

KEYNOTES

ROCHESTER GAY MEN'S CHORUS

May 2017, Volume 34 Issue 3

We are so excited about the closing concert for our 2016-2017 season! *We Will Rock You*, at the Hochstein Performance Hall on Saturday, June 17, at 7:30 pm, will feature exclusively the music of the band Queen.

In addition to including many of the band's biggest hits, including "Bohemian Rhapsody," "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," "Somebody to Love," and "We Are The Champions," the concert will spotlight our amazing singers belting out other hits of the super-group, will include a band of our own playing along, and will feature the return of our wonderful dancing troupe, the Rochettes!

Queen wrote such incredible songs with lush vocal harmonies, which make an easy transition to a choral treatment. The band, which was comprised of guitarist Brian May, bassist John Deacon, drummer Roger Taylor, and their iconic vocalist Freddie Mercury, recorded 15 studio albums and 10 live albums and released numerous compilation albums in their long history, but they also have a place in LGBTQ history, particularly their lead singer.

Freddie Mercury died in 1991 from complications from AIDS, after having confirmed that he had contracted the virus shortly before he died. He was the first major rock star to admit to having the disease, and the first to die from it as well.

Because of the importance of remaining vigilant about HIV infection, we will welcome Dr. Bill Valenti of Trillium Health to our concert, whose new book, *AIDS: A Matter of Urgency*, talks about the AIDS crisis and challenges us to continue to be a part of the solution. Read more about Bill's work in this edition of Keynotes. This concert is sure to be a favorite for our audience members, so get your tickets now before they sell out.



Tickets are \$20 general, \$17 for seniors and students, and \$8 for children. All adult tickets (including seniors and students) will be \$25 at the door — so purchase in advance for the best deal!

Tickets can be purchased online at www.thergmc.org, by phone at (585) 423-0650, or in person at Parkleigh, Equal=Grounds, or from RGMC members.

This project is made possible with funds from the Decentralization Program, a re-grant program of the New York State Council of the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and administered by the Genesee Valley Council on the Arts at the Livingston Arts Center, a member supported organization.



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While our chorus members have the voices and the passion to carry off the biggest ballads of the most delightful divas, being cast in such roles in traditional productions simply isn't going to happen. But that's the name of the game when it comes to *Miscast*.

Held at Blackfriars Theatre on Friday, June 2, at 8 pm and Saturday, June 3, at 2 pm, Miscast will feature talented members of the RGMC performing outside casting restrictions. This type of cabaret-style show has been performed from Broadway to Los Angeles and many places between, and the RGMC is excited to bring it back to Rochester again this year! Tickets are just \$12 and are available through our website, www.thergmc.org.

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Endowment Fund Offers a New Way to Support the RGMC

Thanks to the generosity of longtime RGMC patron and LGBTQ advocate James Moran, the chorus now has a \$25,000 endowment fund through the Rochester Area Community Foundation. The structure of an endowment fund allows this gift to have a long-term impact, as the principal amount will be held intact while the income from its investments is utilized.

We can make use of the funds once the account grows to \$100,000. This exciting development will help to support the mission of the chorus for many years to come.

In your own giving plans, please consider donating to the endowment online, through the link on our website, thergmc.org. We also can

gratefully accept cash donations, appreciated assets (such as stocks and bonds), and bequests. Donations by check may be mailed to the chorus office (121 N. Fitzhugh St., Suite #315, Rochester, NY 14614-1214), with specification that the donation is for the endowment fund.



Many thanks to James Moran, and all of you, for your support.

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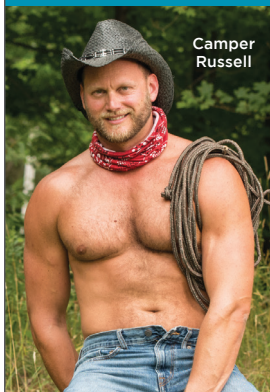
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THE ROCHESTER GAY MEN'S CHORUS

Annual Fundraiser

MORE THAN US 4

Thank You for Making More Than Us 4 a Success

We extend our sincere thanks to all who supported and attended our fourth annual More Than Us fundraiser on April 29. Our audience of more than 100 enjoyed a delicious buffet dinner put on by the Historic German House; dozens of exciting raffle and auction items; and performances from a variety of local talent: RIT's a cappella group, Eight Beat Measure; Chamber Ballet Brockport; Dawn Sargent; Thomas Warfield; jazz/blues duo Hanna PK and Gian Carlo Cervone; the Rochettes; and, of course, the RGMC, previewing two Queen songs from our *We Will Rock You* repertoire. Matt Molloy was a fantastic host who added to the entertainment.

We would also like to thank our event sponsors: Wegmans, ImageOut, Special Touch Bakery, Century Wine and Liquor, BASC and Fabulous Flowers and Gifts.

Make sure to check out the event photos and videos on our Facebook page!

It is because of the generous support of patrons like you that we are able to continue our mission of creating social change through excellence in the choral arts. Thank you!

