PETITIONS AND NOMINATIONS FOR CANDIDATES DUE FOR BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Use the democratic process upon which this union is based. In order for AGMA to fully serve its members, each member must participate in the selection of the candidates for the Board of Governors as well as in the final vote. You have the right and the responsibility to nominate candidates to run in the upcoming election for National Officers and members of the AGMA Board of Governors. The Board of Governors represents the various artists who make up our union and these governors make the decisions that affect each and every member.

Members may nominate their choices by petition. This requires at least ten signatures of members in good standing as of February 1, 1998. Candidates have to accept the nominations as well as be in good standing before submission. To be a member in Good Standing of AGMA you must be fully paid in both basic and working dues. Should you have your employer deduct your basic dues, it could be possible that your dues are not being paid in time and your signature or vote could be invalid. If you need to check your standing, please contact the AGMA Membership department.

Information on the elected positions as well as petitions for nomination are contained in this issue.

AGMA RELIEF FUND SERVICES AGMA MEMBERS

Unexpected hardships such as illness, injury, or a canceled contract can be an enormous setback for artists. For over fifty years, the AGMA Relief Fund has served as a safety net for your AGMA friends and colleagues - providing emergency assistance and long-term care to dancers, singers, stage managers, directors and choreographers in need. Chances are, at least one person you know has been assisted by the Fund at some point.

Each year, the Relief Fund appeals to the AGMA members to contribute to the organization that exists solely to support them. In Chicago, new Advisory Board members Bryan Miller and Carolyn Berghoff organized an auction to raise money. Bryan also sold T-shirts which benefited the Relief Fund. To date, this has brought in close to $3,500. Their efforts are much appreciated, and a great inspiration to others. In addition to the generosity of the membership, the Relief Fund has also received annual grants from the Walter Scott Foundation, the William Matheus Sullivan Foundation, and Broadway Cares/ Equity Fights AIDS.

When you give to the Relief Fund, your money goes to supporting the following programs:

✦ Immediate response to emergency needs
✦ Rent and utilities payments
✦ Assistance for elderly and disabled artists

Sarah Hersh of Lyric Opera Chorus participates in an AGMA silent auction to benefit the AGMA Relief Fund during Idomeneo.
SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

THE SECRET ABUSE

Over the New Year’s holiday, my family and I traveled to Charleston, South Carolina to see that city’s fabled architecture and to absorb the history emanating from its mansions, graveyards, and cobblestone streets. We stayed in a fortress-like hotel which had been converted from the first site of the military college known as The Citadel. This military academy was featured in recent headlines, when the first undergraduate women broke gender barriers to admission, as an earlier generation had broken the racial barriers. The Citadel also inspired one of its graduates, Pat Conroy, to write of the mistreatment he and his classmates experienced during their college years there. Conroy’s The Lords of Discipline, explores the abuses to which first year students are subjected by those who have absolute power over them, students for whom the only escape is to quit.

Conroy’s novel is a baroque embellishment of the theme: absolute power corrupts absolutely. AGMA Artists, in passionate pursuit of excellence, in dedication to the highest of levels of attainment, and out of loyalty to their employers and colleagues, make extraordinary sacrifices. Despite the gift (or is it a curse?) of brilliant talent, in their years of study, apprenticeship, and as professionals, many suffer pain, privation, even humiliation for the sake of their artistic goals. Like many areas of the performing arts, sexual harassment and predation are not unknown.

Many Artists are fortunate to work for employers and artistic staffs who do not exploit their earnest desires to dance, sing, stage manage, direct, and choreograph. Yet even one instance anywhere of sexual harassment or abuse is excessive. To be fair, when such incidents are brought to the attention of managements, protective and punitive measures are usually swift and adequate to prevent recurrence.

However, two concerns remain: First, the prevention and, second, the reporting of all such incidents. Where unequal status and bargaining positions are present, relationships may not be truly consensual. Artists should not be apprehensive lest any factors but talent, skill, and dedication dictate their successes and future contracts. The results of a recent canvassing of AGMA Artists indicate that although the problem is not pervasive, it affects our members in the workplace from time to time. (Nor are all the episodes attributable to members of management staffs. A few AGMA members have been reported to have been guilty of misconduct of this sort toward other AGMA members. In these cases, as in situations where members of management are involved, it is the employers who have the power and the duty to take action to avert further problems.)

