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2015

Singer's Handbook, Fifth Edition

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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Buffalo Pride Parade, 2015



Member Handbook 2015-2016



M&T Bank, Main Street, 2014

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.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
1. Welcome	4
2. Who We Are.....	6
A. BRIEF HISTORY	6
3. What We Do	8
A. TYPICAL CONCERT SCHEDULE.....	8
B. OUTREACH PERFORMANCES.....	8
C. SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS	9
D. CHORUS FUNDRAISERS	9
E. MEDIA.....	9
F. GALA CHORUSES, INC.	10
G. GALA FESTIVALS	11
4. How We Govern Ourselves	11
A. BOARD STRUCTURE	11
B. BOARD SERVICE.....	12
C. BOARD MEETINGS.....	13
5. What We Offer to You	13
A. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP	13
B. WELCOMING TEAM AND CHORUS BUDDIES.....	14
C. ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND ACCOMPANIST	14
D. DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS	15
E. SECTION LEADERS	15
F. SECTION REPRESENTATIVES.....	15
G. REGULAR REHEARSALS	16
H. MUSIC.....	16
I. MERRY COMMITTEE.....	16
J. <i>eBLAST</i>	17
L. NAME BADGES	17

M. GROUPANIZER..... 18

6. What We Expect of You 19

A. ATTENDANCE POLICY..... 19
B. DUES POLICY..... 21
C. TUXEDOS..... 22
D. ENSEMBLE RESPONSIBILITIES 23
E. REHEARSAL CONDUCT 24
F. USE OF BGMC NAME 28
G. PUBLICITY..... 28
H. CONFIDENTIALITY 29
I. SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY 29
I. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY 29
J. SEXUAL AND OTHER UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT..... 31
K. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY..... 33
L. HALL-CLOSING CHECKLIST..... 33

7. How You Can Help..... 34

A. MONEY 34
B. TIME 35
C. WORD OF MOUTH 36
D. AUDIENCE-BUILDING..... 36
E. FRIENDS OF THE BUFFALO GAY MEN’S CHORUS (FOBGMC) 36
F. ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY CLEANUP..... 37
G. ARCHIVES..... 37

The End 38

Fifth edition
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1. Welcome!



Welcome to the 2015-2016 season of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus. Whether you are joining us for the first time or returning, you will find this season to be a rewarding experience. We sing with a purpose, and that is to change the hearts and minds of our audiences and ourselves.

The BGMC can offer many great opportunities should you choose to take them. There are members with different backgrounds and experiences. Take the time to meet new people and forge new friendships. Choral singing is social and so is the BGMC. We offer many social opportunities like Friday Fish Fry, Merry Events, and more.

Lastly, I encourage you to lose yourself in the music, sing with passion from your heart. It is an incredible experience to share the stage and make music with so many talented men.

Welcome again, and let's make music that moves people.

Robert M. Egan, President



Let me extend a warm welcome to each of you as we embark on a wonderful journey of music making together.

For the fall season, our programming includes challenging, traditional repertoire and contemporary music, alongside music from various world cultures (and some fun new settings of old favorites). Our repertoire focuses on a wide variety of choral music from all time periods, presenting styles that educate, challenge, and enlighten both our audiences and our singing membership.

The BGMC affirms, by example and through song, the worth and dignity of a cross-section of the diverse population that is reflective of Buffalo, incorporating music that positively represents the gay community and openly supports issues related to human equality and justice.

May you find our rehearsals and performances to be a time of fellowship, comradery, and friendship while we maintain the highest quality of choral singing.

Garrett F. Martin
Interim 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

Buffalo's first gay chorus, the Queen City Chorus, was founded in the 1980s and was later renamed the City of Good Neighbors Chorale. It included men and women and 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 of Choruses, Inc. (GALA), 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 held a meeting at the Crane Branch Library on Elmwood Ave. The concept of forming a men's chorus was presented to an audience of thirty men and women.

