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Men's Chorus

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

Fall 2006

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Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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Crescendo!

The Newsletter of
the Buffalo Gay
Men's Chorus, Inc.

Volume 5 · Issue 1
Fall 2006

BGMC returns to Kleinhans Music Hall to Celebrate Music, Art and the Parks on November 19



Photo used with permission

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus returns to the stage of Kleinhans Music Hall on Sunday, November 19, to perform with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. BPO Music Director JoAnn Falletta and BGMC Artistic Director Barbara Wagner will each conduct.

Joining the chorus and the orchestra will be Philippe Quint, internationally acclaimed violinist, who will perform Pablo Sarasate's *Ziguenerweisen* (or *Gypsy Airs*) and Jules Massenet's "Meditation" from *Thaïs* on a 1723 Stradivarius violin loaned to him from the collection of

Mr. and Mrs. Clement Arrison of Buffalo.

To enhance the theme—Celebrate Music, Art, and the Parks—Ms. Wagner collaborated with orchestra manager Dan Hart and Maestro Falletta to create a varied and exciting program focused on the music of nature. Some of the works to be performed include "The Pasture" and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" from Randall Thompson's *Frostiana*, "Chin-A-Ring-Chaw" arranged by Aaron Copland, and Sir Edward Elgar's "The Snow."

Maestro Falletta expressed particular excitement that the BGMC and the BPO will be performing "Nessum Dorma" by Giacomo Puccini in a newly arranged score for chorus and full orchestra. She noted the fondness she has for the BGMC, and Barbara Wagner in particular, by rearranging her flight schedule so she could personally conduct the benefit concert.

Philippe Quint was born in St. Petersburg in the former Soviet Union. A child prodigy, he made his orchestral debut at the age of 9. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* described him as "a modern Paganini." Now an American citizen, Mr. Quint earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees from Juilliard in 1998.

As a classical artist, Mr. Quint frequently performs and records works by William Schuman, Lukas Foss, Leonard Bernstein, and Ned Rorem among many others. He also maintains a busy schedule in the realm of music for theater and film. Philippe has been cast to play a leading role in "Russian Blue," an upcoming motion picture about a classical violinist immigrating to the United States from Russia.

His impressive repertoire makes him highly sought both nationally and internationally. Philippe rearranged his itinerary to perform with the BGMC and the BPO on November 19.

The proceeds of this concert will go to the Olmsted Parks Conservancy and the Buffalo Philharmonic.

The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy is the first nonprofit organization in the nation to manage a park system. Frederick Law Olmsted believed parks should be places where city dwellers could enjoy scenery designed to "refresh and delight the eye, and through the eye, the mind and spirit."

This philosophy inspired Buffalo's park and parkway system, which today's generation is rediscovering as one of the city's treasures. In Buffalo, Olmsted created an interconnected park system, the first of its kind, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

As Buffalo's cultural ambassador, the BPO has toured widely across the United States and Canada. In Western New York alone, the orchestra presents more than one hundred classics, pops, and youth concerts each year.

Tickets are available by calling (716) 885-5000. General admission is \$50 for the concert, or \$175 for the VIP pass which includes the concert, private reception and art auction in the Mary Seaton room immediately following the performance. The artwork being offered at the auction includes over one hundred pieces offering various representations within the Buffalo Olmsted Parks system. Local, national, and internationally recognized artists will have their works available to benefit these two major organizations.

Important cultural icons to our community, the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus is proud to support the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy.

The benefit concert is presented through the generosity of Louis and Annlouise Ciminelli and Clement and Karne Arrison.

For more about Philippe Quint visit his website
www.philippequint.com

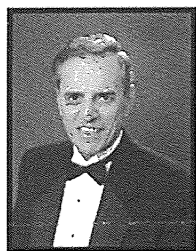
BGMC
Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

President's Column

by Dennis C. Stuart, BGMC President

"Where words fail, music speaks."—Hans Christian Anderson

Happy Fifth Birthday, BGMC



Music has the power to touch and change us in ways that spoken words cannot. Can music sung in concerts performed by a group calling itself the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus be equally powerful?

Society's message to many of us has been that we do not and cannot "belong" in the boy scouts, the armed services, marriages and many communities of faith. Some family members shun us as well. The issue of acceptance is at the core of all of our relationships. In the process of entertaining and enlightening others, we feel totally accepted and included when we make music as the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus. This inclusion is "music" that truly speaks to us!

