



Through the Hot Wave

Minnie Pause and the Hot Flashes

Create Big Laughs in Katy

On a crisp Thursday evening, Wanda Cramer, Penny Rosas, Lori Tally, and Cheryl Morrison are busy applying their false eyelashes and setting their wigs. Bubbling with enthusiasm, they are getting ready for their show, Minnie Pause and the Hot Flashes, also known as MP3.

Written by Shetye Cypher

Describing themselves as older than “dirt, dust, and mud,” MP3 helps audiences around both Katy and the state laugh with attitude, no matter what stage of life they’re in. The group is firmly committed to sending a message of hope through customized oldies music and humorous insights, and to bring relief to a tough and sometimes taboo subject — menopause. “MP3 is undeniable proof that God’s plans are bigger than ours, and He definitely has a sense of humor,” says Kramer, the group’s creator.

Friends First

The women met roughly ten years ago at the same church. About two years ago, Kramer, who has published many books and a musical CD, was asked to lead worship for a women’s retreat. She came up with the idea and asked the others to join in on her project. “The show was an overwhelming success. Word spread, and we now average about a show a month,” says Rosas, who is also a US History teacher at Mayde Creek High School. “We usually rehearse twice a week and spend as much time talking and praying as we do practicing. The four of us have invested a lot in each other.”

Getting the Look

Morrison, who is also an assistant principal at Cinco Ranch High School, has developed their quirky look. “You have no idea how expensive it is to look so cheap,” says Morrison. “In our real lives, none of us wear much makeup or make any kind of spectacle of ourselves. Quite the contrary is our stage look, which evolved from a desire to look retro, gaudy, extravagant, loud, and downright outrageous.” The numbers have been choreographed by all, but Tally has resurrected moves from her past dancing with the Spring Woods drill team. Tally, a former elementary school teacher, manages the group and serves as organizer, booking agent, and coordinator of events.

Wanda Kramer plays Minnie Pause, the lead singer and voice of wisdom in the group



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MP3 has been performing and touring together for over two years

“MP3 is a huge surprise in my life. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would perform zany songs and dances for audiences, especially at this ripe stage in my life.”

- Cheryl Morrison



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It's Showtime

Morrison says they have a wide range of songs that draws a big audience. "We have a regular show, Joy Unplugged, and a Christmas show, Oh What a Night, each with completely different songs and a different script consisting of altered oldies from the 50's, 60's, and 70's. Pop hits like "Under the Armpit" (Under the Boardwalk) describes those impending hot flashes, "Spider Veins" (You're So Vain) exposes those unsightly but inevitable little eventualities, and "My Husband Sleeps Tonight" (The Lion Sleeps Tonight) needs no explanation," says Morrison. "Many of our songs tell of the experiences of women of all ages, and especially those who have been touched by the 'joys' of menopause, while others, like "I will Follow Him," "My God" (My Guy), and "Holy Spirit" (Pretty Woman), draw audiences to worship."

Who's Who?

Each woman plays a unique character. Kramer plays Minnie Pause, the lead singer in blue, and the voice of wisdom. Rosas plays the apathetic, but easily influenced, obsessed with pink, stage hog. Morrison (in yellow) plays the "dumb blonde poster woman for extreme menopause," who unabashedly exhibits every symptom. Tally plays Joy (in lime green), a young, vibrant, eager, and energized former fan-turned-intern for MP3, who desperately wants to be a member of the group but is constantly rejected and shunned by its members. She quickly wins the allegiance of the audience and has even the most reserved on their feet, singing along, dancing, and cheering for her.

"Our favorite part of every engagement is getting to visit after shows with women who tell us how much they needed to laugh and that

they laughed so hard that tears rolled down and messed up their mascara," says Tally. "Believe it or not, very young women tell us they look forward to menopause after attending our shows."

On the Road Again

They have performed for various churches of different denominations and several organizations in Katy, McAllen, Texas City, twice in Buna, and Sour Lake. They also have provided entertainment for the Katy Pregnancy Help Center, a library fundraiser, and a 50th wedding anniversary. "One of our troop members owns an RV, so we're fortunate to travel in one vehicle to venues. Our husbands are our roadies, ardent supporters, and are as involved in MP3 as we are, so they go where we go," says Kramer. "There's nothing like the bonding that takes place when eight people are together for five hours in an RV. Lots of new lyrics and material for future scripts materialize as a result of our togetherness on those trips."

Going Global

The group's desire is to reach across the globe and touch people's lives. They hope to be on TV and to produce CDs and DVDs. "MP3 is a huge surprise in my life. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would perform zany songs and dances for audiences, especially at this ripe stage in my life," says Morrison. "I'm really very reserved in my real life, and the fact that God chose me to serve Him in this way is proof that He can do anything with anyone. And what a privilege it is to get to perform with three of the finest women I have ever known." **KM**

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