I. Agent Issues: Please remember that if you have problems with your agent, get sued by an agent, or get dunning letters from a collection agency about commissions allegedly due to an agent, call me immediately at (212) 265-3687. We are continuously engaged in assisting solo singers with a wide array of agent-related problems.

II. American Ballet Theater Dancers, Stage Managers, and Choreographers Rejoin AGMA: At its meeting on January 15, AGMA’s Board of Governors unanimously ratified an Affiliation Agreement pursuant to which the Dancers, Stage Managers, and Choreographers of the American Ballet Theater (ABT) are once again represented by AGMA. Members of the ABT bargaining unit, consisting of 90 dancers, choreographers, and production personnel, ratified the Agreement four days earlier.

Thirteen years ago, during a period of labor unrest, the ABT dancers left AGMA and formed an independent union called Independent Artists of America (IAA). Subsequent changes in AGMA’s governance and leadership and AGMA’s revitalization of its representation of dancers, and changes in the IAA’s leadership, were major factors in facilitating the merger.

Early in 2007, AGMA met with the Dancers’ Committee to discuss the possibilities of once again representing the ABT Dancers. As a result of that meeting, IAA asked AGMA to work with it in renegotiating its contract with ABT. Over the next few months, AGMA staff and the Dancers’ Committee reviewed input from the dancers and drafted contract proposals designed to give the dancers a greater ability to manage their careers and personal lives.

Deborah Allton-Maher, James Fayette, and Gail Lopez-Henriquez worked with me on the negotiations and, with the help of a Dancers’ Committee (led by Marcelo Gomes, Karin Ellis-Wentz and Kelley Boyd), we negotiated a new agreement with ABT which secured significant contract improvements and wage increases, and was unanimously ratified by the shop.

Thereafter, the dancers asked AGMA to have IAA merge back into AGMA and take over their collective bargaining representation. An Affiliation Agreement was worked out which was then ratified by the IAA. With the approval of AGMA’s Board of Governors, all of the dancers, choreographers, and production personnel once again become members of AGMA, effective February 1, 2008, ending a decades-old rift.

My sincere thanks to Deborah, James and Gail, and to the Board, for their work in achieving this spectacular accomplishment.

III. Guest Artist Agreement: AGMA is unique among entertainment unions in that it allows, rather than prohibits, its members to work for non-union employers. This policy allows AGMA members to seek employment across a broad spectrum of compa-
The American Guild of Musical Artists  
1430 Broadway, 14th Floor  
New York, New York 10018-3308  
(212) 265-3687  
Fax: (212) 262-9088  
www.MusicalArtists.org

Lawrence Tibbett, *Founding President*  
Jascha Heifetz, *Founding Vice President*

James Odom, *President*  
Gerald Otte, *1st Vice President*  
John Coleman, *2nd Vice President*  
Colby Roberts, *3rd Vice President*  
Sara Stewart, *4th Vice President*  
Lynn Lundgren, *Treasurer*  
Gregory Stapp, *5th Vice President*  
Alan S. Gordon, *National Executive Director*  
Gerry Angel, *Director of Operations*  

**FROM THE PRESIDENT**  
**JAMES ODOM**

But I’m not trying to influence your vote in either whatever far-too-early primary you will be voting in, or in the general election in the fall. At least I’m not trying to influence your vote here. What happens later, in privacy and over adult beverages, will be between you and me. What happens in... well, you know the drill.

I have both aim and purpose in this article. My aim is to talk to you about the upcoming AGMA Board of Governors election. You will find elsewhere in this publication a petition for candidacy in AGMA’s annual May election. Now, while I certainly encourage anyone who has any interest in serving on the Board to grab that petition and start collecting signatures, that is not my purpose here. Encouraging you to consider becoming a member of AGMA’s leadership is simply a logical extension of my aim.

My purpose, and I do have one, is to give just a little information about the political structure of AGMA. Because one of the FAQ’s I get is, “Just how does AGMA work?” And also because it’s not very realistic of me to expect you to participate if you don’t really know what’s going on.

There are two branches of leadership in AGMA. The first group is the elected leadership, which is an all-volunteer group elected by the members in annual elections each May. The second group is the paid professional staff. Since my aim is to talk about the May election, we’re not going to talk about the professional staff right now. We’ll get to them another time.

Starting at the top of the elected leadership, you have the National Officers. AGMA has a President, five Vice Presidents (conveniently numbered One through Five), a Treasurer, and a Recording Secretary. The officers are elected every other year for a two-year term.

The President serves as chair of the Board of Governors, and deals with the administrative issues of the Board. He or she also works closely with the staff to oversee the implementation of policy, which is set by the Board. The President serves as chair of the Trustees of the AGMA Relief Fund and acts as a liaison between our sister unions. The Vice Presidents perform duties assigned them by the Board and serve as chair for Board meetings in the absence of the President. The Treasurer is chair of the Finance and Budget committee, and oversees the budget process and monitors the financial situation of the union. The Recording Secretary maintains the attendance records of the Board and oversees the preparation and distribution of the minutes of Board meetings and any materials that will be needed for upcoming Board meetings.

**Common misconception Number One:** AGMA’s officers receive compensation for their service. Simply not true. AGMA’s elected leadership is prohibited from receiving compensation from the Union. Changing that would require approval of the entire membership through a referendum vote.

