



ROCHESTER GAY MEN'S CHORUS

DIVAS OF EMPOWERMENT



SATURDAY 03.22.25 AT 7:30 PM
HOCHSTEIN PERFORMANCE HALL



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Letter from the Board Chair

Good evening and welcome to our “Divas of Empowerment” concert. Tonight, we celebrate the voices that have lifted us up, inspired us, and reminded us of the power of boldly being ourselves. From the anthems of resilience to the ballads of self-love, the divas we honor tonight have given us the soundtrack to our strength.

Their songs have been our battle cries in times of struggle, our comfort in moments of doubt, and our affirmations of self-worth when we needed them most. Through their artistry, they have reminded us that our voices matter, our stories deserve to be told, and our power lies in embracing exactly who we are.

Tonight, as we pay tribute to these legendary performers, we recognize the profound impact their music has had on our community. Their lyrics have echoed in our hearts, pushing us forward, lifting us up, and reminding us that we are never alone. Whether through the defiant power of an anthem or the gentle reassurance of a love song, these divas have been our guiding stars, showing us the beauty of authenticity and the strength found in unity. This concert is not just a performance—it is a tribute to the resilience, courage, and unbreakable spirit that their music has instilled in all of us.

We are so grateful to have you with us tonight. In a time when our identities are trying to be suppressed, your presence here is a testament that collectively we will not be silenced. Together, let us celebrate joy, authenticity, and the unbreakable spirit of our community.

By standing with the Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus, you affirm the power of music to inspire, unite, and create lasting social change. Thank you for being our very own divas of empowerment. We will continue to use our voices to uplift and advocate for a more inclusive world, continuing our mission of creating social change through excellence in the choral arts.



Jeffrey Elsenheimer, Jr

Board Chair, RGMC Board of Directors



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on its continued contributions
to music & entertainment
for the community.*

Letter from the Artistic Director

Good evening, one and all! To all our dear friends, family, supporters, allies—our beautiful LGBTQIA2s+ community of Rochester—welcome to Divas of Empowerment!

This evening's concert is one that is so near and dear to our hearts, and we hope yours too. It is no secret that in this day and age, the LGBTQIA2s+ community is under attack across this country. I personally live day to day with an utter sense of shock at how eager so many people and politicians can be to strip away basic human rights from those they misunderstand and deem unworthy. When the Supreme Court legalized marriage equality in 2015, it seemed so permanent and so uplifting. And the steps beyond that that we have taken toward equality for gender-non-conforming, non-binary, and trans people, as well as people of color within our community, seemed like slow and steady progress. Never fast enough, but nonetheless moving in the right direction on the whole. But now, so many of the rights we and our elders fought for, for generations of progress, now seem on the verge of slipping away in a matter of weeks, putting our very lives and futures in danger. We now hear a renewed call to stand up for our existence in all ways imaginable. **WE WILL NOT BE ERASED.**

To this end, our concert program consists of songs by beloved divas with messages of hope and strength from which I hope we can all take inspiration as a community. These songs celebrate our uniqueness, our authenticity, and our inner empowerment. They are meant to lift us up and remind us that we are strong; we are worthy; and nobody and nothing can replace the beautiful light that our community brings into this world. Tonight, we protest through celebration of our priceless worth.

This is the purpose of the RGMC, as outlined in our mission and vision statement for the last 40+ years, as written by our founding director, Nicholas Williams. Now more than ever, these words resonate within us and unify us with a single goal:

“We the members of the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus unite proudly to seek a better world for ourselves, our community, and for our nation by sowing the seeds of harmony through the universal language of music. We sing for ourselves to make glorious music with friends who experience the world as we do and who share our joy in standing together. We sing for our siblings in the LGBTQIA2s+ community to embody pride, family and a sense of home. We sing for our friends and supporters who join us to overcome ignorance and prejudice. We sing for those unknown and unseen, awakening to who they are, in closets of oppression, or in search of community, that they may see our faces and hear our joy and know that the night is not forever, and that there are friends and brothers to light their way and to welcome them home.”

And so tonight we sing for our lives and the lives of all seen and unseen within our community.



Sincerely with all my love,
Alex Kuczynski
RGMC Artistic Director

A handwritten signature of Alex Kuczynski in black ink.



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For information on placing an ad, visit us at www.thergmc.org
or call (585) 423-0650.