A steering committee was formed and it decided that the new men's chorus would be a volunteer-led organization, directed by a nine-member elected Board of Directors. 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 our framework.

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. James Estep served as our first president.

The board selected Barbara Wagner to be our first Artistic Director. Ms. Wagner, a long-time Buffalo choral conductor and the Minister of Music at the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Buffalo, held auditions during the summer of 2001.

Our very first rehearsal with Ms. Wagner was held at the Unitarian-Universalist Church on Elmwood Avenue on an infamous day: September 11, 2001. Nine of the original 35 singers were still performing with us in 2014. Ms. Wagner retired in June 2011.

Our second Artistic Director from 2011-2015 was Ciaran Krueger, whose skill in vocal teaching made a noticeable and early improvement in our choral sound. His understanding of LGBT issues and his sensitivity to the personal histories of gay men was appreciated. He introduced The Big Gay Sing to Buffalo and drew raves from the audience.

Joining us in the Fall of 2015 is Interim Artistic Director Garrett Martin. Since 2013, Garrett Martin has served as the Organist and Director of Music at Westminster Presbyterian Church, where he directs and oversees the church's four choirs and The Westminster Choir School and accompanies Sunday services.

We have sung over 40 full concerts, commissioned original compositions, and performed on Buffalo radio and television, in churches, synagogues, schools, community centers, summer festivals, the M&T Plaza Series, 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, including AIDS Walks, Pride parades, the Elmwood Festival of the Arts, and Buffalo Bison's 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 Evergreen Health Services (formerly AIDS Community Services). We performed to great acclaim at GALA Festivals.

Learn more about our history at our website:

www.buffalogaymenschorus.org/history/

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 season has two semesters, fall and spring. The fall semester begins at the end of August, culminating in a concert performed on three consecutive nights, usually in mid-December. The spring semester begins in January, likewise culminating in a concert performed on three consecutive nights, usually in mid-May.

Concerts are held on weekends, with Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday afternoon or early evening performances in three different venues. **These performances are mandatory.**

B. Outreach Performances

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

Outreach events are central to our mission. We are often asked to perform at events to benefit good causes. We accept these invitations on a case-by-case basis, depending on the availability of you, our singers. There are usually 2-3 outreach performances per season.

We always participate in Buffalo Pride Festival. In 2013, we sang at the annual conference of the local Gay-Straight Alliances. Our presence was very meaningful for this young audience. We also sang at Benedict House and the Weinberg Campus.

In June 2013, we sang at the Buffalo History Museum on the day that the Supreme Court overturned the Defense of Marriage Act. Footage of this appearance aired on local TV.

C. Sign Language Interpreters

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

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

D. Chorus Fundraisers

Fundraisers are fun events, separate from our concert schedule. In the past, we have organized spaghetti dinners, cabarets, and other informal events which include some singing. These earn income that supports our mission. The success of these events depends on you.

E. Media

We are often invited to perform live for local radio and television. Be sure to read our publicity policy (section 6G) on page 26.

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.

Photographers, please add your pictures to our Flickr group!

www.flickr.com/groups/bgmc/

F. GALA Choruses, Inc.

www.galachoruses.org

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

GALA serves over 170 member choruses and 8,000 singers, with membership open to all GLBT and GLBT-allied choruses. Member choruses are located throughout North America, Europe, South America, Africa, and Australia.

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

We have been a proud member of GALA since our founding in 2001. A portion of your dues goes to GALA in order to maintain our membership.

When you are traveling, check the GALA website for the concert schedules of fellow choruses. We also encourage you to subscribe to one of the GALA 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). We will return to Denver in 2016.

Performing in magnificent concert halls to enthusiastic audiences of other singers and experiencing the transformational power of the GLBT choral movement is exhilarating. Singers have said 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 in the State of New York as a not-for-profit membership organization. As such, we are governed by member-approved by-laws. Our by-laws are online in the Documents section of Groupanizer (see p. 17).

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 May 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.

