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

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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Spring 2009

### Crescendo!, Spring 2009

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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# Crescendo!

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

Volume 7 · Issue 3  
Spring 2009

## BGMC moving to St. John's-Grace

by David Mathewson, BGMC board member

On February 18 the BGMC board of directors voted unanimously to move the chorus office and rehearsal space to St. John's-Grace Episcopal Church, 51 Colonial Circle in Buffalo effective the fall of 2009. Our move has been made necessary because of a chronic need for additional space currently not available at the Unitarian Universalist Church.

The move will allow the chorus to establish a proper business office and to consolidate storage of all its records, music, and equipment in an adjoining room all under one roof. Our new location also has an abundance of on street parking. The chorus will continue to hold its Friday evening concert at the Unitarian Universalist Church which has been our home since September 11, 2001.

Current plans anticipate taking possession of the new office space in June to allow for some minor renovations and decorating to take place before the actual move later this year. Chorus rehearsals will continue at the Unitarian Universalist Church through the month of June. The fall trimester will begin at our new address.

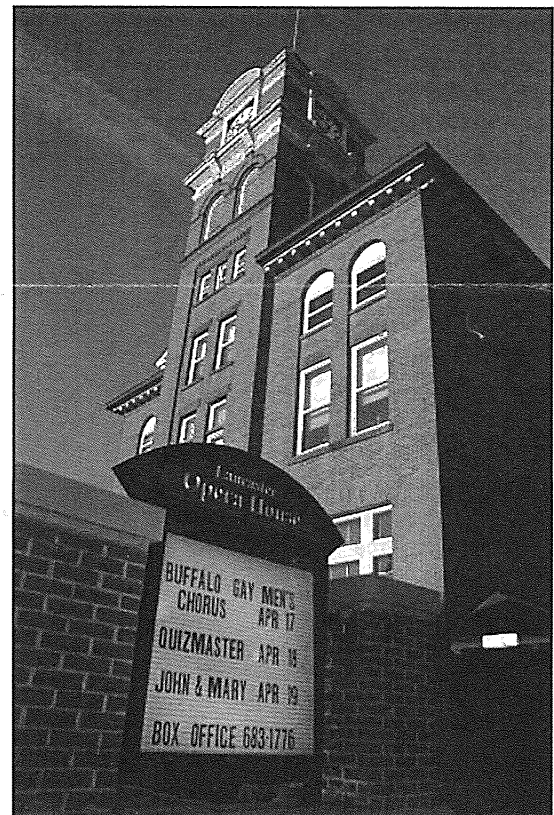
The Rev. Philip Dougharty and the St. John's-Grace parish family—an inclusive community of faith—are looking forward to the BGMC's arrival.



*Barb conducts the chorus at the Karpeles Manuscript Museum  
in support of PFLAG.*

## Join the parade

Everyone is invited to join the BGMC on June 7 for the annual Pride Parade beginning at 1:00 p.m. at the parking lot of Kleinhans Music Hall. The parade will end at Bidwell Parkway where there will be entertainment, food, information booths, etc. The chorus will perform from the stage along with the other performers. Join in the fun!



*The sign says it all: The BGMC at the  
Lancaster Opera House.*

# President's Column

by G. Michael Liska, BGMC President



Welcome spring! What wonderful days are ahead. Memorial Day weekend leads to the Allentown Art Festival, Taste of Buffalo, and all the other festivals and, last but not least, the June concerts of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus on June 19, 20, and 21.

We all brave the fierce Buffalo winds and can't wait for the sun to warm us and give us a chance to experience the summer weather again. We've made it through another winter and are ready for a beautiful spring.

For the past three years I have enjoyed being a very active member of the chorus' Board of Directors: vice president for one year and president for the past two years. During this time I have had the opportunity to speak to our concert audiences at each performance. I have had many wonderful conversations with our patrons and have learned so many reasons why the BGMC is important to so many of you.

During my term as president I have taken great pride in the accomplishments we experienced together. We took the leap of offering a series of three major concerts in a concert season. We performed each concert on Friday and Saturday evenings but also added a Sunday afternoon event for those who preferred to join us in a suburban location. We continued to do our public service in assisting other organization in their fundraising efforts. We traveled to Miami to share our talents with the other amazing GALA choruses. We hosted Schola Cantorosa, the gay men's chorus from Hamburg, Germany.

