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CHORUS**  
OF WASHINGTON DC



**NOVEMBER 14, 2015**  
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# PROGRAM

Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC  
presents

# THE SHOW

Thea Kano, Director  
Eric Peterson, Patter Coach  
Alex Tang, Piano  
Joe Vignali, Production Manager

## CAST

Jarrold Bennett  
Robby Dean  
Rob Finn  
Jay Gilliam  
Christian Gonzalez  
Paul Negron  
Justin Ritchie  
Lonny Smith  
Michael B. Smith  
Kevin Thomason  
JJ Vera



# WHO'S WHO

**Jarrod Bennett**, a caffeine dependent life-form, was born in the analog world but is now digital. He strives to live in tenor-land, is absolutely awkward, proud of his nerdiness and a strong swimmer. He's humbled to be performing with this wonderful family of musicians.

**Robby Dean** lives in Washington DC with his dog Gucci and has been a member of GMCW for three years. Until GMCW, most of Robby's musical performances were centered around playing the trombone in the pit orchestra in various musicals. This is Robby's first venture onto the cabaret stage as a performer.

**Rob Finn** joined GMCW in January 2015 and is a proud member of the Rock Creek Singers. He had the honor and privilege of traveling to Cuba with the Chorus in its historic LGBTQ outreach tour this past July. Rob moved to DC last October and lives with his partner Dan in NoMa.

**Jay Gilliam** Performing with GMCW since 2007, Jay loves the stage — and chorus! He'll sing anything: pop, choral or Broadway. And anywhere: Tokyo, Havana or his shower. Jay thanks his friends and Rod Stewart for pushing him to sing out loud and proud!

**Christian Gonzalez** Since relocating from Colorado two years ago, Christian has become a proud member of GMCW and is excited to share the stage with these talented men. Christian would like to send a warm thank you to his friends and coworkers at the Annapolis Brio, and his husband Kyle: Mi Amor gracias por todo el apollo, animo y el amor que me das todo los dias, sin ti no podria sobrevivir. Te amo.

**Paul Negron** loves to sing and can be seen lighting up the stage with his sexy, smooth moves. In September of last year he joined Potomac Fever, in which he is a part of the fabulous baritone section. Paul thanks his family and friends for supporting him every step of the way.

**Justin Ritchie** has been singing with GMCW since 2010 and is happy to be back again for this year's cabaret. He loves performing and sincerely believes that all of life's great truths can be found in a Broadway musical...especially Sondheim musicals.

**Lonny Smith** has sung with GMCW since 2011, performing in the *Home Cooked Cabaret* and Rock Creek Singers. Originally from Brainerd, Minnesota, he has lived in the Washington area for 12 years. As a cabaret singer and actor, he has performed locally at Germano's, Sotta Sopra, the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop, the Kennedy Center, Signature Theatre, MetroStage, the DC Arts Club and as part of the Washington Fringe Festival.

**Michael Brendan Smith** is celebrating his 25th anniversary as a GMCW member, and 22 years as a member of Potomac Fever. Last July, he was proud to join other GMCW singers in an historic cultural exchange tour of Cuba. Michael dedicates his performance tonight to his long-suffering spouse, Morrigan, and to their loveably inert beagle, Samantha.

**Kevin Thomason** is delighted to reprise his role as Norma Desmond in *Sunset 2: Back to the Boulevard*. When not playing (?) a self-centered aging diva, Kevin can be found downing Grey Goose cosmos at the bar. This is Kevin's fourth GMCW cabaret, which is remarkable considering his complete lack of training and questionable talent.

**JJ Vera** is honored and proud to be among the cast of *The S\* Show* alongside fellow members of the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC. This is his second year in the Chorus and his first contribution as a soloist in a cabaret. JJ would like to thank GMCW for taking him in and supporting him in his growth as an artist and musician.



### **Thea Kano, Artistic Director**

Dr. Thea Kano, a Northern California native, became active in the arts at an early age. She started playing piano at age four and began taking ballet soon after, a background that has a strong influence on her conducting. Dr. Kano's graceful yet commanding presence on stage and the robust performances she obtains from her musicians have basis in her formal training as a dancer.

