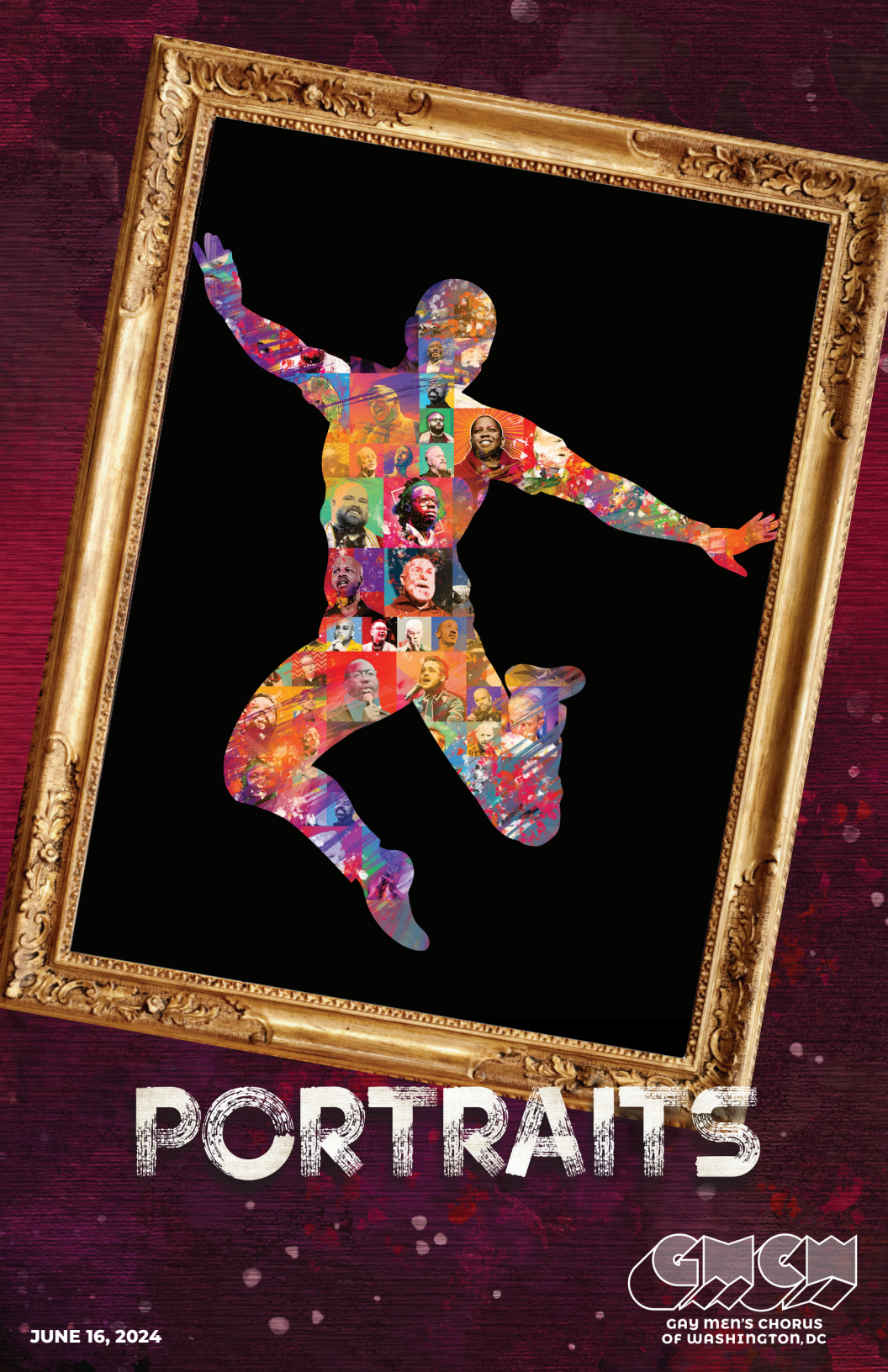
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GAY MEN'S CHORUS
OF WASHINGTON, DC
JUNE 16, 2024

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to the premiere of *Portraits*! The Portraits Project began in early 2020 when a longtime singing member approached us with a generous gift earmarked for a new commission incorporating visual art. After several meetings and discussions, the Portraits Project was born with the mission to represent through visual art, music, and dance, the vibrant human spectrum of identity, expression, orientation, and culture.

In 2021 we issued a call for artwork, yielding nearly 500 images from over 300 artists from 25 countries and most of the United States. Ultimately, nine images were chosen for this first installation of the Project. The process of choosing a mere nine artworks was daunting, as the art submitted was extraordinarily inspiring. We initially eliminated the images representing known people, such as celebrity artists and historical figures, so as not to distract the audience with any previous knowledge of that person. Secondly, we eliminated works that included words or numbers, so as not to distract from the lyrics the chorus would sing. And thirdly, we decided to include only paintings in the exhibition, thus eliminating photographs and drawings. We looked for paintings with the potential for storytelling through song, and the potential for movement through dance. And finally, and most importantly, with the help of GMCW members and staff, we choose the artwork that we agreed best represented a diversity of artists and subjects integral to the mission of the Project.

We next posted the images on our website and then put out a call for musical scores in 2022, asking composers to submit a piece for TTBB chorus inspired by one or more of the portraits in the exhibition. The call yielded dozens of choral compositions from around the world. In early 2023, members of GMCW gathered to sing through the scores and provide feedback to guide the selection of the nine compositions ultimately chosen to accompany the nine artworks. Once the selections were made, digital recordings of the music were posted on our website along with the images of the artworks.

The dance component began later in 2023 when we reached out to nine choreographers with whom we had previously worked or who came recommended to us. The choreographers each selected a portrait to bring to three-dimensional life with choreography for our 17th Street Dance company.

In the fall of 2023 the artists, composers, and choreographers met virtually with GMCW's artistic team to discuss their individual contributions to the Portraits Project and share the intent behind the creation of their work. The first dance rehearsal took place in November 2023, and the Chorus rehearsals began in February 2024.

Thank you for joining us tonight. It is our hope that you feel yourselves seen and represented on this stage as together we celebrate the beautiful tapestry of humanity.

Thea Kano
Artistic Director

GMCW would like to offer our deepest gratitude to the following donors who have generously underwritten today's world premiere performance of *PORTRAITS* in honor of the 20th anniversary of our Artistic Director Dr. Thea Kano:

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Bill Lipsett & Eric Bolda
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Richard Bennett
James Ellzy & Francis O'Malley
Greg Kubiak
Tom Mounteer
Lawrence Poole & Steve Oatmeyer
Nicole Streeter

WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!