In September 2001, a small group of men set out to create something larger and greater than themselves. They dreamed of transforming lives with music and inaugurated the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus. Our first two BGMC presidents, Jim Estep and Dave Gannon, along with Barbara Wagner conducting and Debi Overton's accompaniment, have brought us to this point in our history. It is a tribute to them and to their sensitivity and devotion, their wit and wisdom, that we have touched so many hearts in our audience. A majority of the current chorus is comprised of men who have sung with us all five years.

The Sound of One Hand Clapping

Regardless of Zen and your thoughts on that sound, we know that the BGMC could not exist without the support of you, our audience. Your physical presence and your enthusiasm do more than just bring our music to life and make our efforts worthwhile. It validates our dream for the chorus and makes it reality.

We recognize and acknowledge that it takes more than a fabulous Artistic Director – thanks Barb, for kick starting the BGMC into stardom - and 75 musicians to create an extraordinary musical experience and the

wonderful success we've enjoyed these past five years. It also takes the support of our audience: YOU.

The plain and simple fact is that we would be greatly diminished without you. I would enjoy hearing from our audience members. Feedback shows that we have friends who passionately care about the chorus and the music we present. I'm interested in your ideas about how to improve the BGMC. Please contact me at president@buffalogaymenschorus.com. We hope our music speaks to you. You most certainly speak to us.

But once a year.....

The Friends of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus annual appeal letter will arrive in your mailbox soon. Last year your generous contributions helped us defray our expenses when our 70 voices performed a benefit concert on behalf of AIDS Family Services and those devastated by hurricane Katrina. We took our song and our message of enlightenment to First Baptist Church in Niagara Falls for a concert to benefit Community Mission of Niagara Falls/Mark's Place. This year the BGMC will be performing several benefit concerts, among them one on November 19 for the Olmsted Parks Conservancy at Kleinhans Music Hall. Your dollars help us help others. Please know that all the BGMC fundraising efforts are conceived and carried out by BGMC volunteers. Please be generous; we only ask you once a year.



Crescendo!

The Newsletter of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, Inc.

Volume 5 • Issue 1 • Fall 2006

Editor: **Delwyn Milander**
Designer: **Vilardo Printing**

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, Inc.
Incorporated 2001 as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation in the State of New York.

Artistic Director: **Barbara Wagner**
Accompanist: **Debi Overton**

News & Information Director:
Kathleen Niles

Officers 2006-2007
President: **Dennis C. Stuart**
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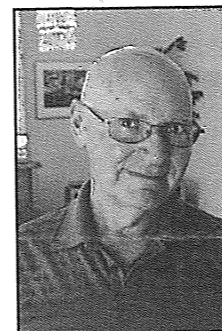
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The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, Inc. is a member of the **Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses, Inc.** (GALA Choruses). GALA Choruses fosters the artistic and organizational development of member choruses through a variety of programs and services.

For more information, visit www.galachoruses.org

In the Spotlight: John Rex

interview by Kathleen Niles and photo by Roger Parris



Straight out of Bowdoin College, John Rex entered the Peace Corps in 1962. In the first group to go to Ethiopia, he taught English (ESL) in the rural village of Debre Berhan. Years later, a second stint in the Peace Corp took him to Namibia. John states "Ethiopia and Namibia are the alpha/omega of my working life." Now, John continues to think between cultures having had such a unique perspective of diverse societies so

young. He founded and currently chairs the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of WNY and has worked to have it become affiliated with the National Peace Corps Association. It is his hope that this group will "bring home the message of international understanding and peaceful outreach."

A true renaissance man, John's bio is so full and noteworthy that we must condense a rich and productive life. He was married and is the proud father of Anne, a physician and recently, the grandfather of twins, Drew and Gwen. He taught for 27 years while married. In the early 90s, some dramatic changes occurred in his life. John divorced and entered the seminary where he became a Unitarian Universalist minister. He served as chaplain intern at Sisters Hospital; spent a year of independent study in India; worked with Mother Theresa's nuns in Calcutta; and, traveled to Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Tragically, John's son died in 1995 at age 25. John moved to Fredericksburg, Virginia, to serve a congregation, then on to North Palm Beach to serve yet another. In 1998, he ministered to the Khasi tribal Unitarians in North East India living in isolated villages for weeks at a time, an experience he describes as "beyond the Peace Corps." John is now a member of Trinity Episcopal Church and states that, while it may sound like a contradiction to his vocation, the mystical humanist he has always been is evolving each day.