The next level of elected leadership is the Board of Governors. The Board consists of 75, 76, or 77 Governors. Why the varying number? For administrative and other purposes, AGMA is divided into eleven geographical areas. Seats on the Board are allocated by the percentage of members living in each of the eleven geographical areas, and by the working categories in which those members are located.
The Experienced Performer’s “Next” Career

The Search for the University Faculty Appointment

by Joseph Evans, former AGMA Vice President, Moores School of Music University of Houston

For several years, I have been asked to consult and advise colleagues in the transition from (full-time) professional singing into university teaching, but this has been on an individual basis. AGMA 5th Vice President Gregory Stapp and President Jimmy Odom, having heard about this, agreed that it would be beneficial to offer an organized program as a service to AGMA’s membership. Last October, AGMA sponsored a seminar called, “Transitioning from a Full-time Singing Career to University Level Teaching,” giving over two dozen interested singers a day together in the boardroom at AGMA’s national office in New York City.

The attendees were provided with practical information, such as finding faculty position announcements, compiling a curriculum vitae, and producing the now-required teaching demonstration DVD. In addition, we discussed what actually happens during a job interview and audition, and included appropriate responses to typical questions asked of the position candidates. Suggestions were provided on how to conduct an on-campus master class, and we used video examples of student singers to demonstrate evaluation and diagnosis techniques. Binders were distributed that contained sources for job advertisements, repertoire for the various developmental levels and Fachs of student singers, sample recital programs, pedagogical information, and suggestions for the organization of the voice studio.

My own experiences have been on both sides of the table, first as a singer looking for a teaching job and, since then, as a member of several search committees at universities. One segment of the seminar focused on how the transition process has changed over the years:

Professional singers have historically moved into the teaching profession in the “autumn” of their performing careers. Faculty appointments at major universities and conservatories during past decades were predicated upon the acceptance of an international performance career in lieu of formal degrees. The accepted position was that these seasoned professionals would bring a rich background to the university, attract the most outstanding students, and provide a wealth of knowledge and expertise gleaned from years of prominence in the international opera and concert scene.

During recent years, this practice has almost disappeared. Most schools of music require at least a master’s degree even for consideration for adjunct appointments. The requirement of a doctorate is inconsistent. Smaller, less performance-oriented schools are more insistent, with little room for flexibility. Many larger schools continue to consider an international performing career to be the equivalent of post-graduate scholastic achievement. Regardless, most institutions of higher learning require experience in teaching on the university level for appointment consideration.

This seminar was designed to give experienced singers the tools to help them successfully negotiate the transition from singing to university level teaching.

For more information, please contact Alan Gordon at either (800) 543-2462 or (212) 265-3687, or via email at AGMANY@aol.com.

Moreover, I believe that it is important that you notify AGMA’s Membership Department in writing of any change of address.

Additionally, AGMA’s Retirement Plan and Health Fund Plans must also be notified separately.

If you change your mailing address, it is important that you notify AGMA’s Membership Department in writing.

Executive Director’s Report (continued from page 1)
2008 Board of Governors Election Information

Listed below are the AGMA Governors whose terms expire this year, as well as those Governors who remain in office. See the Board Seat Vacancy Table on page 5 to determine how many seats are available in your area and category.

Governors are elected for three-year terms unless a seat needs to be filled for the unexpired remainder of a three-year term. Not all areas have vacancies or are entitled to seats in every category. The Census Table on pages 6-7 explains how the proportion of seats is determined.

### National Officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>James Odom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Vice President</td>
<td>Gerald Otte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Vice President</td>
<td>John Coleman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Vice President</td>
<td>Colby Roberts</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th Vice President</td>
<td>Sara Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Vice President</td>
<td>Gregory Stapp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Lynn Lundgren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording Secretary</td>
<td>Mitchell Sendrowitz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Board of Governors

**01 New York Area**
- Chorister Terms Expiring
  - Brian Baldwin (Actor/Chorister), Timothy Breese, Robert Kuehn
  - Remaining in Office: Glenn Bater, Linda Doria, David Frye, Karen Grahn, Robert Maher, Pamela Smith
- Dancer Terms Expiring
  - Seth Davis, Jonathan Pessolano
  - Remaining in Office: William Agliata, Stephanie Godino, Christine McMillan
- Soloist Terms Expiring
  - Jane Bunnell, Belinda Oswald
  - Remaining in Office: Lureta Bybee, Osceola Davis, Greer Grimsley, LeRoy Lehr, Craig Montgomery, Michael Myers, Tony Stevenson, Anita Terzian
- Stage Mgrs/Directors/Choreographers Terms Expiring
  - Terry Ganley
  - Remaining in Office: Raymond Menard

**02 So. California Area**
- Chorister Terms Expiring
  - Jonathan Curtsinger, David Schnell
  - Remaining in Office: Scott Blois, Joseph DeStefano, Heidi Herzog, Jennifer Wallace
- Dancer Terms Expiring
  - Peggy Hickey
  - Remaining in Office: None
  - Soloist Terms Expiring
  - None
  - Remaining in Office: Michael Gallup
- Stage Mgrs/Directors/Choreographers Terms Expiring
  - None
  - Remaining in Office: Lisa Kable

