

AGMA

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE
AMERICAN GUILD OF MUSICAL ARTISTS, Inc.



Howard Chandler Christy
1937

AGMA

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GUILD TALK

THE recent Hippodrome incident emphasizes afresh the necessity for certain reforms AGMA is attempting to introduce in the popular-price opera field. Chief among these is the use of written contracts in the engaging of principals and choristers. It would seem logical to assume that had such contracts been in force on the occasion mentioned, the performance would not have been cancelled.

Why do some popular-price opera impresarios shy away from the written contract and engage their artists and choruses only on an informal verbal understanding? If an opera is being presented to the public in good faith, if artists are being engaged in good faith, there should be no reason for not following the custom (standard in other fields) of confirming such an engagement by the signing of a definite contract. Contracts protect not only the artist, but also the impresario.

Assume, however, that the opera is not presented and the artists engaged in good faith. Assume that the impresario is not financially stable—that he is dependent purely upon box-office receipts to pay the rent of the theatre, the hire of orchestra and of the cast. Then the written contract may become a nightmare to him. With written contracts in force, if he guesses badly and the public doesn't buy tickets, he has, nevertheless, to go ahead with the performance, pay those whom he has put under contract, and, horror of horrors, lose money. Without contracts, if the box-office is unfavorable, he can find some pretext for cancelling the performance and save at least part of his potential losses.

The speculative (or "shoe string") manager who cancels unprofitable performances, in effect asks the artist to gamble with him. But he never shares with the artist his gambler's profits. It's a case of "heads I win, tails you lose."

Suppose such an impresario verbally engages an artist at a fee of \$50. That the box-office is weak and he cancels. The artist loses. Or, that the impresario verbally engages an artist at a fee of \$50 and the box-office is favorable. Then the performance goes on and

the artist receives his \$50. But he receives no extra amount to compensate him for his losses on previous gambles. He participates in no share of the profits for having been willing to have been a partner in a speculative enterprise. (Try to operate that way in the business world and see what happens!)

It is sometimes argued that popular-price opera is at best a speculative business and that its impresarios should therefore be dealt with leniently and not be subject to regulation. That is nonsense. Under good management, popular-price opera is no more speculative than the concert business.

The leading popular-price opera impresario of our time has been active over a long period of years. He is a shrewd operator. He has been financially successful. And, by the way, he uses written contracts.

The losses which popular-price opera impresarios often sustain are caused for the most part by their incompetence as managers and by their frequent errors of judgment. Artists should not be asked to pay the penalty for the impresarios' lack of ability.

AGMA is committed to the policy of the use of written contracts. With the loyal support of its members it will soon be able to enforce that policy in the popular-price opera field. Then, and not until then, will the impresario know that an agreement is an agreement, the artists know that an agreement is really an engagement, and the public know that an announced performance will become an actual performance.

Penny Wise

EVERY PENNY THAT AGMA CAN SAVE is a penny saved for its members.

Whenever ballots or questionnaires or other communications which require a reply from the membership are sent out from the AGMA office it involves a two hundred or three hundred percent increase in expense if it is necessary for us to send out "follow up" letters or ballots in order to remind the members to make that reply. We have not, so far, been able to escape this waste and added expense.

Why not make a mental note of this? Answer Guild communications promptly in the future and save yourself some money.

CHORUS ORGANIZATION PROCEEDS RAPIDLY

ON MAY 9th AGMA received from the International Board of the Four A's full jurisdiction over grand opera choristers in the United States. The jurisdiction formerly held by the Grand Opera Choral Alliance over this field was revoked and the Choral Alliance charter awarded to AGMA.

Since receiving this jurisdiction AGMA has pushed ahead rapidly with the organization of the chorus field so that already every professional grand opera chorus in the United States, with the exception of certain groups within the Choral Alliance, have either become AGMA members or are preparing to do so. Regular AGMA chorus membership groups are organized in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Los Angeles, and organization is going forward with the chorus in the San Francisco Opera Company in San Francisco.

Abuses in Chorus Field

Such rapid organization has been possible because there were, throughout the country, hundreds of choristers who needed and wanted union protection, but who were prevented from getting it by the closed-shop fostered by the old Choral Alliance, whereby, keeping less than two hundred members on its books, that organization consistently refused admission to all other eligible choristers. During the twenty years of its existence the Choral Alliance had never attempted real unionization of the chorus field but, on the contrary, had permitted the various choruses, which it had refused to organize, to take work whenever the Choral Alliance found that it did not have enough members to fill the requirements of the various impresarios who might be producing opera.

This situation, in which there were fully a dozen expert grand opera choruses who could not hope to receive union protection, resulted in the most extreme forms of cut-throat competition and price cutting. Since they had not the protection of an established minimum wage, the various choruses, including the Choral Alliance chorus itself, had no course open to them but to under-bid one another for whatever work might be offered. In this situation of course, the employer benefited at the expense of the chorister.

To persons who were able to look ahead or to consider impartially the interests of the choristers themselves, this abuse of their union status by the Choral

Alliance gave rise, naturally, to indignation and alarm and the Four A's International Board was many times importuned to intervene or to grant separate union affiliation to the large body of choristers who were excluded from the Choral Alliance.