HELP WANTED

The RGMC is in search of a marketing manager (duties include managing social media and writing and proofreading newsletters, emails, programs, etc.), and also in search of a photographer to take pictures at our concerts and events. For more information, please email Business Manager Jim Janssen at jjanssen@thergmc.org.

GAYRAGE SALE!



RESCHEDULED

Due to a rain-filled forecast for our original dates in May, we have rescheduled our Gayrage Sale fundraiser for June 23-25 at 224 Croydon Road, in the Browncroft neighborhood. We are continuing to accept items for the sale! Do you have stuff lying around that you don't need? Have you been meaning to load up the car for a donation run and just haven't found the time? Let us take it off your hands! We will gladly turn your trash into our treasure at the Gayrage Sale. We'll gratefully accept just about anything, but please, no clothing, food, or X-rated items.

To arrange a pickup of your items, email gayragesale@thergmc.org or call (585) 423-0650. All proceeds from our sale will benefit the mission of the chorus.



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on its continued contributions
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DONOR SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON DR. WILLIAM VALENTI



Dr. William Valenti has seen two diseases — polio and smallpox — eradicated during his lifetime. For the past 30 years, he has taken a leading role in the work to eradicate a third: HIV/AIDS.

He was drawn to the medical field from an early age, having participated in the Salk polio vaccine trial as a child and then soon seeing the disease eradicated. He decided he

wanted to work in the realm of infectious diseases, captivated by its ever-changing, puzzle-solving nature.

In 1989, Valenti cofounded the Community Health Network, in response to the need for HIV care during the AIDS crisis. He recalls with gratitude that his idea to establish an HIV/AIDS clinic was highly welcomed in Rochester, with community members and organizations investing financially in what was then only an idea.

“I didn’t do it by myself,” he says. “There were many hundreds of people who contributed to its foundation.”

Now known as Trillium Health, the network has continued to grow and today serves all populations, whether HIV positive or negative. Its comprehensive model provides primary medical care, pharmacy and laboratory services, and other support services (such as housing, transportation, and support groups) all under one roof. It continues to offer specialized care for the LGBTQ community and for HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C patients. It also has a large transgender health program, currently utilized by nearly 400 patients.

Valenti appreciates the welcoming culture he’s found in Rochester, where he feels LGBTQ-affiliated groups have strong visibility and are well integrated into the community. “Rochester stands out as a community where people have the opportunity not only to be themselves, but to advance themselves,” he says.

He sees the work of both Trillium and the Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus as integral to overcoming stigma, which he says is an important part of advocacy. “We shouldn’t be stigmatized for who we are,” he says.

He sees the RGMC as an example of Rochester’s positive community atmosphere, connecting people through the power of music — and adding an important layer of visibility, too: “I like that the RGMC has had the word ‘Gay’ in its name for 30 years,” he says.

The chorus’s alignment with Valenti’s own goals made it a natural fit for his philanthropy, which he has focused on

LGBTQ initiatives.

“As you get older,” he says, “you think about giving back, about what needs to be done, and what you can do to connect the dots in meaningful ways.”

His personal goal is to help LGBTQ-affiliated groups like the RGMC to “reach out, develop, and help other people,” he says. “Especially in this political climate, we need to make sure that the gains that LGBTQ people have had are sustained — to help sustain the movement.”

Valenti emphasizes that philanthropy comes in many forms, including smaller gestures that add up. “Philanthropy doesn’t have to mean millions of dollars,” he says. “It can be as simple as attending an event.”

He sees the benefits of attending an RGMC concert as reciprocal: “The mere presence of other people like you — being a part of that culture — helps people to accept themselves. Going to a concert could be as beneficial as going to your shrink.”

Valenti will join us at our June 17, 2017, concert, *We Will Rock You*, to speak about his work to end the HIV epidemic by 2020 and his memoir, *AIDS: A Matter of Urgency*, published in March. He will sign copies of the book after the show.

This concert is a particularly fitting tie-in: the show honors the music of Queen, whose frontman, Freddie Mercury, died of AIDS-related pneumonia in 1991 at age 45. In a statement released the day before his death, in which Mercury first confirmed the rumors that he was sick, he said, “I hope that everyone will join with my doctors and all those worldwide in the fight against this terrible disease.”

It’s a sentiment Valenti shares, and a fight he continues to lead.

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SATURDAY, MARCH 24,
AT 7:30 PM

Composed by Joshua Shank and based on the 2014 Lambda Literary Award-winning book of the same title by David Levithan, this moving piece tells the stories of multiple coming-of-age characters — two gay teenagers who want to break the world record for longest kiss, a transgender teen and his love interest, and a young man struggling to come to terms with his sexuality — all through the eyes of a Greek Chorus of gay men who died of AIDS.

JUNE 2018: BACK TO BROADWAY

SATURDAY, JUNE 16,
AT 7:30 PM

While, of course, we have performed some Broadway repertoire in recent years, this will be our first Broadway-centric concert since 2010. We hope to have a Rochester drag queen join us to celebrate.