As of Summer 2015, our board is comprised of:

Robert M. Egan, *President*
 Leonard Cercone Jr., *Vice-President*
 Jeffrey J. Strauss, *Secretary*
 Christopher T. Pearson, *Treasurer*
 Scott Akdogan
 Susan C. Gruttadauria
 Zachary Kineke
 Cynthia Van Ness
 William K. Wachob

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 elected 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. Emergency and executive session meetings are closed to observers.

Attending board meetings helps you understand how decisions are made and why. 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 age 18 or over of any sexual orientation who passes a brief audition may join the Chorus as a singing member.

Any man or woman age 18 or over of any sexual orientation who is approved by the board may join the Chorus as a non-singing member. Non-singing members assist with tasks that keep us functioning and, like singing members, have full voting privileges.

B. Welcoming Team and Chorus Buddies

We're a hugging organization. -James Estep

But in the spirit of diversity, we embrace non-huggers. -Bill Wachob

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

There is more to us than music. Your buddy will explain all that is happening in the life of the chorus. Veteran singers, we may recruit you for Buddy service.

C. Artistic Director and 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 hired 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
- Seating and stage placement
- Selection of repertoire
- Programming
- Musical interpretation
- Concert readiness of singers

At every rehearsal, a professional piano accompanist works with the Artistic Director to help you learn the music.

D. Director of Business and Communications

Christopher Reybrouck is our Director of Business of Communications. Chris' role is to handle the day-to-day logistics of the chorus as well as coordinate all of our social media and marketing efforts for the chorus including auditions, outreach, and major performances. All marketing, branding, and public relations questions, concerns, ideas, or opportunities should be brought to Chris directly. His email is info@buffalogaymenschorus.org.

E. Section Leaders

Section leaders are appointed by the AD. They operate in a manner analogous to the Principal or 1st chair in professional orchestras. Under the leadership of the AD, they provide direct musical guidance to their section members.

We encourage you to bring musical questions and concerns to your section leader. He can usually supply quick answers without interrupting the AD, especially during rehearsals.

F. Section Representatives

Section reps are nominated and elected by their respective sections. They report to the Membership Chair and handle non-musical questions and concerns. Their key duties are:

- Taking attendance
- Addressing grievances or presenting them to the Membership Chair

G. Regular Rehearsals

Rehearsals are held in the Parish Hall of St. John's-Grace Episcopal Church on Tuesday evenings, beginning promptly at 7:00 pm and ending at 9:45 pm. Responsibility for bringing break-time refreshments rotates among the four sections. There is usually ample, free on-street parking in the neighborhood. Guests may attend and quietly observe.

H. Music

Our music librarian will assign you a number for the duration of your membership. You will get a binder of music with this number. As new pieces are introduced, they will be numbered before distribution.

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

Music provided for concerts is the property of the BGMC. All music must be returned with your binders after the December and May concerts. You are financially responsible for any unreturned music.

I. Merry Committee

Since rehearsal time has to be devoted to rehearsing, the Merry Committee is charged with organizing opportunities for hanging out, schmoozing, and basically enjoying each other's company. If you enjoy arranging 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

- Organize 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.

J. *eBlast*

The weekly *eBlast* provides important announcements about where and when to show up and what to be wearing and carrying. We send it out via Groupanizer, our online chorus management tool.

Reading the *eBlast* reduces the amount of time that has to be spent on announcements and avoids 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.

Please submit your news to **BGMCEblast@gmail.com** by noon on Sunday. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.

L. Name Badges

To order an engraved name badge, go to **Nicebadge.com** and search on Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus. You will find templates that you can customize with your name. It costs around \$10.

M. Groupanizer

www.buffalogmc.groupanizer.com - Groupanizer is a private, online chorus management & communication tool. You will be given your own username and password. It includes:

- Email communication among members & sections
- Member-only blog
- Our by-laws
- Advertising rates for concert programs
- Member & leadership contact information
- Downloadable copies of the *Member Handbook*
- MP3 practice files of the full scores of each piece, as well as MP3 files for each voice part. Producing these files requires a huge amount of volunteer time, so please be patient if they are not immediately available.