Immediately after AGMA received its charter from the Four A's we began to negotiate with the Choral Alliance for an amalgamation because we believed that in the grand opera field an organization which represented both the choristers and the soloists would be much more effective in bargaining with employers.

Four A's Decides on Chorus Jurisdiction

Before these negotiations had progressed very far however, we became aware of the monopolistic policy which guided the Choral Alliance and were very definitely convinced that the Choral Alliance was not negotiating in good faith, since it had absolutely no intention of giving up the strangle-hold which it had over the chorus field without a struggle. Consequently the Four A's Board appointed a Committee to investigate the negotiations between AGMA and the Choral Alliance and to determine why they were not progressing to a mutually satisfactory result which would be beneficial to all choristers. The Choral Alliance refused to cooperate with this Committee and instead filed charges against AGMA on the grounds that AGMA had invaded Choral Alliance jurisdiction.

These charges of invasion were based upon the fact that AGMA had admitted to membership two choruses, one in Los Angeles and one in Philadelphia.

The Los Angeles situation was reported in these pages some time ago. The Los Angeles grand opera chorus had, for over ten years, been attempting to gain entrance into the Choral Alliance so that they might receive union protection in their work at the Hollywood Bowl and elsewhere. These attempts met with no success since the Choral Alliance did not even trouble to answer the letters which were written them by the Los Angeles chorus.

AGMA bargained for the Los Angeles chorus at the time when it made its contract with the Southern California Symphony Association and obtained for the chorus a minimum wage of \$16.50 per performance. This action of AGMA's was recognized by the Four

(Continued on Page 10)

AGMA SENDS GREETINGS TO MUSICIANS' CONVENTION

AT ITS MEETING on June 8th the Board of Governors adopted the following resolution and instructed Leo Fischer, AGMA's Executive Secretary, to present it to the Annual Convention of the American Federation of Musicians which is currently being held in Tampa, Florida:

"Whereas the American Federation of Musicians, an International Union, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, is assembled in Convention in Tampa, Florida; and

"Whereas the American Guild of Musical Artists, a union affiliated with the American Federation of Labor is interested in the prosperity of the American Federation of Musicians and in the success of its undertakings, since members of both organizations consistently work together, and the two organizations deal with the same individuals as employers of their respective memberships;

"Now, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Governors of the American Guild of Musical Artists, hereby extends its sincere greetings and its cordial good wishes for the continued prosperity and increased power of the American Federation of Musicians and instructs its Executive Secretary, Leo Fischer, to deliver these greetings to the American Federation of Musicians in convention assembled."

NEW CONSTITUTION IN EFFECT

*Results of Membership Referendum Officially
Announced by Board on May 25th*

ON May 25th the Board of Governors, according to the provisions of the old Constitution of AGMA, counted the ballots which had been duly received in the referendum conducted in connection with the proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws.

These amendments, as was announced in the previous issue of the magazine, had been approved by a membership meeting on March 10th, 1938.

The results of the official count disclosed 266 votes in favor of adoption and 4 votes against adoption.

Since 266 constituted an overwhelming majority of the voting membership in good standing during the period of the referendum, the Board officially announced the adoption of the new Constitution and declared it in effect as of May 25th, 1938.

The new Constitution will be printed in booklet form and a copy will be mailed to every AGMA member.

Additional BOARD MEMBERS APPOINTED

*Places Created by Adoption of New Constitution
Filled by Board on June 7th*

ONE of the changes embodied in the New Constitution of AGMA was the provision for a Board of Governors of twenty-seven instead of the previous fifteen and, with the addition of a Fifth Vice-President, eight Officers instead of the previous seven.

Three of these new places on the Board of Governors, as well as the Fifth Vice-Presidency, have been filled by former members of the GOAA, who were elected by the GOAA members and appointed by the Board in accordance with the AGMA-GOAA amalgamation agreement. (See page seven.)

To fill the remaining nine places, the Board of Governors pursuant to its authority under the Constitution, appointed the following persons to the Board as regular members:

Zlatko Balokovic	Jose Iturbi
Mischa Elman	Ernst Lert
Julius Huehn	Lauritz Melchior
Edwin Hughes	Ezio Pinza
Margaret Speaks	

These persons will come up for re-election at the next annual election: December-January, 1938-39.

Hereafter nine members of the Board of Governors will be elected each year to serve three year terms. Under the old Constitution only five Board members were elected each year.

JOINT COMMITTEE TO STUDY ACCOMPANIST SCHEDULE

AT THE Board meeting of June 8th Mr. Edward Harris, Chairman of the Accompanists Committee and a member of the Board of Governors, read to the Board the partial schedule of minimum fees and conditions regarding employment which had been drafted by the AGMA Accompanists Committee.

The Board decided to appoint a committee composed both of artists who employ accompanists and of accompanists themselves, to work out the final form of the schedule. This Committee will meet and work during the summer. Every attempt will be made to finish the work as soon as possible so that AGMA regulations can go into effect for accompanists within the next season.