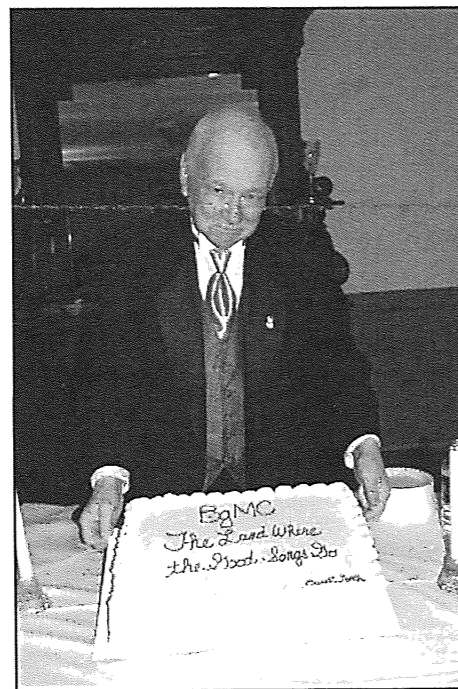
It seems like yesterday when I sat with the board for the first time and listened to the evening's agenda. Now I find myself at the end of my term, remembering what has transpired. I have always believed that you give your best during your term of office and then step aside for the next group of leaders to help guide this group of men to the next level. Change is always good.

While I am pleased with our accomplishments and have enjoyed being president, June will begin a new era with a

new president of the BGMC. I wish him well as he assumes the leadership role of the chorus.

I am proud to be a member of the BGMC. I want to thank all of you for your friendship, conversations, and the times we have shared together. To the men and women of this fine chorus, I love you all and have been honored to have been your president. I intend to remain very involved with the chorus and assume other responsibilities to assist and further the goals of the BGMC in our community.

Sincerely,  
Mike (Spike) Liska



Russ Link proudly displays the cake at the reception.

## Crescendo!

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

Volume 7 · Issue 3 · Spring 2009

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 Bryce Niles**

**Officers 2008-2009**  
President: **G. Michael Liska**  
Vice President: **Christopher Babbitt**  
Secretary: **Jason Higbee**  
Treasurer: **William H. Gardner**  
Directors: **Dave Batt, Norm Duttweiler, Jr., Darrin Kahn, Dave Mathewson, Ryan McKane**

*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.

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](http://www.galachoruses.org)

## Barb's Corner

by Barbara Wagner, BGMC Artistic Director



It seems like the year has just flown by. I can't remember a single week in which the BGMC hasn't had some sort of performance, an extra meeting, or a special commitment to someone or something happening in our own gay community. This, of course, is the way it has to be if we're going to continue to change

hearts and minds as we must.

There's rarely an event that goes by without some grateful soul saying to one of us: "Thank you so much for all you do for the community and for me." We walk the aisles of the venues where we perform and the words of gratitude echo in our ears. This is why we sing and why we select the music we do. To laugh, to cry (yes, we do that too) to let the beauty of the music pour over us, to tap our feet in delight and to know that BGMC is one of the voices for change fills us with gratitude. Thank you all for the support that allows us to continue our journey.

After pride events and our June concerts last season, we didn't miss a beat. We continued rehearsals in preparation for our trip to GALA in Miami where we would listen to our brothers and sisters sing for us and they would listen to us. What an amazing concept it is - a choral festival, never a choral competition. We learn from one another and bring the memories of newfound friends, old friends, their music, and the joy we find being together with people of like minds home with us.

We took a couple of weeks off and began preparing for our first ever holiday concert and our first ever professional recording of that concert. Busy, busy. Another recording session, more rehearsals and on and on it went all season long.

Our holiday concerts were a triumph with three performances. We even did a good part of it again in a live broadcast at the

University of Buffalo on their NPR station WBFO. We played to standing room only in Allen Hall - the largest crowd they'd ever had. Busy, busy.

It was off to Fredonia to sing for the kids' Pride Week; Christmas Caroling at the "Mansion" on Delaware Avenue; an attempt to sing at Benedict House - the rapidly falling snow stopped us in our tracks. Busy, busy. A benefit concert for the kids at Roswell, the first meeting of our brand new production committee, three performances of the lovely "Land Where the Good Songs Go," and a Friday performance for Gusto at the Gallery. Busy, busy.

