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Crescendo! The Newsletter of the Buffalo Gay
Men's Chorus

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

Spring 2007

Crescendo!, Spring 2007

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, "Crescendo!, Spring 2007" (2007). *Crescendo! The Newsletter of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus*. 9.

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Crescendo!

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

Volume 5 · Issue 3
Spring 2007

The Color of Music

by Cedric "Flip" Taporco, 2nd tenor section leader

One might think there isn't any rhyme or reason when you glance at the program set for our June 15 and 16 concerts. But when you start trying to connect all those different songs into our presentation, you realize there are many "colors of our lives."

Going through the first half you will find the warmth of the yellow sun as it encompasses all that we see, and then more when we encircle our audience with "The Circle of Life" from the popular musical "The Lion King."

Patriotic red comes to mind when I think of the diversity of our country and the inclusion of both our next door neighbor Canada and our good friends from Africa as we sing their national anthems.

Magenta seems appropriate because it is what it is when we sing "I Am What I Am."

When we start singing about our family, friends, and loved ones, I think of the many hues of the rainbow. I think of the parents who raised us, the joy of a new found love, or the deep friendships we all share just by being the persons we are when we approach "Family" taken from "Dreamgirls" and "The Circles of our Lives" in a version originally written for the Turtle Creek Chorale.

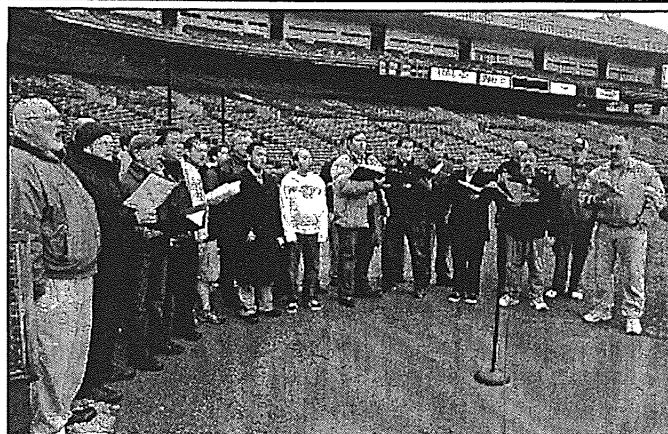
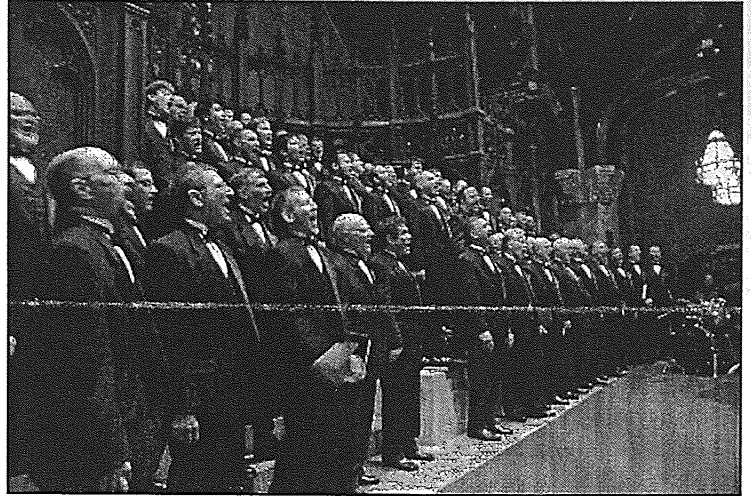
Even the deep blue velvet of "In Remembrance" will make us think of how we hold those who have passed away in our hearts and minds.

We have many challenges in the second half of the program. Foreign languages are difficult to sing and we have to understand what we are singing then we put appropriate colors to each of them. "Oseh shalom" has rich chocolate brown tones to it. "Plaisir d'Amour" has a bubbly golden color of champagne because of the lilting quality of the accompaniment. "Du Bist die Ruh" is light and airy, like Dresden crystal.

Finally, the yellow sun comes bursting through when Matt Mooney sings "Oh Happy Day" as we conclude the concert.