WORLD'S FAIR COMMITTEE

THE various Four A's units are considering the adoption of a common policy in their negotiations with the World's Fair officials regarding the employment of their members at the Fair. This move was inaugurated by Actors' Equity Association through its President, Burgess Meredith, who sent a letter to AGMA and to the other branches of the Four A's urging group negotiations. A committee composed of:

Frederick Baer	Daniel Harris
Frank Chapman	Julius Huehn
Eva Gauthier	Queena Mario
Charles Hackett	Lee Pattison
Artur Rodzinski	
and Margaret Speaks	

was appointed by the Board of Governors to deal with the committees of the other Four A's organizations in working out the schedule of Four A's regulations.

One meeting of the AGMA-World's Fair Committee has already taken place and, pending conferences with the other Four A's committees, the following general points of policy were adopted:

1. The "Four A's-Shop" at the Fair—The requirement that all persons working at the Fair be members of the Four A's organization under whose jurisdiction their activities fall.
2. That all artists performing at the World's Fair be paid for their work. It was decided that an attempt be made to obtain from the World's Fair Employment Relations Committee an acknowledgment that all performers be paid their established fees...

Further reports of the progress of the World's Fair negotiations will appear in future issues.

FEODOR CHALIAPIN *A Tribute*

By MARIA KURENKO

FEODOR IVANOVITCH CHALIAPIN represents a phenomenon which has no equal in the history of operatic and vocal art;—just as Shakespeare and Pushkin in literature. The annals of histrionic art in the past three centuries have no figure comparable to Chaliapin, who embodied all the highest attainments of dramatic and vocal artistry. In his genius everything was in perfect accord—his voice, his acting, his unusually handsome, tall physique, his expressiveness of gesture, his mimics, his comprehension of style and exclusive musical talent.

There are, and have been, a great many outstanding singers possessing one or two of these qualities, but Chaliapin stands alone as the possessor of all. Each of these individual talents he endeavored to cultivate separately to perfection. The art of make-up he studied under the celebrated Russian portrait painter Vrubel, from whose sketches the costume and makeup of "The Demon" by Rubenstein were made. As the example of the effect on his audience created by his costume and makeup, can be cited the premiere of "Faust" in Moscow. His first appearance on the stage was accompanied by such a wild storm of ovation because of the realism of his impersonation of Mephistopheles that he was prevented from beginning his part for ten or fifteen minutes.

The characters and personality of *Ivan the Terrible*, in the opera "Pskovitianka" Rimsky Korsakoff, and of *Boris Godounoff* he studied with the famous historian Klutcheffsky in order to be able to represent the realistic and true types of these heroes of Russian history. He made a careful study of how people die from various causes so as to be able to show to the public such deaths in a natural manner.

It must not be said that Chaliapin sang and acted on the stage; he actually performed a ritual. Everything about him was so exalted, so ideal, so dignified and persuasive that one could not disagree with his interpretation of the role he was portraying. Whenever he was scheduled to play, from the very start an unusually solemn atmosphere prevailed in the theatre. The audience spoke only in whispers, as if afraid to break the solemnity of the occasion. His colleagues, the conductor, and the chorus members, were likewise under the same spell.

Heaven forbid that anyone dare to obstruct any of the scenes conceived by him! His exclusive magnificence on the stage created the following anecdotal fact: Four years ago in the Prague during the performance of "Boris Godounoff," the artist playing the role of Patriarch was so awed and overcome by the majesty and brilliance of Chaliapin's *Godounoff* that he ran from the stage and did not stop running even to remove his costume until he reached his home. The curtain had to be lowered.

Chaliapin was the friend of the best poets and artists of his epoch. Gorky was his dearest friend. They had much in common, for they both came of peasant stock.

Composers wrote operas for him. Boito presented "Mephistopheles" in Milan and brought Chaliapin especially for the performance. Gretchaninoff presented for the first time his "Dorbina Nikitich," a charming opera based upon folk melodies of Russia in Petersburg, and Massenet wrote "Don Quichotte" for Chaliapin and presented it at the Paris Opera Comique for the first time. It was a triumph. Three



MARIA KURENKO

years ago the Opera Comique again presented "Don Quichotte," and when Chaliapin arrived, all the members of the orchestra, chorus, soloists and director were waiting on the stage. The director addressed to Chaliapin a most gracious and touching speech. "I—the orchestra—the artists are all at your service," he said. "Do with us what you want."

Four years ago in Naples a special medal was ordered for Chaliapin and was presented during the performance of "Igor" in which he played two characters—*Galitzky* and *Kontchak*.

The last five years of Chaliapin's tour in Europe, Asia and the United States were a veritable triumph. In Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria special trains were organized for those who wished to see and hear Chaliapin. It seems as if the governments of these Slavic countries wished to give as many of their citizens as possible an opportunity to see him before his death so that they might have the right to say "I saw Chaliapin, I heard Chaliapin."

In Japan, while in one or the other of her cities, schools were closed and the children were lined in rows at the railroad station to welcome the great Russian artist with shouts of—"Banzays." To return these courtesies Chaliapin learned a few sentences in Japanese to express his gratitude.

