



A MESSAGE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
JARED BRAYTON BOLLENBACHER

*"OMEA PERFORMANCE HITS THE MARK!"*



It was just last summer that our fearless leader, Brayton, received the exciting news that CGMC had been selected

to perform at this year's OMEA convention. Work began almost immediately to select music and rehearse a program that would make a lasting impression on this important audience of music educators from throughout the state. Now that it's over, we asked Brayton, how did we do? Here is his response:

"It's hard to put into words how pleased I was with our performance at the annual Ohio Music Educators Association convention on Friday, February 2, 2024, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

The chorus sang so beautifully and emotionally, for a performance that only really had four dedicated rehearsals to come together, which in itself was an impressive feat. Preparing during the month of January was also a challenge, with several singers dealing with illnesses. Learning notes, memorizing music and adding choreography, all in four weeks, was a lot to expect, but they came through and pulled-off an incredibly wonderful performance. We were able to sing at a venue and in front of an audience that we never anticipated reaching before.

Since that historic evening, I have had numerous educators throughout the state tell me that our performance was so meaningful for them, especially as they work to navigate through the new legislation and laws that are affecting our community.



We can't grow a tree overnight, but as the first LGBTQA+ chorus to perform for OMEA, we planted a seed that I think will start budding and evolving in the near future. One can only hope that we are part of a catalyst of change to make this state supportive of our trans and non-binary friends and family. Let us continue to build love for all in the LGBTQA+ spectrum."

While it's very gratifying to hear positive feedback from the audience, it's also worth noting that this program had a profound impact on many of our singers. Here are some thoughts from Kris Boyd, who moved to Columbus from New York City after the pandemic, and joined CGMC last August. He shared this post on our group bulletin board the day after the OMEA concert:



"OMEA was the first time I've been back to singing since NYCGMC's spring show was canceled in March 2020 before the pandemic. I was so burned out with singing for many reasons, mostly because my want of community outreach never really manifested in any meaningful way.

That was until last night's performance. It struck me, as I sat in my car on the ride home, that in my 14+ years of being involved in the choral world, this was the first time I felt like I was part of a performance that actually had a possibility of making a difference.

There were many young people in that audience who got to hear something that a young me never got to hear or see. Our LGBTQ+ community was just so damn visible in a public place beyond the more common performances that can sometimes feel like an echo chamber.

THIS is what I had been craving from the choral world all these years. I love singing and enjoy the typical choral show. In CGMC, we not only provide a safe space for our chorus members, we also give voice to those who don't have

one, and we're visible to those who still can't be.



Through our performance, we showed a massively diverse community, not just an individual or stereotype.

All of this is to just say, thank you all for being the wonderful, courageous people you are. I don't need to know you personally to see the light in each and every one of you. Thank you Brayton and Jordan for stoking and developing a, seemingly impossible, sound out of us in such a short amount of time. And just thanks to everyone for helping bring a spark back into my life I had been missing for so long!"

The day after the OMEA appearance, CGMC Board President Doug Althausen sent this congratulatory message to the performers:

"All of us on the Board want you to know how impressed and proud of you we are, especially knowing how much work went into making last night's show such a memorable success. Your voices were amazing, and you deserved all the cheers, the standing ovation, and the wonderful comments that still are coming in.

In the weeks prior to the show, Jordan's rehearsal leadership was inspired. Brayton's vision for the show was spot-on. His comments before the performance were powerful, striking the

hearts of the educators in the room. The musicians simply added beauty to the power of the night, from Nathan's forever-awesome playing on an unfamiliar piano to the bold tempo of percussion to the underscoring played by the violins and bass.

Donovan, in his role, worked (with Lana Moy) quietly behind the scenes and after-hours to get members their costuming and their passes, coordinate volunteers, and commiserate with the City Council reps, deserving more credit than most realize.

This night was very special because of the opportunity it presented to us as a history-making show. It was also a teaser for the Banned show we have coming up in June. Thank you, each of you, for your continued devotion to the harmony of our community, inviting all with Voices Raised and Lives Changed."

With love, Your Board!

*Rich Alonso, Doug Althausen,  
Chuck Cohen, Joe Flaherty, Matthew Fox,  
Jason Guthrie, Lisa Hope,  
Krystal Jackowiak, Joseph Olson,  
Allen Proctor, Jerry Rhodes,  
Bill Ryan, Jim Svagerko,  
James Wells, Bill Wright*



A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
DONOVAN JONES



As we step into the vibrant season of spring, I find myself filled with an immense sense of excitement and anticipation for the wonderful opportunities ahead. With April fast approaching, we are eagerly preparing for one of the highlights of our year –



**THURSDAY EVENING  
APRIL 25, 2024  
6:00PM – 8:30PM  
LINCOLN THEATRE  
769 EAST LONG STREET  
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43203**

The Forte Awards stand as a celebration of our many collective achievements, dedication, and the profound impact we continue to make within our community and beyond. It is a time to honor excellence, creativity, and the unwavering spirit that defines our chorus and a member of the community who embodies the mission and vision of CGMC. Tickets are on sale now and we hope to see you there.