RGMC Artistic Staff



Dr. Alex Kuczynski, Artistic Director

Dr. Alex Kuczynski holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music (MA and PhD, piano studies in the studio of Rebecca Penneys) and Vassar College (BA in music and cognitive science). A collaborative pianist since the age of twelve, Alex had an early career accompanying in school choirs, music festivals and the church. Under real-time pressure at a young age, he quickly sharpened a diverse set of musical skills including sight reading, sight singing, playing an open score, improvisation, music theory, and the coordination of timing and interpretation while playing with other musicians. In high school, Alex competed in state-wide choral festivals as accompanist and won awards at district, regional and all-state levels in Pennsylvania. He was then employed as staff accompanist at Vassar and Nazareth Colleges

over the course of college and graduate school.

Currently, Alex serves as pianist, organist and music director at Trinity Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Rochester, artistic director of the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus, staff accompanist for the Geneseo Central School District, and pianist for opera singers, voice studios, and collegiate instrumental soloists. In addition to concert and church accompanying, Alex also serves as pianist and music director for theater groups such as the Off Monroe Players, Rochester Association of Performing Arts, The Lyric Theatre, the Geneseo Community Players and more. Additionally, Alex continues to enjoy performing solo piano music in a range of styles from the 17th - 21st centuries. An expert teacher in both music theory and piano, Alex has served as Visiting Instructor of music theory at Nazareth College and previously as Graduate Instructor at the Eastman School of Music during the length of his graduate studies, where he taught the whole undergraduate music theory and aural musicianship curriculum. Currently, in addition to performing and music directing, Alex teaches about 30 piano students of all ages, providing a solid music education for individual pianists as they reach and exceed their goals and dreams.



Bob Dietch, Principal Pianist

A local career musician, many will remember Bob behind the piano at Tara, where he entertained regularly for the majority of its 30-year run in downtown Rochester.

He is an alumnus of SUNY Fredonia School of Music, where he was degreed cum laude in their highly selective Sound Recording Technology program, and inducted into Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society.

Over the years, Bob has enjoyed music-directing and performing for a variety of private and community events, schools, and theatre groups including Blackfriars, Geva, RAPA, OFC Creations, Greater Rochester Repertory Company, Downstairs Cabaret, Rochester Children's

Theatre, East Rochester and Fairport High Schools. He was honored by the Theatre Association of New York State with an Excellence in Vocal Direction award for his work on ETC's Falsettos.

Bob is the longtime collaborative pianist for West Irondequoit Central School District's Choral Music program, the Traveling Cabaret and Temple Emanu-El.



Catherine J. Hardesty, CT Sign Language Interpreter

Catherine "Cat" J. Hardesty is a Nationally Certified Interpreter for the Deaf who joined RGMC as the Artistic Interpreter in 1999. She is a freelance Community Interpreter, but her favorite venue is music, especially with RGMC. She lives in Greece with her Life Partner, Robert Slater. Her son Christian and his wife Amber live in Columbus, Ohio where they are both practicing attorneys, and are the proud parents of their daughter Elana Paige!



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welcome here!”**

The People That Make It All Come Together

RGMC BOARD:

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Bill Miller, *Secretary*

Bob Caruso, *Member at Large*
Cory Cummings, *Member at Large*
Michael Lill, *Member at Large*
Dennis Rosenbaum, *Member at Large*
Raul Torres, *Member at Large*

Matt Bereza, *Choral Representative*
Daniel Reeder, *Choral Representative*

ARTISTIC STAFF:

Alex Kuczynski, *The John Williams and Chuck
Lundeen Artistic Directorship*
Bob Dietch, *Principal Pianist*
Ryan Russell, *Principal Percussionist*
Sam Fortunato, *Percussionist*
Matt Bereza, *Bass Guitar*
Nicholas Williams, *Artistic Director Emeritus*

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Shane Allen, *Graphic Design*

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Alex Kuczynski, *Music Director/Conductor*
Elier Ruiz, *Production Stage Manager*
Cat Hardesty, *CT Sign Language Interpreter*
Tom Henderson, *Sound Engineer*

Mission Statement:

The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus creates social change through excellence in the choral arts.