Finally retired, John currently lives on Park Street. He has spent many months working on this house. It was one of the oldest homes on the Secrets of Allentown tour this year. Additionally, John is a signature member of the Niagara Frontier Watercolor Society and has had his work in juried shows on numerous occasions. Although addicted to karaoke, John's greatest addiction is the BGMC where "music is a loving ministry of enlightenment, entertainment, and education in a warm and welcoming community."

What we did with our summer

by Delwyn Milander

Many a school child remembers the first day of class when the teacher asked everyone to write an essay on the theme "What I did with my summer."

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus may have taken a break from regular Tuesday rehearsals from June to August, but that doesn't mean we were idle.

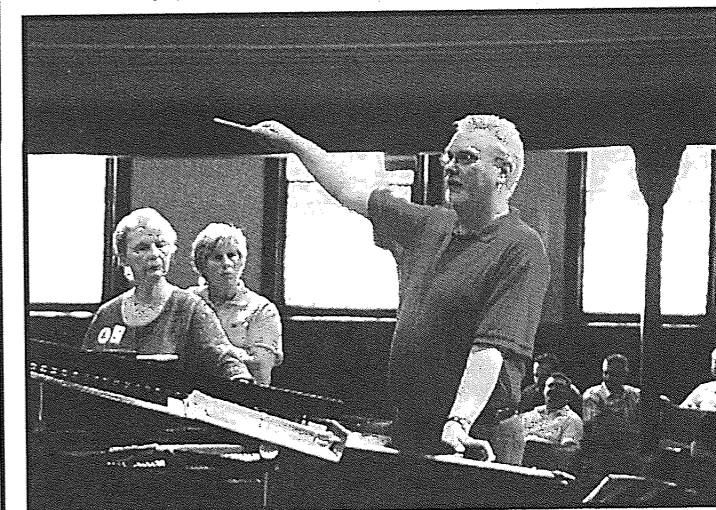
On July 21 the chorus sang for MOCHA, Men of Color Health Awareness, at the Statler Towers Golden Ballroom. The MOCHA Project, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness of HIV in communities of color. The July 21 event was their 10th anniversary ceremony and dinner, recognizing several people and organizations that contributed to MOCHA's cause.

The annual BGMC garage sale was held on July 29 and 30 at Hamlin House a month earlier than last year. We raised over \$1,700 and moved many treasures into the hands and hearts of new owners. Thanks to everyone who supported this event in various ways but especially to Kevin Thompson and Woody Sipprell for their leadership in organizing the sale.

On August 18 we surprised David Goldstein at the farewell reception held in his honor at Temple Beth Zion. Buffalo is losing a great musician with David taking a prestigious position in Chicago. Cantor Goldstein has sung with the BGMC on two occasions and has been an enthusiastic supporter of the chorus.

Finally, while we didn't sing, various BGMC volunteers staffed our booth during the Elmwood Festival of the Arts on August 27 and 28. We sold lots of CDs, handed out calling cards, took the names and addresses of people interested in the chorus and it's activities, and were a prominent part of the street fun.

As you can see, the BGMC really doesn't go on vacation. We still seek ways to fulfill our mission even in the summertime.



Nick Williams, Rochester Gay Men's Chorus Artistic Director, leads warm-ups while Barbara and Debi listen attentively.

Rochester and Buffalo choruses join forces in June concert

by Kathleen Niles

When we were beginning our chorus over five years ago, the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus traveled to Buffalo to perform a singer recruitment concert that was very successful.

This past June, we said a 'thank you' to our friends in Rochester in a joint concert.

"Calling all the Boys" was presented at the Hochstein School of Music in Rochester to a very thrilled and enthusiastic audience on a hot summer night. The BGMC sang a number of pieces from our spring concert, "Let Us Entertain You." The RGMC sang numerous songs from Stephen Schwartz's musical album including his shows "Godspell," "Pippen," "Fathers and Sons," and "Wicked."

