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### Let Us Entertain You

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

Presents:

# Let us Entertain You.

Friday, June 23, 2006 at 8pm

and

Saturday June 24, 2006 at 8pm

**BgMC**  
at

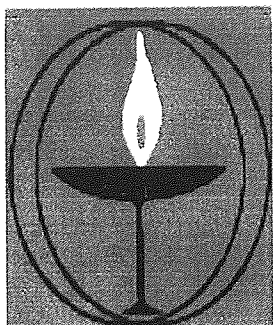
Buffalo State College  
Performing Arts Center  
Rockwell Hall  
1300 Elmwood Ave

Artistic Director: Barbara Wagner

Accompanist: Debi Overton

**BgMC**  
The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

[www.buffalogaymenschorus.com](http://www.buffalogaymenschorus.com)



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Rev. Joel Miller, Minister  
Barbara Wagner, Music Minister

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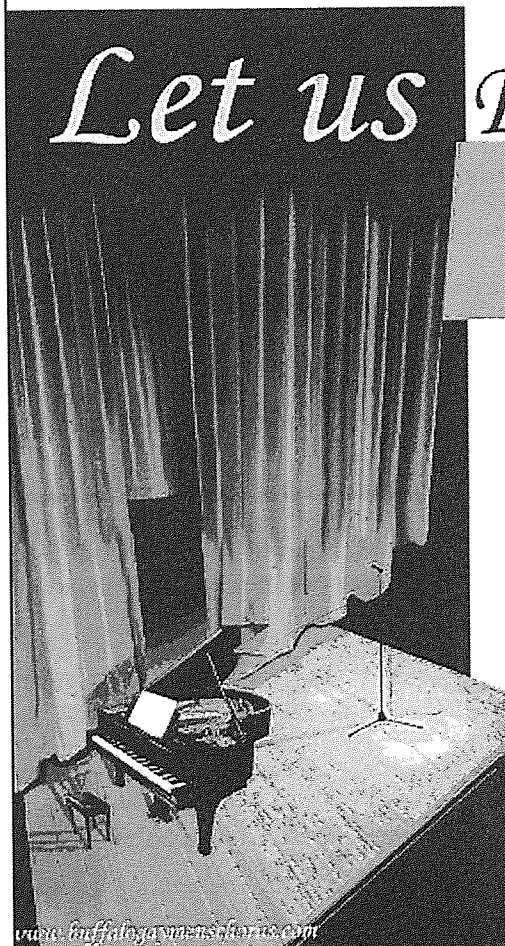
**WORKING FOR EQUALITY SINCE 1831**

**BGM**  
Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

*Barbara Wagner, Artistic Director*  
*Debi Overton, Accompanist*  
*presents*

*Let us Entertain  
You.*

*8 o'clock*  
*Friday, June 23, 2006*  
*and*  
*Saturday, June 24,*  
*2006*  
*Buffalo State College*  
*Performing Arts Center*  
*Rockwell Hall*  
*1300 Elmwood Avenue*





CITY OF BUFFALO  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

BYRON W. BROWN  
MAYOR

June 2006

Dear Members and Supporters of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus:

Greetings and Congratulations to the BGMC as you close your 5<sup>th</sup> Season!

I am pleased to send you warm wishes on behalf of the City of Buffalo as you present your June concert "Let Us Entertain You" at the Performing Arts Center at Rockwell Hall on the campus of Buffalo State College.

May your continued success under the direction of Maestra Barbara Wagner represent all that is best about our city: diversity, beauty, harmony and artistic excellence!

Your mission to "produce vocal music of high quality in the rich tradition of men's choral singing," has won you praise and given our region another cultural asset of which we all can be proud.

May your June 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> concert dates cap off a celebrative month of Pride celebrations as you continue to enlighten and create harmony in our community of "Good Neighbors!"



Sincerely,

*Byron W. Brown*

Byron W. Brown  
Mayor

## *A Message from the President*

To those of you who receive *Crescendo!* and read my last column, some of this will sound vaguely familiar, so I ask your indulgence.

This will be my last column as President of the Board of Directors. My term ends at the end of this month, and it is time to bring in new energy and ideas to the Board.

I leave the Board, with mixed feelings, in that it has been a wonderful and rewarding time, for the past three years. Serving as member of the Board and having the opportunity to serve as it's President, has been a positive and uplifting experience. Working closely with the other members to ensure the organization's goals are met has been a source of personal growth and pride for me. But in leaving, it will be nice to reclaim some of my leisure time to concentrate on becoming a better singer, working behind the scenes on individual tasks and being able to say to someone, "That's a great idea but now you need discuss it with the next President of the Board." I do not say that facetiously, but in all sincerity, as I am a firm believer that an organization needs a continuous flow of administrative leadership to keep it healthy and functioning.

There isn't enough space in this playbill to adequately express my love, affection and respect for the hardworking men and women who put all of this together. From Barb, Debi, the singers and non singing members and staff, I will cherish all of the memories, even those whose volume level was out of the normal range. Throughout it all we have remained friends, become closer friends, and have consistently worked for the continued growth of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus.

In the *Crescendo!* column, I talked about family, those with whom I share a genetic connection and also my BGMC family. I did not address the "audience" branch of the BGMC family, as I wanted to save that for tonight.

