

Interim Artistic Director Report

Meeting of the Board of Directors for Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus

July 16, 7pm EST on Zoom

Since the Last Board Meeting

As I have reported for the past 6 months, I have been working with an individual every morning over FaceTime to help him match pitch so he can join the chorus. He successfully auditioned and joined us for Pride retreat on May 7. I am continuing to work with him on Pride music for Voices United. We have a few newer (and long-standing!) members who also struggle to stay on their part. I firmly believe if we continue to invest in people and focus on the long game, all of our members can grow musically and continue to improve in their own ways.

Max Mitchell was an excellent substitute pianist for our Spring concerts. On Monday, June 12, following our first weekend of concerts, two of our members fell ill and this began a chain reaction of Covid sickness that resulted in the cancellation of the second weekend of events, as well as two Artistic Director auditions. A renewed sense of fear and concern surfaced and should be considered. Covid is not the only problematic illness in our world but it is currently the biggest driver of that fear. Several members bemoaned the fact they had to bothered to get the last series of booster shots. I understand you cannot legally require members to get vaccinated, but perhaps you could strongly recommend this and even facilitate booster shots.

Our assistant AD and pianist is currently standing in for me for Voices United rehearsals on July 10 and 17. It remains to be seen if her health will improve.

The library project was stalled by Covid. I lost a full week of work in the library and was further hindered when my main helper, Steve Keefer, needed emergency surgery for a non-Covid related health issue. Groupanizer is also presenting problems with the migration and I hope to have help with someone on the tech level. Rose Sprout has been scanning music and uploading to the chorus Google Drive so I can complete entries. No holiday music was previously scanned or uploaded to Groupanizer. This is still my priority while also continuing to migrate the General music. It is unknown if I will be able to complete the SATB transfer but I will certainly try. Steve is well again and is retired. We will work feverishly the final week of July in attempt to complete this project.

I have been disappointed in the tone of correspondence toward our organization from the leadership of the Womyn's chorus for Voices United. I don't know what

the solution is but, in the Bay Area, I have personally witnessed the breakdown of working relationships between the LGBTQ+ organizations by condescending language such as I have seen. Perhaps HGMC would consider sharing the financial burden between organizations? And if the other organizations aren't willing to share the financial burden, then perhaps they will yield to HGMCs full control and/or selection of alternate organizations to participate. Perhaps Theatre Harrisburg, other open and affirming churches, or other LGBTQ+ artists might be considered in the future. If respect cannot be shown to the hosting organization, perhaps it is time to rotate guests. I commend our leadership for professional and calm responses. Not once has anyone from HGMC reacted. Our leadership is representing us well.

Voices United will be my final appearance with you and I could not be happier with the results of the AD auditions. It will be a pleasure to observe your future success from a distance. I am formally retiring from choral conducting and you will always be my last great love. Best wishes and onward!

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Lynne Smith, Interim Artistic Director