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

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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Fall 2009

### Crescendo!, Fall 2009

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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# Crescendo!

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

Volume 8 · Issue 1  
Fall 2009

## Chorus debuts at Chautauqua

by Kathleen Bryce Niles and Delwyn Milander

"Chautauqua has the distinction of being both a point on the map and a word in the dictionary." This is the way David McCullough introduces the weekly program of Music from Chautauqua on WNED-FM.

On Saturday, September 12, the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus discovered the truth of this statement as they performed at Lenna Hall on the grounds of beautiful Chautauqua Institute. We were invited to be a part of the Rainbow Pride Connection Conference held that weekend. It was the first ever GLBT conference to be held on the grounds of the Chautauqua Institution.

In the off season as few as 400 people actually live on the grounds in contrast to 10,000 visitors at the height of the summer. One can barely walk around the busy streets.

Upon arrival the grounds seemed so large and empty that we wondered where the people would come from to fill the hall. Our fears were misplaced as the doors opened and the appreciative audience flooded in.

Our voices filled the acoustically wonderful hall with the one of our "best of" concerts. Compared to the silence outside, the contrast was amazing. Barb, Debi and the singers gave their all and the audience warmed to each selection.

Following the concert, many chorus members were housed overnight on the grounds as guests of those who reside at Chautauqua all year round. It was a unique opportunity to continue reveling in the atmosphere of one of the most respected institutions in the United States. The ambience of this unique place of Americana is not lost on even the most casual observer.

The whole experience was quite thrilling and well worth the round trip ride.



Men in tuxes: the BGMC in formal attire.

## Kudos to:

Norm Duttweiler and Dion Johnson, 1st and 2nd place fundraising walkers last May in support of AIDS Walk 2009.

ALL who helped with the move to St. John's-Grace.

ALL who helped staff the table during the Elmwood Festival of the Arts, but especially board member Mark Smith.

Rob Black for cashiering the CDs.

Music librarians Don Behr and Gerry Klein for all the work they do getting ready for another season.

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



All photos by Roger Parris, Michael Longo and Paul Brundage

## Special Save the Date

On the evening of Saturday, November 14, the BGMC, along with other guest choirs, will come together with the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus at St. Paul's Cathedral for a joint concert.

Watch for additional information on the time of the concert and a list of the choirs that will be participating. Please plan to join us on November 14.

# President's Column

by Christopher S. Babbitt, BGMC President



Welcome fall, and most of all welcome to the ninth year of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus. My name is Christopher S. Babbitt, and it is my privilege to be writing to you today as not only a singing member of the renowned BGMC, but also as the newly elected president of the board of directors.

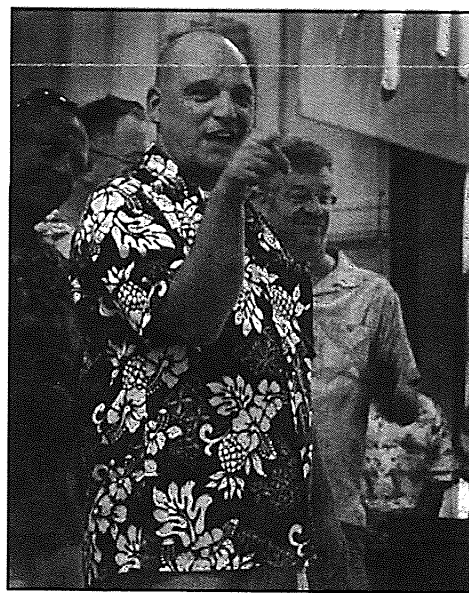
It was June of 2003 when I was first introduced to the BGMC. Recently relocated from Connecticut to Buffalo for work, I crossed paths with a gentleman reading a program from the BGMC's spring concert at one of the local bars downtown. We began chatting and he raved about the BGMC and how powerful the sound and their sense of community. He offered to sell me a ticket to their next performance the following evening, so I bought two. As I sat in the audience at the First Presbyterian Church of Buffalo at Symphony Circle, not only was I in awe of the beautiful architecture of the building, but my heart overflowed with joy as I listened to the melodious sounds that filled the rafters. It was then that I found not only a home in Buffalo, but a home in the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus.