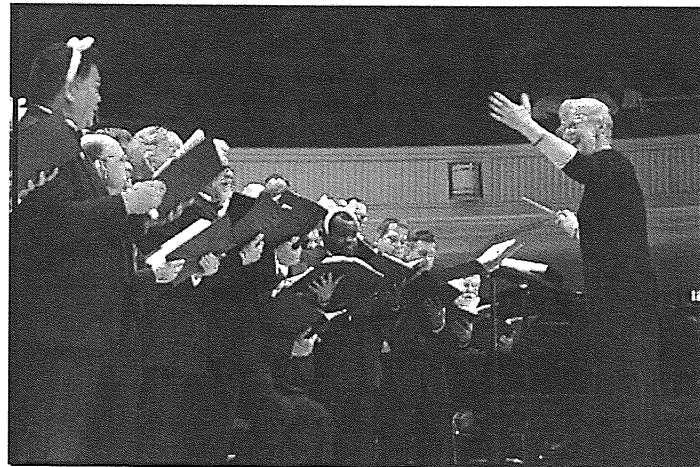
Both choruses concluded the concert with "Non Nobis Domine" and "In Whatever Time We Have." Standing ovations were the order of the night. More importantly, we showed what our communities are most famous for—support, encouragement, courage, and class. Brothers in song—sing on!



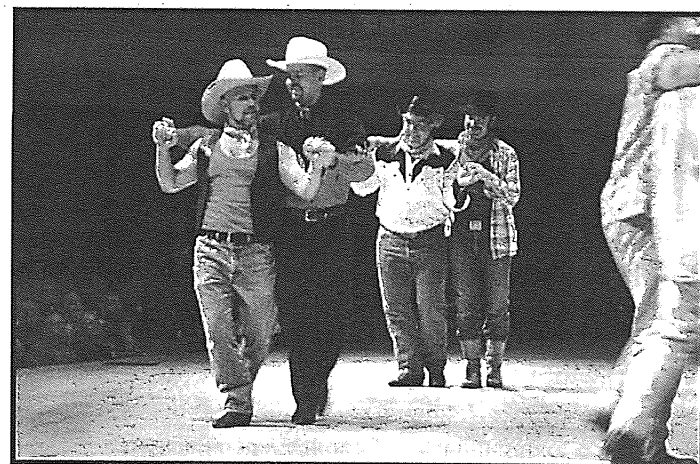
Rochester Gay Men's Chorus in concert



Shaun Doyle and Matt Mooney share the stage in "For Good."



Barb conducts the chorus in "Landscape." That's 'Flip' Taporco as the lamb.



The Rochettes were a real crowd pleaser.

Photos by Mike Longo



Barb's Corner

by Barbara Wagner, BGMC Artistic Director

As we celebrate the founding of the now award winning, critically acclaimed Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus five short years ago, I would be remiss if I didn't once more acknowledge the founders of this splendid organization. These intrepid men had the vision, the courage, the strength, the dreams, the tenacity, and the fearlessness to take the big risks for the all of us. These singers have changed my life, as many of their lives have been changed by BGMC. We have forged new and lasting friendships, we have felt safe with one another, we've laughed and cried together, and we've sung like I never dreamed possible as we've been able to change minds and hearts in our community and the community at large. "My boys" have taught me much with laughter and great good humor. I'm often drawn to the words of a song we sang a couple of years ago on a concert called "Fearless." "There's a change of heart anytime you join the choir, be a voice upon the mountain, see a fire in the rain." We sing for our lives as we first did five years ago on the searing evening of 9/11. We sing for our lives and the lives of our family. So join us this season as we celebrate in song. In fact, the first concert will be called "Celebrate" and indeed we shall!

One of the wonderful things I've been able to do for the past couple of years has been to attend the annual GALA Leadership Conference. This September, Board President, Dennis Stuart, Lorne Gretsinger, our counsel and former board member, Bill Gardner, and I flew off to Miami to spend a weekend at this year's conference. We spent almost every waking minute in workshops, absorbing the wisdom of those who have more experience than we do. There were three tracks and I, of course, always follow the one intended for the artistic directors. Within that particular track are workshops designed especially for the artistic directors of men's choruses.

Guess how many women direct men's choruses in the GALA movement. You're absolutely right! Out of well over one hundred Gay Men's Choruses, there are women directing three of them: Kathleen McGuire in San Francisco, Merry Keller in St. Louis, and yours truly. And so once more, I must thank our founders for taking a risk with this woman. What an amazing ride you've allowed me to take. You may recognize names like Stan Hill, Tim Seelig, and Dennis Coleman. Like Kathleen McGuire, they all have huge choruses and multi-million dollar programs and yet the collegiality among all of us is astounding and somewhat unusual. The competition that we often see among other musicians is simply not there. The artistic directors who have been around for many years see their roles as mentors and guides as we, who have not been with GALA for so long, wend our way through the complexities of leading men's choruses. It's pretty amazing.

