

# ModernMen

COACHELLA VALLEY MEN'S CHORUS

SPRING CONCERT 2026



**DR. STAN HILL'S  
FINAL CONCERT AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

Kurt Jordan, Principal Accompanist

**April 17th & 18th 7:00pm**

**April 19th 3:00pm**

at the

Palm Springs Plaza Theatre

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Music is love, a truth since music emerged. Love of family. Love of a Higher Power. Love of life. Love for our communities of fellow humans. And love of music itself. Our spring concert Sing Out! celebrates these various forms of love through a program of glorious and moving choral works.



Our current political and social climate tends to disparage love and empathy as signs of weakness. We are discouraged to care for those who look or think differently than we do, without trying to understand their values and experiences. Love becomes a "4-letter word". But often, a calm discussion uncovers core values similar to our own, based in love and care for our families and communities. Caring for the community and for each other is a core value of the Modern Men family of singers, board members, and staff. Our signature song – "Why We Sing" – states very clearly "Music builds a bridge; it can tear down a wall. Music is a language that can speak to one and all."

Dr. Stan Hill has been Modern Men's leader of love for 10 years. We now celebrate his love of beautiful blends of choral harmonies and meaningful lyrics as he conducts his last concert for us. As saddened as we are to lose such a talented and caring Artistic Director, we celebrate and honor his accomplishments by continuing his legacy of excellence under a new Artistic Director. As of this writing, we are in the final stages of selecting Dr. Hill's successor and expect to be able to announce the selection as part of today's program.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support of Modern Men as we continue making beautiful music in our journey of love.

**Greg Chrzczon**

*Board President*

Modern Men - Coachella Valley Men's Chorus



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[www.drmauxiliary.org](http://www.drmauxiliary.org)

To Dr. Stan Hill,  
To quote one of your favorite songs,  
“Music’s fierce compassion  
flows from you...”  
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## FROM THE PODIUM

"To everything there is a season and a time". However, to every season and time eventually comes transition and the opportunity for a rebirth, a new energy, a new vision, and a new future. It has been my privilege and honor to serve as Artistic Director of Modern Men - Coachella Valley Men's Chorus over the past ten years

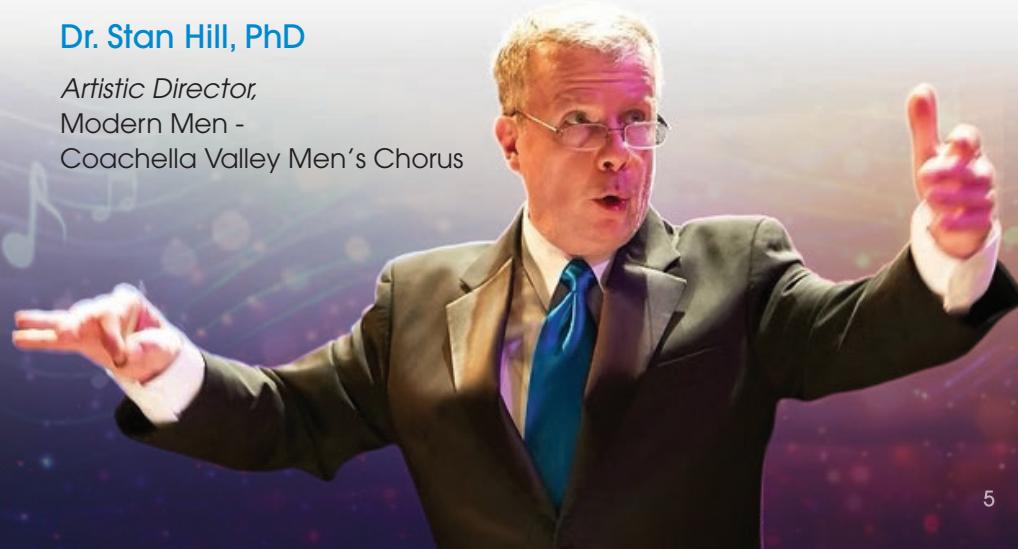
In preparing a listing of all of our concerts and the repertoire contained therein, I couldn't help but reminisce on the many outstanding performances of these men. Many of you will remember these shows: Rocketman - The Music of Elton John, Believe - The Music of Cher, Manilow-Songs That Make the Whole World Sing, Sounds of the Sixties, The 70's Show, Cool Yule and many others.

From 26 of them on a make-shift stage at The Bank on South Palm Canyon Drive to the Palm Springs Cultural Center to, most recently, being the Ensemble-in-Residence here at the Plaza Theatre in downtown Palm Springs, these men have accomplished what very few other choruses have been able to do. They have increased and sustained their membership, their audience participation, their performance prowess, and they have coalesced into a remarkable musical entity in the Coachella Valley.