Preventing sexual abuse and harassment is also a responsibility of AGMA staff and members. Secrecy harms the victims and protects the perpetrators. All incidents must be reported, whether by the Artists involved or by witnesses to the events. As distressing as relating such information
From the President

Gerald Otte

What matters most in your life? Of your health, your family, your career, your wife, husband, lover, which is the most important thing in your life? Are you philosophical about life? Perhaps you are a fatalist. Do you like dogs or cats or both? What is your favorite color? Is Clinton a good President or a bad one? Are these questions too personal? Should the "Presidents Column" address such un-union issues? Probably it shouldn't. I mention such diverse, everyday ideas in this article to point out a very important fact about our union. We're different! "Oh," you say, "big deal, we're different." Yes, it is a big deal. We are not one homogenous group with one idea about how the world should be run. We are as diverse as all society is diverse. That is a big deal.

Diversity is the strength of our union. We have a union of wealthy international stars and minimal wage part-time choristers. We have seventeen-year-old dancers and eighty-seven-year old retired soloists. We have New Yorkers and Oklahomans. I could not begin to describe the sexual, cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity of our union. It's all there. Yet, we are a union. Each of us has a reason for being a part of this union. This is my reason.

I danced in a great Modern Dance company for seventeen years. Toward the end of my tenure I saw the great change that had evolved. What had started as a small, part-time company had grown into a big business. I toured as many as thirty-five weeks in a single year. We were no longer the family of dancers from the "Lower East Side" of New York going to Connecticut for a show in Hartford. We toured over fifty countries. I danced in forty-three states. Dancers were now replaceable on two weeks notice. They no longer needed a three to five year study under the master. There was no personal investment. The dancers were good. Some of them were great. They, however, were not committed to one company. This was just a stop, for many of them, as they developed their own careers. Somewhere along the line this had become as much "business" as "show."

Dancers came to me and said, "Shouldn't we have contracts of some kind? Shouldn't we know what we are going to be making this next year? Is there any way we can plan for our time when we are not rehearsing or performing?" I was pretty ignorant. I just assumed that's how things were and would remain. Then, someone mentioned the dreaded word, "union." It was two more years of talking over beers before we made a call to AGMA. That was a very scary thing to do. For the first time we, the dancers, had grown up enough to recognize our responsibility for our own lives. Why should the company change? They were getting maximum effort for minimum resources. We were the ones who had to change. It was another year before we had the nerve to apply for certification as a union company. We were very proud.

This story does not have a very happy ending. I was informed, by the director, that the company was "going in a new direction" and that my services were no longer needed. Maybe it was time for me to move on. I left a wonderful group of dancers who had contracts, knew their schedules in advance, had guaranteed breaks, and working conditions spelled out clearly. I also knew that I didn't want it to be so scary for the next generation of young artists to ask for their rights.

I guess that's why I'm your President. What's your story?
PAY OR PLAY PROVISION REVISITED

Tom Jamerson

A few years ago the term "Pay or Play" was discussed in AGMAzine. To recap, the term "Pay or Play" means that the salary specified in the individual Artist's contract is guaranteed to the Artist being ready, willing, and able to perform the contracted duties. The "Pay or Play" provision is in every AGMA Individual Artist's Contract for Employment. Should the contract be canceled by a company for any reason other than Force Majeure (e.g. act of God), the financial remuneration of the contract is owing to the Artist. Generally, a cancellation by a company would not be considered an act of God unless the cause of the cancellation is fire, flood, etc...

In recent months some opera companies, for financial reasons or otherwise, have canceled productions or changed the production to be presented. This has caused the company to cancel some Individual Artist's Contracts. When this happens, the Pay or Play clause requires the opera company to satisfy the financial terms of the contract. AGMA maintains that the full value of the contract is owed to the Artist.

Should you experience a cancellation of your Individual Artist's Contract for any reason, please contact the AGMA office to report the cancellation. For contracts in Dance, contact Alex Dubé. For contracts in Opera contact Thomas Jamerson. We will work with you to achieve full satisfaction of the agreement.

This provision of our agreement is one of the most important protections AGMA offers and it should be used by the membership when the contract is breached.

TEIGIT CHANGES

Due to changes in state laws, carriers have withdrawn certain health insurance coverage in the states of New Jersey and Washington. Members currently being covered by TEIGIT health insurance will continue to be covered until the member ends the policy. However, no new policies will be written until further notice.

TEIGIT expects insurance in Washington to be available within the next year, though policies for New Jersey are not expected to be available within the near future unless changes within the state regulations change.

TEIGIT has now made available a Long Term Disability Income Insurance with monthly benefits up to a maximum of $3,000 in increments of $100 (not to exceed 60% of average monthly earnings when combined with any other disability benefits).