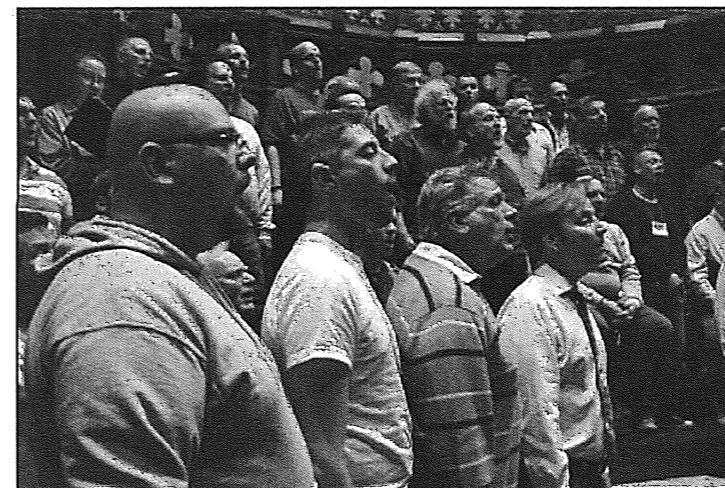
There was the Lancaster Opera House performance, and a Benefit for PFLAG at the Karpeles Manuscript Museum on Porter Avenue. Oh my - and now it's almost time for our June concert, "BGMC on Vacation," preceded by "Diamonds and Pearls" our major fundraiser, and the annual AIDS Walk.

"BGMC on Vacation" promises to be great fun with maybe a bit of sadness here and there. We'll be singing some rollicking songs like "Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah" by Alan Sherman and "Summer Nights" from "Grease," the beautiful "Will You" from a new musical "Grey Gardens" and a series of songs that celebrate the West, as well as a marvelous song with poetry by Yeats, "Innesfree," a new setting of Madeline Davis' poem "The Bandit" and, of course, "Home on the Range."

There's much more, but we do have to keep a few secrets from you. Please join us for this delightful concert on June 19, 20, or 21. I promise you won't be disappointed.

With gratitude to all of you.

*Barb*



Warming up: the chorus prepares for the concert at the Unitarian Universalist Church.



'Flip' Taporco, left, and Ray Neil work out a few notes before the concert begins.

# Kathleen's Kameos

by Kathleen Bryce Niles, News and Information Director

## BGMC blessed to have a countertenor

A countertenor is a male singing voice whose vocal range is equivalent to that of a contralto, mezzo-soprano or (less frequently) a soprano, usually through use of falsetto, or more rarely the normal or modal voice. Rob Szustak has proven to be a wonderful addition to the BGMC. He is that rare individual gifted with the range that places him in the category of a countertenor. Barb Wagner has carefully selected pieces to highlight his voice. Whether it is a classical piece written centuries ago or a doo-wop song from the 1950s, Rob lends something very special to the music and our ability to present it to our audiences in a unique manner.

## Barb's challenge succeeds

One of the strengths of our concerts is the ability of artistic director Barbara Wagner to construct each concert with a variety of music. There is always something for every audience member to appreciate and applaud. In order for a chorus to grow, it is imperative to stretch singers' abilities. Barb is a master at this. Invariably, there are pieces written in a language that few in the chorus speak. Whether it is Russian, German, Hebrew, French it is a beautiful piece that is extraordinarily difficult to learn and sing well. The audience has no idea the amount of time and effort it takes to produce such an outstanding piece but work has served them well. Listeners are witnessing the continual challenge and growth of a fine chorus.

## Guest artists are important to concerts

We include guest artists, singers, or musicians in our concerts for several important reasons. It offers a showcase of different talents to our audiences as a brief respite in the midst of a great deal of choral music.

There is a tremendous amount of music to learn three times yearly and the guest artists offer a moment for the singers and Barb to sit back and enjoy while resting voices and baton a little bit. The kind of intense performances that we give could not be successful without strong voices to carry them.

## Pins signal our commitment

Those who attended our last concert may have noticed the small red ribbon pins that our singers wore on their tuxedos. Engraved with BGMC, these pins express our support of programs that exist to combat AIDS. The BGMC has done many benefit concerts to assist those non-profit groups that work with individuals afflicted with that illness.