Let my final program message to you be one of gratitude, love and acknowledgment for your wonderful support of the BGMC; for your friendship and enthusiasm for our music which we sing for you and lastly, for being such a wonderful audience to sing to.

Dave Gannon  
*President, Board of Directors*





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\*The General Synod of the United Church of Christ endorsed gay marriage in civil law and religious sacrament on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005.



## Spotlight On Our Corporate Partners

Our Corporate Partners have added their "voices" to the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus to share in a vision of excellence in our arts community. Their financial help assists the Chorus with programs that make a direct contribution to our mission. They have helped us bring our message and existence into the hearts and minds of people who may never have thought of us in a positive manner. We are most grateful to each of them. Please give them your well deserved support.

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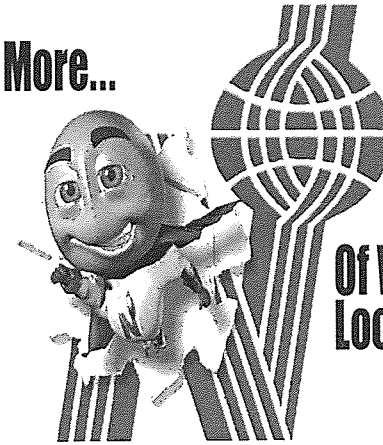
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Sergio Neglia, dancer

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Xu Duo, piano



## BRAVO BEETHOVEN!

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Yoonjung Han, piano  
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Robert Franz, conductor  
Joshua Bell, violin

## A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

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Eric Fennell, tenor  
Valerian Ruminski, bass  
Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus  
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Saturday July 15, 8 pm  
Robert Franz, conductor  
Jodi Benson, soprano (voice of Ariel from *Little Mermaid*)  
Michael Maguire, tenor (Tony award winner for his role as Enjolras in *Les Misérables*),  
Burke Moses, baritone (original Gaston from *Beauty and the Beast*)

## GERSHWIN TO BERNSTEIN

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William Wolfram, piano

## CIRQUE SYMPHONIQUE

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## *Themes of Liberation*

Although our spring musical program for 2006 is ostensibly focused on entertainment, light fun, and Americana, it is no coincidence that the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus has chosen songs which speak seriously of liberation -- not only of gay and lesbian people, but also the liberation of Africans and African-Americans, and liberation from the restrictive historical trappings of certain music itself.

Typical of our concerts, songs such as "You Can Fly," "Come Away With Me," and "No Matter What" espouse liberation in broad terms which we can internalize as gay men. The lyrics of these songs imagine a place where we can kiss on the mountain top, awake safe in the arms of another, believe what we choose, be who we are, spread our wings and fly among the stars.

Other songs in the program connect our personal liberation to the fate and destiny of others. The rich strains of the anthem "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" (1897) shake the bonds of European colonialism by evoking African emancipation and self-determination. The arrangement we are using in performance was edited for diction by Naomi Tutu, daughter of Bishop Desmond Tutu, and commissioned for publication by the Dallas Turtle Creek Chorale, one of the world's largest gay men's choruses.

The musical genius of Moses Hogan provides an equally liberating conceit for the concert -- that there is "Plenty Good Room" for all "in my Father's kingdom." This African-American spiritual is augmented by Hogan's trademark knack for syncopation and creative harmonic progressions.

A couple of pieces in the program have been subject to controversy. The minstrel songs, "Ching-a-Ring-Chaw," (circa 1825) and "O Susannah!" (1847) were originally written for performance by white men in blackened faces, and likely were intended to elicit laughter by ridiculing black slaves. This form of "entertainment" marks one of the darkest periods in American music. How can these songs possibly be liberated from such awful origins?

This was the question that gay American composer Aaron Copland no doubt asked himself. In the 1950's, he set out to transform and recover the musical spirit of "Ching-a-Ring-Chaw" by replacing the original text with a more universal and idealistic context: "I did not want to take any chance of it being construed as racist." The original text was about the African-American immigration to Haiti. To the amazement and perhaps horror of American slave owners, Haiti had become an independent nation of black citizens in 1804, unsuccessfully contested in its declaration of independence. Some U.S. slaves no doubt escaped to the Caribbean island. We can speculate that the "chings" and "rings" are imitative of the sound of chains and ankle irons of

moving slaves. But over time, and with the help of Copland, these associations have faded, and the piece has become a standard classic in American repertory.

"O Susannah!" by Stephen Foster is also an established piece, learned for many years by school children. But unlike Copland's work, its lyrics seem not to have been altered since the first performance in 1847. The lyrics, "The sun so hot, I froze to death," deprecate the first person narrator for his impaired logic, a racist characteristic of most minstrels when the narrator is perceived as black. But when sung in other contexts (by a racially mixed chorus without blackface), the effect is hardly the same. Prominent African-American scholar and author, Amari Baraka, (formerly LeRoi Jones), demonstrates in his now classic analysis of the history of African-American music, *Blues People* (1963), that minstrel shows can equally satirize the white performer underneath the blackface. Composer Stephen Foster apparently soon abandoned writing for minstrel shows and by 1864 he wrote "Beautiful Dreamer" which exudes beauty in each languorous phrase.