And the inspiration for all of this has been the genuine loyalty, enthusiastic support, and remarkable generosity of you, their beloved audience. It is my sincere hope that this will continue for decades ahead, because I am certain that these men will continue to win hearts through their music for years to come. With your support and dedication, you inspire them to work hard and be their best. YOU are why they sing, and YOU are why they will continue to sing.

### Dr. Stan Hill, PhD

*Artistic Director,  
Modern Men -  
Coachella Valley Men's Chorus*





# CONGRATS

## Dr. Stan Hill

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Zach Herries  
Jeff Hillard

Franklin Joens  
Andrew Kuula  
# Bradley Lagore  
Mike Lukschu  
Paul MacKey  
Darin MacLeod  
Rich Meyers  
Richard Miller  
+ Van L. Neel

## TENOR 2

Matt Browning  
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Jeffrey Cipic  
Ron Claussen  
Chris Cochran  
# Michael Cohen  
Jon De Freitas  
Andrew Dorph  
# Kirk A. Dow  
Richard Elander  
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# Paul Kowal  
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Duffy Lucas  
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## DR. STAN HILL, PhD ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Southern California native Dr Stan Hill became the Artistic Director of Modern Men - Coachella Valley Men's Chorus in 2016. He had at that time completed a 12-year tenure as Artistic Director of Minnesota's Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus and, prior to that, served for 11 years as Artistic Director of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus. His extensive choral experience started much earlier, however, as a member of the Cherub Choir at the First Presbyterian Church of Orange at age 8. His trajectory as a choral singer and then conductor

of diverse choruses as well as vocal clinician, coach, and music arranger, would continue over the following 7 decades.

While Stan's history might suggest a master plan, in fact serendipity also played a significant role, particularly here in the Coachella Valley. Stan moved here in 2012 with plans to retire from choral conducting and ease into the easier pace of life in the desert. At the time, Modern Men was a newly formed group of local singers. They invited him to become their Artistic Director following their July, 2016 appearance at the GALA Choruses Festival in Denver with 25 singers on stage.

That easier paced life would have to wait. Stan and Modern Men became fast friends. Together they would build the formidable group of 140 singers that have been entertaining desert audiences while weaving themselves into the cultural life of our Valley. As is the case with many who come to the desert to begin a new chapter, Stan brought with him exceptional credentials. He earned his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees at California State University, Fullerton. He earned his PhD at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, completing his dissertation on laryngeal physiology.

His facility for combining the art and science of singing has been at the heart of both his longevity and his success at his calling. Some highlights:

- He has overseen the commissions of some of the most successful music in the gay men's choral repertoire, including the major works *Naked Man*, *Exile*, *Metamorphosis*, *Through a Glass*, *Darkly*, and *The Kushner Trilogy*.
- Stan reunited with his friend the noted composer Robert Seeley on the most recent of those commissions: *MOMENTum* with Modern Men. Work on the piece spanned the COVID-19 pandemic. Its delayed world premiere took place at Palm Springs Pride in 2021. Its GALA Choruses Festival premiere followed in 2024 at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis with over 90 singers on stage.
- Stan has also produced 13 audio recordings, including one with Modern Men, numerous videos and has written countless arrangements for men's choruses.

- In 2012, Stan was honored with GALA Choruses' highest accolades: The Lifetime Achievement Award and the GALA Choruses' Legacy Award.
- In 2016, Stan was named Conductor Laureate by the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus where he also worked tirelessly to navigate the chorus and community through the worst days of the AIDS pandemic.

From his tenure with the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, one of the founding GALA choruses, to his foundational tenure with Modern Men, one of GALA's newest choruses, Stan's exceptional contributions in combining the artistry of choral singing and the power of community activism distinguishes him among his peers and earned him a devoted following among those he has led.

As a skilled and accomplished musician, Stan's accomplishments speak for themselves. Along with his commitment to making music, Stan has been dedicated to the health and advancement of the communities where he has lived, working tirelessly for inclusion and advancement and lifting all through the power of music. From the fair and compassionate treatment of those afflicted by HIV/AIDS in the very earliest days of the pandemic during his time with the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, to his use of music to keep us connected during the COVID-19 pandemic, Stan has proved that the power of music can lift us up, strengthen our bonds, and bring everyone to their potential and to their better selves.

Stan saw great potential in a nascent Modern Men and, forgoing his plan to retire and instead opted to devote himself to nurturing that potential to build this great chorus. For that, we will always be deeply grateful.