Everyone could witness the grateful enthusiasm Chaliapin experienced in Chicago three years ago. The tickets were sold out a week before his scheduled concert. The stage

as well as the auditorium was crowded. As was recorded by the press, such an event had not been witnessed for a decade. The critics wrote panegyric hymns. He sang indeed divinely at the mature age of 62 and many a clandestine holy tear could be seen rolling down the cheek. He caused tremors of the soul, he enchanted — he made people weep, and he made them laugh. Among the best numbers of his concert repertoire were the "Two Grenadiers" of Schumann, the "Aria of Leporello" from Mozart's *Don Juan*, the "Aria of Life for the Tzar" by Glinka, and other lyric and comic songs by Glinka, Dargomisky, Moussorgsky, etc., "The Flea" of Moussorgsky Chaliapin made immortal. Nobody could sing as Chaliapin did, a song by Rubenstein — *Persian Romance*.

In his singing he created a magnificent picture of love, sorrow, jealousy and dreams of the human heart. Even now, when I remember it, tears come to my eyes; tears of sorrow that a great artist died and will never come back — tears of admiration for the marvelous moments he gave us listeners. He was as great in concerts as in opera, but no audience appreciated him as Russia did, and secondly — France. France, marvelous country of great culture, heart and understanding, country of faithful love for artists.

Artists and performers once loved and admired by Paris remain admired forever. Chaliapin was adored in France, worshipped by selected audiences and by the crowds. And he died in Paris.

When he passed away Paris eulogized a truly great artist. Everyone was at his funeral in the modest Russian church at Rue Darue in Paris, the church so beloved by all Russians. The church was surrounded by thousands and thousands of Russians and Frenchmen and the services were broadcast to other thousands who could not get into the church. Many were openly crying, crying for the great Chaliapin who was gone forever, and crying in memory of the best part of their former Russia. His songs, however, live in the hearts of his Russian people. The bier was carried from the church by Sergei Rachmaninoff, Sergei Lifar and Boris, son of Chaliapin, who had just returned from America. Enroute to the cemetery the procession stopped before the Grand Opera where Chaliapin created so many beautiful roles. The Grand Opera's chorus sang excerpts from *Boris Godunoff*.

All Paris was there including the president of France himself. All Russia; all the poor; those who are known as emigres; all came to pay homage to their great national artist. Glamorous page of Russia's past with beautiful personal memories of those who knew better days. This page, with the death of Chaliapin, closed forever.

Just after I made by debut in Russia eighteen years ago, I sang *Rosina* with Chaliapin in "Barber of Seville," as *Marguerite* in "Faust" and as *Antonida* in "Life for the Tzar" by Glinka. He knew the gentle art of aiding with his advice and his kind words. He loved youth and he loved to help young struggling artists to find their rightful place. With Chaliapin as *Mephistopheles* and I as *Marguerite*, the opera "Faust" was to be presented at the Staatz Opera in Berlin eight years ago. I had a long season in America — much longer than I had anticipated — so I phoned to Berlin that it would be impossible for me to interrupt my season in America for two or three performances in Berlin.

Some time after, I heard from a personal friend and accompanist for Chaliapin, Max Rabinovitch that Chaliapin was very angry with me. How could I prefer anything to performance with him? I really was afraid to meet him again. A few years ago I was invited to have dinner at Mischa Elman's house in New York where Chaliapin and his wife were among the guests. Mischa Elman, trying to do his best to please me, put me at Chaliapin's right at the table.

At the beginning of the dinner I felt he was very cold to me and avoided my eyes. But as the dinner went on with interesting general conversation about art and music, ardent conversation of Russians, he became more friendly and the dinner was a success. Afterwards, when I was talking to his wife, Chaliapin approached me, bent from his great height and whispered, "Kurenko, I thought I would never forgive you the betrayal of 'Faust,' but it seems I do forgive you." I was really touched by this reconciliation.

A few years ago when Lawrence Tibbett and I sang in a joint recital in Detroit and I was admiring his beautiful interpretation of songs by Moussorgsky, Tibbett said to me, "I'm glad you like them. I adore Russian music. I have studied it, but I wish I could sing and speak Russian . . . I love it because I adore Chaliapin. He is my ideal." He was the ideal of all sincere, talented actor-singers, and as long as the traditions of his created characters live, he will be ideal. Chaliapin sang beautifully until his last performance. His voice was young and powerful as ever. I heard him in *Boris* and the *Barber of Seville* only two years ago. I also heard him in Paris in "Igor" when he sang the two roles of *Prince Galitzky* and *Konchak*, and the audience went wild.

Now his voice is stilled, and forever stilled, and again one feels that though everyone is mortal, genius should be immortal, but for the world Chaliapin is no more.

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GOAA ELECTION RESULTS

AT THE MEETING of the Board of Governors held on June 15th, 1938, the secret ballots cast by the former members of the Grand Opera Artists Association for the election of three members of the Board of Governors and one Vice-President in accordance with the provisions of the AGMA-GOAA agreement of August 27th, 1937 were counted under the supervision of Mr. Frank Gillmore, International President of the Associated Actors and Artistes of America, who attended the Board meeting for that purpose.