A peculiar bit of irony is that the song "Today" (1964) was a signature piece for the New Christy Minstrels, a modern popular choral group named after the original Christy Minstrels which was the longest-running minstrel group in the 1800's. Perhaps the name was adopted in the 1960's as an omen for success. But renaming, redefining, and transforming are a part of the liberating process of musical history.

Borrowing, trading, and altering are hallmarks of some of the best art. Both oral folk tradition and composed music model such creative transformations. In "Landscape" a familiar nursery tune is liberated from its juvenile context and humorously metamorphosed into seven musical conventions or styles. Like Copland, at risk of having his intentions misunderstood, Gershwin studied African-American music to compose *Porgy and Bess*, and applies the same syncopation and blues harmony to "I Got Rhythm" in the exciting arrangement, "Rhythm Medley." The jazzy handling of "I've Been Workin' On the Railroad" gives a new funky street-corner style rendition to a well-worn tune. "Let Us Entertain You" was originally written for burlesque strippers in the Broadway show *Gypsy*, but BGMC has turned the song into a show opener to welcome the audience into our music and into our lives as gay men. We have even taken the liberty of borrowing "Home on the Range" as a salute to Jack and Ennis of *Brokeback Mountain*.

*Dr. Lawrence Van Heusen sings second bass in BGMC, and published his dissertation on James Baldwin and Black Religion in 1980. He is a trustee at Pilgrim-St. Luke's United Church of Christ and works for Jewish Family Service. He was a social worker on the East Side for ten years. He lives in Kenmore with his partner of 30 years, Robert A. Scharf.*



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with Andrew Ziemba, Percussion
- Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika\*  
"God Bless Africa" Words and Music by Enoch Sontonga  
arranged by Gabriel Larentz-Jones
- Plenty Good Room Spiritual arranged by Moses Hogan  
with Matthew Mooney, Tenor
- Beautiful Dreamer Words and Music by Stephen Foster  
arranged by Scott Henderson  
with Peter C. Smith, Clarinet
- O Susannah Words and Music by Stephen Foster  
arranged by Jonathan Crutchfield  
with Raymond Neil and Debi Overton, piano duet
- Ching-A-Ring-Chaw Minstrel Song adapted by Aaron Copland
- Workin' on the Railroad! American Folk Song  
arranged by Douglas Moore
- Home on the Range arranged by Paul Peck  
Dedicated to Ennis and Jack with love
- Rhythm Medley Words and Music by George Gershwin  
arranged by Terry LaBolt  
with Mr Ziemba, Percussion

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- Today Words and Music by Randy Sparks  
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BGMC Chamber Singers

- Come Away With Me Words and Music by Norah Jones  
arranged by Steven Milloy  
with Mr Ziemba, Percussion
- Come What May David Baerwald  
from *Moulin Rouge*  
Mr Mooney and Shaun Doyle Jr., Tenors
- No Matter What Andrew Lloyd Webber  
from *Whistle Down the Wind* arranged for BGMC by John Quillin  
with Dan Weinrieb, Baritone  
and Mr Ziemba, Percussion
- You Can Fly Words and Music by Alan Stein  
arranged by Neil Richardson  
with Mr Ziemba, Percussion

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### Translation\*

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika  
(God Bless Africa)

God bless and preserve Africa.  
Let her glory be held up high.  
Please listen to our prayers;  
God bless her children.

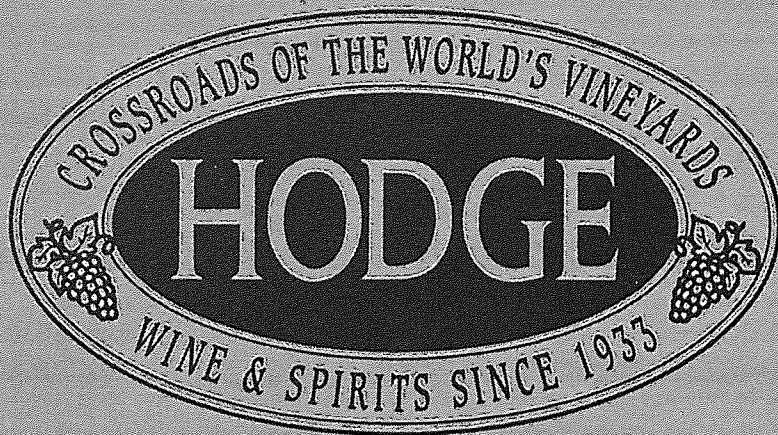
Spirit, please come down;  
God bless and protect us.

Holy Spirit, please come down;  
Bless us, we her children.

God protect our nation;  
Please bring an end to wars and suffering.  
Protect us,  
Protect our nation, Africa.

Amen, so be it forever and ever.





