



**CGMC QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER**  
**VOLUME 1    AUGUST 2023    NUMBER 2**

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

*by Jared Brayton Bollenbacher*



Some of you might have thought that our Pride Week Concert at the Lincoln Theatre in June was the end of our 22-23 Season. But the fact is, we had an additional

performance at the end of July, when CGMC performed at the Ohio State Fair in the Ohio Natural Resources Park.

We did a 45-minute set of music from Walt's Vault. The crowd started with around 100 people, but once people heard our music, the



crowd continued to build throughout the entire program. This was such a great opportunity for the chorus because we performed for an audience that had likely never heard our music before. These are the types of outreach events that we are excited to embrace.

Also this summer, we received word that CGMC has been selected to sing at the Ohio Music Educators Association Conference, which is being held in Columbus, in February of 2024. We will be performing for Ohio music educators from elementary, middle, and high schools and as well as collegiate professors. These educators specialize in choral, instrumental, and orchestral music. This is a great opportunity for CGMC to be recognized in our state for our choral ability. It's also a very big deal as we are the first LGBTQ choral group to perform at such an event.



As we move into our 34th season, I am so excited to get started! We begin with our October concert called *Dreams and Nightmares* presented by VOX. This will be a concert featuring classic nighttime songs, done in a very interactive way – making it a performance that only CGMC can put on! Then, in December, we'll sing our favorite holiday music from home and around the world, as CGMC presents *Holiday!* Two concerts you won't want to miss!

As always, we are accepting new singers for our *Holiday!* concert. If you are interested, we would love to see you or your friends and family at a voicing either on August 27th or August 30th! Both will be held at the Ohio Theatre – you can sign up for a session on our website: [www.cgmc.com](http://www.cgmc.com)

## ANNOUNCING OUR 2023-24 SEASON



### DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES, *featuring VOX*

Friday, October 20, 2023 | 7:30 p.m.  
Saturday, October 21, 2023 | 7:30 p.m.  
Riffe Center: Studio 1  
77 S. High Street \* Columbus, OH 43215

### HOLIDAY!

*featuring Illuminati*  
Saturday, December 16, 2023 | 7:30 p.m.  
Sunday, December 17, 2023 | 2:00 p.m.  
Riffe Center: Davidson Theatre  
77 S. High Street \* Columbus, OH 43215

### SONGS OF THE SPIRIT

Join us for Illuminati's annual full-length concert of sacred and spiritual music, and songs from monthly services at houses of worship that invited Illuminati to sing.

Sunday, May 19, 2024 | 2:00 p.m.  
Worthington United Methodist Church  
600 High St. \* Worthington, OH 43085

### BANNED

With legislatures banning books, Drag performances, and Women's and Trans rights, join us as we celebrate all the banned things that make our community so vibrant..

Saturday, June 8, 2024 | 7:30 p.m.  
Sunday, June 9, 2024 | 2:00 p.m.  
Lincoln Theatre  
769 E. Long St. \* Columbus, OH 43203

**SEASON TICKETS ON SALE NOW!**

CGMC wishes to thank our Community and Corporate Media Sponsor for their commitment to join us in our mission of "Voices Raised. Lives Changed." and to increase awareness of, and support for, the entire LGBTQIA+ community!

## SING WITH US ~ **Become a CGMC Singer**

CGMC is a volunteer choral ensemble consisting of singers who are at least 18 years of age who are dedicated to increasing awareness of, and support for, the entire LGBTQIA+ community. We strongly encourage people who do not identify as gay men to join the Chorus. Join as a singer in the full chorus or Illuminati, our sacred music ensemble.



We are proud to welcome singers of **ALL** sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, ethnicities, backgrounds, and skill levels who sing in the tenor, baritone, or bass vocal range.

*There is no audition to join CGMC.* Voice placements (Voicings) will help you join the vocal range section that is correct for your voice. Illuminati accepts new members throughout the season.

