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Celebrate

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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since 2002



buffalogaymenschorus.com

BgMC
The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

Artistic Director
Barbara Wagner

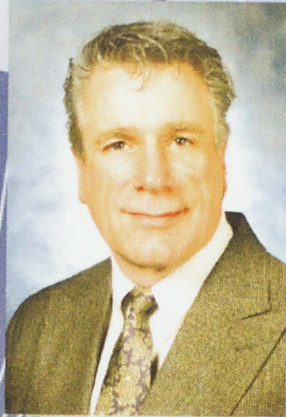
Accompanist
Debi Overton

Friday January 19, 2007
Unitarian Universalist
Church of Buffalo
695 Elmwood Ave.
Buffalo, New York

Saturday January 20, 2007
Westminster Presbyterian Church
724 Delaware Ave.
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The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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Our Mission

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 also to enlighten.

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

Our Motto

Use your powers to heal, and not to harm.



CITY OF BUFFALO

BYRON W. BROWN
MAYOR



January 2007

Dear Members and Supporters of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus:

Greetings and salutations to the BGMC on the occasion of your 6th season of song!

We send warm wishes on behalf of the City of Buffalo as you present *Celebrate!* at the Unitarian Universalist Church and at Westminster Presbyterian Church.

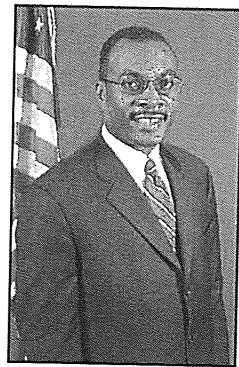
Your continued success under the direction of Maestra Barbara Wagner represents all that is best about the arts in our city: Beauty, harmony and excellence!

While we listen to you "produce vocal music of high quality in the rich tradition of men's choral singing," we know your sounds are the fruit of hard work and many rehearsal hours. You merit praise and have given our region another cultural asset of which we all can be proud.

We remember that these concerts on January 19th and 20th mark the 5th anniversary of your first public event in February 2002. Continued best wishes as you enlighten and entertain in our community of "Good Neighbors!"

Very truly yours,

Byron W. Brown
Mayor



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The Power of Music to Build Community Dennis C. Stuart, President, BGMC



We can be touched and moved by music. It can change us in ways that simple words can never do. We maintain that the BGMC is in the business of opening hearts and changing minds. In truth, a measurable part of this work is achieved by building bridges to individuals and groups within Western New York.

Music has the power to elicit emotions and to create harmony in ways that the spoken word cannot. I am absolutely convinced that through the power of our voice in communal song we can directly improve not only our own lives and those of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, but also the lives of everyone in our community.

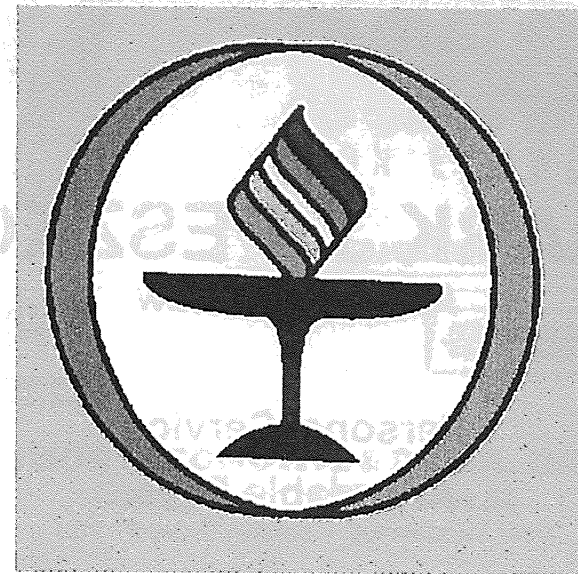
The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus has proven in five short years that we are an important force for change and acceptance. Our benefit concerts enable us to offer support to other non-profit and philanthropic organizations in need of funds, publicity, and support. These concerts build bridges and enable us to work together. We support our respective missions by performing these concerts. Our Board of Directors is committed to community involvement by our chorus. To this end, we look forward to more "bridge building" collaborations and partnerships. Additionally, we intend to continue our work with organizations involved in restoring Buffalo's beautiful trees so devastated by our October snowstorm.

In talking with people at our post-concert receptions, I am pleased to learn that many in our audience have attended virtually all of our concerts. Many others make certain to attend at least one each year. Thank you for sharing our enthusiasm! Know that our dedication to our mission will move us toward a just and equitable society for ALL citizens. Thank you for being with us for these past five years - we would be greatly diminished without your loyalty and support.

By rough estimate, our volunteer time since our inception as the BGMC totals over 60,000 hours. It is no wonder that we have evolved into a major component of the Buffalo arts scene. We are indeed, a powerful group of men! And, the women who work with us are pretty terrific, too! Enjoy the fruits of these past five years as our volunteer singers present for your listening pleasure - *Celebrate!*



*The BGMC participates in the Buffalo Gay Pride parade.
June 2003*



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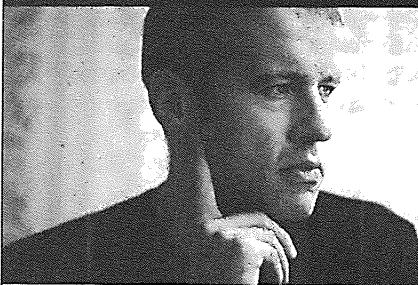
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Jessica Purple Rodela, Intern Minister

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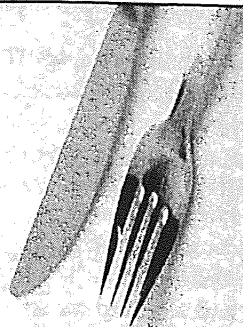
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Reflections From Within The Chorus - 1

*Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001. Months of preparation.
Organizing committee work. Incorporation certificate.
Bylaws. Countless discussions. Getting the word out.
How-to-tips from the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus.
Hiring our artistic director. And then the special pain of
this day. The calls to cancel tonight's first rehearsal. But
we go forward. Will anyone come? Will we falter at the
very start? 5:00, 6:00 pm, audition times. They come.
Over 40 of them. The 7:00 p.m. rehearsal time. He
remains downstairs to man the door. He cannot yet deal
with the group emotional turmoil. He weeps. Upstairs,
they hold hands, they weep, they pray — and we sing.
Such intense feelings! The B.G.M.C. has begun.*

Reflections from the Artistic Director



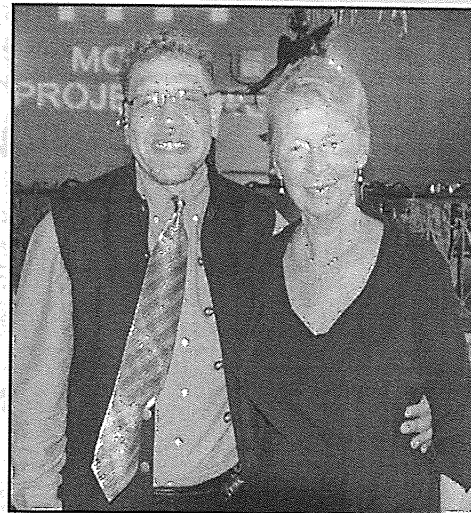
Several weeks ago, one of my most respected colleagues on the Board of the BGMC lovingly referred to me as a "bleeding heart liberal." I felt proud and honored that he believed that I was one of those people that I had admired for so many years. If I was not a "bleeding heart liberal," I don't believe the men of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus and I would have enjoyed the give-and-take relationship we have enjoyed these past 5+ years.

In the early days, many of the men gave me the benefit of the doubt when I knew that some of them wondered how a "straight old broad" could possibly succeed as the director of a gay men's chorus. In return, I accepted the challenge and the doubts and gave the best of everything I had learned over more than 37 years in the choral conducting field to my now, most beloved men. They listened as I told them how to produce a beautiful five-note scale, how to sing a gorgeous, warm fortissimo, how to modify their vowels so they were all perfectly unified, how to find their head voices, their falsettos.... They took all of this to heart and, in return, sang with a beauty I never thought possible. There were many simple five-note scales that were so exquisite; they brought tears to my eyes. We have given and taken musical and personal gifts to and from each other for more than five years, always with unexpected powerful results for all of us. It's been magical and exciting for many of us, and for me, the only way to reach the beauty and goodness for which we all strive.

My tolerant men gave me gay humor, with all of its often hysterical permutations. How we have laughed at my silly mistakes! There have been many, but unfortunately, they are not fit for publication in an elegant program like this one. (Talk to me later.) In return, I gave of my bawdy, mature humor, a product of many years in a field where humor, beauty, love and joy all go hand and hand. There has been much laughter and joy and yes, often tears in the rooms where the BGMC has rehearsed. It's all necessary so we can achieve even more than our best when we sing.