**03 Chicago-Midwest Area**
- Chorister Terms Expiring
  - Catherine V. Duke, Joseph Fosselman, Richard Livingston

**04 San Francisco Area**
- Chorister Terms Expiring
  - Matthew Carroll, Chuck Coyl (Actor/Chorister), Lawrence Montgomery, Lorene Richardson, Cole Seaton
  - Dancer Terms Expiring
  - None
  - Remaining in Office: Michael Anderson
  - Soloist Terms Expiring
  - None
  - Remaining in Office: Christopher Feigum, Rodell Rosel
- Stage Mgrs/Directors/Choreographers Terms Expiring
  - Margaret Stenger
  - Remaining in Office: None

**05 New Orleans Area**
- Chorister Terms Expiring
  - Sally Mouzon
  - Remaining in Office: Julianne Booth
  - Dancer Terms Expiring
  - None
  - Remaining in Office: Christopher Anderson, Nicholas Smith
  - Soloist Terms Expiring
  - Antonio Nagore
  - Remaining in Office: None

**06 Philadelphia Area**
- Chorister Terms Expiring
  - Evelyn Santiago-Schulz
  - Remaining in Office: Maren Montalbano
  - Soloist Terms Expiring
  - None
  - Remaining in Office: Sara Blann

**07 Wash./Baltimore Area**
- Chorister Terms Expiring
  - David Prager, Christopher Rhodovi, Bailey Whiteman
  - Remaining in Office: Joe Minor
  - Dancer Terms Expiring
  - Barbara Stuckey
  - Remaining in Office: None
  - Soloist Terms Expiring
  - None
  - Remaining in Office: J Austin Bitner, Paul Mcllvaine
- Stage Mgrs/Directors/Choreographers Terms Expiring
  - None
  - Remaining in Office: Cassandra Domser

**08 Pittsburgh Area**
- Chorister Terms Expiring
  - None
  - Remaining in Office: Kellie McCurdy Ryan

**09 New England Area**
- Soloist Terms Expiring
  - Marilyn Bulli
  - Remaining in Office: None

**10 Texas/Oklahoma Area**
- Chorister Terms Expiring
  - Matthew Woodbury
  - Remaining in Office: None
  - Dancer Terms Expiring
  - None
  - Remaining in Office: Nicholas Leschke
  - Soloist Terms Expiring
  - Fred Craven
  - Remaining in Office: None

**11 Northwes Area**
- Chorister Terms Expiring
  - Maria Leatha
  - Remaining in Office: George Scott
### 2008 Board Seat Vacancy Table

This chart indicates Board seat(s) available in the following categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Chorister/Actor</th>
<th>Dancer</th>
<th>Director/Stage Manager/Choreographer</th>
<th>Soloist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. New York</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Southern California</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Chicago-Midwest</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. San Francisco</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. New Orleans</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Philadelphia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Washington/Baltimore</td>
<td>1 (expires 2010)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Pittsburgh</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. New England</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Texas/Oklahoma</td>
<td>1 (expires 2009)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Northwest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**President’s Message (continued from page 2)**

classified. Many people believe that there is a small group of Board members who labor for endless nights in dark, dank, damp subterranean caverns beneath the No. 1 subway line at Broadway and 40th Street in Manhattan. It is believed that they use arcane and dangerous methods to determine just how the seats are allocated, and that very occasionally, after descending to these depths, one or more are never seen again. I, personally, love this theory. Unfortunately, it isn’t true. The truth is that it is a simple mathematical process, although I will admit that the method used to round fractions of percentages to avoid trying to elect partial persons can be a bit mystifying. In any case, should the final figures indicate that a specific geographic region or working category does not qualify for a representative within the 75 members of the Board, an additional seat can be added for that area or category. Board members serve a three-year term.

The Board is responsible for setting policy for the Union, approving Collective Bargaining Agreements, overseeing the finances of the Union, and overseeing the National Executive Director. I’ll not go into the internal structure of the Board because, quite frankly, I’m concerned about saving trees. It is enough to say that there are committees and methods through which the Board achieves its purposes. Much like the U.S. Congress, although smaller and, for the most part, less contentious.

Common misconception Number Two: Being elected to the Board of Governors requires special knowledge of the Union and a lot of time, and I’m probably not qualified anyway. WRONG! Thinking about it enough to be concerned that you aren’t qualified indicates that you probably are. The Board meets once a month. When I was first elected to the Board, meetings sometimes lasted as long as four hours or more. Currently, the usual Board meeting lasts somewhere between an hour and a half and two hours. Occasionally, the issues before the Board cause the meeting to go a little longer. But, occasionally, meetings take less time. Some of the committees meet between each Board meeting, others meet only when there are issues for them to consider. While Governors are encouraged to attend every meeting, reality does tend to slap one up ’side the head, so constitutionally, Board members are only required to attend six of the twelve meetings each year. Remember that petition elsewhere in this publication? Think about it…

This brings us to a more local level. Remember the eleven geographical areas? Well, each area has an Area Committee. Constitutionally, the Area Committees have “such powers and duties as provided for by the Board of Governors.” In most areas they function much as the Board of Governors does, except that they concern themselves with issues in their specific area. Area Committees consist of members from the various working categories and are elected at the Area Membership Meetings that occur each year. AGMA’s constitution specifies that the Area Committee should have at least two officers, an Area Chair and another, unnamed, officer. Area Committee members serve terms that are no more than three years, although some areas opt for shorter terms. In Chicago/Midwest, for example, we elect the Area Committee officers annually.

