

# Performing in Public: What is it Like to Perform in a Transgender Choir?



Presented by Ann Thomas



# Glee, episode 607, "Transitioning", shot Nov 12, 2014 at Paramount, aired Feb 13, 2015 on Fox

Katerick "Erick"  
Lash, bass section  
leader, TCLA

Ann Thomas,  
bass section,  
TCLA

Lee Te,  
Tenor 2,  
TCLA

Shane Ivan Nash, tenor, TCLA

Ari Adler, bass  
section, TCLA



*"I Know Where I've Been"*  
Unique / **Bvs** / Unique + **Bvs**

0:16 Song Start

0:23 There's a light, in the darkness, tho' the night is black as my skin  
0:39 There's a light burning bright, show-ing me the way, but I know where I've been

0:55 There's a cry, **(Oooo-ooooh...)** In the distance, **(...Oooo-ooooh)**

1:03 It's a voice that comes from deep within

1:11 There's a cry **(Oooo-ooooh)** askin' why I pray the answers up ahead, cuz I know where I been

1:27 There's a road **(Oooooh...)** we've been travelin'

1:35 Lost so **(Oooooh...)** many on the way,

1:43 **(But the riches)** Ho! but the riches

1:47 **(Will be plenty)** the riches will be plenty yeah

1:53 **(Worth the risk)** worth the risk **(and the chances)** and the chances **(that we take)** take

1:59 **(There's a dream, There's a dream, There's a dream)** There's a dream **(in the future)**

2:07 There's a, struggle **(Struggle)**

2:09 That we have **(we have...)** yet to win **(yet to win!)**

2:15 Use that pride **(Use that Pride)** in our hearts **(in our hearts!)**, To lift us up **(Whoa-oh-oh...)**

2:21 Until tomorrow, **(...Oooooh-Oooooh-Oooooh-Oooooh)** cuz just to sit still would be a sin

2:28 **I know it, I know it, I know where I'm going**

2:34 **Lord knows I know!!!!!!**.....Where I've **be-en!!!!!!**

2:48 **Lord!** when we win, I'll give thanks to my God cuz I know where I've... **Been!!!!**



The original script – note there's no music, only lyrics!