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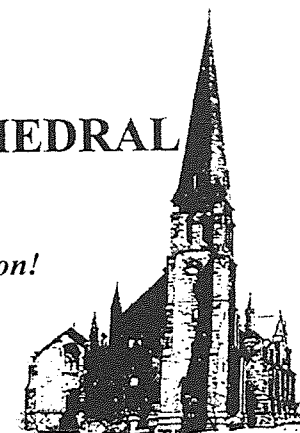
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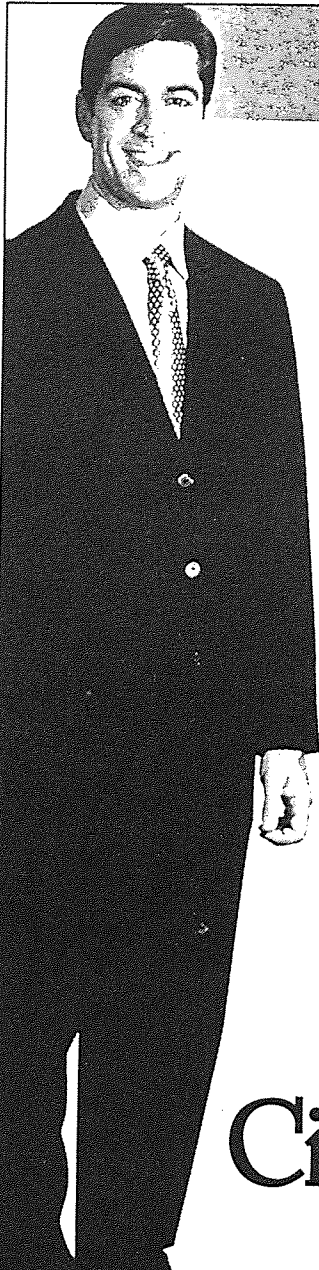
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## *The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus*

### Tenor I

Robert Black  
 Josh D. Blasdell  
 Peter A. Bruschi  
 Robert C. Donner  
 Shaun Doyle Jr. \*\*\*  
 Norm Duttweiler  
 Ronald Houk  
 Mike Liska  
 Matthew Mooney  
 Aidan Ngin  
 John Rex  
 Brian Schuster  
 Hanford Searl Jr.  
 Kevin L. Thompson

### Bass II

Jim Estep  
 Ronald J. Galena  
 Jaime Stephan Goldfuss \*\*  
 Lorne E. Gretsinger  
 Jim Jagow  
 Rob Keefe \*  
 Randall D. Kozlowski  
 Paul LaDuca  
 Russell C. Link  
 Timothy H. Mahiques  
 David K. Mathewson  
 Ryan J. McKane  
 L. Martin Palcic \*\*\*  
 Todd B. Ruth  
 Andy Steck  
 Derek K. Teneycke \*  
 Dr. Lawrence Van Heusen  
 Joseph A. Zimmerman

### Tenor II

Donald Behr  
 Edward F. Cizek Jr.  
 Dave Gannon  
 William C. Hardy  
 John V. Iacono  
 Gerry Klein  
 Delwyn Milander  
 Michael Mrocza  
 Nelson A. Neels  
 Roger Parris  
 Mark J. Peszko  
 Mike Styn  
 Cedric 'Flip' Taporco \*\*\*  
 Jason A. Ward

### Bass I

Christopher S. Babbitt \*  
 Dave Batt  
 Jim Carrubba  
 Dan Folwell  
 William H. Gardner  
 Andrew Giarrizzo  
 Michael P. Gillis  
 Vincent Kuntz  
 Aaron LeBeau \*  
 Nicholas Mawer \*  
 Ramón 'Ray' Meléndez  
 Raymond Neil  
 Andy Newbert \*\*\*  
 Paul R. Newell  
 Benjamin Phillips  
 Joe Puma  
 Jim Rigo \*  
 Robert Rose  
 Michael Shanahan \*  
 Sherwood 'Woody' Sipprell  
 Dennis C. Stuart  
 Bobby Suwala  
 Dan Weinrieb  
 Steven Young

- \*\*\* Section Leader
- \*\* Chorus Marshall
- \* On leave

## *The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus (continued)*

### Non-Singing Members

David Hetherly  
 John Jubulis  
 Mike Longo  
 R. Mark Meyer  
 Geoffrey Mohr  
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## *Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus Mission Statement*

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus is dedicated to producing vocal music of high quality in the rich tradition of men's choral singing.

We seek through song not only to entertain, but also to enlighten.

We sing to create harmony as we celebrate pride in the community and in ourselves.



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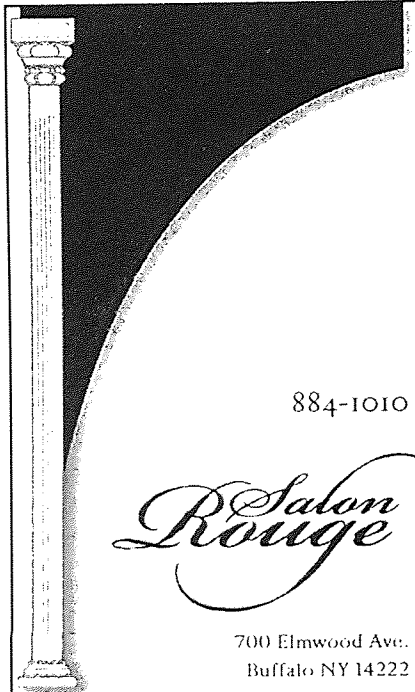
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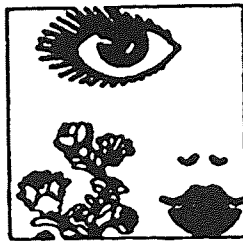
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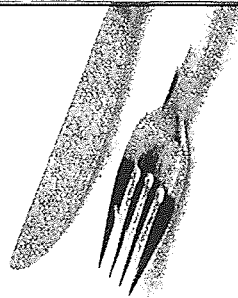
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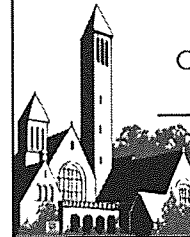
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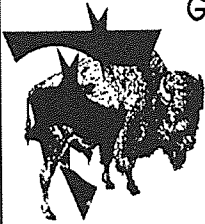
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*The Friends of the BGMC listed in this program are those who have contributed between June 3, 2005 and June 3, 2006.*

