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2013

Singer's Handbook, Third Edition

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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Singer's Handbook

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



Delaware Avenue, south of the Rt. 198 overpass, west side of the street

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Third edition

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51 Colonial Circle

Buffalo, NY 14222

www.buffalogaymenschorus.org

1. Welcome

To new members, I would like to welcome you to an experience that will lead to lasting friendships and wonderful memories. To our returning members, thank you for your constant dedication to the mission of the BGMC.

This past year was an exciting one for the BGMC, marked by exceptional concerts, taking our performances and productions to new heights. As we expand musically and artistically, we embrace members like you who will continue to grow this organization and move us towards musical excellence.

The BGMC has always been more than a premier men's choral group. This chorus allows you to be yourself, to grow as an individual, to make friends, and to share YOUR story. Through visibility and song, as gay and gay-affirming men, we enlighten hearts and minds. Our music changes people's lives. You are going to love this group as much as I do. Together we will have some of the most inspiring and moving experiences of our lives.

--Gregory Ciupak, President

Let me warmly welcome you to The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus. Whether you are a returning or a new member, you will find this year a rewarding experience. We are committed to excellence in choral singing while being a positive force in the lives of individuals and our community.

This year we have highly mission-based message to bring to our audiences. Each piece of music selected is presents a powerful emotion or relates an experience I know will resonate with you. Testimony by Stephen Schwartz is the highlight of our year and reading through the text, I cannot help but quote from it now. "So many friends with jokes and laughter, not to mention the joy of living in authenticity... I would have missed the chance to sing out like this with people I love beside me." Thank you for being here tonight and taking that step to making things better for us and the community.

I encourage you to lose yourself in the fellowship, friendship, and, of course, spectacular music. Experience the power of men united through voices as we change the lives of our audiences and members. Let's make great music together as brothers in song.

--Ciaran Krueger, Artistic Director

2. Who We Are

Songs are funny things. They can slip across borders. Proliferate in prisons. Penetrate hard shells. I always believed that the right song at the right moment could change history. --Pete Seeger

A. Brief History

The BGMC was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and the by-laws were adopted by the Board of Directors on January 15, 2001.

We were preceded in the mid-1980s a group of singing gay men and women called the Queen City Chorus, later renamed the City of Good Neighbors Chorale. It survived into the mid-1990s.

In 1999, Mike Rogers of Washington, DC, a former Buffalonian working as Director of Fundraising for the Gay and Lesbian Association (GALA) of Choruses International, called Roger Parris in Kenmore and urged him to establish a new gay chorus in Western New York.

A small group of friends first met on January 16, 2000 and composed a brief mission statement. On March 26, 2000, five members of the group hosted an open meeting at the Crane Branch Library on Elmwood Ave. in Buffalo. The concept of forming a men's chorus was presented to an audience of thirty men and women.

A Steering Committee formed and decided that the new men's chorus would be a volunteer-lead organization, directed by a nine-member elected Board of Directors with three-year-long terms. Musical decisions would be made by a salaried Artistic Director. By-laws borrowed from the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus and the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus served as the

framework for our structure.

Out of a short list of candidates, the board appointed Ms. Barbara Wagner as our first Artistic Director. Ms. Wagner held auditions during the summer of 2001.

The first rehearsal of the BGMC was held on a terrible day: September 11, 2001. From the original 35 singers, eighteen are still performing with us in 2013. Ms. Wagner retired in June 2011.

Our Artistic Director, chosen through an inclusive process involving all members, is Ciaran Krueger, a young man with deeply-rooted singing and choral directing experience. Ciaran earned a Master's of Music in Choral Conducting from SUNY/ Buffalo.

We have sung more than 30 full concerts, commissioned a number of original compositions, and performed on Buffalo radio and television, in churches, synagogues, schools, community centers, summer festivals, and with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in Kleinhans Music Hall.

We have performed numerous benefits for other organizations and are active in gay and other community events, among them AIDS Walks, Pride parades, the Elmwood Festival of the Arts, and Buffalo Bisons baseball games.

We have been honored with awards from the Empire State Pride Agenda/Embrace WNY, the Arts Council of Buffalo and Erie County, Artvoice, and AIDS Community Services (now Evergreen Health Services). We performed to great acclaim at the GALA Festivals.

Learn more about our history at our website:

www.buffalogaymenschorus.org.

Click on **About Us**.

