ANNUAL REPORT
27TH SEASON
AUGUST 2013 - JULY 2014
Our Mission

The Gateway Men's Chorus affirms and promotes gay culture and acceptance through excellence in musical performance and education.

Our Vision

We believe we can achieve great things because:

Together we become more than each of us alone.
We open ears that would otherwise be closed to our message.
We create a community that loves unconditionally.
We proclaim to the world that a voice like ours can never be silenced.

Our Values

The Gateway Men’s Chorus abides by central values that govern how we both operate internally as an organization and engage externally with the community as a whole. We value:

♦ Community
♦ Leadership
♦ Excellence
♦ Initiative
♦ Integrity
♦ Diversity
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Chorus Manager

Paul Simpkins
Chorus Manager
Hello, friends, fans and supporters of the Gateway Men’s Chorus. We could not do this work without you. I am continually blown away by the generosity of spirit of our volunteers, which of course includes our members and Board. The state of our union is indeed strong.

Last year was a banner artistic year for us. We presented three concerts, full of variety and contrast. We began the year with YULE TUBE, our salute to those holiday movies and T.V. specials that we grew up with. Act Two was our “holiday TV show”. One of my favorite moments was the opening song that I wrote for Act Two, which featured jugglers, dancers, gymnastics, and… a ferocious man eating chicken!

All of us, singers and audience alike, were profoundly moved by our March concert, I AM HARVEY MILK, which was a collaboration with the Heartland Men’s Chorus from Kansas City. This is a powerful song cycle by Broadway Composer Andrew Lippa, honoring the life and legacy of this civil rights pioneer. The evening was powerful and poignant: a call to action to live a good and purposeful life. This concert was a great example of why we do what we do and the difference we can make.

We wound up the season with THE 80S SHOW. So much fun! We involved the audience in the singing, projecting lyrics here and there and giving participation instructions. We got the men off the risers for some full stage dancing. We also took time to honor our friends who fell during the AIDS crisis. The 80s were a decade of wild contrasts, which made for a memorable, variety-filled evening.

So we look to the coming year with excitement! There are great things happening in this organization. Thanks for being a part of it.

Al Fischer, Artistic Director
THANK YOU

TO OUR GENEROUS 27TH SEASON DONORS

DONOR ROSTER reflects gifts made during the fiscal year spanning 8/1/2013–7/31/2014. IF YOU BELIEVE YOUR GIFT was miscategorized, PLEASE CONTACT THE GMC OFFICES IMMEDIATELY.

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Please note:

These financials are as of 10/1/2014 and may not reflect final reporting numbers on our official 990.

If you have any questions concerning this financial statement please contact treasurer@gmcstl.org or exec.dir@gmcstl.org. Thank you for your continued support as we move towards a more sustainable, transparent, model of financial reporting.
Performances

During the 27th Season, the Gateway Men’s Chorus produced the following concerts:

- *Yule Tube*, December 13 & 14, 2013 at the Edison Theatre
- *I Am Harvey Milk*, April 5, 2014 at the 560 Music Center
- *The 80s Show*, June 13 & 14, 2014 at the Edison Theatre

The chorus also performed as part of a number of community events, many of which were free and open to the public. During the 27th Season GMC partnered with Doorways, Shaare Emeth Synagogue, the Saint Louis Cardinals, CHARIS, BandTogether, SAGE Metro St. Louis, St. Louis Efforts for AIDS, Macy’s, One St. Louis, Ameren, St. Stanislaus, Grand Center, United Hebrew, Metro East Pride, Pride St. Louis, The Muny, St. Louis Public Library Foundation, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Independence Center, and College Avenue Presbyterian Church for performances. GMC also joined forces with Heartland Men’s Chorus (of Kansas City, Missouri) and presented a retrospective oratorio on the life of civil rights leader, Harvey Milk. The concert was presented in Columbia, Kansas City, and St. Louis.

Fundraising

GMC hosted a range of fundraising events during the 27th season, creating additional opportunities for the St. Louis community to connect with the mission of the Gateway Men’s Chorus, while also financially supporting the organization. GMC events included:

- **Donor Thank You Party**, was hosted by the GMC Board of Directors and gave GMC donors recognition for the contributions made during the year.
- **Holiday Wreath Auction**, offered patrons the opportunity to kick off the holiday season by bidding on a range of holiday wreaths designed by both major florists, as well as singing members of the chorus.
- **Homegrown Cabaret**, showcased the individual talent of the chorus members. Funds from this event are earmarked to support the effort of sending Gateway Men’s Chorus to GALA Festival 2016 in Denver, Colorado.
- **Cabaret Risqué**, a fundraising gala concert featuring a number of St. Louis’s premier cabaret talent.

