

## For Immediate Release

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### Two Choruses Unite for Americana-Themed Program

After highlighting British artists in its last concert, Heartland Men's Chorus returns to the American songbook for the final concert of its 24th season, *Go West, Young Man*, June 12 & 13, 2010 at the Folly Theater.

Americana is the focus of a program that is sure to highlight HMC's rich choral sound. That sound will be nearly double in power with the addition of Portland Gay Men's Chorus as special guests for this concert. Representing both ends of the historic Oregon Trail, the choruses will celebrate the American spirit through the diverse genres of folk music, spirituals and more.

"HMC has collaborated with other gay men's choruses in recent years," said Joe Nadeau, artistic director. "At the GALA Choruses Festival in Miami, Bob [Mensel, artistic director of Portland Gay Men's Chorus] approached me after our performance about the idea of a collaboration to end their chorus's 30th anniversary season. We were each already considering programs of American music, so we quickly agreed on repertoire."

HMC will perform a solo set before being joined on stage by Portland Gay Men's Chorus. Their set will highlight classic American composers, including Aaron Copland ("Ching a Ring Chaw"), Stephen Foster ("Hard Times") and John Philip Sousa ("Stars and Stripes Forever"). A highlight of the HMC set will be a stunning arrangement of "My Country 'Tis of Thee" by Paul Tucker, Joe Nadeau's former conducting teacher and head of choral activities at the University of Kansas.

Portland Gay Men's Chorus will individually offer music by Woody Guthrie, Holly Near and Mimi Farina, as well as arrangements of folk songs representative of Native-, Mexican-, and African-American traditions. "I wanted to represent different aspects of American culture, as well as different musical genres," said Bob Mensel. "We'll sing the spiritual 'Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho' in a barbershop style, and bring an American swing style to the comic number 'Swish and Swagger.'"

The two choruses will join forces for the world premiere of three traditional folk songs arranged by Missouri-born composer Greg Gilpin. His arrangements of "Home on the Range" and "Live Your Dream" were

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highlights of previous HMC concerts. The new works, "Skip to My Lou," "Shenandoah," and "The Crawdad Song" are equally powerful.

The immediate appeal of these traditional folk songs lies in their simplicity. But in these new arrangements, their simple melodies build to complex rhythms and fanciful harmonies to create a contemporary take on these century-old songs.

Having Portland Gay Men's Chorus on stage with Heartland Men's Chorus affords the opportunity to program "Everyone Sang." Written by Eric Helmuth, this *a capella* piece features two antiphonal choruses singing in call-and-response fashion. Each chorus sings independent musical lines that sound rich and harmonious when heard simultaneously.

"America the Beautiful" will be the final number in the program. HMC recorded this Marvin Gaspard arrangement in 2004. In an email to Joe Nadeau, the composer noted that HMC's performance captured the essence of his arrangement more than any other recording he had heard.

Heartland Men's Chorus and Portland Gay Men's Chorus will team for Go West, Young Man June 12 & 13, 2010 at the Folly Theater (300 West 12th Street, Kansas City, Mo.). The choruses will present the same program the following week at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall in Portland, Oregon. Tickets for the Kansas City performance are available online at [www.hmckc.org](http://www.hmckc.org) or by phone at (816) 931-3338.

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