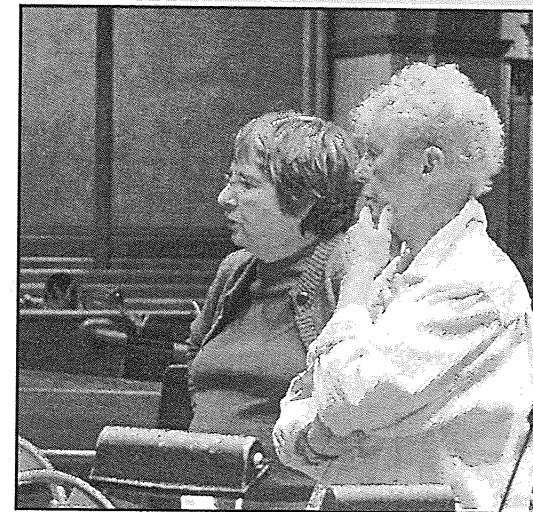
These magnificent, warm, loving men have changed my life in ways I never dreamed were possible. I am so grateful for the opportunity that was offered to me by our founders, and even more grateful for the give-and-take that has made it all work. And yes, as I said at our very first concert, I can still "feel the love tonight."

With much love,
Barb



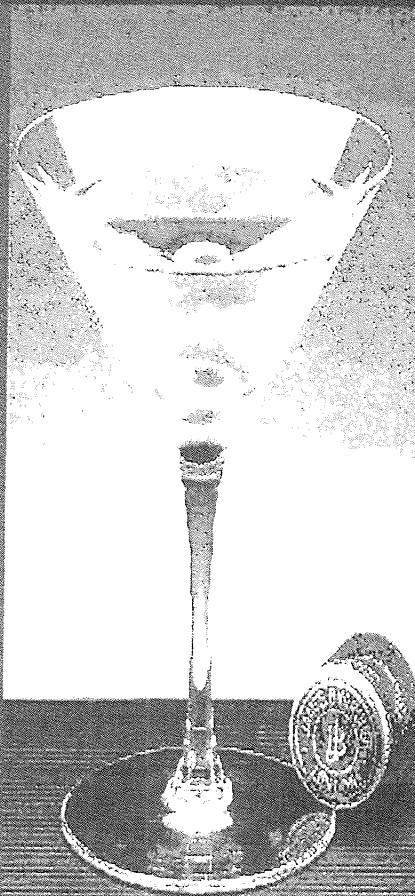
Executive Director of Men of Color Health Awareness Project Inc., John Morgan, and Barb Wagner share a smile after the BGMC performance at the MOCHA annual awards banquet. August 2006

Barb Wagner and Mary Louise Nanna, Founder and Director of the Ars Nova Musicians, discuss voice parts at a rehearsal for the Viva Vivaldi Concert. November 2004



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Swedish Proverb

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&
Saturday, March 3, 7:30 p.m.
The Chapel at Niagara University

Reflections From Within The Chorus - 2
We wanted to bond. Theater events, longer breaks during rehearsals for socializing, special birthday celebrations ... whatever would work. And the house parties! Gay guys bringing their best creations to eat. Spirited gatherings, and their infectious laughter and joyous, loving, even boistrous chatter — as friends and acquaintances sharing their growing bonds as gay men and B.G.M.C. singers — and not excluding one or two straight men (“presumed gay by association”) who identify and sing with us. The special connection between Barb and her “boys” began early. As we grew to over 70, the venues changed. Large parties at the American Red Cross building and similar spots. The after-rehearsal gatherings at Panos on Elmwood at special tables for up to 20 plus men (and Barb). Our best aspirations always the same: To be “together,” to be “family.”

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The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

Tenor I

Robert Black
 Norman Urban Boyer
 Peter A. Bruschi
 Brian Bussard-Schuster
Robert C. Donner
 Shaun Doyle Jr. **
 Norm Duttweiler Jr.
Ronald Houk
 Spike (Michael) Liska
 Randy McWharf
 Matthew Mooney
 B.Aidan Ngin
 R. Jeffrey Proctor
 John Rex
 Hanford Searl Jr.
 Kevin L. Thompson
 Guy Tomassi

Bass II

Brant Adamczyk
 Ronald J. Galena
 Paul T. Gannon
 Michael P. Gillis
Jaime Stephan Goldfuss *
 Lorne E. Gretsinger
 Jim Jagow
 Rob Keefe
 Randall D. Kozlowski
 Russell C. Link
Timothy H. Mahiques
 David K. Mathewson
 Ryan J. McKane
L. Martin Palcic **
 Michael J. Pardee
 Brian Rotach
 Dr. Lawrence Van Heusen
 Joseph A. Zimmerman

** Section Leader

* Chorus Marshall

Members in bold print have sung in all major BGMC concerts since 2001

Tenor II

Michael K. Bardo
Donald Behr
 Paul Brundage
 Edward F. Cizek Jr.
Dave Gannon
 William C. Hardy
 John V. Iacono
 Gerry Klein
 Delwyn Milander
 Michael Mroccka
 Nelson A. Neels
Roger Parris
 Mark J. Peszko
 Mike Styn
 Cedric 'Flip' Taporco **
 Jason A. Ward

Bass I

Christopher Babbitt
Dave Batt
 Dan Folwell
William H. Gardner
 Andrew Giarrizzo
 Scott Glasser
 Michael Heaney
 Duane Krakowiak
 Vincent Kuntz
Ramón 'Ray' Meléndez
 Raymond Neil
Andy Newbert **
 Paul R. Newell
 Murphy Palazzo
 Benjamin Phillips
 Joe Puma
 Jimmy Rigo
 Robert Rose
 Michael Shanahan
Sherwood 'Woody' Sipprell
Dennis C. Stuart
 Bobby Suwala
 Dan Weinrieb
Steven Young

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

Non-Singing Members

Chuck Alaimo
 Edward N. Giannino
 Mike Longo
 Mark Meyer
 Steve Niemiec
 Todd B. Ruth
 Danny Winter

Artistic Director

Barbara Wagner

Accompanist

Debi Overton

News & Information Director

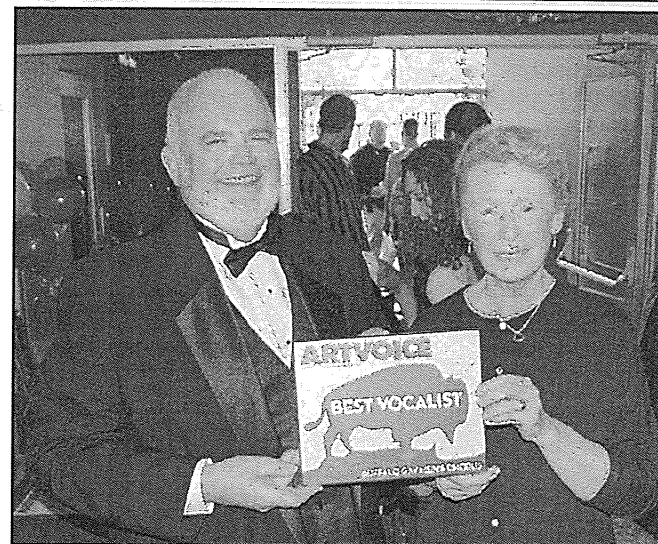
Kathleen Bryce Niles

Board of Directors

Dennis C. Stuart, President
 Mike Liska, Vice President
 Dave Batt, Secretary
 Todd B. Ruth, Treasurer
 Dave Gannon, Past President
 Christopher Babbitt
 Edward N. Giannino
 Michael P. Gillis
 Timothy H. Mahiques
 Steven Young

Archivist

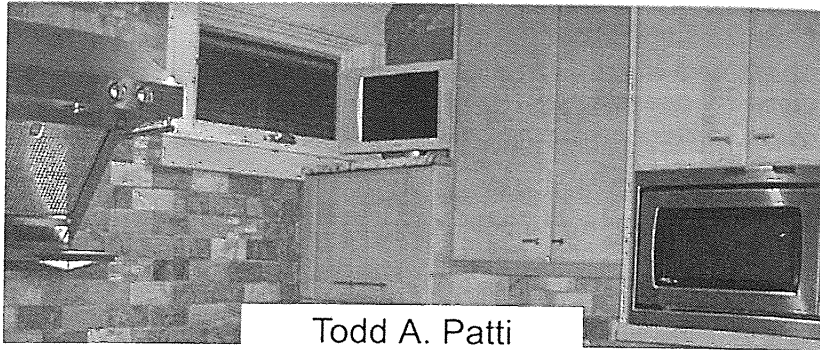
Chuck Alaimo



Dave Gannon and Barb Wagner proudly accept the "Best Vocalist" award presented by Artvoice. June 2006