3. What We Do

I don't sing because I'm happy; I'm happy because I sing. --William James

A. Typical Concert Schedule

Our chorus has two seasons, fall and spring. The fall season begins at the end of August, culminating in a concert performed on three consecutive nights, usually the second weekend of December. The spring season begins in January and ends in May, likewise culminating in a concert performed on three consecutive nights, usually in mid-May.

Concerts are always held on weekends, with Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday afternoon or early evening performances in three different venues. These concert performances are mandatory. Singers are encouraged but not obligated to appear at other performances.

B. Outreach Performances

What about those other performances? We are often asked to perform at events to benefit good causes. We accept these invitations on a case-by-case basis.

There are usually two or three of these outreach concerts every season. While they are not mandatory, we hope that as many of you as possible can participate. **These events are central to our mission.**

For example, in the spring of 2011, we sang in a local high school on behalf of Gay & Lesbian Youth Services (GLYS). In

2013, we sang at the annual conference of the local Gay-Straight Alliances. Our presence was very meaningful for those young audiences.

SUNY/Fredonia usually invites us to perform during their Diversity Week. We always march in Buffalo Pride Parade and sing at the rally afterwards. In June 2013, the video clip of our appearance at the Buffalo History Museum was aired on local TV on the day that the Supreme Court overturned the Defense of Marriage Act.

C. Sign Language Interpreters

Signs are to eyes what words are to ears. --Ken Glickman

In an effort to be welcoming and inclusive to all, a professional American Sign Language interpreter is hired to interpret for Deaf and hearing-impaired audience members, typically the Sunday performance of our December and May concerts.

D. Chorus Fundraisers

Chorus fundraisers are fun events, apart from our concert schedule, and they are not mandatory. In the past, we have organized spaghetti dinners, cabarets, and other informal events which include some singing. These earn income that supports our mission. We encourage you to participate.

E. Media

Music can change the world because it can change people. --Bono

Media invitations offer additional opportunities for community outreach. The chorus is often invited to perform live for local

radio and morning TV talk shows. Be sure to read our publicity policy (section 6G) on page 27.

In order to promote our mission, the Chorus utilizes Facebook (please friend us!); Twitter (@thebgmc); Constant Contact, a bulk email service; and *Crescendo*, our print newsletter.

For photographers in the chorus and audience, we maintain a Flickr group. Please join and contribute your BGMC pictures!

www.flickr.com/groups/bgmc/

F. GALA Choruses

www.galachoruses.org

We like to think that the BGMC is special, and we are. But we are not unique. GALA Choruses (Gay And Lesbian Association of Choruses, Inc.) formed in 1982, is an international 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization serving the GLBT choral movement, with a mission to support GLBT choruses and “to change our world through song.”

We have been a proud member of GALA Choruses since our first season in 2001. A portion of your BGMC dues go to GALA Choruses in order to maintain our BGMC membership, as GALA Choruses supports itself through dues.

GALA reports over 150 member choruses and 7,500 singers, with membership open to all GLBT and GLBT-allied choruses. Member choruses are located throughout North America, Europe, South America, Africa, and Australia, and range from 5 to 250 singers.

Through workshops, festivals, networking, and administrative support, GALA Choruses fosters the continued artistic and organizational growth of its member choruses.

Should you be traveling, the GALA Choruses website has a list of member choruses and their concert schedules and websites.

We encourage you to subscribe to one of the GALA Choruses e-mail lists:

www.galachoruses.org/programs/email/email_lists.html

G. GALA Festivals

It was like meeting 4,000 cousins you never knew you had. --BGMC member

The BGMC has performed at GALA Festivals in Montreal (2004), Miami (2008), and Denver (2012).

Performing in the magnificent concert halls of host cities to enthusiastic audiences of other singers, hearing the music of our brother and sister choruses, and experiencing the transformational power of the GLBT choral movement is exhilarating. Singers have said that their Festival experiences stay with them for a lifetime.

4. How We Govern Ourselves

The important work of moving the world forward does not wait to be done by perfect men. - George Eliot

The BGMC is incorporated by the State of New York as a nonprofit membership organization. As such, the BGMC is governed by member-approved by-laws that specify our governing structure. The by-laws are online in the Singer section of our website.

The BGMC is subject to all federal, state, and local laws governing the operation of not-for-profit corporations. Members of the Board of Directors are the legal officers of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, Inc.