The newly elected board of directors consisting of six current members and three new members began the year by reflecting on our past. We attended a retreat in August to help build and unify our team in preparation for the tough tasks ahead of us. Also attending that day were four guest speakers; James Estep, David Gannon, Dennis Stuart and G. Michael Liska, BGMC's first four presidents. James, David, Dennis and Michael all gave us words of encouragement, but most of all they gave us a renewed sense of community and family.

As you know, families face struggles and milestones. The BGMC, just like every other not-for-profit organization, has struggled throughout this past year's economic downturn. Some of our brother

and sister choruses within the GALA community have been forced to shut down due to their financial struggles. But there is hope. As the economy begins to grow and heal so does the BGMC. The board of directors has set a hefty goal for our ninth year, to raise \$100,000 through concert ticket sales, advertising and charitable gifts from our loyal donors. It is through support from you, our patrons, that gives us the hope, drive and passion we need to reach out to others. All of this costs money, and like any not-for-profit organization, we rely on our supporters and patrons. You have come through for us year after year. Thank you, and I look forward to seeing and meeting each of you at one or even all of our holiday concerts, "Joyful and Triumphant" on Friday, December 11, Saturday, December 12, and Sunday, December 13, 2009.

Yours in harmony,  
Christopher S. Babbitt



Jimmy Rigo sports his vacation attire at the spring concert.

# Crescendo!

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

Volume 8 · Issue 1 · Fall 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 2009-2010**  
President: **Christopher Babbitt**  
Vice President: **Norm Duttweiler, Jr.**  
Secretary: **Dave Mathewson**  
Directors: **Frank Ball, Neal Flaig, Mark Marquardsen, Ryan McKane, Mark Smith**

Treasurer: **William H. Gardner**

*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, 51 Colonial Circle, 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



Music, music, music! Workshops, singing, fabulous clinicians, brilliant colleagues and lots of love everywhere! That was the story of my summer. It was the best summer, both professionally and personally, that I've had in years. I came home from Portland and Canon Beach in Oregon with stacks of incredible choral music and filled with joyous anticipation at seeing "my boys" again.

But before that happened, I took one more musical trip. This time it was to Columbus, Ohio, where colleagues from the worldwide GALA movement met to share ideas and music and the love we have for what we all do, which is to direct some of the finest choruses in the country. Lorne Gretsinger, Jason Higbee, Rob Black, David Mathewson, Tim Mahiques, and I were so high from these wonderful days that we all but flew home.

As we listened to our new friends singing and sharing together on the last evening I came to the shining realization that we, the singers and artistic directors of the GBLT movement, are the luckiest people on earth. We get to make music with the finest singers in the country. Best of all, the music and the powerful words truly make a huge difference in the lives of the people who listen to us do the thing we do best and love the most. There are stories in our own BGMC of men whose lives have been changed, enriched, and even saved by singing together. There are stories from young and old members of our audiences whose lives have been powerfully changed by the music and their stories of acceptance and reconciliation. We are changing lives and hearts with music! We are blessed to be able to do that.

Like so many nonprofit organizations in the GALA movement, we are beset with financial problems. There was a time not too very long ago when we feared that the BGMC wouldn't survive. Suddenly an angel came out of nowhere and donated enough funds so that we could begin our ninth season. We're still not out of the woods, but we pray that we will be by

the beginning of 2010. Many, many thanks to those of you who have been so generous with your support over these exciting years. We hope we can count on you this season as well. We all have made a difference in the lives of so many.

We have a fine new board of directors with Christopher Babbitt at the helm, along with Norm Duttweiler, vice president, and David Mathewson, secretary. We are encouraged by the fine quality of our singers and their enthusiasm for the work we are doing.