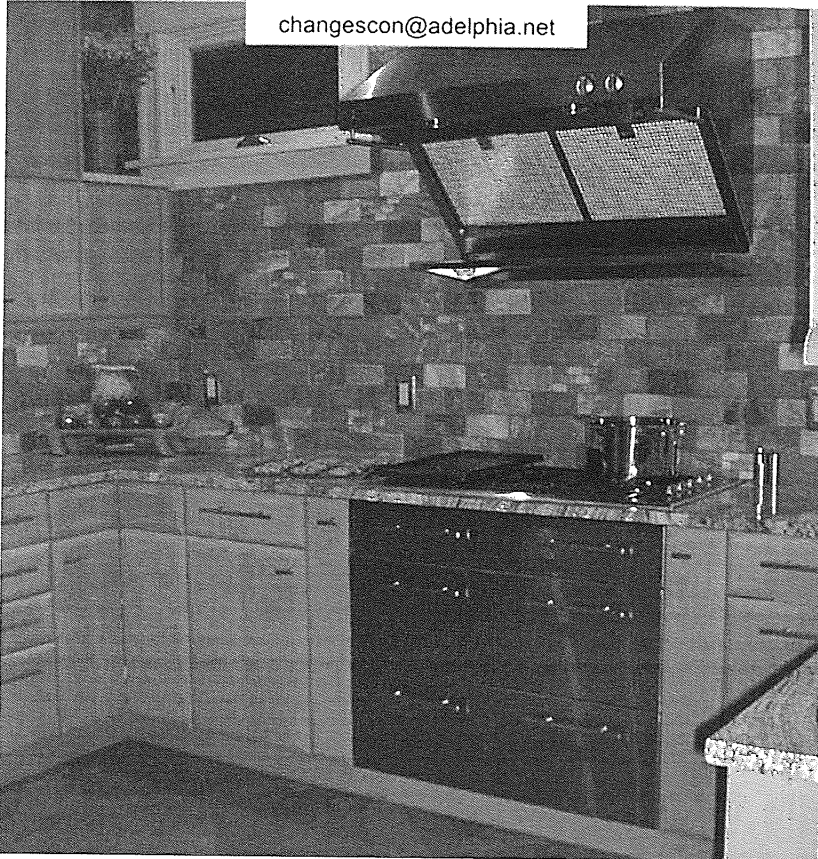
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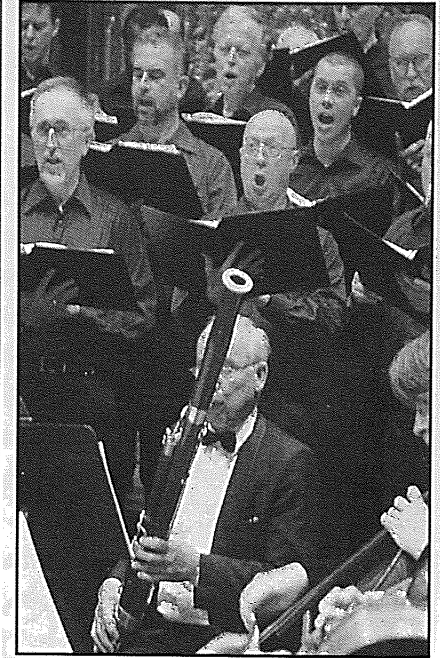
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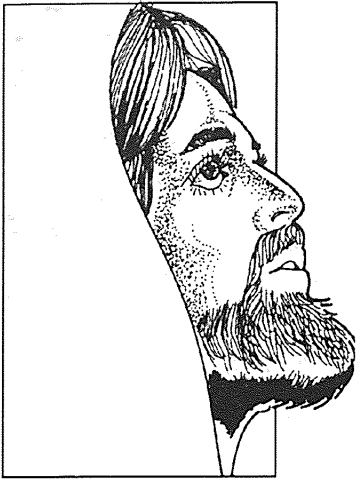
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The BGMC sings with the Ars Nova Musicians. November 2004

Reflections From Within The Chorus - 3

It was not always easy. For some, it took real courage. The sudden realization that we attract TV coverage at our performances, because of who we are. The "GAY" Men's Chorus. Looking out in the audience and unexpectedly seeing one's student and fearing the next school day. Finding a news photo of the Chorus on the workplace bulletin board with your face circled and a slur in the margin. Learning to be open and clear — and unafraid — about who we are. Holding and supporting each other. Getting through the crises to our stronger and better selves. And hoping that others, by our example, may have the strength to accept their own very special selves.



No matter who you are,
no matter where you are
on life's journey,
you are welcome here.

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Reflections From Within The Chorus - 4

We first wore modest outfits: black pants with polos or casual black-collared shirts. Something "everybody could afford." Then came Montreal! Summer 2004, a city enlarged with 5,000 gay and lesbian singers from around the continent and abroad. A week listening to other choruses ... the men resplendent in their tuxedos, often singing from memory. When our turn came, we had raised our own expectations. Thirty minutes singing our specially commissioned song series on Whitman poems from memory, before an audience of 3,000. An incredible, mind-bending experience! Back in Buffalo, we immediately arranged for tuxedos for everyone and made a commitment to strong memorized elements in our concerts. This was, now, truly serious.



The BGMC was one of 165 choruses participating in the GALA Chorus Festival in Montreal. July 2004

Reflections From Within The Chorus - 5

Our choice of music has sometimes been accompanied with a touch of controversy. Some would prefer lighter, show-tune music. Others, classical. Some wanted it a bit more "gay;" others, less so. Opinions did not just vary within the Chorus, they were sometimes strongly held. But Barb has encouraged us to mix the lighter with the more serious music, including some of the beautiful material available from other lands, in other languages. Oh, how some of us struggled with that — and not always happily! But we have persisted. And a confidential survey of the members this year makes it clear that some of our most cherished repertoire comes from other-language music that you will be hearing tonight. It seems true that, by and large, we are all growing more comfortable with different musical experiences as we continue on our way.

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Reflections From Within The Chorus - 6
In our wildest dreams, we would never have associated "B.N.C." and "B.P.O." in our minds. But in 2003 and 2006, under the batons of Ron Spiegelman and JoAnn Falletta, in turn, we sang with the B.P.O. What glorious experiences they were! There we stood, singing our music with pride, with gratitude that it could be heard and, we hoped, with confidence that it measured up to our very best. In 2003, we sang the serenely elegant "Cantique de Jean Racine", by Gabriel Fauré, as part of an all-French program. At the Olmsted Park Conservancy event in 2006, we sang a variety of music ranging from the quiet and sedate to the magnificence of "Nessun Dorma," Puccini's operatic masterpiece. We are confident we know what brought us to the B.P.O. stage on both occasions: the focused, persistent musical genius of our own Barbara Wagner, to whom her "boys" offer their continuing devotion and affection.



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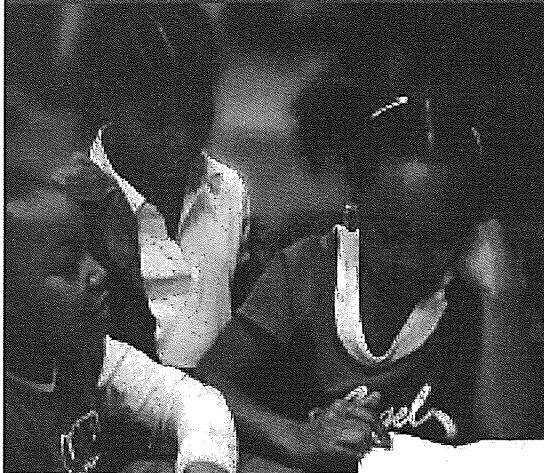
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Reflections From Within The Chorus - 7

We've donned our tuxedos. Concert time is near. There is a general milling around in the back rooms — with chorus members talking and laughing with one another, audience members and supporters coming and going. Barbara appears, dressed and ready. She signals and we come together around her. She calls our newest members to the center of our gathered group. Hands are raised as she asks for those who have sung at all our concerts, then all but one and so on, down to the present time. Then her quiet talk to our newest singers, — how they are now, this night, full members of the chorus, and that it welcomes them with open arms, and that we sing for the music — but not just that. We sing to save lives, and we know that that happens. Whether in Buffalo, or in a small town Canadian church, or the Baptist Church in downtown Niagara Falls (to assist local AIDS relief effort,) or the Masonic Hall in Erie, Pa. (to help local gay men and lesbians form their own gay chorus,) or an arts program at the College in Fredonia (in support of its gay and lesbian student activities,) or elsewhere as we are called and are able to respond. We should be proud of what we do, she says, a reminder from this straight woman of our more serious purposes. Then, we sing, to her and to each other and not necessarily in perfect key. Softly, so as not to be heard in the concert hall. But earnestly, sincerely. Always the same:

My life flows on, in endless song, above earth's lamentation.

I hear the real though far off song that hails a new creation.

No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that rock I'm clinging.

Since Love is Lord of Heaven and Earth,

How can I keep from singing?

The tones drift away, as we briefly stand there. Then: "Places everyone. It's time." Another concert begins.

[These seven Reflections have been contributed by a chorus member as paid and anonymous advertisements.]

Celebrate!