For full information and application material for all plans contact TEIGIT at:
(212) 758-5675 or (800) 886-7504
Fax - (212) 888-4916
645 Third Avenue / NY, NY 10022

Correction: In the last issue of the AGMAzine, Frank Kerin was inadvertently left off the Membership and Member Relations Committee list.
PETITION

For Nominations For Members of the AGMA Board of Governors

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

________________________________________ as a
(Name of Member) (Solo Singer, Stage Director/Stage Manager, Chorister or Dancer)

member of the AGMA Board of Governors from the __________________________ area.

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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, 1998.

I, ________________________________, agree to run for election to the AGMA Board of Governors.

________________________________________
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.
MASTER AGREEMENT COMPLETED

Tom Jamerson

The negotiations with the Six Opera Companies (Les Six) have been concluded. It has taken a long time to finalize the details in this very difficult negotiation. As reported last time, issues involving Production Staffs of these companies were difficult issue. You will remember that Management attempted to remove the Stage Managers, Assistant Stage Managers and Assistant Stage Directors from the agreement. The end result of the national negotiations was that many of the provisions for Production Staff (Stage Managers, Assistant Stage Managers, and Assistant Stage Directors) were deferred to the local addenda of each individual company of the Master Agreement and, as of the end of January, most of the local addenda regarding Production Staff have been successfully negotiated. We believe that by the time this article is published, all Master Agreement companies will have concluded these talks.

There has been participation in these discussions by many AGMA artists including members of the Production Staffs from each company. We are grateful to all those who gave of their time to attend the meetings. Their participation was directly responsible for the success of the negotiations. The Managements of these companies seemed to be happy to have the Production Staff Personnel present. The Production Staff members of the Washington Opera, the Dallas Opera, as well as the Seattle Opera achieved improvements in the conditions of their contract. San Diego Opera and Houston Grand Opera (Assistant Directors only in Houston) agreement will have been completed by the time this article is published and it is anticipated that similar improvements will have been made. Significant increases in the minimum weekly salary and the tightening up of the working conditions, such as meal breaks, per diem, and free days, were among the achievements.

ACTION COMMITTEE FOR SOLO SINGERS

Emily Manhart

Yes, Virginia, there is a committee for soloists! We are the Action Committee for Solo Singers (ACSS), a standing subcommittee of the Membership and Member Relations Committee.

ACSS was formed over two years ago in direct response to the complaints that AGMA had not done enough to represent soloists. Since that time, ACSS has become an important force in all aspects of Union activity.

Soloists had a huge impact on the recently signed Master Agreement. Over 40 soloists had unprecedented input during the negotiations with New York City Opera, and currently we are working directly on contracts with Chicago Lyric Opera, San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Opera, and many more.

Within AGMA, ACSS has been instrumental in shaping many important issues. Currently on our plate are a discussion of the Independent Contractor vs. Employee status of soloists, revisiting and improving the contracts of Apprentice programs, and strengthening the "pay or play" clause in all contracts. Recent victories have included the reworking of classification of roles on Schedule "C" and expanding Health and Retirement coverage for soloists. We are also looking at changing the rules for allowing proxy voting for strikes, and establishing a Strike Fund.

In the past soloists had been reluctant to step forward for fear of reprisals and being labeled a union activist by the companies they work for. ACSS
1998 EXPIRING BOARD OF GOVERNORS’ TERMS

Those Board Members whose terms are expiring are listed followed by remaining Board Members and a notation of Entitlements / Remaining Board Members / Number of Open Positions.

**AREA 1
NEW YORK AREA**

Solo Singers
Andrea Bradford, Gabor Carelli, Aaron James, Eileen Koyl, Stephen West, Joseph Wolverton


27/20/7

Choristers
Robert Kuehn, Bonny Rinas, Deborah Saverance, Kenneth Young

Remaining In Office: Lee Bellaver, James Bingham, Roger Crouthamel, Harris Davis, Kenneth Dovel, Karen Grahn, Harriet Greene, Elinor Harper, Nicola James, Lorraine Keane, Nancy Kendall, Linda Mayes, Mary Meyers, Roger Olsensen, Marilyn Pelletier, Carolyn Siefkes, Alan Sokoloff, Constance Webber

22/18/4

Stage Directors/Managers
Bruce Donnell, Michael Phillips, Raymond Menard

Remaining In Office: None

4/0/4

**AREA 2
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AREA**

Solo Singers
Anne Marie Biggs

Remaining In Office: Helen McComas, Beverly Robinson, Zale Kessler

3/3/0

Choristers
Janet Goggins, John Golitzin, Roger Lindbeck, David Schnell

Remaining In Office: Susan Baker, Andrew Black, Scott Blois, Aleta Braxton, Jonathan Cutsinger, James Holomom, Joseph Sundstrom