Weekly E-blasts are distributed through Groupanizer. Messages will appear in your In box with **[members]** in the subject line.

The weekly *eBlast* provides important announcements about where and when to show up and what to be wearing and carrying. We send it out of Groupanizer, our online chorus management tool.

Reading the *eBlast* reduces the amount of time that has to be spent on announcements and avoids 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.

To send a message to the entire membership, use this address:
members@buffalogmc.groupanizer.com

Here is how to send a message only to your section:

Baritone:	baritone@buffalogmc.groupanizer.com
Bass:	bass@buffalogmc.groupanizer.com
Tenor 2:	tenorii@buffalogmc.groupanizer.com
Tenor I:	tenori@buffalogmc.groupanizer.com

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 non-singing, 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

For me the rehearsal period is the part I most enjoy. It's the creating of the story.
--Damian Lewis

Participation at full and sectional 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 everyone is present.

Conflicts with work and family schedules occur. Illness or other personal situations 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 so, please alert your section representative, preferably in advance. This keeps him informed and enables him to keep you up to date. If you have missed a full rehearsal, please make a special effort to attend the next sectional rehearsal.

- **How many rehearsals must I attend?**

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. Missing 20% of regular rehearsals will trigger a concert readiness review by the AD.

- **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 present at 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 fairly to all. 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 Representative as soon as possible.

Your Section Representative and the Artistic Director 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.

If you are called out of town on business or an emergency, you may be able to participate online. Please check with the AD about using Skype or a comparable service.

B. Dues Policy

What you want is for music to love you back. That's why you pay your dues. You want to feel like you belong and are part of this symbiosis, metamorphosis, whatever you want to call it. -Tom Waits

All Singing and Non-Singing Members are required to meet membership dues obligations. Dues are payable at the first rehearsal, or upon joining the BGMC. Dues will be collected by the BGMC Secretary or his/her delegate. In all cases dues obligations must be met no later than 12th rehearsal of the semester.

Those who have met their dues obligations and conduct policies are considered by our bylaws to be members in good standing. Members in good standing have full voting privileges at chorus elections and other general membership voting occasions, and are entitled to participate fully in chorus events, including performances.

- **Dues Structure**

Singing and Non-Singing Members: \$70.00 per semester (or \$140 per season)

Special Members: BGMC employees are exempt from dues

- **Dues Discounts**

Singing and Non-Singing Members who meet dues obligations within the first 4 rehearsals of a semester are entitled to a \$10.00 dues discount.

- **Payment Plan**

A Singing Member unable to meet the dues obligation with one

payment may request a payment plan within the first 4 rehearsals of a semester. Payment plan requests must be submitted in writing to the Membership Committee Chair (membership@buffalogaymenschorus.org). The Membership Committee Chair will approve the request and notify the requesting member and Dues Secretary within 7 days. Singing Members making payment plan arrangements within the first 4 rehearsals will also be entitled to \$10.00 dues discount. All payment plan requests will remain confidential.

- **Singing Member Dues Scholarships**

Dues Scholarships may be awarded on an individual basis based on demonstrated financial need. Scholarship requests must be submitted in writing to the Membership Committee Chair (membership@buffalogaymenschorus.org) prior to the 5th rehearsal of the semester. The Membership Committee Chair will present each request to the Executive Committee for consideration and determination of scholarship amount. The Membership Committee Chair will notify the requesting member and the Dues Secretary after the Membership Chair and Executive Committee's decision. All scholarship requests will remain confidential.

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 tuxedo store. The cost is around \$170. If financial hardship precludes you from purchasing a tuxedo, please speak to your section representative or Membership Chair.

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**

Our bylaws 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**

Your participation is essential to our success. Your chorus team depends on you to be at rehearsal to get the job done.

- **Rehearse your music**

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

The Artistic Director asks you to practice your music at home. Please do so. When asked to memorize music, you will make steady progress by working on it between rehearsals. Remember, MP3 files of each part are available at Groupanizer.

