

JULY 8, 2021

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO THE CHORUS FAMILY

Dear Chorus Family,

On July 1, we posted “Message from the Gay Community” to SFGMC TV and across social media. It was chosen because of how loved it was when we performed it live here in San Francisco at Pride, at SingOuts, in South Carolina and at the Pride Showcase. The piece was commissioned by the Oakland Symphony who shared it with us.

The far-right conservative media found our “Message...” video and have taken it as their cause. This has all happened in the last 24 hours and it continues to pick up steam. They have taken the lyrics out of context to support a narrative that suits their intolerant and hateful needs. It is obvious the tongue-in-cheek humor is lost on many. As a result, we have seen the user comments on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram become increasingly alarming. Emails to individuals and the chorus office are vitriolic – including threats of harm.

We feel the first action we must take to keep everyone involved with the chorus and the making of this video safe is to turn the video to private. We are communicating with law-enforcement both locally and nationally. We will not be threatened and we follow legal steps to act on those threats. We will always accept others who may hold different values, but when violence is their choice of expression, since 1969 we have not backed down. After decades of children being indoctrinated and taught intolerance for anyone who is “other,” from using the Bible as a weapon to reparative therapy, it’s our turn. We have dedicated ourselves to being role models, teaching, and spreading the message of love, tolerance and celebration through our music.

Our second action is to work to control the narrative. The video is being illegally copied and placed on YouTube, Instagram and other websites. Others have the right to follow Fair Use laws, but that is not what is happening here. Therefore, our social media and marketing staff are working around the clock to alert moderators at YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and to file DMCA’s (take down of websites featuring stolen content). So far, this has been very successful.

Lastly, if you receive personal communication of any kind regarding this video, please forward to info@sfgmc.org.

Thank you for your love and support and for believing in the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus and its mission. We are proud of who we are. We are proud of what we sing.

Yours,

Dr. Tim Seelig, Chris Verdugo and Glenn DeSandre