A. Board Structure

The nine-member Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Planning
- Setting policy
- Hiring, firing, and supervising employees
- Making all administrative and financial decisions governing the operations of the BGMC

You, the members, elect the board by secret ballot. Elections are held at the annual member meeting of the BGMC, Inc. The annual meeting is usually built into our "wrap" party after the spring concert.

The Board of Directors then elects from its ranks the officers: the president, vice-president, and secretary. Officers serve one-year terms.

A treasurer, appointed and supervised by the Board of Directors, manages the financial affairs of the chorus. The treasurer must be a BGMC member in good standing but is not a member of the board unless he or she chooses to run and is elected to a seat.

B. Board Service

Board service is a three-year, unpaid, volunteer role. Any BGMC member in good standing may run for a seat on the

board. Board members may serve no more than two consecutive terms and must cycle off for at least one year before returning.

C. Board Meetings

We invite you to attend and observe any regularly scheduled board meeting. The board meets, with occasional exceptions, on the third Wednesday of every month. Every board meeting has time set aside for membership concerns. Emergency and executive session meetings are closed to observers.

Attending board meetings helps you understand how decisions are made and why. More importantly, observers say they come away with a deeper appreciation for the time and effort of those who serve on our board.

5. What We Offer to You

A. Qualifications for Membership

It's very difficult for me to dislike an artist. No matter what he's creating, the fact that he's experiencing the joy of creation makes me feel like we're in a brotherhood of some kind...we're in it together. --Chick Corea

Any man of any sexual orientation, who is age 18 and over, and passes a simple audition, may join the Chorus as a singing member.

Any man or woman of any sexual orientation, who is age 18 or over, may join the Chorus as a Backstage (non-singing) member. Backstage members assist with any and all tasks that keep us functioning and, like singing members, have full

voting privileges.

B. Welcoming Committee

A smile is the universal welcome. --Max Eastman

Along with a smile, we wish to extend to our new singers a warm welcome! And the same to singers who are now returning. As a new member, you will be partnered with a veteran singer -- your chorus Buddy -- to orient you thorough your first semester.

Watch for the Welcoming Committee's new member orientation session, held a few weeks into each season. It will help explain chorus doings and answer any and all questions.

There is more to the BGMC than singing and your Buddy will explain all that's happening in the life of the chorus. Veteran singers, we're counting on you to volunteer for Buddy service and help welcome new singers.

C. Artistic Director & Accompanist

Being a conductor is kind of a hybrid profession because most fundamentally, it is being someone who is a coach, a trainer, an editor, a director. --Michael Tilson Thomas

The Artistic Director (AD) is an employee of the BGMC and is appointed by the Board of Directors to provide musical leadership for the chorus. The AD is authorized to make such decisions as:

- Singer auditions
- Voice placement
- Programming

- Musical interpretation

The Board of Directors, acting under the BGMC by-laws, is the ultimate decision-making authority. When musical matters are involved, the AD acts in consultation with the board.

At every rehearsal, a professional piano accompanist works with the Artistic Director to help you learn the music. Debi Overton-Niles, our accompanist, is supervised by the AD and is a BGMC employee.

D. Section Leaders

Section leaders are appointed by the AD and the board and are strongly encouraged to attend board meetings. They operate in a manner analogous to the Principal or 1st chair in professional orchestras.

Section leaders, under the leadership of the AD, provide direct musical guidance to section members. We encourage you to bring musical questions, attendance issues, or other concerns to your section leader. He can usually supply quick and knowledgeable answers without interrupting the AD, especially during rehearsals.

Read your section leader's e-mail and alert him right away when you are unable to attend a rehearsal.

E. Regular Rehearsals

Aim your GPS or online mapping service to:

St. John's-Grace Episcopal Church
51 Colonial Circle
Buffalo, NY 14222

Rehearsals are held in the Parish Hall on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm sharp. Responsibility for bringing break-time refreshments rotates among the four sections. There is usually ample, free on-street parking in the neighborhood.

F. Music

After your audition, our music librarian will assign you a number for the duration of your membership. You will get a binder with this number filled with a set of music. As new pieces are introduced, they will be numbered before distribution. You just pull the copy with your number and add it to your binder.

Binders are collected from each member after the fall and spring concerts. Music provided for concerts is the property of the BGMC and all of it must be returned with your binders. You are financially responsible for any lost music.

Please make any notations **in pencil**, not ink or marker, so that your music can be reused by another singer.