**Celebrate!*
Music

Come to the Music Music and Words by Joseph M. Martin
Michael Heaney, Piccolo
Christopher Hart, Percussion

**Celebrate!*
Possibilities

Laudate Pueri Felix Mendelssohn
Psalm 113

**Celebrate!*
Faith

Hospodi Pomilui S.V. Lovovsky
From the Russian Orthodox Liturgy

**Celebrate!*
Love and Creativity

To a Stranger Martin J. Wimmer
Words by Walt Whitman
For Roland E. Martin and the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus © 2004

**Celebrate!*
Nature

Shenandoah American Folk Song
Arranged by James Erb

**Celebrate!*
One Another

No One is Alone Music and Words by Stephen Sondheim
From *Into the Woods* Arranged by Peter Ghiloni

**Celebrate!*
Courage and Community

Seize the Day Music by Alan Menken
From *Newsies* Words by Jack Feldman
Mr. Hart, Percussion

**Celebrate!*
the "Beat!"

You Can't Stop the Beat Music by Marc Shaiman
From *Hairspray* Words by Marc Shaiman and Scott
Mr. Hart, Percussion Wittman
Paul Newell, Choralography

— Intermission —

**Celebrate!*
Memories - Five Years of BGMC History



Music from the Heart - The magic of February 2002. The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus appears on the Buffalo scene for the first time! Four languages - what a coup!

How Can I Keep From Singing? Quaker Hymn
Arranged by Ginger Littleton

Dirait-on Morten Lauridsen
Words by Rainer Maria Rilke

La Vergine degli Angeli Giuseppe Verdi
Text by Francesco Maria Piave
Jennifer Grace-Mernitz, Soprano



Sounds of Summer - June 2002. We could hardly wait to sing the wonderful "Our Love is Soaring Across the Land," by Holly Near.

Our Love is Soaring Across the Land Music by Jeff Langley
Words by Holly Near



Of Sweet Harmony – January 2003. We sang “Cantique de Jean Racine” and were later invited to sing it with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra that spring. We also sang chorus and audience favorite “Non Nobis Domine” to a thunderous ovation!

Cantique de Jean Racine Gabriel Fauré
Scott Glasser, Violin

Non Nobis Domine Patrick Doyle
From *Henry V*



Songs of Freedom – June 2003. We sang in Hebrew! Chorus Baritone and doctoral candidate in Theory, Michael Chikinda arranged the joyous “El Yivneh Hagalil.”

El Yivneh Hagalil Julius Chajes
Arranged by Michael Chikinda



If Music be the Food of Love – January 2004. Our biggest challenge to date was learning and performing “The Last Words of David.”

The Last Words of David Randall Thompson



Singing with Pride – June 2004. We had commissioned our first choral work – “Adamic Songs,” (six of them) by Roland Martin to the poetry of Walt Whitman. “Standing on the Side of Love,” the TTBB arrangement done for us by composer, Jason Shelton was in direct response to President Bush’s proposal that an amendment banning same sex marriage be added to the constitution. We were ready for the GALA Festival in Montreal.

From the Adamic Songs Roland E. Martin
I. As Adam Early in the Morning Poetry Walt Whitman
V. What Think You I Take My Pen in Hand
Glenn Einschlag, Bassoon
Peter C. Smith, Clarinet

One More Walk Around the Garden Burton Lane and Alan Jay Lerner
From *Carmelina*



Brothers in Song – January 2005. GALA was a revelation to us. Our repertoire was quickly growing and changing. We had new friends from gay choruses all over the world that inspired us and helped us find the music we needed. Our processional was the rollicking “Be Our Guest.” We did “Nessun Dorma” for the first time.

Nessun Dorma Giacomo Puccini
From *Turandot*



Fearless! – June 2005. We were still heady with memories of Montreal and GALA. One of our most courageous concerts to date included “Naked in the Leaves,” and “I Ain’t Afraid.”

Naked in the Leaves Music by Robert Seeley
Words by Robert Espindola

I Ain’t Afraid Music and Words by Holly Near
Arranged by Steven Milloy



A Winter’s Tale – January 2006. We performed another commissioned piece, and the poignant “Seasons of Love.” It marked our final concert with our beloved Cantor David Goldstein.

Seasons of Love Jonathan Larson
From *Rent*
Shannon Niver, Soprano



Let Us Entertain You – June 2006. Performing in Rockwell Hall, singing “Landscape,” the lovely “Today,” and “Nkosi Sikelele’ iAfrica.”

Today Music and Words by Randy Sparks
From “*Advance to the Rear*”

Nkosi Sikelele’ iAfrica Music and Words by Enoch Sontonga
Please rise if you are able.

We celebrate all of you who have traveled and continue to travel this journey with us as we sing for the awareness, acceptance, tolerance, joy and love the BGMC represents. In the words of Holly Near, we are “singing for our lives.”

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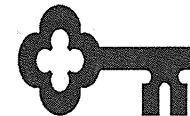
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One of the great moments in my life was when we sang "Non Nobis Domine" at the First Baptist Church in Niagara Falls. Some Baptists are known in the gay community for their homophobia, and some of these in other Baptist churches reared their heads before the concert. But I grew up in this denomination, the American Baptist Church, and knew that down deep these Baptists wanted to show God's love to all. We received an embracing, warm welcome, and the pastor later wrote in his church newsletter that as he looked around and saw the BGMC and the diverse audience, he felt as though he had "seen the face of God."

Larry Van Heusen – Bass II

Call for Volunteers

While we could easily use several full time staff, as a non-profit organization we thrive on the volunteers who assist us whenever they are able to do so. We always need volunteers to help out in many different support roles that enable our singers to do what they do best - Sing! If you are interested in a volunteer position with the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, please contact our office at 716-883-1277.

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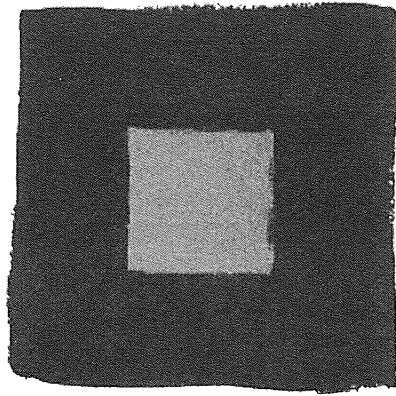
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by Gary Earl Ross

directed by Lorna C. Hill

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Gary Earl Ross is a professor at the UB Educational Opportunity Center and author of the books "The Wheel of Desire" and "Shimmerville." His 2005 play "Matter of Intent" won the Emanuel Fried Best New Play Award and the Edgar Award from the Mystery Writers of America.

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Music Notes

Come to the Music

With a catchy tune, off-kilter joyful dance groove and buoyant lyric it's not surprising that "Come to the Music" has become a favorite piece of choral singers and audiences since Joseph M. Martin published it six years ago. The song was commissioned by a high school men's chorus for the Texas Music Educators Association. The BGMC heard no fewer than five renditions at the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA) festival in Montreal in 2004.

Laudate Pueri

Though a Romantic composer, firmly planted in the 19th century, Felix Mendelssohn absorbed the clarity and simplicity of Baroque and early Classical music into his own style. At a time when musicians rarely performed music of dead composers, Mendelssohn was keenly aware of his musical forbears: He revived Bach's St. Matthew Passion (abridged and somewhat reorchestrated) for public performance in 1829.

In his motet "Laudate Pueri Dominum" (Psalm 113,) published in 1830 and originally written for women's chorus, we hear a perfect example of Mendelssohn's refined musical language: The harmonies are adopted from Mozart and grafted to counterpoint that hearkens back to Bach. All melds easily - and wonderfully - with Romantic expressiveness and passion.

Hospodi Pomilui

In the Orthodox Church, the word "Liturgy" refers specifically to the Eucharistic service - in the West, its equivalent is the Mass. As the early church developed, a number of Liturgies arose in the East, but only four forms are in use today. One of those is the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom which is used on Sundays and weekdays. The phrase "Hospodi Pomilui" ("Lord, have mercy") is sung many times throughout the Liturgy. We have included a setting by S.V. Lovovsky (1830-1894) - a lesser-known Russian contemporary of Tchaikovsky - in which that phrase is repeated no less than 75 times.

To a Stranger

Buffalo composer Martin J. Wimmer writes:

"Walt Whitman's poem 'To a Stranger' was published in 1860 in Leaves of Grass in the cluster of 45 poems of distinctly gay sensibility called the Calamus poems. Leaves of Grass was criticized because of its exaltation of the body and sexual love and also because of its innovation in verse form - that is, the use of free verse in long rhythmical lines with a natural, 'organic' structure. I was inspired to set poetry by Whitman after hearing the BGMC perform several Whitman settings by fellow Buffalo composer, Roland E. Martin. 'To A Stranger' was composed in 2004."

Mr. Wimmer hopes his music does justice to this remarkably potent poem.

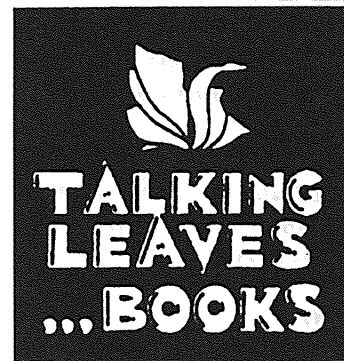
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The first time I came to a rehearsal, I reached out to shake the hand of a fellow chorister who pushed my hand aside. "This really isn't a hand shaking kind of group, welcome to the family!" he said, as he gave me a big hug.

Seeing all of our friends and family in the pews of the church warmly greeting and standing in support of us was overwhelming as we processed down the aisle of a filled Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church.

