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## **Gay Men's Chorus Acquires West Coast Premiere of "Through a Glass, Darkly"**

SAN DIEGO, February 2011 – The San Diego Gay Men's Chorus (SDGMC) announces that it has secured rights to present the powerful, edgy, and inspirational "Through a Glass, Darkly" for its West Coast Premiere in April 2011. The 45-minute theatrical musical will be performed by SDGMC as part of its popular spring concert, to be held at the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center's 500-seat David and Dorothea Garfield Theatre in La Jolla.

"Through a Glass, Darkly" dramatizes 36 hours in the life of Sebastian, a young Wall Street executive who "hits bottom" because of his chronic use of crystal methamphetamine and how his addiction affects his partner and his circle of friends. Although Sebastian has a long-term partner named Zack, Sebastian's meth addiction pulls him back into the club scene where he meets young men like Billy, whom he introduces to meth for the first time. After both Zack and Billy face the cold truth that they've been lied to and left behind, Sebastian risks losing everything and everyone in his life.

While not all "Through a Glass, Darkly" audience members might personally relate to the story's portrayal of drug addiction, they are bound to be deeply touched by the production's universal themes of love, trust, deception, denial, and the healing power of loyal friends. "I've had audience and chorus members ask me why I would program a concert piece about crystal meth. Many of them think I'm crazy," said SDGMC artistic director Gary Holt. "But the truth is, the crushing social issue of addiction has affected the lives of many people we know and care about. The chorus' obligation to present this type of work is an integral part of our stated Vision Statement: 'To connect, challenge and inspire our audiences by broadening cultural awareness of important social issues and the bonds that unite us all.'"

The oratorio's composer, Michael Shaieb, says he has been deluged with emails and letters from people telling him how powerfully the music has affected them in one way or another.

"We didn't realize it was going to have such an effect on people," Shaieb says. "I think there's something that has to make a cathartic change in somebody's life and sometimes music does that... somebody hears something and it just hits them right to their very core."

In “Through a Glass, Darkly,” Shaieb deftly weaves passionate solos, powerful choral music, and edgy electronica that evokes the club scene frequented by the lead characters Sebastian and Billy. In composing “Through a Glass, Darkly,” Shaieb was inspired by the Moody Blues’ album “Days of Future Passed,” which mixes orchestral music with classic rock. Shaieb was also heavily influenced by his own experience of helping a close friend of his who was addicted to crystal meth at the time.

“Through a Glass, Darkly” will be featured as the second act of SDGMC’s spring concert, “Friend Me.” Artistic Director Holt has selected contemporary music for the program’s first act which touches on many of the themes that reappear in Shaieb’s meth piece. Among the act one songs performed by the chorus are Coldplay’s “Viva La Vida,” Amy Winehouse’s “Rehab,” “Song For a Friend” by Jason Mraz, “Stand Up For Love” by Destiny’s Child, and the popular club hit “I Just Wanna Dance” from the controversial “Jerry Springer: The Opera.” “Friend Me” contains strong language and adult subject matter.

## **Audition Information**

The San Diego Gay Men’s Chorus is seeking passionate and gifted singers with theatrical experience to perform the roles of Sebastian, Billy and Zack in “Through a Glass, Darkly.” Although these roles are written for men who are in their 20s and 30s, singers of other ages may audition and will be considered as appropriate. Auditions will be held on Sunday, February 27 at 7:00PM at the chorus’ rehearsal home, University Christian Church, 3900 Cleveland Avenue in Hillcrest, across from the DMV and Hillcrest post office. Those auditioning should bring two dramatic songs in contrasting styles, with either sheet music or track accompaniment. An accompanist will be provided, and no audition monologue is required.

Additional audition information is posted on the SDGMC website, [www.sdgmc.org](http://www.sdgmc.org), or interested actors may contact artistic director Gary Holt at [artisticdirector@sdgmc.org](mailto:artisticdirector@sdgmc.org).

## **About Michael Shaieb**

“Through a Glass, Darkly” was commissioned for Michael Shaieb by the Twin Cities Gay Men’s Chorus (TWGMC), which debuted the piece to two sold-out audiences in March of 2008. TWGMC performed the piece again in July 2008 at the eighth GALA Choruses Festival in Miami. “Through a Glass, Darkly” has since been performed by the Gay Men’s Chorus of Washington, D.C., the Miami Gay Men’s Chorus, The Philadelphia Gay Men’s Chorus, and the New York City Gay Men’s Chorus. The San Diego Gay Men’s Chorus proudly presents the West Coast Premiere.

Composer Michael Shaieb’s recent choral projects include a Tony Kushner trilogy commissioned by Twin Cities Gay Men’s Chorus as part of the Guthrie Theatre’s 2009 Kushner Festival. (One

movement from that trilogy, "I Want More Life" - a setting of Prior Walter's words from "Angels In America" - is featured in act one of SDGMC's "Friend Me" concert). Other musical projects include: "Go-Go Beach," "Dogs That Wear Hats," "Pickle Pins," and "Golden State." For film and television, Shaieb co-wrote original music for the VH1 documentary "Last Days of Left Eye," along with his partner of 10 years Brent Lord, as well as background music for various prime-time shows, and the end credits song for the short film "Waking Dreams." Shaieb and partner Lord, are co-founders of the music production company FatLab Music, and both are alumni of the NYU Tisch Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program.

## **About SDGMC**

The San Diego Gay Men's Chorus was formed in January 2010 from the marriage of the San Diego Men's Chorus and the Gay Men's Chorus of San Diego, two choruses that boasted long and proud legacies of performing in San Diego and beyond. SDGMC's exciting first year began with "Our House," a spring concert that celebrated the contributions of local community organizations. The Chorus followed that this past summer with two sold-out "extrABBAganza" concerts, and finished 2010 with its sold-out "Tinseltown" concerts that showcased classic holiday songs from film and television.

This Chorus' official mission is to create a positive musical experience through exciting performances that engage audiences, build community support, and provide a dynamic force for social change.

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