



Creating Choirs that Welcome Trans* & Gender-Queer singers

1. **When posting for singer auditions** keep language about voice parts gender-neutral. Encourage gender-queer individuals to staff your information booth at Pride and other events.
2. **In the audition setting ask new singers their preferred pronoun.**
3. **If a singer shares that they are transitioning via testosterone** ask when they started and how the transition has affected their vocal range, etc. It will typically take 6-12 months for a singer's voice to settle to a consistent range and can take up to 2 years to be reached.
4. **Assign voice sections for each singer dependent on their voice range and voice color.** If a singer's voice is still transitioning check their range every 3-4 months and assist them in moving to a new vocal part as needed.
5. **You may encounter a transwoman who wants to sing alto or soprano.** She has been wanting to live as a woman possibly her whole life and has finally transitioned. But, unless she's lucky enough to be a countertenor or has the finances to undergo a new vocal adjustment surgery, singing in a treble range is likely an unrealistic goal. You can support her by listening to her voice and helping her sing in as high a range as you feel is healthy for her. It is all right to be clear that you assign all singers to sections based on vocal range.
6. **Post signs for gender-neutral bathrooms in rehearsal and concert spaces.** Educate your chorus and audience regarding the protocol and importance of gender-neutral restroom space.
7. **Use gender-neutral language in rehearsal** and insist that all section leaders and singers also follow these same guidelines.
8. **Adopt a gender-neutral language statement for your organization** (see below).
9. **Update your guest artist and musician contracts** to ask that they use gender-neutral language when working with your chorus.
10. **Invite all singers to audition for any solo that fits their vocal range.**
11. **Invite trans* and gender-non-conforming individuals, artists, speakers, and song writers to perform as a guest artists in your concerts.**
12. **Program music by trans* and gender-non-conforming composers and song-writers.** Share stories in the concert setting that educate the audience regarding gender non-conforming individuals in history or current day experiences.
13. **Commission a piece of music** exploring the experience of gender-diverse people.
14. **Examine requirements mandating gender-specific concert attire.** Forcing singers into gender-specific (or incongruent) clothing may be seen as a public devaluing of identities and communicates indifference to the spectrum of gender identity and expression.
15. **Explore the use of the acronym "LGBT" in your chorus.** "GLBT" flows off the tongue easily, but it might be more accurate to say "LGB" and "T." Gay, lesbian, bisexual, straight, etc. are all labels for sexual orientation, describing various forms of relationships with other people. Gender identity, on the other hand, describes one's relationship to oneself.

*** What does “transgender” mean?**

Broadly speaking, transgender people are individuals whose gender expression and/or gender identity differs from conventional expectations based on their physical sex. The word “transgender” or “**trans***” is an umbrella term which is often used to describe a wide range of identities and experiences, including: transsexuals, Female-to-Male, Male-to-Female, cross-dressers, drag queens or kings, two-spirit, gender queers and many more expressions of gender.

Is being transgender the same as being gay or lesbian?

Like all other people, transgender people can be gay, straight, lesbian, bisexual, or anything in between. Sexual orientation is different from gender identity or expression and can not be assumed about anyone.

GALA Choruses Gender-Neutral Language Statement

GALA Choruses strives for gender neutrality with regards to language in recognition of the many genders represented within our member choruses, singing sections and the LGBT community. When working and communicating with singers and choruses within the GALA community please keep the following guidelines in mind.

- Please refer to sections by voice part rather than gender, ie; *tenors and basses* rather than *men or women*.
- There are also gender inclusive ways that you can address a chorus as a whole. *People* or *folks* or simply *everyone* are more gender-neutral options (as opposed to *Ladies and Gentlemen*).

We know that gender specific language is a part of our culture and we don't expect each individual to overcome years of conditioning overnight. We would, however, appreciate your attempt to address our members in the most gender-neutral way possible.

Tips for Allies of Transgender People

These tips can help you move toward becoming a better ally to transgender people. The list is not exhaustive and cannot include all the "right" things to do or say because there is no "right" answer to every situation you might encounter.

1. You can't tell if someone is transgender just by looking. If you don't know what pronouns to use, listen and respect the terminology a transgender person uses to describe their identity.
2. Don't make assumptions about a transgender person's sexual orientation.
3. Don't ask a transgender person what their "real name" is.
4. Be careful about confidentiality, disclosure, and "outing."
5. Understand there is no "right" or "wrong" way to transition - it is different for every person.
6. Don't ask about a transgender person's genitals, surgical status, or sex life.
7. Challenge anti-transgender remarks or jokes in public spaces - including LGB spaces.
8. Support gender neutral public restrooms.
9. Actively make your company, place of worship or group truly trans-inclusive.
10. Know your own limits as an ally. Don't be afraid to admit when you don't know something.

GLAAD updated May 2015 / Adapted from MIT's "Action Tips for Allies of Trans People." For the complete resource see: www.glaad.org/transgender/allies