When you return for the next semester, your binder will be filled with new music for the next concert.

G. Merry Committee

Since rehearsal time has to be devoted to, well, rehearsing, the Merry Committee is charged with organizing opportunities for hanging out, schmoozing, cruising, and basically enjoying each other's company. If you enjoy organizing outings and get-togethers, you're a natural for the Merry Committee. Its goals are to:

- Schedule at least one function per month
- Foster relationships within the BGMC community and develop inexpensive social events
- Recognize important events, dates, and milestones in the lives of members
- Run a weekly 50/50 drawing

Please watch your *eBlast* for Merry Committee updates and events.

H. *eBlast*

The weekly *eBlast* provides important announcements about where and when to show up and what to be wearing and carrying. Reading it reduces the amount of time that has to be spent on announcements during rehearsal.

Develop the habit of reading the weekly *eBlast*. This will avoid using valuable rehearsal time for questions that have probably already been answered.

If you do not have access to e-mail, it is your responsibility to obtain the *eBlast* and your section leader's e-mails from a friend in the chorus.

I. *Crescendo*

The BGMC newsletter, *Crescendo*, is published twice a year, prior to our December and May concerts. All members are invited to help with lick-n-stick, our pre-rehearsal mailing production line.

Crescendo keeps our audience up-to-date about concert dates

and chorus happenings and serves to create excitement about all things BGMC.

Prime your friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers to buy concert tickets by adding their names to the *Crescendo* mailing list. Please give their addresses, both postal and e-mail, to the chorus member who maintains our mailing list.

J. Polo Shirts

Polo shirts with the embroidered BGMC logo are available for \$30-\$35, depending on market rates and the size of the order. Your first BGMC polo shirt is half price, a one-time-only discount for new members. All subsequent shirts are full price, even if you withdraw from the chorus and return at a later date. Polo shirts are usually ordered once per semester.

Here is the cost breakdown:

- The shirt ranges from \$20- \$25
- The BGMC logo costs about \$10
- Tax and shipping are extra

K. Concert CDs

Every singer who performs in a concert gets one copy of the concert CD at a reduced rate. Additional CDs cost \$10 each. They make terrific gifts and can be ordered through our website or purchased at our concerts.

L. Website: buffalogaymenschorus.org

You will be given a user name and password to access the

Singer section of the website. It includes:

- Our membership list
- BGMC by-laws
- Advertising rates for concert programs
- Leadership contact information
- *eBlast* archives
- Downloadable copies of the *Singer's Handbook*
- MP3 practice files of the full scores of each piece, as well as MP3 files for each voice part. Our volunteers spend a huge amount of time producing these custom files, so please be patient if they are not immediately available.

6. What We Expect of You

You can't build a society purely on interests, you need a sense of belonging.
--Valery Giscard d'Estaing

All Chorus members, singing and backstage, agree to act in accordance with policies set forth in this handbook and with the by-laws adopted by the Board of Directors of the BGMC.

A. Attendance Policy

Eighty percent of success is showing up. –Woody Allen

Attendance at rehearsals is the most important contribution you make to our musical success. Rehearsals are where we come together, receive instruction from the Artistic Director, listen to one another, and form ourselves into one unified choral ensemble. This happens best when all are present.

Obviously, work and family conflicts will arise. Illness or other personal difficulties may interfere with your ability to attend

rehearsals. Our attendance policy seeks to balance the chorus's need to have you present with your need for flexibility when schedule conflicts occur. The purpose is to treat all singers fairly as we strive to prepare as a group for our performances.

- **What if I need to miss a rehearsal or arrive late?**

If you must miss a rehearsal or arrive late, please alert your section leader as soon as possible. This keeps him informed with what's happening in his section and enables him to keep you up to date. If you miss a rehearsal, please make a special effort to attend the next sectional practice. Repeated tardiness or early departures from rehearsal will be counted against your attendance.

- **How many rehearsals can I miss?**

Attendance at **80% of regular rehearsals** is necessary in order to perform in each concert. A regular rehearsal is defined as any rehearsal that takes place **before** Production Week. Specific numbers of rehearsals and allowed absences will be provided with each semester's rehearsal schedule, enclosed in your music folder.

- **Production week rehearsals**

A Production Week rehearsal is defined as any rehearsal that takes place during the week leading up to any major concert series. It is a crucial stage in every major concert series. Attendance at all Production Week rehearsals is mandatory.

