Should AGMA Fine the Free Rider?

One of the peculiarities of a democracy is the willingness of its citizens to "let the other fellow" do the work. As Americans, we would rise up in protest if any one of our rights were threatened. Yet many of us are "too busy" (and very silent) when we are asked to take on the responsibilities which go with those rights. We all know the "free rider" type of citizen.

In the same sense, AGMA is a democracy which has won for its members the many privileges which they enjoy today. A comparatively young union, which has developed and grown in spite of unique problems and against difficult odds, AGMA has brought increasing stability of employment and greater protection while employed, to its body of members. These rights we fight for whenever they are threatened, because, first and foremost, AGMA's responsibility is to its members.

But what of the members' responsibility to AGMA? Membership carries with it not only the privileges that have been won through the years. It carries the responsibility for participating in the conduct of AGMA, so that present gains might be maintained, and new gains and benefits achieved in the future.

Some action must be taken to spur members to take an active part in the affairs of AGMA. It is an all too common experience to have meetings postponed (with the unnecessary expense to AGMA of paying for a meeting hall that is not used) because of the absence of even a quorum. It has been proposed that members would attend meetings in greater number if specific dates were set far in advance for meetings. It has been suggested that the second Sunday in October, December, February and April be fixed as meeting dates.

At a membership meeting held in New York on March 16th (which had been postponed from an earlier date because of the lack of a quorum) this matter of non-attendance by members was gone into extensively, and a resolution passed, recommending to the Board of Governors that every person who did not attend that meeting receive a letter of censure and be fined $1.00 or more, the amount to be determined by the Board.

The time has come for serious . . . possibly drastic action. In justice to the future of AGMA . . . in fairness to those conscientious members who are giving their time and energies and abilities to the solving of our problems, members can no longer continue to "let the other fellow" do all the work. We would like to know what you, as a member, feel can be done to stimulate more participation on the part of members. What is your feeling about the fine as a means of insuring full attendance at meetings? What other proposal do you have which might help to wake up your fellow members to the gravity of the situation? It's your union . . . what do you think should be done with the "free rider"?

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Support Urged for Reed-Keogh Bill

AGMAN'S ACTION NEEDED

OF personal benefit to members of AGMA (and to all professional people) is the H. R. 4371, known as the Reed-Keogh Bill, which offers a more equitable application of income tax laws as they affect AGMANS.

The bill would permit an AGMA member to set aside 10% of his income (but not over $7,500) into a trust fund set up by his union, and to receive a deduction for Federal income tax purposes for such amount. A bank would invest the money in securities allowed as a legal investment for trust funds.

Upon reaching the age of 60 (or if totally and permanently disabled before then), the member could elect to receive his pension in a lump sum (then taxable as a capital gain) or in installments, or by purchase of annuities (taxable at ordinary rates as received).

AGMA's past attempts (and those of other professional groups) to get the Treasury Department to allow averaging of income have met with no success. It is particularly important, therefore, that every member of AGMA lend his support to efforts to get this bill a hearing. You can do this by writing at once to Congressman Eugene J. Keogh, sponsor with Congressman Daniel A. Reed of this beneficial bill, at the House Office Building, Washington, D. C.

AGMA members, its officers, board and executives, have all been aware of the injustice of the present method of taxing performers whose high earnings in one year are followed by low income in the next year. At a meeting of the Board of Governors on February 19th, the following resolution was passed and copies sent to the members of the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives:

WHEREAS, members of the AMERICAN GUILD OF MUSICAL ARTISTS realize their greatest earnings in a limited number of years, and

WHEREAS, the tax rates now in effect make it almost impossible for them to save money or make other provision for retirement and old age in their years of greatest earnings, and

WHEREAS, approximately 50% of the employment obtained by members of the union is on behalf of institutions and organizations which are exempt from social security coverage, and

WHEREAS, it is a matter of serious concern to the artist to make provision for his old age beyond that now provided by the Federal Social Security Laws, and

WHEREAS, there is now pending in the House of Representatives HR 4371, the objective of which is to enable persons to make present provision for their retirement and old age,

NOW, THEREFORE be it RESOLVED that the AMERICAN GUILD OF MUSICAL ARTISTS approves of the principle and objectives of the said HR 4371 and be it FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the members of the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives and urging them to grant a full and complete hearing on the bill and to release it from Committee.

All 4A unions and other groups of professional people (lawyers, architects, doctors, et cetera) are supporting the Reed-Keogh bill and demonstrating that support by letters to the bill's sponsors. There is, however, a grave prospect that the House Ways and Means Committee will let this measure die without its even getting a hearing.