**Autumn Voicings take place on  
Sunday, August 27**

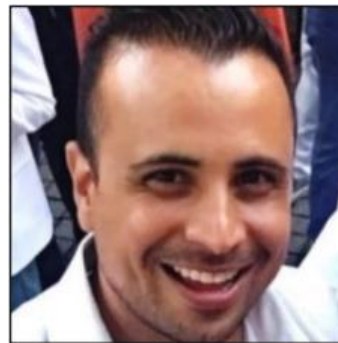
**from 5 pm – 8:30 pm  
& Wednesday August 30  
from 6 pm – 8:30 pm at  
The Ohio Theatre, 60 East State Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215**

**[Sign up for specific times here.](#)**

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### A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*by Donovan Jones*



Hi Friends: Earlier this summer, I marked the end of my first full year with the Columbus Gay Men's Chorus, which also coincided with the last day of our Fiscal Year.

Back in the Spring of 2022, after a few years of using alternate venues, we returned to the Lincoln Theater for two shows - *Bless Our Showtunes* and *Dolly and the Swift Chicks*. Our numbers on stage and in the audience were



strong considering what COVID did to most performing arts groups starting in March 2020.

We pushed ahead and had a very strong 2022-23 season, finishing with 115 singers on stage and a sold-out final show for our production of *Walt's Vault*, during Pride Week in June.

We've not only grown in the number of singers and audience members over the past year, but also in the size of our staff and Board of Directors, with 15 new or returning Board Members as we start our 2023-2024 season.

We are also embracing diversity and equity in new ways, as our Artistic Director, Brayton Bollenbacher, champions and programs more music by female-identified and non-binary composers and arrangers, as well as composers and arrangers of color.

This coming year has much for us to be excited about! We are bringing back our Forte Awards in the Spring, and we'll conclude our year with a chorus-wide trip to Minneapolis in July for the GALA Choruses Festival. This quadrennial gathering is being held for the first time since 2016, due to COVID in 2020. CGMC is proud to be a prominent leader nationwide in the GALA network of choruses.



As we begin our 2023-24 Season, please consider making a generous gift in the spirit of pride, to help us continue to fulfill our mission. Click [here](#) to learn more about our [annual giving campaign and all the ways you can support our organization](#). You can also make your [season ticket purchase](#) now. We invite your participation and attendance at all our performances.

I'm excited and humbled to work for this wonderful organization and we're so glad to have you as part of our family.



## LET'S GET READY TO RAFFLE!

*by Susie Williams-Yeager*

Once again this year, CGMC will be organizing and conducting a RAFFLE – with the main purpose being to raise money for our Membership Fund, which has two purposes: to support members needing some financial assistance for required costuming for a show, and – this year - to provide financial assistance for the members of the chorus who will be representing CGMC at the quadrennial GALA Festival in Minneapolis next summer.

Doug Althausser has transferred the proverbial CGMC Raffle Scepter to me, so I will now be serving as your *Raffle Queen*!! While I didn't receive any sort of crown, ornate robe, or jewels, I am nonetheless happy to be serving in this important role!

I will begin soliciting donations from chorus members for this December's *Holiday!* RAFFLE in late September and anticipate kicking it off sometime in October! I will be reaching out to various businesses and organizations for their support – but the bulk of our RAFFLE items typically come from our members themselves. What can you donate to make our RAFFLE a big success, you ask?

The sky's the limit when it comes to things you can donate, with these few exceptions: No used or worn clothing, and please no obscene or offensive items. Think outside the box! Keep your eyes open for possible treasures while out and about, or feel free to show off your creative talents or hobbies by donating items you've made yourself. If you're stumped, I'll be happy to provide suggestions of popular prizes from past raffles, if needed.

All chorus members will be able to buy raffle tickets in person at the large chorus rehearsals. We will also notify everyone by email, once the auction goes live on our Facebook Page, where you can buy tickets by using Venmo.

The *Holiday!* RAFFLE drawing will be held during Tech Week - and you don't need to be present to win! I will notify any winners who are not in attendance or not singing in this concert.

Tickets prices for this upcoming RAFFLE are: \$1 for 1 ticket; \$5 for 6 tickets; \$10 for 13 tickets; and \$20 for 27 tickets. The more tickets you buy, the more items you can bid on, and greater chance you'll have of winning something fun!

