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Men's Chorus

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

Fall 2008

Crescendo!, Fall 2008

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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Crescendo!

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

Volume 7 · Issue 1
Fall 2008

BGMC wins hearts at GALA

by Dave Mathewson

I am still trying to digest the GALA experience.

Never before have I been moved to tears so many times during a seven day period.

Our BGMC family, both those who were participants at GALA and those who were present in spirit only, have every right to be proud of our chorus and the artistic maturity we have at the tender age of six.

Throughout the week I had the opportunity to hear comments from other singers regarding our performance. The BGMC logo on my shirt was usually enough to get the conversation rolling.

We were complimented on our dynamic range from a "shimmering pianissimo" to an earthshaking, yet controlled fortissimo. Artistic interpretation, blend and balance between sections, vocal quality, and diction all received favorable comments.

One listener said that at six years of age, "You guys make music on the same level as many of the larger groups."

I heard many compliments on the "masterful" way that Barb had selected and ordered the repertoire for our set, as well as the intimate, subtle communication that was observed between conductor and singers. Debi's skilled, expressive accompaniments, and Shaun's "velvet tones" also garnered praise. On no fewer than three occasions it was noted that there had been no grandstanding by our artistic director, accompanist or soloist.

Our BGMC family has much to be proud of and much to look forward to.

MOCHA concert

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus will sing a benefit concert for MOCHA Project on Saturday, October 25th at 7:30 p.m. at Church of the Ascension, Linwood at North St. in Buffalo. Immediately following the concert, MOCHA expects to be awarding the mayors of Buffalo and Rochester, as well as state senator Antoine Thompson, special awards for their support of the MOCHA mission. MOCHA Project focuses on community development, health education, and service to people of color in Buffalo and Rochester, with an emphasis on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals. A catered reception will follow. Admission is \$30 and tickets are available in Buffalo at 716-852-1142, ext. 13, and in Rochester at 585-420-1400, ext. 10. Or you may email BGMC member Larry Van Heusen at cityimpact@aol.com. Parking availability is printed on the back of each ticket.



Shaun Doyle sings his solo at GALA.



BGMC in performance in Miami, Florida.



Michael Heaney accompanies the chorus.

President's Column

by G. Michael Liska, BGMC President



Where has the year gone? I remember just a short time ago being at Temple Beth Zion for our January concert and here we are in the fall. Allow me to review our year for those who may have missed some of the events.

The June concerts were amazing! I heard from many in the audience who expressed their praise for what they said was the best concert series ever. Our June concerts were the first to take up a whole weekend, Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday afternoon. The Sunday afternoon matinee at the United Methodist Church in Williamsville was packed. This would have normally been the end of the season with a couple of well-deserved months off to recuperate, but there was still more to be done.

On July 6 we played host to the gay men's chorus from Hamburg, Germany, Schola Cantorosa, and the Toronto Men's Chorus, Forte, for a GALA Send-Off Concert preceded by a delicious chicken barbeque.

On July 12 we boarded our Continental flight for Miami and GALA Festival VIII. We spent an entire week with approximately 5,000 other GALA chorus members from across the United States, Canada, and around the world. Each chorus did a 30-minute set performing in front of their peers in the magnificent Arsht Center for the Performing Arts.

We were all filled with emotion as we lined up to go on stage. There were last minute hugs and best wishes before we felt what seemed like the eyes of thousands as we sang our program. Afterwards, the sound engineer reported that we blew out his headphone amplifier during the singing of our commissioned piece, "Yes!!" Now that's power!

We were sad to leave Miami the following Saturday, but the thought of coming home was inviting. It was hot and sticky in Miami. During the layover in Atlanta, we celebrated a milestone birthday by singing "Happy Birthday" to Andy Newbert. He's 39 years old—again. That really started something.

We received requests to sing to others who were celebrating birthdays on July 19 even while in flight.