This bill is important to you! That's why it is important that you write — right now — to urge support for HR 4371.

Hyman R. Faine
National Executive Secretary

DECEASED

FELIX SALMOND, the internationally renowned cellist, passed away on February 20.

AGMA extends its sincere condolences to his relatives and many friends in their bereavement and expresses its genuine regret at the passing from the musical scene of a beloved artist.

AGMAZINE

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SANDRA MUSELL, Editor

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THESE ARE YOUR CANDIDATES
FOR BOARD OF GOVERNORS

With the election to the Board of Governors now at hand, AGMAZINE presents photographs of the candidates, together with a brief statement about their activities. These are the candidates whose names appear on the ballots which have been sent to all active members of AGMA. Candidates newly elected to the Board of Governors will serve three years.

In compiling the following information, the identical amount of space was made available to all candidates, some of whom chose to be brief while others used the full amount allotted to them.

NEW YORK AREA
9 Vacancies
(Treasurer, 1 soloist, 1 instrumentalist, 2 dancers, 4 choristers)

ABBA BOGIN
Treasurer. AGMA member for 3 years. Appointed Treasurer of AGMA by Board of Governors to fill vacancy left by death of Donald Dame. Very active in AGMA Artists-Managers Relations Committee. Pianist for New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

RUTHANNA BORIS
Dancer. Member of Board of Governors of AGMA 3 years. Choreographer and soloist with New York City Ballet; formerly featured with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

WILBUR S. BROMS
Chorister. Recently appeared in Metropolitan Opera Company’s production of “Die Fledermaus” on tour. Appearances with City Center Opera Company, solo performances with St. Paul Pop Concerts Orchestra, St. Paul Civic Opera, radio and television. Veteran of World War 2.

VIDA BROWN
Dancer. Formerly soloist with the Ballet Russe; delegate of that company until 1948; presently with New York City Ballet; recently directed two ballets for San Francisco Ballet Company.

JOHN BROWNLEE
Soloist. Member of AGMA since 1937. Has appeared with major opera companies and in concert recitals throughout the world.

ALFREDO CORVINO
Dancer. AGMA representative of ballet at Metropolitan Opera. Appointed member of Board to fill vacancy left by Robert Lindgren.

VIVIENNE DELLA CHIESA
Soloist. Extensive professional appearances both here and abroad in concert, in opera, as soloist with symphony orchestras; star of major radio programs; television appearances, recordings, musical comedy.

MATTHEW FARRUGGIO
Chorister. AGMA member since 1937. Has appeared with Chicago, San Carlo, Metropolitan and City Center opera companies. Has been AGMA representative for choristers with City Center; serves on AGMA Committee for Wages and Working Conditions in Popular Price Opera Field.

IGOR GORIN
Soloist. Extensive appearances in radio and television; opera and concert; soloist with symphony orchestras; recordings.

JOSEPH C. HANCOCK
Chorister. Has served on a number of AGMA Committees for 11 years; for past 7 years, AGMA representative with Charles Wagner Company. Member of Committee for Wages and Working Conditions in Popular Price Opera Field.

FRANK HOBI
Dancer. Member of Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo 1945-49; for past 3 years soloist with New York City Ballet and AGMA representative during that time. Member of Ballet Theatre 1941-42. U. S. Army Air Force 1942-45.

BYRON JANIS
Instrumentalist. AGMA member since 1951; on AGMA Artists-Managers Relations Committee. Piano Soloist with leading symphony orchestras in America; concert recitals both here and in South America.
THESE ARE YOUR CANDIDATES

NEW YORK AREA
(Continued)

CHARLES EDWIN KUESTNER
Chorister. Five seasons with New York City Opera Company 1947-1952; has served as AGMA chorus delegate for past three seasons. 3 years in U. S. Army.

RAY LEV
Instrumentalist. Piano soloist with leading symphony orchestras; recitals throughout the country.

TOM PYLE
Chorister. Member of AGMA, AFRA. Serves as AGMA representative with Robert Shaw Chorale-Concert Theatre, Inc.

BENNO RABINOFF
Instrumentalist. Violin soloist with leading symphony orchestras; concert tours throughout America and Europe; extensive radio appearances.

GENEVIEVE ROWE
Soloist. Member of AGMA Board of Governors for 1 year; member of AGMA Artists-Managers Relations Committee. Former Board member of AFRA. Concert and radio artist.

LORRAINE RUESS
Dancer. With ballet of Metropolitan Opera Company since 1945. Member of Metropolitan Ballet Negotiations Committee. Member of Committee for Wages and Working Conditions in Popular Price Opera Field.