By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have done several concerts in the community. On September 13, we sang at the Chautauqua Institute for a large "Rainbow Connection" gathering. The enthusiasm and joy in the beautiful Lenna Hall was palpable that moonlit night. On October 16 we sang in the Friends of Music series at St. Paul's Cathedral. On October 23 we journeyed to the Pride Festivities at Fredonia College and at the Buffalo Seminary. Coming up on November 14, we'll join forces with the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus and the Western New York Children's Choir.

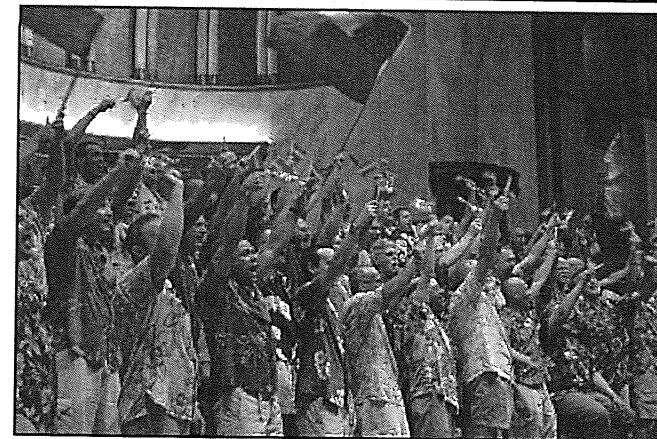
I'm also delighted to tell you that, for the very first time, the BGMC will be performing at the annual lighting of the Christmas Tree at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery on December 4.

All of this is happening as we prepare for our holiday concerts in December. We're calling it "Joyful and Triumphant" and it WILL be just that, with all kinds of newly commissioned music, old favorites, and even a sing-along. We're having a grand time planning and rehearsing the music and looking forward to our performances at the Unitarian Universalist Church on December 11 at 8:00, at the venerable Riviera Theater in North Tonawanda on Saturday, December 12 at 8:00, and Westminster Presbyterian Church on December 13 at 5:00.

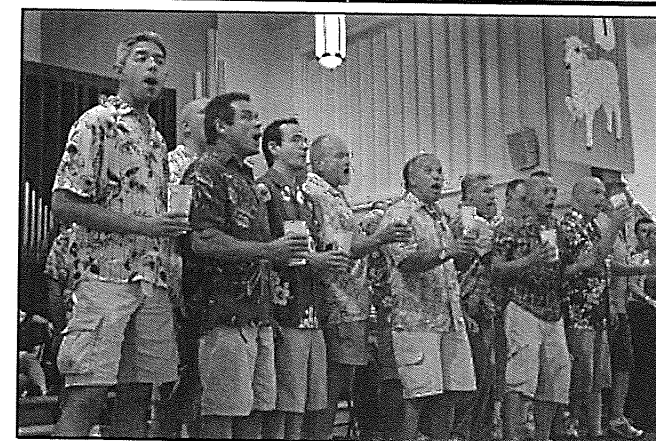
Again, thank you for your unwavering loyalty and generosity. We look forward to seeing you at one of our concerts.