As we began our early afternoon session on Friday with our brilliant and inspiring clinician, Jo Michael Scheibe, he asked us to stand around the room in order of years of experience with GALA choruses. There they were, the big guns, at the head of the line. Dr. Scheibe challenged them to advise and encourage those of us with less experience in the GALA movement and we, in turn, were to ask for what we needed. It was a very special moment as we looked at one another with affirmation written all



Barbara and David Goldstein embrace during his farewell reception on August 18.

over our faces. We have an artistic directors' e-mail list and I've never seen a request for music or help ignored. We shared repertoire—what a revelation—we shared ideas around making a better sound, Jo Michael did enlivening, energetic warm-ups with us, he told us to have fun with our choruses, to laugh, to cry, maybe even allow a little chattering when it's productive. We all loved him and many of us felt much needed affirmation. He affirmed my affinity for laughter filled, energetic, joyous rehearsals.

We actually took along a bunch of our recordings. Imagine our pride as we watched people looking them over and often buying them. They were all sold. I'm still waiting with baited breath to hear what Kathleen McGuire has to say about us! Because of the stellar work of Mike Styn, our recording editor and sound expert, these CDs are impressive in both sound and sight. You'll hear much more about Mike in the next issue of *Crescendo*, but I must tell you that sitting with him in an editing session at Mark Custom Recordings is a revelation. He prepares for hours and hours and knows exactly what to request so that we have the finest recordings possible. (Of course, it helps a bit if we sing well.)

Each morning at breakfast or late in the afternoon over a glass of wine, we would share what we each did that day. We all took copious notes and came back with tons of new ideas. The good news is that much of what we do in Buffalo is done well, but then there are the "aahs." Why didn't we think of that before? And then there are the problems that no one has ever figured out a way to solve. That's how it goes. The best news is that we are all there because we love our choruses and want to do our very best for and with them and for each other.

And so, please join us whenever and wherever you can as we commemorate the work that all of us, including our volunteers, the Friends of BGMC, and our audiences have done over the past five years. We can take great pride in what we've all accomplished.

With much love and gratitude,

Barb

SAVE THESE DATES!

Sunday, October 22, 2006 • **Road Trip to Erie, PA** • 4:00 pm • Benefit performance on behalf of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie and Northwest Pennsylvania Rural AIDS Alliance • Masonic Lodge, 32 West 8th Street, Erie, PA.

Saturday, November 4, 2006 • **Pride Alliance Diversity Concert** • 8:00 pm • State University of New York at Fredonia

Sunday, November 19, 2006 • **Fundraising Concert to benefit the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra** • 2:30 pm • BGMC and the BPO, JoAnn Falletta and Barbara Wagner conducting • Kleinhans Music Hall

Friday, January 5, 2007 • **Gusto at the Gallery** • 8:00 pm • Albright-Knox Art Gallery

Friday, January 19, 2007 • **Concert—"Celebrate"** • 8:00 pm • Unitarian Universalist Church, Elmwood Avenue at West Ferry

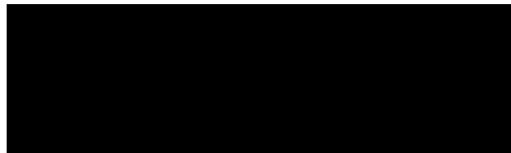
Saturday, January 20, 2007 • **Concert—"Celebrate"** • 8:00 pm • Westminster Presbyterian Church, 724 Delaware Avenue, between Summer and North Street

Friday, June 15, 2007 • **Concert—"Colors of our Lives"** • 8:00 pm • Unitarian Universalist Church, Elmwood Avenue at West Ferry

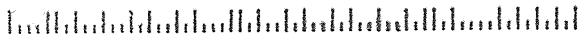
Saturday, June 16, 2007 • **Concert—"Colors of our Lives"** • 8:00 pm • First Presbyterian Church, One Symphony Circle across from Kleinhans Music Hall

July 12-July 20, 2008 • **GALA Festival VIII** • Miami, Florida

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Yes, I'll join the Friends of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus!

Thank you for helping the growth & success of BGMC. Your contribution is tax deductible.

- | | | |
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