Please don't hesitate to call or text me with any questions or ideas you might have at 614-325-3662, or email [susiewillyeag@gmail.com](mailto:susiewillyeag@gmail.com)

### AWARDS PRESENTED AT AUGUST CAST PARTY

*by Krystal Jackowiak, Membership Director*

I want to thank you all again for the remarkable 33rd season we've just had! Our incredible members make this organization so special, and I'm truly grateful for each one of you.

We have another exciting year ahead, but earlier this month, we took time to acknowledge some of our members who made this past season so special! A festive Season 33 Awards ceremony took place on August 1st at *The GoGo* during our *Walt's Vault* Cast Party. Here's a recap of the terrific honorees and award winners who were recognized at the party:



- Golden Pump Award: Ryan Ladina
- Fertig-Callihan Award: Mike Bierschenk
- Unsung Hero Award: Eric Anderson
- Oh Captain, My Dance Captain Award: Rosemary Marston and Shayna Sullivan
- Boot Scootin' Boogie Award: James D. Smith
- Pride Champion Awards: William Ryan, Jean Nicole Lyons, Taylor Jane
- Walt's Vault Newcomer Award: Milo Browne
- Illumination Award: Joey Lyons
- New Member of the Year: Alex Dennie
- Member of the Year: Scott Kenneth Kustis
- President's Award: Jason Todd Guthrie

For those award winners who were not able to attend the cast party, I'll catch up with you in September to give you your award! ❤️

### HAPPY TIMES DURING COLUMBUS PRIDE MARCH AND FESTIVAL

*by Tahrea Maynard, Social Media Manager*



CGMC was honored to participate in the 2023 Stonewall Columbus Pride March and Festival on June 16<sup>th</sup>. We had a float in the parade, a booth to visit in Goodale Park, and we performed songs from our June concert for an enthusiastic crowd in the afternoon.

Over 22 CGMC members volunteered to participate in Pride preparations, by decorating, building and volunteering at the Booth. Folks who were able to attend the festival and visit our booth were treated to a warm greeting, candy and information about upcoming events and how to get involved with the Chorus.



CGMC member Joey Lyons (they/them) was a part of the CGMC Pride Committee as well as the Booth Chair. "It was such a joy to get to represent the chorus at our booth this year," said Joey. "We had so many great conversations with members of the community, and even got to serenade three different people with Happy Birthday! I think my favorite part was getting to spend quality time with fellow chorus members from other sections that I don't always get a chance to talk to at rehearsals. We



really have such a wonderful group and I'm so glad to know all of them!" Quite a few members brought their friends and family members to join in the festivities this year. Current CGMC Vice President, Joseph Olson (he/him), remarked, "this year's Pride March was so special because I was able to proudly march, hand-in-hand, with my husband and our two daughters (ages 5 and 8.) My mom-in-law, sister-in-law, and her partner also joined us from out-of-state! What made it more special for me was being surrounded by our CGMC family all weekend long - from the Parade, the Festival, and performing onstage! I love when all my families collide into one big, beautiful, proud community!"



Rainbows, smiles, and hugs were abundant. Over 60 CGMC members marched in the Pride Parade. Several members reported hearing their names called out from the crowds as they made their way up High Street, being recognized by friends and family.

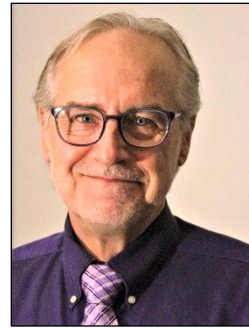
Folks cheered so hard as the CGMC float passed by. It was a grand day for our group and for the LGBTQIA+ community in Central Ohio. By showing up and participating in the March and Festival, CGMC was once again able to raise voices and potentially change lives.



## BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

### "Proud to Serve!"

*by Doug Althaus, CGMC President*



I've been proud to serve as President of CGMC twice over the past five years. I served my first term from 2018-2020, and I've just started the second year of my second term, which started in 2022 and runs through June of 2024.

My main responsibility as President is to lead the Board in deciding on and planning the future for the Chorus. I encourage board members to make decisions and follow through on organization-enriching activities, represent the Chorus in contracting, serve as a public speaker on behalf of the Chorus as needed, and provide supervision over the paid staff positions, including the Artistic Director and Executive Director.