## Sartorial splendor abounds

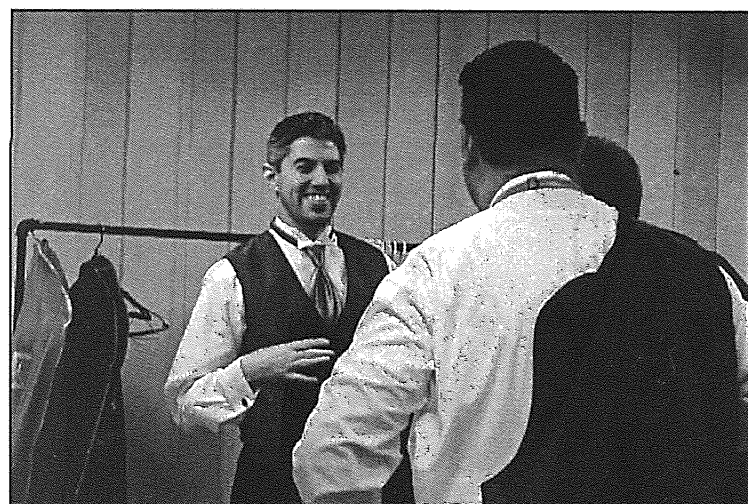
At its inception, the BGMC knew it was important to present a unified image to our audiences. We began with a series of T-Shirts with our logo, in a rainbow of colors worn with black or tan slacks. As we grew and our audiences grew, we moved into our signature tuxedos. And, from there, we began to refine and embellish our image with handkerchiefs, lovely silk hankies in various colors enriched our look, then, the ties! We have gray ties and black bow ties. Now, we have red pins. While we promise to maintain the same quality of music that made you a fan, we promise, too, to maintain the challenge of making our presentations visually appealing as well.

## Facebook presence finds new fans

You can find the BGMC on Facebook these days. We have two sites that provide info on upcoming concerts. We can speak to you from there and keep you informed about our activities. Please join us.

## Our website is a great resource

Please bookmark our website so you can make a quick check from time to time. You can find us at [www.buffalogaymenschorus.org](http://www.buffalogaymenschorus.org).



Dion Johnson smiles for Darrin Kahn at the Albright-Knox.



Mark Smith, left, Scott Nachbar, and Ray Moore pause for the camera before Gusto at the Gallery.

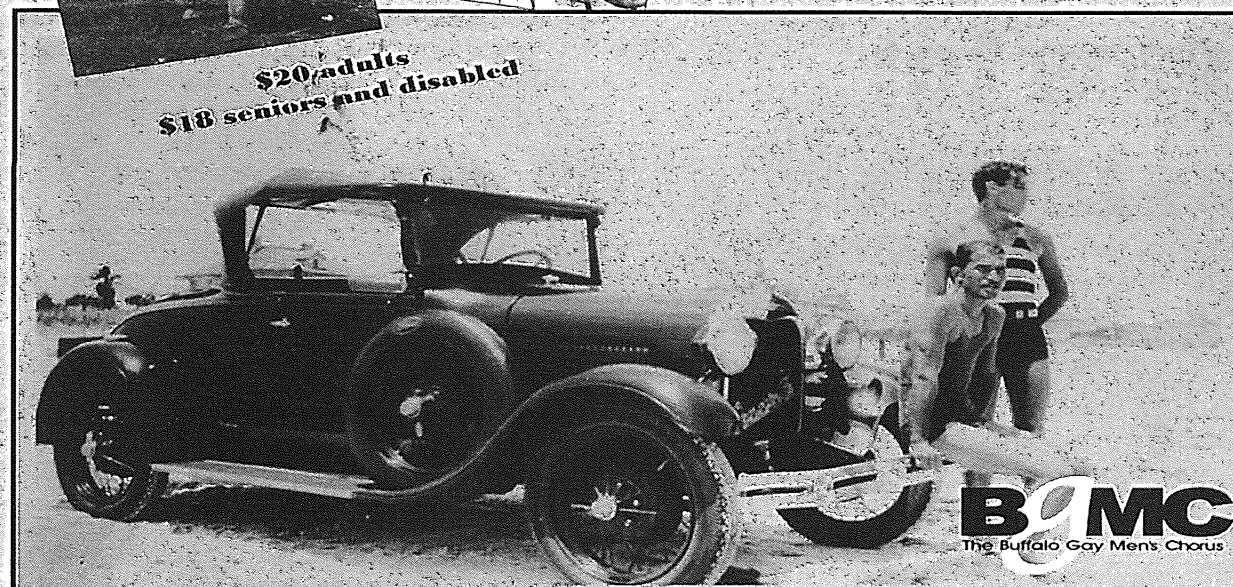
# Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

