

Orlando Gay Chorus' concert eloquent, varied

By Steven Brown

SENTINEL CLASSICAL MUSIC CRITIC

The Orlando Gay Chorus, in its concerts at the Civic Theatre Complex, did something too rare among choruses of any type: It sang so that its words came across.

Maybe that should have been expected. Many of the numbers the group sang at its concerts last weekend concerned such values as understanding, acceptance and cooperation — within its own community and in society at large. The members

of the chorus sang as though they believed every word, which of course is what anyone singing anything should do.

The messages probably could have lent themselves to either preachiness or militance. But the music involved handled the ideas more lightly than that, and so did the chorus Saturday night. (The concert was repeated Sunday night.)

The pieces that overtly carried the themes, some of them created for choruses like this one, were written in the popular vein; catchy tunes were usually in the forefront. But if the melodies were designed with immediate appeal in mind, the arrangements had been put together with some ingenuity. The occasional intricacies added color and interest and made the music a more inviting vehicle for the message.

It wasn't simple fare. The music demanded a choir with some sophistication, and the Gay Chorus was that. The group — with 53 members, most of them men — delivered its message with fervor, but it still han-

dled the music with discipline.

In the quick numbers, the group sang with spirit and precision — not only in rousing spots, but even when the music needed to be quick and quiet. The key was probably rhythm: The more syncopated and complex the rhythms were, the more life the singers put into them.

The chorus also put life in slow, restrained music. Just as in the faster music, the group had a knack for singing quietly but with character. The tone became gentle and light,

but the sound still flowed out evenly and the words were still

Music review

clear. The choir's weakness was its lack of a rich, robust tone. When it opened up, the sound was penetrating, not hefty; when it sang softly, it had delicacy, but not warmth.

Aside from that, the choir had versatility, and the conductors — director Charles Callahan in most numbers, but associate conductor Kenion Thompson II in a few and Kenneth R. Ramoska in one — used it with flair. Most of "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," a spiritual, was quiet and soulful, but it also rose to an impassioned climax. Jean Berger's "Alleluia" was full of bounce and animation.

The group carried on with particular enthusiasm in two medleys — one featuring George Gershwin songs, the other Duke Ellington. There were generous helpings of gusto and jauntiness, but in the Gershwin medley Callahan worked a neat transformation. When "Embraceable You" came in, the vigor vanished and the singing became smooth and sleek, and that really made the music's sentiment count.



Mission Statement :

To provide musical excellence in choral arts.

Calendar of Events 1993-1994 Season

Holiday Hop - Friday December 10, 1993

Holiday Concert - Saturday December 18, 1993 7:35 pm

Sunday December 19, 1993 7:35 pm

Knowles Memorial Chapel, Rollins College, Winter Park

1994 Spring Tour -

February 19, 1994 - Orlando, at the Club

February 26, 1994 - Jacksonville, Sponsored by FUAD

April 9, 1994 - Pensacola, Sponsored by GLOBAL

Pride Concert - Saturday June 11, 1994 7:35 pm

Sunday June 12, 1994 7:35 pm

Ann Densch Theatre, Loch Haven Park, Orlando

Goals

- Increase visibility
- Obtain mainstream recognition
- Increase membership - performing and non-performing
- Decrease discrimination through education and awareness raising
- Secure corporate sponsorships, in order to underwrite CD's, tours, etc., purchase materials, hire paid personnel, raise awareness, permit outreach
- Become a stable and credible resource for building bridges and coalitions

Objectives

- Produce a CD / audio recording
- Produce a performance tour of North Florida
- Hold an "Open House" kick off event
- Obtain mainstream media reviews
- Sell the maximum number of tickets for events
- Assist organizations desiring to address and support gay and lesbian concerns with fundraising efforts

