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**GREAT MUSIC AT ST. BART'S CONCLUDES ITS SEASON WITH THE EMPIRE CITY MEN'S CHORUS – "RESPLENDENT: A SILVER ANNIVERSARY CONCERT" – ON SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2019**



*Empire City Men's Chorus, photo by Joe Wheeler*

*Great Music at St. Bart's*, the concert series produced by the Mid-Manhattan Performing Arts Foundation (MMPAF), concludes its eighth season on Saturday, June 1, 2019, at 5:00 pm with a concert by the **Empire City Men's Chorus** that both concludes the chorus's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and kicks off the month of WorldPride NYC 2019.

**"Resplendent: A Silver Anniversary Concert"** features the Empire City Men's Chorus, conducted by its artistic director, Vince Peterson, in a program celebrating choral music: music from different choral traditions; the work that led to the chorus's founding, David Conte's 1986 *Invocation and Dance*; and two works commissioned by ECMC in their world premiere performances, by Will Stackpole of New York City and Lydia Jane Pugh of the United Kingdom (see below for full program).

The concert is part of a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary ECMC gala benefit that also includes a reception and dinner, to raise money for the group's mission: to perform adventurous and eclectic repertoire from early to modern, with an emphasis on new works from living composers. The event honors the composer of the Chorus's founding piece, David Conte, and a current member of the Chorus, philanthropist David R. Murray.

Empire City Men's Chorus was founded in 1993 as Gay Gotham Chorus after singers in another ensemble were inspired by the beauty of David Conte's *Invocation and Dance*. "I'm thrilled to be honored by Empire City Men's Chorus on the occasion of its 25th anniversary," said Conte. "The Chorus was founded during years of ever-increasing AIDS deaths, which inspired *Invocation and Dance*. Men's choral music will always be a balm."

"Gay men's choruses were founded in the 1980s and '90s as a way of using art to understand the apocalypse," said ECMC Artistic Director Vince Peterson. "Choruses commissioned David Conte to express musically what they were thinking and feeling as AIDS decimated their communities. His work product is music, but the result is hope, beauty, and love."

Tickets to the concert, priced at \$30 (\$20 for students and seniors) are available by calling 212-378-0248 or at [www.mmpaf.org](http://www.mmpaf.org). For tickets to ECMC's gala, priced at \$250, visit [www.empirecitymenschorus.org](http://www.empirecitymenschorus.org).

Empire City Men's Chorus is a diverse group of 41 gender-identifying men of all backgrounds and sexual orientations, volunteering their time to come together as a family to create choral music. It states, "we value musical excellence, artistic versatility, and professionalism in our singers. We value diversity in our membership, listeners, and communities. We value fraternity and inclusivity. And we value community outreach and partnership, partnering with organizations that align with our mission." [www.empirecitymenschorus.org](http://www.empirecitymenschorus.org)

ECMC is led by Artistic Director Vince Peterson, who recently received the prestigious Louis Botto Award for Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal. Presented by Chorus America in memory of the founder of the professional men's vocal ensemble Chanticleer, the Botto Award is one of the highest honors in choral music. In addition to his work with ECMC, Peterson leads the shape-shifting vocal ensemble Choral Chameleon, which he founded in New York City in 2008.

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**Saturday, June 1, 2019, at 5:00 pm in the Church**

**EMPIRE CITY MEN'S CHORUS – “RESPLENDENT: A SILVER ANNIVERSARY CONCERT”**

Empire City Men's Chorus

Vince Peterson, conductor

Gwyneth Walker	<i>I've Known Rivers</i>
Lydia Pugh	<i>Love Is Enough</i> (text by William Morris) – <u>World premiere</u>
Will Stackpole	<i>Breathed Not a Word</i> – <u>World premiere</u>
David Conte	<i>Invocation and Dance</i>
	<i>Everyone Sang</i>
	<i>Goodbye, My Fancy</i>
Ysaye Barnwell	<i>Wanting Memories</i>
Ralph Vaughan Williams	<i>Love Bade Me Welcome</i>
Paul John Rudoj	<i>Yonder Come Day</i>
John Legend & Common	“Glory” from <i>Selma</i>
George & Ira Gershwin	“Our Love is Here to Stay”

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**MIDTOWN CONCERTS: A FREE WEEKLY SERIES OF CONCERTS OF EARLY MUSIC BY GEMS**

Gotham Early Music Scene, in conjunction with the Mid-Manhattan Performing Arts Foundation, presents Midtown Concerts, a weekly series of 35-minute early music concerts in midtown Manhattan featuring soloists and ensembles from the U.S. and abroad.

For a schedule, visit [www.gemsny.org/midtownconcerts.html](http://www.gemsny.org/midtownconcerts.html)

Admission is free

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***Tickets are available through the Box Office at St. Bartholomew's Church, 325 Park Avenue, New York, NY, and are available by phone, [212-378-0248](tel:212-378-0248), and online at [www.mmpaf.org](http://www.mmpaf.org).***

**Great Music at St. Bart's**, the concert series produced by the Mid-Manhattan Performing Arts Foundation ([www.mmpaf.org](http://www.mmpaf.org)) that embraces a wide range of music in programs that shine in St. Bart's spaces, is the most recent installment in the rich musical history (see below) of St. Bartholomew's Church. St. Bart's features two of New York's unlikely but outstanding concert spaces: the 150-seat chapel is an intimate and acoustically brilliant venue perfectly suited for contemporary chamber music, and the majestic 1,000-seat sanctuary boasts an Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ that is the largest in New York City and one of the finest examples of the American Classic Organ in the U.S.

**St. Bartholomew's Church**, the historic Episcopal parish on Park Avenue in New York City, was founded in January 1835, and in the fall celebrated the 100th anniversary of the first service in its current location. The magnificent 1918 Romanesque-style church, a National Historic Landmark that features a portal designed by Stanford White and a grand Byzantine-style interior and iconic dome designed by Bertram Goodhue, has had a vital presence in New York for a century. St. Bartholomew's also became a force in the musical life of the city and the wider church: Legendary musicians such as Leopold Stokowski, who went on to a career as one of the world's great conductors, Harold Friedell, and James Litton have served the church as

Organist and Choirmaster. For many decades, a world-famous weekly series of Evensongs featuring performances of the great oratorios by St. Bartholomew's Choir was offered free of charge, stressing the parish's commitment to inclusion by ministering to a wide community. *Great Music at St. Bart's*, an outgrowth of these Evensongs, still offers the greater New York City community top shelf concert performances at very reasonable ticket prices.

For more information on the centenary, visit <http://stbarts.org/stbarts100/>.

*April 17, 2019*