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Anonymous, in honor of Pilgrim St. Luke's United Church of Christ

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Gannon. Thanks for all you have  
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life of William G. Wagner  
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Dr. & Mrs. Samuel Barone  
Sherrie H. Bernat, in memory of  
Thomas Swan  
Nancy L. Blumreich  
Susan Bogner, in honor of Ron  
Houk, my mentor and friend  
Will & Bonnie Botsford  
Ruth Bury  
Vincent Buscaglia  
James Carrubba, Jr, in honor of  
Barbara Wagner  
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Arthur Christy  
Therese Clarke  
Ruth Cohan  
Harold & Mary Cohen  
J.N. Connelly, Jr.  
Angelo Conti  
Rev. Katherine Cooke  
Dave Davis  
Dominic DeFillippo & Arlen Peters  
James & Mary Frances Derby  
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Patrick DiMartina  
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Ronald Groth	Sheila Paprocki
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Peter G. Hart	Tom Pegowski
Bob & Norma Henderson	John J. Pellegrini
Richard Herr	Philip & Kristen Pfaff
Timothy D. Heuser	Shirley B. Philipps
& Margaret Hollingsworth	Jim & Trudy Possinger, <i>in honor of the</i> <i>BGMC's excellent performances</i>
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Suzie & Bill Jack, <i>in honor of Dennis</i> <i>Stuart, Roger Parris &amp; Paul LaDuca</i>	Bob & Luann Roberts
Paula W. Jack	David Rocque
Charles P. Jamieson & Edward J. Jamieson	Jennifer & Tony Scarozza
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Robert H. Keefe	Debbie M. Sheehan, <i>in memory of</i> <i>Officer Joseph Sheehan</i>
Lindy Korn, Esq, <i>in honor of Roger</i> <i>Parris</i>	Mary Pat Sheehan & Family
Ed Koryl	Joyce Sherwood
Amy Kottler & Andrew Lipkind	Candace Smith
Dr. Frank H. Long, Jr.	Harriet B. Stewart
Barbara & Bill Laderer, <i>in honor of</i> <i>Russell Link</i>	John & Elaine Swaine
Norma Jean Lamb	Paul & Gloria Stuart
K.S. Ludwig	Alan Thompson
Scott Luscombe & David Hylander, <i>still living in sin, in honor of the</i> <i>marriage of William Knodel &amp; Keith</i> <i>McQuay on October 7, 2005</i>	Cynthia Van Ness
Horace Mann, Ph.D.	Ted Van Velzen, <i>in honor of Jim Jagow</i>
Marie A. Marshall	John & Noreen Visone, <i>in honor of</i> <i>many BGMC friends</i>
Bernadette McCarthy	Barbara C. Walsh
Nancy McLoughlin, <i>in memory</i> <i>of Russell Digati</i>	Robert Wiechman
Paul Michaels/Aurum Jewelers	Stephanie D. Williams
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With the BGMC's 75 singers and volunteers donating merchandise, this year's Sale promises to be bigger than ever.

"We'd be most appreciative to receive any items that anyone would care to donate" reports Garage Sale chairman Woody Sipprell. Simply call the Chorus phone at 883-1277 and arrange for a pick up. Thank you for your support of the arts in Western New York, in general, and the BGMC, in specific!

**BGMC**  
The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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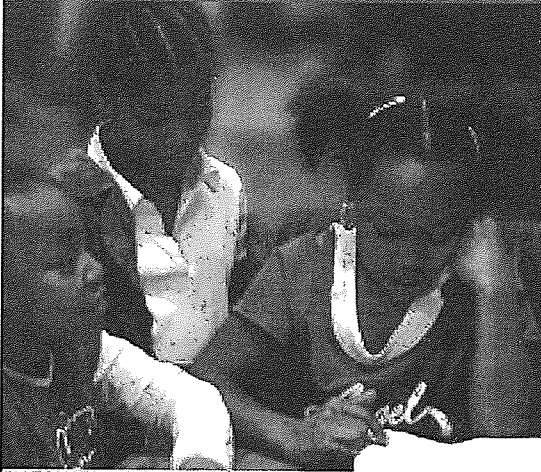
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## *About the Artists*

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus (BGMC) performs a rich catalog of classical, contemporary, Broadway, pop and multi-cultural music. The repertoire is as diverse as the 75 men who are singing with pride as members of the BGMC. A balance of educating, entertaining and enlightening allows us to maintain our integrity as a gay chorus while providing inclusion and appreciation by all members of our respective communities.