You, the audience, are invited to put your own colors to these songs. We look forward to having you with us on Friday, June 15 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo (695 Elmwood Avenue at West Ferry) or on Saturday, June 16 at First Presbyterian Church (One Symphony Circle across from Kleinhans Music Hall). Both concerts begin at 8:00 and doors open at 7:00, and both will be followed by receptions for the audience and chorus. Saturday's performance will be interpreted for the hearing impaired.

Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$16 for students/seniors/disabled and can be obtained from any chorus member or on your charge cards through our new website at www.buffalogaymenschorus.org.



Take me out to the ball game: BGMC auditions for the Bisons. We sing the national anthem on Pride Sunday, June 3 at Dunn Tire Park.

The Tale of the Bison

by Barbara Wagner, BGMC artistic director

One upon a time there was a glorious chorus. The chorus was filled with very handsome, strong men who could sing like angels. There was one lady who helped all these handsome, strong men learn to sing better. She was very lucky. She loved all of these handsome, strong men and most of them loved her, even if she was a lady.

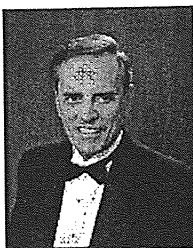
One cold winter day, the lady answered her ringing telephone and heard someone say that her handsome, strong men had an appointment

continued on page 4

President's Column

by Dennis C. Stuart, BGMC President

A year of "firsts" and who's on first



Our concerts on June 15 and 16 mark the end of our sixth season. What an incredibly busy season it has been for the members of the BGMC board of directors. It was truly a year of "firsts" in which the chorus charged ahead. Here are some of the highlights.

You've told us that you'd like us to make it easier to purchase concert tickets, buy chorus merchandise, and make donations by charging using a credit card. Beginning now, you will be able to do all that through our website www.buffalogaymenschorus.org. See how we've "charged" ahead.

It has been said that the new BGMC website has had one of the longest gestation periods in history but it was worth it. Please check it out. Our thanks go to Dave Gannon for all his work in birthing this new baby.

Our incredibly talented artistic director Barbara Wagner has always worked on our behalf. This year she became an official employee of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, Inc., after completing all the requisite flurry of paperwork with New York State and the Federal government. Barb remains on the board as a nonvoting member.

On April 28, we inaugurated our very first "Supper and Song" fundraiser. With modifications, we plan on making it an annual event. Suppers were at various homes and the backstage look at a typical chorus rehearsal gave everyone a memorable evening. Special thanks go to board member "Spike" Liska who worked long and hard since last August to ensure the success of this event.

Our intrepid news and information director, Kathleen Niles, thought we'd get some good exposure in the community by singing the national anthem at a sporting event. After eighteen months of phone calls, e-mails, and personal conversations she was able to secure an audition spot for us with the Buffalo Bisons. Who's on first? The BGMC will be. We'll be singing the Star-Spangled Banner on Pride Day, June 3, at

Dunn Tire Park preceding the ball game. You can bet that Kathleen has other goals in mind. Could getting us the pre-game national anthem gig for the Buffalo Bills be next?

Finally, this past season also marks the highest number of benefit concerts on behalf of other nonprofit and philanthropic organizations that we've ever done. We've continued our bridge building in a huge way and in so doing continue to fulfill our mission to educate as we enlighten.

Please join us for one of our spring concerts, June 15 or 16, as lift our voices in song and continue to strive to improve not only our lives and those of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters but also the lives of everyone in the community. I look forward to chatting with you at one of our post concert receptions.



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

Crescendo!

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

Volume 5 · Issue 3 · Spring 2007

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**
Vice President: **G. Michael Liska**
Secretary: **Dave Batt**
Treasurer: **Todd B. Ruth**
Directors: **Christopher S. Babbitt, Michael P. Gillis, Lorne Gretsinger, Tim Mahiques, Steve Young,**

Crescendo! is published three times a year (Fall, Winter, and Spring) by the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus. Periodicals paid at Buffalo, NY. Postmaster: Send address changes to: *Crescendo*, 695 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222.



Barb's Corner

by Barbara Wagner, BGMC Artistic Director

Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the members of the BGMC and the vision of our vice president, Spike Liska, the evening of April 28 brought many of us and our friends into the homes of BGMC members for dinner and later to the Unitarian Universalist Church for music and a look behind the scenes of chorus operations, followed by dessert and coffee.