11/7/4

Stage Directors/Managers
None

Remaining In Office: Peggy Stenger

1/1/0

Dancers
None

Remaining In Office: Lola Montes

1/1/0

**AREA 3
CHICAGO AREA**

Solo Singers
James Odom, Arnold Voketaitis

Remaining In Office: Jason Balla, Lynn Lundgren, Emily Manhart, Thomas J. Sillitti

5/4/1

Choristers
Louise Fisher

Remaining In Office: Carolyn Berghoff, Michael Cook, Kenneth Donovan, Martha Edwards, Luis Galvez, Richard Livingston, Bette Mc Gee, Sarah Miller-Rix, Darrell

13/9/4

Stage Directors/Managers
None

Remaining In Office: Sandra Sachwitz Bernhard

1/1/0

Dancers
None

Remaining In Office: Danny Furlong, Nora Heiber, Carolyn S. Houser

3/3/0

Nakagawa, Thomas Potter, Robert Prindle, Lorene Richardson, Roberta Saper, Jeffrey Taylor

15/14/1

Stage Directors/Managers
None

Remaining In Office: Christopher Nicholson

1/1/0

Dancers
Michael Anderson, Mario De La Nuez, Gretchen Klocke-Brown, Richard Knapp

Remaining In Office: Sara Stewart

3/1/2

Remaining In Office: Gregory Stapp, Martha Howe

2/2/0

Choristers
Colby Roberts

Remaining In Office: Dallas Lane Katherine Mc Kee, Sigmund Seigel, David Varnum

5/4/1

Continued on page 9
BRUCE MARKS TO RECEIVE DANCE/USA HONORS AT 1998 NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE

Bruce Marks, Boston Ballet artistic director emeritus, has been named a recipient of Dance/USA’s 1998 Honors. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Artistic Director Judith Jamison will also receive the award.

The Honors, given biennially, were created by Dance/USA’s Board of Trustees in 1986 to recognize outstanding lifetime contributions to dance. Past award recipients include Martha Graham, Antony Tudor, Robert Joffrey, Merce Cunningham, Alexandra Danilova, and Alvin Ailey. The awards will be presented at a celebratory luncheon on June 6, 1998, in Charleston, South Carolina at the Dance/USA 1998 National Roundtable. The Roundtable, a three-day conference, brings together artists and arts professionals from around the globe to discuss pressing issues facing the dance world. The conference convenes June 4-6 at the Francis Marion Hotel and the Lightsey Conference Center of the College of Charleston, and is co-hosted by the Spoleto Festival USA and the South Carolina Arts Commission.

DANCE PUBLICATIONS

Ballet Review
A quarterly review of critical and scholarly writing about theatrical dance.

Choreography and Dance
An international journal covering ballet and related forms of dance performed on stage, including choreographic techniques, published four times per year.

Dance and the Arts
A bi-monthly magazine providing articles on all aspects of dance, especially teaching and performance, and featuring a calendar of events for the dance world.

Dance Connection
Published five times per year, this publication provides a forum for editorials about the dance world of Canada.

Dance Directory
A biennial directory which lists dance programs in American colleges and universities.

Dance Ink
A quarterly academic publication featuring writing and photography about dance.

Dance Magazine
Dance Magazine includes worldwide coverage of the art with feature articles, late-breaking news, reviews, and a variety of columns by leading writers and photographers.

Dance Magazine College Guide
A biennial directory to dance in North American colleges and universities.

Dance Teacher Now
A practical magazine for dance educators. Published since 1979, 10 times a year.

Dance Theater Journal
Description: An academic publication published quarterly covering all aspects of dance for dance professionals and students.

Impulse
A quarterly international journal covering dance science, education and medicine.

Note from the Editor: AGMA does not necessarily endorse the above listings by inclusion within this publication. The information is solely to inform members of publications within their field.
### Area 5 - New Orleans Area

**Solo Singers**
None

Remaining In Office: Karen Kalin  
1/1/0

**Choristers**
None

Remaining In Office: Dorian Gray Alexander  
2/1/1

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### Area 6 - Philadelphia Area

**Solo Singers**
None

Remaining In Office: Ned Barth, Carol Gutknecht  
2/2/0

**Choristers**
Jan Taylor

Remaining In Office: Ennio Brugnolo, Shellie Camp, Judith Russo  
3/3/0

**Dancers**
None

Remaining In Office: NONE  
1/0/1

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### Area 7 - Washington / Baltimore

**Solo Singers**
Amy Philadelphia, Stephen Stokes, Michael Consoli

Remaining In Office: Joan Morton, Margaret Stricklett  
5/2/3

**Choristers**
Charlene Marchant, Teresa Reid, David Santini

Remaining In Office: Cynthia Blum, James Hampton, Timothy Kier, Paul Klingenberg, Wilson Nichols, Caroline Widegren  
9/6/3