What a marvelous bonding experience for those who made the trip. For many singers, it was their first GALA festival and I can guarantee it won't be their last. Arriving home, we gathered around the baggage carousel in the Buffalo airport and did an impromptu performance of "How Can I Keep from Singing." Then, we parted and for the next few days suffered withdrawal. Going back to our regular routines just didn't seem right.

Two weeks later it was August and a busy month for the board of directors. Eve Campbell, a well-known name in the GALA chorus circuit, flew in from Dallas, Texas, to facilitate a weekend retreat for board members. During these sessions, we developed plans for three major projects we will undertake this year: developing job descriptions, policies and procedures, and implementing a more organized program for volunteers.

As you read this edition of Crescendo, we are well into preparations for our first ever holiday concert weekend. It seems strange to be singing holiday music while it's still pleasant outside. The selections Barb has put together will delight our audiences and prepare them for the Christmas/New Year's season to come.

Please remember that this is the first holiday concert we have ever done so tickets will undoubtedly go fast. Watch the buffalogaymenschorus.org website for all the details and locations.

Another first: we will be selling CDs of the holiday concert to give as gifts to friends and family at Christmas.

Well, I believe you are up to date now. If you are not already, I invite you to become a part of the BGMC family by volunteering to help in our important work. We depend on supporters like you to continue our programs through your generosity and attendance at our concerts. And we appreciate all the encouraging words that come our way.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at one of our holiday concerts, December 12, 13, and 14.

Crescendo!

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

Volume 7 · Issue 1 · Fall 2008

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

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, Inc.
Incorporated 2001 as a 501 (c)(3)
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State of New York.

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

News & Information Director:
Kathleen Bryce Niles

Officers 2008-2009
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Directors: **Dave Batt, Norm
Duttweiler, Jr., William H. Gardner,
Darrin Kahn, Dave Mathewson,
Ryan McKane**

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Choruses, Inc.** (GALA Choruses).
GALA Choruses fosters the artistic
and organizational develop-
ment of member choruses
through a variety of programs
and services.

For more information, visit
www.galachoruses.org

Barb's Corner

by Barbara Wagner, BGMC Artistic Director

It feels a little like we're in the middle of a whirlwind, but the clouds around it are all filled with the colors of the rainbow.

When we returned from the GALA Festival in Miami, our ears were filled with the sounds of some of the most beautiful singing we ever heard. Our hearts were filled with the joy of new friends and the familiar happiness of reuniting with old ones. The compliments so generously given to us were received with humility and enormous gratitude.

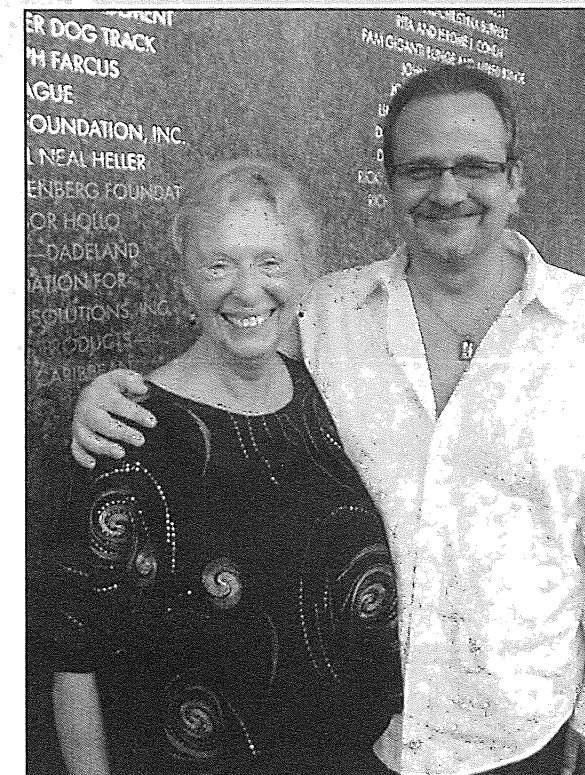
When we went to Montreal four years ago, we were inexperienced rookies who knew very few people. In Miami, after attending numerous GALA leadership conferences and making more amazing connections than we could count, we were welcomed with open arms by many. We are very proud to be able to count many from some of the best GALA choruses as friends and colleagues. We share our successes and the problems we all encounter along the way. We share music that we've sung, we share concert themes. We help each other solve administration problems. It's a very special organization, virtually free from competition. We're all in this together, sharing the good news of the GLBT movement the best way we know—through our music. We're very lucky people.