THEA KANO
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

JUSTIN FYALA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PORTRAITS

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SHAWN ALGER

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STAGE DIRECTOR
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PORTRAITS

THE ARTISITS

JOAN COX
CÉLINE GAUCHEY
TERRANCE GREGORASCHUK
JACQUELINE HOYSTED
JAMES KIMAK
LINDA LOWERY
JUDITH PECK
NICOLE WANDERA
GREGORY WILKINS

THE COMPOSERS AND LYRICISTS

RICHARD CLAWSON
MATTHEW FELBEIN
JOSHUA FISHBEIN
ISMAEL HUERTA
PAUL LEAVITT
RAYMOND MUELLER
CAROLINE PEACOCK
COLE REYES
ETHAN SOLEDAD
ROYDON TSE

THE CHOREOGRAPHERS

MICHAEL BOBBITT
JESSICA BROWN-WHITE
KRYSTAL BUTLER
CRAIG CIPOLLINI
MATTHEW CUMBIE
SOLOMON HAILESELASSIE
JAMES ELLZY
ANDREA MILLER
CATHERINE OH

PORTRAITS

Speaker: Jarrod Bennett

Portrait: *Strange Fruit*
Artist: Nicole Wandera
Music: “Strange Fruit”
Composer and Lyricist: Paul Leavitt
Choreographer: Catherine Oh

Dancers: Sean Cator, Iván Dávila, Cole Jaconski, Franky Lieder, Juliana Murcia, Darryl Pilate, Brook Urquhart, Yuri Velasquez, Matt Zagorski

Speaker: Jack Reiffer

Portrait: *Shard*
Artist: Céline Gauchey
Music: “I am (only mine)”
Composer and lyricist: Cole Reyes
Text: Cole Reyes
Choreographer: Matthew Cumbie

Dancers: Sean Cator, Iván Dávila, Cole Jaconski, Franky Lieder, Juliana Murcia, Darryl Pilate, Brook Urquhart, Yuri Velasquez, Matt Zagorski

Speaker: Marcos Sastre

Portrait: *See Me*
Artist: Linda Lowery
Music: “Do You See Me?”
Composer and lyricist: Royden Tse
Choreographer: Michael Bobbitt

Soloist: James Ellzy
Dancers: Craig Cipollini, Neal Going, Jeffrey Hollands, Daniel Kingsley

Five-minute pause

Speaker: Alex Gerhard

Portrait: *Sleep with One Eye Open and Do Not Speak of It*
Artist: Terrance Gregoraschuk
Music: “Sleep With One Eye Open”
Composer and lyricist: Raymond Mueller
Choreographer: Jessi Brown-White

Dancers: Craig Cipollini, Iván Dávila, James Ellzy, Jeffrey Hollands, Cole Jaconski, Franky Lieder, Cathy Oh, Brook Urquhart, Matt Zagorski

Speakers: Jarrod Bennett, Alex Gerhard, and Jack Reiffer

Portrait: *Steeled*
Artist: Judith Peck
Music: “Steeled”

Composer and Lyricist: Matthew Felbein
Choreographer & Soloist: Krystal Butler

Speaker: Dillon Lewis

Portrait: *Night Hunger*
Artist: Joan Cox, artist
Music: “For Us”
Composer: Richard Clawson
Lyricist: Caroline Peacock
Choreographer: James Ellzy

Duet: Juliana Murcia, Cathy Oh
Dancers: Sean Cator, Craig Cipollini, James Ellzy, Neal Going, Jeffrey Hollands, Daniel Kingsley, Franky Lieder, Darryl Pilate, Brook Urquhart

Five-minute pause

Speakers: Sean Robinson and Marcos Sastre

Portrait: *Man with Tattoo, Havana*
Artist: James Kimak
Song: “Paz”
Composer: Ismael Huerta
Text: Alfonsina Storni
Choreographer: Solomon HaileSelassie

Youth: Matt Zagorski
Adult: James Ellzy
Spirit: Craig Cipollini

Speaker: Sean Robinson

Portrait: *Black Lives Matter: Keep Your Eye on the Prize*
Artist: Gregory Wilkins
Music: “It Was Not Fate”
Composer: Joshua Fishbein
Text: William H.A. Moore
Choreographer: Craig Cipollini

Soloist: Darryl Pilate
Dancers: Sean Cator, Iván Dávila, Neal Going, Jeffrey Hollands, Cole Jaconski, Daniel Kingsley, Franky Lieder, Juliana Murcia, Yuri Velasquez

Speaker: Dillon Lewis

Portrait: *Virginia*
Artist: Jacqueline Hoysted
Music: “When I Rise Up”
Composer: Ethan Soledad
Text: Georgia Douglas Johnson
Choreographer: Andrea Miller
Soloist: Chloe Crenshaw

Please join us in the Orchestra section of the Concert Hall immediately following the performance for a talkback with the artists.

WHO'S WHO

Thea Kano (Artistic Director) (she/her)

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 in 2014 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 founded the New York City Master Chorale in 2005 and served as the artistic director until spring 2019. 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 Duruflé's *Requiem*, Dr. Kano completed research with L'Association Duruflé 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.

Theodore Guerrant (Principal Accompanist) (he/him)

Now in his 40th season as GMCW's principal accompanist, "Dr. Teddy" is arguably the longest-tenured collaborative pianist for a single chorus within the entire GALA Choruses network. He has traveled with the Chorus to various cities across the United States, two Canadian provinces, three Scandinavian countries, and can be heard on many GMCW recordings. Dr. Teddy received degrees in keyboard performance from the University of Georgia (B.M. piano cum laude; M.F.A. harpsichord), the University of Wisconsin (M.M. piano), the University of Maryland (D.M.A. piano), and the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University (G.P.D. organ), and studied piano in Buriton, England, with Denise Lassimonne. Dr. Teddy is also organist-choirmaster at Christ Church Parish Kensington (Episcopal), accompanist for the National Philharmonic Chorale, and associate director-accompanist for the Central Maryland Chorale. He also teaches on the staff of the University of Maryland School of Music as a coach-accompanist.

C. Paul Heins (Associate Conductor) (he/him)

C. Paul Heins joined the GMCW artistic team as associate conductor in the 2014 – 2015 season. Dr. Heins's principal role with GMCW is directing the GenOUT Youth Chorus, an outreach ensemble for LGBTQ+ and allied youth founded in 2015. Under Dr. Heins's leadership, GenOUT has grown from its inaugural class of nine singers to a current enrollment of 24 singers representing 15 schools in DC, Maryland, and Virginia. Since its inception, more than 140 students from over 75 schools have participated in GenOUT Youth Chorus and camps, and notable performance venues have included the Kennedy Center, the Library of Congress, the Washington National Cathedral, and the White House for President Obama. In addition to its regular performances with GMCW, GenOUT's collaborations have included Nashville's Major Minors, The Musicianship's Washington Youth Chorus, The Washington Chorus, Mosaic Harmony, and the Children's Chorus of Washington.

In February 2023, GenOUT traveled to Cincinnati, Ohio, to perform at the national conference of the American Choral Directors Association. As one of eight Insight Choirs, GenOUT showed how vocal ensembles are/can be communities that provide a sense of belonging to marginalized populations.