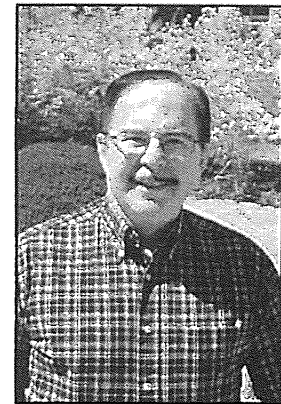
**Friday, June 19, 2009, 8pm**  
**Unitarian Universalist Church**  
**695 Elmwood Ave**  
**Buffalo**

**Saturday, June 20, 2009, 8pm**  
**First Presbyterian Church**  
**Symphony Circle**  
**Buffalo**

**Sunday, June 21, 2009 4 pm**  
**Church of the Nativity**  
**1530 Colvin Blvd.**  
**Kenmore**

**\$20 adults**  
**\$18 seniors and disabled**





## In the spotlight: Gerry Klein

interview by Kathleen Bryce Niles,  
photo by Roger Parris

Gerry Klein is a subtle kind of guy—nothing flashy nor showy. He possesses just a steady, workman-like industry that every organization must have to not only sustain, but also to thrive. He goes about volunteering behind the scenes, never seeking the spotlight, and he does what needs to be done to get the job completed successfully.

Gerry is a native Western New Yorker having graduated from Clarence High School where his love of choral music was nourished and nurtured. While singing in chorus ensembles he learned to act as well. He had lead roles in both musicals and drama. These activities continued through his years at Bryant & Stratton College where he earned an associate degree in accounting. He continued with several choral groups during his marriage and his children's youth.

After his marriage ended in 1984, Gerry worked as comptroller for an automotive group in Erie, Pennsylvania. During all the years there, he was a member, and later, president for six years of the Erie Philharmonic Chorus. Additionally, he sang with and was president for two years of the Symphonic Singers of Erie. And, he sang with the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus from time to time.

In 2003, he moved back to Buffalo to be closer to his children. Friends told him about the BGMC. Upon learning that Barb Wagner was the artistic director, he leapt at the opportunity to try out for the chorus. When he learned that the music librarian needed assistance, Gerry quickly volunteered for that job four years ago. He is also the treasurer of the co-op where he lives and the secretary/treasurer of the Orchard Park Citizens Group.

Gerry wants all to know that if you love great choral music that the BGMC is definitely the place to be.

## Kudos to:

ALL who helped with the Diamonds & Pearls Cabaret on May 16.

ALL who participated in the AIDS walk 2009 on May 30.

Andy Newbert for keeping up the Crescendo mailing list.

Paul Brundage for being photographer at the winter concerts.

ALL our friends and supporters who support the chorus during these difficult economic times.

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

## Three gigs, three Fridays in April

It must be some sort of a record but the gay men's chorus performed on three of the four Friday nights during the month of April.

It was a dark and stormy night at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery as the chorus returned to Gusto at the Gallery on April 3. A small but enthusiastic audience braved the dreadful weather to hear the chorus repeat selections from the winter concert and sing other favorites from the past. With wind and rain whipping the floor to ceiling glass wall in the auditorium, artistic director Barb Wagner announced the program from the stage giving verbal program notes along the way. If you're blue and you don't know what to do, the BGMC chorus line has the answer in Irving Berlin's "Puttin' on the Ritz." "There's so much to be thankful for," sang the chorus in one of its numbers with Jason Higbee, the man with the horn, on trumpet. It may have been miserable outside but it was warm and bright inside.

The weather was much better on April 17 for the BGMC premier at the Lancaster Opera House. The suburban audience heard a program featuring Rob Szustak, countertenor, in "Psalm 23" from Leonard Bernstein's Chichester Psalms, Dion Johnson and Jason Ward singing "Anthem," from the musical Chess, and Shaun Doyle, soloist, in "Here's Where I Stand." The chorus line made another appearance in "Puttin' on the Ritz." After a standing ovation, the audience went home knowing why you can't take the "Color out of Colorado" and why you can't have New York City without Queens.

The Karpeles Manuscript Museum on Porter Avenue was the setting on April 24 for the third of the three April appearances. This time it was to support the fundraising efforts of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. The all a cappella program featured Scott Nachbar on trombone accompanying the chorus in "Wade in the Water," and Josh Blasdel, tenor soloist, in "Remember." Rounding out the program the chorus reprised favorites from past concerts including "Stand by Me," "Sixteen Tons," and concluded with the rousing Moses Hogan arrangement of "The Battle of Jericho." The BGMC is proud to support PFLAG in its mission of promoting the well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends.