Love,

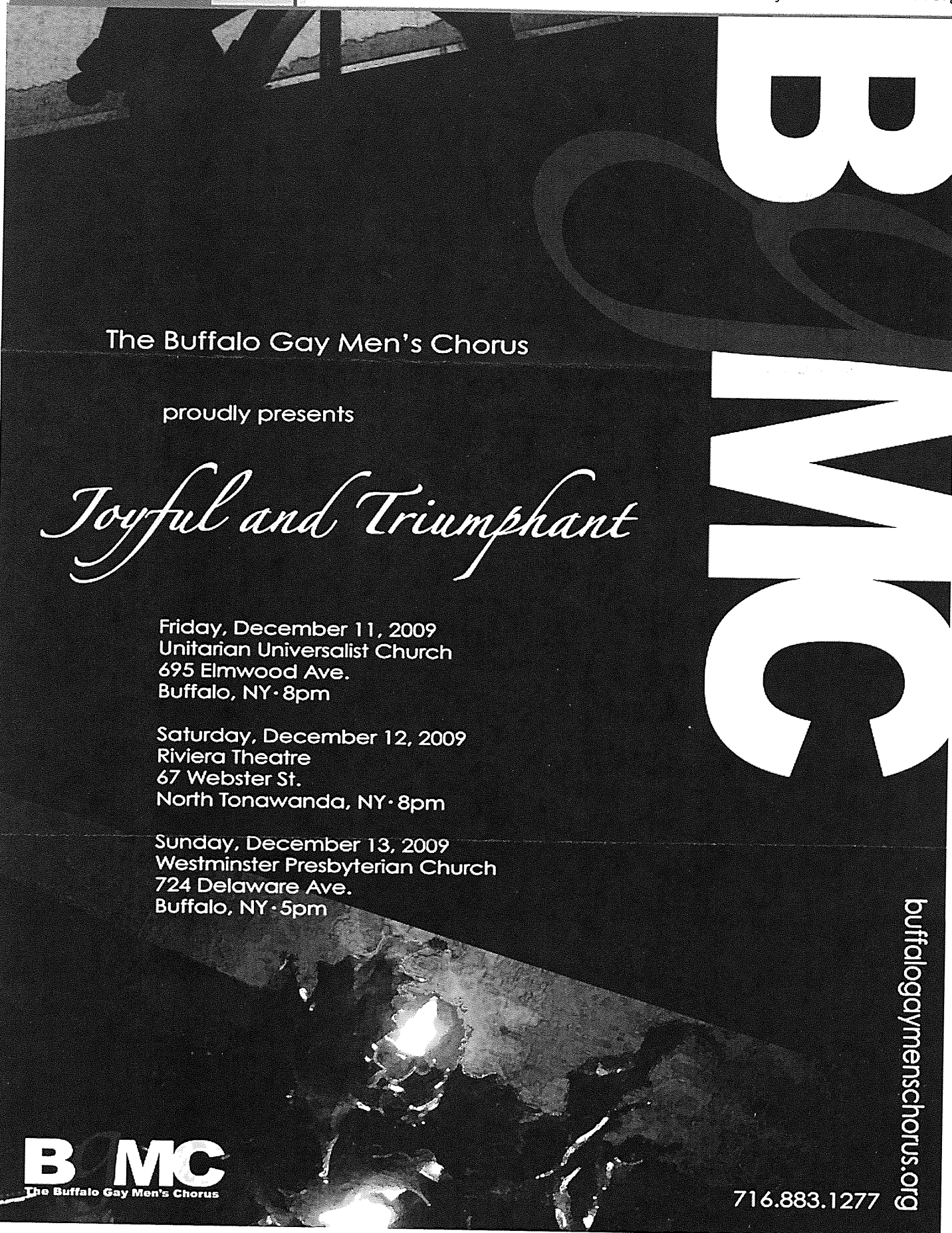
Barb



The chorus shows its pride in "Color Out of Colorado."



Let's swig to "The Caffeine Overload Polka."



The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus  
proudly presents

*Joyful and Triumphant*

Friday, December 11, 2009  
Unitarian Universalist Church  
695 Elmwood Ave.  
Buffalo, NY • 8pm

Saturday, December 12, 2009  
Riviera Theatre  
67 Webster St.  
North Tonawanda, NY • 8pm

Sunday, December 13, 2009  
Westminster Presbyterian Church  
724 Delaware Ave.  
Buffalo, NY • 5pm

**B MC**  
The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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# In the spotlight: Paul Brundage

interview by Kathleen Bryce Niles, photo by Roger Parris

Paul Brundage is a very accomplished guy. Born in Wellsville and currently residing in Niagara Falls, he brings an enthusiasm and excitement about singing to the BGMC. Paul learned to read music while practicing with the chorus and Barb and making such wonderful friendships because of membership in the BGMC.