Dr. Kano has conducted an extensive range of repertoire with several ensembles, including the Angeles Chorale, The Washington Chorus and, last season, assumed the position of artistic director of the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC, for which she also directs its acclaimed ensembles Rock Creek Singers and Potomac Fever. In addition, she oversees GMCW's outreach efforts, including its GenOUT program. A champion of music education, Dr. Kano has devoted countless hours to students of all ages and backgrounds. She believes in the power of music to nurture and believes that classical music should be accessible to all. Dr. Kano's substantial experience in this arena includes: building partnerships with organizations serving disenfranchised adults, hosting workshops with at-risk youth, leading youth arts programs of many sizes, as well as directing award-winning high school and collegiate choruses.

In addition to her work with GMCW, Dr. Kano serves as the artistic director of the New York City Master Chorale, which she founded in 2005. The 80-member group is recognized as one of the finest vocal ensembles in New York City and has performed to sold-out audiences on two continents. Dr. Kano is known for her expressiveness and dynamic conducting and the Chorale has been praised for its balance and richness in tone in performing a variety of musical styles. Under her direction, the Chorale made its debuts at Lincoln Center (2006) and Carnegie Hall (2009), as well as its international debut in Paris, France (2011).

Dr. Kano has prepared choruses for Zubin Mehta, Esa-Pekka Solonen, Emil de Cou, David Hayes, Craig Fleischer, Victor Vener and Paul Salamunovich. Dr. Kano's various ensembles have performed at the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Disney Hall, Église Saint-Sulpice (Paris) and on the National Mall for the 2009 inaugural ceremonies.

Dr. Kano received her doctorate in choral conducting from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2004. At UCLA, Dr. Kano studied under Donald Neuen, her professional mentor. For her dissertation on Durufé's *Requiem*, Dr. Kano completed research with L'Association Durufé in Paris and studied privately with Paul Salamunovich. Dr. Kano holds a Master of Music degree from UCLA and a bachelor's degree in choral music education and piano performance from Arizona State University.

Dr. Kano speaks French and actively conducts ensembles in New York City, Paris and Washington, DC.

# WHO'S WHO



## Alex Tang, Accompanist

Alex Tang plays for GMCW's popular monthly open mic nights and has performed at the Kennedy Center, Smithsonian, Arena Stage, Signature Theatre, Studio Theatre, National Theatre and Ford's Theatre for numerous local and touring productions including *Mamma Mia!*, *Wicked*, *The Lion King* and *If/Then* (starring Idina Menzel). He conducted the area premieres of *Urinetown* (Signature), *Adding Machine* and *Passing Strange* (Studio), accompanied the former Lesbian & Gay Chorus of Washington for nearly eight seasons, and played keyboards for the new musical *Kid Victory*,

by the legendary John Kander (*Cabaret*, *Chicago*) and Greg Pierce (Signature). By day, he works as an attorney. Musical training: Juilliard (Pre-College Div.); Yale (B.A. with honors).



## Eric Peterson, Patter Coach

Eric Peterson has been a member of the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC since 2009. He received his BA in theater from Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA, and might be familiar to GMCW audiences as Roger in *Grease*, Melvin P. Thorpe in *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, Willoughby in *Alexander's House*, and Miss Mazzeppa in *A Gay Man's Guide to Broadway*. He makes his living helping organizations become more diverse and inclusive, and lives in Capitol Hill with an adorable dog and an ornery cat.



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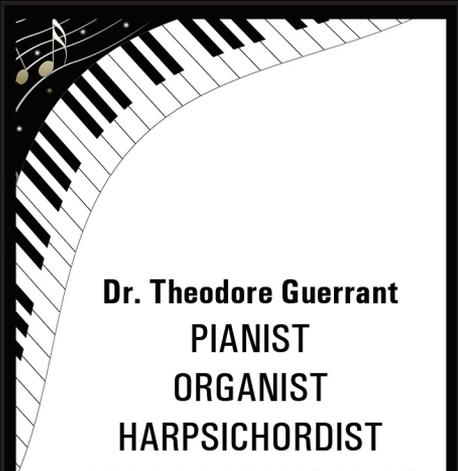
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