



Our Mission:

The Gateway Men's Chorus affirms and promotes gay culture and acceptance through excellence in musical performance and education.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Concert *I Am Harvey Milk* Is Presented April 5, 2014 at the 560 Music Center in University City

St. Louis, MO, March 6, 2014 – St. Louis's Gateway Men's Chorus (GMC) joins voices with Kansas City's Heartland Men's Chorus (HMC) for the first time since 1997 for a fun and inspiring evening of music, with *I Am Harvey Milk*, an original song cycle by Broadway veteran Andrew Lippa, inspired by the life and legacy of Harvey Milk. This one-night only concert in St. Louis will be presented on Saturday, April 5 at 8 p.m. at the 560 Music Center in University City, conducted by GMC's Artistic Director Al Fischer. The concert will feature principal soloists Martin Fox as Harvey Milk, Jimmy Coogan as Young Harvey, and Kourtney Strade as Soprano.

The St. Louis performance will be the third in a month-long series of concerts across the state of Missouri performed jointly by the two choruses, who combine to form the largest all-men's chorus in the state. Additional performances of *I Am Harvey Milk* will be offered by GMC and HMC in Columbia, Missouri on Saturday, March 8 at 7 p.m. at the Missouri United Methodist Church and in Kansas City, Missouri on Saturday, March 29 at 8 p.m. and Sunday March 30 at 4 p.m. at the Folly Theatre.

Harvey Milk was the first openly gay man to hold public office in the state of California, when in 1977 he won a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, San Francisco's equivalent of a city council. Assassinated in a tragic shooting spree that also took the life of San Francisco mayor George Moscone by an ideological rival Dan White, Milk served less than a year into his term in office, but in that time radically transformed the national public perception of roles gay men could play in public life. Milk's story has been famously told in the 1984 documentary *The Times of Harvey Milk* and the Academy Award-winning film *Milk* in 2008. He was named by Time Magazine as one of the "100 Heroes and Icons of the 20th Century."

The song cycle (or oratorio) *I Am Harvey Milk* was originally commissioned by the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus to commemorate the 35th anniversary of Milk's assassination and the 35th anniversary of SFGMC, whose first performance occurred on the night of the assassination, as part of spontaneous memorial service that flooded the streets of San Francisco on November 27, 1978. Since its premiere in 2013, the piece has been performed by the Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus, so GMC and HMC's performances will be only the third time that the work will be presented for an audience. Future concerts have been planned

by the Gay Men's Choruses of the Twin Cities MN, Los Angeles CA, Vancouver BC, and Dayton OH.

"I am extremely proud to be working with the great singers of both the Gateway Men's Chorus and Heartland Men's Chorus to bring this work of music to the stage," says Gateway Men's Chorus Artistic Director Al Fischer. "Harvey Milk's life stands for the very same values that we believe in at GMC – integrity, community, and leadership. He has taught generations of gay men to choose hope over fear and to embrace the power of what it means to come out to your friends and neighbors in order to build a better future for our world. We hope that this concert will honor his legacy and inspire others to join the fight to end discrimination and create a more loving world."

Composer and lyricist Andrew Lippa is best known for his three popular musicals, *Big Fish* (which starred St. Louis's own Leo Norbert Butz on Broadway in 2013), *The Addams Family* (for which he received a Tony nomination for both music and lyrics in 2008), and *The Wild Party* (which won both the Outer Critics Circle Award for best Off-Broadway musical and the Drama Desk Award for best music in 2000). He has also maintained an ongoing relationship with Broadway and television star Kristin Chenoweth as her music director for concerts across the globe, from the Metropolitan Opera and Lincoln Center to Powell Hall in St. Louis, for a concert with Chenoweth and the St. Louis Symphony. He was ordained an interfaith minister in 2013.

Conductor Al Fischer has led the Gateway Men's Chorus since 2011. During his tenure, GMC has welcomed pop sensation Fred Schneider of the B-52s as a special guest artist and has developed fresh collaborations with Bob Kramer's Marionettes, several religious institutions, and the Muny (through a partnership in which GMC singers have performed in ensemble chorus roles on their stage). Also during his tenure, the chorus has grown to its largest number of singing members, with 2012's *extr-ABBA-ganza*, which featured the talents of 73 St. Louis singers. Tenor Martin Fox is a familiar face to St. Louis audiences, after many roles on stages across the region, including his most recent critically acclaimed performance as John Adams in Insight Theatre's 2013 production of *1776*. Soprano Kourtney Strade is a frequent soloist throughout the St. Louis region and serves as Artistic Director for GMC's sister chorus in St. Louis, CHARIS. Boy soprano Jimmy Coogan is heavily involved in Young People's Theatre and was most recently seen in the Muny's 2013 production of *Les Miserables* as Gavroche.

I Am Harvey Milk performs in St. Louis Saturday, April 5 at 8 p.m. at the 560 Music Center, 560 Trinity Avenue, University City MO 63130. Tickets to the concert are available for \$25, with discounted rates available for students and seniors. [To purchase tickets click here.](#)

About the Gateway Men's Chorus

Since April 1988, the Gateway Men's Chorus has been performing to the delight of thousands throughout the St. Louis region. In 2012, Gateway Men's Chorus won the Focus St. Louis "What's Right With The Region" award for improving racial equality and social justice. Since its inception, the Chorus has grown to approximately 100 members and has

become one of the most successful male choral arts organizations in St. Louis both in musical and repertoire and longevity.

The mission of Gateway Men's Chorus is to affirm and promote gay culture and acceptance through excellence in musical performance and education. The organization furthers this mission by producing beautiful male choral music and presenting a positive image of gay men. The Gateway Men's Chorus annually produces a three-concert season, highlighting a diverse blend of musical styles and entertaining performances. The organization also participates in a large number and wide range of special events and community outreach activities throughout the year. The group is open to singers of all backgrounds who sing within male vocal registers.

GMC is a legal 501(c) (3) non-profit organization governed by a Board of Directors. The Chorus has benefited financially from the Missouri Arts Council, the Regional Arts Commission, the William A. Kerr Foundation, the Gateway Foundation, Fox Performing Arts Charitable Foundation, the Arts and Education Council. Corporate funding from American Airlines, Anheuser-Busch, the Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation, General American Insurance, MetLife, Tripp Co Creative, Hartford Coffee, The Vital Voice, USA Mortgage, AT&T Foundation, Boeing Company, IMB Corporation, Monsanto Foundation and G. Ink. Incorporated.

About the Heartland Men's Chorus

Heartland Men's Chorus provides excellence in performance while advancing men's choral music, building community, and reaching out to diverse audiences. The members of HMC have joined together for the purpose of making music as a not-for-profit, volunteer chorus of gay and gay-sensitive people who are making a positive cultural contribution to the entire community.

The Chorus regularly performs with more than 150 singers, and presents a three-concert season at the historic Folly Theater. During the 2012-2013 season, nearly 7,500 audience members experienced the music and message of HMC. An even greater number of people hear the Chorus at community outreach events throughout the year.

HMC performs a varied repertoire of music, including jazz, Broadway, popular and classical works. In recent years, the Chorus has become known for its musical documentary format which uses music, narration and multi-media to illustrate social issues.

The Chorus has performed nationally and internationally, but places particular importance on performing in smaller communities throughout the Heartland where our voices most desperately need to be heard. Heartland Men's Chorus is registered with the IRS as a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.