- **Attendance at concerts**

If you plan to sing in a major concert series, you must be able to attend all 3 performances. This is important to the individual sections and the unity of the chorus as a whole.

- **What if special circumstances affect my attendance?**

For an attendance policy to be meaningful it has to be applied evenly and fairly. That said, fairness might require that special

circumstances be taken into consideration. If you anticipate something that could interfere with rehearsals, consult with your section leader as soon as possible.

Section leaders, the Artistic Director, and the Board of Directors will work with as much flexibility as possible to accommodate those who make a good faith effort to attend rehearsals and prepare for concert performances.

B. Dues Policy

- **Dues**

Dues are set by the board and are subject to change based on the financial obligations of the organization. Dues for all BGMC members, both singing and backstage, are \$60 per semester. Please submit all payments to the dues & attendance secretary. Checks should be made out to BGMC.

- **Payment deadline**

Payment in full is expected within 30 days of the first rehearsal. We call these 30 days the grace period. After 30 days, if dues are not paid in full and arrangements have not been made, the member will incur an additional charge of \$10.

- **Installment payments**

If you are unable to pay your dues in one lump sum, you may work out a payment plan with the dues secretary. Please set up your payment plan within the 30-day grace period.

- **Financial assistance**

We do not want anyone to leave the chorus because of financial challenges. If you cannot afford your dues, please speak with the dues secretary about financial assistance. All conversations with the dues secretary will be kept confidential.

- **Refunds**

If you have paid all or part of your dues and must leave the chorus, you may be eligible for a full or partial refund.

- If you withdraw before the halfway point in the semester AND return all your music, your dues will be fully refunded.
- If you withdraw after the halfway point in the semester but before the concerts AND return all of your music, your dues minus \$25 will be refunded.
- If you must withdraw after the halfway point in the semester for especially compelling reasons (for example, moving away from Western New York, developing a serious illness, becoming the primary caregiver for someone with a serious illness, or similar emergencies) AND return all of your music, your dues will be fully refunded.

C. Tuxedos

We put on formal wear and suddenly we become extraordinary. --Vera Nazarian

Every singer is expected to purchase a tuxedo ensemble, including vests and ties, which match those of the other chorus members. We will direct you to our preferred tuxedo store. The estimated cost is \$170. If financial hardship precludes you from purchasing a tuxedo, please speak to your section leader.

D. Ensemble Responsibilities

We all share the responsibility of keeping our chorus operating in an efficient and productive manner. This means establishing some policies and rules. We are counting on you to take them seriously.

As members of the BGMC, we are ambassadors for the organization. Our conduct reflects upon the chorus's reputation and influences its ability to attract new members, concert patrons, and financial supporters.

Accordingly, we conduct ourselves in an appropriate manner during all chorus functions and strive for a culture of mutual respect. Members of the chorus shall refrain from any disruptive activity during chorus functions.

- **Be a member in good standing**

The bylaws of the BGMC define a member in good standing as someone who has met the financial and conduct policies and responsibilities written by the Board of Directors and the Artistic Director.

- **Attendance is essential**

You are important to the success of the BGMC and we value your participation in the chorus. Your chorus team depends on you to be at rehearsal to get the job done. Absenteeism and tardiness create problems for your Artistic Director, your section, and your chorus.

- **Rehearse your music**

The only thing better than singing is more singing. --Ella Fitzgerald

The Artistic Director usually asks you to practice your music at home during the week. Please do so. When asked to memorize music, you will have steady progress by working on it between rehearsals. Remember, MP3 files of each part are available in the Singer section of our website.

E. Rehearsal Conduct

Some days there won't be a song in your heart. Sing anyway. --Emory Austin

Each of us is responsible for the tone and mood at rehearsals. The atmosphere is more pleasant when we:

- Respect the Artistic Director's decisions regarding the tempo, breath markings, or dynamic phrasing of a piece
- Understand that talking and whispering are distracting and interfere with other singers' concentration and progress
- Refrain from negative comments, even when the guy in the next seat makes the same mistake several times in a row
- **Use our powers to heal and not harm**

Singers, please:

- Be punctual for rehearsals
- Be prepared both vocally and physically
- Listen to your section leader's advice
- Wear your name tag
- Bring a pencil
- Turn off or silence all hand-held devices
- **No texting or cell-phone use. Seriously.**
- Step outside of the rehearsal room for emergency calls
- Turn the pages of your music quietly
- Limit announcements to break time
- Pitch in when it is your section's turn to bring snacks and clean up after rehearsal
- Put your chair away after each rehearsal
- And finally, no cologne, please

At rehearsals, announcements will be delivered by a board member or a delegate chosen by the board. If you have an announcement, please deliver it to the announcer before the

beginning of rehearsal. Items not meeting announcement criteria may be forwarded to the membership via the *eBlast*.

