

WA – ACDA Transgender Workshop:
Saturday, February 20, 2016
10:30am-1:30pm
Federal Way Library

Dr. Sarah Bartolome, Northwestern University
Julie Parsons, ACDA President-Elect
Scott Farrell, Private Voice Teacher and Former conductor of the Seattle
Lesbian/Gay Chorus
Allan Andrews, Participant
Mitchell Hunter, Seattle Men's Chorus
Lynn Goralski, Seattle Women's Chorus
Halie Looper, Company Manger for Flying House Productions
Dr. Heather MacLaughlin Garbes, Western ACDA Liason

Resource contact:
John Kelleher, former conductor of the Seattle Lesbian/Gay Chorus

Sarah Bartolome Presentation:

Working with Transgender Singers in the Choral Context

1. Working with transgender student is new for many in the field
 - a. Every choir is in a classroom, not just in a school setting
 - i. Community choirs, etc. are also places for advocacy and education and the conductors need to be leaders of these issues.
 - ii. Also being very open and understanding and being aware of the biases of members of the ensemble and address those feelings, etc.
 - b. What are some of the “scary aspects” for labels, etc.
 - i. Transgender
 1. A term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth
 - ii. Cisgender / Non-transgender
 1. Gender identity, expression, or behavior align with those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth
 - iii. Ftm: Female to Male, then called Transgender Male
 - iv. MtF: Male to Female, then called Transgender Female
 - v. Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Transition
 1. Identity: internal sense of male, female or something else
 2. Expression: how person represents their gender identity (behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice and body charactestics)

2. William's Institute
 3. Transgender Law Center
 4. Genderbread Person / Gender Unicorn
 - a. www.transstudent.org/gender
 - b. tsroadmap.com/index.html
 - i. outdated, but good place to start
 - c. Divorces gender and sexuality
 - d. Trans community: Transition and then blend is the expectation so you don't risk job security, safety, etc.
 - i. Transpop.org: Survey system that will allow transgender to check their actual gender.
 - ii. 700,000 people in the US identifying as transgender
 1. New survey was just taken in 2015 with new report to come out in 2017.
 - e. Gender Unicorn
 - i. Identity, expression sex assigned at birth, physically attracted to? Emotionally attracted to?
 - ii. Good starting entrance to discussion
 - f. Your gender identity and how you express it are two different things.
 - i. Men do it this way and women do it that way.
 1. How does that apply to your ensemble
 - a. Performance attire
 - b. Make-up
 - c. Voicing
 - g. Medical School (UW) now has a transgender-focused class that talks about medically treating transgender patients.
 - h. Transgender is being focused on right now for non-discrimination laws, especially since the marriage equality ruling.
 - i. 41% of all transgender have attempted suicide
 - i. This is an alarming statistic and one that needs to be shared to show that it is almost 1 out of 2 transgender people.
 - j. Lower yearly salary very common (by approximately \$10,000)
 - k. Health care restrictions in many states
 - i. Transition related health care needs: only 9 states cover it
 - ii. Surgeries are still over \$20,000 - \$30,000 even with some health benefits
2. Case Study of Melanie
 - a. Awareness of words that are used in rehearsal (men / women vs. sopranos / altos)
 - i. Men start at measure....., etc.
 - ii. Gender binary in the choral rehearsal is an issue
 - b. Voice change can be a time when transgender students start to feel these things because being a soprano felt comfortable and then the change to the male voice can be a jolt if they still relate more as a female if male.

c. Voice and Mannerism

- i. inflection and speaking voice will map very feminine.
- ii. Pitch is not a huge difference, it is more inflection and changes at the end of the phrase.

Reference Materials:

Burge, Kathleen. "Members of transgender chorus find their voices" *Boston Globe* August 24, 2015.

Cronn-Mills, Kirstin. Beautiful Music for Ugly Children. Minneapolis, MN: Flux, 2012.

Green, Lucy Music, Gender, Education. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Palkki, Joshua and Paul Caldwell "Creating Safe Space: LGBTQ Singers in the Choral Classroom. A Summary of Research and Implications for Practice. Handout from 2015 National ACDA. **Also on galachoruses.org website.**

Pike, Michelle. Queer in the Choir Room: Essays on Gender and Sexuality in Glee. Jefferson, NC: McFarland Books, 2014.

Creating Safe Space for GLBTQ Youth: A Toolkit. Website: advocatesforyouth.org.