## KURT JORDAN PRINCIPAL ACCOMPANIST



Kurt developed an intense interest in learning the piano after having seen *The Phantom of the Opera* with his parents at age 10. He studied under the guidance of Joann Algier throughout middle and high school, during which time he discovered a love of music using multiple pianos. This passion was further explored at Azusa Pacific University while studying with Dr. Robert Sage. Kurt performed several recitals of material he arranged for two and three pianos, the recordings of which have received radio play in Los

Angeles, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Boston, Austin and Beirut. In 2009, Kurt had the honor of performing the West Coast premiere of Alvin Curran's 7.5 hour long piano song cycle, *Inner Cities 1-13*, as well as the U.S. premiere of movement *14 at Burning Man* in 2013. Kurt graduated from Azusa Pacific University in 2010 with a BA in Music Theory and Composition. Kurt has composed several large-scale works for piano solo, a song cycle for piano and soprano and most recently, a piano sonata.



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## TOM MCGILLIS SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER



Tom McGillis has been an American Sign Language interpreter with a focus on interpreting artistic performances for more than 40 years. He is the founder and principal of StageHands Interpreting, LLC, a referral agency for interpreters for arts and cultural events in the Coachella Valley. This season marks Tom's eighth with Modern Men. From 1988 until 2016, he served as the principal American Sign Language interpreter for the New York City Gay Men's Chorus.

His theater credits include *Eureka Day*, *Mr Parker* (Dezart Performs); *Ernest Shackleton Loves Me*, *Other Desert Cities*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Light in the Piazza*, *Next to Normal* (CV Rep); *The Mouse Trap*, *Nunsense Amen*, *Escape to Margaritaville*, *The Last Five Years* (Desert Theater Works); *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Those Musclebound Cowboys of Snake Pit Gulch* (Desert Rose Playhouse); *Forever Plaid* (Paper Mill Playhouse), *The Christmas Revels* (Symphony Space); *Progress* (Hudson Guild); and *Anna and Danilo* (Handstone Productions). Tom has interpreted concerts at Palm Springs Pride, Rock the Park (Palm Springs), Concerts in the Park (Palm Desert), and Voices of Kentuckiana.

Tom studied artistic interpreting at the Juilliard School and is a graduate of the interpreter training program at the New York Society for the Deaf. Tom holds a Master's in Business Administration degree from Baruch College of the City University of New York. A New Jersey native, he lived in New York City for more than 30 years before moving to Palm Springs with his husband, Donald Gardenier (MM Baritone), in 2016.

## RON WHEELER PRODUCER



Ron has been involved in singing, acting and production since he was a child. He started in the world of theater as a child in productions for Junior University in San Bernardino performing in *The Wizard of Oz* and *Pinocchio*. As a teenager he became involved with San Bernardino Civic Light Opera learning from professionals in the back of the house as well as front of house. As an adult he has played many leading roles such as Harry Roat in *Wait Until Dark*, Garry Lejeune in *Noises Off*, Jed

in *Fifth of July*, Charlie Brown in *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, Mayor Shinn in *The Music Man*, the Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz*, Angie in *Gypsy* as well as credits for choreography and direction in *Fiddler on the Roof*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Gypsy*. Ron was previously the producer for the Palm Springs Gay Men's Chorus as well as Harmonic Voices. He has been the producer for Modern Men since 2016.

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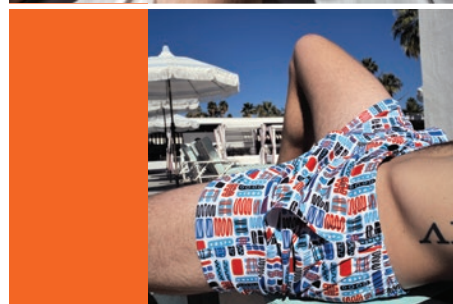
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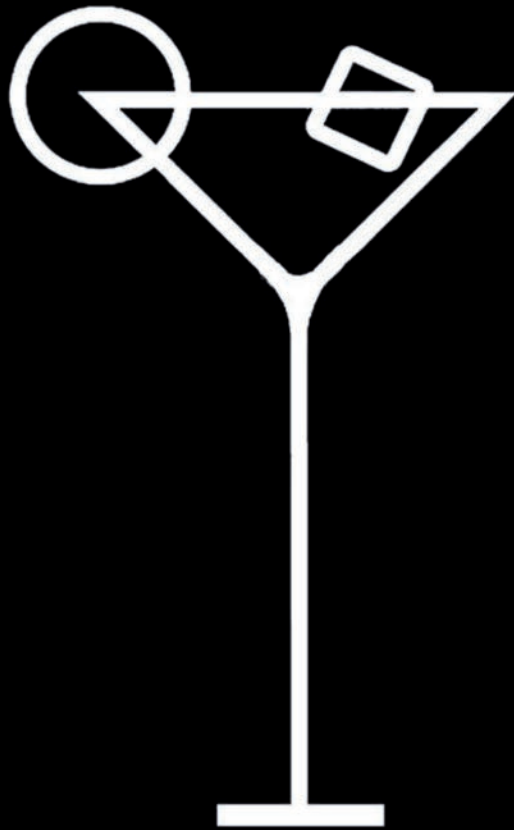
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## MODERN MEN COACHELLA VALLEY MEN'S CHORUS