Vision Statement:

• We, the members of the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus, unite proudly to seek a better world for ourselves, our community, and for our nation by sowing the seeds of harmony through the universal language of music. • We sing for ourselves to make glorious music with friends who experience the world as we do and who share our joy in standing together. • We sing for our sisters and brothers in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community to embody pride, family, and a sense of home. • We sing for our friends and supporters who join with us to rebuke ignorance and prejudice. • We sing for those unknown and unseen, awakening to who they are, in closets of oppression, or in search of community, that they may see our faces and hear our joy and know that the night is not forever and that there are friends and brothers to light their way and to welcome them home.

In Memoriam:

Ariel
David Ammering
Jacqueline Archer
Gary Bauer
Stephen Berds
Tom Carr
Steven Chabot
Bill Coleman
Bob DeGrandchamp

John DiPrima
Jeffrey Freeland
Tom Glasow
Bob Griffith
Paul Kelly
Charlie Kruppenbacher
Chuck Lundeen
Edward "Ted" Lyons
Stanley Malinowski
Chuck Mathewson

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ROCHESTER GAY MEN'S CHORUS

First Tenor

Robert Caruso
Josh Knapp
CJ Lagapa
Marc McCabe
Terry Quataert
Daniel Reeder
Dennis Rosenbaum
Alan Van Camp*

Second Tenor

Matt Bereza
Patrick Casey
Evan Dorscheid
Sam Fortunato
David C. Knoll
Dawn Lepard
Dick Madden
Paul Scheib
David M. Skinner*
David Snyder
Brian White

Baritone

Dakota Altewalder
Sam Beach**
Lon Beery
Jeffrey Elsenheimer, Jr.
Michael Hannen
Peter House*
Robert Parsons
Sean Scott
Jesse Sutterlin
Yu Yin Tsang
John Villani

Bass

Kennan Beckstrand
Paul Berezney
Christopher Craft
Dan Flaherty
Tony Jagla
Rob Keefe
Bill Miller
John Scharf
Jim Tavolaro
Mark Taylor
Charles Weber*
Jorge Yacila

**Section Leader*

***Membership*

Concerns Chair

The Rochettes

Evan Dorscheid
Dan Flaherty
George Kampo
Alex Kuczynski
Bob Parsons
Steven Price
Terry Quataert
Riley Sullivan
Jorge Yacila
Choreographer:
Jamie Lee Porteus

The Teddy Bears

Sam Beach
Josh Knapp
CJ Lagapa
Bill Miller
Daniel Reeder
Dennis Rosenbaum
Jim Tavolaro
Alan Van Camp
Brian White
Director/Accompanist:
Alex Kuczynski

VersiTone

Dakota Altewalder
Tony Jagla
Josh Knapp
Sean Scott
Sean Terry

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DIVAS OF EMPOWERMENT

ROCHESTER GAY MEN'S CHORUS

"A Different Kind of Love Song" (Cher).....by M. Lewis, J. Aberg and
S. Rosnes.
Arr. D. Maddux.

"One Moment in Time" (Whitney Houston) by J. Bettis and A. Hammond.
Arr. C. Weirick.

"Go West" (Village People).....by J. Morali, H. Belolo, and V. Willis.
Arr. S. Milloy.

"I Love You More" by Ann Hampton Callaway.
Arr. Tim Sarsany.
Bob Parsons, clarinet
Soloists: Paul Scheib, Tony Jagla, John Scharf

"Freedom" (Beyoncé) by J. Lomax, J. Coffey, A. Lomax, F. Tirado,
K. Lamar, A. Benjamin, C. Marie and Beyoncé.
Arr. C. Madison.

TEDDY BEARS

"Better Angels" (Barbra Streisand) by J. Myrin, C. B. Sager, J. Landers.
Arr. S. DeCesare.

"Y'all Means All" (Miranda Lambert) by M. Lambert,
S. McAnally, and L. Dick.
Arr. D. W. Rosenbaum.
Jim Tavolaro, guitar
Josh Knapp, ukulele

MOUNT HOPE WORLD SINGERS

"Lua, Lua, Lua" Esther Scliar

"Wau Bulan" Tracy Wong

"The Island Itself" Sarah Quartel

INTERMISSION

DIVAS OF EMPOWERMENT

ROCHETTES

"I Will Survive / Flowers".....by Miley Cyrus Ft. Gloria Gaynor.

VERSITONE

"Hero" (Mariah Carey)by M. Carey and W. Afanasieff.
Arr. K. Kitzmiller.