We returned to Buffalo, energized and ready to tackle what promises to be a very busy year. We began rehearsals in late August in order to be ready to make our very first studio recording. After seven years of singing together, we're going to present three performances of our inaugural holiday concert, "Hope for the Holidays," on December 12, 13, and 14. We're recording the music early so that we can have recordings available for sale at the concerts. Think Christmas and Chanukah gifts, folks.

The songs are wonderful, many familiar, but with new, fresh arrangements. I must admit that my favorites are "White Christmas," arranged by Charlie Beale, artistic director of the New York City Gay Men's Chorus; "Do You Hear What I Hear?" courtesy of the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus; "Hard Candy Christmas" arranged by Chad Weirick, accompanist of the Boston Gay Men's Chorus along with "Thanks," also arranged by Mr. Weirick for chorus, piano and trumpet. Jason Higbee will be our trumpet soloist.

There's also a lovely arrangement of the familiar "The Snow Lay on the Ground," by California composer, David Conte. As Peter Smith and I sat at the Yelton Rhodes display at the GALA exhibits, Maestro Conte came up, introduced himself to us, and handed us a sample of this wonderful piece. As many of you

Photo by Dan Wasinger



Former BGMC singer and board member, Dan Wasinger, and Barb in Miami.

know, Peter is a magnificent harpist and, lo and behold, this arrangement is set for men's voices, piano/organ, and harp. I'm sure you can figure out the rest of the story.

Finally, you'll hear the heart wrenching "Finally Here" by Eric Helmuth, a tribute to all of us who work so hard to keep our community, both gay and straight, alive and aware.

I can't say enough about the professionalism of the brilliant chorus I'm so proud to conduct. We still laugh and make silly jokes, but when it's time to settle down and put tiny finishing touches on a phrase, everyone is poised to do just that. That's the difference between the BGMC and a chorus that's just around to have fun. That's the difference between an amateur and a professional chorus. I'll take the amateurs any day—they/we are in it for the love of the music and how to present it to the listener in the best way possible. In the end, it's about the love and the souls of the singers. They "get it" and it shows. I thank my lucky stars for that every day of my life.

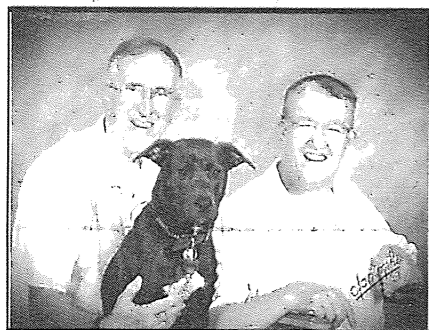
See you all soon.

With love,
Barb

In the spotlight: Larry Van Heusen

interview by Kathleen Bryce Niles, photo by Olan Mills used by permission

Dr. Lawrence Van Heusen is no ordinary man. He is a spectacular representative of many of the qualities and attributes most men wish to emulate. He is kind, warm, generous, gifted and humble—not an easy combination to achieve.



For 33 years, he and his partner, Bob Scharf, have lived a quality life as partners. Bob has prenatal cerebral palsy and is, for the most part, confined to a wheelchair. All those years ago, Larry chose to share his life with Bob knowing that it would be a challenge for both of them but each willing to do so out of a genuine love for one another. It has been a great ride for Bob and a wonderful walk for Larry. Side by side, they support and encourage each other. They live in Kenmore with a fabulous pooch named Sadie.