Common misconception Number Three: Participating as “only a local leader” is not important. I’m not going to scream “wrong” again, but I do strongly disagree. It is true that many of AGMA’s national leaders are also local leaders, but it is certainly not necessary. Grandma Beck would say, “Lots of hands make for me not having to work my butt off.” Not to

*(continues on page 9)*
### Board of Governors Seat Allocation for 2008 Election

(Census Data Based on Members in Good Standing as of July 31, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR TERM EXPIRES</th>
<th># CHORISTERS/ACTORS</th>
<th># DANCERS</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th># CHORISTERS/ACTORS</th>
<th># DANCERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. NEW YORK</td>
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<td>2. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA</td>
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<td>6. PHILADELPHIA</td>
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<td>9. NEW ENGLAND</td>
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<td>10. TEXAS/OKLAHOMA</td>
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<td>11. NORTHWEST</td>
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<td>1,219</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The tables above and on page 7 show a distribution of the total number of seats allocated to each geographic area, to each professional category, and to each professional category within each particular geographic area. The seats are allocated according to the procedures set forth in AGMA’s Constitution, including one extra seat allocated to New Orleans as permitted for a geographic area not otherwise entitled to a seat.

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**CONSTITUTION NOTICE**

AGMA’s Constitution and Bylaws are on the AGMA website [www.musicalartists.org](http://www.musicalartists.org) and can be downloaded and printed. Members without internet access can request a hard copy by writing to AGMA at 1430 Broadway, New York, NY 10018.

---

**IN MEMORIAM**

Jennifer Alexander  
Rose Bampton  
Andrew Foldi  
William Golden  

Frank Guarrera  
Joan Ingpen  
Michael Kidd  
Gary D. Rideout  

Lowell Smith  
Tamara Tarby  
Giuseppe Valdengo

*Indicates a distinguished individual in a related profession.
**“Baking for Bucks” to Benefit the AGMA Relief Fund**

*by Linda Mays, Honorary Chair of the AGMA Relief Fund Holiday Drive*

During the December 12 Metropolitan Opera performance of *Roméo et Julliette*, the Chorus Ladies’ lounge was the site of the festive third-annual bake sale and silent auction to benefit the AGMA Relief Fund. Laura Fries and Jane Thorngren were the creative geniuses who made the Bake Sale and Silent Auction gorgeous and profitable.

The talented bakers enlisted by Laura Fries and Linda Mays included: Met soloists LeRoy Lehr (and wife, Veronica Reed), Raul Melo, Paul Plishka, Eduardo Valdes, Jeffrey Wells (and wife, JoEllen); Stage Director Gina Lapinski; Stage Manager Raymond Menard; Chorus Administrative Assistant Steven Losito; Dancer Jenny Sandler; Choristers (regular, extra, retired) Rebecca Carvin, Kent Cottam, Aixa Cruz-Falu, Garth Dawson, Meredith Derr, Maria Donaldi, Steven Fredericks, Laura Fries, Constance Green, David Lowe, Craig Montgomery, Rose Nencheck, Anne Nonnemacher, Jean Rawn, Deborah Saverance (and sister, Glenda Groff), Carolyn Sielski, Annette Spann-Lewis, Daniel Clark Smith, Jane Thorngren, Sara Wiedt, Dennis Williams; AGMA Board of Governors member Linda Doria; and IATSE Local #764 dresser Martine Ogawa. Their phenomenal creations demonstrated both talent and care.

Barbara Curran, a member of the United Federation of Teachers, IATSE Stagehand Nat Lichtwar, and AGMA members Linda Doria, Suzanne Falletti (with daughter, Olivia), Laura Fries, Constance Green, Mary Meyers, and Jane Thorngren, made up the tireless sales team.

Thanks to all of the generous bakers and buyers, we were able to break our previous record and raise $1,800 in sales and an additional $750 in donations to assist our members through the AGMA Relief Fund.
**BOARD PETITION**

For Nominations of Members to the AGMA Board of Governors

We, the undersigned members of AGMA, in good standing, hereby nominate

_________________________________________ as a ______________________________

(Name of Member) (Soloist, Stage Dir/Mgr/Choreo, Chorister/Actor, or Dancer)
member of the AGMA Board of Governors from the ______________________________ Area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
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Ten signatures* of *members in Good Standing* are required. Both signatories and nominees must be residents of the above Area or in accordance to the Constitution.

**THIS PETITION MUST BE FILED WITH THE NATIONAL OFFICE IN NEW YORK BY MARCH 1, 2008.**

I, ______________________________, agree to run for the Board of AGMA.

____________________________
Signature of Nominee

*Additional signatures are advised in the event that one or more may be invalid due to late payment of dues, inactive status or some other irregularity.
Do You Have Money in AGMA’s Health Fund Plan B?

Have you worked for one of the companies listed below? Finding out if there is money in your account couldn’t be easier.

Administrative Services Only, Inc. (ASO) administers the AGMA Health Fund Plan B for those AGMA members who have had contributions made by their employer as required by a Basic Agreement. Go to www.asonet.com and follow the instructions, or call their toll-free number for AGMA members, (866) 263-1185.

If you have worked for one of these companies and have not been receiving quarterly statements and/or forms from the ASO office, it’s probably because they do not have your current address. Please contact ASO directly at Administrative Services Only, Inc., P.O. Box 9010, 303 Merrick Road, Suite 300, Lynbrook, New York 11563-9010 or call the toll free number (866) 263-1185.