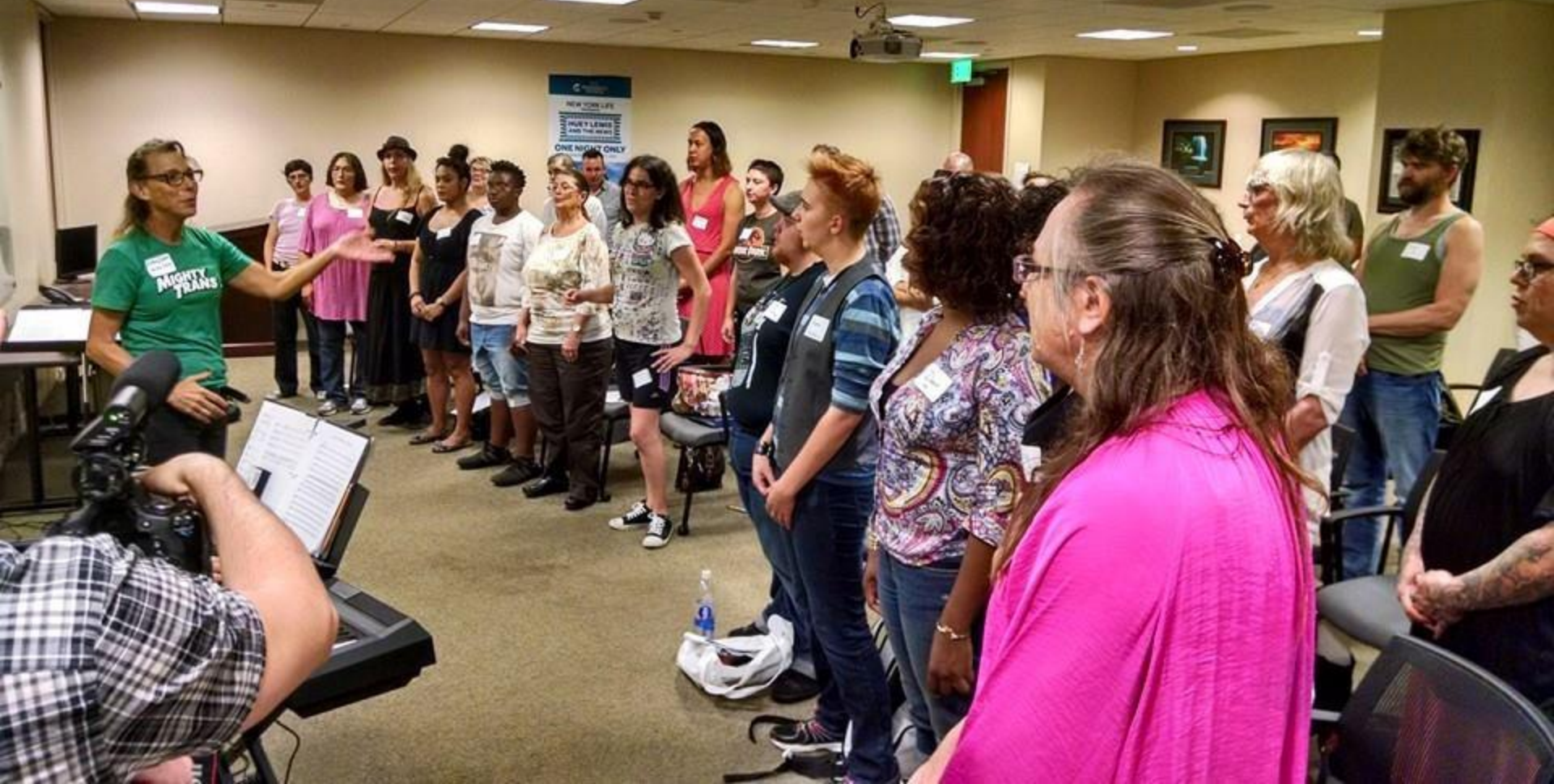
# Glee

The director placed me right behind the lead, Coach Bieste, played by Dot-Marie Jones