Sixty-seven ballots were received and tabulated, one being invalidated because it was not marked.

Daniel Harris, receiving the highest number of votes (47), was elected to the Vice-Presidency and formally appointed by the Board.

Elisabeth Hoeppel (42 votes) and Lawrence Power and Georgia Standing (37 votes each) were elected and appointed as members of the Board of Governors.

Of the other candidates, Arthur Anderson received 28 votes; Mario Valle 23 votes; Dmitri Onofrei 21 votes; Delfina Calzalari 14 votes; and Rocco Pandiscio 11 votes.

After the ballots were tabulated lots were drawn to determine the tenure of office of the persons elected.

Mr. Harris, as Vice-President, will serve for two years coming up for re-election at the Annual Meeting of December-January, 1939-40.

Miss Hoeppel will serve a two year term, coming up for re-election at the Annual Meeting of December-January, 1939-40.

Mr. Power and Miss Standing will serve three years, coming up for re-election at the Annual Meeting of December-January, 1940-41.

With the election of these three additional Board-Members and one additional Officer, and with the appointment of nine new Board-Members to fill the places provided by the new Constitution (see page 5) the work of the Board, which has been increasing tremendously in latter months, will be greatly facilitated.

AGMA welcomes these new Board-Members and looks forward to their assistance in the work before us.

AGMA'S MEMBERS... EDDY BROWN

(This is the first appearance of a new department in "AGMA" Magazine through which we intend to introduce various AGMA members who are engaged in activities of interest to their colleagues)

AS MUSICAL DIRECTOR of Station WQXR in New York, Eddy Brown occupies an office on West 57th St. Here, rather ambitiously early in the morning, the interviewer sought him out in order to ask questions about the Dunrovin Festival, and about WQXR. The Dunrovin Festival is presenting a series of three performances, two concerts and one operatic presentation, during the latter part of June and the beginning of July at the Estate of William Matheus Sullivan in Ridgefield, Connecticut. Rumors of an admission price of \$50.00 per seat hinted at something out of the ordinary run of summer concerts.

"What is the Dunrovin Festival about, Mr. Brown? Is it just a program of summer musical entertainment or is there a more important purpose behind the productions?"

"There is a very definite purpose behind the Dunrovin Festival, although it will be very good musical entertainment. The Festival is one of the production units sponsored by the Chamber Music Society of America which was formed five or six years ago. The purpose of the Society is to foster the performance of fine music that is not extensively known. Committees function in various localities plan programs and support the performances through subscriptions. In Scarsdale, New York for instance the local group is supporting an orchestra.

"In Ridgefield there will be three performances. The first will feature singers of the Dessoff Choir, Amri Galli Campi, the new soprano of the Metropolitan, and Ralph Kirkpatrick. The second program will feature Greta Stueckgold, Alice Ehlers, George Barrere and a Chamber orchestra, conducted by myself. In the third program we are going to present scenes from three of Mozarts operas—'Così Fan Tutte,' 'The Magic Flute,' and 'The Marriage of Figaro.'

"Mozart was a radical in his day just as Beethoven and Wagner were radicals and we are going to give a production of these operas which we think Mozart, if he were alive today, would understand and approve.

"We have spent six weeks in rehearsal. The scenes will be sung in English.

"This is very important. No wonder opera has been unpopular in this country so far—sung in foreign languages so that the audience is unable to understand a good half of the performance.

"Only half the fun of operas like 'The Marriage of Figaro' or 'The Barber of Seville' is in the music—the rest is in the dialogue, the comic situations, the wit, all of which is lost without a proper understanding of the text.

"We face a situation in America now similar to the one that Mozart faced in Germany when he was writing his operas. He wrote to Italian texts, the operas were produced in the Italian manner and sung by Italian singers. Not until Von Weber appeared was opera written regularly in German to really German subjects, but from that time on German

opera became a national institution. By the beginning of this century there were over 200 opera houses in Germany.

"I think we are at the same point in America now. There is almost a musical Renaissance in progress. We have never heard so much talk about music as in the last few years. Never so much and so many kinds of music. We just need a little encouragement; a little direction and one or two vital personalities and we will have a real American national musical culture. The country is right for experimentation and new things.

"More and more of us are becoming dissatisfied with old methods of production and a second hand musical culture. Spontaneous and unorganized activities are going on. Before long it will solidify. There is no doubt about it, America has become music conscious."

"Do you think that the Federal Music Project has helped in the musical revival you speak of?"

"Why in some respects it has made it. It has created audiences, it has experimented. The radio, of course, has been the most important factor. The radio has spread the knowledge of music from one end of the country to the other."

"That brings us to the second thing I want to ask you about—WQXR. Is your audience confined strictly to Greater New York or does the interest reach into outlying districts?"

"We send our printed programs all over. We have subscribers in Canada and in the South. WQXR plays the kind of music people are learning to want. People are getting to feel the need for music which has a lasting appeal or a lasting worth; something that will really satisfy their musical appetite. Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, Brahms and Wagner are 'good sellers' all of the time."

"I remember a couple of years ago when WQXR first started. People learned of it almost by word of mouth. At that time you played only an hour or so each day. Now you are using more and more 'live' programs."