Modern Men Chorus is proud to be part of the vibrant LGBTQ+ arts community in Palm Springs and the greater Coachella Valley. With more than 140 active performers, the chorus brings together voices united by a shared love of music, connection, and community.

As the Palm Springs Plaza Theatre's official Ensemble-in-Residence, Modern Men Chorus is honored to contribute to the cultural life of the Valley through performances that celebrate diversity and the power of the human voice. Beyond the stage, the chorus remains deeply committed to community engagement through Pride events and local partnerships.

Modern Men Chorus also values its connection with fellow GALA Choruses in the region—including A Cabbello, Coachella Valley Acappella, and the Palm Springs Gay Men's Chorus—and is proud to be part of a supportive and inspiring choral community.



Special funding provided by

Modern Men - Coachella Valley Men's Chorus is a proud member of



GALA Choruses leads the LGBTQ choral movement in North and South America. We cultivate the artistic development of 15,000 singers from approximately 200 choruses throughout the Americas.

Modern Men is a 501(c)(3) organization as defined by the US Internal Revenue Code. EIN# 46-3645867

# ACT 1

*Gabriel's Oboe from The Mission* ..... Ennio Morricone  
*Our life, our earth, thus they cry out.*  
*Our pain, our strength, thus they cry out.*  
*Our rage, our faith, thus they cry out.*

*Always Keep This Close*.....Music by Zachary J. Moore  
 Lyrics by Colleen Carhuff

*What If I Could Tell You* ..... Heather Sorrenson  
**SOLOISTS** FRI – Zach Herries SAT – Paul Hanoski SUN – Mark Evans

*Somewhere over the Rainbow*.....Words and music by Harold Arlen  
 arr. Dennis Coleman  
**SOLOIST** Richard Elander

*Imagining You from Birds of Paradise*.....Music by David Evans  
 Lyrics by Winnie Holzman

*The Prodigal from Exile*.....Music by Robert Seeley  
 Lyrics by Robert Espindola

*Homeward Bound*.....Music and Lyrics by Marta Keen  
**PRIMO** FRI – Keith Montgomery SAT – Paul Cady SUN – Greg Chrzczon  
**SECONDO** Kurt Jordan **SOLO 1** Nathan Truesdell  
**SOLO 2** FRI & SUN – Charles Bowers SAT – John Perez Mora

*All of Me from A Vision Unfolding* ..... Kyle Pederson  
**SOLOISTS** FRI & SUN – Jim Gnaster SAT – Chris Cochran

*Not in Our Town*..... Music and Lyrics by Fred Small  
**SOLOISTS** FRI & SAT - Valerian Rumainski SUN - Bob Mensel

## – INTERMISSION –

## INSTRUMENTALISTS

**1ST VIOLIN** Ian Kaminski

**CELLO** Richard Treat

**2ND VIOLIN & CONTRACTOR** Mari Mizutani

**OBOE** Steve Humerickhouse\*

**VIOLA** Curtis Rainey

**PERCUSSION** Eddie Felix

\* Steve Humerickhouse's appearance has been underwritten through the generosity of Joann Usher & Connie Nyman

# ACT 2

*I Can Fly from Metamorphosis*..... Music by Robert Seeley  
 Lyrics by Robert Espindola

*Flight Song*..... Music by Kim Andre Arnese  
 Lyrics by Euan Tait

*Love Lives On*.....Music and Lyrics by Barry Man  
 arr. Mark Riese

Three Selections from *Naked Man*..... Music by Robert Seeley  
 Lyrics by Phillip Littell