How do you choose the music? That was the first question in the Q & A session. I loved that question and it occurred to me that many of you might find it interesting. The process is a very thoughtful one and involves many of our experienced musicians whose advice I solicit constantly.

The first thing we do is choose a title for the concert. Every so often, a chorus member comes along and makes a suggestion for the next concert, so when the time comes there is something already on the table. The program you're about to enjoy on June 15 and 16 was easy. Our lives are indeed colorful and not always bright, so it seemed that "The Colors of Our Lives" would lend itself to a great variety of music.

Some of you may already know that a fairly large number of our GALA choruses do shows that might feature only one composer or style. That may happen to us one day, but for now I love the variety of music we're able to do with more open ended themes.

Once we're all agreed on a title, I begin looking for music. By now I have a huge stack of TTBB music that I've collected over the past six years. I'm obviously looking for things that fit the theme. I look for edgy things like "I Ain't Afraid" that will challenge us and our listeners to take a look at our lives and how we're living them. I'm looking for good music—there's a lot of bad, corny stuff out there—music that suits our voices. Is it too difficult? Too easy? I look hard at the poetry. Does it move me? I look for diversity of tempo. Too fast? Too slow? Just right?

When I'm satisfied with what I've found, the boys and I get together and look at it carefully. Then the suggestions begin to fly. We need to get "Stand by Me." Loren Gretsinger says Toronto has it. Denver has an arrangement of "Swimming to the Other Side." I have a recording, says Tim Mahiques. We have to do "Circle of Life," says Jason Ward. I'll get it from Kathleen McGuire. She and I are pals now. Shaun Doyle wails out the opening lines. We all nod our approval. I have trouble getting "Family" from Seattle. Finally, in desperation, I call



Barb & Scott Glasser at the Jamestown concert in March.

Jason, who says, I'll get it for you and he does. Stan Hill of the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus responds quickly and sends us his arrangement of "The Prayer."

Jaime Goldfuss, Flip Taporco, Bill Gardner, and David Mathewson have looked over my selections, approved many, but thought some weren't so good. That's the way it goes. We all loved "Plaisir d'Amour" and "Du Bist die Ruh." Is there enough diversity, a trademark of our concerts? And so it goes until finally the program falls into place.

I have the great pleasure of doing the programming, arranging the various songs in an order that will really tell the story of "The Color of Our Lives." It's an amazing process. I've already begun the search for music for our next concert, "The Proud and the Passionate." Isn't that a great title? It started as "The Sacred and the Profane" and gradually and carefully we arrived at this exciting alliteration.

So now you know the rest of the story. Let me know if you have any suggestions us—we welcome them.

Enjoy "The Colors of Our Lives" on June 15 or 16. Thank you for your enduring love and support of our work. With much gratitude to my boys and to all of you who come to listen to us.

Barb

On pitch and on the go

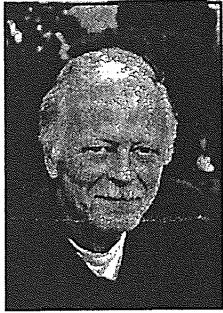
In order to give back to the WNY community that supports our efforts, the peripatetic BGMC spends quite a bit of time "on the road." A few of the places and events we been a part of include: **The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra benefit for the Olmsted Park Conservancy; Gusto at the Gallery at the Albright-Knox; the Tree Lighting Ceremony for Children's Hospital at the Adam's Mark; AIDS Benefit Concerts in Buffalo and Erie, PA., Fredonia State College to celebrate Diversity Day; the Langston Hughes Center for their Multicultural Celebration; Jamestown Community College sponsored by the student senate, the college programming committee, and the Katharine Jackson Carnahan**

Endowment for the Humanities, and the Patricia Parete fundraiser.

One of the reasons that the BGMC is so popular in Western New York is our willingness to share the gifts we have been given. Those of you who attend our major concerts in January and in June, those of you who generously contribute as sponsors and donors, and those of you who volunteer your time and energy are the reason we can do all that we do without compensation for so many fine nonprofit agencies. Please continue this amazing way of allowing us to be generous on your behalf with our time and talents.