Dr. Heins's previous appointments include Georgetown University (Concert Choir director), the Lesbian & Gay Chorus of Washington (director), the Washington Master Chorale (assistant director), Washington Men's Camerata (accompanist/associate conductor), and the College of William & Mary (interim choir director). He was musical director for three GMCW musicals (*Ruthless*, *When Pigs Fly*, and *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*). Dr. Heins is a frequent guest pianist, flutist, and conductor in the DC area. He was trained in piano and flute at Bowling Green State University (B.Mus.), flute at the University of Maryland (M.Mus.), and choral conducting at the University of Maryland (D.M.A.). His principal teachers have been Edward Maclary, Patrick Walders, and Mark S. Kelly (conducting); William Montgomery and Judith Bentley (flute); and Virginia Marks and Victoria Harris (piano). His doctoral work centered around Lukas Foss's cantata, *The Prairie*. Dr. Heins has presented at conferences of the American Choral Directors Association and Chorus America, and has served as guest clinician for DCPS music festivals and teacher workshops.

Ronté Pierce (Assistant Conductor) (he/him)

Ronté Pierce brings over 33 years of singing, performing, and directing experience with faith-based, community, academic, and choral vocal ensembles, as well as experience with musical theater and opera to his position as the director of the Seasons of Love ensemble.

Ronté's musical journey began in Durham, NC, where he participated in the children's choir of his childhood church. It was there that his love of singing and directing gospel music was cultivated and he eventually started a successful singing group, served as a worship leader, and directed three choirs at his home church.

Ronté's musical experiences with his childhood church inspired him to study voice at North Carolina Central University (NCCU) in Durham, NC. He was a member of the NCCU Concert Choir, NCCU Touring Choir, NCCU Vocal Jazz Ensemble, and NCCU Opera Workshop. Upon receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Music, he began a teaching career with the hopes of inspiring others to express themselves with music.

Ronté currently serves as one of three music teachers at Jackson-Reed High School in Washington, DC, where he directs a successful choir program. He believes that the best teachers are those who continue to engage in the learning process, which has led him to pursue and receive a Master of Music degree from Boston University (2012) and an Education Specialist degree from Grand Canyon University (2021).

WHO'S WHO

Solomon HaileSelassie (Stage Director/Choreographer) (he/him)

Solomon HaileSelassie is a director, stage manager, designer, and film maker. Since 2021, he has served as GMCW's resident stage director. He attended the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, where he trained in both vocal music and theater, Winston Salem State University, and New York Film Academy. He received his substantive professional training at The Studio Theatre and 2nd Stage. He is the Resident Production Designer/Manager for the Library of Congress, the Resident Stage Manager for Longacre Lea, where he is a company member, and is the Founding Director of Artistic Collaboration for Annexus Theatre Company. His directing credits include *The Passage*, *Phones*, *Lunch Dream*, *Girls*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Shape of Things*, *Three in a Hallway (Ebenezer's Ghosts)*, *Punching People You Never Met*, *and Sonata*; *Carrie: The Musical* (assistant director).

Michael Bobbitt (Choreographer) (he/him)

Michael J. Bobbitt is a theater director, choreographer, and playwright who was the artistic director of New Repertory Theatre in Watertown, MA, and Adventure Theatre-MTC in Bethesda, MD. He is currently the executive director for Mass Cultural Collective and is the highest-ranking cultural official in Massachusetts state government. He has served as an associate professor of theater at Boston Conservatory at Berklee and Howard University and volunteered on numerous nonprofit boards in Maryland and Massachusetts. Michael has directed/choreographed at Arena Stage, Ford's Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Olney Theatre Center, Studio Theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Center Stage, Roundhouse Theatre, and the Kennedy Center, among others.

Jessi Brown-White (Choreographer) (she/us)

Jessi Brown-White is an interdisciplinary artist, certified Reiki master, and teacher. Jessi is the creator of The Body/Image/Object (BIO) Project for women — a creative healing initiative for autobiographical storytelling. She is also co-founder of Dreamscapes Healing Arts, a collaborative virtual community of conscious, compassionate women taking healing into their own hands. Her most rewarding public work as a Sing for Hope Piano Artist and Teacher brought hope, healing, and connection to millions of people on the streets and community spaces of New York City. Jessi has a BA in theater performance from James Madison University and more than 25 years of experience in the visual and performing arts.

Krystal Butler (Choreographer) (she/her)

Krystal Butler began her training at Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, DC. She continued her education at Long Island University and earned a B.F.A. in Dance. Krystal was a scholarship student at Alvin Ailey Summer Intensive, American Dance Festival, Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts, and Arke Danza. She has danced for companies such as Forces of Nature Dance Theater and INSPIRIT, a dance company. She joined Pilobolus Dance Theater in 2010 and toured and performed in over 35 countries with the shows *Magnifico Circus*, *Shadowland*, and *Shadowland 2* created by Pilobolus. In 2014, she joined the Pilobolus Dance Theater repertory company. After 10 years of tour life, Krystal is now a full-time licensed massage therapist and teaching artist. In 2019, Ms. Butler had her first week-long dance residency at Oberlin College.

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WHO'S WHO

Craig Cipollini (Choreographer) (he/him)

Craig Cipollini is a director and choreographer based in DC. As a dancer, he toured with productions of *A Chorus Line* and *42nd Street*, in addition to many regional, summer stock, and dinner theater credits. Some musicals he has directed and/or choreographed include *Cabaret*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *The Will Rogers Follies*, *Carousel*, *Anything Goes*, and *West Side Story*, to name a few. He directed and choreographed *One Night in New York!* at the 2013 Capital Fringe Festival where the show won Best Overall Production and Best Choreography. He directed and choreographed GMCW's productions of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* and *The Rocky Horror Show*, as well as *Men In Tights: A Pink Nutcracker* (2010), *Seven*, *Divas*, *A Gay Man's Guide to Broadway*, and *That '80s Show*.

Richard Clawson (Composer) (he/him)

Richard Clawsom studied music composition and theory at the University of South Alabama. As a full-time church musician, he has written over 100 pieces for liturgical use. His musical journey has taken him to the orchestra pit of numerous theatrical productions as well as the accompanist seat for cabaret acts. He served as composer in residence for Teatro La Fragua in El Progreso, Honduras. . He has enjoyed a long friendship and working relationship with internationally renowned soprano Jennifer Holloway who has premiered many of his works. A singing member of OurSong, Atlanta's LGBTQ+ chorus for over 10 years, he has had the honor of composing several pieces for that ensemble, include a commissioned piece for their 20th anniversary season.

Joan Cox (Artist) (she/her)

Joan Cox is a figurative painter. Her work focuses on painting intimate relationships between women. She seeks to portray dynamic, complex, sensual, sexual, and loving relationships between women — normalizing them. Joan's socially relevant paintings open up dialogue through a complex investigation of cultural norms, sexual identity, and body politics. Based in Baltimore, Maryland, Joan is a painter and photographer, as well as a graphic designer and writer. She earned a BFA from Towson University and an MFA from Massachusetts College of Art at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. Her work has been shown nationally and can be found in a host of private collections.