*I Come from Good People*

**SOLO 1** Andy Kuula **SOLO 2** Mark Wilensky-Ziemann

**SOLO 3** FRI – Van Neel SAT – Larry Wray SUN – Paul Trombley

*Marry Us*

*Never Ever*

*Love Medley* ..... arr. for piano and string quartet by SK Hill

*When I Fall in Love, Let It Be Me, Unchained Melody*

**SOLO 1** Alan Frith-Smith

**SOLO 2** FRI & SUN – Matthew Netto SAT – Amarin Ratanarat

**DANCERS** Brett Conway and Maxwell Simoes

Male-male *pas de deux* choreographed by Ballet Master Arturo Fernandez

## A TRIBUTE TO DR. STAN HILL

*Guest conductor: Gary Holt*

*Tribute Introduction:*

Greg Chrzczon, Board President, Modern Men Chorus

*Special Remarks Honoring Dr. Hill:*

Dan Spencer, Previous Member of the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus  
 Tom Burtch, Previous Member of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus  
 David Pearson, Current Member of Modern Men Chorus

*A Million Dreams from The Greatest Showman*..... Music and Lyrics by  
 Benj Pasek & Justin Paul

**SOLOISTS** FRI & SUN – Dustin Hawkins SAT – Darin Macleod

*For Good from Wicked*..... Music and Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz  
 arr. Alex Rybeck  
 Orchestration by Greg Chrzczon

**SOLOISTS** FRI & SUN – Mark Evans SAT – Brent Gettelfinger

*Why We Sing*.....Greg Gilpin



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To my Fellow Modern Men:

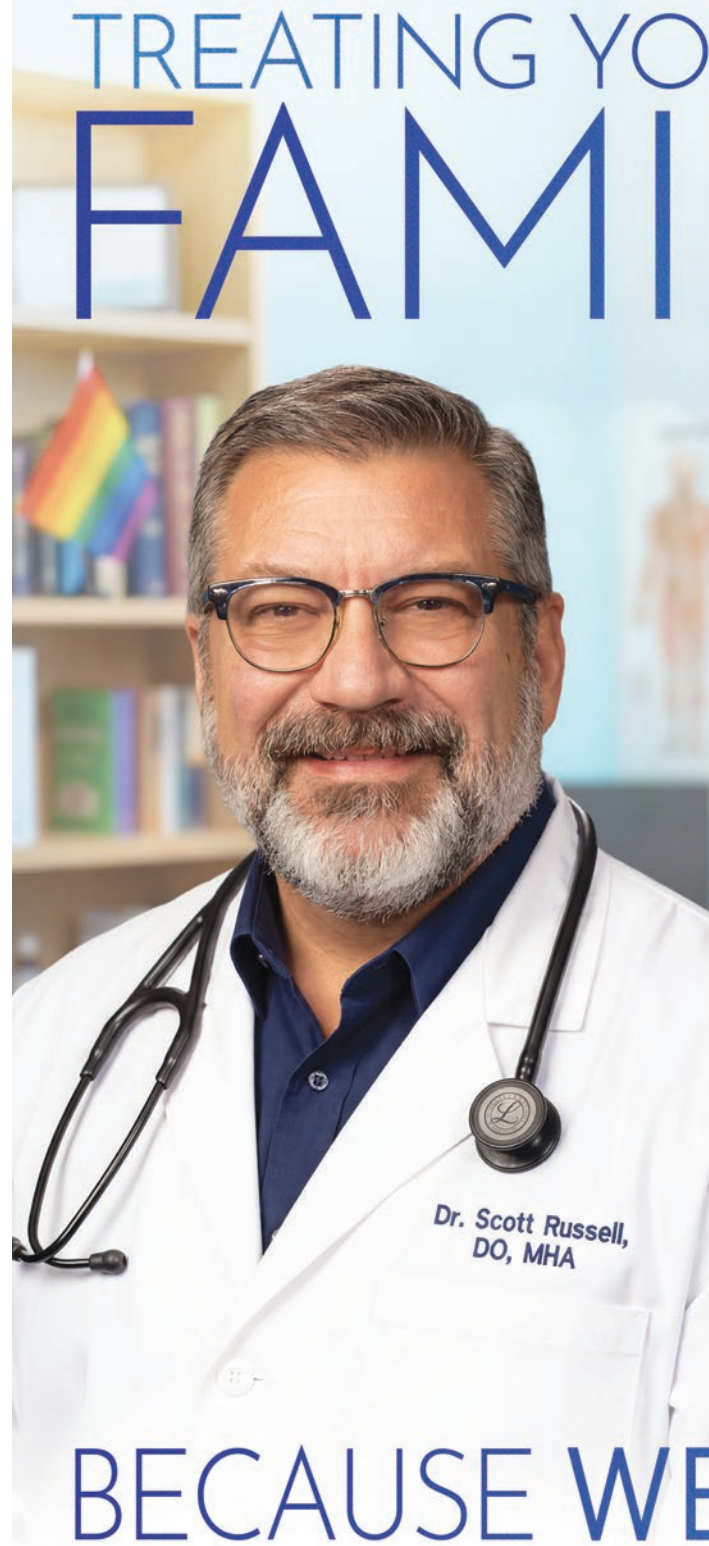
Every concert with you has made me believe, in spirit, I can fly.

