



PHOTO BY BETSY SCHLEHUBER | ELON NEWS NETWORK

ELON DEBUTS UNIVERSITY'S FIRST SHOW CHOIR CLUB

by Betsy Schlehuber

When sophomore Jordan Kelberg arrived at Elon University last year and met fellow sophomore Holland Cogan, they noticed a lack of a performance groups that fit their niches. “We saw an opportunity to create something because Elon has acapella groups, Elon has a choir, but they didn’t really have anything in between that,” Cogan says.

Unlike acapella groups and traditional choirs, Kelberg and Cogan wanted to go beyond using only vocal ability—they wanted to do choreography as well. They combined those elements and worked toward creating a show choir group.

Elon Muses, or Muses for short, is the first organization established of singers, dancers and musicians that focuses on all genres of music, from pop to musical theater. According to Kelberg, Muses performances are like musical numbers, but instead of a storyline tying the songs together,

they are a showcase of talent. Kelberg and Cogan first considered starting a show choir in September 2021, but they did not pursue anything seriously until the spring 2022 semester, according to Cogan. By May 2022, Elon Muses was born, with the help of current music director, sophomore Jenny Molyneaux.

Kelberg's introduction to music was through musical theater, an art she has been exposed to ever since she could walk. She says that musical theater was what made her obsessed with performing. "I think I'm a stronger dancer than I am a singer, but in terms of liking them, any sort of performing I love to do," Kelberg says. "It doesn't really matter what it is, as long as I'm performing."

Cogan also started her musical journey with theater, first performing in the fourth grade. Although she mostly focuses on singing, she says that she loves performing and all

things arts-related. I've always been drawn to the stage and performing, and I honestly feel the most like myself when I'm performing," Cogan says. "It just makes me feel alive."

Fall auditions for the show choir occurred September 1 and 2, according to Elon Muses' Instagram, @elonmuses. After discovering Muses at the organization fair, first-year Brooke Gustafson auditioned for the group, saying that the process was simple and kind.

After auditions, Muses now has fourteen performers, including Kelberg and Cogan, who all happen to be women. Even so, Kelberg says, all genders are welcome to be Muses performers. Cogan says that more auditions will be held in the spring and no experience is required. "We are just really looking for strong singers, and then we can teach you how to dance," Cogan says. "If you're not a singer and you want to help with instrumentals

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Kelberg notes that the first Elon Muses performance is set to happen in December, with a spring performance in April 2023. As Elon Muses starts holding rehearsals, crafting choreography, and arranging songs, Kelberg is looking forward to watching the music happen. “I’m excited to see what it’s going to look like by the time I’m a senior, to see how many performances we’re going to have under our belt, and how big we can grow and maybe even do competitions,” Kelberg says. “It’s all the what-ifs that excite me.”

Cogan says that she is excited to see all the friendships that form because of Muses, especially for the first-year students who have found a place within the organization. “I remember as a freshman, I was just looking for a support circle on campus,” Cogan says. “Now I’m seeing all the freshmen being so excited to take part in this journey with us.”

Gustafson sa similar excitement for the future of the group, particularly possible performances and making connections