Dress rehearsals

The purpose of a dress rehearsal is to prepare the chorus for a performance in a specific venue. We do not wear tuxedos or concert apparel at dress rehearsals.

The Artistic Director and/or chorus marshals line up and move singers on and off stage in a professional and orderly manner, ensuring that we are appealing and attractive while on stage.

Singers, please:

- Arrange your music in concert order before the dress rehearsal
- Quietly pay attention to and quietly follow directions from the Artistic Director or marshal
- Remember your place in the line-up and on the risers
- Remember who is standing next to you
- Honor our deadlines for turning in ticket money and unsold tickets

After rehearsals

After most rehearsals, many singers gather at a one of the local restaurants (usually Mythos or Pano's on Elmwood) to socialize over a bite to eat and get caught up with what's happening in the chorus. Please, please join us!

F. Performance Conduct

For our audience, concert enjoyment is about combined vocal and visual performance. A concert CD may sound flawless but a live performance offers much more pleasure.

And like it or not, an audience judges a choral performance on

more than what it hears. It also judges by what it sees. Your appearance and behavior on stage have a strong influence on audience perception and enjoyment.

So smile! If we want to heal hearts and make feet tap, our audience should see that we enjoy singing together. Please make every effort to look comfortable, relaxed, and at ease, even if you have to fake it. When we look relaxed, the audience relaxes and becomes receptive to our song. When we smile, the audience feels our enthusiasm and is primed to enjoy the concert.

Please remember that a key word for any choral endeavor is **blend**. We must all blend not only in voice to please the ear, but also in dress to please the eye.

Before leaving home on concert day:

- Clean and press your tux
- Wash and press your shirt
- Shine your shoes
- Remove jewelry above the neck or on the wrist
- Remove watches
- Skip the cologne and other scented products
- Skip embellishments on your tux; this is not the time to wear your beloved grandmother's brooch
- Bring post-concert treats, if it is your section's turn

Arriving at the venue:

- "Call time" is when you are expected to be on the riser with music in order, ready to sing
- Arrive well before call time in order to find the entrance into the venue, drop off post-concert treats, find dressing rooms and restrooms, take your place in line and on stage, etc.
- Save the parking spaces closest to the entrance for our audience

- Once you are in concert apparel, we encourage you to meet and greet our audience before the concert

When lining up to go on stage:

- Maintain silence and decorum
- Turn off all electronic devices or leave them backstage
- Cooperate with chorus marshals and/or the Artistic Director by **quietly** listening to instructions

While on stage:

When I'm on stage, I'm trying to do one thing: bring people joy. Just like church does. People don't go to church to find trouble, they go there to lose it. --James Brown

- Smile; it puts the audience at ease
- Focus on the Artistic Director; no cruising the audience
- Open and close your music in unison
- Maintain silence in between songs
- Maintain silence and decorum while others are performing
- Focus on soloists and guest artists when they are performing; no cruising the audience
- When a piece ends, do not move or close your binder until the accompanist finishes playing and the AD signals you
- Applaud soloists or guest artists only if directed to do so by the AD. A big smile in the direction of the performer after his/her performance is fine.
- Disregard the sign language interpreter who may be alongside the risers at some performances
- Watch the AD for cues on when to bow as bowing should be in unison
- Keep your eye on the AD as bowing may happen more than once
- Did we mention to not cruise the audience?

After the concert:

- Please stay and socialize with the audience at post-concert receptions
- Join in the post-concert meet & greet line-up if asked
- Please remain in your tux or other designated concert attire at all post-concert receptions
- If you change into street dress, we do not expect to see you at the reception
- Please help our volunteers clean up and close the hall. Now you can change into street clothes!
- After the last concert of the series, please turn in your binder to the music librarian; it's expensive!

F. Use of Chorus Name

Chorus members shall not perform under the name of the chorus or claim to represent or speak for the chorus in any manner or media outlet without explicit approval of the president of the chorus.