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 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 and use it!
- Turn off or silence all electronic devices
- **No texting or cell-phone use during rehearsal**
- Step outside of the rehearsal room for emergency calls
- Pitch in when it is your section's turn to bring snacks and clean up after rehearsal
- Put your chair away after each rehearsal
- Remember please, no cologne

Announcements - At rehearsals, announcements will be delivered by the president or a delegate chosen by the president. Please deliver announcements to the president before the beginning of rehearsal. Items not meeting announcement criteria may be posted on the white board in the rehearsal hall or shared 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 or chorus marshals appointed by the AD will 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' responsibility:

- Arrange your music in concert order before dress rehearsals
- Quietly pay attention to and follow directions from the Artistic Director or marshals
- 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 join us!**

F. Performance Conduct

Concert enjoyment is about combined vocal and visual performance. A CD may sound flawless but a live performance offers much more pleasure.

The audience judges a choral performance by what it sees and hears. Your appearance and behavior on stage have a strong influence on audience perception and enjoyment.

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

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:

- Shower or bathe and apply deodorant
- Clean and press your shirt and tux
- Shine your shoes
- Remove jewelry above the neck or on the wrist, including 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 reception 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 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
- 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 remain in your tux or other designated concert attire at all post-concert receptions
- Join in the post-concert meet & greet line-up if asked
- Please stay and socialize with the audience at post-concert receptions
- Please do not change into street dress unless you are leaving the reception or assisting with post-reception clean-up
- Please help tidy up and close the hall
- After the last concert of the series, please turn in your binder to the music librarian; it's expensive!

F. Use of BGMC 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.

I. Social Media Policy

Every member of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus is an ambassador of our organization and mission to the public at large, representing the chorus' brand and its commitment to our patrons, community and donors. This policy is adopted to ensure consistently appropriate representation of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus image on social media venues, including, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter and third party websites.

When a member clearly identifies their association with the BGMC and/or discusses their participation in, or work with or for the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus while online, they have a responsibility to act appropriately and in ways that are consistent with BGMC's values and policies.

These guidelines set out the principles which BGMC members are expected to follow when using the Internet and gives interpretations for current forms of interactivity.

The intent of these guidelines is not to stop you from conducting legitimate activities on the Internet, but rather to flag-up those areas in which conflicts can arise.

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus's (BGMC's) well-deserved reputation as a trusted community institution that provides a nurturing environment and offers high quality artistic programming is fundamental to its success. The public must be able to trust the integrity of BGMC's programming and believe that BGMC is sincere in its stated aim to create harmony, both internally and externally. To this end when identifying with BGMC and/or posting content about BGMC, members and staff:

1. Shall take care that only information about BGMC that is in the public knowledge should be disclosed. If you are in doubt as to whether the information is publicly known, please consult with the President of the Board of Directors.
2. Shall not engage in activities that might bring BGMC into disrepute.
3. Shall not post derogatory or offensive comments, including criticizing other choruses and arts groups in a non-constructive manner.
4. Shall refrain from using public forums to debate internal matters.
5. Shall tag responsibly! Please be mindful and respectful when posting photos of other chorus members.

This policy is intended to assist members in conducting themselves on the Internet in a manner that protects BGMC and one another from negative consequences and to ensure that we are able to create harmony in our hearts and with each other.

J. Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus (BGMC) is committed to providing an environment that is free from all forms of conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Unwanted actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual advances, or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition includes many forms of offensive behavior and includes gender-based harassment of a person of the same sex as the harasser. The following is a partial list of sexual harassment examples:

- Unwanted sexual advances.
- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances.
- Visual conduct that includes leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons or posters.
- Verbal conduct that includes making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, or jokes.
- Verbal sexual advances or propositions.
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, or suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations.
- Physical conduct that includes touching, assaulting, or impeding or blocking movements. Unwelcome sexual advances (either verbal or physical), requests for sexual

favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; (2) submission or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for making employment decisions; or, (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

If you experience or witness sexual or other unlawful harassment, report it immediately to the Membership Concerns Committee Chairperson. If the Membership Concerns Chair is unavailable or you believe it would be inappropriate to contact that person, you should immediately contact the President of the Board of Directors or any other member of the Board. You can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal or retaliation.