**Stage Directors/Managers**
None

Remaining In Office: Kim Lee  
1/1/0

**Dancers**
Roger Cunningham

Remaining In Office: None  
3/0/3

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### Area 8 - Pittsburgh Area

**Choristers**
None

Remaining In Office: Erma Thurston, Peter Bianchi  
2/2/0

**Dancers**
None

Remaining In Office: Craig Sanok  
2/1/1

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### Area 9 - New England Area

**Solo Singers**
S. Mark Aliapoulos

Remaining In Office: None  
2/0/2

**Choristers**
Timothy Lanagan

Remaining In Office: Geraldine Barretto, Charles Newton  
2/1/1

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### Area 10 - Texas Area

**Solo Singers**
None

Remaining In Office: None  
1/0/1

**Choristers**
George Elson, Robert Sheets

Remaining In Office: None  
2/0/2

**Dancers**
Remaining In Office: James Payne  
2/1/1

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### Area 11 - Northwest Area

**Solo Singers**
None

Remaining In Office: Shirley Harned  
1/1/0

**Choristers**
None

Remaining In Office: Raoul Bellis-Squires, Susan Dorn, George Scott, Robert Wickstrom  
4/4/0

**Dancers**
None

Remaining In Office: Ariana Lalone, Charles Newton  
1/2/0
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
FIRST ROUND OF 1998 GRANTS ANNOUNCED

Ballet Hispanico of New York
New York, NY
$35,000
DISCIPLINE/FIELD: Arts Education
To support the enhancement and expansion of Primeros Pasos (First Steps), the organization's education outreach initiative, during the 1998 and 1999 school years, to include in-school residencies, special performances, and other activities in New York City and throughout the country. (National/Multi-State Impact)

Dance Theatre of Harlem, Inc.
New York, NY
$115,000
DISCIPLINE/FIELD: Dance
To support Dancing Through Barriers, a comprehensive education outreach program that provides lectures, master classes, school assemblies, performances, and open rehearsals to children and communities nationally. (National/Multi-State Impact)

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Inc.
Pittsburgh, PA
$25,000
DISCIPLINE/FIELD: Arts Education
To support arts education and outreach programs in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio during the 1998-99 season which are designed to reach underserved audiences, build future audiences and enrich children's education through exposure to and participation in classical dance. (National/Multi-State Impact)

Washington Opera
Washington, DC
$35,000
DISCIPLINE/FIELD: Opera
To support the presentation of four Look-In performances, which are 50-minute behind-the-scenes programs designed to introduce the artistic elements of opera to 4th through 7th grade students in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia in 1998-1999. (National/Multi-State Impact)

Houston Grand Opera Association, Inc.
Houston, TX
$100,000
DISCIPLINE/FIELD: Opera
To support the third year of the Community Connections Initiative which involves free outdoor performances, artist residencies, discounted mainstage performances, expansion of the Opera's arts-in-education program, and an in-school tour of an opera on drug abuse prevention during 1998-1999.

John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Washington, DC
$30,000
DISCIPLINE/FIELD: Presenting
To support Performing Arts for Everyone, a program of free performances, bi-annual open houses, and discount ticket programs that significantly expands the Center's reach to the local community and to visitors to the nation's capital.

Lyric Opera Center for American Artists
Chicago, IL
$10,000
DISCIPLINE/FIELD: Opera
To support the 1998-99 Training Program, a comprehensive professional development program for young opera artists that includes theatrical training, language instruction, vocal coaching, and workshops with master artists and composers.

Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Inc.
Kansas City, MO
$55,000
DISCIPLINE/FIELD: Arts Education
To support Opera for Teens, a project to expand the Lyric Opera's education programs in breadth and depth for 6th- to 12th-grade students in four school districts in the Kansas City metropolitan area over a two-year period, using the productions of Never Lost A Passenger: Hamlet Tubman and the Underground Railroad and Joshua's Boots.

Music Center Opera Association/Los Angeles Music Center Opera
Los Angeles, CA
$100,000
DISCIPLINE/FIELD: Opera
To support Los Angeles Opera's developmental and sequential arts education programs including: Elementary In-School Opera Program, Secondary In-School Opera Program, Student Matinee Program, teacher training, website for Education Programs, and evaluation in 1998-1999.