In the spotlight: Woody Sipprell

interview by Kathleen Niles and photo by Roger Parris



Sherwood "Woody" Sipprell's vitality and leadership attest to the fact that 60 is the new 40. A founding member of the BGMC, Woody served as our first vice president and has successfully chaired the production committee. While amazed at the progress achieved by the chorus in its first five years, he is convinced that we "ain't seen nothing yet!"

An only child, Woody was born, as he says, "just prior to mid-century of the last millennium," was educated in Hamburg, NY and at Cornell University. While at Cornell, he went to an audition of the a capella group, "The Sherwoods" thinking he might just have an "in." He did not. However, he auditioned and won a place in the prestigious Cornell University Glee Club. He joined them on a tour behind the Iron Curtain at a time when it "was the scariest place you ever heard about." Fortunately, the bond of music got the group through all the checkpoints and united them with their Soviet counterparts.

For fifteen years, Woody lived near Clearwater, Florida, and worked at a major hotel. It was during this time in the south that the AIDS crises began. Having lost his best friend to the illness, Woody and a few others founded AIDS Coalition Pinellas which is similar to ACS in WNY. Beginning with a board of nine people and a client base of seventy, their aim was to turn the organization over to professionals in the field. It is now part of Hospice of the Florida Suncoast, the second oldest hospice organization in the nation.

When his parents needed him home for elder care, Woody returned to New York. Upon their deaths, Woody's longtime dream of a Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus began to materialize. He was thrilled to learn that others, who held that same wish, were in the initial meeting stages. And, over the next months, the organization we currently enjoy was given the necessary administrative and musical wings to fly. Woody notes that some of the "mileposts envisioned for the second five years have long been accomplished." He knows that the next five years will truly be awesome.

The BGMC is most grateful for Woody's inspiration and leadership. He continues to work behind the scenes to make this community of musicians the siblings he never had. And with Woody as a big brother, we cannot fail.

The Tale of the Bison (continued)

to sing for the Bisons. First she thought about her handsome men singing for big furry animals and then she remembered that there was a baseball team in Buffalo called the Bisons. Could it be? The lady loved baseball and she knew that many of her men did too.

It WAS the baseball Bisons! Oh my, what would they sing? What would they wear? Would they sing well enough? It was all so exciting.

They practiced and practiced until the song was perfect. Now it was time to sing for the Bisons. They dressed in their best baseball hats and went to the ball park. Even though it was raining, the lady and her strong, handsome singers were very happy. The baseball field looked so beautiful, especially when they were all standing on it.

They opened their mouths and sang one of their favorite patriotic songs—"The Star Spangled Banner." It was very good. They all went home and waited and waited to hear what would happen. Would the Bisons like their singing?

A few weeks later, the lady who helped the singers sing better answered her ring telephone again. It was one of the Bisons telling her that the Bisons wanted her strong, handsome singers to sing at a Bisons baseball game. They won first prize.

And so, they will sing the national anthem on Pride Day, June 3, at 1:05 at Dunn Tire Park, a very special day for the lady and her angelic singers.

THE END

The best again

The BGMC announces with great appreciation and pride that the WNY voters placed us in the number one spot for the second year in a row in the *Artvoice* Best of Buffalo Awards. Last year, we won for Best Vocalist because that was the closest category that fit. With just a quick call to the editor of *Artvoice*, a new and more appropriate category was instituted for 2007. This year, the BGMC won Best Vocal Ensemble. The honorable mentions included: Vocalis, Buffalo Gateway Chorus, Choral Arts Society and the Boys of Summer. We were proud to be mentioned with those other great group and prouder still to be named the Best of the Best.



Happy Birthday BGMC, 5 years old!

Kudos to:

Barb Wagner, BGMC artistic director, for Unitarian Universalist choir's production of Gwyneth Walker's "The Golden Harp," accompanied by members of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and BGMC singers Don Behr, Flip Taporco, Shaun Doyle, Peter Bruschi, Michael Heaney, Bill Gardner, and Jaime Goldfuss on April 1.

Debi Overton, BGMC accompanist, for her church choir's production of the Beethoven Mass in C at Calvary Episcopal Church on May 20.