Born in Gloversville at the end of WW II, Larry was raised by his mother in Schenectady. He graduated from Buffalo State (BA-English), Albany (MA & DA), and the University at Buffalo (MSW Social Work). His doctoral dissertation was on the embodiment of African-American religious meaning in the works of James Baldwin. After a few years as an instructor of English Composition and Literature, he changed his career to that of a Social Worker and Psychiatric Counselor.

Both Larry and Bob retired in January. Bob, who is from Salamanca, spent thirty years as a computer programmer in marketing for the HSBC bank.

Coming from a musical family, Larry took advantage of any opportunity to learn. As a child, he attended a special one-year program of piano lessons at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester. He took a rare course in Walter Piston's Classical Harmony at Linton High in Schenectady. He taught music theory in a Summer Instrumental Program and sang in Union College's Collegium Musicum. In his senior year, he wrote a full-length musical play based on Hamlet which was produced at a local church. At Buffalo State, Larry was president of the Men's Glee Club and sang baritone in the Buffalo Statesmen, a male quartet. He won a first and second prize in two US Army talent shows at Fort Sam Houston for playing piano by ear. He sang in the City of Good Neighbors Chorale. He notes that joining the BGMC has awakened his musical involvement that was dormant for a number of years.

While Bob is a dedicated opera listener and researcher as well as his family's genealogist, Larry loves to bicycle and has been across the US including Alaska by bike. They are very active in Pilgrim-St. Luke's United Church of Christ. Additionally, Larry was a longtime activist and leader in the Albany gay community. In 1984, he received their highest honor, the Harvey Milk Award, for his many years of service there since Stonewall.

Larry's dedication and commitment to the BGMC's outreach initiatives contribute to making him an outstanding member of the chorus. We are proud to place him in the spotlight.

Kudos to:

Peter Bruschi for producing the GALA Send-Off concert on July 6.

Ryan McKane for pulling off an awesome chicken barbeque before the concert.

Mark Meyer who guarded the cashbox during the performance.

All those who hosted our German friends of Schola Cantorosa during their stay in Buffalo.

Norm Duttweiler for arranging the airport shuttle when we arrived in Miami.

The four BGMC first tenors who sang in the GALA Festival Chorus in Miami: Pee Lee Clark, Norm Duttweiler, Dion Johnson, and Cliff Moore.

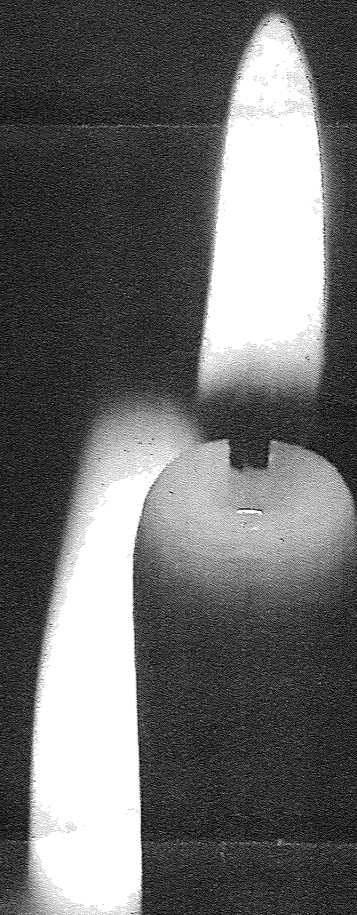
Lorne Gretsinger for all he did to get the chorus to GALA in Miami and have that once-in-a-lifetime experience that only a GALA festival can bring!

Those who worked the BGMC booth during the Elmwood Avenue Festival of the Arts.