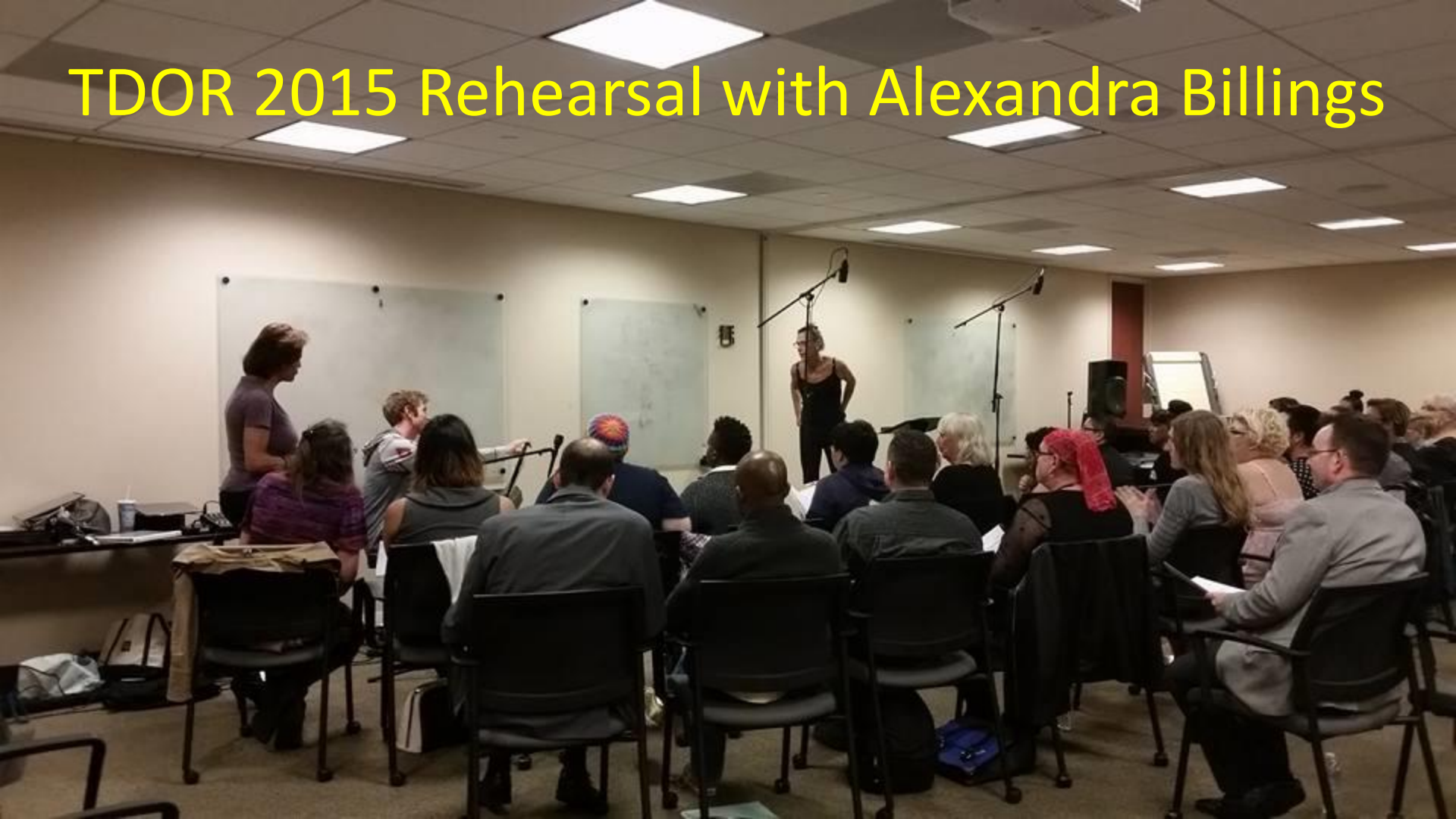
# TCLA First Rehearsal Oct 18, 2015



# Season 1 – Oct 2015 to June 2016

- TDOR
- TCLA Fundraiser
- Mike Honda Fundraiser
- PSA, Silas Howard dir.
- GMCLA Voice Awards
- First Major Concert
- Long Beach Pride
- MSNBC Mini-Doc
- Kol Tivkah Pride Shabbat
- Everybody's Gym
- St. John's Episcopal
- LA City Hall
- Industry Mixer
- LA Pride
- Trans Pride LA
- Interscope Records: Hands-A Song For Orlando
- Williams Institute UniTy

# TDOR 2015 Rehearsal with Alexandra Billings







# First Fundraiser at Jeff Olde and Alan Uphold's house Many VIPS like Caitlyn Jenner and Jeffrey Tambour

Other VIPs present included Alex Billings, Rhys Ernst, Zackary Drucker, and many more





# Mike Honda fundraiser.

This was our first paid gig, for Mike Honda. Several VIPs are visible in this picture, including retired Mass. Senator Barney Frank





**GMCLA Voice Awards**  
**Our formal introduction to the**  
**supporters of GMCLA**





With chorus member Kathryn Davis, who is a forensic scientist, doing in real life, what Pauley's character on NCIS does.

# GMCLA Voice Awards Backstage with one of the hosts – Pauley Perrett



# Los Angeles City Hall



VOTING CLERK



# Interscope Records studio: Hands – A Song for Orlando



# Season 2 – Sept 2016 to July 2017

- Models of Pride
- TDOR
- TrevorLIVE
- TCLA Fundraiser
- USPATH
- Superbowl Party
- Trans\* Conference
- Ziggy Stardust
- Dodgers recording
- Dodgers performance
- KPFK FM
- Resist March
- Trans Pride LA
- I Rise
- Outfest



# TDOR 2016





# TREVOR LIVE

AN IRREVERENT EVENING OF COMEDY AND MUSIC!

gettyimages®

Phillip Faraone

Gay Men's Chorus and Transgender Chorus of Los Angeles perform onstage during The Trevor Project's 2016 TrevorLIVE LA at The Beverly Hilton Hotel on December 4, 2016 in Beverly Hills, California.



# TCLA Fundraiser at Chad and Brian's mansion



This photo shows how we can unite people through song. Caitlyn Jenner is in the center of it, and the photo is taken in the house of Brian Pendleton and Chad Goldberg, who sponsored and organized the LA Resist March in June of 2017.

# The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars







Ziggy Stardust guest soloists Justin Tranter  
and Our Lady J

# Singing the National Anthem for the LA Dodgers





LA Resist  
March,  
40,000-  
100,000  
estimated  
crowd  
size







Margaret Cho at LA Resist March



# Trans Pride LA



# 'I Rise' at Walt Disney Concert Hall



This was just our chorus on the stage after the performance. There were something like 14 choruses and choirs from a wide variety of backgrounds totaling something like 400 performers, uniting in love.



