



## Susan Haugh

Pittsburg >> LGBT Performing Arts

Most kids first stand up and then start walking. Susan Haugh stood up and then started conducting music.

Where did she get her orchestras? “The TV,” she says. “PBS’s Live From Lincoln Center, the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Pops. Music is all-enveloping. It’s movement, energy, vibration, time and space. It is everything together.”

Haugh began performing and writing her own instrumental and choral works in 1987. Several years later, she helped found the Renaissance City Women’s Choir, a Pittsburgh-based group that offers gay-positive music and openly supports equality and social justice issues.

“I have a personal drive to work to effect change where I can,” says Haugh. “I am a composer and director, so I am using the tools and talents I have to create a world that understands and accepts all people for who they are.”

Ten years ago, following a successful stint with the choir, Haugh founded Dreams of Hope, an LGBT youth performing arts ensemble in Pittsburgh. She’s worn many hats there, including artistic director, grant writer, fundraiser, performance creator, and mentor. “[Many] queer youths cannot be open with their boyfriend or girlfriend at school, or at parties, or at their places of worship, or at home,” says Haugh. “They need safe places where they can express themselves and deal with the myriad of issues they are dealing with on a daily basis.”

In one of her most recent community projects, Haugh is working with the Pride Youth Theater Alliance (PYTA), a network of arts, educational, and service organizations in the U.S. and Canada. As chair of the Mentoring Committee, she is helping PYTA to start new queer youth theaters. “The emergence of new youth groups is very exciting and important, if we are going to really change the minds of people throughout the country,” she says. —Sheryl Kay

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## SINGER AND BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR

Melissa Etheridge has criticized Angelina Jolie for her double mastectomy. While many hailed Jolie as brave for the preventive surgery against the BRCA gene, which she carries, Etheridge called Jolie’s decision a “fearful choice,” saying that she believes cancer is a result of stress, nutrition and environment.

● **DANIELLE POWELL WAS** expelled from Grace University, a conservative Christian college, one semester before graduation in 2012 after she began dating another woman. The school demands that students sign and abide by a code of conduct that forbids kissing, prolonged hugs and watching MTV. The school is now demanding Powell pay back \$6,000 in loans connected to the final semester they didn’t permit her to finish.

● **KAITLYN HUNT, A SENIOR AT** Florida’s Sebastian River High School, is facing two counts of felony and lewd and lascivious conduct because she was sexually active with her girlfriend, another high school student who is three years younger. Hunt was a cheerleader and member of the basketball team, where she met her 14-year-old girlfriend. In Florida it is illegal for someone who is 18 to have sex with a teen under the age of 16. The girlfriend’s parents contacted police and pressed charges against Hunt right after her 18th

birthday. If convicted, Hunt faces 15 years in prison, and has turned down a plea bargain that would have forced her to register as a sex offender for life. Hunt’s parents are standing behind their daughter and fighting for the state laws to be changed.

● **PROSECUTORS IN KENTUCKY** are attempting to make Geneva Case testify against her wife Bobbie Joe Clary in a murder and robbery charge. Case has refused to testify against her wife invoking spousal privilege. Prosecutors believe that Clary admitted guilt to her wife, and claim Case cannot invoke spousal privilege because same-sex marriage is not recognized in the state of Kentucky. The couple entered a civil union in Vermont in 2004.

● **SENATOR TAMMY BALDWIN** has delivered her first speech on the Senate floor. She spoke about the disconnect “between the content of the debate here in Washington and the concerns of hard-working people in places like Wisconsin.” —Sassafra Lowrey