Pacific Northwest Ballet Association
Seattle, WA
$65,000
DISCIPLINE/FIELD: Dance
To support the pilot year of Discover Dance and complementary programming, to help develop a broader and more diverse audience in the greater Seattle region.
may be, no protection can be afforded where no need is perceived. Individuals are encouraged to give reports to AGMA representatives whom they trust, including delegates, Local Area Executive Committee Chairs, AGMA Board Members, or members of staff, including me. Those reporting should be assured of confidentiality, unless and until they themselves agree to further disclosure to prevent repetition of the objectionable conduct.

How do we know what constitutes sexual harassment or abuse? Acts may be physical or verbal. Conduct may be overt or subtle. The employment relationship of the individuals, the context of the words or actions, the past conduct of the parties, the existence of similar complaints, all are important in evaluating an occurrence. Because of the harm that false accusations may cause, care and thoroughness should be guidelines in any investigation.

With your help and that of our employers, let’s expose and eliminate sexual harassment and abuse from AGMA workplaces entirely.

Congratulations to the entire AGMA Schedule “C” Committee, which was applauded briefly in the last AGMAzine. Chairperson Anita Terzian, David Schnell, Gregory Stapp, Melanie Sonnenberg, and Frank Kerin analyzed roles and chorus numbers and classified a number of operas new to the Schedule. We are grateful for their scholarship and the many months they dedicated to this endeavor.

Relief Fund (Continued from page 1)

- Assistance for performers with AIDS
- Medical care for ill or injured artists

Here are several examples of those assisted in 1997, a sample of the variety of cases seen every year:

M. J., a singer, was diagnosed with breast cancer in the spring of 1997. The cancer had spread rapidly and doctors recommended chemotherapy. The course of therapy was grueling and involved many trips to the hospital. She hoped that with the help of family and friends she would be able to meet her financial needs. This was not possible. She requested assistance for the car service and for the co-payments on her monthly medication costs. The Trustees approved money to cover payments on a monthly basis directly to the car service for round trips to the hospital, as well as the medication costs. At present, M. J. is in remission.

B. A., a singer, has undergone a series of leg surgeries as a result of a car accident. He has lost much of his income and cannot make ends meet. The Trustees approved money to cover his co-payments for medical bills and medication for a one year period.

J. P. is an elderly former AGMA dancer who is wheelchair bound. She lives with her brother and depends on him for financial support. Her brother’s income does not provide for all that is needed. Her Social Security disability check is extremely small, however, she contributes to her household. J. P. is a strong, positive woman who will not give up. Her brother helps her with her exercises and she hopes to be stronger in the future. Two organizations including the AGMA Relief Fund assist with some of her needs. The Trustees have approved money for a one year period.

If you would like to learn more about getting more involved on your local level - from putting together raffles to sponsoring benefit concerts - please call us at (212) 265-3687 to find out about the fun ways you can support the Relief Fund.
NEA UPDATE:
Jane Alexander - Term Ends
Ivey Awaits Capital Hill Confirmation

Christa Csoka

Jane Alexander completed her four-year term as Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts in October, 1997. As the sixth chairman in the agency’s 32-year history, she was appointed by President Clinton and sworn into office by Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor on October 8, 1993.

“My time at the National Endowment for the Arts has been both immensely challenging and deeply rewarding. It was a great privilege to be front and center to the kaleidoscope of the arts in America,” Chairman Alexander said. “If I am left with one overwhelming impression from my time at the NEA, it is the increasingly strong and spirited connection that has developed between the American people and the arts in their own communities. As our nation moves into the next millennium, I believe that the Endowment’s role as a national voice for the arts will become even more vital.”

President Clinton said, “Jane Alexander has led the National Endowment for the Arts with courage, vigor, and imagination for four years. Hillary and I are grateful to her. She has served her country with the same standard of excellence she gives to her artistry.”

The White House has selected as replacement for Jane Alexander, William Ivey, Director of the Country Music Foundation in Nashville, since 1971. President Clinton announced his intent to nominate Ivey on December 19th, 1997, and is still awaiting confirmation by the Senate. Ivey is best known in Washington for preserving historical recordings in both the classical and popular music fields. He was a member of the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities and emerged as a strong voice on the broader issues of arts policy.

Ivey is a national trustee of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. He has served as panelist, panel chair, and consultant to the Music, Folk Arts, Challenge, and Advancement programs of the National Endowment for the Arts. “He is someone with an intimate knowledge of the NEA,” said an administration official familiar with the search process.

“America’s creativity is democracy’s calling card; it is of the utmost importance that every citizen engage and support our nation’s living cultural heritage,” Ivey said. “This is a very important agency, particularly in its role nurturing excellence in all the arts. I would welcome the possibility of being able to work in a leadership role and it would be an ultimate job for me.”