Remember: When your employer is required to make Plan B contributions for you, those contributions are part of your compensation. Not using the contributions made for you is the same as not cashing your paycheck. The money in your Plan B account can be used for almost any medical, dental, or optical expense.

AGMA PLAN B CONTRIBUTING EMPLOYERS

American Repertory Theatre | Gotham Chamber Opera | Opera Company of Philadelphia
Aquila Theatre Company | Grant Park Music Festival | Opera Pacific
Ascension Music Chorus & Orchestra | Houston Grand Opera | Opera Theatre of St. Louis
Ballet San Jose | The Jena Company | Philharmonic Symphony of NY
Ballet Tech Foundation | Joffrey Ballet of Chicago | Pittsburgh Opera
Baltimore Opera Company | Los Angeles Master Chorale | Portland Opera Association
Boston Lyric Opera | Los Angeles Opera | San Diego Opera Association
Central City Opera Association | Lyric Opera of Chicago | San Francisco Ballet
Chautauqua Opera Association | Lyric Opera of Kansas City | San Francisco Opera
Chicago Opera Theatre | Martha Graham Center | San Francisco Symphony Chorus
Cincinnati Opera Association | Melodious Accord Inc. | Santa Fe Opera
City Center 55th Street | Metropolitan Opera | Seattle Opera Association
City Grand Opera | Michigan Opera Theatre | Stages Repertory Theatre
Dallas Opera | Movin’ Out Broadway | Studio Arena Theatre
Discovery Orchestra (Philharmonic Orchestra of New Jersey) | Movin’ Out Tour | Tri-Cities Opera
Florentine Opera Company | Music Before 1800 Inc. | Washington National Opera
Florida Grand Opera | Musica Sacra | Western Opera Theater

President’s Message (continued from page 5)

mention the fact that without input from the local level, national leaders are working in the dark.

At the most local level, you have the Shop Delegate or Steward. We use both terms interchangeably. I prefer Delegate for no particular reason except that it’s the term I’m used to using, so that’s the term I’ll use. The Shop Delegate is the first line of defense in contract enforcement and the foundation upon which the rest of the leadership stands. Because our individual shops all work in slightly, or sometimes greatly, different ways, the ways the Shop Delegates/Stewards are elected vary from shop to shop.

Common misconception Number Four: Being a Shop Delegate is hard, thankless work and will only serve to drive you to distraction. And that’s if you’re lucky. Well, okay, I have to admit that at times this is not entirely untrue. But it is important work, and you can actually take great satisfaction from it. It also helps that over the last several years we have greatly strengthened the support system for Delegates. There are now Delegate training programs that can be arranged for you, and systems have been set up to allow you to draw on the resources of AGMA’s professional staff and other elected leaders.

Common misconception Number Five: My vote doesn’t really matter, so I can just not bother sending in my ballot. I’m sorry, the answer we were looking for is, “My ballot is marked and in the mail to the National Office. Thank you for playing. Charlie, tell our contestants about their lovely parting gifts.”

Seriously, AGMA is a representative democracy. And in a representative democracy, the individual is the final authority. Your vote is how you exercise your authority. Don’t give up your authority by not voting. And if you find that voting’s not enough, the petition is still in this issue. Start getting those signatures.
New Orleans Opera opened their 2007-08 season with a new production of Gounod’s *Faust*. While the City of New Orleans continues repairing the flood-damaged Mahalia Jackson Theatre for the Performing Arts, performances are being held at McAlister Auditorium on the campus of Tulane University.

The New Orleans choristers welcomed the news that AGMA’s Board of Governors had approved a waiver of initiation fees for those joining AGMA in calendar year 2008, in recognition of the continuing hardships in New Orleans due to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Many of the New Orleans choristers lost everything or experienced severe damage to their homes in the flooding. Quite a few choristers relocated to different parts of the U.S. and there are still those who are not yet back in their homes. Thank you, Board of Governors, for recognizing the continuing struggle of New Orleanians; even though we are out of the eye of the media, our lives are still fragmented.

AGMA President Jimmy Odom attended the production of *Faust* and met with the New Orleans choristers on October 22 during a tropical deluge. Special thanks go to all those who braved the elements to attend the meeting and meet with Jimmy personally. The New Orleans choristers especially thank Jimmy Odom for paying a visit to the Crescent City.
San Diego Unions Resurrect Arts & Entertainment Council

by Joey DeStefano, AGMA Board Member and San Diego Opera Chorister

On November 16, 2007, representatives from each of the entertainment unions in the San Diego environs met to discuss issues of mutual concern and how to stabilize the growing arts industry in San Diego County.

Held at Union Hall in Mission Valley, with lunch and facilities sponsored by IATSE 122 Business Agent Carlos Cota, the meeting was the beginning of a new Arts & Entertainment Council for the San Diego environs. The group was initially formed some time ago, but had fallen into disuse. This is the first time that AGMA representatives had been invited to join in discussions. The Council hopes to provide a forum for interaction and support among the entertainment unions in San Diego County.

As a member of the Executive Committee of the San Diego Central Labor Council (CLC), Mr. Cota arranged for Lorena Gonzalez, Political Director for the San Diego CLC, to speak to us about how she can help our respective unions maintain a strong voice on the CLC, and how they can support us in future negotiations and discussions.