"We try to use as many 'live' programs as we can. Of course we are a young station and must move conservatively. As far as the studio presentations are concerned we find that most interest, next to the recordings of big orchestral works, is in novel or unusual instrumental ensembles.

"But there is no doubt about the importance of radio in building up the musical revival that is now under way. Musicians should take advantage of the opportunity radio offers, to be articulate about their needs and problems. I would like to see an AGMA program on WQXR where our leading musicians held a sort of informal forum and brought before the public interesting musical and professional problems. Just as the President, and other persons who have important messages to deliver, use the radio to put them before the people, so we musicians who have a message of the greatest importance should use the radio to put it over."

THE WEST COAST

By ERNEST CHARLES, Assistant Executive Secretary

GREETINGS FROM CALIFORNIA, the land where almost everything happens — most of it right here in AGMA's office.

Since our last appearance in AGMA's pages, the Los Angeles office has seized hold of things and by this time has established itself as the axis of the California Musical World. Although one result of being the axis is that everything whirls rather alarmingly about one's head, we cannot deny that is a state of affairs which we rather enjoy.

The organization of the California Opera Company was our first taste of Popular-Price Opera work. The company announced a season of several weeks of opera in and about Los Angeles. To protect our soloists, chorus, and ballet, we required the company to post a cash bond covering rehearsal compensation, transportation and salary. The California Opera Company never went into production.

If AGMA does anything in the Popular-Price Opera field here, it will prevent impresarios from rehearsing a company for many weeks with no compensation in the hope that advanced ticket sales will make it possible to put on two or three performances. This is a condition which is unhealthy and harmful to opera, and it must be stamped out.

Shortly after the demise of the California Opera Company the Hollywood Bowl held auditions to select a chorus for the opera productions at the Bowl this summer. These auditions were held in accordance with the AGMA-Southern California Symphony Association contract and took place at the Los Angeles Junior College and the Audition Committee was composed of the following people: Representing the Southern California Symphony Association were Mrs. Clifford Lott, Chairman, Mr. Alexander Stewart and Kathleen Lockhart Manning. The AGMA Audition Committee comprised Clemence Gifford, Eleonore Woodforde, Ruth Miller Chamlee, with your representative acting as Master of Ceremonies.

Fifty-eight AGMA members auditioned on the first day, of which there were approximately thirty-five

chosen without question. During the following week approximately 150 people auditioned, and as a result of the selections made we will welcome into our chorus section a number of very fine fresh young voices.

The Hollywood Bowl auditions were scarcely over, when the La Scala Opera Company, of Seattle (!) decided to produce the opera "Aida" at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. Negotiations with this company have been successfully concluded and very favorable terms have been established for the soloists, chorus and ballet.

The Hollywood office is well established and as far as your correspondent is concerned, he has had the greatest good fortune in having the help and cooperation of everyone, without which nothing could have been accomplished.

Let me extend a very warm welcome to any AGMA members who are visiting in California and also issue a very earnest invitation that they make the AGMA office their headquarters. We are in a position to help them in innumerable ways and we want them all to feel that we are completely at their service.

The production of "Aida" that is to be staged by the La Scala Opera Company at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena on June 25th will be 100% AGMA. The Hollywood Bowl Operas this summer will be 100% AGMA. The many situations arising as the result of AGMA contracts have been handled with great wisdom and farsightedness by our local Executive Committee.

Your representative has had the opportunity and privilege of making several appearances before clubs here in Hollywood and in each instance has been accorded a very warm reception. There is a great amount of work to do out here and those people responsible are entering into it with the greatest enthusiasm.

The future looks very bright — almost, in fact, sunny. This is, of course, nothing new to California, where it never rains. . . .

CHORUS ORGANIZATION PROCEEDS RAPIDLY (Continued from Page 4)

A's Board and met with no objection from the Choral Alliance at the time.

In Philadelphia there were two choruses in existence competing with one another for the work which was available in their vicinity. The Choral Alliance issued "letters of affiliation" (which the Four A's Board ruled to be invalid since they had not provided that the members of either chorus should become members either of the Choral Alliance or the American Federation of Labor) first to one chorus, then to another. By this means both choruses were kept so weak by competition against one another that neither of them constituted any real threat to the closely held monopoly of the Choral Alliance itself.

AGMA took one of the choruses into its membership in the early part of this year in order to avoid the cancellation of several performances of the Civic Grand Opera Company in Philadelphia which would have represented a serious loss of employment of AGMA's solo members.

After the Choral Alliance had filed its charges of jurisdictional trespass against AGMA, AGMA responded by filing counter-charges to the effect that the Choral Alliance had failed to organize its field. AGMA was upheld by the Four A's International Board. The charter of the Choral Alliance was revoked and jurisdiction over choristers awarded to AGMA.

Since the revocation of its charter, the leaders of the Grand Opera Choral Alliance have managed to prevent most of their members from joining AGMA. This, of course, can only result in severe harm to these choristers since they will be unable to work with AGMA artists in any opera company under contract to AGMA. Since all of the popular-price opera companies are under AGMA contract and since we expect that the Metropolitan, the Chicago and the San Francisco Opera Companies will be so shortly, there is no doubt that these efforts to preserve a split in the grand opera chorus field will be, before long, defeated.