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

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus
presents

Hope for the Holidays



Friday, December 12, 2008, 8pm
Unitarian Universalist
Church of Buffalo
695 Elmwood Ave
Buffalo

Saturday, December 13, 2008, 8pm
Trinity Episcopal Church
371 Delaware Ave
Buffalo
Signed for the hearing impaired

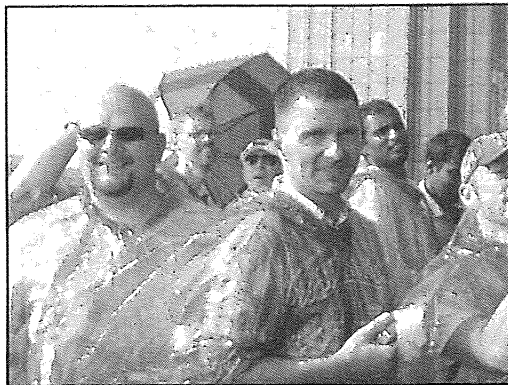
Sunday, December 14, 2008, 4 pm
Hamburg United Methodist Church
116 Union Street
Hamburg

Seating starts 1 hour prior to concert
Adults \$20
Seniors and Disabled \$18

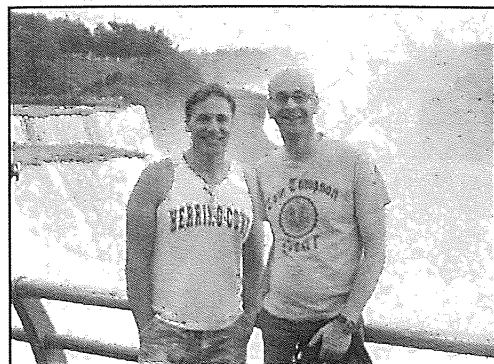
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The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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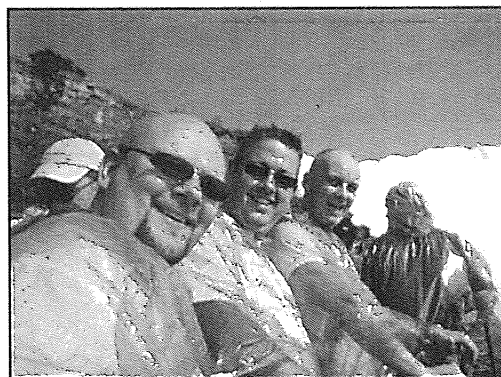
Schola Cantorosa at Niagara Falls



Norm Duttweiler and German friends.



Joe Puma, BGMC, and his German guest.

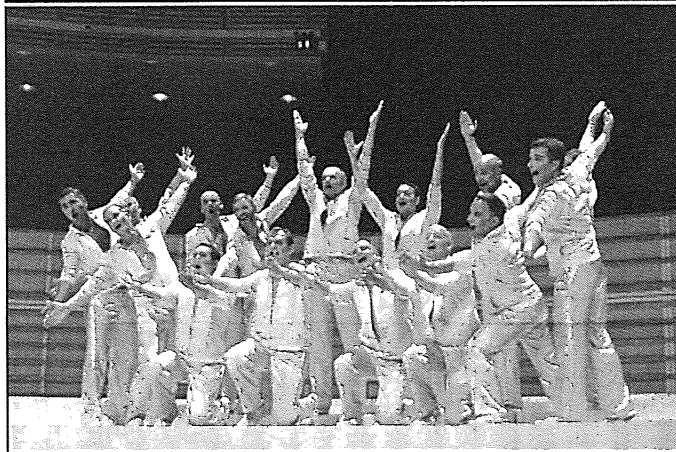


Norm, Darrin Kahn and other wet people.

