

MUSIC TRIUMPHED OVER INTOLERANCE

In the summer of 2005, 120 members of the Boston Gay Men's Chorus toured Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic. The tour began in Berlin, where the BGMC performed at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt and sang for a crowd of 400,000 at the Christopher Street Day festival. The tour ended in Prague with a gala concert at the Rudolfinum to raise money and awareness for domestic partnership legislation.

The middle of the tour was spent in Wroclaw, Poland, where the BGMC was booked to give that country's first-ever concert by an openly gay organization. Upon arrival, the Chorus learned that the concert was in jeopardy of being cancelled due to threats from a right-wing Catholic group called the League of Polish Families. For a week they had pressured city and concert hall officials to cancel the event to no avail.

The day before the concert they announced that they would do anything necessary to prevent the concert, including purchasing all remaining tickets, storming the hall, and forming a human chain to prevent the BGMC from entering.

The Chorus, staying at the Hotel Wroclaw, was put under 24 hour police guard with police vans blocking the hotel driveway. Singers were warned to travel only in groups and to be cautious. Advance ticket sales were suspended and it was unclear if or how the concert would go on.

BGMC members were bussed to the concert venue for a dress rehearsal under police escort and 20 armed officers formed a protective line from the bus to the stage door. While the Chorus rehearsed, the protesters arrived. They shouted through bullhorns and unfurled signs and

banners with crude anti-gay symbols. They chanted hate-filled messages and claimed the Chorus was there to destroy the Polish family. Police surrounded the hall, the street, and adjacent rooftops. A counter-demonstration joined the scene, with college students and liberals chanting to support the Chorus. A stream of audience members filed through the police lines.

At eight o'clock the Chorus took the stage to a full house of cheering people. Security guards and police lined the auditorium (you can hear a few police radios in the opening numbers) and nearly a dozen news crews from around the country were set up to film. The Chorus began to sing "Gaude Mater Polonia" a hymn that had been Poland's unofficial anthem for centuries. The audience rose to its feet and stood silently while the BGMC sang. Audience and singers

alike were in tears as each other's cultures were embraced. In welcome remarks, the BGMC quoted President John F Kennedy, who once said "Art is not a form of propaganda, it is a form of truth."

The concert concluded with a 10 minute standing ovation as the Chorus came back on stage to sing encore after encore. Off stage, the singers were besieged by hugs, kisses and tears from the emotional audience. The next morning, the entire front page of the city newspaper was devoted to the concert and protest. The newspaper article said it best: "Music triumphed over intolerance."

Recording Credits

Edited and mastered at Soundmirror, Boston, MA. Recorded live at Philharmonic Hall, Wroclaw, Poland, June 27, 2005

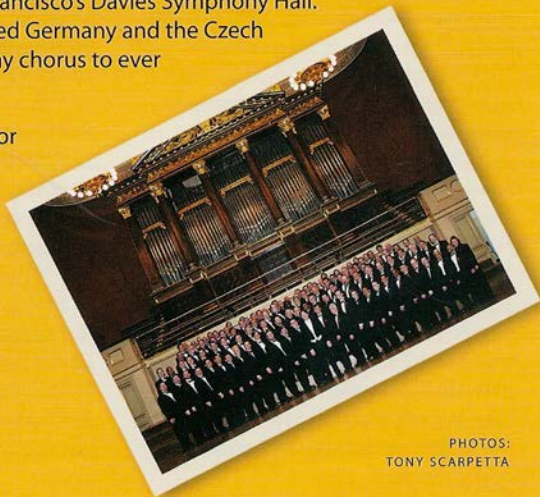
BOSTON GAY MEN'S CHORUS

The nationally acclaimed Boston Gay Men's Chorus was founded in 1982. As one of New England's largest and most successful community-based choruses, the 175 voice ensemble is celebrated for its outstanding musicianship, creative programming, and groundbreaking community outreach. Under the dynamic leadership of Music Director Reuben M. Reynolds III, the BGMC sings a wide spectrum of classical and popular music with excellence and builds bridges to all people by providing a positive, affirming image of the gay and lesbian community. At home in some of Boston's most prestigious venues including Symphony Hall and Jordan Hall, the BGMC has also performed coast to coast, from New York City's Carnegie Hall to San Francisco's Davies Symphony Hall. In June 2005 the BGMC toured Germany and the Czech Republic and was the first gay chorus to ever perform in Poland.

Please visit www.bgmc.org for more information on the BGMC and a complete discography.

Boston Gay Men's Chorus

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PHOTOS:
TONY SCARPETTA

BOSTON GAY MEN'S CHORUS

LIVE IN POLAND

Reuben M. Reynolds III, Music Director — Chad Weirick, Assistant Music Director & Principal Accompanist

- 1 **Gaude Mater Polonia**
traditional (1:22)
- 2 **Free to Love**
Dean X. Johnson (2:49)
- 3 **Jonathan Wesley Oliver, Jr.**
Tom Brown (4:47)
- 4 **Bright Morning Stars Are Rising**
Paul Siskind (4:41)
- 5 **O Magnum Mysterium**
Morten Lauridsen (4:52)
- Old American Songs**, Aaron Copland
- 6 **At the River** (2:37)
- 7 **Simple Gifts** (1:35)
- 8 **The Little Horses** (2:39)
- 9 **Ching-A-Ring-Chaw** (1:53)
- 10 **Zion's Walls** (2:23)
- 11 **The Day After That**
John Kander and Fred Ebb (6:47)
- 12 **A More Perfect Union** (9:04)
Music by Roger Bourland, Text by Phillip Littell
They Stood in Lines
Ask Me
You and I
- 13 **Our Love Is Here To Stay**
George Gershwin, arr. Weirick (3:16)
- 14 **Little Jazz Bird**
George Gershwin, arr. Weirick (3:52)
- 15 **Embraceable You**
George Gershwin, arr. Weirick (2:19)
- 16 **S'Wonderful**
George Gershwin, arr. Weirick (2:14)
- 17 **The Quest Unending**
Joseph M. Martin (5:40)
- 18 **There Comes A Time**
Connie Kaldor, arr. Zwozdesky (1:22)
- 19 **Down by the Riverside**
traditional, arr. Weirick (4:10)
- 20 **Everything Possible**
Fred Small, arr. Zwozdesky (5:06)



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