Paul comes from a large extended family consisting of parents, brother, and sister as well as five step-brothers and a step-sister. As a teen, he enjoyed singing in church choir and loved other choral groups such as the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus. While traveling, Paul keeps busy singing along with the radio and CDs.

Well educated, Paul hold degrees from Wellsville High, Bryant & Stratton, Community College Air Force, and Buffalo State. He has worked in the US Air Force, NY National Guard, Adelphia Cable, and as a school bus driver. Currently, he is a custodial engineer for the Niagara County School System.

Paul's interests include photography and high powered model rocketry. While in the Air Force, he was honored with outstanding unit awards and volunteered for the Tour-De-Coeur and Adopt-A-Highway Programs shooting photos of military personnel helping in highway clean up. After twenty-three years of service in the military, Paul is retired.

Although his present job keeps him from singing with the chorus, he hopes to return someday and rejoin the second tenor section.

The BGMC is most grateful to have him as a member and one of our staff photographers. His pride in membership and his willingness to serve the organization is testament to his loyalty.



Debi Overton, accompanist, supports the chorus at our spring concert at First Presbyterian Church.

# Kathleen's Kameos

by Kathleen Bryce Niles, News and Information Director

## Nonprofits need support now more than ever

Whenever there is a downturn in the economy the first groups to suffer are the arts. It's our feeling that after the basics of food, shelter, and clothing, the arts are critical to our well-being. We can't say too often how much we appreciate the support of our loyal fans who stick with us in these difficult times. Another artistic director has said that in times of crisis the power of choral music seems only to increase. Thanks to everyone to helps keep the music alive this season.

## We are who we are

Choral music is often serious but there are times when the chorus lets down its proverbial hair and gets silly. Somebody dons a costume or we let Nate Phillips transform himself into Gladys Over. Sometimes we do choralography and toss things in the air. Serious music can make you cry but, oh boy, we can make you laugh until your sides ache. We are who we are!

## Program notes tell a story

Jason Ward and artistic director Barb Wagner spend countless hours on the program notes that are in each concert program. They provide a translation if it's a piece in a foreign language. Sometimes it's just a point of interest that explains why the composition was written and the place it holds in music history. There's a story behind each selection the chorus sings. The program notes will tell you all about it.

## Russ Link makes the programs great

Chorus member Russ Link is one of the main people in charge of the programs. He works hard alongside Robin Johnson of Vilardo Printing to ensure that our advertisers, our singers, and guest artists get the full coverage they deserve. Thanks to Russ for this very valuable service to the BGMC.

## Friends of the BGMC give the chorus that extra boost

One of the reasons the chorus can do so much is because of the support of those who become Friends of the BGMC. Please look at the form on the back of the newsletter. Please consider giving the chorus that extra boost by writing a check in memory of a loved one, in honor of some special person, or just because. You'll have a good feeling when you make that gift knowing it will be deeply appreciated.



Ballerinas Nate Phillips and Jason Ward wish everyone "Pansies Everywhere You Go."

## SAVE THESE DATES

Saturday, November 14, 2009 • Joint Concert with the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus  
and the Western New York Children's Chorus

Friday, December 4, 2009 • Albright-Knox Christmas Tree Lighting

Friday, December 11, 2009 • Holiday Concert • **Joyful and Triumphant**  
Unitarian Universalist Church • 695 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY at 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 12, 2009 • Holiday Concert • **Joyful and Triumphant**  
Riviera Theater, 67 Webster Street, North Tonawanda, NY at 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 13, 2009 • Holiday Concert • **Joyful and Triumphant** • Westminster Presbyterian Church  
724 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY at 5:00 p.m.

### Coming Events in 2010

Friday, June 18, 2010 • Spring Concert • Unitarian Universalist Church in Buffalo

Saturday, June 19, 2010 • Spring Concert • First Presbyterian Church, Symphony Circle in Buffalo

Sunday, June 20, 2010 • Spring Concert • Orchard Park Presbyterian Church



Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, Inc.  
51 Colonial Circle  
Buffalo, NY 14222

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

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

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

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I have time or services that may help the BGMC. Please contact me.