In attendance at the meeting were Joey DeStefano (AGMA), Carlos Cota (IATSE 122), Ed Badrak (AFTRA), Ginny McClure (IATSE 905), Jack Shepherd (IATSE 495), Debra Wanger (AEA), Eddie Arias (AFM 325), and Don Ahles (SAG).

AGMA Arizona Sponsors Backstage at the Opera

by John Cleveland, Arizona Opera Shop Steward

Backstage at the Opera is a rare opportunity for the chorus members to step out of the crowd and share their talents in the spotlight — alone or with one or two colleagues. Choristers have the opportunity to do what they love to do best, and also get to be an active part of raising money and support for Arizona Opera. This year, it was exciting to present this concert on June 9 at the Temple of Music and Art, a jewel of a theatre in downtown Tucson, and an elegant setting in which to share great music. In Phoenix, Backstage at the Opera was performed on June 16 at the Phoenix Boy’s Choir Facility in a wonderfully intimate setting that really brought the music to life.

Backstage at the Opera this year began with a wine and hors d’oeuvre reception, followed by the performance with an intermission buffet of desserts and coffee. All performers donated their time and talents in support of their “artistic home” and proceeds from the evening were donated to the general fund of Arizona Opera. Dan Kurek again served as the artistic director and accompanist for the concerts.

This year, over 160 patrons from the community attended the two concerts and $3,500 was raised for Arizona Opera in ticket proceeds and donations. In a recent ceremony, John Cleveland, AGMA Shop Steward, presented the check for $3,500 to Debra Harrison, General Manager of Arizona Opera, and Roberto Mauro, Director of Artistic Administration (see photo). Plans have already begun for the 2008 “Backstage at the Opera” concert series.
Tricia Lepofsky was elected as the new Washington/Baltimore (W/B) Area Committee chair in November 2007. Harvey Fort and Farrar Strum were newly elected to the Committee and succeed Vickie Miller and Tim Kjer, who both served our membership so effectively. The W/B Area extends much gratitude to them, and gives special thanks to Tim Kjer for his leadership as Area Committee chair for the last seven years. The strides realized in the contracts and Unionism in the Washington/Baltimore Area are directly associated with his expertise and guidance.

The Washington Ballet’s production of Septime Webre’s *Nutcracker* was broadcast in December to soldiers in Iraq. This special gift to our military was made possible by the combined efforts of all the unions involved with The Washington Ballet and special arrangements with the Pentagon.

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Washington National Opera’s production of Engelbert Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*: Magdalena Wor as the Witch and Leslie Mutchler as Hansel

Washington National Opera choristers in this year’s contemporary production of *La Bohème*: left to right: Nicholas Houhoulis (Cowboy Blue), Seong Won Nam (Diva), William Jones (Batman), and Matt Osfchin (Cowboy Yellow)

The Washington Ballet dancers at a production of *Excerpts from A Day in the Life*, left to right: Zachary Hackstock, Morgann Rose, Luis Torres, Tamas Knizia, Chauncy Parsons, Laura Urgelles, Jade Payette, and Brianne Bland

The Washington Ballet dancers in Septime Webre’s *Where the Wild Things Are*, left to right: Laura Urgelles, Sona Kharatian, and Brianne Bland

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Friday, December 14, 2007, became a memorable day for AGMA in the San Francisco Area when Western Counsel John Russum and National Dance Executive Nora Heiber led the negotiations of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus contract, as well as media side letters to the San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Ballet agreements, to successful completions, all on the same day.

With the assistance of the negotiating committee (Terry Alvord, Tiffany Cromartie, Kevin Gibbs, David Meissner, Jay Moorhead, Pam Sebastian, Chung-Wai Soong, Dianne Terp, and Merilyn Vaughn), Mr. Russum and Ms. Heiber began negotiating the San Francisco Symphony (SFS) Chorus contract in March 2007. After months of negotiating, the AGMA team was able to secure a three-year contract that includes 6.8%, 5.1% and 5% increases to the annual base compensation; 13.26%, 6.7% and 6.62% increases to rehearsal fees; the introduction of AGMA Health Fund Plan B contributions; and language that ensures the engagement of additional professional choristers should the size of the chorus reach a particular size. Other noteworthy improvements consist of new rate premiums related to day-time work, along with increases in sick leave and comp tickets. AGMA and the SFS professional choristers wish to express their sincere gratitude to the SFS Players Committee (AF of M) for all of their support during this process.

Side Letters for San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Ballet

Both the San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Ballet approached AGMA with requests to negotiate side letters that would serve to cover projects involving what many are prom- ising to be the new frontier for the performing arts, simulcasts of live performances in movie theaters.

After installing a Koret-Taube Media Suite, the first permanent high-definition, broadcast-standard video production facility in any American opera house, San Francisco Opera (SFO) entered into an agreement with The Bigger Picture, a subsidiary of Access Integrated Technologies, Inc., for world-wide distribution of six operas per year beginning in early March 2008. San Francisco Opera presented this development to representatives of AGMA, AFTRA, and IATSE in October 2007. San Francisco Area Chair Julianne Booth, Chorister Donna Turchi, Assistant Stage Director David Lefkowich, Dancers Jamielyn Duggan and Katherine Wells, and Principal Singer Kristen Clayton helped create the side letter allowing the Company to move forward with this exciting project.