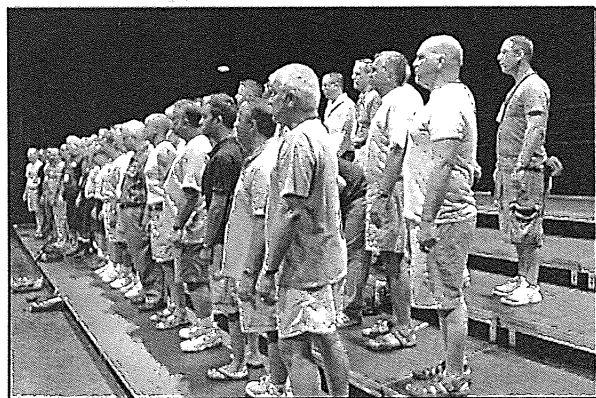
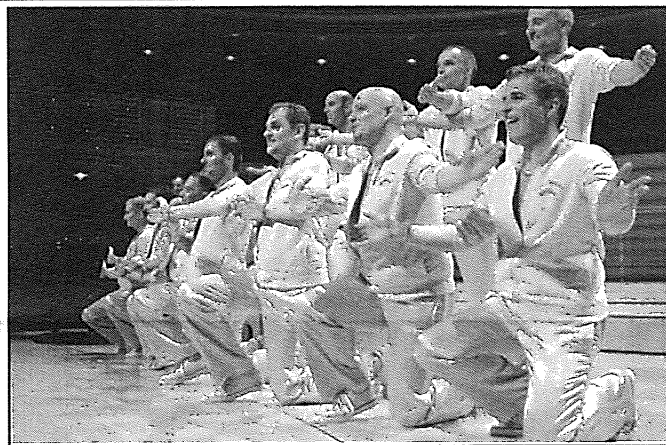


The group goes to the casino in Niagara Falls.

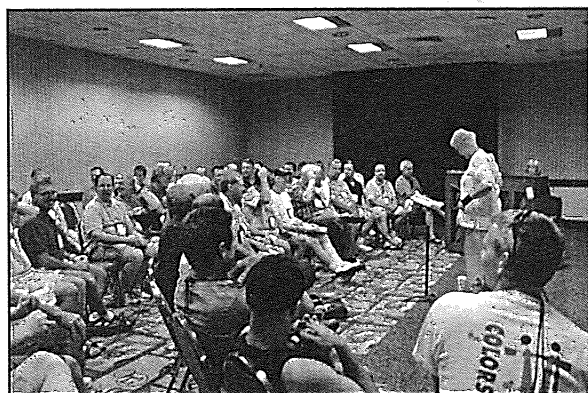
Photos by Ron Houk



Schola Cantorosa do their show at GALA.

