

I want one of the first official actions of my presidency to be an expression of gratitude to the Board Members and especially to the past president, Chris Aulbach, for all the hard work and dedication they've given to this organization over the past two years plus of the COVID pandemic. It's because of Chris's leadership and the Board's hard work that this chorus not only has survived but has come out on the other side of this pandemic financially solvent, with members intact, and able to produce a major concert under the direction of an incredible Interim Artistic Director, Stephanie Lynne Smith. No mean achievements under the best of circumstances let alone during what we have endured over these past years.

The year that we're facing will be a time for rebuilding, realigning, and redeveloping the chorus. I want to guide the chorus in rebuilding the infrastructure that often times during the past two years had to be bypassed in order to keep the place running. We need to get reorganized and reassemble the various committees, defining obligations and dividing the resultant workloads among far more people than the small handful that has been used to trying to do it. The Chorus has taken the first step in its realignment with the adoption of the membership changes to our bylaws. We now have actively go about opening the door and make absolutely certain when anyone comes through it, they feel completely welcome and as at home as any cis male member would be or has been in the past. This is part of our redevelopment too, along with our need to find a new, permanent, artistic director. Of all the challenges that we face this year, this one concerns me the most. I've served on two prior searches for artistic directors, and I know first-hand how difficult it is to find someone who is a good fit, who will move the chorus forward both professionally as musicians and as an organization within our community. We are going to have to look carefully at every aspect of our job description for an artistic director. What will we be asking them to do for us and what will we be willing to do for them, not least wise in terms of the pay. Stephanie has shown us a fine example of what an artistic director can be, and we would be wise to use her example as a road map to find the type of artistic director this organization should have.

It's my hope that by this time next year we will have that artistic director in place, we will have a solid action plan for our artistic development as well as our community participation, that we will have the framework laid out for our financial stability both short term as well as long term and, as we have done in the past, we will be preparing to participate in the 2024 GALA conference.

Respectfully submitted

Paul R. Foltz  
President