As part of San Francisco Ballet’s 75th Anniversary, the Royal Opera House/Opus Arte presented an offer to distribute the Ballet’s Nutcracker worldwide, outside of PBS, including a theatrical release of a live simulcast to seventy screens throughout the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom. Assistant Stage Manager Tiffani Snow, with Dancers Elana Altman, Margaret Karl, and Pascal Molat contributed to the successful completion of this side letter.

Other Area News

In other Area News, Ms. Heiber has begun negotiating the terms and conditions that will cover Ballet San Jose’s five-week tour of China, set to take place in June of 2008. This side letter will serve as the foundation for tour language that AGMA hopes to negotiate into the Ballet San Jose collective bargaining agreement (CBA), which is due to expire in June 2008.

All in all, AGMA ended 2007 by ushering in, negotiating, and helping support several ground-breaking projects, terms, and conditions on behalf of our members. Aside from the ongoing grievance between AGMA and SFO (see update on page 16), the only disappointing news for the San Francisco Area came from Ballet West’s new Artistic Director, Adam Sklute, when he chose to not re-engage three dancers in violation of their CBA. AGMA is in the process of scheduling an arbitration to resolve this matter. Ms. Heiber and Eastern Counsel Deborah Alton-Maher are scheduled to begin renegotiating the Ballet West CBA on March 17, 2008.
New York Area Meeting
by Timothy Breese, New York Area Chair, Board Member, and Metropolitan Opera Chorister

The New York Area held a meeting on November 12, 2007. Outgoing Chair Mitchell Sendrowitz welcomed the Core Supers (now called Staff Performers) at the Metropolitan Opera to the AGMA membership.

Timothy Breese was elected as the new New York Area Committee Chair. Other new and re-elected members of the Area Committee include: Choristers Brian Baldwin, Jean Braham, Robert Kuehn, Rob Maher, Louis Perry, Mitchell Sendrowitz, and Marty Singleton; Dancers Christine McMillan and Jonathan Pessolano; Soloists Craig Montgomery and Belinda Oswald; and Stage Managers/Directors/Choreographers representative Ray Menard. Many thanks go to the AGMA members who serve on the New York Area Committee, past and present, especially Mitchell Sendrowitz, for his service as Chair.

During National Executive Director Alan Gordon’s report on the State of the Union, he assured us that New York City Opera will honor their contractual guarantees during the year-long construction project at the State Theater, even while discussions continue concerning those who are not covered. He also mentioned that after helping the dancers at American Ballet Theatre with their recent contract negotiations, it is hoped that they will soon rejoin AGMA after 12 years as an independent union. [Ed. Note: Please see update on page 1.]

Eastern Counsel Deborah Allton-Maher reported that several companies have recently negotiated their contracts in the New York Area: Ballet Hispanico, Martha Graham, Tri-Cities Opera, and Merce Cunningham. The negotiation with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will start ahead of schedule.

Following the main reports, various concerns and issues were discussed, including:

1) AGMA Health Plan Coverage: Can AGMA provide health coverage for its members? Mr. Gordon, stating that it is not currently financially feasible for AGMA to provide coverage for its members, directed members to the Health Insurance Resource Center page of The Actors Fund website for information. Patrick Carfizzi, a member of a Board sub-committee researching healthcare, reported that for some members, the insurance provided by the Freelancers Union might be worth investigating.

2) Health Fund Plan B: How can a member find out if there is money in his or her Health Fund Plan B account? Members who have had contributions made on their behalf by participating companies (see list on page 9) can go to www.asonet.com to find out how much money is available for their use.

3) Strike Fund: Does AGMA have a strike fund? AGMA does not currently have a strike fund. Mr. Gordon mentioned there are several remedies available, including the Union Plus Credit Card, which allows members’ payments to be suspended during a strike.

Free flu shots were provided for members and many attendees took advantage of this benefit. Refreshments and socializing concluded this successful meeting.

Metropolitan Opera Audition News: On December 17, 18, and 19, 2007, a group of Metropolitan Opera Regular Choristers, led by Daniel Clark Smith, sacrificed precious, pre-Christmas time-off to ensure that approximately 130 AGMA members and 250 non-AGMA members could audition expeditiously for Regular and Extra-Chorus positions in a comfortable, courteous, and professional atmosphere.

Dan began working with Met management months before the actual audition dates to plan for chairs, restrooms, drinking water, security guidelines, and other details that made the process seamless.

Working with Dan over the course of the three audition days were Craig Montgomery (as Dan’s assistant), Jean Braham, Sandra Bush, Karen Dixon, Suzanne Falletti, Michael Gray, Lee Hamilton, Jason Hendrix, Mary Hughes, Sven Leaf, Linda Mays, Anne Nonnemacher, Charlotte Philley, Marc Persing, Irwin Reese, John Smith, and Elaine Young.

Regular Chorus AGMA Delegates Greg Cross and Belinda Oswald monitored the auditions from 10:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on all three days.

New York City Opera Alumni Reunion

When: April 18, 2008
Where: Tavern on the Green
       W. 67th St. & Central Park West
       New York City
Time: 12:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.
       12:30 p.m. (Cash Bar-Terrace)
       1:30 p.m. (Buffet Luncheon)
       Open seating
Cost: $55.00 per person

Please mail your check to:
Lila McGill
7891 Granville Dr., Tamarac, FL 33321
Phone: (954) 718-9445
(Mail checks as soon as possible)

Volunteers are needed to help at the reception table. If interested, please call Arlene Adler at (718) 520-8966.
Dear Friend:

You are my hero and a hero of our colleagues in need. You are a loyal supporter of the AGMA Relief Fund and you deserve the credit for the many success stories, made possible by assistance through the Relief Fund.