Matthew Cumbie (Choreographer) (he/him)

Matthew Cumbie is a collaborative artist, dance maker, writer, and artist educator. He has danced in the companies of Christian von Howard, Keith Thompson, Jill Sigman, Paloma McGregor, and Dance Exchange, an intergenerational dance organization founded by Liz Lerman. For many years, he was also the associate artistic director of Dance Exchange. He has served on the faculties of many colleges and universities, and currently is a visiting assistant professor at Colby College. His work has been commissioned and supported by places like Dance Place, the Bates Dance Festival, Herman Melville's Arrowhead, Harvard University, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Originally from Houston, Matthew holds undergraduate degrees from Texas Lutheran University and Texas State University and an MFA in dance from Texas Woman's University.

James Ellzy, II (Choreographer) (he/him)

James Ellzy began his dance training at Northwestern University in 1989. He performed primarily in musical theater until starting with modern dance in 1999 in San Diego. While in San Diego, he danced primarily with San Diego Dance Theatre and the California Ballet Company. He also performed with Butterworth Dance Company and LaDiego Dance Theater. He directed the Gay Men's Chorus of San Diego's productions of *Oliver Button is a Sissy* and *Nutcracker: Men in Tights*, and was invited to serve as an international judge for Showcase!, the Australian national dance competition. Since moving to DC in 2008, James has performed with Dakshina/Daniel Phoenix Singh Dance Company and the DC Cowboys. By day, James is a family physician at the Defense Health Agency.

Matthew Felbein (Composer) (he/him)

Matthew Felbein is a composer and educator from the Chicago suburbs. He has composed and arranged works for a wide variety of musical settings including choirs, concert bands, collegiate marching bands, varied instrumental ensembles, musical theater, and solo works. His compositions placed second in the ACDA @ UIUC composition contest and third in the Illinois Music Educators Association composition contest. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Music Education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Joshua Fishbein (Composer) (he/him)

Joshua Fishbein specializes in composing and arranging choral music. He has won awards from the American Choral Directors Association, the American Composers Forum, BMI, Cantate, Chorus America, Chorus Austin, The Esoterics, the Guild of Temple Musicians, the National Lutheran Choir, and several other performing arts organizations. Currently, Dr. Fishbein is an adjunct faculty member of the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University. Previously, he taught at The College of New Jersey, Towson University, the University of Maryland Baltimore County, and the University of Nevada Las Vegas. He earned degrees in music from the University of California, Los Angeles, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and Carnegie Mellon University.

Céline Gauchey (Artist) (she/her)

Céline Chu Gauchey is a French-Chinese artist specializing in acrylic portraits. As a biracial first generation American, her portraits capture the intricate duality of a human's sense of self. Each piece represents the dichotomous relationship every person has between what they want to be and who they really are. Céline is originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, and based in New York City. Céline is also a photographer, with a primary focus on landscapes. She graduated from Barnard College of Columbia University with degrees in Economics and Psychology, and currently works as a software engineer.

WHO'S WHO

Terrance Gregoraschuk (Artist) (he/him)

After attending the Alberta College of Art and Design from 1977 to 1980, Terrance (Terry) pursued a career in the commercial art industry, as an illuminated sign designer and magazine art director. As Terry's reputation and client list grew with his fine arts paintings, he decided to leave the advertising world to devote himself to fine art painting full time and hasn't looked back since. His latest series is "Trans4mations," which was inspired by a family member's announcement of being transgender. These paintings are a testimony to Terry's passion for creativity as he explores and processes the trials, tribulations, and joys of gender identity and diversity through the lens of a cisgender heterosexual man.

Jacqueline Hoysted (Artist) (she/her)

Jacqueline Hoysted is an award-winning interdisciplinary artist, curator, and activist based in Montgomery County, Maryland. Her work has been displayed in exhibitions across the US and featured in the *Washington Post*, *Washington City Paper*, *HuffPost*, *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, and *Reno Gazette-Journal*. Jacqueline is the recipient of grants from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Maryland State Arts Council, and the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County. She is also a co-founder of ArtWatch, a DC artist collective focused on positive political activism that realized the One House project (2017 and 2018), a collaboration of 300 DMV artists standing up for equality and inclusion.

Ismael Huerta (Composer) (he/him)

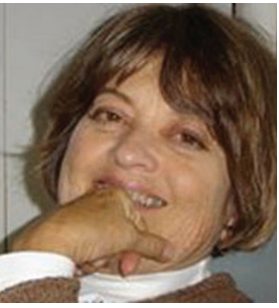
Ismael Huerta is a 28-year-old composer living in Chile. He studied musical composition at Universidad de Chile. Currently he is attending his seventh year of studies with Pablo Délano, as a master composer. Ismael is a cinema lover, and a fan of folk music. In his compositions, he accentuates melodies and harmonies, trying always to include music from the past and present. Ismael has won six awards, both Chilean and foreign, and his dream for the future is to be able to study film music and composition abroad.

James Kimak (Artist) (he/him)

James Kimak has been a fine artist, photographer, and graphic designer for more than 40 years. James has honed his creative skills within a wide variety of fine and digital art disciplines. After a successful career as a designer, illustrator, and art director for such firms as NBC and CNBC, he created large mural installations for hospitals and universities including NY Presbyterian Hospital, Columbia University, and the UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. His works in acrylic on canvas focus on contemporary realism in a wide variety of subject matter, with the emotive powers of light and form being his principle concern.

Paul Leavitt (Composer) (he/him)

Paul Leavitt made his debut as a concert pianist at 15 with the Albany Symphony Orchestra. He is a composer and concert pianist who holds a BFA from SUNY Purchase and a MM from The Juilliard School. Since 2014 Mr. Leavitt has been the conductor of the Arioso Chorale of the Friday Morning Music Club of Washington, DC. *The Washington Post* wrote, "Paul Leavitt's *Requiem* should belong in every chorus's repertoire. It is deeply expressive and skillfully written." His choral works have been performed by The Choral Arts Society of Washington, Washington Bach Consort, Cathedral Choral Society, and Scott Tucker, NOVA Community Chorus, and Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Orchestra. He has also composed commissions for Choral Arts, Congressional Chorus, and the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC.



Linda Lowery (Artist) (she/her)

Linda Lowery was born in Oklahoma, but, when still an infant, moved with her parents to Washington, DC. There she developed her love of art, surrounded by the rich collections of the National Gallery, the Corcoran, and the Phillips Museum. She earned a BFA degree from Ohio Wesleyan University and a Masters from George Washington University. She also studied at the University of Vienna in Vienna, Austria. Linda is a full-time artist, painting both en plein air and in her studio in Alexandria, Virginia. Although her primary medium is oil, she explores other painting media including watercolor and encaustics. She shows extensively in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area and is represented in many private collections as well as in the permanent collection of the Museum of Encaustic Art in Santa Fe.

Andrea Miller (Choreographer) (she/her)

Andrea Miller is a choreographer, creative director, and founder of the internationally renowned multidisciplinary organization GALLIM. She is a Guggenheim, Sadler's Wells, New York City Center, and Princess Grace Fellow, and was featured in *Forbes* as an entrepreneur and leader in the dance world. Recent dance commissions include New York City Ballet, Martha Graham Dance Company, Bern Ballet, Noord Nederland Dans, Pennsylvania Ballet, A.I.M by Kyle Abraham, Rambert2, Ailey II, and The Juilliard School. She has been an adjunct professor at Marymount Manhattan College and Barnard, and is currently a guest faculty member at The Juilliard School, where she is an alumna.

