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A Queerly Joyful Noise

Choral Musicking for Social Justice

JULIA “JULES” BALÉN

“Balén’s book sweeps you into the life of LGBTQ choral music. As a conductor in the GALA network for 30 years, it is a joy to see it so beautifully described in this important book. Balén is able to take the reader on a beautiful journey and educate us all along the path. Every person—gay or straight—who loves music should read this book.”

—Dr. Timothy Seelig, Artistic Director, San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus

“Balén accurately unwraps our shared queer choral musicking with vision and depth while also tracing our connections to other contemporary movements for social justice and equality. In addition, she is able to capture familiar choral issues, events, rehearsals, and performance experiences with humor and aha moments. Wonderfully readable and well researched. Enthusiastically recommended.”

—Dr. Catherine Roma, founder of Anna Crusis Women’s Choir and current conductor of Hope Thru Harmony Women’s Choir

“I have spent many hours pondering how it is that our work as LGBTQ choruses impacts social change. Julia’s book made me laugh and cry but most importantly informs our ongoing efforts to enhance our effectiveness at creating social change through the power of music.”

—Robin L. Godfrey, executive director, GALA Choruses

A Queerly Joyful Noise examines how choral singing can be both personally transformative and politically impactful. As they blend their different voices to create something beautiful, LGBTQ singers stand together and make themselves heard. Comparing queer choral performances to the uses of group singing within the civil rights and labor movements, Julia “Jules” Balén maps the relationship between different forms of oppression and strategic musical forms of resistance, exploring the potential this queer communal space creates for mobilizing progressive social action.

Herself a proud member of numerous queer choruses, Balén draws from years of firsthand observations, archival research, and extensive interviews to reveal how queer chorus members feel shared vulnerability, collective strength, and even moments of ecstasy when performing. *A Queerly Joyful Noise* serves as a testament to the power of music, intimately depicting how participation in a queer chorus is more than a pastime, but a meaningful form of protest through celebration.

JULIA “JULES” BALÉN is a professor of English at California State University, Channel Islands in Camarillo.

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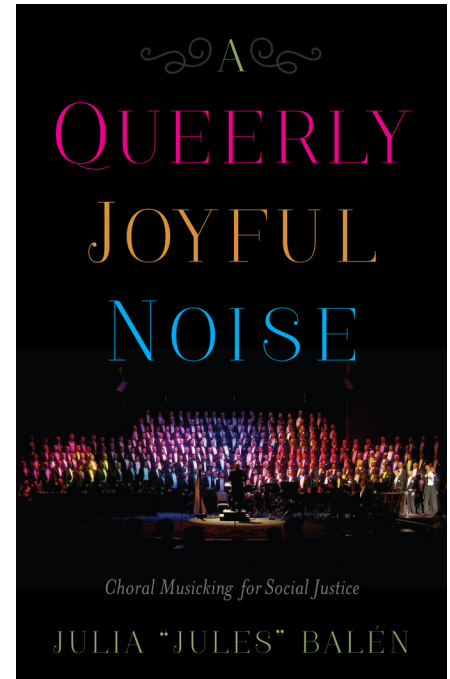
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