The National Endowment for the Arts was created by an act of Congress in 1965. It is an independent federal agency whose mission is to foster and sustain the excellence, diversity, and vitality of culture in the United States while broadening the availability of arts for all Americans.

Over 95% of AGMA members perform for non-profit organizations. Without the Challenges and Grants of the NEA, many programs offered by these companies would not be available. An important aspect of the NEA is to build our audiences of the future, to ensure that tomorrow’s generations will have every opportunity to learn and embrace the Arts in America.

Soloists (Continued from page 6)

AGMA Relief Fund
1997
Membership Appeals

For the Relief Fund, 1997 isn’t over. Checks are still coming in from the 1997 Membership Appeal. Thanks to the generosity of AGMA members across the nation, over $23,000 has come in to date. If you haven’t sent your contribution to the Relief Fund, we urge you to send it as soon as possible. 1996’s record donations of $26,000 have almost been matched. You can still make a difference!

Last year, the Board of Governors did an outstanding job of raising money - bringing in over $2,200. Board members who have not yet mailed in their contributions to the Board of Governors Challenge: it’s not too late! Members of the Board have demonstrated how important the Relief Fund is to them, and they hope that every Board member will give whatever amount he or she can toward this year’s target goal of $5,000.

Similarly, the AGMA Relief Fund Advisory Board is also rising to the challenge of 100% participation. Many thanks to all the many Advisory Board members who have given generously, and for those of you who have yet to mail in your 1997 pledges, please send them

Continued on page 14
Soloist Corner

Gregory Stapp

Popular Misconceptions about AGMA

AGMA was founded by and for soloists. But misconceptions abound regarding AGMA's current relationship with soloists. And all AGMA members might profit from reexamining some of these misconceptions.

Soloists aren't represented in AGMA
Soloists are proportionally represented on Local Area Executive Committees, AGMA's ruling Board of Governors and each of the BOG's committees. Soloists currently chair the Administration & Policy Committee, Membership & Member Relations Committee, Merger & Affiliation Committee, Action Committee for Solo Singers (comprised entirely of soloists), and certain Local Area Executive Committees. An active soloist also serves as one of AGMA's national officers.

Soloists aren't consulted for Collective Bargaining Agreements
The active participation of soloists in collective bargaining sessions around the country is becoming the rule rather than the exception. Soloists are reading contracts, suggesting improvements, planning strategies and actually showing up at the bargaining table. This heightened involvement (more than fifty soloists participated for New York City Opera's contract alone) ensures credible proposals and increases bargaining strength for the entire shop. By once again involving themselves directly in the negotiating process, soloists are achieving historic contractual improvements in wages, health care, working conditions, etc., to the betterment of each individual soloist.

Soloists have agents to negotiate on their behalf
Although soloists' agents may be responsible for initial introductions to and/or engagements by a company as well as for negotiating individual contractual perks and fees, it is AGMA which, acting on the soloists' collective behalf, has negotiated the minimum fees, working and safety conditions, health and retirement packages, guarantees of payment, liability insurance, etc., that protect soloists from the moment their contract is signed until the time they return home following the completion of their employment.

Soloists never work for scale
In fact many soloists do work at least occasionally for scale. Soloists may be startled to realize that a lump-sum fee which is considerably higher than a per-performance minimum is still actually only the scale that the company is contractually obliged to pay any soloist engaged under those circumstances. AGMA-scale includes not only per-performance minimum fees but all other monies paid as required by the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

Many CBA's require soloists to receive rehearsal pay, overtime pay, health and pension contributions, while out-of-town soloists may also be required to receive round trip travel and per diems. Thus particularly for productions with few performances, until soloists' negotiated per-performance or lump-sum fees are perhaps several times higher than the minimum per-performance fee, their agents have in fact negotiated nothing but an accounting shuffle for monies that were already guaranteed.

This misunderstanding results in large part because companies have often been allowed to credit any amount of a per-performance fee that is larger than the minimum per-performance fee-confusingly called overscale-against certain other payments that would otherwise be due the artist. AGMA is currently negotiating to abolish overscale and to have individual

Continued on page 14
Soloist Corner (Continued from page 13)

artist contracts and paycheck stubs specify exact breakdowns of all monies earned. It should also be recalled that per-diem rates aren't taxable or commissionable or subject to AGMA's working dues.

AGMA's just a big bureaucracy
AGMA has no big bureaucracy. Although responsible for addressing the needs, concerns and expectations of thousands of members individually contracted by scores of employers across the country, AGMA has fewer than twenty-five employees and relies heavily upon the volunteer efforts of the membership throughout the organization.