Raymond Mueller (Composer) (he/him)

Raymond Mueller is a composer and arts educator originally from Long Island. He studied music at Ithaca College, Five Towns College for the Performing Arts, and George Mason University, where he specialized in music composition and fine arts education. Raymond is known for creating unique musical experiences that shine a light on a wide range of social experiences, often giving voice to those who are marginalized. His music is commissioned and performed around the world. He has worked as an educator and administrator in the United States and abroad. His commitment to creativity and keeping arts education thriving during the pandemic recently earned him the Arts Advocate Award from the Ohio Art Education Association.

WHO'S WHO

Catherine Oh (Choreographer) (she/her)

Catherine Oh is a dancer and choreographer residing in Washington, DC. Her choreography credits include *Trees* (BLT — world premiere), *Cabaret* (RCP), *American Spies* (HUB Theatre), *The Wedding Singer* (NextStop Theatre), *She Loves Me* (TAP), *Chess* (KAT — WATCH nominee), *Caroline, or Change* (ESP), *Annie* (RCP — WATCH nominee), *[title of show]*(LTA), *Wonderful Town* (RCP), *Reefer Madness* (DS — WATCH nominee), *The Great American Trailer Park Musical* (KAT), *The Wild Party* (DS), *Side Show* (ESP), and *Urinetown* for which she won a WATCH award.

Caroline Peacock (Lyricist) (she/her)

Caroline Peacock is an Episcopal priest and chaplain educator who directs the Spiritual Health program at Emory Winship Cancer Institute. She is the mother of three children through adoption. She studied musical theater at University of Michigan, social work at CUNY Hunter College, and received her theological training at General Theological Seminary. Since 2017 Caroline has been a proud singing member of OurSong, Atlanta's LGBTQ+ chorus. She writes poetry and lyrics to feed her soul.

Judith Peck (Artist) (she/her)

Judith Peck is a Washington, DC-area allegorical figurative artist who has made it her life's work to paint about current issues and healing, using a variety of methods and experimental techniques to achieve a diverse range of visual and tactile results that validate a strong narrative. Judith's paintings have been featured in magazines like *American Art Collector*, *Poets /Artists*, *The Artist's Magazine*, *iARTisas*, *Combustus*, and the books *Tradition and Transformation* and *The Ashen Rainbow* by Ori Z. Soltes, as well as *The Kress Project* published by the Georgia Museum of Art.

Cole Reyes (Composer) (he/him)

Cole Reyes is a Brooklyn-based composer, educator, conductor, and performer originally from the Chicago area. He has collaborated with artists such as the JACK Quartet, Del Sol Quartet, Transient Canvas, the Rhythm Method Quartet, and Juventas New Music Ensemble, among others. He has also received commissions from the National Orchestral Institute, the _____ Experiment, Sascha Groschang, and the Six Degrees Singers, among others. His music has been awarded by groups such as Zodiac Trio, IL-ACDA, the National Flute Association, Lux Choir, the Huntsville Master Chorale, and the San Francisco Choral Artists, and many others. Cole received his undergraduate degrees in music and mathematics from Washington University in St. Louis, and a masters degree in concert music composition from New York University.

Ethan Soledad (Composer) (he/him)

Ethan Soledad is a Filipino-American composer residing in Florida. An experienced singer, he incorporates drama in his work, emphasizing the importance of silence and one's perception of time. His music draws from a wide palette of compositional styles and colors ranging from impressionism and neoclassicism to post-minimalism and the avant-garde. He is a teacher at the Shepherd School of Music pre-college program, teaching music theory, composition, and aural skills to advanced high school students. Additionally, he is a young artist at DACAMERA Houston, engaging in outreach programs with Harris county elementary and middle schools. He graduated with his Bachelor of Arts in Music at Florida State University in 2021 and is currently pursuing his Master of Music in Composition at Rice University.

Royden Tse (Composer) (he/him)

Royden Tse is a Chinese-Canadian composer. His music has appeared on the stages of the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, and the Melbourne Recital Hall and been performed by ensembles such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, iSing! Suzhou, Brussels Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Shanghai Philharmonic. He is a winner of many accolades, including seven SOCAN Foundation Awards for Young Composers, Grand Prize from the iSing! Composition Competition, and Lieutenant Governor of Alberta's Emerging Artist Award. In 2017, he was named one of CBC Music's Top "30 Under 30" classical musicians. Born in Hong Kong, Dr. Tse studied music in England graduating from the Universities of British Columbia and Toronto (D.M.A) in composition. Currently he is a teaching artist for the Canadian Opera Company.

Nicole Wandera (Artist) (she/her)

Nicole Wandera is an artist from Nairobi, Kenya, and currently based in Northern Virginia. She studied at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she earned a BFA in communication arts. Her work is primarily in digital and acrylic painting, though she explores other mediums when necessary to tell her story. Nicole's African heritage is a vital source of inspiration for her work. The richness of her culture is prevalent through the color, texture, and themes of her pieces. Her art is also a way for her to be politically active and raise consciousness through creative expression.

Gregory T. Wilkins (Artist) (he/they)

Gregory T. Wilkins is a gay artist and educator whose mixed media and fiber pieces integrate hand- and machine-constructed processes. Gregory encourages viewers to reflect on social justice and think about their own privilege and how they might affect change. Raised in a multi-ethnic, multinational family, Gregory faced adversity throughout his life that shaped his development, social activism, and education. While working at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of American Art, he was empowered to use his artistic voice to create opportunities for dialogue and to address modern day concerns. He currently lives in Mankato, Minnesota, and works for Minnesota State University, Mankato.

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Shawn Alger (Bass) (he/him)

Shawn Alger is a double bassist equally at home in a variety of musical settings including music of the classical cannon, historical performance, and popular genres. As an in-demand performer in the Washington DC area, he serves as the associate principal bassist of the Maryland Symphony and has performed with modern and period ensembles such as the National Symphony Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, Annapolis Symphony, and National Philharmonic. Dr. Alger is a section bassist with the Endless Mountain Music Festival, an organization dedicated to outreach and bringing live musical performances to the under-served counties of northern Pennsylvania and central New York.

In addition to his performance duties, Dr. Alger is the double bass instructor at Washington Adventist University and has been a guest lecturer and clinician for numerous schools, universities, and ensembles throughout the country. His primary teachers include Anthony Manzo, Jeffrey Weisner, Tyler Abbott, and Thomas Derthick.

Mark Carson (Percussion) (he/him)

Mark is currently an active freelance performer in the Washington, DC area specializing in classical and commercial performance. Formerly he was Assistant Principal Percussionist with the United States Air Force Band, Washington, DC, Assistant NCOIC of the Concert Band, and Woodwind/String Superintendent. Mark has performed with the National Symphony, Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, Washington National Opera, National Gallery Orchestra, Baltimore Opera Company, Houston Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, and New York City Ballet, the National Philharmonic, Maryland Symphony, and Roanoke Symphony.