Organization in Philadelphia

In Philadelphia, the chorus working at the Civic Grand Opera Co. and at the Robin Hood Dell has been organized under AGMA and has elected its own local committee which functions under the direction of Edmund J. Irvine who was appointed at the Board meeting of June 8th, as Assistant Executive Secretary of AGMA in Philadelphia.

The local committee, elected at a membership meeting of the chorus held on June 2nd at the Hotel Sylvania, is composed of the following persons:

<i>Chairman</i>	Mr. R. T. Connell
<i>First Vice-Chairman</i>	Mr. Josef A. Escher
<i>Second Vice-Chairman</i>	Mrs. Jessie Walker
<i>Secretary</i>	Miss Helen E. Botwright
<i>Three Committee Members</i>	Miss E. Christine Connelley
	Mr. Walter M. Hemmerly, Jr.
	Mr. Pierino Salvucci

The Hippodrome Cancellations

The recent occurrence at the Hippodrome when a performance of "Aida" and one of "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Pagliacci" were cancelled is an example the harm that is being done by the opposition elements in the Choral Alliance. Although AGMA is aware that other factors than the chorus situation were responsible for these cancellations, nevertheless the loss of employment to both soloists and choristers which resulted must be in great measure held against the Choral Alliance leaders.

AGMA'S Policies

AGMA's policy in regard to the organization of the chorus is very simple, very honest, and will be, we believe, very welcome to the choristers themselves, their employers and the artists who work with them.

Any person who is employed as a chorister is eligible to membership in the chorus division of AGMA. Likewise, any impresario may employ any chorister whom he may wish.

This policy will be hailed with relief by impresarios who, in the past, have been forced to employ choristers whom they did not want and whom they considered undesirable in appearance, voice, and stage ability.

After Fortune Gallo had cancelled his entire tour in the fall of 1937 because he was unable to come to a reasonable understanding with the Choral Alliance in connection with the employment of his chorus, he wrote a letter to AGMA in which he requested us to do something to rectify the situation in which he was forced to employ choristers whom he felt would seriously endanger the success of his enterprise.

Similar requests were received from almost every other impresario in the field. Now that this condition has been corrected and this burden removed we can undoubtedly look forward to new activity and greater employment for both choristers and the principals in the opera field.

AGMA will bargain for its chorus membership for better wages and better working conditions. As in all of our other activities we will attempt to keep in mind the interest of the whole of our membership and the welfare of opera itself.

BAN On Semi-Recorded OPERA

Board Rule Prohibits Members From Performing With Recorded Accompaniment

DURING the past winter AGMA received various reports that plans were afoot to produce a tour of "opera" in which the orchestral and choral music were to be reproduced by means of electrical recordings and only the singers were actually to appear on the stage.

Productions of this kind had been given in England and Russia during the past few years as experiments in the synchronization of "canned" and "live" music, with the orchestral and choral music being projected from a loudspeaker and a conductor beating measures and pointing cues. The singers interpolated their parts in the intervals of silence or orchestral accompaniment measured off for them.

The last act of "Faust" was presented in this manner at the Juilliard School last winter under the direction of Vladimir Schavitch, using recordings of the orchestral and choral music made by Sir Thomas Beecham in London. While the experiment was interesting, viewed as an experiment, it could not have been considered satisfactory as a musical performance.

In the early part of Spring, AGMA received definite word that a company was being formed to produce opera in this manner, on a commercial basis. The Board was thus faced with the necessity of deciding whether or not to establish minimum wages and other working conditions for "companies" of this type.

About this time the following letter was received from Mr. Joseph N. Weber, President of the American Federation of Musicians:

AMERICAN GUILD OF MUSICAL ARTISTS, INC.

Dear Sirs and Brothers:

This office has for some time past now been importuned by promoters to agree on a policy of having theatrical performances, vaudeville shows, opera, musical comedies and like productions so arranged that the singers or actors can give their performances being accompanied by recorded or canned music.

As doubtlessly your organization is interested in this matter, I beg to call to your attention that for the entire theatrical profession, such a development would be extremely dangerous. The recording would not stop with the music but finally would include the chorus and later the principals as well.

For these reasons, the American Federation of Musicians will not permit its members to make recordings for such purpose as above explained and takes this means of calling the attention of your organization to the danger that if it agrees to the promotion of such performances, part of which are supposed to be played by recorded music, it will not stop

there. The interests of members of a chorus and even that of principals finally become involved. Therefore all of us should be opposed to such developments.

Wishing your organization continued success, I remain with best wishes,

Fraternally yours,

JOE N. WEBER.

This letter crystalized certain misgivings which had been in the minds of members of the Board since "recorded opera" had first come up for consideration. With AGMA's assumption of jurisdiction over choristers the matter became even more complicated, since the presentation of opera with the use of recordings to eliminate the chorus was definitely opposed to the interests of our chorus members. It became apparent that, as Mr. Weber pointed out, the scheme presented a grave danger for the future. The next obvious step was to eliminate the comprimario singers then possibly the principals themselves would be eliminated and the entire performance recorded, while the action was projected on a moving picture screen.