Orlando Gay Chorus
P.O. Box 3103 Orlando, Florida 32802
(407) 645 - 5866

ORLANDO



GAY CHORUS

1993-1994
CONCERT
SEASON

History / Background

The Orlando Gay Chorus, founded February 14, 1990, has taken its place among Central Florida's leading choruses. The Chorus, under the direction of Dr. Charles Callahan, performed their Premiere Concerts in June, 1990, at the Orlando Museum of Art to sold-out audiences. Since that time the Chorus has performed for AIDS benefits at St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church in Winter Park, and the consecutive year the GLCS sponsored AIDS Memorial in the Walt Disney Amphitheater at Lake Eola. The Chorus has also performed during Diversity Week at Rollins College and the University of Florida, for the Fall Conference of the Southeast District at Joy Metropolitan Community Church, and during Easter Sunday services at the Knowles Memorial Chapel. The Chorus has performed as part of the Arts in April celebration and is now requested annually to perform at the prestigious Red Ribbon Ball.

From the Premiere Concerts through the June, 1993, Pride Concerts, the Orlando Gay Chorus has enjoyed performing before sold-out or standing-room-only audiences for each concert presentation. The Chorus' potential is limited only to the size of suitable performance space available.

In June, 1991, the Orlando Gay Chorus teamed with the Tampa Bay Gay Men's Chorus to perform joint concerts in Tampa and Orlando. The week of June 27 to July 5, 1992, the Chorus traveled to Denver, Colorado, to participate in GALA Festival IV with approximately 4,000 other gays and lesbians from around the world. In November, 1992, the Orlando Gay Chorus again teamed with the Tampa Bay Gay Men's Chorus and the South Florida Lambda Chorale in Ft. Myers as an impetus to start Florida's seventh gay and/or lesbian chorus.

This spring will bring the Chorus' first annual Spring Tour. Travelling to Jacksonville and Pensacola, the tour events are being sponsored by FUAD, FREE, and GLOBAL.

The Orlando Gay Chorus is licensed by ASCAP and is a proud member of the Arts Service Council, Chorus America, and GALA Choruses (the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses).

Informational Statistics

Chief Volunteer Officer : Robb Noll, President
 Chief Professional Officer : Dr. Charles Callahan
 Music Director
 Phone : (407) 895 - 1652

The Orlando Gay Chorus, Inc. is tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.

Number of Members : 62 singing
 15 non-singing
 Number of Volunteers : 77

Approximate number of volunteer hours served : 8,550
 Counties impacted : Orange 73.3%
 Seminole 14.6%
 Other 12.1%

Paid Staff :
 Professional and Managerial Personnel: Two Part-time

Biographies

Dr. Charles Callahan Music Director

Charles Callahan, a native of Cambridge, Massachusetts, began his musical studies at the Boston Archdiocesan Choir School. In 1971, he received a full scholarship to the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Following graduation from Curtis, Callahan was awarded a grant to study in Belgium with the famous composer and organist Flor Peeters. Dr. Callahan taught at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, where he earned his doctorate in 1978. He relocated to Florida from Middlebury College in Vermont, where he was Composer in Residence and directed the noted Middlebury College Choir. Dr. Callahan has become one of the leading performers and composers of organ and choral music in America. His recordings are on Vista and Pro Organo labels. Dr. Callahan is presently on the faculty of Rollins College and Director of Music and Resident Composer at the Knowles Memorial Chapel in Winter Park.

Kenion A. Thompson, II Accompanist & Associate Director

This is Mr. Thompson's thirteenth year as a music director in the Central Florida Area. He has directed over 150 musical productions ranging from professional shows at local theme parks, Community Theater shows, and Children's theater. He currently teaches voice, vocal auditions and piano privately. Ken is also owner of Florida Living and Design, a design company specializing in custom landscaping, irrigation systems and outdoor lighting.

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FULL PAGE	200.00	225.00	400.00
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* Cost includes 2 tickets.

** Cost includes ads for both the Holiday and Pride Concert programs and 2 tickets.

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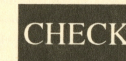
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