



HARRISBURG
GAY MEN'S CHORUS

President's Report: Year End 2020-2021

August 9, 2021

After planning for the 2020-21 season in the early summer of 2020, we were forced by COVID to completely reinvent our approach to music making, fundraising, and gathering as a chorus.

A portion of our members collaborated with the Baltimore Men's Chorus to produce four virtual chorus videos of holiday songs during the fall 2020 semester. This collaboration was essential to the chorus on a number of fronts: it provided members with an opportunity to work on music, it gave members a vital social outlet at the height of the pandemic, it educated us on how to work virtually, and it gave the HGMC new material to use for a virtual holiday event in December.

In October, members of the board attended an online symposium presented by GALA Choruses. Valuable information was shared that went in to help us through the pandemic.

We re-broadcast our 2019 production of "Two Boys Kissing" via YouTube twice during November. This was done in conjunction with our Annual Campaign. Donations and viewership were small.

GALA Chorus, which had been canceled in 2020 and rescheduled for 2021 was cancelled completely in the fall.

The BMC agreed to give us permission to use the four new virtual videos for our own event. "Our Favorite Things" took shape as a collection of holiday favorites (chosen by a survey of chorus members earlier in the year) mixed with the four new songs. The virtual concert also featured guest appearances by Betty Whitecastle (Jeff Mitchell) and Lizzie Beaumont (Eddie Diehl). It was shown on December 27th and 30th. A watch-party was held via zoom with members of the chorus. The event was well received and viewership was up from the "Two Boys Kissing" re-broadcast.

Immediately following "Our Favorite Things," the Board began to put together a spring 2021 virtual concert. Our accompanist Tracey Wieseman connected us with Larry Marietta. Larry has a wealth of experience conducting. Since rehearsals were held virtually, the fact that he lived in San Francisco didn't matter. He started rehearsing with us in late January. This connection proved more valuable than anyone could have imagined as time went by.

As the pandemic began to retreat and vaccinations became available, plans were made to sing the nine songs conducted by Larry in person. Everyone involved was fully vaccinated. Larry flew in from the west coast to conduct. After a few rehearsals, we were blending and producing the sound that people expect from us. We would finally get the chance to sing together for the first time since December 2019.

On Sunday, June 13, the HGMC presented "Lifting Us Up: The Brilliance of Broadway." The concert was live streamed on YouTube. Daniel Snyder did sound, and Joey Randazzo handled the video production. This time, there were 233 unique viewers! No illnesses or COVID cases came as a result of performing together. It was an event that will be remembered by all of those involved.

None of these events would have been possible without the help of everyone involved. There was a spirit of cooperation and collaboration that showed what we can do when we work together. Steve Creps, our Treasurer, deserves a special thank you for his work in seeking out, and applying for, the grants that have allowed HGMC to continue during this most challenging time after losing our traditional fundraising sources.

Despite the challenges, the HGMC concluded a successful year that I think everyone is proud of.