

Two Boys Kissing!

On Saturday, March 24th at 7:30pm, The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus will present the second concert of their thirty-fifth season, *Two Boys Kissing*.

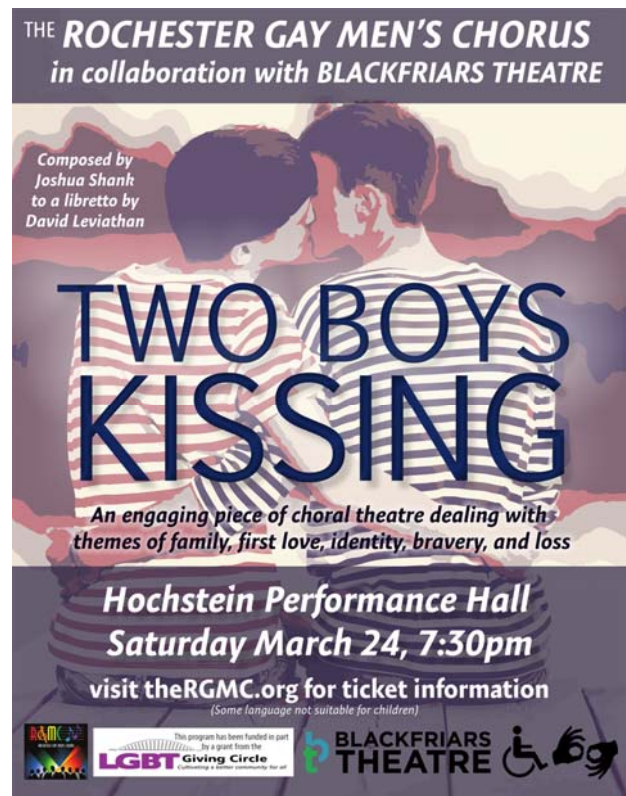
Based on David Leviathan's Lambda Literary Award-winning book, Joshua Shank's *Two Boys Kissing* tells the stories of two gay teenagers who attempt to break the world record for the longest kiss, another young couple falling in love, and a teen whose sexual orientation is discovered by his conservative parents. Called an "engaging piece of choral theatre," *Two Boys Kissing* will feature actors as the central characters and narrators, as the chorus comments upon the action. The work "is for anyone who's fallen in love, for anyone who's been hurt by love, for anyone who has lost a loved one, and for anyone who still believes in love and still believes in hope."

The themes of family, first love, identity, bravery, belonging, and loss are central to this powerful work, which will be a collaboration between the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus and Blackfriars Theatre.

Commissioned and performed by the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus for their 35th anniversary two years ago, we are thrilled to be sharing this with the Rochester Community for ours. Plus, on the night of the concert, three other choruses (Philadelphia Gay Men's Chorus, Columbus Gay Men's Chorus, and Gay Men's Chorus of South Florida) will be performing *Two Boys Kissing*

as well, but we'd prefer you come to our performance!

Tickets are available at www.thergmc.org or by calling (585) 423-0650. Tickets can also be purchased in person at Equal=Grounds, Parkleigh, or from any chorus member. Advance sale tickets are \$8.00 for children 12 and under, \$17.00 for students and seniors 60 and older, and \$20.00 for adults. Tickets at the door are \$8.00 for children and \$25.00 for all others.



RGMC Out On The Town



The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus is thrilled to be able to continue to realize its mission statement out in the community by participating in varied and important events in and out of Rochester.

On Friday, March 2nd, the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus appeared at First Baptist Church of Rochester as part of their Community Concert Series. The Chorus was thrilled to bring out some of our greatest hits and to give a short sneak preview of *Two Boys Kissing*.

We revisited pieces written by Rochester natives and friends of the chorus Jeff Wilson ("I Close My Eyes") and Mark Alan DeWaters ("Names"), the gorgeous "If You Only Knew" from *Through a Glass, Darkly*, a few hits from our Queen concert, and also selections from *Two Boys Kissing* including "Song for That Kid Out There," "Song for Our Parents," and "Make More Than Dust."

After the performance, we enjoyed a meet-the-artists reception, featuring wonderful goodies and a wonderful opportunity to connect with new people – and new fans.



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GALA Leadership Symposium 2018

Every year the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA Choruses) holds a leadership symposium for Artistic Directors, Chorus Managers, Boards of Directors, and Singers. This year, the Symposium was held February 16th-18th in Orlando, Florida and featured workshops on fundraising, programming, community engagement, management best practices, and other important aspects of chorus leadership. Singing delegates may participate in workshops on vocal production and singing technique as

well as organizational skill-building.

The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus sent their Artistic Director and Business Manager so that they could exchange ideas and learn from other directors and managers in the GALA Choruses network of almost 200 member choruses. Favorite workshops included the TTBB Repertoire Reading Sessions, Audience Developments, Trends in Digital Advertising, and even Managing High-Maintenance Members!

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KEYNOTES is the official newsletter of the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus and is published three times a year. The RGMC is solely responsible for its editorial content.

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Patti LuPone: Don't Monkey with Broadway!

Featuring member of the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus

On Sunday, April 29th at 8pm in Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre, twenty-one members of the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus will be onstage singing with Broadway legend Patti LuPone as she presents *Don't Monkey with Broadway!*

Singer and actress Patti LuPone's storied career in Broadway and Hollywood has spanned over four decades. A fireball of talent and a musical force to be reckoned with, Patti LuPone is one of the greatest performers in modern musical theater. Since establishing herself with a Tony Award-winning performance as Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Evita*, she has impressed audiences and critics alike in *Les Miserables*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Gypsy* (for which

she won another Tony Award in 2008).