Although for these reasons the project seemed dangerous, nevertheless, in view of the fact that this artificial means of reproducing certain portions of the opera was rather unsatisfactory to the listener, its chances of real success (and therefore of the ability to give employment to AGMA members) seemed practically negligible. While a few performances might be given and might prove moderately successful because of the element of novelty attached to them, it did not seem probable that this type of opera would endure as permanent entertainment.

From the point of view of the singer, the necessity of keeping rigid time with a mechanical recording eliminated any possibility of self-expression or individual interpretation.

Therefore in view of the fact that the semi-recorded opera did not seem to offer any real promise of much employment to AGMA members, while it did constitute a threat of loss of employment to them as well as to musicians, and since it very definitely constituted a threat to the artistic standards of opera presentation, the Board, on May 20th, adopted the following resolution:

"WHEREAS, after due consideration of all facts available to the Board and in the light of the experience which members of the Board have had with other methods of artificial reproduction of musical performances it is the opinion of the

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AGMA Enters the THEATRE Authority

AT THE Annual Membership Meeting on April 18th, the membership unanimously voted, authorizing the Board to take steps toward the entrance of AGMA into the New York Theatre Authority, Inc.

Accordingly, on April 20th the Board of Governors adopted the resolution printed below, endorsing the Theatre Authority and its activities.

When all details are worked out concerning the proportion of the monies collected by the Authority which will be allocated to AGMA, and concerning other matters bearing upon the entrance of AGMA into the Authority, AGMA will pass a rule prohibiting its members from taking part in any benefit not approved by the Authority. Before this rule goes into effect the membership will be notified through AGMA Magazine and a full explanation of how AGMA's benefit-control system will work will be given them.

Meanwhile AGMA is represented at the meetings of the Theatre Authority and is participating in the plans that are going forward there to make the necessary revisions in the Authority to accommodate its new members, AGMA, SAG, AFRA, and the AFA.

The Theatre Authority has organized offices on the West Coast and AGMA is represented on its West Coast Board.

It is anticipated that final arrangements concerning the membership of the Four A's branches in the Theatre Authority will have been settled before the next issue of the "AGMA" Magazine is published.

The Board resolution passed on April 20th is as follows:

"WHEREAS, Theatre Authority, Inc., a New York Corporation, was organized for the purpose of regulating benefits insofar as they concern participation of professional persons of the amusement industry, and

WHEREAS, Theatre Authority, Inc., has been operating successfully in the Eastern States and now contemplates ex-

tending such operation throughout the United States and Canada, and

WHEREAS, The Council of Actors' Equity Association on March 13th, 1934, passed a resolution endorsing the Theatre Authority, Inc. and on January 22nd, 1935, passed a resolution prohibiting its members from appearing in any benefit that has not first been approved by the Theatre Authority, Inc., under penalty of fine or suspension and the American Federation of Actors and Screen Actors Guild, Inc., have passed similar resolutions, and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of this organization to do all within its power to contribute toward the successful functioning of Theatre Authority, Inc.,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the American Guild of Musical Artists, Inc. does hereby endorse the Theatre Authority, Inc., and its activities and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that when and only when the Theatre Authority, Inc. and the American Guild of Musical Artists, Inc. reach a mutually satisfactory agreement with regard to the proportion of the new proceeds collected by the Theatre Authority, Inc. from benefits allocable to the American Guild of Musical Artists, Inc. the following regulations shall become effective:

"No member of the American Guild of Musical Artists, Inc. shall appear in, assist in any manner or give help of a professional nature either directly or indirectly to any benefit which has not first been approved by the Theatre Authority, Inc. Violation of the foregoing shall be deemed conduct unbecoming a member of the Guild."

Although the regulation of benefits in which AGMA members appear is not yet placed finally in the hands of the Theatre Authority, AGMA members should notify the Guild office whenever they are requested to appear in benefits so that some investigation can be made to determine whether the benefit is legitimate.

BAN ON SEMI-RECORDED OPERA . . .

Board that any method of producing opera whereby the orchestral music, the choral music, and/or any other feature of the musical ensemble is reproduced by electrical transcription, represents a grave danger to the well being of the musical profession and represents a direct curtailment of employment for certain types of AGMA members; and

"WHEREAS, the American Federation of Musicians, through its President, Mr. Joseph N. Weber, has informed AGMA of a similar attitude on the part of the American Federation of Musicians and has requested AGMA to support the policy of the A. F. of M. in discouraging the production of such operatic performances;

"Now, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Governors does hereby prohibit every AGMA member from

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accepting engagements or appearing either gratuitously or for compensation in any operatic production in which the orchestral music, the choral music, and/or any other part of the musical ensemble is reproduced by means of mechanical transcriptions."

AGMA members will please take note that they are prohibited from accepting employment in "opera productions" of the type described in the resolution. Violations of this rule will be dealt with very firmly. If any member receives an offer of employment from any producer of this kind of opera he should notify the AGMA office at once.