Please join me in dedicating this year’s AGMA Relief Fund Holiday Drive to Ms. Beverly Sills and Mr. Jerry Hadley...two champions of the Relief Fund, both of whom spearheaded past AGMA Relief Fund Holiday Drives.

“One day you are on 'cloud nine', singing, soaring and the next day a catastrophic illness or accident can send you crashing to earth.”

“In those darkest hours the Relief Fund helps our colleagues in need. We need your help to continue this critical work.”

Beverly Sills, 2004 Holiday Relief Fund Drive

As a result of passionate and compassionate commitment, your generous response has enabled the Relief Fund to provide social services, financial aid and comfort to our colleagues in the midst of dire situations. The Relief Fund is currently providing emergency aid to the family of an AGMA member who was called from the operatic stage to serve in “the theater of war” in Iraq. Assistance is given confidentially—the results are often felt globally.

“At some point in our careers as artists, we all face unforeseen hardships that set us back. For some of us, however, injuries, illnesses and financial difficulties can leave us with no money to pay our rent, food and medical bills.”

“I am asking you to contribute because I think this organization is important to the whole opera and dance world. They rely on your help. I urge every member and donor to give what he or she can to keep the Relief Fund alive and working for as many of our fellow members as need help.”

Jerry Hadley, 1997 Holiday Relief Fund Drive

As we mourn the loss of these mighty and generous souls, we have a unique opportunity of paying tribute to them by supporting this pertinent and vital cause...their cause...our cause.

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season.

Sincerely,

Linda Mays
AGMA President and Relief Fund Chair, 1999-2007

*In Memoriam
Administered by The Actors’ Fund of America

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Abba Bogin
Bruce Donnell

Daniel Duell
Alan Gordon, Esq.
Candace Itow

Lynn Lundgren
Linda Mays
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ALTERNATE TRUSTEES

Lorraine Keane *emeritus
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Colby Roberts

AGMA RELIEF FUND DONATION FORM, PLEASE SEND TO:

Susan Davison, c/o AGMA Relief Fund; 1430 Broadway, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10018; (800) 543-2462

Make checks payable to the AGMA Relief Fund

My contribution to the AGMA Relief Fund is (contributions $25 and over may be charged to your Visa or MasterCard):

$500 ______ $100 ______ $50 ______ $25 ______ $15 ______ Other ______

Card #: __________ - __________ - __________ - __________  Exp. Date: __ __ / __ __  Bank V Code: ______ (last 3 digits on back of card)

Name: _____________________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________________________________________

E-mail: ____________________________________

In memory of:______________________________  In honor of: __________________________

Name of person to receive acknowledgment letter: ______________________________________________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________________________________________

☐ Check this box if you do not want to be listed in AGMA publications
NOTICE TO PRINCIPAL ARTISTS REGARDING SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

AGMA is involved in litigation against San Francisco Opera (SFO) because the Opera has been unilaterally deducting retirement and health plan contributions from Principal Artists' per-performance fees without AGMA's approval or the Artists' fully informed consent. An arbitration was conducted on January 22 and 23 and the decision is still pending.

AGMA representatives have met and talked with many Principal Artists regarding this issue and fully appreciate the huge impact SFO's action has had, and continues to have, on all who work with SFO. Any Principal Artists who have contracts for performances at San Francisco Opera and have questions about this issue should contact AGMA's San Francisco Area Representative, Nora Heiber, at nheiber@earthlink.net or at (415) 310-9877, as soon as possible. All contact with AGMA will be held in complete confidentiality.

Principal Artists and their agents need to be aware that until this issue is resolved, the per-performance fee that San Francisco Opera is currently offering Principal Artists includes AGMA's Health Fund Plan B and Retirement benefits as well as per-diem amounts.

The effort that many Principal Artists have already made in assisting AGMA in this matter is much appreciated. This is just one example of an issue in which AGMA is in the unique position of offering Principal Artists an opportunity to unite in accomplishing goals that cannot be achieved by their agents.

CONTACT LIST OF ASSISTANCE, MEMBER-ONLY SERVICES, AND DISCOUNTS

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<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Numbers</th>
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<td>Actors Federal Credit Union</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.actorsfcu.com">www.actorsfcu.com</a></td>
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<td>The Actors Fund</td>
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<td>The Actors Fund - Midwest</td>
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<td>(800) 221-7303</td>
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<td>(323) 933-9244</td>
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<td>(800) 221-7303</td>
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<td>AGMA Relief Fund - Intake West</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.agmaretirement-health.org">www.agmaretirement-health.org</a></td>
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<td>AGMA Health Plan B (“Administrative Services Only”)</td>
<td>(866) 263-1185</td>
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<td>Artists' Health Insurance Resource Center - NY</td>
<td>(212) 221-7300, ext. 165</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ahirc.org">www.ahirc.org</a></td>
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<td>(800) 581-CTFD (2833)</td>
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<td>TEIGIT (The Entertainment Industry Group Insurance Trust)</td>
<td>(800) 886-7504</td>
<td><a href="http://www.teigit.com">www.teigit.com</a></td>
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<td>Union Privilege/Union Plus</td>
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