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus
Every moment I spend as a member of this organization is a memorable one. I know that we can't expect to change the entire world at once, but if we keep working on it one heart at a time we'll be successful.

Jason Ward - Tenor II



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From all of the BGMC Family, a very special and heartfelt thank you to the *Friends of the BGMC*. Your "voice" and generosity bring enlightenment, inspiration, healing, empowerment and harmony to the greater community and to all of us. We are most grateful.

The Friends of the BGMC listed in this program are those who have contributed between June 4, 2006 and December 31, 2006.

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I first heard the piece "I Ain't Afraid" when it was performed by another chorus in Montreal at GALA in 2004. If any song could be an anthem for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, this one is it. I'll never forget sharing this song with hundreds of supportive and welcoming people gathered at Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church in April 2005 in the midst of community turmoil surrounding our concert. What a day!
Donald Behr – Tenor II

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Shenandoah

The original lyrics of this haunting riverboatmen's song tell the story of a roving trader in love with the daughter of Chief Shenandoah; the rover tells the chief of his intent to take the girl with him far to the west, across the Missouri River. The words in this arrangement omit mention of the daughter; the song is sung to the river, not to Chief Shenandoah.

No One is Alone

Billed as a fairy tale for adults, Stephen Sondheim's 1987 musical *Into the Woods* interwove the stories of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella* and *Rapunzel* as a witty and multi-layered examination of the parent-child relationship, the responsibility to community, and the inevitability of growing up and discovering the real world. Despite darkness, murder and mayhem, sweetness and simplicity color the book and score of *Into the Woods*. "No One Is Alone" is a pragmatic - and affecting - conclusion to the story.

Seize the Day

The 1992 Disney musical *Newsies* retells the story of the 1899 New York City newsboys' strike against newspaper moguls Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst. The boys explode into the anthem "Seize the Day" at the point in the story when, inspired by a recent trolley-workers' strike, they realize that they have the power to unite and fight for their rights.

You Can't Stop the Beat

"You Can't Stop the Beat," the finale of the blockbuster 2002 Broadway musical based on John Waters' loopy 1988 film comedy *Hairspray*, celebrates joy and pride among the exuberant young people of Baltimore who embrace diversity and triumph over prejudice. The song celebrates the joy that comes from "lightening up." Don't fight it - have fun with everything that's weird and wonderful about each of us!

How Can I Keep From Singing?

"How Can I Keep From Singing" holds a very special place in the hearts of the 35 men who gathered at the first rehearsal of the brand-new BGMC. That rehearsal began at 7 PM on September 11, 2001. At the end of that brutal and bewildering day, this lovely hymn centered and restored us.

The publisher's attribution of this song as a "Quaker hymn" is in dispute, as various sources claim that it was composed in 1860 by Baptist minister Robert Wadsworth Lowry, who wrote about 500 other hymns, including "Shall We Gather at the River."


continued on page 44

The spontaneous applause and standing ovation for Father George Reger as he barely completed the phrase "Welcome to Blessed Trinity Church" will always hold special meaning for me. It demonstrates what the BGMC is about, that enlightenment through our music is always possible, even when faced with challenges from those who would prefer we remain in the closet. **ORUS**

Dave Gannon - Tenor II

"A Gem on Hertel"

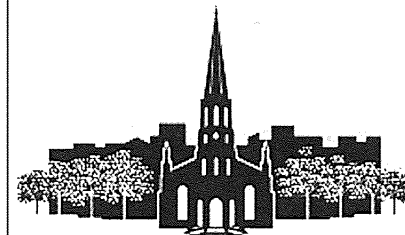
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ROBIN JOHNSON

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Dirait-on

Of the last song in his cycle of five songs, *Les Chansons des Roses*, the composer writes: "Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) wrote nearly 400 poems in French. His poems on roses struck me as especially charming, filled with gorgeous lyricism, deftly crafted and elegant in their imagery. *Dirait-on* is set as a tuneful folksong that weaves together two melodic ideas first heard in fragmentary form in preceding movements of my choral cycle."

La Vergine degli Angeli

La Forza del destino was written for the Bolshoi Theater in St. Petersburg, where it premiered in 1862. Its libretto was the last of the nine that Piave wrote for Verdi. At the end of the third act of the opera the fugitive heroine Leonora, disguised as a monk, kneels in prayer before the altar of a monastery church and receives communion. Her voice soars over those of the monks.

Our Love is Soaring Across the Land

A child of politically active parents, Holly Near is a unique combination of entertainer, teacher and activist. Her career as a singer has been defined by an unwillingness to separate her passion for music from her passion for human dignity. "Our Love is Soaring across the Land" is one of nearly 500 songs she co-wrote with composer Jeff Langley. It has been sung by gay and lesbian choruses around the world since its composition in 1994.

Cantique de Jean Racine

The *Cantique* is a setting of words by the 17th century dramatist and poet Jean Racine. It was Fauré's first significant composition, written in 1865 while he was in his final year at the *École Niedermeyer*, the 'École de musique religieuse et classique'. He submitted the piece for the composition prize, and won, though it remained unpublished for eleven years. Fauré went on to write a good deal of religious music - most notably the *Requiem*, written in 1888 - but of the shorter sacred pieces it is the *Cantique* that has particularly captured the affections of choirs and audiences.

Non Nobis Domine

Patrick Doyle's stirring anthem was composed for the soundtrack of Kenneth Branagh's 1989 film *Henry V*, where it is heard during the now-famous climactic scene where King Henry, in the aftermath of the Battle of Agincourt, makes his way across the dead-strewn battlefield in a stunning, four-minute tracking shot.

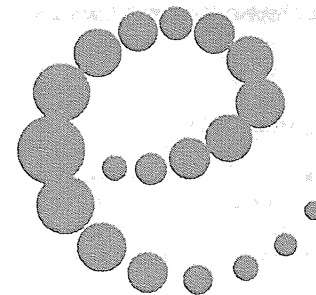
El Yivneh Hagalil

Julius Chajes (1910-1985) was born in Lvov, Poland. He served as head of the piano department at the Music College in Tel Aviv and came to the United States in 1937. In 1940, he became the conductor of the Center Symphony Orchestra in Detroit and was appointed to the faculty of Wayne State University in 1950. This energetic piece, written in 1945 as excitement grew in advance of the opening of the State of Israel, suggests a spirit of hard work, cooperation and growth. Michael Chikinda, a member of the BGMC in 2003, recast this popular piece for performance by our chorus.

continued on page 46

I'm very proud of my participation as a member of the first Board of Directors that brought this wonderful chorus to Buffalo. As I think about these last five years, I think of the friends, the rehearsals, trips to Canada and cities in Pennsylvania and New York, performances with the Buffalo Philharmonic, but most of all the music, and, of course, that means Barbara Wagner. She is the grand force that makes us as good as we are. I never dreamed that, as I approach my 75th year, I would be singing in a gay chorus in Buffalo, but here we are, singing "You Can't Stop the Beat" with HAND MOTIONS no less, as well as French, Italian, Latin, opera and gospel. Thank you for the music, as the song goes, Barbara. Wouldn't it be amazing if we could celebrate our tenth year together?

Russ Link - Bass II



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continued from page 44

The Last Words of David

The Boston Symphony Orchestra commissioned "The Last Words of David" in 1949 in honor of the 25th anniversary of its director, Serge Koussevitzky. Randall Thompson, professor of music at Harvard University and a teacher of the young Leonard Bernstein, drew his text for this soaring work from II Samuel 23:3-4 in the King James version. The words "Alleluia ... Amen" are not part of the scripture.

From the *Adamic Songs*

Acclaimed Western New York composer, teacher and organist Roland E. Martin set six poems from *Leaves of Grass* for the BGMC in 2004. He writes: "It was an overwhelming pleasure for me to set these wonderful poems. They are filled with moments of great tenderness, intimacy, longing, lust, joy and more. Many composers have set Whitman's poetry. His 'love poetry,' perhaps because of its abundance of masculine pronouns, has only seldom been set to music. This is probably the first musical setting of most of these poems."

One More Walk Around the Garden

Despite words by Lerner (*Brigadoon*, *My Fair Lady*, *Camelot*) and music by Lane (*Finian's Rainbow*), the artistic forces who had teamed up to create *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever* (Grammy for best original cast album), the 1979 musical *Carmelina* did not fare well on Broadway. Based on the 1968 film *Buona Sera, Mrs. Campbell* and nominated for a Best Original Score Tony, the cast included Georgia Brown and Paul Sorvino.

The lovely trio "One More Walk around the Garden" is sung by three WW II veterans, any of whom might have fathered Mrs. Campbell's daughter, who is now 17 years old.

Nessun Dorma

Puccini's final opera, *Turandot*, is saturated with exotic characters and colorful harmonies. They tell the tale of the handsome Prince Calaf, who is given the chance to spare his life from a death sentence placed on him by the cold-hearted Princess Turandot - if he can correctly answer three riddles. Act 3 opens in gloom of night, with shadowy voices promulgating the death sentence. With a key change to a bright, strong major mode, the Prince vows to find the answers, save his life - and win the hand of the Princess.

Our arrangement jumps to the final pages of the opera as all celebrate the power of light and love.