Amidst the buzz of anticipation for the Forte Awards, we find ourselves deeply engaged in our annual membership fundraising drive, continuing through March 15<sup>th</sup>. This pivotal campaign serves as the lifeblood of our organization, fueling our mission to be the beacon of inclusivity and harmony in the LGBTQIA+ community. It is



important to underscore the unique essence of our chorus – the fact that we proudly welcome all individuals, regardless of their financial means, to join us in our musical journey. CGMC stands as the only large LGBTQIA+ chorus in the country that operates without imposing membership dues. This fundamental principle of inclusivity is what sets us apart and defines our mission.



During our membership fundraising drive, we call upon our community, our friends, and our allies to contribute what they can, ensuring that our doors remain open to all who wish to raise their voices alongside us. Every contribution, no matter the size, resonates deeply with the values of

inclusivity and acceptance that lie at the core of our chorus.

As we continue in this exhilarating season, let us strive to inspire, uplift, and unite through the power of music. Together, we will elevate our voices, celebrate our diversity, and champion the values that make us proud members of CGMC.

With gratitude and anticipation,

*Donovan*

Donovan Jones, MA, MPH He|Him|His  
Executive Director - Columbus Gay Men's Chorus  
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**GIVE ONLINE AT:**

**[WWW.CGMC.COM/DONATE](http://WWW.CGMC.COM/DONATE)**

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## JOIN CGMC'S SOCIAL MEDIA TEAM!

Do you like social media? Do you enjoy taking pictures and videos of your friends at rehearsal? Do you want to help make CGMC even better? This is your invitation to join CGMC's new Social Media Team, co-chaired by Nick Deyo and David Donofrio.

We are looking for members who have ideas about upgrading our online presence. Whether you are an idea person, love to take pictures, or even

have interest in helping make posts for us, we want you on the team! The more the merrier - many hands make light work! :)

We promise to not make it a huge commitment, and we will definitely make it fun! If this interests you at all, click the SurveyMonkey link below, and let us know how you can help!  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3766Q7T>

## MEMBER PROFILE DEON ALEXANDER



I have been a member of the chorus for five years, joining in 2018, and I sing upper Baritone.

Singing has always been a passion of mine. In middle school, I sang in show choir, and I sang A LOT in the shower from 6th grade until...well, I still do that! Two years before joining the chorus, I was a season subscriber, so I was somewhat familiar with what the chorus was about.

I have a friend (who is no longer in the chorus) who convinced me to come to a chorus mixer at which I met Droo, Jason Guthrie, and various other chorus members. I enjoyed the vibe I was getting from those with whom I interacted, so I decided to give the chorus a try.

My favorite concert so far was "Dreams and Nightmares." It was the most fun I've ever had performing, and the audience feedback was overwhelming and affirming.

Aside from the music, my favorite part of being in the chorus is Jared Young, of course! I love the sense of community and belonging that I feel with this group. It keeps me engaged and excited about the possibilities.

If you want to be in an affirming environment with fun, eccentric, genuine, and loveable people who will accept all of your idiosyncrasies, then this is the group for you. CGMC is truly a family, and the music we sing together is the glue that binds us. Professionally, I am an accountant. But many people don't know that I'm also a decent ballroom dancer! And, I am a big fan of Jennifer Hudson.

What do I like most about living in Columbus? I enjoy the ever-evolving food scene here. There's always a new great place to dine. My favorite vacation to date was my trip to Spain in 2016. It was truly a magical and transformative experience.

#### MEMBER PROFILE ANDREW "DROO" FREEMAN



I joined CGMC in September of 2015, so this is my ninth season singing in the chorus and my eighth season singing in VOX.

I started as a lower baritone, but the Chorus needed more basses at the beginning of 2022. So, I made the small step down the staff to upper bass, which is where I still am today.

I had recently moved back to Columbus after having lived in Seattle for almost 12 years. I had sung with the Seattle Men's Chorus, so joining CGMC allowed me to continue singing and meet people.

It's too difficult to decide on which of our concerts has been my favorite, but definite highlights include singing on the field of Huntington Park and the VOX Across the Pond and ABBA concerts. Aside from the music, what is your favorite part of being in the chorus is the people! I've made some really good friends.

To anyone who is considering becoming a member of CGMC, I say "Just try it! You don't have to audition. You don't have to commit to anything. There are over 100 singers in CGMC who thought about joining, took the chance, and are

still singing (like me!).

I am a self-proclaimed big dork (see my Chorus Connection profile.) But many people don't know that I'm currently working on my second master's degree at Ohio State, in public administration. My goal is to graduate in Spring 2025.

If you know me, then you already know the my favorite singers/music groups are David Bowie and Stevie Nicks! I even have tattoos of some of their album art.

The thing I like most about living in Columbus is that it's a "blue" small-big city. I'm still waiting to take "my favorite vacation ever" – but Italy is a close second!

A MESSAGE FROM  
CGMC BOARD PRESIDENT  
DOUGLAS ALTHAUSER



CGMC's Board held its' semi-annual retreat in January, facilitated by CGMC singing members (and professional trainers) Tess Smith and Chelsea Gilbert.