JULES SASSANI
Chorister. Has represented professional opera chorister beginning with G.O. C.A. in 1935. Has served on many Committees, including the Dues Committee, the Classification of Roles Committee, the Merger Committee and others.

BETTY STONE
Chorister. 3 years as member of Board. Television Authority Board member. Served on Choral Committee; delegate at last Convention; member of Metropolitan Opera Company chorus.

ROMAN TOTENBERG
Instrumentalist. Member of AGMA since 1945. Violin soloist with leading symphony orchestras; tours throughout America in concert recitals.

NEW ORLEANS AREA
1 Vacancy — Chorister

ARTHUR WINTERLER
AGMA representative in New Orleans for many years. Organizer of New Orleans AGMA chapter. Choral and small part appearances with local companies.

LOS ANGELES AREA
1 Vacancy — Chorister

RAYMOND BUELL
Chorister. Member of AGMA since 1937. Charter member Los Angeles AGMA area. Now serving on Los Angeles Executive Committee. Member of Committee for Wages and Working Conditions in Popular Price Opera Field.

GENE CURTSINGER
Chorister. Member of AGMA since 1939. Regrettably, more detailed information and photograph not available to AGMAZINE at press time.
AGMA Wins Joint Jurisdiction
With Equity on ‘Four Saints’

For the first time in the history of the entertainment field, joint jurisdiction will be held and contracts administered jointly by three unions, with the production of Virgil Thompson’s “Four Saints in Three Acts” by ANTA—Ethel Linder Reiner. AGMA’s claim to exclusive jurisdiction over this production, when plans for it were first announced, was challenged by two sister unions, Actors Equity Association and Chorus Equity Association.

In an effort to avoid any dispute over the issue and to avert conflict which might jeopardize the employment possibilities of the individual organizations, AGMA and the Equities representatives have entered into an agreement which is without precedent in the field. AGMA members, recalling the disallowed claim of AGMA for jurisdiction over “Die Fledermaus” and “Regina,” will recognize this joint arrangement as a marked achievement in AGMA’s history...one which indicates the beneficial possibilities of joint jurisdiction and which demonstrates AGMA’s traditional position that all unions, acting as jurisdictional agents for their members, must work in harmony.

Following are basic features of the agreement, as concurred in by Actors Equity, Chorus Equity and AGMA:

1. The agreement shall be without prejudice to the claims of any of the three organizations as to their right to administer solely the production of “Four Saints in Three Acts” or as to their exclusive right to the jurisdiction of the production. This agreement is made solely with reference to the above production for the Spring of 1952 in New York City and for the summer and fall of 1952 in Europe.

2. AGMA and the Equities agree that the production in the United States shall be under an Equity form of contract with the minimum previously agreed to by the unions, and for the European tour under an AGMA form of contract at AGMA minimums and conditions.

3. Members of the respective unions shall not be required to join any other union as long as they maintain their good standing as to their present membership.

4. Artists who are members of none of the three unions shall be free to join any of the three unions and their cards will thereafter be recognized as sufficient for this production.

5. The governing body of Actors and Chorus Equity shall, in consultation with the AGMA Board of Governors, be the one to determine issues and make rulings under the Equity form of contract, and the AGMA Board of Governors, in consultation with the Equity Council, shall do the same for the AGMA form of contract.

Material benefits to performers under this agreement have been secured. For the New York City run and the rehearsal weeks, AGMA succeeded in increasing the Equity minimum by $5.00 and $10 respectively; for out of town appearances, AGMA minimums (always higher than Equity minimums) will prevail. Artists engaged for the production will find the essence of this agreement incorporated in a rider to the standard contract.
Proposed Amendment to State Jobless Pay Law
Would Count Auditions as Unemployed Week

As a result of the concerted efforts of AGMA and its sister unions in the entertainment field, an amendment to the labor law with respect to unemployment insurance has been introduced which counts an audition as one employed week, even though employment might not result from the audition. Officially, the amendment reads as follows:

"Week of employment" means a week in which a claimant did some work in employment for an employer liable for contributions under this article, and includes a week in which a claimant, pursuant to the request of an employer liable for contributions, exhibited to such employer his talent related to the presentation of a role in a play or other similar act devised for the entertainment of the public, by means of a demonstration, test or rehearsal, even if no remuneration is paid for such exhibition, and even if such exhibition does not result in a contract of hire."

AGMA, together with sister unions in related fields, is continuing its vigorous attempts to modify existing legislation with respect to unemployment insurance benefits. Organized labor throughout the state is lending every strength to efforts to alter the present requirements for qualifying for insurance benefits under the law.

