



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 2026

2026 Pride Bands Alliance Conference, Hosted by Philadelphia Freedom Band, Celebrates Pride, Music, and Freedom

PHILADELPHIA – The Philadelphia Freedom Band will host [*Band Things Happen in Philadelphia: A Celebration of Pride, Music, & Freedom*](#), the annual conference of the international Pride Bands Alliance, May 21 - 25, 2026.

The event will welcome 350+ LGBTQ+ musicians from around the world to rehearse, perform, and connect. Three public performances will be held during the conference: pep band & color guard performances in the Gayborhood and in Fairmount, and a culminating concert of two 150+ musician concert bands in the Kimmel Center's iconic Marian Anderson Hall.

Public Performances

Friday, May 22: Pep Band & Color Guard Marching Rehearsal in the Gayborhood

The Pride Bands Alliance Conference Pep Band and Color Guard will hold an outdoor marching rehearsal in the Gayborhood, culminating at the recently-opened [*Philly Pride Visitor Center*](#) at 1139 Locust Street. The band will perform a mix of pop tunes that highlight the grit, the joy, and the independent spirit of both Philadelphia and the LGBTQ+ community. The event, in partnership with Philly Pride 365 and the Philly Pride Visitor Center, will also feature the giant rainbow pride flag that is part of the city's annual Pride Month celebrations.

Saturday, May 23: Pep Band & Color Guard Performance in Fairmount Park

Philadelphia welcomed the world and showed off the future at the 1876 Centennial Exposition, the first World's Fair in the U.S. Relive the inventions, innovations, and international flair that made history on May 23rd at Visit Philadelphia's free Saturday Firstival, part of **52 Weeks of Firsts**. The conference Pep Band and Color Guard will perform a celebratory mix of Philly-themed hits and patriotic music for Memorial Day weekend at the site of this Centennial Exposition – West Fairmount Park near the Please Touch Museum.

Sunday, May 24: Concert Bands Performance at Marian Anderson Hall

Say You Want a Revolution: Music of Change and Transformation is the culminating performance of the Pride Bands conference, which will feature two 150+ musician concert bands performing in the Kimmel Center's iconic Marian Anderson Hall. Our repertoire will celebrate the Semiquincentennial Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of

Independence, other important historical moments in America and Philadelphia, and calls for progress. We also plan to pay homage to LGBTQ+ history, celebrate the nation's deep musical roots, and champion hope for the future. The concert will feature the debut of two newly commissioned pieces composed by Michael Evans and local composer Melissa Dunphy. Tickets and info at grco.de/revolutionPFB.

Conference Details

This May, the city of brotherly love and sisterly sass will come alive with the sound of pride, music, and freedom. [Band Things Happen in Philadelphia](#) is more than a conference – it's a 5-day symphony of visibility, artistry, and community welcoming 350+ LGBTQ+ musicians from around the world.

Timed to coincide with the nation's semiquincentennial celebrations, this landmark gathering will bring musicians from across the country and around the world to Philadelphia. Together, we'll rehearse, perform, connect, and celebrate in one of America's most historic – and most proudly queer – cities.

What to expect:

- Culminating concert band performance of two 150+-musician ensembles at the Kimmel Center's iconic Marian Anderson Hall
- Chamber and jazz ensembles, showcasing musical diversity
- Workshops & panels on artistry, activism, and inclusion
- Marching band & color guard extravaganza through Philly's vibrant streets and parks, in partnership with Philly Pride 365, Visit Philadelphia, and the Philly Pride Visitor Center
- Social events & networking for musicians, allies, and advocates
- Rehearsals of the Pride Bands Alliance's 2027 Rose Parade marching band & color guard – [the first LGBTQ+ marching band in the parade's 138-year history](#) – featuring special guest Terry Madigan, president of the Pasadena Tournament of Roses
- Exploration of Philly's cultural riches, from the Gayborhood to Independence Hall

This conference is a celebration of what happens when music meets movement—when LGBTQ+ bands take center stage not just to entertain, but to inspire. It's a chance to honor our history, amplify our voices, and build a future where queer musicians are heard, seen, and celebrated.

Whether you're a performer, supporter, or proud Philadelphian, PFB invites you to be part of something unforgettable. Learn more about the conference at 2026.pridebands.org.

About Pride Bands Alliance and Philadelphia Freedom Band

[Pride Bands Alliance](#) is a membership organization of LGBTQ+ community concert and marching bands from cities around the world. Formerly Lesbian and Gay Band Association, the organization

was founded in 1982 and remains dedicated to its original goals of promoting LGBTQ+ Music, Visibility, and Pride by providing a network of LGBTQ+ community bands at all stages of development, promoting music as a medium of communication among people, improving the quality of artistic and organizational aspects of member bands, and stimulating public interest in the unique art form of community band music in our culture. By “banding together,” Pride Bands Alliance shows that people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities/preferences, ages, creeds, races, and challenges can build a strong community.

The [Philadelphia Freedom Band](#) is Philadelphia’s LGBTQIA+ community band, with jazz, marching, and concert ensembles. PFB is a non-profit organization comprised of a wide variety of talented musicians, ranging from amateur to professional, who come together to perform throughout the greater Philadelphia area and provide visible, active support to the LGBTQ+ community.

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