# Season 3 – Sept 2017 to current

- Ziggy Stardust encore performances
- Black AIDS Institute Gala
- Models of Pride
- TDOR
- Veteran's Day
- World AIDS Day
- APAIT Miss Quest Pageant
- LA Music Center
- Angels of Change
- Demi Lovato
- Mystery Commercial
- Mystery Music Video
- Ugly Stepchildren Variety Show

# Black AIDS Institute Gala dancing and singing with Alfre Woodard



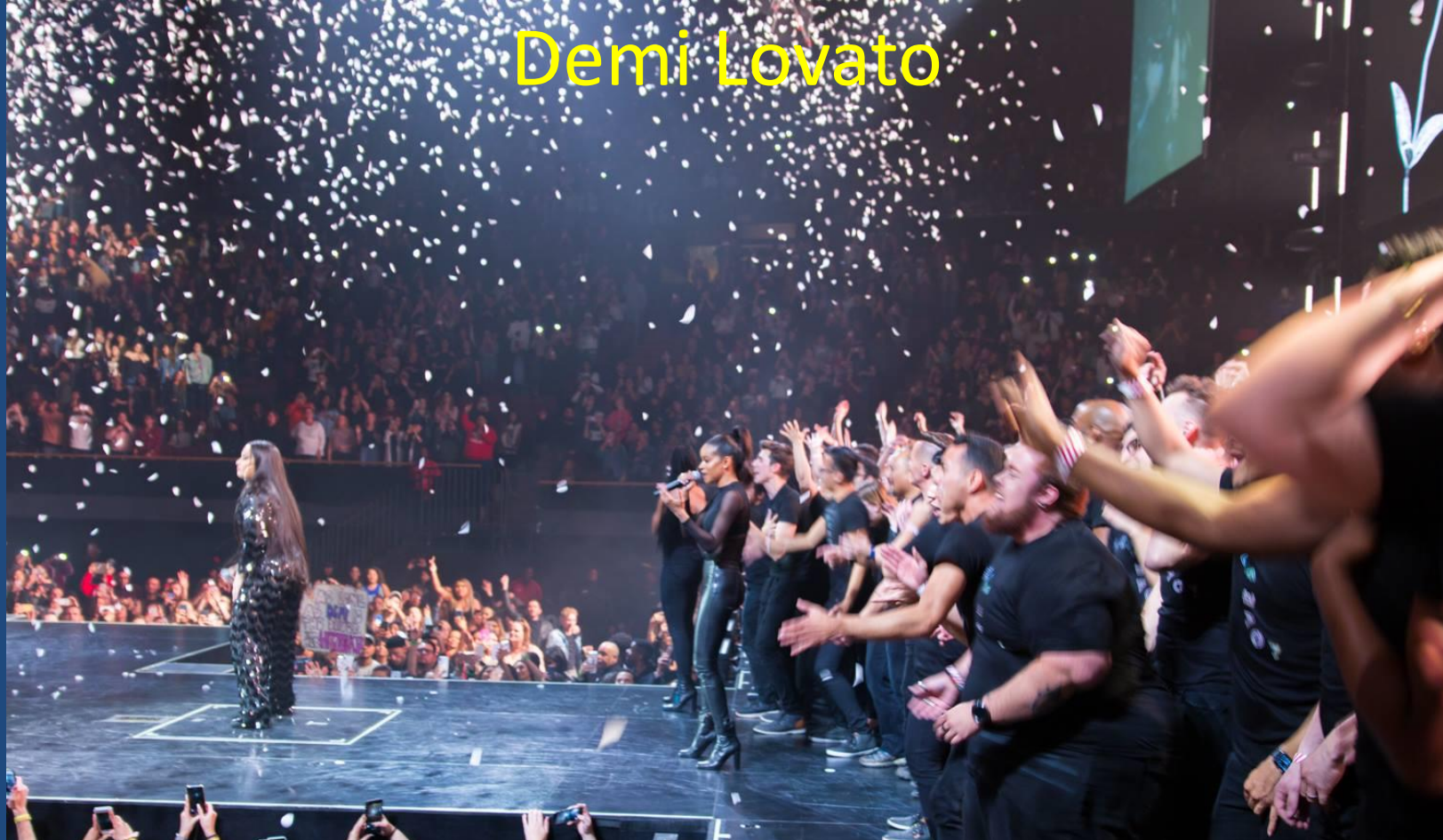


# Veteran's Day performance in West Hollywood





# Demi Lovato



We were asked to sing along side of the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, and Vox Femina, for two songs with Demi Lovato



# TCLA has performed with

- Gay Men's Chorus of LA
- Vox Femina
- Alexandra Billings
- Our Lady J
- Brianna Sinclaire
- Holly Near
- Dot-Marie Jones
- Justin Tranter
- Demi Lovato
- Jennifer Leitham

# Featured in hundreds of articles

- Broadway World
- MSNBC
- Yahoo News
- LA Times
- TMZ



With all this attention,  
wouldn't you expect us  
to be celebrities?