I joined the group originally in 1990. In fact, I was a founding member of the group back then because I craved a social activity for gay people beyond those already offered in Columbus. Shortly thereafter, I moved away to pursue other ventures and was gone for 25 years. Upon my return to Columbus, I rejoined the group and sang my first concert in December 2015.

The thing I enjoy most about being in CGMC is the opportunity for connection with other gay men and with people who support nontraditional thinking and being able to represent a positive image to the community.

I feel that CGMC plays an important role in Columbus' cultural scene. For one, we've endured longer than other arts groups that started about the same time we did. Every concert we perform includes a subtle message on the dignity of queer people. Whether people like CGMC's shows or not, no one can deny that we are a bold and enduring group. We also provide a resource for people who want to sing and be influenced by that message of dignity, themselves.

In my spare time, I like to do lots of things! I like to cook and travel. I am also an amateur photographer. I like to meet new people, experience different things and share good

times and ideas. I also like classic movies and the history of cartoons.

Professionally, I was an addiction and mental health counselor for 25 years, and I still hold licensure in Ohio as an Independent Chemical Dependency Counselor. I published a book on a method of addiction treatment that I researched and developed. In the middle of that part of my career, I worked as a health educator for the Columbus AIDS Task Force (the forerunner of *Equitas*). In 2005, I started law school, and I have since worked for 15 years in different capacities as a Family and Juvenile Law attorney. Since becoming involved with the leadership of the Chorus, I've also made myself knowledgeable in 501(c)3 law. I am also a licensed massage therapist, in the State of Hawaii, and still like to practice.

Other things you should know about me personally include the fact that I adopted a son when he was 5 months old and raised him as a solo dad. He is 26, now, and he brings me joy every day. I like road trips, and each year I take several long weekends that involve a day's drive. I like to bicycle and will ride my third century-ride this fall. I have no pets currently, but someday I'll own a Samoyed. I grew up in Columbus and Worthington, and I cut my professional teeth in Athens and Marietta. I moved to Hawaii and lived there for 15 years, returning to Ohio to help my mom when dad got sick, and to start a new career.

I was an Honor Thespian in high school, but only sang in choir for one year. I have two degrees from Ohio University, and one from Capital University Law School.

My favorite books: *The Tao of Pooh*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Confederacy of Dunces*, *And Then there were None*. My favorite movie: *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World!* Other favorites: Hot chocolate made with almond milk, the game Cranium, Euchre, Thai cuisine, Jim Steinman, community theater, stand-up comics who don't use shock, NPR, Christmas and Hallowe'en. I'll take Coke over Pepsi, dark chocolate over milk chocolate, white wine over red, Buggs over Mickey, Diego over Austin.

Things to do that are still on my bucket list include learning to paint – and eventually travelling to Africa and finally succeeding in visiting all seven continents.

## MORE CGMC MEMBER PROFILES

by Jared Brown

*We're happy to feature two more members of CGMC in this issue with "get to know you" profiles. Our membership is both very diverse and unquestionably interesting – which gives us so much to celebrate as we find out more about them.*

### SEAN BOLEY

**1. How long have you been a member of the chorus?** 8 years

**2. What voice part do you sing?** Tenor

**3. Why did you join the chorus?** I lived in Columbus for two years and hadn't really found a community yet. The day the Supreme Court gave

their decision for *Obergefell v. Hodges* allowing for gay marriage to be legal, I figured it would be a good night to go out and celebrate. I headed over to the nearest bar, and it turned out that a lot of chorus members were there too, celebrating not just the ruling, but a successful show earlier that evening. I met so many people who really talked up the chorus, and how much fun it was, and I decided that night that I'd sign up for the next voice placements.

**4. What has been your favorite concert that you have performed in?** How can I choose? Finding Oz was special to me, since I got to sing "Over the Rainbow" in front of an enormous crowd at GALA in Denver in 2016. And singing with the Philadelphia Gay Men's Chorus for our joint performances, in both cities, of *Two Boys Kissing* was such a wonderful and emotional experience. But then, getting to sing part of this gorgeous trio in "We Three Kings" for last year's Beaus and Belles is also one of my proudest moments.