G. Publicity

Publicity can be terrible. But only if you don't have any. --Jane Russell

By joining the chorus, you are granting permission for the BGMC to use, publish, and display your name, image, photograph, voice, or other likeness, without notification, review, approval, or compensation, in organs of media including but not limited to concert programs, recordings, advertisements, radio and television appearances, and the internet, for purposes of promotion and marketing of the chorus.

H. Confidentiality

Members' names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses are not to be given to individuals who are not BGMC members and may not be used for business or other purposes unrelated to the BGMC.

I. Substance Abuse Policy

If you are present at any rehearsal, performance, or other official chorus function exhibiting behavior that has been adversely affected by alcohol or drugs (prescribed or otherwise), we may remove you from that particular function. It may also lead to termination of your membership.

7. How You Can Help

Real charity doesn't care if it's tax-deductible or not. --Dan Bennett

A. Money

Dues provide only a small fraction of the BGMC budget. Likewise, income from ticket sales brings in only about 1/3 of our budget. The hard fact is that dues and ticket sales alone do not bring in enough dollars to purchase music, pay our Artistic Director and accompanist, rent our office, advertise our concerts, record our CDs, and sustain our work and mission.

Our treasurer can advise you on how to make a tax-deductible contribution or establish a planned giving program.

B. Time

Support us with your time by:

- Distributing concert posters to local businesses
- Helping prepare *Crescendo* for mailing, the aptly named lick-n-stick get-together
- Organizing fundraising projects
- Serving on a BGMC committee
- Running for a seat on the Board of Directors
- Staffing the BGMC table at the Pride Celebration (first weekend in June) or the Elmwood Avenue Festival of the Arts (last weekend in August)

C. Word of Mouth

Support us with your powers of persuasion by:

- Recruiting new singers
- Recruiting Backstage members and volunteers
- Selling ads for our concert programs
- Selling tickets to our concerts

D. Audience-Building

Every show that sells out is like a hero's welcome to me. --Gil Scott-Heron

Singing to a full hall is a joy. If your friends and family receive *Crescendo* and/or our Constant Contact messages, they will know about our concerts and be 'pre-sold' when you contact them to buy tickets.

Please sign them up to receive these wonderful publicity pieces. Watch for the announcement about how to submit

names & addresses to our database manager.

E. Friends of the Buffalo Gay Men’s Chorus (FOBGMC)

From the beginning, we understood that charitable donations would be crucial to the survival of the BGMC. Thus, the Friends of the Buffalo Gay Men’s Chorus (FOBGMC) was born in the fall of 2001.

Simply put, the FOBGMC was formed to ask folks to support the mission of the chorus with their dollars. The Friends are wonderful people who write checks to the BGMC because they love our music and believe in our mission, and for no other reason. Well, okay, they bask in the glory of seeing their names printed in our concert programs.

How does the FOBGMC raise money? In three ways: an annual fundraising letter is mailed out in October; a donation form appears in *Crescendo*, and donation envelopes are inserted in concert programs.

But why wait for any of those? You may donate at any time to FOBGMC. You’ve added your voice to our mission; we encourage you to add your dollars to the FOBGMC as well.

Your contribution means your name is printed in the concert program twice: once on the singers’ page and again on the FOBGMC donor pages. Your donation may be in honor of someone or in memory of someone. Be creative!

F. Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup

We were officially certified by the Adopt-A-Highway folks in

August, 2012. We clean up the on-ramp from the 198 Scajaquada to the Delaware S-curves and the on-ramp from Delaware Avenue, heading north, to the 198 Scajaquada. Look for the day/time announcement in the *eBlast* and the sign-up sheet at rehearsal. Think of how fabulous you'll look in that yellow hard hat and orange vest!

G. Archives

Archivists make it last longer. --Anonymous

Documenting our history has been a priority since our beginning. Our volunteer archivist maintains a growing collection of concert programs, posters, reviews, meeting minutes, memorabilia, etc., and welcomes your contributions.

You can help by donating clippings, programs, posters, reviews, articles, pictures, videos, and stage props.

8. The End

Life is not so much about beginnings and endings as it is about going on and on and on. It is about muddling through the middle. --Anna Quindlen

Thank you for reading all the way to the last page! Send your suggestions and feedback for the next edition to Cynthia Van Ness at: bettybarcode@yahoo.com

