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Singing Through Spring

After 26 years, June 20 will see LGCW's final performance for the foreseeable future

by Will O'Bryan
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As late spring sees the end of the 2010 pride season, it will also see the end -- or, at least, the indefinite cessation -- of the Lesbian & Gay Chorus of Washington, D.C. (LGCW). For 26 years, the LGCW has been offering a voice to anyone in the community wanting join the community in song, with no auditions required.

"There was not a lot of debate," says C. Paul Heins, who joined LGCW in 2002 and has served as music director since 2003. "We had done a lot of things to try to reinvent ourselves in this difficult economic situation. We thought, 'If these don't work, it might be time to disband.' We realized it was time."

A large hit came from dwindling membership. Heins explains that, as is the case with many LGBT community organizations formed in years past, the community niche that the chorus once filled may simply no longer exist.

"In a sense, we're a victim of our own success," he says. "LGCW formed at a time when it was difficult for GLBT people to be out. Today, you can be out and there are tons of opportunities for GLBT people. Not only GLBT-specific things -- in sports, music, politics -- but you can be out and be in the Cathedral Chorale Society or any number of things."

Heins says that when he began with the LGCW, it had a healthy membership of 40. This season, in contrast, began with just 15.

A March 16 release announcing the news, however, stopped short of calling the change an end to the chorus. Instead, LGCW members -- all of whom participated in this consensual decision -- have chosen to call this an "indefinite break."

"We wanted to leave the door somewhat open" Heins explains. "We wanted to keep the 501(c)(3) status alive. We're closing down, but we've got that status, people who love to sing, and an architecture of values. If I was a betting man, I'd bet in five years you'd see a resurgence of the LGCW, but in a different form. I'd be delighted to see that."

In the meantime, the LGCW has four performances scheduled: *Just Married -- The Musical*, Friday, April 23, and Saturday, April 24: an appearance at Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Saturday, June 12; and *The LGCW Farewell Concert -- Our Love Song to You*, Sunday, June 20.

For more information about these remaining show, or for tickets, call 202-546-1549 or visit lgcw.org.

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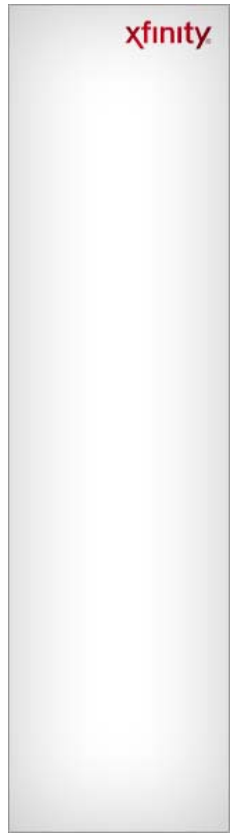
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