Principal block to performers, of course, is the requirement of at least twenty weeks work in the fifty-two weeks immediately preceding the filing of a claim.

Special Hearing for Entertainment Field

Following a resolution adopted by the State Federation of Labor at its Convention in Buffalo, which put the Convention on record as endorsing amendments which might reduce the requirement for qualification below twenty weeks, the Hughes-Brees Commission was persuaded, through the good offices of Senator MacNeil Mitchell, to grant a special hearing to the entertainment field. The meeting was held on January 23rd at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York City, and attended by President Lawrence Tibbett and Executive Secretary Hy Faine representing AGMA; representatives of Equity, Chorus Equity, the American Guild of Variety Artists, the American Federation of Radio Artists, the League of New York Theatres and the State Federation of Labor were present. Senator John H. Hughes and Assemblyman Orlo M. Brees, co-chairmen of the Commission, together with other members of the Commission and executives of the Division of Placement and Unemployment, met with the representatives of the performer unions in a lengthy, comprehensive discussion of the discriminatory phases of the bill. Lawrence Tibbett stressed the difficulties in the fields under the jurisdiction of AGMA, whose short seasons do not provide twenty weeks' work for performers. He also made the point that many employers of AGMA members are not liable for contributions to unemployment insurance under the law.

Three Vital Points to Consider

The Hughes-Brees Commission was asked to consider three points which would make the law realistic in its application to performers:

A reduction in time from the twenty weeks now required by the law, since over a three year period, approximately three-fourths of the entertainment field could not qualify for unemployment insurance, and probably never would be able to; Money earned, rather than time worked, as yard-stick for qualification; Continuing negotiations between the Commission, the Division of Placement and Unemployment Insurance and the entertainment field to work out methods by which more performers could qualify for more money.

The Commission stated that it had been impressed by the case presented to it and would see what could be done.

Following the meeting, Senator Mitchell wrote President Lawrence Tibbett a warm letter of congratulations on the "fair minded and constructive manner in which you presented your case, and I think you made many friends by what you did there."

AGMA Asks Clarification

Secretary Faine received a letter from Senator Mitchell, dated February 27, 1952, in which he stated: "The Hughes Committee has introduced a bill, Senate Int. 2250, Pr. 2402, to extend compulsory coverage under the unemployment insurance law, so that actors and actresses who are employed by non-profit theatrical organizations will be included in compulsory coverage, in order to bring them within the benefits of the law." Executive Secretary Faine promptly wrote to Senator Hughes, pointing out that the wording of this bill might be construed in a restrictive way and eliminate operas, ballets and concert productions, and urged that the language be broadened to include these forms of entertainment.

Compulsory Coverage Not All-Inclusive

Senator Hughes replied, on March 13th, that the Commission discussed the wording of this bill with the New York State Department of Labor and that this body understands the bill to include operas and ballets. In the Commission's forthcoming report, it will be stated that this was the legislative intent and this interpretation will be binding on the Department of Labor with respect to administration of the law. Senator Hughes wrote further, "You are correct, however, in stating that the extension will probably not cover concert productions. It was not the intent of the Legislature to extend compulsory coverage to musicians, except as they may be employed in connection with the presentation of plays and operas. If such extension is desirable, we shall be pleased to consider it next year."

AGMA, as well as other unions in the performing field, in cooperation with all organized labor in the State, will press diligently for modifications of the present law to secure maximum benefits under the unemployment insurance law.
Managements Under AGMA Agreements

The following companies have negotiated Basic Agreements with AGMA for the 1951-1952 season.

AGMA artists may perform only with Producers or Associations listed in this column. Any violations of this ruling will result in disciplinary action by the Board of Governors.

Each AGMA member is advised to check with the AGMA office before signing a contract with any producer.

OPERAS

Atlanta Opera Co.
Celebrity Artists Corp.
Central City Opera Assn., Inc.
Chautauqua Institution
Cincinnati Opera Assn., Inc.
City Center of Music and Drama, Inc.
Columbia Opera Co.
Connecticut Opera Association
Connecticut Opera Company
Fort Worth Opera Assn., Inc.
Garden State Opera Assn.
Guild Opera Co.
Johnstown Opera Guild
La Scala Opera Assn. of Hollywood
Los Angeles Conservatory of Music and Arts
Los Angeles Grand Opera Productions
Metropolitan Opera Association
J. H. Meyer
Monte Carlo Opera Co.
National Grand Opera Co.
New England Opera Theatre Inc.
New Orleans Opera House Assn.
New York Youth Concerts Inc.
Nine O’Clock Opera Co.
Opera Guild of Miami
Frank Pace
Pacific Opera Co.
Philadelphia Civic Guild Opera Co.
Philadelphia La Scala Opera Co., Inc.
Pittsburgh Opera Inc.
Popular Price Grand Opera Co.
Rome International Opera Co.
San Francisco Opera Assn.
Shreveport Opera Co.
Symphony Society of San Antonio
Chas. L. Wagner Management, Inc.
Virzi Opera Guild