They provided training to help the Board with a decision-making model that promotes collaboration when evaluating issues needing Board approval.

In the early years, CGMC's board usually ran on majority votes to make decisions. It was quite democratic, but wasn't always the best business model. Over the past few years, the board has worked to improve how it conducts business. We have used the talents of volunteers and Board members with knowledge on 501(c)3 law, business

law, finance and accounting, and professional ethics.

The formality has seemed a little awkward at times, since most of us joined the Chorus to sing and have fun, without the worry of approving policies and financial statements. But all this work has led us to grow from a grass-roots venture, surviving on proceeds from garage sales, to a well-respected member of the Columbus professional arts pantheon, with a sustainability plan (which, yes, includes your financial support.)

Our retreat gave us more skills to help us evaluate issues affecting the Chorus, and help Board members work together to make the best decisions for the organization.

Board work is the kind of behind-the-scenes stuff that audience members don't know about. But it's also the kind of stuff that helps CGMC to make sure there will always be performances for our audience to enjoy! Thank you for your support and interest in the Columbus Gay Men's Chorus. Inviting all with Voices Raised, Lives Changed.

INTERESTED IN SERVING CGMC?



Hello, CGMC Family! We are seeking new members for our Board of Directors. Together, we are responsible for defining the purpose and direction of the organization, making financial and policy decisions, and handling personnel matters, including developing job descriptions and hiring professional staff. We meet 6 to 11 times per year,

usually on the third Monday of the month from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Two-thirds of the Board must be singing members or volunteers. You can learn more by reading our Board Handbook and Bylaws, which can be found on Chorus Connection. New terms begin on July 1st, with April entry possible. Feel free to contact any current Board member with questions.

To apply, please send a letter of interest along with your resume, via e-mail to:

Joseph Olson, Vice President  
[vicepresident@CGMC.com](mailto:vicepresident@CGMC.com)  
by Sunday, April 7, 2024



SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2024  
**Dr. Robert J. Fass Memorial  
AIDS Walk Ohio**

Genoa Park  
303 W. Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43215  
Starting at 8:00 am

Parking is available on the street and at the COSI garage. Participate in person at Genoa Park or virtually in your own neighborhood.

Members and friends of CGMC are once again invited to support and participate in the Annual AIDS Walk Ohio, one of the largest opportunities for the public to give back in this capacity.

Please sign up for the CGMC team. This is a very fun event and it is for an important cause!

<https://www.classy.org/event/aids-walk-ohio-2023/e418684>.

For more information, contact:

[cgadellnewton@gmail.com](mailto:cgadellnewton@gmail.com)

(614) 288-1082

The weather will be great. Come out and run or walk your first 5K of the year. We are planning a social gathering after the event, details to be determined. Stay tuned for updates.

This event brings over 1,000 people from across the state together to raise critical funds for HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention programs. In just the past eight years, AIDS Walk Ohio has raised over \$2 million for AIDS service organizations in Ohio, including Equitas Health, who produces the event and is the primary beneficiary.

Funds raised support HIV/AIDS medical care and treatment, HIV prevention (which includes PrEP), and a variety of other services like primary care, behavioral health counseling, and dental care—one of the most unmet needs of those living with HIV.







CGMC was recently recognized by the Columbus City Council, celebrating 34 years, with the following resolution:

WHEREAS, this Council recognizes and celebrates the 34th season of the Columbus Gay Men's Chorus ("CGMC"),  
And

WHEREAS, since 1990, the Columbus Gay Men's Chorus has been a vehicle for fostering connection among LGBTQ+ community members who love to sing in a non-auditioned, inclusive environment, and

WHEREAS, the chorus has grown in its 34 years to a consistent composition of well over 100 members, making it the largest TTBB (tenor, baritone, bass vocal range) chorus in Ohio, and

WHEREAS, the CGMC creates and performs innovative, provocative, and entertaining programs that enhance the arts in Central Ohio, and that honor, preserve, and expand the legacy and artistry of the TTBB (tenor, baritone, bass vocal range) choral sound and tradition, and

WHEREAS, the CGMC is open to all people regardless of vocal talent, musical ability, race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, religion,

age, physical ability, sexual orientation, or economic means, and

WHEREAS, the CGMC's mission strives to increase awareness of, and support for, the entire LGBTQ+ community, and their art and advocacy have been instrumental in creating a culture of inclusion for members of the LGBTQ+ community both within Columbus and beyond, and

WHEREAS, the CGMC was recently recognized for their more than three decades of accomplishments by the Ohio Music Educator Association (OMEA), and was the first LGBTQ+ Chorus that has been ever commissioned to Perform at the OMEA Annual National Conference, and

WHEREAS, the CGMC's art has been pivotal in ensuring that friends, neighbors, and loved ones within the LGBTQIA+ community are seen and heard – both in spirit and in song, and

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS: That this Council celebrates the 34 years of the Columbus Gay Men's Chorus and recognizes their critical contribution to increasing visibility, recognition, understanding, and inclusion of those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, or other sexual orientations across the City of Columbus.