Naked in the Leaves

While there are many songs that celebrate the joys of conventional married life, there are few songs that capture the joy and tenderness experienced by gay men blessed with the stability of long-term relationships. Robert Secley, the longtime composer-in-residence of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, has set this tender, slow waltz to extraordinarily perceptive words by Robert Espindola, who is himself an educator and strong advocate for teenagers living with HIV/AIDS.

I Ain't Afraid

Holly Near released "I Ain't Afraid" on her album, *Edge* in 2000. Five gay and lesbian choruses sang this stirring, in-your-face anthem at the 2004 GALA Festival

in Montreal. We heard Steven Milloy himself directing his chorus, *VocalPoint!* The song has been adopted, with Holly Near's gracious permission, as the theme song of the Institute for Humanist Studies, based in Albany.

Seasons of Love

The *Rent* phenomenon captured the imagination of theatergoers in 1996. A modern retelling of the story made familiar to opera lovers from Puccini's *La Boheme*, *Rent* covers the year in the life of persons living with AIDS, and their friends and lovers among the New York crowd of struggling artists and actors. Jonathan Larson, the creator of *Rent* tells us in this song to make the most of time and love, despite burned bridges and untimely death. Larson died of an aortic aneurism two weeks before the show's opening.

Today

This lovely ballad was first sung by The New Christie Minstrels in the more-or-less forgettable 1964 Civil War comedy, "Advance to the Rear." Composer Sparks was a member of The New Christie Minstrels at the time, as was the late John Denver.

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica

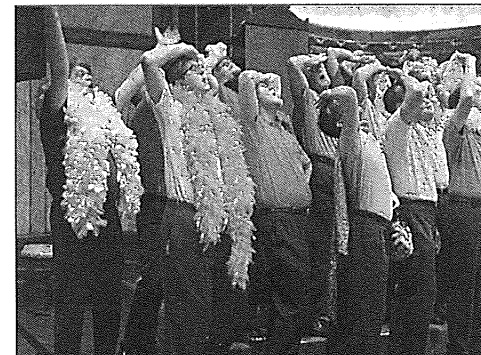
"Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica" was composed in 1897 by Enoch Sontonga, a teacher at a Methodist mission school in Johannesburg. For decades the song has been regarded as the national anthem of South Africa by the oppressed. It was always sung as an act of defiance against the apartheid regime. There are no standard versions or translations of "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica" so the words vary from place to place and from occasion to occasion.

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When the BGMC first performed "Our Love is Soaring Across the Land" at our Spring 2003 concert, I found a song that 'spoke' to me and helped me feel at peace with myself. I finally felt content with identifying myself as a gay man. The message of this song truly empowered me. I still get goose bumps every time I hear the introduction!

Rob Donner – Tenor I

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The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus has been an important part of my life since the day I arrived for my first rehearsal. My first rehearsal in February 2002 was about 2 months after my father died after suffering from a long bout with cancer. I needed something to help fill my life again. The friends I have made in the chorus have helped fill that void.

I took a sabbatical in the fall of 2004 and spring of 2005. During that time I lost my mother who died suddenly at the end of June 2005. I came back to the chorus in the fall of 2005 and remembered how much the chorus helped me feel alive again.

To the men of the BGMC, Barbara Wagner, Debi Overton and all volunteers, I wish to express the deepest gratitude to all of you. You are the best family anyone could ever have. Thank you!

Dan Folwell – Bass I

We were rehearsing for one of our concerts and Barbara had to leave to find some music in her office. She needed someone to keep the rehearsal going and asked me to conduct "Nessun Dorma" while she was gone. Let me just say that being one of the singers of this group is such a pleasure and a privilege for me, and when we are really communicating with Barbara and she with us, that magical moment always happens.

That being said, as I conducted the chorus, I felt that very magic we always look for when we sing together. How we listen to each other to make music together. I could see in all of the faces in front of me how committed we all are to each other, to the music and to Barbara. I cannot imagine life without being able to sing with you all. I love the BGMC.

Flip Taporco - Tenor II

'Our Voices Win Freedom...' ...is the motto of GALA Choruses.

The Gay And Lesbian Association of Choruses, Inc. (GALA Choruses) is the world's only association committed to serving the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered choral movement. The BGMC is a proud five-year member of this now over 100 member association encompassing 10,000 plus singers. Formed in 1982, GALA Choruses provides support, and helps foster the artistic and organizational development of member choruses through a wide variety of programs and services. GALA Choruses produces choral festivals, educational conferences and publications and facilitates networking among members. It serves as a resource center for choruses and individual members.

In the summer of 2004 the BGMC attended and performed at the GALA Festival VII in Montreal where over 6,000 other singers participated. The BGMC is already making plans to attend and perform at GALA Festival VIII in Miami, Florida in July of 2008.

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Translations

Laudate Pueri

*Praise the Lord, all ye children, praise the name of the Lord.
Blessed be the name of the Lord from henceforth now and forever.*

Dirait-on

*Abandon surrounding abandon,
Tenderness touching tenderness...
Your oneness endlessly caresses itself, so they say;*

Self-caressing

*Through its own clear reflection.
Thus you invent the theme of Narcissus fulfilled.*

La Vergine degli Angeli

*May Our Lady of the Angels shield you beneath Her mantle, and may
the Holy Angel of God keep vigil to protect you.*

Cantique de Jean Racine

*Word of God the most high, our sole hope,
eternal day of the earth and heavens
as we break the silence of the peaceful night
divine saviour, look down upon us.*

*Imbue us with the fire of thy great mercy
so that hell itself will flee at the sound of your voice
disperse the sleep which leads our languishing souls
to stray from the path of righteousness.*

*O Christ show your favour to your faithful people
who have come together to worship you
receive the praises that they offer up to your immortal glory
and may they come back laden with the gift of your grace.*

Non Nobis Domine

Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to Your Name give glory. - Psalm 115

El Yivneh Hagalil

The Lord will build Galilee. Blessed be He who will build Galilee.

The Last Words of David

He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Alleluia, amen.

Nessun Dorma

No one sleeps, no one sleeps...even you, o Princess, in your cold room, Watch the stars that tremble with love and with hope. But my secret is hidden within me; My name no one shall know, no, no, On your mouth I will speak it when the light shines, and my kiss will dissolve the silence that makes you mine.

No one will know his name and we all must, alas, die. Vanish, o night! Set, stars! At daybreak, I shall conquer! Love! O sun! Life! Eternity! Light of the world and love! We celebrate our happiness in the infinite sun! Glory to you! Glory!

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica

God bless and preserve Africa. Let her glory be held on high. Please listen to our prayers; God bless her children.

Spirit, please come down; God bless and protect us.

Holy Spirit, please come down; Bless us, we her children.

God protect our nation; Please bring an end to war and suffering

Protect us, protect our nation, Africa.

Amen, so be it forever and ever.

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About the Artists



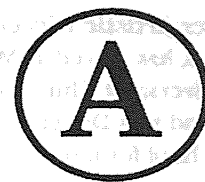
Incorporated in 2001, **The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus (BGMC)** performs a rich catalog of classical, contemporary, Broadway, pop and multi-cultural music. The repertoire is as diverse as the 75 men who are singing with pride as members of the BGMC.

The BGMC has been honored by the Empire State Pride Agenda with a Community Service Award. This award was in recognition of efforts to raise awareness and to enlighten our region through song. To that end, the BGMC has performed in a variety of venues throughout Western New York and Ontario for many community events. Additionally, the BGMC has traveled to Montreal to participate in the seventh annual GALA Festival, an international gathering of gay and lesbian choruses. Recently the BGMC won the *Artvoice* Best of Buffalo 2006 Award for 'Best Vocalist.'

While maintaining a strong presence within the gay community, The BGMC also has been privileged to perform with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra at Kleinhans Music Hall on two occasions, and has done benefits for the Amherst Unitarian Universalist Church music program; Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church's restoration; the annual World AIDS Day Memorial Service; and, the AIDS Community Services fundraiser Cause for Celebration. Additionally, BGMC performed for the arrival of The Amistad; participated in "Gusto at the Gallery" at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery; sang at the Ars Nova Musicians "Viva Vivaldi" Concert; sang at Fredonia College for their diversity and multicultural groups; and, at the Nichols School for Diversity Week. Of course, our four major concerts annually bring our work to thousands of avid listeners.

The BGMC is a membership association dedicated to producing high quality vocal music in the rich tradition of men's choral singing. Through song, the Chorus endeavors to entertain and enlighten, create harmony and celebrate personal and community pride.

continued on page 56



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Membership in the BGMC is open to any man who passes a simple audition and who is willing to commit to weekly rehearsals, an active performance schedule, paying semi-annual dues and wants to have fun making beautiful music.

Auditions are held throughout the year. For more information, call Artistic Director Barbara Wagner at 668-1124.

*Singing With Pride
Since 2001*

continued from page 54



Barbara Wagner, the charter **Artistic Director** of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, has served as Minister of Music at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo (UUCB) since 1962 and was Director of Vocal Activities at Nichols School for more than 24 years.