All allegations of sexual harassment will be quickly and discreetly investigated. To the extent possible, your confidentiality and that of any witnesses and the alleged harasser will be protected against unnecessary disclosure. When the investigation is completed, you will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Any member who becomes aware of possible sexual or other unlawful harassment must immediately advise the Membership Concerns Committee Chairperson or any member of the Board of Directors so it can be investigated in a timely and confidential manner. We have a zero tolerance attitude toward harassment and will deal promptly and effectively with any Member who engages in unlawful harassment. Anyone found engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of membership.

K. Equal Employment Opportunity

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus (BGMC) will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus (BGMC) does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus (BGMC) will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

L. Hall-Closing Checklist

When leaving rehearsals or meetings, members are asked to help close up. Here are the proper procedures:

1. Return all chairs to the carts
2. Return all tables used to storage; wipe-down if necessary
3. Unplug fans and coffee makers
4. Empty trashcans. Extra liners and paper towels are stored in the lower cabinet to the left of the kitchen sinks
5. Do not leave food on counters
6. Close and secure all windows
7. Cover and store the piano and bench
8. Return any borrowed equipment to the choir room
9. Check for misplaced music and lost personal items
10. Check all doors to make sure they are closed and locked.
 - BGMC Office and Library

- Courtyard (smokers') door
 - Lafayette Door - Release the panic bar using the hex wrench hanging on the door jamb
 - If you have opened the Red Doors, please make sure that they are secure and that the light in the stairwell is turned off
 - Kitchen Fire Escape door
11. Check the small powder room to make sure lights are off
 12. Check restrooms to make sure they are clear
 13. Turn lower hall and stairwell lights off
 14. Turn Parish Hall lights off:
 - Main Lights: use only the yellow switches in the breaker box
 - Side Lights: Use the switch at the top of the stairs
 - Rear stair hall

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, ticket sales bring in only about 1/3 of our budget. The hard fact is that this income alone does not bring in enough to purchase music, pay our employees, rent our office, advertise our concerts, and sustain our work and mission.

How to support us with your money:



Shop at AmazonSmile
and Amazon will make
a donation to:
The Buffalo Gay Men's
Chorus

[Get started](#)

amazonsmile



- Buy branded BGMC merchandise at:
<http://buffalogaymenschorus.qbstores.com>
- Join **www.Igive.com**. We get a percentage every time you shop at 1,500 large & small online retailers.
- Log in at this address and we earn a percentage of your Amazon purchase:
<http://tinyurl.com/BGMC-Amazon>
- Establish a monthly giving plan
- Include us in your estate planning
- Direct your United Way contribution to us

B. Time

How to support us with your time:

- Distribute concert posters to local businesses
- Organize and participate in fundraising projects
- Serve on a BGMC committee
- Run for a seat on the Board of Directors
- Staff 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

How to support us with your powers of persuasion:

- Recruit new singers
- Recruit non-singing members and volunteers
- Invite your Facebook friends to our events
- Sell ads for our concert programs
- Sell 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. Please sign up your friends and family members to receive *Crescendo* and/or our email messages so they will know about our concerts and be 'pre-sold.'

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 our survival. Thus, in the fall of 2001, the Friends of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus was born.

The Friends are wonderful people who write checks to us 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 four ways: an annual fundraising letter is mailed out; a donation form appears in *Crescendo*, donation envelopes are inserted in concert programs, and fans can donate at our website.

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 area around the Delaware Ave. S-curves and the Rt. 198 ramps. Clean-up dates will be announced in the *eBlast*. 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 position is presently vacant and an experienced volunteer would be welcome.

The 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.**

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 feedback for the next edition to Cynthia Van Ness at: bettybarcode@gmail.com.