"I Will Always Love You" (Whitney Houston).....by Dolly Parton.
Arr. David Maddux.

ROCHESTER GAY MEN'S CHORUS

"Born This Way" (Lady Gaga).....by S. Germanotta, J. Laursen,
P. Blair and F. Garibay.
Arr. Tim Sarsany.

"Uprising of Love"by Melissa Etheridge.
Arr. Pakk Hui.

"You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)" (Sylvester)...by Sylvester and James
"Tip" Wirrick.
Arr. Steve Milloy.
Soloist: Josh Knapp.

"Firework" (Katy Perry)by E. Dean, M. Eriksen, K. Perry,
S. Wilhelm, and T. E. Hermansen.
Arr. D. Maddux.

"Express Yourself" (Madonna)by Madonna and S. Bray.
Arr. D. Maddux.

We Care About Your Feedback

Help us help you. We want to make your RGMC concert experience fun and enjoyable. Please take a few minutes to tell us your thoughts about today's concert.

As a thank-you, you will be entered into a drawing for 2 season tickets for our 2025-2026 concert series!



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Mount Hope World Singers

(MHWS) seeks to build community and foster intercultural understanding through engaging, high quality, respectful performance of music in original languages from around the globe.

The chorus's repertoire is varied and often includes instrumental accompaniment such as piano, cello, percussion, flute, violin, and cello. In addition, the group happily collaborates with other artists including dancers, solo vocalists, and

other choral ensembles. Past performance venues have included public schools, churches, senior living centers, the Rochester Central Library, the Rochester Psychiatric Center, and Monroe Community Hospital. MHWS has also participated in many community events including the William Warfield Scholarship Celebration, AIDS Awareness Day, and the Rochester People's Climate Coalition March for Global Climate Action. The chorus has collaborated with FuturPointe Dance, Nazareth Dance Ensemble, New Bethel CME Church, the Taiwanese Choir, Sladki Doumi Balkan Women's Chorus, BIODANCE, and many individual performers. They are members of the Greater Rochester Choral Consortium and have performed in their prism concerts at Kodak Hall at the Eastman Theatre.

Conductor Brian White is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music with a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and inspires with his musical expertise, enthusiasm, and humor.

Artistic Director Annika Bentley has been a professional musician for over 20 years. She is a singer-songwriter, composer, and artist with an integrated degree in photography and music.

MHWS rehearses for roughly seven months of the year (February through May and September through December). Rehearsals are held at the Community of the Savior (4 East Henrietta Road, Rochester) and remotely via Zoom on Sundays from 2 to 4 pm. No auditions are required.





The chorus is fragrance-free and is working to become accessible and welcoming to individuals who are blind or have low vision and individuals who for other reasons do not read music.

On June 5 and 7, 2025, MHWS will present “The Hundred Windows” at the Rochester Academy of Medicine. In collaboration with visual artist and animator Christine A. Banna and composer and sound designer Logan Barrett, these immersive, multidisciplinary performances will explore the senses and reflect the vastness of the world we inhabit as humans. Stay tuned to their website for ticketing information, coming soon.

MHWS is a member organization of the South East Area Coalition (SEAC), a 501(c)3 organization.



Soprano:

Annika Bentley
Kayleigh White
Lizz de Simone
Jennifer Gaul
Krystal Kinder
Sahara Smith

Alto:

Jen Becker
Barb Deitz
Elaine Hollis
Debra Lindsey
Carol Santos
Dorothy Petrie
Jenny Stanberry

Tenor:

Kathleen Fraser
Sofie Herbeck
Evan McMahon
Dennis Rosenbaum

Conductor:

Brian White

Percussionist:

Don Sherman

Bass:

Rajiv Snape
Tate Shaw
Jim Willer
Henry Cretella
Peter Schoellkopf

For information on joining the chorus, booking a performance, or forming a collaboration, email rochestermhws@gmail.com or use the “Contact Us” form on their website:

[MounthopeWorldSingers.org](https://mounthopeworldsingers.org)

