

Kennedy Center Replaces LGBTQ Performance Amid New Leadership

The Kennedy Center has canceled an upcoming LGBTQ Pride performance by the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC (GMCW), just weeks after President Donald Trump assumed his role as chairman of the venue's board.

The 250-member GMCW, which has performed for the Bidens, Clintons and Obamas, was scheduled to join the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) in performing "A Peacock Among Pigeons" on May 21, ahead of Pride Month in June. However, the Kennedy Center abruptly canceled the event, replacing it with "The Wizard of Oz in Concert."

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In a Tuesday night statement, GMCW expressed disappointment over the decision, saying they "regret" losing the opportunity to collaborate with the NSO on a Pride-themed performance. "We are deeply disappointed with the news that our upcoming Pride performance... has been canceled," the chorus wrote on Facebook. Despite this, they vowed to continue promoting equality and diversity and will now perform the piece at their Choral Festival for WorldPride 2025.

The cancellation follows major leadership changes at the Kennedy Center. Trump took over as chairman in early February after the firing of President Deborah Rutter and appointed Ric Grenell, former U.S. ambassador to Germany, as interim president. Trump also replaced outgoing chair David Rubenstein.

Trump previously criticized the Kennedy Center's programming

choices, particularly its inclusion of drag performances targeting youth. On February 7, he wrote on Truth Social: “Just last year, the Kennedy Center featured Drag Shows specifically targeting our youth – THIS WILL STOP... THE BEST IS YET TO COME!”

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GMCW traces its origins to 1981, when the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus (SFGMC) performed at the Kennedy Center, inspiring the creation of the Washington-based group. The SFGMC faced backlash in 2021 for releasing a controversial music video joking about “converting children” to a pro-LGBTQIA+ worldview.

As Trump reasserts conservative cultural values at the Kennedy Center, this cancellation signals a shift in priorities for the institution’s programming. The move has drawn mixed reactions, with critics calling it an attack on LGBTQIA+ representation while supporters see it as a return to more traditional performances.

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