Operations

During the 27th Season GMC made great strides in bettering the fiscal, organizational, and technological infrastructures of the organization. Daily oversight of fiscal reporting from an IRS trained professional and experienced nonprofit administrator allowed the organization to streamline processes and policies across departments. The greatest achievement was streamlining the budgeting process; this success allows the organization to create a budget that is a living document, reflective of the current health of the organization, and informative of opportunities to mitigate risk. Nonetheless, the organization will report a loss for fiscal year ending July 31, 2014. This shortfall is largely a consequence of the slow transition in executive leadership between the departure of our former Executive Director in January 2013 and the arrival of our current Executive Director in November 2013. During this period without executive leadership, which included first quarter of this fiscal year, fundraising efforts were greatly challenged. Since Gale’s arrival, she has successfully reengaged much of the Chorus’ donor base, diversified development attempts, and established lasting relationships with corporate sponsors. All of these efforts prime GMC to manage its next fiscal year with increased budgetary rigor and enable it to recover some of the operating reserves which were utilized to cover the shortfall in this season.
The Gateway Men’s Chorus Develops Its Next Three Year Strategic Plan

By: Joe Gfaller, Board Vice President

In February, 2014, the Gateway Men’s Chorus Board of Directors met for a two-day board retreat, in part to focus on GMC’s next strategic plan. Strategic plans help align vision, define accountability, and help an organization point its compass in the right direction. Recognizing that GMC is three years away from its 30th anniversary, the board set its sights on developing a three-year plan, one that could guide the chorus to this important milestone.

Over the course of the board retreat, members of the board identified a range of priorities. Many ideas were scribbled on many flip charts, and wide ranging in-depth discussions were had. By the end of the weekend, consensus had been reached around six main areas of focus. The board then presented these ideas to our singing membership at an intensive rehearsal in May. Through feedback from membership, strategic thinking continued to be refined further. In the end, agreement was reached that the following focus areas were GMC’s highest organizational priorities for this next three years:

- **A refined vision statement** that points towards a positive future for our community, rather than the limitations it faced in the past.
- **Clarified policies, processes, roles, and responsibilities** to empower each staff member, singing member, board member, and volunteer to perform at their highest potential.
- **A stronger GMC board, with accountable participation** from leaders across the St. Louis region building a stronger backbone of leadership for the organization.
- **Diversified revenue streams** between earned and contributed sources, prioritizing meaningful financial return and/or community impact, building our donor and audience base, and budgeting to a surplus.
- **Better defined communication tools** to best engage type of constituents and to deepen their long term commitment and investment.
- **Providing the highest level of customer service** to offer a consistent “wow” experience each time we collaborate or connect with the community.

By building action plans surrounding each of these priorities, the board and staff hope to have a living document that can help guide the GMC towards a fiscally sound, artistically rich future that honors the sound work of those who have come before us, but which points us towards a vibrant future. Twice each year, the board will evaluate organizational progress towards bringing these priorities to life. We hope that as supporters of GMC, you will see this progress as it unfolds as well – and join us in celebrating our three year count down to the start of GMC’s fourth decade as a vital part of the St. Louis community.
27TH SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

You Got to Have Hope

By: Kirk Price, Member

One man, a bullet, and a message that is still as strong today as it was when Harvey Milk said it in 1977, “You got to have hope”, exemplifies the message of I Am Harvey Milk, a commissioned work of Andrew Lippa created to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus and the assassination of Harvey Milk. I had the honor of participating in seven performances of this powerful work which cumulated with a chorus of 530 men in Los Angeles, celebrating the 35th Anniversary of the Gay Men’s Chorus of Los Angeles.

On March 30, 2014, Heartland Men’s chorus, along with Gateway Men’s chorus performed the Midwest Premium of Andrew Lippa’s I Am Harvey Milk. With emotions running in overdrive, the choruses took the stage at the Folly Theater in Kansas City under the direction of San Francisco’s Dr. Timothy Seelig. Together with a superb multi-media production, the story of Harvey Milk was presented like a Broadway musical. Two performances and over 2,000 witnessed the raw emotions of “Sticks and Stones” and ultimately the resounding message of “Tired of the Silence.”

The following week, Heartland Men’s Chorus traveled to St Louis to present the same work to the audience in St. Louis at the 560 Center in the Loop. While the multi-media was the same, the performance was more of an Oratorio, rather than a musical. The orchestra and choruses, under the direction of artistic director Al Fischer, provided St. Louis audiences with an emotional insight into Harvey Milk’s message of “Hope.” The outstanding performance of the combined choruses and soloist Marty Fox, provoked many emotions in the audience of 700. These performances marked the first time in 15 years the Heartland Men’s Chorus and Gateway Men’s Chorus collaborated; it is clear that joint concerts will be planned between the two choruses in the future.

In July, I traveled to Los Angeles to participate in a mass GALA chorus of over 500 men to perform the work I Am Harvey Milk. The backdrop for the performance was the renowned Walt Disney Concert Hall in downtown Los Angeles. As we gathered to rehearse on Friday evening, the LA chorus warmly welcomed all those who traveled to help celebrate their anniversary; and upon finishing the first rehearsal, it was clear that this would be an experience not to be forgotten. Under the direction of Dr. Joe Nadeau, a 15 piece orchestra and a chorus of 530 (representing over 7 large city choruses) performed the oratorio of I Am Harvey Milk for an audience of 4,000 in two performances.

The importance of works such as I Am Harvey Milk and the opportunity to share them with our audiences provides conversation starters on how far we have come and how far we can still go with Harvey’s message of “You got to have hope”.

Thank you to those whose vision brought this work to life and to those who allow us to perform it with pride!

Photo: Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, California, July 20, 2014 — I Am Harvey Milk
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