

Case Statement: Creating a More Tolerant Society Through the Power of Music

The GALA Chorus (GC) works to create a more tolerant society; by accessing a broad spectrum of society through the quality of our performances, by breaking down the foundations of homophobia through our diversity and visibility, and by conveying the wants, desires and stories of our lives using the unique power of music.

The GC gains access to a broad spectrum of society through the quality of our performances – the talented direction, composers, singers, dancers, instrumentalists and production staff – provide the credibility required to open doors to our performance opportunities. We gain access to groundbreaking performances, as in Wroclaw, Poland, where the superior quality of a CD recording opened the door. We gain access to performances in high schools and places of worship from our reputation for high-quality musicianship. We gain access to otherwise skeptical audience members by performing in eminent and respected Boston theaters and venues.

We recognize that life is relatively good for GLBT individuals in urban enclaves. We are out, and our stories are understood by much of the community. But the urbanization of the GLBT community is not the long-term solution for the elimination of homophobia. We reach out to suburban religious institutions and schools, taking our messages beyond Boston, supporting isolated GLBT individuals and the community institutions that support them. Our exceptional performance standards allow us access and visibility to a large and diverse community.

The GC uses this community access to break down the foundation of homophobia. Homophobia is defined as an irrational hatred, disapproval, or fear of homosexuality, homosexual men and lesbians, and their culture. Like other forms of prejudice, homophobia is a fear of a difference, or fear of the unknown. Homophobia is based on ignorance, by lack of exposure, or by over-exposure to the stereotypes of the GLBT community. Adding to the problem, homophobia keeps many GLBT people from coming out, due to their lack of identification with the stereotypes, or the fear that they will be typecast with those elements, thus perpetuating the problem.

We play an important role in creating visibility to the community by representing a broad and diverse group of GLBT people. We encourage all GLBT individuals to come out of the closet so our diversity can be seen and understood by society at large. We encourage our members to live open, accepting and proud lives and provide them with a safe, secure and accepting Chorus community. In addition, we encourage GLBT members of our community to increase their visibility by attending performances where they can be safe, celebrate our diversity, and hear our common stories. Through our broad audience reach and community visibility, we eliminate fear; we encourage understanding and create tolerance.

The GC uses the power of music to convey our stories and connect with audience members in a very unique way. It is well known that music connects with individuals on a deep, intellectual, emotional,

spiritual and human level. In bypassing their “fear based anger”, we touch their emotions, and provide an opportunity for them to listen, learn, grow and change. By telling our stories through music, we are able to share with our audiences our common stories of the human experience.

Even as society accepts that the GLBT community exists, and embraces TV shows, movies, open artists, politicians and celebrities, heterosexuals still perceive our different sexual orientation as separating us from other basic human wants – children, spouses, and legally recognized and supported families. By telling the stories of our lives, that these wants are so deep and fundamental that GLBT individuals have worked to realize them *without* legal and community support, the GALA CHORUS helps to create understanding.

The GC is helping create a more tolerant society through the power of music! We reach a broad spectrum of people because of our exceptional performance standards. We eliminate fear by showing the broad diversity of the GLBT community. We help people change by using the unique power of music to their touch hearts and open their minds to the common human experience we all share!

Built on a 10-Year History

The GALA Chorus is one of the region’s largest and most successful community-based choruses. Now in its 10th season, the 100-voice ensemble is celebrated for its outstanding musicianship, creative programming, and groundbreaking community outreach. Under the dynamic leadership of Music Director John Doe, the GC sings a wide spectrum of classical and popular music with excellence and builds bridges to all people by providing a positive, affirming image of the gay and lesbian community. Each year the Chorus offers a subscription concert series of three programs, performed in the city’s most prestigious. The Chorus is heard live by more than 12,000 people each season and thousands more through recordings and television broadcasts.

(Include examples of successes: the first time we did this, the first chorus to be invited to perform here, we have produced “x” number of CDs, etc.)

Why We Need Your Financial Support

As with many performance organizations, Ticket sales, program ads, concert fees and CD sales together cover only X% of the annual revenue we need to maintain our mission. The remaining Y% of our revenue must come from the generous financial support of corporate, government and individual donors. Currently two-thirds of our donations come from individual donors, a majority of whom are Chorus and GALA CHORUS Board members. This fact speaks to the dedication and commitment of the men and women that make up the GALA Chorus; however, we do need to broaden our donor base to sustain the long term growth and financial health of organization.

Your financial support is needed to ensure GALA CHORUS concerts are accessible to the broadest range of people possible. Without your support our average ticket price would have to increase from \$X.00 to \$Y.00 to cover the cost of an average concert. Your donations allow us to offer affordable ticket prices for our audience members.

Your financial support also helps us reach beyond our concerts. With your support, we can bring the message of diversity, tolerance and acceptance to more Schools, Churches, Synagogues and Townships outside of the metropolitan area. With your support, we can create quality recordings which help carry our message not only beyond our concerts but beyond our region.

By providing financial support to the GALA Chorus, our donors are directly participating in making our vision a reality. Your donations make it possible for us to reach a broad range of audience members, to create visibility and understanding of GLBT differences, similarities and basic needs, and to encourage all individuals to learn, grow and change.

Together We Can Create a More Tolerant Society through the Power of Music!