In *Don't Monkey with Broadway*, two-time Tony Award winner Patti LuPone explores how her life-long love affair with Broadway began and her concern for what the Great White Way is becoming today, through indelible interpretations of classic Broadway show tunes by the likes of Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart, Jule Styne, Stephen Schwartz, Charles Strouse, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim, Cole Porter and Irving Berlin. The show was conceived and directed by Scott Wittman with musical direction by Joseph Thalken.

Tickets are available at eastmantheatre.org/events/patti-lupone/

The RGMC is offering the opportunity for you to sponsor a song during any performance.

For a tax-deductible donation of \$250, sponsorship will allow you select a song from an upcoming show and include a personalized message to be featured next to the song in the program.

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About Two Boys Kissing

From the liner notes to the CD recording of the first performance of *Two Boys Kissing*

Composer Joshua Shank:

When I first sat down to read the source material for this piece, I was stunned at how beautiful the framing device worked in terms of compellingly telling the stories of the various boys. That idea – a Greek chorus of gay men who lost their lives during the AIDS crisis – seemed so simple and elegant that I couldn't believe that I hadn't heard of a story being told in that way before. This is the brilliance of David Levithan and, if you haven't read the book already, you should *rundon'twalk* to your local library and check it out. I remember reading it in my neighborhood coffee shop in Austin and being moved to tears multiple times. I adore this book. In fact, I actually own two copies and have bought several more for friends.

Adapting it into a choral opera for the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus was a labor of love by a huge group of people. My thanks to the entire production team, especially my co-librettist, Eric Grant, who worked with me over many months to adapt David's novel into something we thought would be appropriate for this audience. Thank you also to the engraver who worked on the final score and parts. Ben Stonaker, as well as my husband, Robert, who gave me a few lines of beautiful poetry you'll hear on this recording and basically lived *Two Boys Kissing* with me over the past year. However, chief among the people that have my unending gratitude are David, for giving us his beautiful story to play with, and Ben Riggs [Artistic Director of the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus], who saw an opportunity to create something hopeful. In the LGBT community there are a lot of sad stories we can tell but, as Harvey said, "You gotta give 'em hope!"

Jeff Heine, Executive Director of Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus:

35 years ago, on May 15 and 16, 1981, the first fifty-something members of what was then the Twin Cities Men's Chorus performed for the first time. It was a time when the gay community was finding its voice, its strength, its own self-acceptance. Three weeks later, on June 5, 1981, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a report describing cases of severe immune deficiency in five young, previously healthy gay men in Los Angeles. By the end of 1981, after we performed our first holiday concert, a total of 270 cases of severe immune deficiency would have been reported and 121 of those individuals would have already died. It is just coincidence that Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus was born so close to the start of the epidemic. We just wanted to get together because we wanted to sing. We found strength from bigotry and discrimination. We formed a community. We supported each other when our community had no other voice, or at least a voice that people wanted to hear.

Today, we fulfill our community building mission in many ways. One of these is the commissioning of new music for the LGBT choral movement. I am so proud of our new work *Two Boys Kissing*. The Chorus plays the role of the narrators of *Two Boys Kissing*: the first generation of men who died of AIDS. This Greek chorus tells the story, just as they do in David Levithan's novel, marveling in wonderment at a world that they could not have envisioned 35 years ago. *Two Boys Kissing* allows us as a Chorus to come full circle, back to the events that drove the first of strength and growth in our organization. It brings the discussion of AIDS back to the forefront in the context of a story about today's LGBT youth. It is a fitting conclusion to our 35th season, and a promise of things to come.



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35 years of RGMC—Act 2: From Founding to Today

Three decades since the founding of the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus, it has grown to over forty voices raised in song, entertaining thousands over the years with unique musical talent.

Founding member Nicholas Williams served as director of the Chorus between 1983-2007, and the RGMC was also directed by original conductor Kent Peterson, Dr. Bruce D. McClung, Dr. Stanley Malinowski, Dr. Theodore F. Ashizawa, Robert S. Parsons, Lee Wright, and current Artistic Director, Dr. Robert Strauss, who has served since 2009. Each director brought with them a passion and unique concert season which has brought the Chorus across Rochester and even outside of it. Past performances have been held in the Hochstein School of Music, the Eisenhart Auditorium, the Chamber of Commerce, the Image Out Film Festival, Marriage Equality of Downtown Rochester, SUNY Geneseo,

Rochester Riverside Convention Center, among others.

The Chorus also participates in exchange concerts with choruses in Buffalo, Syracuse, Detroit, Philadelphia, Toronto, Vancouver, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Karlsruhe, Germany.

The RGMC has shared not only its voice with the Rochester community, but its time as well. Members of the chorus are active members of the community, volunteering to staff telephones for WXXI TV membership drives, collecting food for the AIDS Rochester food cupboard, donating the poinsettia plants used to decorate the hall during concerts to those living with HIV and AIDS and volunteering with Image Out and the Out Alliance.



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On behalf of the Board of Directors, Staff and Members of the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus we would like to thank all of our donors listed below for their generous support during the past twelve months.

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