Norman Boyer for designing the poster for this spring's concerts.

Ramón Meléndez for those fabulous cakes he provides each month on birthday night.

Michael "Spike" Liska for being the inspiration behind Supper and Song.

Mark Meyer, former BGMC treasurer, singer, and board member for his proofreading skills.

Jim Estep, former board president, for his grant writing skills.

Dave Gannon, former board president, for bringing the new website to life.

Scott Glasser graduated from Fredonia State on May 12 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree with a major in Music Education. Scott was behind the invitations to participate in Diversity Week.

Paul Cassavaugh and Linda Reznick for their many, many hours of volunteerism and organizational skills with both the January and June concert tickets.

Greg Rabb, for his tireless work in making our Jamestown debut concert such a success on March 24.

(Inadvertent omissions are inevitable. If you have suggestions for the next Kudos list, please pass them along to the editor.)

Behr and Loliger are winners of Operabuffery Award

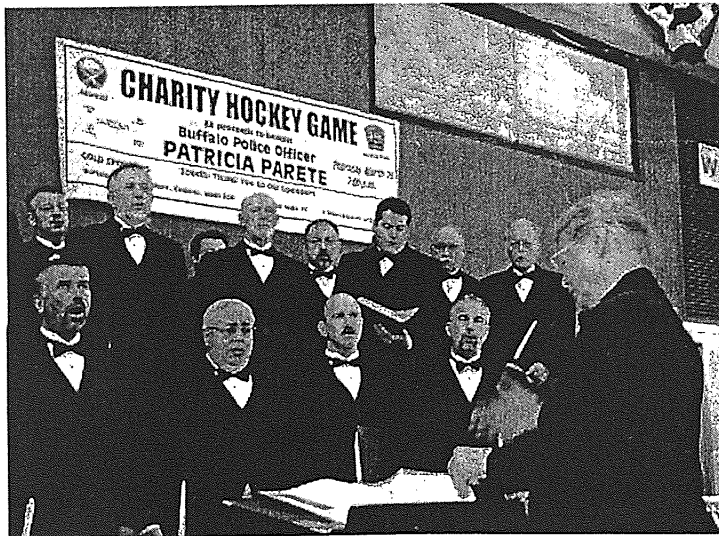
BGMC's librarian, Don Behr and his partner, Sam Loliger, are recipients of the 2007 Operabuffery Award given by OperaBuffs, a Buffalo organization, devoted to the appreciation of live performances of opera in various cities.

The award is well deserved. Don and Sam have made going to the opera a hobby for over thirty years, attending over 450 productions in various US cities and in Canada. They've even experienced Wagnerian opera in Germany while on a nonoperatic tour several years ago.

It makes one think about how members of the BGMC family are involved in music elsewhere when not busy in the gay men's chorus.



Buffalo Philharmonic clarinetist Patti DeLutis and bassoonist Glenn Einschlag were featured soloists with the chorus in Jamestown.



For a good cause: BGMC sings at the Buffalo Police Officer Patrica Parete fundraiser.



Cynthia Van Ness and Vince Kuntz (1st bass) smile for the camera.

SAVE THESE DATES!

Pride Sunday, June 3, 2007 • **BGMC** sings national anthem at **Dunn Tire Park** • 1:05 pm

Sunday, June 3, 2007 • Annual Pride Parade and Celebration • **BGMC** joins the parade • visit pride-buffalo.org for more details

Friday, June 15, 2007 • **Concert - "Colors of Our Lives"** • 8:00 pm • Unitarian Universalist Church,
695 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222, corner of West Ferry

Saturday, June 16, 2007 • **Concert - "Colors of Our Lives"** • 8:00 pm • First Presbyterian Church, One Symphony Circle, Buffalo, NY
14201, across from Kleinhans Music Hall

Tuesday, June 19, 2007 • **Annual meeting and election of new board members** • BGMC members check your e-mail for venue

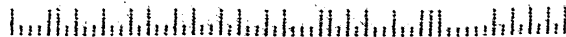
Tuesday, September 4, 2007 • First rehearsal for 2007-2008 season • Singers check your e-mail to confirm

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