Your fellowship, camaraderie, and passion make our time together unforgettable.


Thank you for the happiness.

– A Fellow Modern Man

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# SONG DEDICATIONS

## All of Me

WTS: You have always seen me.  
I love you, always.  
– TJB

## Flight Song

To my husband of 36 years, Bob Colangelo. He is the one that gives wings to my hopes and dreams, he lifts my spirits always, and he sets new heights toward which I strive. He makes my world begin as song.  
– Jeff Jenest

## Gabriel's Oboe

Dedicated to the memory of Marty Kahler who provided the oboe accompaniment to the 1998 recording "How Fair This Place" by the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus.  
– Tom Burch and Neil Austin

## Homeward Bound

Grandma Betty, you were the first to sing to all of us, and none of us will ever forget how you sang with love and joy those many nights you rocked us to sleep. Not a day goes by that we don't miss you, but on behalf of myself, my mom Linda and our entire family, we know that one day we will sing with you again when we are all homeward bound.  
– James Beck

## Imagining You

Richard – It's hard to imagine my life any happier than now, with you. Thank you.  
– Tom DeRemer

## Love Lives On

I am dedicating Love Lives On to the man who taught me compassion, joy and privacy – from September 1976 until he passed. Oscar de la Renta was the love of my life.  
– Jack Alexander

## Love Medley

To my husband Al. Forty-seven and one half years of love so far. May the trend continue. I love you.  
– Andrew Dorph

To my love, my darling Tyler, let it always be me!  
– Matt Netto

## Never Ever

To the men of Modern Men who made my life complete with their dedication, support and incredible sounds for 10 years. "Take each moment as a gift."  
– Dr. Stan Hill, PhD

Dedicated to Dr. Stan Hill who commissioned the song cycle "Naked Man" in 1997. As we bid farewell to Stan, let's send him off with these words from the text: "Life will take us where it will, New beginnings, Ends... Take each moment as a gift. Give it back again."  
– Tom Burch and Neil Austin

To Stan Hill: Thank you.  
– Steve Carson

Honoring Stan for all his years of service to the LGBTQ choral community. It's been my honor since 1994 to sing with Stan. Never ever will we have this moment again.  
– Craig Gottfried

## Not in Our Town

To my fellow Jews and to everyone who understands the harm of antisemitism. There are only 16 million Jews in the world and yet it is believed that half the world is antisemitic. We are 2.4% of the U.S. population and yet 70% of U.S. religious hate crimes are against us. Please stand with us and against antisemitism.  
– Brian Saber

Drew, this song, inspired by a true story, is timely. It is powerful, moving and filled with unity, not apathy. This will speak to you. XOXO  
– Bill

## The Prodigal

In memory of my Mom and our 'complicated' relationship and my Dad with his calm, supportive nature.  
– Your son, Bill

To Rene Schneeberger: I kept thinking about all the songs I'm singing this concert and this one stood out. I sang this song two years ago for the first time and fell in love with it. It's a powerful story and I'm so grateful to sing it again in front of you. This song is for you.  
– Jared Watson

## What If I Could Tell You

Dedicated in loving memory of EJ Byington, our foster son. "What If I Could Tell You" the impact you made on the world and on us, your foster dads.  
– Jim Cox and Gary George

## Why We Sing

In memory of John and Elizabeth Carson.  
– Steve Carson

In loving memory of my twin brother, Darrell. We both share a love for the mission and power of the gay choral movement. May his passion for music and equality continue to inspire every voice. You will live on in the songs in my heart.  
– Harold Lewis

This song is dedicated to Jason, whose courage to audition and joy in joining a chorus embody the very reason we sing – for hope, for peace, and to celebrate and speak what we believe. Your voice now carries that message, and I'm so proud of you.  
– Harold Lewis