The BGMC has been honored by the Empire State Pride Agenda with a Community Service Award. This award was in recognition of efforts to raise awareness and to enlighten our region through song. To that end, the BGMC has performed in a variety of venues throughout Western New York and Ontario for many community events. Additionally, the BGMC has traveled to Montreal to participate in the seventh annual GALA Festival, an international gathering of gay and lesbian choruses. Recently the BGMC won the Artvoice Best of Buffalo 2006 Award for 'Best Vocalist.'

While maintaining a strong presence within the gay community, The BGMC also has been privileged to perform with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra at Kleinhans Music Hall. BGMC has done benefits for the Amherst Unitarian Universalist Church music program; Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church's restoration; the annual World AIDS Day Memorial Service; and, the AIDS Community Services fundraiser Cause for Celebration. Additionally, BGMC performed for the arrival of The Amistad; participated in "Gusto at the Gallery" at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery; sang at the Ars Nova Musicians "Viva Vivaldi" Concert; sang at Fredonia College for their diversity and multicultural groups; and, at the Nichols School for Diversity Week. Of course, our four major concerts annually bring our work to thousands of avid listeners.

Incorporated in 2001, The BGMC is a membership association dedicated to producing high quality vocal music in the rich tradition of men's choral singing. Through song, the Chorus endeavors to entertain and enlighten, create harmony and celebrate personal and community pride.

Barbara Wagner, the charter Artistic Director of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, has served as Minister of Music at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo since 1962 and was Director of Vocal Activities at Nichols School for more than 24 years.

The Choir at the UU Church, in addition to its Sunday morning responsibilities, enjoyed two highly acclaimed European tours: the first to Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic and the second to Ireland, Wales, England and Scotland. The Choir, under Ms Wagner's direction, has

*continued on page 41*

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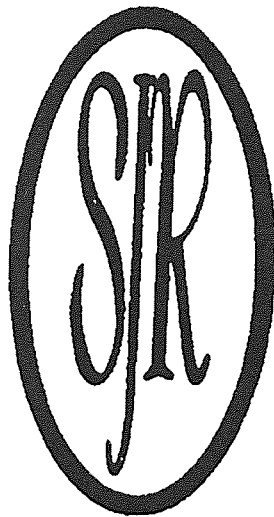
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*continued from page 39*

recorded for American Public Radio, performed locally with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO), Amherst Saxophone Quartet and the Ars Nova Musicians. Ms Wagner was the conductor for the Peace Odyssey Concert Tour of Hungary and the former Soviet Union. Choral singers from all over the US participated in this tour.

She ran a choral program at Nichols High School that involved more than 100 young singers, including a Concert Chorus, Women's Ensemble, Men's Ensemble and a Mixed Chamber Group. She was also guest conductor for the City of Good Neighbors Chorale, Buffalo's Gay/Lesbian chorus in the mid 1980s.

Ms Wagner earned a BFA Degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo, where she studied organ with Squire Haskin, and completed graduate work at Westminster Choir College. Her advanced studies include organ study with Karl Richter at the Munich Conservatory and conducting with Raymond Harvey, formerly Assistant Conductor of the BPO and presently Music Director of the Kalamazoo Symphony.

She is a member of the American Choral Director's Association, the Erie County Music Educators Association, MENC, Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network (founding member, former Vice President and Board member) NYSSMA and the American Guild of Organists (sub-dean and program chair for the Buffalo Chapter), the Chromatic Club of Buffalo. She was Chair of the New Hymns Task Force of the Unitarian Universalist Association, which recently completed *Singing the Journey*, a brand new supplement to *Singing the Living Tradition*, the hymnbook for the denomination. Ms. Wagner also served on the Commission, which worked for 7 years compiling and researching that book, which went to press in 1993.

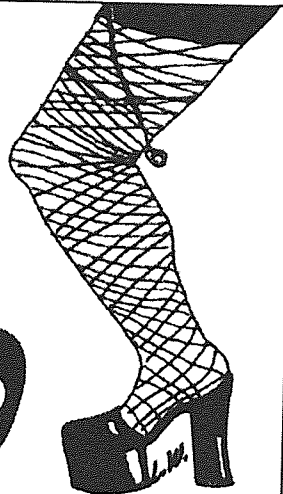
Ms Wagner is the recipient of the Buffalo Philharmonic/Erie County Music Educators Award for Excellence in Choral Music in 2002, and is included in the 2004 edition of *Who's Who in American Women*. She is slated to be included in the upcoming 25th anniversary edition of *Who's Who in America*. She and the chorus were featured in *About* magazine's June, 2006 edition.

A native of North Carolina, Debi Overton (Accompanist,) has held positions as coach/accompanist at the University of Texas at Austin, and served as director of the Chamber Music Program at The New School of Music in Philadelphia. For many years, she was active at the Summer Music Festival in Aspen, Colorado. As the coach/accompanist for the choral department in Aspen, she served as assistant to noted conductor Fiora

*continued on page 43*



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*continued from page 41*

Contino. She has assisted in preparing choruses and soloists for such conductors as Tamara Brooks, John Nelson, Robert Shaw and Sergei Commissiona. Additionally, she has coached with coach/accompanists David Garvey, John Wustman, Brooks Smith and Dalton Baldwin and the local master, Livingston Gearhart.

