

ARTNEWS

On Saturday evening I had the enormous pleasure of seeing about two dozen members of the New York Labor Chorus perform at the Essex Street gallery in New York as part of Fred Lonidier's exhibition concerning labor conditions and the power of unions. Lonidier introduced the group—which began in 1991 and now has more than 70 members from 20 unions—by discussing the tumultuous political moment, when conservative politicians control the levers of power. “We outnumber them!” he declared, earning some applause. But, he continued, “we are not always together, and now is the time to be together.” He looked around. “So here we are, together.”

And, without further ado, the chorus, accompanied only by a keyboardist, performed an energetic set that included “Do You Hear the People Sing” from *Les Misérables* (1980) and the old Industrial Workers of the World standard “Solidarity Forever,” which Pete Seeger helped make famous. “Solidarity forever/For the union makes us strong,” the members sang, swaying back and forth and waving hats from their respective unions. It was a powerful, moving show, though I may be biased as a former United Federation of Teachers member.

Lonidier's exhibition closed on Sunday, but Essex Street has numerous JPEGs available, and if you want to see the Chorus, they'll have a benefit concert at Symphony Space in New York on Saturday, May 5.

—*Andrew Russeth*
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