As an educator he has served on the faculty of the University of Nebraska Omaha, Columbia Union College, Washington Adventist University, and the New England Music Camp in Sidney, Maine. Mark has recorded soundtracks for Disney, National Geographic, HBO, Discovery Channel, Naxos, National Public Radio, Learning Channel, and the Fox network. An educational artist for Sabian Cymbals, Pearl Drums/Adams Percussion, Blackswamp Percussion, and Vic Firth drumsticks, he presents clinics at all levels. He is actively commissioning new works involving percussion and various instruments, and has given world premiere performances of more than a dozen works.

John Kaboff (Cello) (he/him)

John Kaboff has performed as concerto and recital soloist as well as chamber musician in Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Strathmore Hall, the United States Department of State, and the embassies of France, Germany, and New Zealand. John is a highly successful teacher whose students have received numerous international awards and prizes and populate professional orchestras. His students have performed at the American Cello Congress and at World Cello Congress where they were featured in an internationally broadcast workshop with Yo-Yo Ma. His students have also been featured in the Classical Spotlight Showcase for Maryland Public Television.

He has been the feature of numerous articles in such publications as the *Washington Post* and the *Baltimore Sun*, and is noted in Yo-Yo Ma's biography, *Musicians with a Mission*, as a remarkable teacher as part of his collaboration with Mr. Ma at the World Cello Congress. John studied with Janos Starker at Indiana University, William Pleeth at the Britten-Pears School in England, and in Germany at the Kronberg Academy.

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Portraits is partially underwritten by a generous gift from Bill Lipsett & Eric Bolda.

In Memoriam

We remember our members who have been lost to us over the years. Their spirits live on with us and we honor their memory. Respectfully, we request if you know of anyone whose name has been omitted from this list, please contact us at 202-293-1548 so that we may continue to celebrate and honor the contributions of all of our members.

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Theodore Guerrant
Individual from the Chorus

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GLSEN
Community Organization

Thea Kano
Individual from the Chorus

GMCW is thrilled to celebrate this year's Harmony Award recipients. The awards were presented at *Spring Affair: A Night at the Museum* on May 18, 2024 at the Ritz-Carlton, Washington, DC. The Harmony Awards are GMCW's highest honor and are presented by the Chorus's Board of Directors to an individual and organization from the community, and an individual(s) from within the Chorus family. Please join us in celebrating their great work and achievements!

GMCW
GAY MEN'S CHORUS
OF WASHINGTON, DC

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2024 HARMONY AWARD HONOREES!

HARMONY AWARDS

The Harmony Award is GMCW's highest honor. The awards are presented by the Chorus's Board of Directors to individuals and organizations from the community, and an individual from within the Chorus family. Recipients include:

Individuals from the Community:
Peter D. Rosenstein, LGBTQ+ community activist, 2004
David Catania, DC Councilmember, 2005
Frank Kameny, Gay rights movement pioneer, 2006
Adrian Fenty, DC Mayor, 2007
Noi Chudnoff*, business proprietor and arts patron, 2008
The Right Reverend V. Gene Robinson, Episcopal bishop, 2009
John Berry, Director, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2010
Barney Frank, U.S. Congressman, Massachusetts, 2012
Eric Schaeffer, Signature Theatre Artistic Director, 2014
Kevin Jennings, GLSEN founder & Obama "safe schools" appointee, 2015
Marsha Pearson, GMCW founder, 2016
Muriel Bowser, DC Mayor, 2018
Wendy Rieger, NBC4-TV news anchor, 2019
Phil Mendelson, DC Council Chairperson, 2022
Tammy Baldwin, US Senator, 2023
Joaquin "Jocko" Fajardo, 2024

Organizations:
The Mautner Project, national Lesbian health organization, 2004
Holland & Knight, international law firm, 2005
Food and Friends, food and nutrition service providers, 2006
Metro DC PFLAG, education and advocacy organization, 2007
SMYAL, 2008
Washington DC Metropolitan Police Department's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit, 2009
Immigration Equality, 2010
Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, 2011
Washington Blade, 2012
Team DC, 2014
Williams Institute, 2015
National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016
NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ Journalists, 2017
Whitman-Walker Health, 2018
Casa Ruby and NBC Out, 2019
Metro Weekly, 2022
The Wanda Alston Foundation, 2023
GLSEN, 2024

Individuals from the Chorus family:
Steve "Soph" Herman, 2004
Gary Regan and Roger Bergstrom, 2005
Carl Baldwin & Gary Turner and David Streit, 2006
Phil Rogerson, 2007
Laurence Rosen, 2008
Michael Baker, 2009
Jeff Buhrman, 2010
Greg Kubiak, 2011
Mark Hennen, 2012
Joe Vignali, 2013
Tom Nichols & Dan Chadburn, 2014
Michael E. Hill, 2015
Christopher Grieder & Stuart Kopperman, 2016
John Moran* and Jack Reiffer, 2017
Marcus Brown and Rob Hall, 2018
Charles Berardesco, 2019
Robert T. Boaz*, 2022
Timothy Allmond & Robert Klein, 2023
Thea Kano and Theodore Guerrant, 2024

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ABOUT US

MISSION
The Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC (GMCW) sings to inspire equality and inclusion with musical performances and education promoting justice and dignity for all.

OVERVIEW
GMCW is the largest LGBTQ+ chorus in the nation's capital. We are a renowned performance group. Since 1981, we've performed shows nationally, internationally, and at-home in Washington, DC. To date, we have 250+ singing members, four select ensembles, a youth chorus, over 500 donors, and an annual audience of 10,000+. Our mission is to use music to promote equality, achieve justice, and overcome our differences. Over the last 43 years, we've put on numerous shows and done hours and hours of community outreach. We've sung and danced our hearts out around the country, including our Equality Tours in 2017, 2018, and 2019. We've been around the world, too, including stops in Cuba, Iceland, and Ukraine. We've sung for the Clintons, the Bushes, the Obamas, and the Bidens. Alongside Alan Cumming, Carol Channing, Chita Rivera, and Angela Lansbury. We've visited many prestigious venues, including the Kennedy Center, the White House, and Carnegie Hall, just to name a few.

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STRANGE FRUIT
Text by Paul Leavitt

They taunt me, pursue me
Sticks and stones
Will break my bones
Danger, where do I go?
No safe place anywhere.
Simply existing,
Nowhere to run
No place to hide
Where I can be myself
No place to be myself
Rejected by my own kind

I've got to fight back
I can't run away
There's no place to hide
It's time to fight back

It haunts me, pursues me
This legacy of bigotry
Of murder and tyranny
Oppression everywhere
For simply existing

There's no escape,
Nowhere to hide
Where I can be myself
A place to free myself
Accepted by my own kind

I've got to fight back
I can't run away
There's no place to hide
It's time to fight back

It haunts me, pursues me
A vision of security
A world of equality
Not tainted by hatred and cruelty
Oh let it be

How can I heal myself
A place to free myself
Accepted by my own kind

Love me, hold me
Heal me, rescue me

I AM (ONLY MINE)
Text by Cole Reyes

I am my self
I am my only self
My most imperfectly fractured self

Splitting moments to hours to lifetimes
I am but myself
Whole and complete

Refracted reflection of what I may be
I am only me
I can only be me

Mirrored, magnified singularities
Overwhelm my perception that
I am
Beautifully mine
Wonderfully divine.