**5. Aside from the music, what is your favorite part of being in the chorus?** -- Knowing that I have friends I can rely on.

**6. What would you say to encourage someone who is considering CGMC to sign up?** At the end of this season, we'll be going to GALA! It's an enormous LGBTQIA+ chorus convention, with groups from all over the US, and beyond! We'll get to perform and hear other groups too. Minneapolis 2024 is the first one in eight years, so I bet it's going to be big! It's totally optional to go to this, but it's an incredible experience!



**7. What's one interesting fact that many people don't know about you?** I may or may not have started writing some horror fiction...

**8. What's your favorite movie?** -- *Jurassic Park*, *Pan's Labyrinth*, and *Mrs. Doubtfire* (again, like I could choose just one!)

**9. What do you like most about living in Columbus?** There's always something going on.

**10. What's been your favorite vacation ever?** Not exactly a vacation, but in the Summer of 2010, I spent a month in Spain for a study abroad program. My friends and I went to so many museums and castles. We watched as the Spanish team won the World Cup! And we ate the most amazing food and saw the most beautiful parts of the country. I'd love to go back one day.



**JESS WAIZMANN**

**1. How long have you been a member of the chorus?**

Since January 2023

**2. What voice part do you sing?**

Tenor 1

**3. Why did you join the chorus?**

I have always wanted to sing in a chorus and had been in a women's choir in high school for a couple of years as a mezzo soprano. I was nervous about joining, as I don't have sight reading skills and was so out of practice! Me and my wife attended the "Beaus and Belles" concert in December and hearing Krystal talk about membership, I thought it was a great opportunity to sing in a group that shares my values. I have always dreamed of singing in a group all through my adult life!

**4. What has been your favorite concert that you have performed in?** Only 2 so far but definitely *Tales of Our Age*! The storytelling and the songs we performed were so touching. My parents attended the concert, and my mom cried the whole time. My Dad told her afterwards that it was the most exciting thing they had done in a long time! In addition, my wife, Jiwon, decided to join as a T1 after that concert because she loved it so much!

**5. Aside from the music, what is your favorite part of being in the chorus?** Being in CGMC has given me the community and chosen family I didn't know I needed! My wife and I have been calling practices "church", with

us singing on Sunday's and having shared values and mission. There is such joy in singing in this group. I have made so many dear friends and am continuing to meet and get to know new folks all the time! I believe deeply in our mission and am thankful for the culture of inclusion and acceptance in the group. I also appreciate the awareness and visibility our group has during a challenging political time for our community.

**6. What would you say to encourage someone who is considering CGMC to sign up?** Go for it! You don't have to have a lot of experience or musical skills to join, as long as you can match pitch and sing in the TTBB range. It's hard work but so fun and worthwhile. I would say don't be intimidated because there is a very supportive and inclusive culture in the chorus.

**7. What's one interesting fact that many people don't know about you?** I supervise behavioral health services provided across 8 counties in central Ohio. I love overseeing a department and having a positive impact on staff and culture, as well as serving our clients and their families. I am passionate about supporting individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health disorders. I deeply value supporting individuals during difficult times, with compassionate, trauma-assumed treatment that maximizes individuals' choice, control and personal empowerment.

**8. What's your favorite movie?** *Saving Face* - probably not well known but a happy, positive representation of queer women in the media!

**9. What do you like most about living in Columbus?** I moved here in 2005 from OU in Athens due to the vocational opportunities here. Of course, it's now home and I am grateful for the arts, queer community and events/festivals in the city.

**10. What's been your favorite vacation ever?** Any vacation with my wife, whether a little local weekend trip or our beach and mountain adventures!

*Member profiles will be featured in each of our quarterly newsletters. If you are interested in being profiled, please let Jared Brown know, in person, or via email at: [jaredclaytonbrown@gmail.com](mailto:jaredclaytonbrown@gmail.com)*

**THURSDAY NIGHT SOCIAL TIMES THIS FALL:**

**SEPT. 7, OCT. 5, NOV. 2 AND DEC. 7**

**KARAOKE NIGHTS AT 9PM AT A.W.O.L.**

**49 PARSONS AVENUE \* COLUMBUS, OH 43215**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**