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# Modern Men

## IN MEMORIAM

Mark Austin	Arthur Healey	Lynn McCasland
Bill Bordonaro	Jefferson Hills	Chester McLemore
Bruce Chartier	Chris Holcombe	Vance Reger
Mark Cohen	Raymond Andrew "Rusty" Kaplin	Heath Richard
Simeon Den	Thompson Lange	Michael Scacco
Robert Espindola	Randy W. Lerner	Robert Seeley
Dave Gooding	Robert Litvak	Daisy VanHeerd
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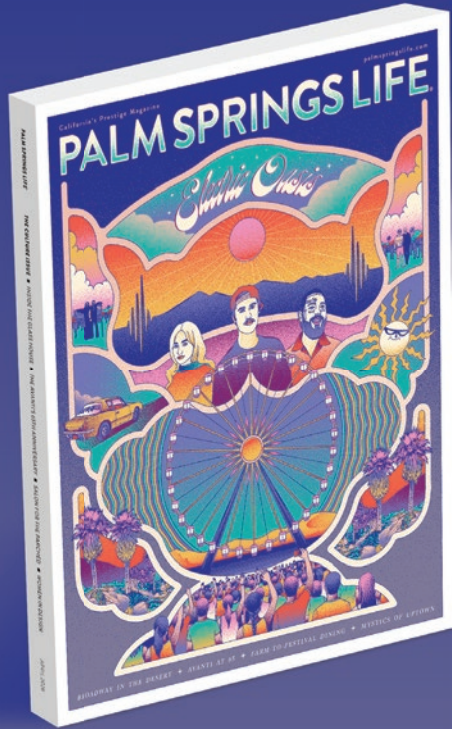


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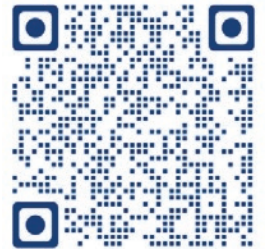
### YOU are why we sing—and why we continue.

Thank you for supporting us by attending our show! The combination of ticket sales, member dues and the support of donors allow us to generate the funds required for our beloved chorus to continue performing for our community in the Coachella Valley. As with many non-profit arts organizations, we continue to feel the pressure of increasing costs for all of the items in our budget.

Your generosity helps us meet the day-to-day needs of the chorus, while also allowing us to plan for our continued growth. As we enter our eleventh year, we continue to promote harmony through outstanding performances, entertaining and empowering our audiences, and embracing diversity through our community outreach.

Whether you are a first-time donor, or a long-term supporter, your gift will directly impact our ability to deliver on the mission of Modern Men.

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For more information about donations,  
please email **Nathan Truesdell**, Board Member  
and Director of Development, at  
[ntruesdell@truelocalmedia.com](mailto:ntruesdell@truelocalmedia.com)

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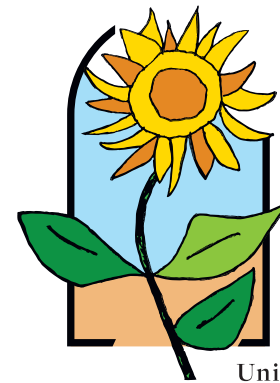
# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Dr. Stan Hill, PhD would personally like to recognize:

- Kurt Jordan for making even me sound good.
- Ron Wheeler for being the most dedicated and professional producer imaginable.
- Tom McGillis who could have retired after being the ASL interpreter for NYCGMC for decades but instead, joined us with a level of professionalism that is an inspiration.
- Nathan Truesdell for making dreams come true.
- Don Gardenier for being on call, even during rehearsals.
- Doug Wong for being my sounding-board.
- My biological family for being here for me: my brothers: Jim, Rob and George – my incredibly ugly sister: Marilyne – my sisters-in-law, Brenda, Jeri and Deanna – my nieces and nieces-in-law: Stacy, Bekah, Aimee, Caitlin, Ashley and Cary – my nephews and nephews-in-law: Kenny, Robbie, Matt and Anthony.
- Robert Seeley and Robert Espindola whose talents I borrowed to make beautiful music.
- Rosie Vacano for her constancy, devotion and unqualified support.
- Alden and Linda Esping who, for almost 60 years, lived the phrase “Stand by me”.
- My extended family: Derek & Arturo, Doug Stewart, Gary Holt, Dan Spencer & Joaquin Galeano, Susan Munday and so many other Roosters.
- Emil and my Silver Sneaker friends, whose support of the chorus for the past ten years has been a blessing.
- To the many who sang with me in other choruses and are at or in this concert.
- To the original Modern Men board who, ten years ago, trusted me to be their director: Stephen Owens, Dan Spencer, David Gooding, Robert Seeley, Chuck Wilhelm, Michael Scacco, Charlie Mercer, Dan Kelley McBride, Kenny Owens.
- And our beloved audience who has afforded us all the opportunity to sing.
- And to Jane Paul, my friend, mentor, inspiration, and impetus for all I have achieved.