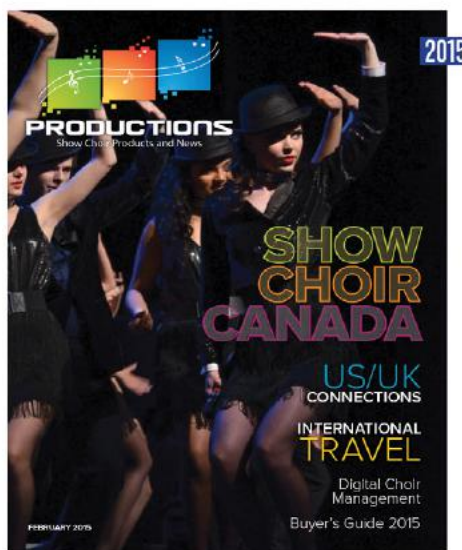
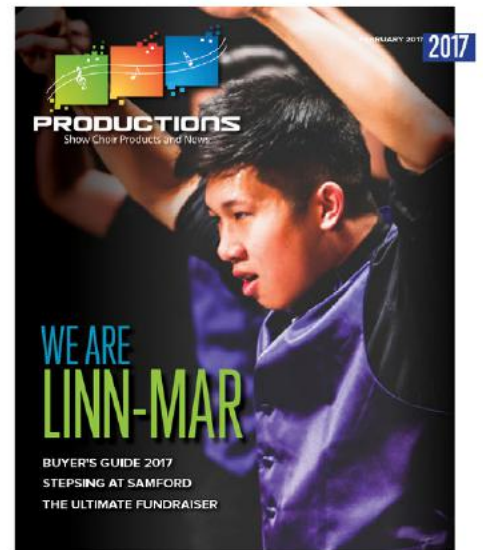
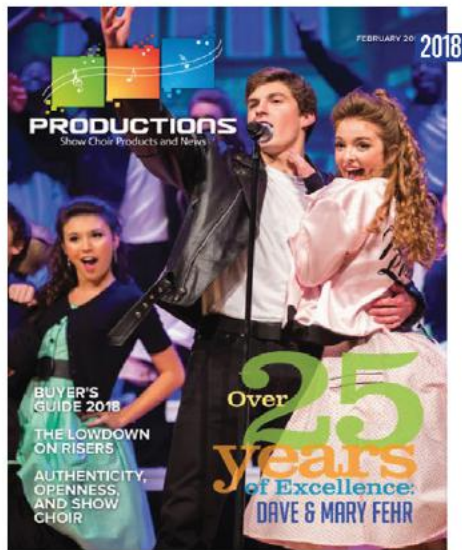
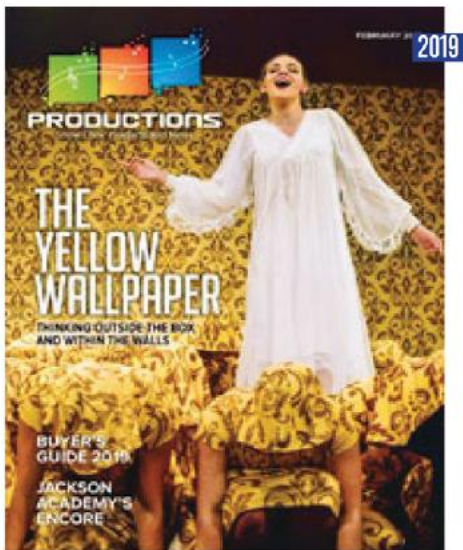
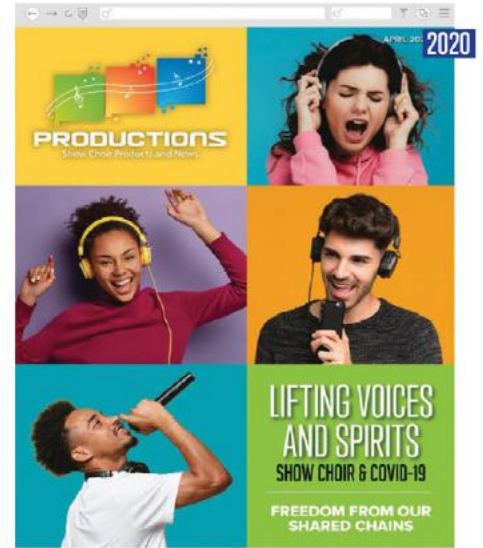
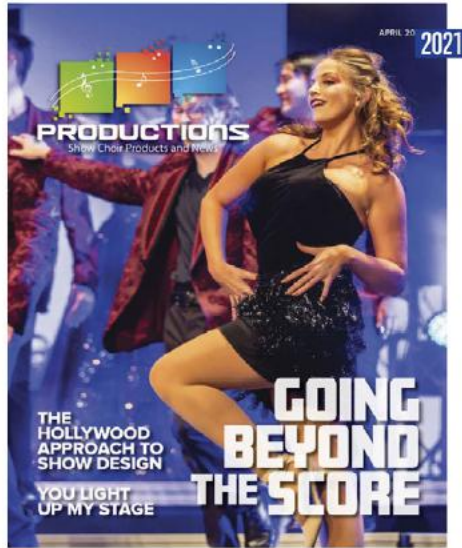
with other Muses performers. “I can already tell that we’re all going to be really good friends, and I cannot wait for the products that we put out there,” Gustafson says.

With the debut of Elon Muses, Kelberg’s goal is to make Muses a place where theater and music performers can thrive together and feel accepted. “If I could wave my crystal ball and then come back to Elon, I would really love to see Muses grow into something that stays here as long as it can,” Kelberg says. “I want it to grow and be a safe space for people that love music.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Betsy Schlehuber (’25) is majoring in journalism and minoring in creative writing at Elon University. Schlehuber reports for the website and the Pendulum. Schlehuber also contributes to Elon Local News, either behind the scenes or in front of the camera. Outside of ENN, Schlehuber cohosts a radio show through WSOE and enjoys listening to music, hiking, shopping, hanging out with friends, and taking photos. After graduation, she hopes to be writing at a local newspaper or magazine.

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