I am only mine.

DO YOU SEE ME?
Text by the Roydon Tse

Do you see me?
When I look at you
You look past
Who among us can be seen?
See me in my joy, See me in my sorrow Do you see me now?

I hid in the shadows for far too long,
I looked around, and I just felt wrong.
But something gave me strength
Strength to face the day.
I looked them in the eye
and to all I will say:
See me in my joy,
See me in my sorrow.
Call me by my name
I will no longer bow to shame.

Do you see me?
See me for who I am.

SLEEP WITH ONE EYE OPEN
Text by Raymond Mueller

Sleep with one eye open
And do not speak of it

I lie in bed each night
Afraid that tomorrow
Will not come.

Why must I hide from you?
Hide from the ones who said
They loved me?

I see no option
But to fear you.
You look at me
And you judge me.
You choose to not see past
The body that I am trapped in.
Deep inside.
Don't let them know
That deep inside
A voice still yearns
That one day
I'll wake up from this nightmare
And you will see me.

Every night I lie in bed
Afraid of you,
Afraid to speak
So I do not.
I lie in bed each night
Afraid that tomorrow
Will not come.

Why must I hide from you?
Hide from the ones who said
They loved me?
Until then
Sleep with one eye open!

STEELED
Text by Matthew Felbein

No, not you.
You are broken.
You do not belong.

I hear the rattle of words in my head,
But not my heart.
For I have steeled my heart
Against sticks and stones
That break my bones
And the words I won't let hurt me.

Reach out your hand
You have a home
Someone is there
You are not alone!

I just need your hand
To pull me through the storm.
Take me out of the waters
Deep to a place that's safe and warm.

There's humanity in the loneliness,
There is beauty in the fracture.
Just give me your hand,
I'll pull you from the storm.

Don't be afraid, I am here.
I'll keep you safe and warm.

You don't have to be alone.

FOR US
Text by Caroline Peacock

Outside we are invisible
Outside people pass us
Unknowing that inside this room
Is a vast expanse
Inside this room is a universe
Of tender strength
Of locked eyes
Of pushing
Of pulling
Of longing
Of loving

Not for the gaze of men
But for hearts fuller
Hearts larger
Hearts bolder, warmer, stronger
Hearts for us, for we
For you and me
A universe

PAZ
Text by Alfonsina Storni (1892 – 1938)

Vamos hacia los árboles... el sueño
Se hará en nosotros por virtud celeste.
Vamos hacia los árboles; la noche
Nos será blanda, la tristeza leve.

Vamos hacia los árboles, el alma
Adormecida de perfume agreste.
Pero calla, no hables, sé piadoso;
No despiertes los pájaros que
duermen.

Let's go to the trees... The dream
It will be done in us by heavenly
virtue.
We go to the trees; The Night
It will be soft to us, the sadness slight.

Let's go to the trees, the soul
Numbed with wild perfume.
But be silent, do not speak, be pious;
Don't wake up sleeping birds.

(continued)

IT WAS NOT FATE
Text by William H. A. Moore
From *The Book of American Negro Poetry*, edited by James Weldon Johnson

It was not fate which overtook me,
Rather a wayward, willful wind
That blew hot for a while
And then, as the even shadows came,
blew cold.

What pity it is that a human grown
old in life's dreaming
Should stop, even for a moment,
To look into another's eyes.

And I forgot!
Forgot that one's heart must be
steeled against the east wind.
Life and death alike
Come out of the East:
Life as tender as young grass,
Death as dreadful as the sight of
clotted blood.

I shall go back into the darkness,
Not to dream
But to seek the light again.

I shall go by paths, perhaps,
On roads that wind
Around the foothills
Where the plains are bare and wild
And the passers-by
Come few and far between.

I want the night to be long,
The moon blind.
The hills thick with moving memories,
And my heart
Beating a breathless requiem
For all the dead days I have lived.
When the Dawn comes —
Dawn, deathless, dreaming —

I shall will that my soul must be
cleansed of hate,
I shall pray for strength to hold
children close to my heart,
I shall desire to build houses where
the poor will know
shelter, comfort, beauty.

And then may I look
into another's eyes
And find holiness,
Love and the peace
Which passeth understanding.

WHEN I RISE UP
Text by Georgia Douglas Johnson
(1880 – 1966)

When I rise up above the earth,
And look down on the things that
fetter me,
I beat my wings upon the air,
Or tranquil lie,

Surge after surge of potent strength
Like incense comes to me
When I rise up above the earth
And look down upon the things that
fetter me.

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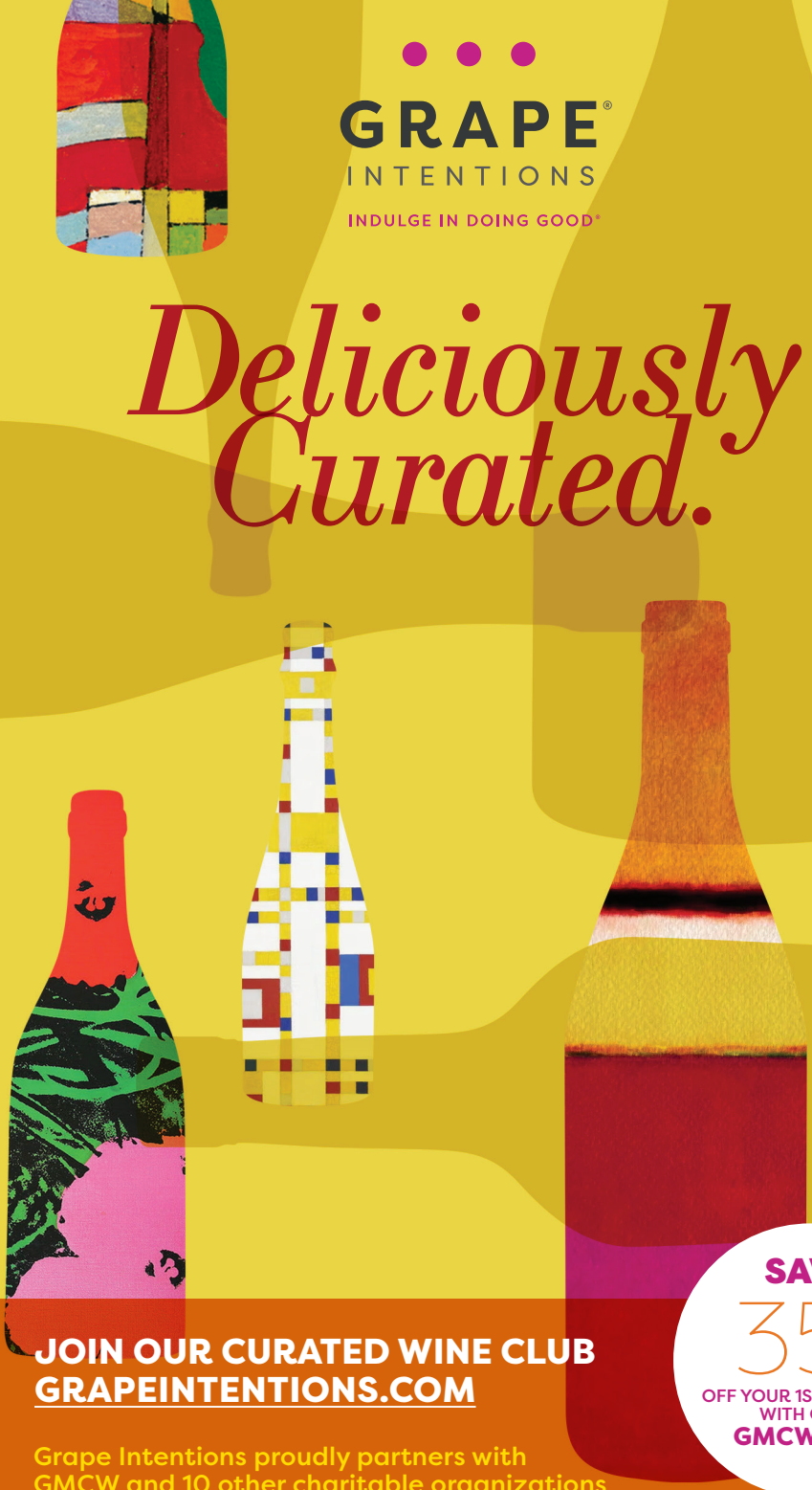