BALLETS

Ana Maria Spanish Ballet
Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo Inc.
Ballet Theatre Foundation, Inc.
City Center of Music and Drama, Inc.
Jose Greco and his Spanish Ballet
Mata and Hari
Sadlers Wells Theatre Ballet
Mia Slavenska Ballet Variante
Marina Svetlova Ballet
Uday Shankar — Hindu Ballet

Constitution Referendum Carried

Results of the vote on the amendment to Article 8, Section 1 of the AGMA Constitution, which amendment provides that “the Guild shall hold a convention every two years during the last three weeks of the month of June” have been tabulated, and the amendment passed by an overwhelming majority of members voting. Of a total of 342 votes cast, 311 approved the amendment, with 12 disapproving. (19 ballots were not included in the count, by reason of their indigibility as a result of failure to comply with the conditions of the balloting).

The Board of Governors at its meeting on January 15th of this year unanimously passed the resolution calling for an amendment to hold Guild conventions every two years, because of the heavy expense of holding two annual and one Constitutional Convention, as originally required by the Constitution. The burden on the National Treasury threatened to endanger the financial stability of AGMA and the resolution of the Board of Governors was made as a matter of practical economy.

Officially, Article 8, Section 1 of the AGMA Constitution now is amended to read as follows:

“The Guild shall hold a convention every two years during the last three weeks of the month of June, except that the Board of Governors may, by two-thirds vote, order a convention within such two-year period, the date of any such convention to be fixed by the Board of Governors at such place as the delegates at the preceding convention may determine.” There will thus be no convention in 1952 and the first convention under the amended Article will be held in June, 1953.
AGMA Unfair List

The companies and producers listed below have been placed upon AGMA's unfair list by the Board of Governors. Under no circumstances may an AGMA artist perform with these companies. Any violation of this rule will result in disciplinary action by the Board of Governors.

Adams-Williams Corporation
430 Sixth Avenue, N.Y.C.
Wilson A. Williams
Alkahest Celebrity Bureau
1221 Mortgage Guarantee Bldg.
Atlanta, Georgia
S. Russell Bridges
Belmont Opera Guild
(Belmont Community Society)
183rd Street and Arthur Avenue
Bronx, New York

Cosmopolitan Opera Company
1332 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 7, Pa.
Theodore Feinman
Boston Grand Opera Company
160 West 73rd Street
New York, N.Y.
Stanford Erwin
London Opera Co., (Celebrity Attractions, Inc.)
150 West 46th Street, N.Y.C.
Vera Crenny
Manhattan Opera Co.
119 West 57th Street, N.Y.C.
Stanford Erwin
Manhattan Opera Guild
1545 Broadway, N.Y.C.
Benjamin F. Kuscher
Mascagni Opera Guild
250 West 91st Street, N.Y.C.
Josephine La Puma
New Brooklyn Opera Co.
119 West 57th Street, N.Y.C.
E. E. Stanford

New York Civic Opera Company
150 West 46th Street, N.Y.C.
Willam Reutemann
New York Operatic Society
Empire Hotel
63rd & Broadway, N.Y.C.
William Feinman
Rochester Grand Opera Co.
745 Penfield Road
Rochester, N.Y.
Josephine di Crasto
Star Opera Company
317 West 42nd Street, N.Y.C.
Francis C. Torre
Verdi Grand Opera Co.
110-42 65th Avenue
Forest Hills, N.Y.
Sylvestre Zaccaria
Washington Grand Opera Assn.
1710 19th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
William Webster

Close Harmony For Merrill - Peters

Wedding bells rang out on March 30th for Metropolitan Opera stars Robert Merrill and Roberta Peters, who were wed at the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City. A crowd of some two thousand gathered outside the synagogue to cheer the happy couple, while the ceremony was performed before one thousand invited guests, including officers and artists of the Metropolitan. The beaming bridegroom sang in “Aida” the next night and then the newlyweds left for a brief wedding trip. Their opera and other appearances make it necessary to postpone a longer trip until summer. AGMA members join in extending a wealth of warm, good wishes for their happiness.

The two singers will make their first concert appearance together at the fourth annual “Music Under the Stars” concert at Ebbetts Field on June 7th, for the benefit of the American Fund for Israel Institutions.