## The kindness and generosity of so many make the success of MODERN MEN possible. Our sincere appreciation to:

- United Methodist Church of Palm Springs  
Jane Voigts, Pastor | Pamela Hill, Office & Campus Coordinator
- The Palm Springs Plaza Theatre & Foundation
- John Bolton: General Manager of the Plaza Theatre
- Mariah Pryor: Production Director of the Plaza Theatre
- The Search Committee: Greg Chrzczon CHAIR, Dennis Chase, Chris Cochran, Peter Gordon, Paul Kowal, Mitchell Laks, Jerry Lee and Joel Muggge
- The Tribute Committee: Nathan Truesdell CHAIR, Steve Carson, Donald Gardinier, Gary Holt, Paul MacKey, Brian Saber, Dan Spencer, Joann Usher and Ron Wheeler
- The Retreat Committee: Stephen Owens, CHAIR, Dennis Chase, Harold Lewis, Joel Muggge, Joe Vignale and Ron Wheeler.
- Mitch Laks, Steve Carson, George Rockel and Peter Kostrobala for securing and managing our March all-day rehearsal at the Four Seasons Clubhouse in Palm Springs
- Butch Zein, ASL coach
- Matthew Lawton, photographer



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Maestro Bruneau, thank you for 19 extraordinary years of leadership, inspiration, and music. Your artistry will resonate in our voices and in our hearts for seasons to come.

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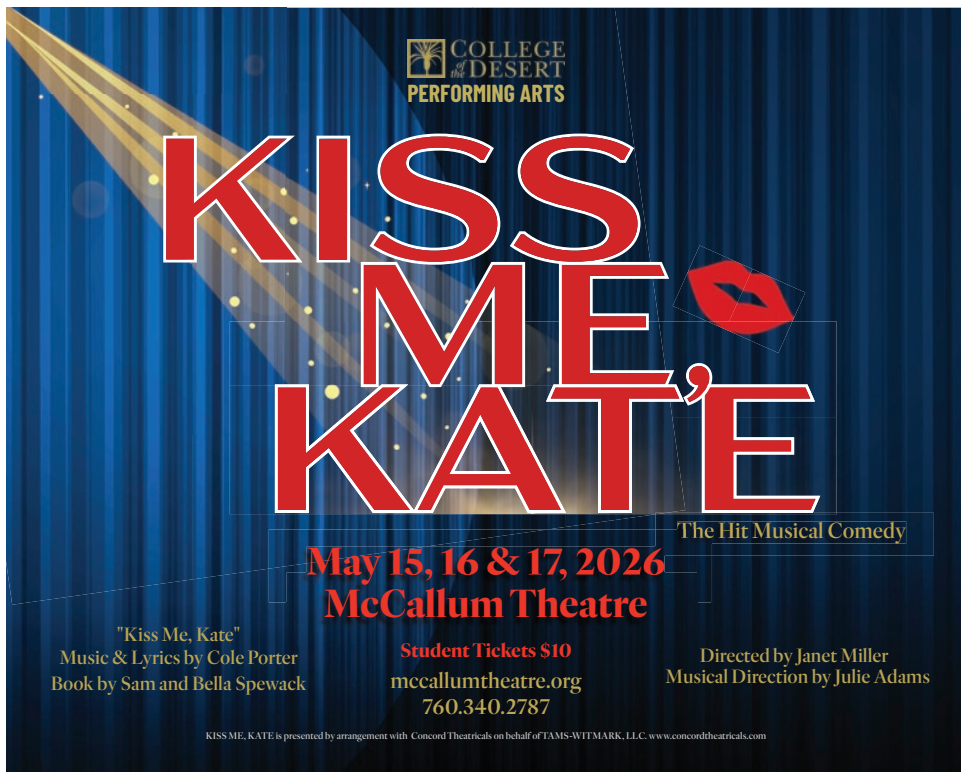
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-James Beck

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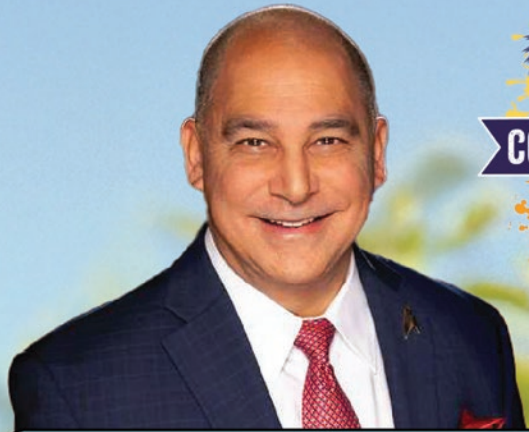
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