Ms Overton has accompanied Master classes for Luciano Pavarotti, Phyllis Curtin, Jessye Norman, Leontyne Price and Sylvia McNair. She has accompanied the regional Metropolitan Opera auditions in Greensboro, NC, Philadelphia, PA, Atlanta, GA and New York City. Considered by her peers to be one of the finest sight readers in the country, she offers nuances and subtle interpretations of music that have been enjoyed and applauded by thousands of listeners throughout the United States. Trained as a concert pianist, she has toured in Europe but prefers the roots, both spiritual and local, offered by a career as a church musician.

In addition to her duties as Organist and Choir Master at Calvary Episcopal Church in Williamsville, Ms Overton is a past chair of the Music Commission of the WNY Episcopal Diocese, has been a member of the Board of Directors for the American Guild of Organists and is active in Western New York teaching, accompanying and performing with singers and instrumentalists.

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In the summer of 2004 the BGMC attended and performed at the GALA Festival VII in Montreal where over 6,000 other singers participated. The BGMC is already making plans to attend and perform at GALA Festival VIII in Miami, Florida in July of 2008.



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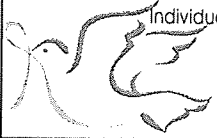
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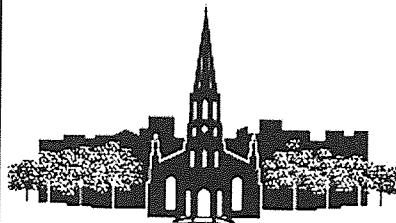
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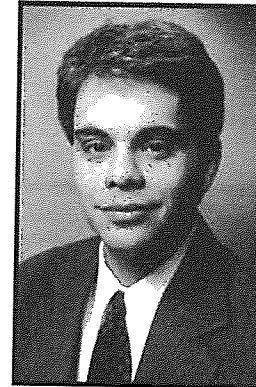
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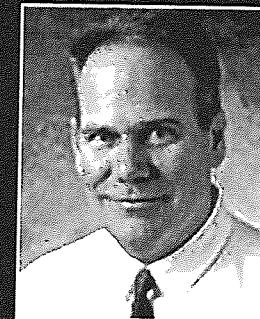
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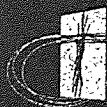
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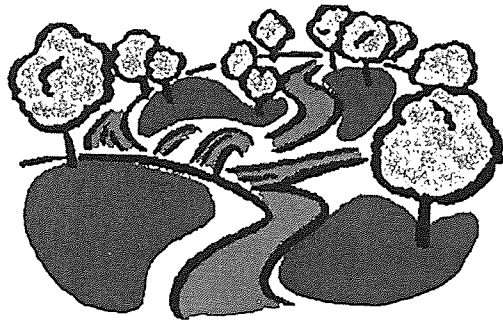
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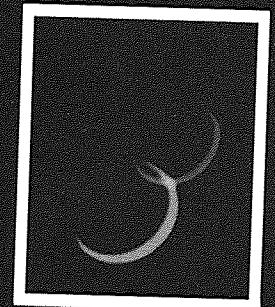
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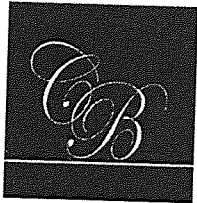




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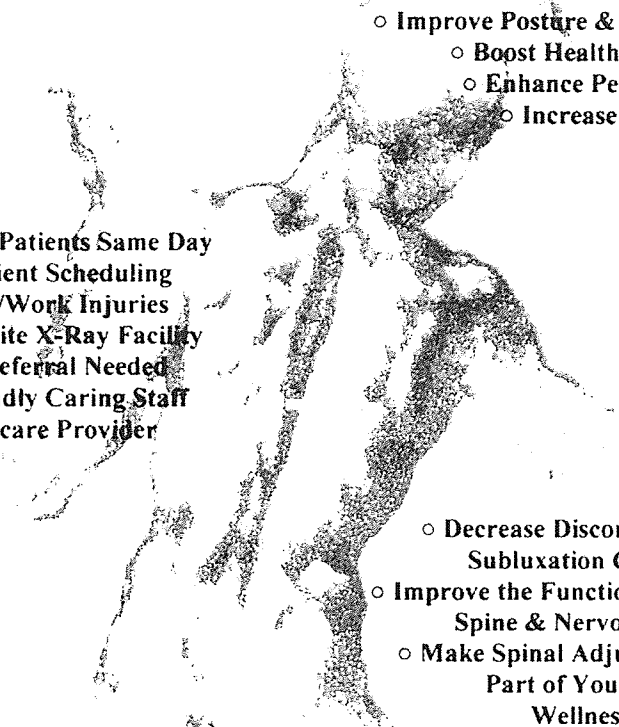
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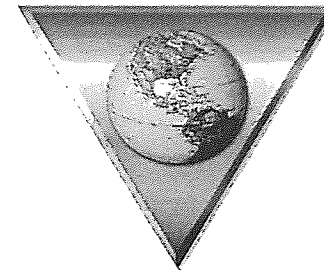
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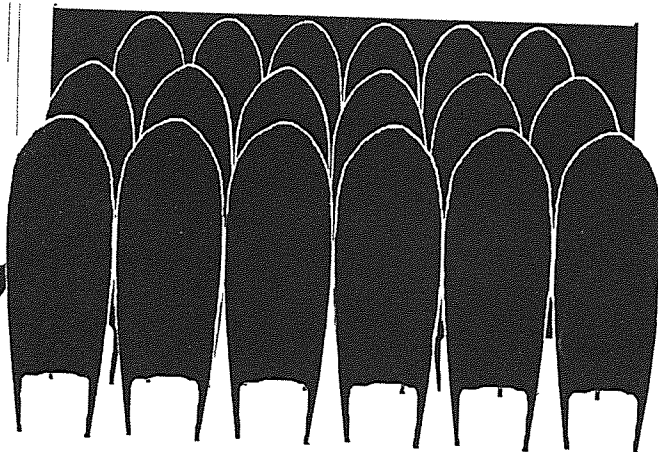
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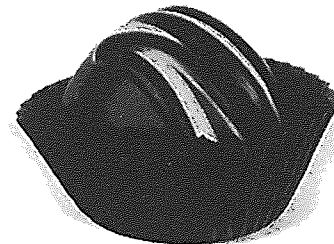