The chorus in performance at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

## Chorus benefits from Mark Custom Recording

A familiar face greeted the chorus when it exited the stage at GALA in Montreal in 2004 and in Miami in 2008. It was Mark Morette of Mark Custom Recording Service of Clarence, New York, who was there to record all the performances of all the choruses in attendance. It felt great to have a local connection far away from home.

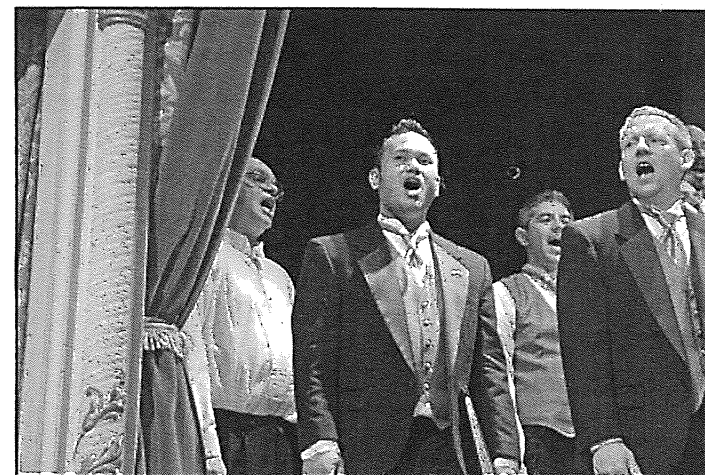
Mark records our local performances too. Known worldwide for their quality recordings of concert bands, orchestras, and chorus groups, Mark Custom Recording Service is in demand throughout the globe from major state, national, and international music conventions. Mark Custom Recording is considered America's premier recording service for live performance groups.

In its years of recording, Mark Custom Recording has had the honor of working with such musical groups as the Goo Goo Dolls, Roy Clark, Dizzy Gillespie, the Chicago Symphony, the Buffalo

Philharmonic Orchestra, the United States Air Force Band, and countless others.

Mark Recording has been showered with awards and honors including Sixty (60) Grammy Entry List appearances, and two Grammy Nominations. In 2001, Mark Recording was awarded the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra's award for "outstanding service to the music industry." During the summer of 2004, Mark was awarded the International Percy Grainger Society's "Grainger Medallion" for lifetime service for the promotion of the music of Percy Grainger.

Mark Recording invites you to peruse their vast database for recordings. But most of all, when you purchase a Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus CD, know that it has been produced by one of the very best in the business.



Hanford Searl, left, Aidan Ngin, and Rob Donner warm up the stage at the Lancaster Opera House.



Debi Overton, accompanist, and Timothy Mroz, bass, smile with Christopher Hart, percussion, in the background at the opera house.



Bill Hardy is "Puttin' on the Ritz."



Josh Blasdel is joined by the chorus in "Remember" at the Daemen College performance.

**SAVE THESE DATES**

Saturday, May 30, 2009 • **AIDS Walk 2009** • Help sponsor a BGMC singer as we walk to remember and honor those we have lost as well as support those who are still fighting the disease.

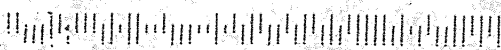
Sunday, June 7, 2009 • **Join the BGMC in the Annual Pride Parade** • Parade begins at 1:00 from Kleinhans Music Hall's parking lot..

Friday, June 19, 2009 • **BGMC on Vacation** • Unitarian Universalist Church  
695 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY at 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 20, 2009 • **BGMC on Vacation** • First Presbyterian Church  
One Symphony Circle, Buffalo, NY at 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 21, 2009 • **BGMC on Vacation** • Church of the Nativity United Church of Christ  
1530 Colvin Blvd., Kenmore, NY at 4:00 p.m.

**Annual meeting and election of new board members** • BGMC members watch your e-mail for details.



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Cut along dotted line and mail bottom portion with your contribution today to: **BGMC, 695 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14222.**

**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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**Friends who contribute at the \$200 "Conductor" level and above will receive two tickets to our next concert.**

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- Please add me to the BGMC mailing list.
- I have time or services that may help the BGMC. Please contact me.