

Gay Chorus Joins Festival at OCPAC

BY PAUL FINDLAY

For the first time in its celebrated 18-year history, the Pacific Chorale's annual Invitational Choral Festival will include select community choruses; and one of those choruses is from a local gay community.

Men Alive—The Orange County Gay Men's Chorus will join the Pacific Chorale and several other noted choruses at the Orange County Performing Arts Center's Segerstrom Hall for a full day of performances and celebration. The festival will be held on March 23 at OCPAC with Men Alive taking to the stage in the evening at 7 p.m.

"We are very excited to be performing at Segerstrom Hall," said Men Alive's Artistic Director Rich Cook. "We're very grateful to have been invited by the Pacific Chorale. Especially considering how young a chorus we still are, this is a great honor. We're thrilled to join with some of the finest local choruses at the festival."

Men Alive will be performing a select block of songs, including pieces from its upcoming classical-driven concert, "Paris, Rome & Home" in April.

In addition to Men Alive, another friend of the gay choral community will also be in attendance: Dr. Bruce

Mayhall, the artistic director of the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles. Mayhall will preside over the high-school-chorus portion of the festival, earlier in the day.

"Education has long been a passion of mine," Mayhall said. "There is a strong educational dimension to choral music. Being able to work with high school students is very dear to my heart."

The Invitational Choral Festival will feature 21 children's, high-school and community choruses from across Southern California. While the children's and high-school choruses will perform earlier in the day, the community choruses will take to the stage in the evening. Other community choruses in attendance will include the Inland Master Chorale, the Irvine Masterworks Chorale, the Cypress Masterworks Chorale, the Orange County Women's Chorus and the Mountainside Master Chorale. A performance by the Pacific Chorale will close the evening.

All Invitational Choral Festival performances will be presented free of charge and are open to the general public. For more information, call the Pacific Chorale at (714) 662-2345 or visit the Men Alive Web site at www.MenAliveChorus.org.