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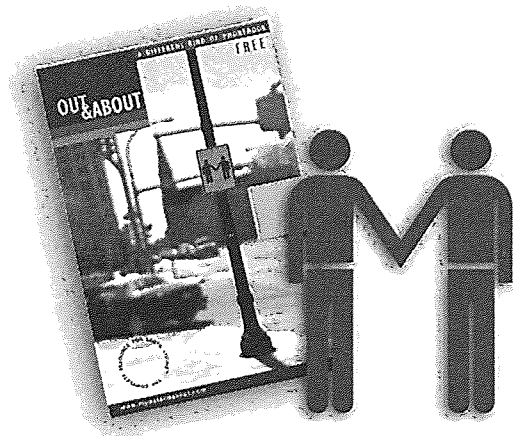
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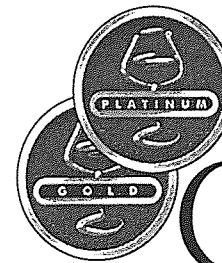


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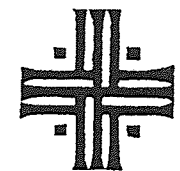
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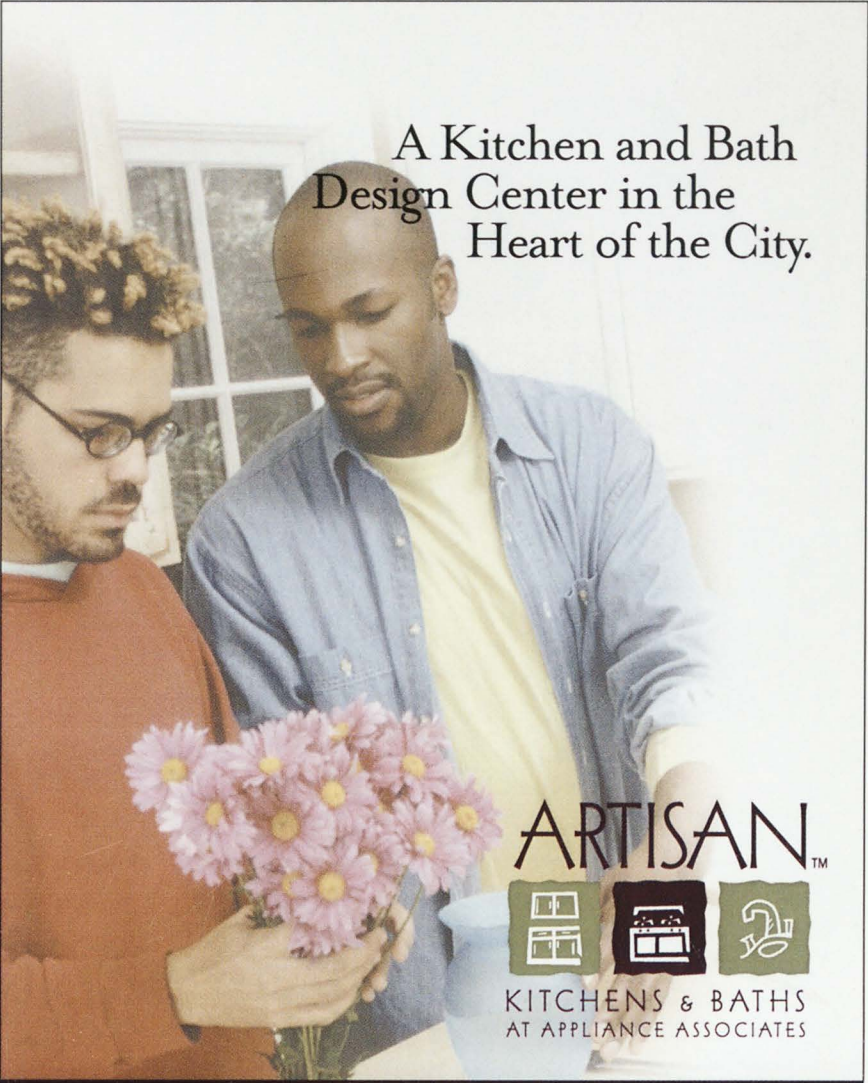
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