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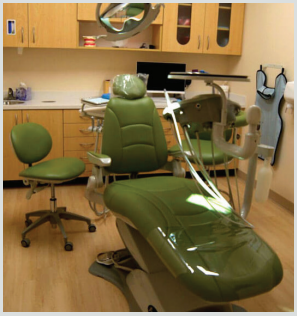

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Circle of Excellence Awards are chosen annually by members of GMCW to recognize the outstanding contributions made by members of the Chorus. These awards honor those individuals who have exemplified the spirit of camaraderie, brother- and sisterhood and community in the Chorus and whose work has had lasting impact over many years.

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Tom Dudley*
Steve Herman
Jim Holloway
Steve Maddox*
Dr. Jim Richardson
Ron Sabacek
B. J. Sobus
Bruce Trinkley
Everett Waldo
Bob Wonneberger
Michael Ziskind

1992
Michael Bohn
Eric Korpon
Darrell Netherton
Harry Powers
Michael Rivard
Rick Rosendall
David Sisson
Duward Sumner

1993
Craig Bowen*
Peter Brayton
Phil Rogerson

1994
Rod Fiorito
Scott Pierce*
David Streit
Robert Wheeler

1995
Darrell Lewis
Len Padgett
Jim Peterson

1996
Michael Baker
Roger Bergstrom
Dick Dorr
Dennis Swick*

1997
Jack Gerard
Charlie Merk
Michael Milano
Gary Regan

1998
Kevin Doss
Robb Rexroth
Laurence A. Rosen

1999
Jerry Carpenter
Bob Dragoset
Thom Gibb

2000
Christopher Grieder
Gary Turner
Joe Vignali
Marvin Weeks

2001
Joe Cannon
Teddy Guerrant
Steven Haber
John Perkins
Michael B. Smith

2002
Carl Baldwin
Barry W. Bugg
Michael Cunningham
Dan Patton
Todd Paul

2003
Tom DiGiovanni
Rick Johnson
Kathy McGee
Chuck Walker

2004
Scott Button
Robert Klein
Jerry Lee
Harold Lewis
Jack Reiffer

2005
Jeff Van Luyn
Stuart Kopperman
Edward P. Oseroff

2006
David Bielenberg
Joe Canter
Bill Cutter
Matt Komornik
Barrett Whitener

2007
Russ Capps
Rob Hall
Marsha Holloman
Paul Leavitt
Jim Murphy

2008
Greg Kubiak
Rob Driggers
Michael Hill

2009
Chip Crews
Mark Hennen
John O'Brien

2010
Jay Ball
Thea Kano
Steve Pflasterer
Andy Van Etten

2011
Sherman Blow
Robert T. Boaz
Peter Fox
Andrew Harmon

2012
Craig Cipollini
Ron Norberg
John "JQ" Quiñones
Shannon Rozner

2013
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Marcus Brown
Sean Robinson

2014
Timothy E. Allmond
Raymond Burditt
Mary Scott
Ryan L. Williams

2015
Emérito Amaro-Carambot
Larry Cohen
John-Paul Hayworth
Rob Serpa, Jr.

2016
Chris Asaro
Rick Davis
Suzette Derrevere
James Ellzy
Rob Neighbour
Lyn VanNoy

2017
Jarrod Bennett
Chipper Dean
Jay Gilliam
Matt Graf

2018
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Mark Hegedus
Dan Kaufman
Mario Sengco

2019
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Corey Bent
Romm Gatongay
Matt Holland
Mark Klein
Samilet Lee
John U. Robinson

2020
Ben Harris
Derrick Jones
Betsy Libretta
Kevin Thomason
Bernard Vicary

2021
Michael Dumlao
Jim Gruschus
C. Paul Heins
Jim Madigan
Raymond Rinaldo
Bryce Weems
Micah Yarbrough

2022
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Tom Boeke
Jonathan Chaffin
Michael Hughes
Brett Kessler

2023
Michael Aylward
Rick Bennett
Justin Fyala
Solomon HaileSelassie
Keygan Miller
Paul Negron
Kirk Sobell
Santos Torres

* posthumously awarded

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The Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC's Ovation Society is an initiative that recognizes and honors those generous individuals and families who have made planned gifts to the Chorus.

If you have already included GMCW in your estate plans, please let us know so that we can include you as a member of the Ovation Society. If not, we hope you will consider joining this special group by including GMCW in your will, as a beneficiary of a retirement account, or by setting up a charitable trust. Planned gifts can greatly reduce the amount of tax paid by your estate at the time of your death and often do not change the amount that would go to your family and friends.

While your attorney or accountant can provide you with more information, GMCW has several corporate sponsors — both financial planners and attorneys — who specialize in LGBTQ+ estate issues. We are happy to share this resource list with you upon request. As a member of the Ovation Society, you will be invited to attend special events and receptions especially for Ovation Society members.

For further information about GMCW's Ovation Society, or if you are interested in learning more about the many ways you can include GMCW in your plans, please contact Executive Director Justin Fyala, at 202-293-1548 or jfyala@gmcw.org.

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Rainbow Railroad helps at-risk LGBTQI+ individuals get to safety around the world. Form a Community of Care to help a LGBTQI+ refugee resettle in the US. Visit **rainbowrailroad.org/welcomecorps** or email us at community@rainbowrailroad.org for more information.

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In a world where religious leaders and their organizations have too often embodied the oppression and rejection that many of us have suffered, a growing number of synagogues, congregations, and other faith-based organizations are welcoming and celebrating LGBTQ+ persons. We proudly list them here as our **PARTNERS IN HARMONY**. We recommend them to any who are looking for a faith community to call home. Visit gmcw.org for links to all of these faith-based organizations.

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