NO



# Why did I share all that?

- To encourage you that good things are happening in spite of all the negative things you might hear in the news.
- To show you that even with lots of attention, you may not get ‘famous’.

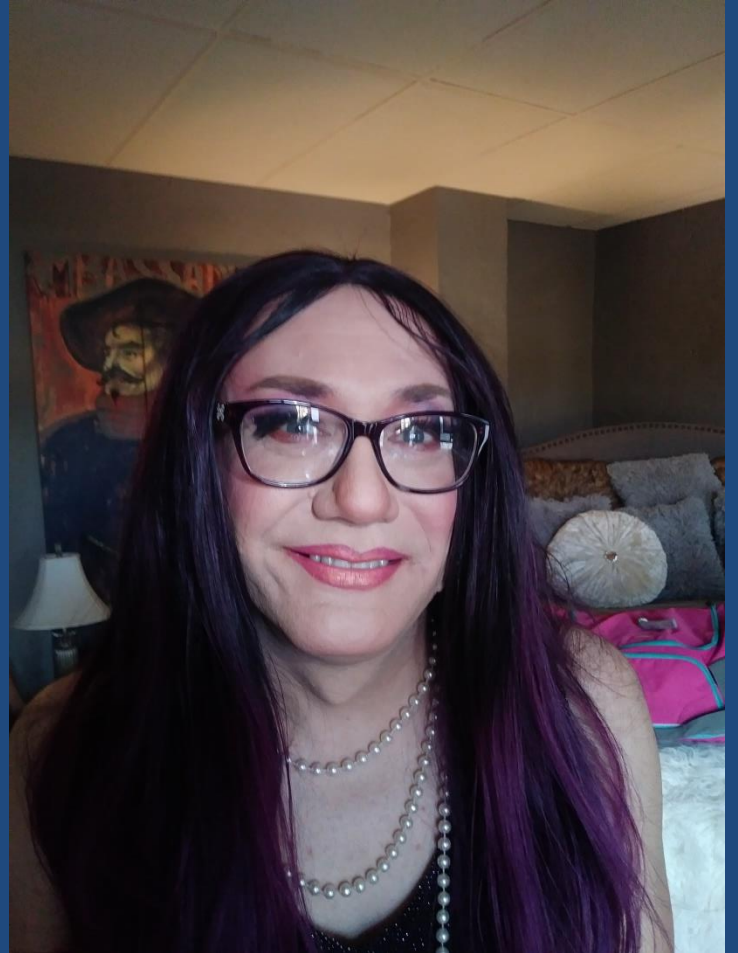
# But all it takes is one person!

- What if just one person sees me that doesn't know I'm trans?
- I could lose my housing, my job, my family!!!



# Do What This Person Did!

This is me in disguise – not even the chorus members or even my roommate recognized me when I came to the performance! It was professionally done, with tape to pull my face tight, a purple wig, and a very nice makeup job.



# Voice Dysphoria

- You're singing in a group
- You're supposed to be blending
- That means people shouldn't be able to tell who's singing what part, unless you do a solo
- You can mouth the words for other sections during your section's rests
- Trans Choirs are mostly TTBB
- Bass and Alto and above are rare, and we really need those voices in their normal or trained range



# Branding

- It's a group – make it about the group, not an individual
- People come and go over the years, so always focus on the group
- Create a logo, matching Tshirts, buttons, stickers, etc – make sure the group owns the designs and artwork

# Fame

- Fame does not divide, it multiplies!
- Share it!
- Be happy when someone gets positive attention!
- Support others in their work!



# Public Relations

- Define your goals as a chorus
- Stay focused on your goals
- Music unifies, so be aware that people from all backgrounds can be unified behind you
- Stay neutral on issues that aren't directly affecting trans issues

# Media Relations

- The main types of stories they might run are in general called human interest. They're not news. They're filler.
- They might run announcements about upcoming performances.
- Be patient with them, and be kind and thankful when they do run a story.

# Interviews

- Relax and be yourself
- The interviewer's job is to help you to relax, so do the same for them – help them relax by being personable
- Stay on point
- Answer in sound bites if at all possible



# Questions and Answers

# Epilogue

Things to come...





