



The Gift of the Magi Concert, A Holiday Tradition
Produced by J. O'Reilly Productions, Chicago
Music & Lyrics By Michael Smith
With Jamie O'Reilly, Michael Smith, and Musical Ensemble

This Christmas concert features the musical composition of Michael Smith, based on O. Henry's 'The Gift of the Magi'. First-rate instrumentalists perform on violin, cello, piano, bass, and guitar, in this beloved annual program, featuring Jamie O'Reilly, Michael Smith and a Guest Narrator, (In 2010 it was Rick Kogan, in past years, Paul Amandes read the story). Two young singe/actors perform as "Della" and "Jim," The ensemble presents a radio theater style concert. The beloved story is read with Smith's wonderful music features singular style tunes and lyrics, from waltzes to blues, soft shoe and tender love duets, as well as gorgeous instrumentals, and the singing of carols and seasonal favorites are included. The "MAGI" is the perfect concert for families to enjoy together. **Concerts Seen at** Evanston SPACE, The Irish Heritage Center, World Folk Music, Friendship Concerts, Fitzgerald's Nightclub, St. Jo, MI- Box Factory for the Arts, Oak Park Library and with Judith Svalander's Ballet Co. at the Woodstock Opera House and Raue Center for the Arts. and live on WFMT's Folkstage.

The Story in Song & The CD Recording, Produced by Judith Svalander

The Gift of the Magi is O. Henry's classic story of generosity and hope. It is the story of Della who sacrifices her long hair for Jim who pawns his heirloom pocket-watch for Della. Set in an era of economic hardship and struggle turn of the century New York City, the music draws from the rich musical hall tradition that was New York in 1905 and from the jazz era styles of old Paris. Michael Smith's lyrics tell of a city boasting modernization and new invention, from the trolley to the telephone and of neighborhood flats bursting with activity. We hear of the dashed dreams of wide-eyed innocents, and off-the-boat immigrants, and the colorful characters they do business with: Madame Sofronie, once a gypsy princess in old Russia, now making wigs of New York society ladies. We meet the sly, deal-making Pawnbroker, whose watches are all set to the time of President Lincoln's death. And of course we fall for Jim and Della, the down-on-their luck newlyweds taking refuge in the wonder of Christmas.

Songs bring to mind the halcyon days of parlor songs and vaudeville, the pre-radio era when novelty songs and waltzes could be heard wafting through the air in the 'tin pan alleys' of New York City. **SONGS:** *I Wish Someone Would Take Me Dancing, Nineteen and Five, You Gotta Like a Guy, Long-haired Woman, The Pawnbroker's Lullaby, Madame Sofronie, Troika Ride, The Magi, On Our Own. A Wanderer Am I, the new song Coney Island Girl and several Christmas carols.*

The "Magi" recording is broadcast as a holiday tradition and has been featured on BBC Radio Celtic Heartbeat, Wales, Montreal Public Radio, WGN radio and TV, and a concert was performed live on WFMT Fine Arts Radio's *Folkstage*.