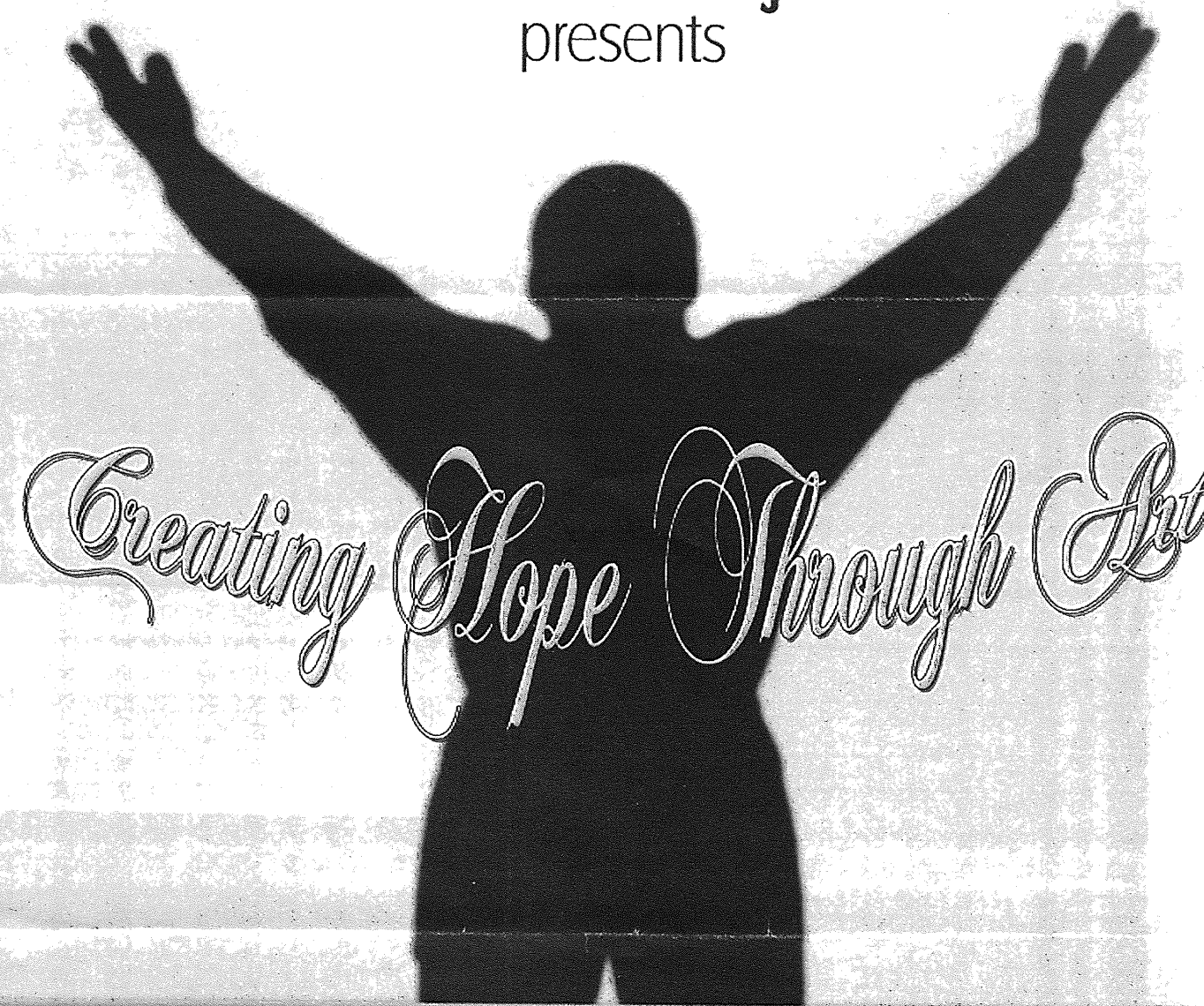


BGMC in final rehearsal at festival.



Photos by Mike Longo

MOCHA Project presents



A BENEFIT CONCERT

BY THE

BUFFALO GAY MEN'S CHORUS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2008 • 7:30 PM

Church of the Ascension
16 Linwood Avenue at North Street
Buffalo, NY
Admission \$30

MOCHA Awards Presentations
Reception to Follow Awards Presentation
716.852.1142 Ext. 10
585.420.1400 Ext. 10



MOCHA provides community development, health education and service to people of color in Buffalo and Rochester, New York; with an emphasis on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals.

SAVE THESE DATES!

Saturday, October 25, 2008 • **BGMC in concert at Ascension Episcopal Church** • 16 Linwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY

To benefit the Men of Color Health Awareness (MOCHA) Project • Concert @ 7:30 pm

Friday, November 7, 2008 • **Pride Alliance Diversity Concert** • State University of New York at Fredonia • Concert @ 8:00 pm.

Friday, December 12, 2008 • **Hope for the Holidays** • Unitarian Universalist Church • 695 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY • Concert @ 8:00 pm

Saturday, December 13, 2008 • **Hope for the Holidays** • Trinity Episcopal Church • 371 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY • Concert @ 8:00 pm

Sunday, December 14, 2008 • **Hope for the Holidays** • Hamburg United Methodist Church • 116 Union, Hamburg, NY • Concert @ 4:00 pm

Wednesday, December 17, 2008 • **Concert at UB South Campus** • WBFO Live Performance • Concert @ 7:30 pm

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, March 20, 21, 22, 2009 • Winter Concerts • **Where the Good Songs Go**

Friday, April 17, 2009 • **Lancaster Opera House** • Concert @ 7:30 pm

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, June 19, 20, 21, 2009 • Spring Concerts • **Camping with the BGMC**

BGMC 695 Elmwood Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14222
(716) 883-1277
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



..... Cut along dotted line and mail bottom portion with your donation 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.