



HARRISBURG
GAY MEN'S CHORUS

President's Report: Year End 2021-2022

August 1, 2022

Our 2021-22 season began with a new Artistic Director, Michael Semancik. Michael immediately began working on our holiday program, "It's Time to Come OUT For Christmas." As rehearsals got underway, the chorus had secured a spot on the schedule Whitaker Center for Science and The Arts. The performances, scheduled for December 2021, would mark the chorus' return to the Whitaker after many years.

Unfortunately, HGMC suffered the effects of a COVID outbreak mid-way through the rehearsals for the concert. With infection numbers on the rise, our fall fundraiser had already been cancelled by that time. Several members suffered terribly with COVID. Thankfully, everyone made a full recovery. Rehearsals started up again. But the decision was ultimately made to cancel the show as fears of reinfections (and first-time infections for those who had not been affected by the initial outbreak) began to grow stronger. It was a painful decision, but as usual HGMC members came together as a group and shared feelings, fears, and a sense of relief in some cases. It was a bittersweet bonding moment for those involved. Members wished one another well and vowed to return in the spring.

And return we did!

New chorus and Board member Lawrence Turner connected us with Stephanie Lynne Smith, whose passion is equaled by her knowledge and experience. Stephanie travelled from Oregon to Harrisburg to run the first rehearsal. The chorus immediately felt a connection with her. She brought an energy that we all could feel. We gained a few new members, and after the challenges of the last two years, we found our groove again. We were hard at work on our 35th anniversary celebration: "35 and Still Alive!"

The HGMC was growing in other ways as well. We were lucky enough to have an intern. Lindsay Brucklacher worked diligently on PR, social media, and everything else that we threw at her. She has made valuable contributions to HGMC's comeback. Thank you, Lindsay!

Our accompanist, Tracy Weiseman was accepted into Rider University to further her music education. Tracy has been a stellar part of our family. Her work HGMC has grown more and more valuable over the course of her time with us. But the title of Accompanist didn't match her contributions. So, Tracy was promoted to Assistant Artistic Director & Accompanist. Congratulations and thank you Tracy!

Our first fundraiser since COVID, selling beer at the Great American Outdoor Show, brought in a strong \$4000 (with nearly \$500 in tips). Thank you to Robb Papapietro for his hard work not only in coordinating the volunteers, but for the support he gave during the week of the show.

Rehearsals continued as spring arrived, and the chorus welcomed two guest conductors during rehearsals. Our sound was back. One June 3, we sang at Pride Night at the York Revs. It was our first performance in front of an audience since 2019.

"35 and Still Alive!" was performed three times at three separate venues, including one outdoor performance. It was also live streamed on our YouTube channel. In total, 174 people attended the concert and we received \$1,182 in donations. Thank you, Stephanie, for the hard work that you put into making our 35th anniversary concert a memorable one.

The week after the concerts, four of our members appeared on "Good Day PA!" HGMC was on TV!

Our very first Silent Auction wrapped up a week or so after the concert. We raised nearly \$6000, which includes matching funds from two individual donors and a corporate donor. Special thank you to Marlene and the Silent Auction committee for making this fundraiser a massive success.

But our performances weren't over yet! We sang at Hershey Pride and Emmanuel United Methodist Church ice cream social. We also did a 30-minute set at Central PA Pride with Mitchell as guest conductor.

As we look to our 36th year, we are considering a change that I feel will launch the chorus into its next era. If we welcome all people who can sing tenor, baritone, or bass, we will open our family to welcome new people. We will also strengthen

our message and mission as we grow and welcome those who were previously unable to experience the joy and fellowship that we have all been so lucky to enjoy all these years. And isn't that what we're really all about?

HGMC has been re-energized and reorganized. We are ready for the 2022-2023 season.

Lastly, I would like to say thank you to everyone who has served on the Board. The last two years have been a challenge. They've also been incredibly rewarding. I'm grateful to have been a part of such a wonderful group of hard-working people. Thank you.