

AGMA

AMERICAN GUILD *of* MUSICAL ARTISTS

Dear AGMA Member:

We are writing to our members today to share the proactive measures that AGMA is taking, and the ways we are working with our signatory companies and sister unions, to ensure our members stay protected during this crisis. Stay tuned for developments.

The American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) is monitoring the ever-growing list of entertainment events and productions that have been limited, canceled, suspended, or postponed indefinitely due to this pandemic.

AGMA understands that this is necessary, that public health should ALWAYS be placed in front of businesses' bottom lines. However, AGMA's main priority is, and will remain, protecting the health and employment of our 7,000 members.

Our artists rely on the resulting income and health coverage that they earn by performing. They aren't paid if they aren't working. Many are facing the stark reality of not being able to work and earn a living, perhaps for months, compounded by the fact that they could even lose their health coverage when they need it most: during a world pandemic.

While AGMA continues to search for alternatives to closures, it appears inevitable that many of our companies will be forced to close for an unforeseen amount of time in order to combat COVID-19. This measure, while drastic, will undoubtedly help our nation combat the virus. But we cannot lose sight of the human cost.

Closing our shops will take a massive toll on the artists, our members. By shuttering productions, we are not just cutting entertainment for the public, we are cutting fundamental economic lifelines for those who spend their lives bringing joy and art to our cities.

We are not lobbying to keep doors open during this time; we are demanding the financial and health protections our members need to survive. For our members, there is no "catastrophe" or "relief pay," but there should be.

Congress and state and local governments must not turn their backs on the artists, singers, dancers, stage managers, orchestra members, stagehands, and all those involved in putting on a production. Local governments know how the arts benefit and uplift their economies, their communities, and the civic life of their cities and

states. They cannot drag their feet at this precarious time.

AGMA therefore calls upon the federal government and city and state governments in which our members work to pass immediate, substantial economic relief for our signatory companies and all non-profit arts organizations likely to be shuttered in response to COVID-19. Such relief should be earmarked specifically to replace lost earnings for artists who cannot perform due to the effort to fight the virus and to ensure the future survival of these organizations after the crisis has passed. There is no time to wait or to be delayed by political infighting. Act now.

While it is difficult to predict exactly how, and for how long, COVID-19 will affect our members and our signatory companies, AGMA will continue to do whatever we can to keep our members safe, healthy, and supported. Collectively, all entertainment unions will develop responses and solutions to fortify our industries in the face of this crisis, and that begins by protecting our members in their time of need.

In Solidarity,

Len Egert
National Executive Director

Ray Menard
President

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