The Choir at the UUCB, in addition to its Sunday morning responsibilities, enjoyed two highly acclaimed European tours: the first to Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic and the second to Ireland, Wales, England and Scotland. The Choir under Ms. Wagner's direction has recorded for American Public Radio, performed locally with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO), Amherst Saxophone Quartet and the Ars Nova Musicians. Ms. Wagner was the conductor for the Peace Odyssey Concert Tour of Hungary and the former Soviet Union. Choral singers from all over the US participated in this tour.

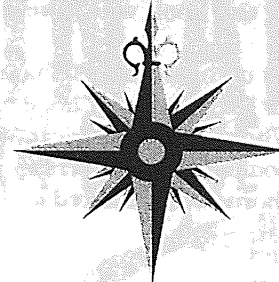
She ran a choral program at Nichols High School that involved more than 100 young singers, including a Concert Chorus, Women's Ensemble, Men's Ensemble and a Mixed Chamber Group. She was also guest conductor for the City of Good Neighbors Chorale, Buffalo's Gay & Lesbian chorus in the mid 1980s.

Ms. Wagner earned a BFA Degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo, where she studied organ with Squire Haskin, and completed graduate work at Westminster Choir College. Her advanced studies include organ study with Karl Richter at the Munich Conservatory and conducting with Raymond Harvey, formerly Assistant Conductor of the BPO and presently Music Director of the Kalamazoo Symphony.

She is a member of the American Choral Director's Association, the Erie County Music Educators Association, MENC, Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network (founding member, former vice president and board member) NYSSMA, the American Guild of Organists (sub-dean and program chair for the Buffalo Chapter), and the Chromatic Club of Buffalo. She was Chair of the New Hymns Task Force of the Unitarian Universalist Association, which recently completed *Singing the Journey*, a brand new supplement to *Singing the Living Tradition*, the hymnbook for the denomination. Ms. Wagner also served on the

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NORTH



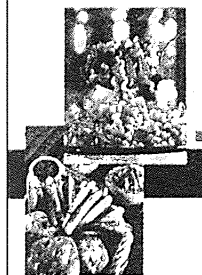
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continued from page 56

Commission for "Singing the Living Tradition" which worked for 7 years compiling and researching that book, which went to press in 1993.

Ms. Wagner is the recipient of the Buffalo Philharmonic/Erie County Music Educators Award for Excellence in Choral Music in 2002, and is included in the 2004 of Who's Who in American Women. She is slated to be included in the upcoming 25th anniversary edition of Who's Who in America. She and the chorus were featured in *About* magazine's June, 2006 edition.



A native of North Carolina, **Debi Overton (Accompanist)**, has held positions as coach/accompanist at the University of Texas at Austin, and served as director of the Chamber Music Program at The New School of Music in Philadelphia. For many years, she was active at the Summer Music Festival in Aspen, Colorado. As the coach/accompanist for the choral department in Aspen, she served as assistant to noted conductor Fiora Contino. She

has assisted in preparing choruses and soloists for such conductors as Tamara Brooks, John Nelson, Robert Shaw and Sergei Commissiona. Additionally, she has coached with coach/accompanists David Garvey, John Wustman, Brooks Smith and Dalton Baldwin and the local master, Livingston Gearhart.

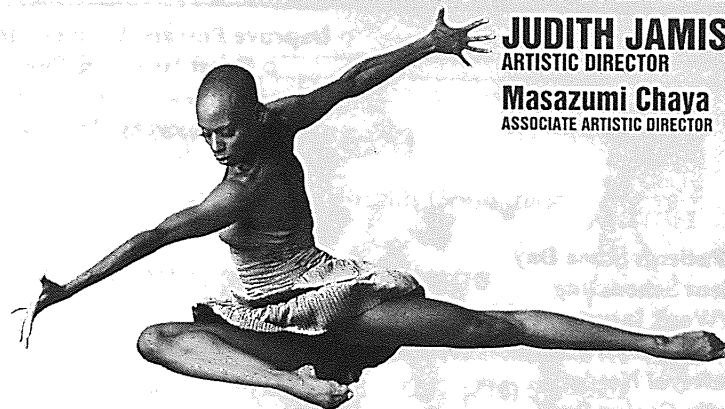
Ms. Overton has accompanied Master classes for Luciano Pavarotti, Phyllis Curtin, Jessye Norman, Leontyne Price and Sylvia McNair. She has accompanied the regional Metropolitan Opera auditions in Greensboro, NC, Philadelphia, PA, Atlanta, GA and New York City. Considered by her peers to be one of the finest sight readers in the country, she offers nuances and subtle interpretations of music that have been enjoyed and applauded by thousands of listeners throughout the United States. Trained as a concert pianist, she has toured in Europe but prefers the roots, both spiritual and local, offered by a career as a church musician.

In addition to her duties as Organist and Choir Master at Calvary Episcopal Church in Williamsville, Ms. Overton is a past chair of the Music Commission of the WNY Episcopal Diocese, has been a member of the Board of Directors for the American Guild of Organists and is active in Western New York teaching, accompanying and performing with singers and instrumentalists.

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"How Can I Keep from Singing?" This simple Quaker song asked a question that burned in my heart each time I attended a BGMC performance. Each time I heard the group perform my desire to join intensified. My right brain emphatically said "Do it!" while my left brain screamed "Are you out of your mind? You don't have the time!"

The turning point for me was experiencing the BGMC's performance of Gabriel Faure's "Cantique de Jean Racine" with the Buffalo Philharmonic. I had previously heard the chorus perform this beautiful, powerful, spiritual work but hadn't yet the pleasure of hearing it performed with a full orchestra.

My heart began to quiver at the very first note. When the ethereal cello solo began on the fourth beat I felt indescribable warmth fill my chest. The hairs the back of my neck stood on end. By the time the chorus entered at measure 13, tears began to flow as wave after wave of beautiful music washed over me. I couldn't stop "leaking" until after the applause had ended. I had never been so profoundly moved by a performance.

"How Can I Keep from Singing?" Simply stated... I can't! I am proud and blessed to be a member of the BGMC family.

David Mathewson – Bass II

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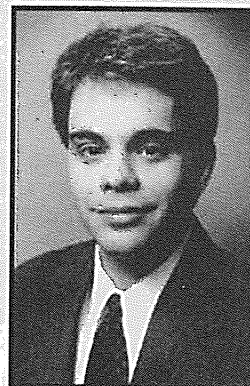
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There have been so many moments with the BGMC that have been incredible. Singing in Montreal for "5,000" people (the number increases every time I tell the story!) or greeting the anti-gay protesters in our tuxes and singing "Standing on the Side of Love" on the altar of a Catholic church were experiences that have changed me as a person. The best BGMC memory has to be singing "Nessun Dorma" with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra this past fall and being able to see my mother's face in the audience as we sang. Not only is it one of her favorite pieces of music, but she stood on that same stage with the BPO chorus when she was young. She was positively beaming and wiping away tears through the whole song, and I was singing it right to her. She was there, as she always is, supporting her gay son and it was so powerful to be able to give her this amazing gift in return. Listening to her favorite (and only) gay son singing with the chorus her favorite aria with this amazing orchestra on the same stage she sang on 40 years ago. It is the truest meaning of the word serendipity. Thank you BGMC from me *and* my mom.

Shaun Doyle Jr. - Tenor I

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Years after I had served in the Peace Corps in Ethiopia, I first heard "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika," sung by a Unitarian Universalist choir. I was moved by the marvelous sound. When I retired and served in the Peace Corps a second time in Namibia, my students there could sing this song from memory with power and conviction that I had not heard before. When the BGMC began rehearsing this song, I found I could not get through it without choking up at the power of the words, music, and the memories they evoked. May it be for all of us a blessing and a prayer:

"Bless, O God, our country, Africa, so that she may awaken from her sleep. Fill her horn with plenty, guide her feet. Bless our mother Africa. Spirit descend. Spirit divine."

John Rex – Tenor I

Many in the chorus will remember the "big" occasions which have marked our five years of history. I will remember the everyday friendships that make each week's rehearsal something rejuvenating. Being somewhat of an "outsider" to this community, the warmth and friendship found in this group is a treasure. I remember my first few weeks in the chorus in February 2004 when I hesitated to talk to anyone, yet the openness and smiles quickly led to some of my life's strongest friendships. Even as a newcomer, our chorus leadership extended an invitation to travel with the group to Montreal for the GALA Festival in July 2004. Again, a momentous event underscored by the everyday joy of creating harmony with friends. In the day-to-day life between our greatest triumphs, I am humbled by the authentic togetherness of this group of singers. Our voices truly do win freedom -- on so many levels. This is why I celebrate the BGMC and everything it means to each and every one of us, each and every day.

Lorne Gretsinger – Bass II



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I remember when I first joined the chorus. Everyone was so welcoming, and there was a true sense of family and community. Not only do I enjoy singing with these fine individuals, but they have become some of my closest friends. The chorus, along with Barbara Wagner's caring and constructive approach, has let me enjoy choral music in a non-competitive, pleasant atmosphere.