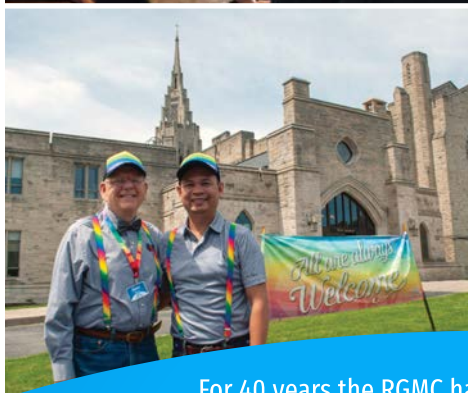


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Mount Hope World Singers

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 ROCHESTER GAY MEN'S CHORUS



SATURDAY 7.12.25 AT 7:30 PM
HOCHSTEIN PERFORMANCE HALL



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A HEARTFELT THANK-YOU TO OUR DONORS

On behalf of the board of directors, staff, and members of the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus, we would like to recognize and thank our donors listed below. Over the past year, we have relied on your continued support more than ever to keep the chorus running.

Thank you for your generosity. A special thank-you to Jim Moran on establishing the James R Moran Endowment for the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus through the Rochester Area Community Foundation (RACF.org).

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Aman

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Michael Longo &
Roger Parris
Pat Moran
Matthew Murray
Anthony Nero
Kaveh Pazdel
Alan Pease
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Michael Longo & Roger
Parris – In Memory of John
Owen

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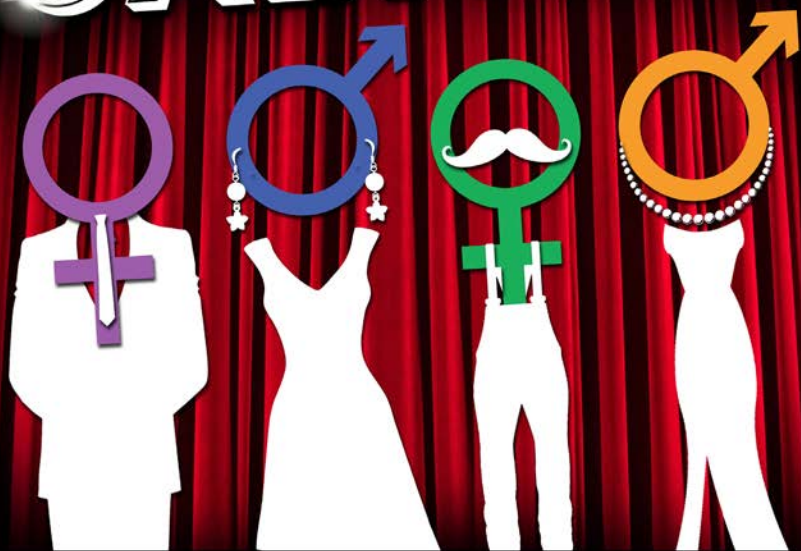
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Fred Weiss

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Michael Fincham

David Gratzner – In Memory
of Chris Manos

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📍 **R A**

**ADVANCED TICKETS 15
EVENT PRICE 20**

THE RGM.C.ORG

Do you like to sing?



The RGMC is looking for new singers and volunteers. If you would like to join us, we would love to talk to you!

Rehearsals for our July concert, ***"It's a Jungle Out There,"*** start on Thursday, April 24, at 7 pm. New members are asked to show up at 6:30 to meet with our artistic director for voice placement. Rehearsals are held at Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N Fitzhugh Street, in downtown Rochester.

For more information, visit thergmc.org/join-us or email newmember@thergmc.org.

The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus is proud to be a member of the following organizations:

GALA Choruses

The mission of GALA Choruses is inspiring and strengthening member choruses to change their worlds through song. Founded in 1982 by fourteen choruses, GALA Choruses is the world's leading international choral association for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and allied choruses. For more information about GALA Choruses and its programs, visit www.galachoruses.org.

Chorus America

Chorus America empowers singing ensembles to create vibrant communities and effect meaningful change by offering services that promote artistic achievement, organizational strength, and advocacy. Founded as the Association of Professional Vocal Ensembles in 1977 to gain recognition for professional choruses, today Chorus America represents hundreds of choruses of every kind throughout North America and beyond. For more information, visit www.chorusamerica.org.

The Greater Rochester Choral Consortium

The Greater Rochester Choral Consortium was organized in 1996 in order to anticipate and avoid scheduling conflicts among choral groups in the Greater Rochester area. It has since grown to 28 member groups varying in size and makeup, embracing some 800 singers of all ages. Their mission is to enrich the Rochester community's cultural environment by fostering the choral arts. For more information about GRCC, visit www.choral-rochester.org.





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