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October 16, 2023

Dear Friend of the Chorus:

The heat of summer finally seems to have given way to a breezy, sunny, fall morning. As we approach the last portion of 2023, we begin the 37th season of the Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus. You will see in our mailings and postings that we are now using only our initials, HGMC instead of our full legal name. It is part of our push to show our community that we aren't just for gay guys anymore. The bylaws were changed a year ago and amended yet again this year to ensure that we were being an inclusive, welcoming, vocal organization open to anyone who is able to sing in a tenor or bass voice range. Already this season alone, we have added 6 new singers to the organization. We have actively pursued expanding our performance area around Central PA. This season we will be doing full concerts in Harrisburg, Middletown, York, Ephrata, Lebanon, as well as Waynesboro. Currently we are seeking venues for performances in Cumberland, Adams and Perry Counties too. We take our mission "to make the arts accessible to all" very seriously. The greater the range of our performances, the more people we will reach with our message of diversity and visibility, two of our greatest assets for combating transphobia and homophobia. We are also very proud that for yet another season, we will be able to have all of our concerts available to the public at no admission charge. To the best of our knowledge, we are the only choral organization in this area that has free admission as part of its standard operating policy.

This past spring, the end of our current season was a bittersweet time for us. As many of you may know, we lost one of our longest and most active members, Bob Nease, who passed away very suddenly. It was also the end of the tenure of our interim artistic director, Stephanie Lynn Smith, who was an invaluable asset to the chorus coming out of the COVID pandemic, getting ourselves reorganized, bringing us back to performance form, and steering us through the search process for a new, permanent, artistic director. That search was rewarded this past August when we signed the contract making Dillon Beede our next artistic director. Dillon, a member of the faculty of Wilson College, brings a solid musical background and abilities to this job but even more so, it's his charm and fun-loving spirit that has imbued the chorus with new life and energy. You will see his programming abilities and musical talents on full display this December with "Bring on the Holi-daze," our first story-scripted concert since 2019. Later for Valentine's Day 2024 you will be treated to a repeat of our Anti-Valentine Cabaret done in conjunction with Theatre Harrisburg. Finally, there will be the traditional spring concert which this season will be in mid-May through early June. We've yet to pick a title for that concert so if you'd like to send us a suggestion or even a song idea or two, please feel free.

Attending one of our concerts is the best way to support the chorus (especially if you put something in the free will offering basket after) but we also provide you with additional opportunities to support us. There is our traditional Halloween fun-raiser this month which will be hosted by Betty Whitecastle and Lizzie Beaumont at the 704, we will be doing our Dine-out with the Chorus again this coming March if you'd like to be treated to a luscious homemade meal along with fun musical accompaniment, and we will have what promises to be one of our best silent auctions yet happening this spring. Of course, this letter comes to you along with our most important fundraiser of the year, our Annual Campaign. This is your chance to support the work of the chorus with a unique monetary gift of any size that is appropriate to your means. We have also included the information for you to place an ad, either for business or personal announcement/congratulations, in our season program. Our programs are distributed at all our events and concerts so your ad will be circulated well within the Central PA region.

I have been a member of HGMC since its founding in 1987. I am proud of its legacy of dispelling transphobic and homophobic hatred through our music. Please help us to continue that fight, bring the message of LGBTQ + diversity and inclusivity to our audiences, but most of all, help us to continue to sing.

Thank you for all you have done, and our fondest hope is to see you soon at one of our events. All the best,

Paul R. Foltz
President, HGMC
he/him/his

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