Scott Glasser – Bass I

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As a member of the BGMCC, I am able to continue my interest in choral singing that began as a high school student. It is an honor to sing under the direction of Barbara Wagner, a leader in Buffalo's music community. It is also an honor to share in the camaraderie of the other men of the chorus. I look forward to future memorable events for the chorus such as our concert at Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church and our concerts with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra.

Mark Peszko – Tenor II

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"The Rhythm of Life" is one song I knew we would be great at, and Barb agreed. When we finally got the arrangement for an all male chorus, all the guys said something like "I did that song in school." I think they didn't realize we would be singing the REAL words!!!! Now it is maybe the most fun song we sing!!

Jimmy Rigo – Bass I



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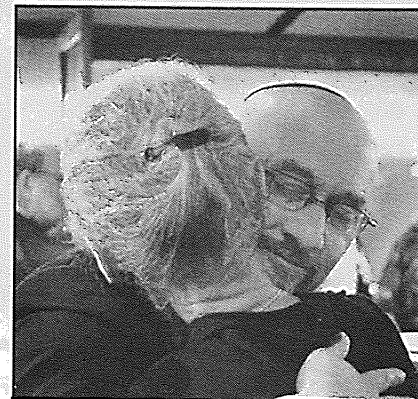
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Barb tells our dear friend Cantor David Goldstein good bye as he prepares for his move to Chicago. August 2006

BGMC

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

After eighteen months of organizing the fledgling BGMC, in 2001 we opened the doors of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo for auditions. The line of men waiting to sing for Barbara extended up the hall and down the stairs.

I had no idea that the joys of singing with these men and those who joined later would continue to be so satisfying over the years. Thank you, Barb and Debi; thank you, Gentlemen of the Chorus; and thank you, all Board members and volunteers who have worked so thoughtfully on behalf of all of us!

Roger Parris – Tenor II and a founding Board member

Many grew up in faiths where God was both a loving Creator and a fierce, demanding, punitive Being. It can take a lifetime to believe that God is not judgmental, threatening, unforgiving and sanctimonious. The piece "I Ain't Afraid" says it all. We are afraid of what religions do in His name not of Him's Chorus

Kathleen Bryce Niles – News & Information Director



David S. Clifford, M.D., A.B.F.P.
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Episcopal

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*Worshiping, welcoming
sharing God's healing love in the city*



Being a part of the BGMC family since its inception has not only nourished and nurtured my soul; it has also brought and continues to bring boundless positive energy, love and joy to my life!

Ramón Meléndez – Bass I
The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

The awards for Outstanding Performance and Best Supporting Actor



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To me "Seasons of Love" is really about remembering and celebrating the loved ones we have lost. Lovers and friends, with whom we walked Elmwood Avenue, went out to brunch, stopped for coffee, and even on occasion kissed hello or goodbye (right in public).
The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

Ron Houk – Tenor I

Best wishes to all BGMC members from your favorite bar:

Q the only letter

the rest of the alphabet is jealous of

44 Allen Street
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*Bring your concert ticket stub into our bar following the concert
Buy one drink and get the second drink on the house!!

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'But merely of two simple men I saw today on the pier in the midst of the crowd, parting the parting of dear friends, The one to remain hung on the other's neck and passionately kiss'd him, While the one to depart tightly pressed the one to remain in his arms.'

I took a special interest in the *Adamic Songs*, especially "What Think You I Take My Pen in Hand?" The lyrics of this song touched my heart every time I sang them because of the memories of friends and loved ones I have said goodbye to, reluctantly. The words bring out emotions of fond memories and empty places in my heart, and remind me of promises made to see each other again; promises I intend on keeping.

Norm Duttweiler Jr. – Tenor I

New job. New friends. New life. New city. Where does one begin? In 2004 I relocated from Hamden CT. I was fortunate enough to meet a native Buffalonian. It was the summer of that year that I was first introduced to the BGMC. My new friend and I attended their June concert at the First Presbyterian Church. They made a GRAND entrance from the balcony above with a joyous sound, enough to bring chills to my skin. Being a performer myself, I know it's not easy to move an entire audience as the BGMC did that night. I knew from that moment on I needed to become a part of that organization. Three years, 15 or so performances later, I still get the same chills as I did that first night. The only difference is that now I'm looking into the audience rather than looking onto the stage. THANK YOU MY BGMC FAMILY.

Christopher Babbitt – Bass I

Congratulations & thanks to the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus
for helping to make Buffalo & Western New York an even more
beautiful place to live and call home.

Jim Mack

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I ended up singing with the BGMC by happenstance. A friend, Buddie Woodridge, brought me to a rehearsal when I was still very much in the closet. My entire life I've always been a bit of an outcast despite my apparent sociability. When I look back, I see myself as a young boy of 7 or 8 years who knew that he liked other boys, but was aware that his family, friends and society around him would not find it easy to accept. So, I kept my thoughts and feelings to myself. I was alone. I became best friends with a few boys in high school and for four years, for the first time, I felt as if I truly belonged to a group. But none of them truly knew all of me.

In college, I met a close gay friend and my one true love but life's journey would take us different places. I was alone again and although I'd not come out of my shell very much, without them, it was like being shown a glimmer of light and then thrust back into darkness. I was still very much closeted.

Then came that fateful evening when, despite my fears of going to a place where other gay men congregated so openly, I agreed to accompany Buddie to just watch and listen. Then I spoke with Barb for the first time. She made me feel so welcome and that it was ok to be gay. The most crucial moment for me was accepting Buddie's invitation which led me to Barb who made me feel that there was a chance to finally be true to myself.

As I remember that moment now, I find myself crying because I never realized until this very moment what that magnificent lady did for me. And she doesn't even know it. I don't think I can ever convey to her how that simple act of warmth and love she exuded that night has changed my life in ways I never could have imagined before. I feel that I have grown tremendously as a gay man and have felt a certain sense of being part of a group that I have never known.

Ray Neil – Bass I

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Save These Dates!

Saturday, March 24, 2007

Road Trip to Jamestown
A benefit concert for AIDS Community Services
Jamestown Community College

Saturday, April 28, 2007

The BGMC guys put "fun" back into fund-raising

Friday, June 15, 2007

Concert - "Colors of our Lives" • 8:00 pm
Unitarian Universalist Church
695 Elmwood Avenue, corner of West Ferry, Buffalo, NY 14222

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

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

Supper and a Song

Save the date, Saturday, April 28, 2007

Mike Liska, vice president and chairperson of the spring 2007 BGMC fundraiser, announces a major event to both delight and entertain the WNY community.

Many BGMC members will invite guests into their homes for a special dinner filled with friends, family, and fun. A minimum tax deductible donation will benefit the operations of the chorus.

After dinner, members and their guests will gather at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 695 Elmwood Avenue at West Ferry Street, for a special event. Come see, and hear the inner workings of the chorus by witnessing a virtual rehearsal under the direction Barbara Wagner.

This program will be the first of its kind available to the general public and promises to be the premier gala to propel us into our June concerts and beyond. A reception of fabulous desserts will follow in the Parish Hall.

Call the chorus phone at 883-1277 for more information or visit us at www.buffalogaymenschorus.com.

Special Thanks

Our Friday Host	Reverend Joel Miller
Our Saturday Hosts	Reverend Thomas Yorty & Richard W. Herr
Program Cover Artwork	Jonathan Rodgers
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Singers pre-concert reception	Zoe & Todd Patti

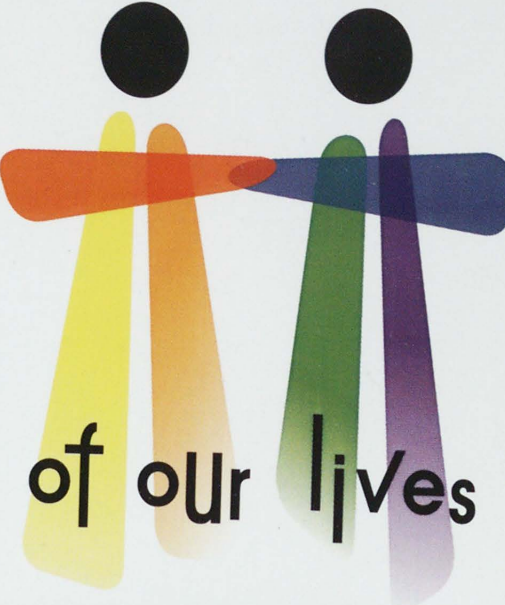
The BGMC would also like to extend a special thank you to all the advertisers you see in tonight's program. Please support the advertisers who have generously supported the BGMC.



"Let me fix it! We go on in 3 minutes!" BGMC members prepare for singing at "Gusto at the Gallery" at the Albright Knox Art Gallery. December 2004

the buffalo gay men's chorus presents

the **COLORS** of our lives



june 15 & 16, 2007

doors open at 7 • concert at 8

friday june 15
unitarian universalist
church of buffalo
695 elmwood (at w. ferry)

saturday june 16
first presbyterian church
1 symphony circle
interpreted for the hearing impaired

adults \$18 • students, seniors & disabled \$16

artistic director
barbara wagner
accompanist
debi overton

BGMC
The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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