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The Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus, seen here in the March concert "This Is Me," will perform with the ASO on June 21. (Photos courtesy of Ames Studios)

Disney, Pride and the power of song: A magical night with the Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus

MATTHEW TERRELL x JUNE 18, 2025

What do *The Lion King*, *Mary Poppins* and *Frozen* have in common with Atlanta Pride?

This June, they all come together in *Disney PRIDE in Concert*, a heart-swelling collaboration between the [Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus \(AGMC\)](#) and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO). The performance, held at Atlanta Symphony Hall, features beloved songs from across the Disney canon, re-imagined through the lens of queer experience — both joyful and brave.

But this isn't just a concert. It's a celebration of visibility, community and the transformative power of music.



Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus artistic director Donald Milton

III. (Courtesy of Voices of Note)

"We're thrilled to be premiering this concert in Atlanta," says Donald Milton III, AGMC's artistic director. "To have one of the finest symphonies in the country join us to celebrate PRIDE is a dream." The show, originally developed by the Boston Gay Men's Chorus in partnership with Disney, has been performed nationwide and now finds a home in Georgia at a time when LGBTQ+ stories are increasingly under threat.

At first glance, Disney and queer identity might seem like an unlikely pairing — but the resonance runs deep. "Disney has been producing incredible, meaningful music for nearly a century, and a central theme in their stories has been finding your truth and acceptance," says Milton. "Finding your place in the world is a universal story, but queer folks have always had a more challenging path, and these Disney songs speak to both the struggle and the joy of the queer experience."

AGMC baritone Gellin Hughes shares one such personal story during the concert, just before singing *Reflection* from *Mulan* — a song often embraced by the trans community. Seeing and loving the person in the mirror becomes a moment of recognition, healing and pride.

For many members of AGMC, singing is only part of the experience. "The chorus is often their primary connection to the LGBTQ+ community," says AGMC President Andrew Berardi. "For many, the chorus is their chosen family, offering a network of support, camaraderie and unconditional acceptance that may be lacking in other aspects of their lives."

This work — less visible than what happens on stage — is at the heart of AGMC's mission. Through social gatherings, emotional support and inclusive rehearsal spaces, the chorus provides a home for queer Atlantans. "We are a lifeline," says David Aurilio, executive director of Voices of Note, the umbrella organization that includes AGMC. "With quiet acts of mentorship, emotional support and deep connection, we cultivate a sense of belonging that transforms lives."

In a city as diverse and sprawling as Atlanta, the AGMC functions as both cultural institution and community hub. Its legacy spans 44 years, evolving from a group seeking visibility during the AIDS crisis to a powerhouse of advocacy and artistic excellence. "In our early years, simply standing on stage as out gay men was an act of defiance and courage," Aurilio says. "Today, our mission reflects a broader, more inclusive vision — amplifying diverse queer voices, addressing intersectional struggles and using artistic excellence as a vehicle for social change."

The decision to center this year's Pride season around Disney music may surprise some, especially those who carry assumptions about what a "gay men's chorus" performance might be. But Milton insists this show is for everyone — families included.

"Disney PRIDE in Concert is not a parody or pastiche — it's a deeply moving, joy-filled celebration of identity, belonging and the stories that shape us. With the full force of the Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, we're bringing Disney's timeless music to life in a way that honors its emotional depth while inviting every audience member — queer or not — to see themselves in the journey," Milton adds. "It's funny, it's vulnerable and it's musically extraordinary."

Disney's enduring themes of belonging, love and hope become especially poignant when voiced by a queer chorus backed by a full symphony. There's even a moving ballad rendition of *It's a Small World After All* — a moment Milton calls one of the most emotional in the show. "Read the lyrics without the melody in your head," he suggests — "There's so much that we share, that it's time we're aware."

As Georgia continues to grapple with legislation that challenges LGBTQ+ visibility in schools and public life, *Disney PRIDE in Concert* is a reminder that queer stories are not just valid — they're vital.

"In this moment — when LGBTQ+ communities are being politicized and pushed to the margins — Disney PRIDE in Concert is a joyful act of resistance. We're reclaiming space through music that generations grew up with and reminding audiences that queer joy is not trivial. It's transformative. This concert is our love letter to anyone who's ever felt different and our declaration that we are still here, still singing and still full of light," says Aurilio.

And in Atlanta — a city with a rich queer history and a vibrant cultural scene — that presence matters.

AGMC doesn't just sing. It uplifts. It connects. It reminds Atlantans that PRIDE isn't only a parade — it's a practice. A chorus of 150 voices singing Disney songs may sound whimsical. But beneath the sparkle lies something profound: the harmony of chosen family, the power of visibility and the magic of being seen for who you truly are.

Where & when

Disney PRIDE in Concert takes place at 7 p.m. Saturday, June 21, at Atlanta Symphony Hall, 1280 Peachtree St. NE. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [voicesofnote.org](https://www.voicesofnote.org).

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