AGMA's initiation fee and dues are too high
In fact they are too low. Whether it be fees for initiation, dues (including salary caps), withdrawals, suspensions or reinstatements, AGMA's members are charged the lowest assessment in the industry. Indeed, our sister unions are outraged at how "cheap" it is to belong to AGMA. In recent years AGMA has significantly cut its costs and improved its financial situation. At the same time, AGMA has substantially increased its activism on behalf of its members. But the point of diminishing returns has long since been passed.

AGMA's poverty fosters delays, hinders services, prohibits initiatives and interferes with all facets of its operation. It has become commonplace for volunteers to step into the breach and provide commendable service, albeit often at great personal and financial cost. This, often in addition to existing, time-consuming, unrecompensed responsibilities as elected delegates, committee members, governors or officers.

These volunteers cannot be expected and should not be allowed to continue to shoulder our collective burden. Volunteerism has a long and respected tradition within AGMA and it should be applauded and continued appropriately. AGMA needs its members to be actively involved in its operations but it may not continue to use them as unpaid staff. To alleviate this burden, and to provide fair representation as well as additional services to the membership, it is apparent even to this writer who himself vigorously opposed the last such change, that an increase in fees is not only justified but an absolute requirement.

AGMA Members are charged the lowest assessment in the industry.

Soloists don't need AGMA
Soloists need AGMA more now than at any time since its founding. Company managements are challenging the basic rights of soloists, including pay or play, union representation, workers' compensation, health care, etc. Whether soloists have problems with cancelled contracts or other grievances, even household names have discovered that only AGMA can be relied upon to assist them receive justice and win redress.

AGMA doesn't do enough for soloists
As has been seen, AGMA is not a faceless organization, it is each of us. If we find fault with AGMA then we find fault with ourselves. AGMA will continue to improve as each of us becomes more involved. If the relationship between AGMA and soloists suffered from mutual neglect for decades, that is no longer the case. Soloists are actively involved in every aspect of AGMA ensuring that soloists needs are being met. The Action Committee for Solo Singers welcomes and solicits the input and assistance of every soloist. Along with every other AGMA member, soloists' money and interests are at stake and demand their attention.

AGMA will never be a strong union
AGMA is in the midst of a major transition. Its current activism has won new respect and benefits for its members while eliciting dismay and consternation from company managements who had long since grown used to AGMA's playing dead. Indeed the members of AGMA are themselves in the process of waking up and taking charge of affairs. Calls for immediate action are pouring in from across the country. Success may beget success, but first it draws great expectations from all quarters.

In order to realize these expectations AGMA is undergoing some wrenching changes as it examines and improves itself from top to bottom. A small Temporary Executive Committee of the Board of Governors has been established to expedite this process. A summit of the entire AGMA leadership will soon be held that will define and clarify AGMA's vision for the future while addressing outstanding issues and concerns. It is vital that all AGMA members, including soloists, take this opportunity to make their voices heard.

Gregory Stapp may be reached at: primobasso@aol.com

Appeals (Continued from page 12)

on. We are also happy to welcome all the new Board members and look forward to working with them, as well as our continuing members, in the coming seasons.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

The following AGMA members were appointed to the AGMA Board of Governors. They will serve through May, 1998.

Christopher Stocker  
Dancer, Area 01

Michael Anderson  
Dancer, Area 03

David Santini  
Chorister, Area 07

Jan Taylor  
Chorister, Area 06
The following AGMA members have had mail returned for some reason. If you know how they can be reached, please call the AGMA Membership Dept. (212) 265-3687

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On A Lighter Note

Quite a number of years ago, the Seattle Symphony was doing Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 under the baton of Milton Katims. Now at this point, you must understand two things:

1. There's a quite long segment in this symphony where the basses don't have a thing to do. Not a single note for page after page.
2. There used to be a tavern called Dez's 400, right across the street from the Seattle Opera House, rather favored by local musicians.

It had been decided that during this performance, once the bass players had played their parts in the opening of the symphony, they were to quietly lay down their instruments and leave the stage, rather than sit on their stools looking and feeling dumb for twenty minutes. Once they got backstage, someone suggested that they trot across the street and quaff a few brews.

When they got there, a European nobleman recognized that they were musicians, and bought them several rounds of drinks. Two of the bassists passed out, and the rest of the section, not to mention the nobleman, were rather drunk. Finally, one of them looked at his watch and exclaimed, "Look at the time! We'll be late!"

The remaining bassists tried in vain to wake up their section mates, but finally those who were still conscious had to give up and run across the street to the Opera House.

While they were on their way in, the bassist who suggested this excursion in the first place said, "I think we'll still have enough time--I anticipated that something like this could happen, so I tied a string around the last pages of the score. When he gets down to there, Milton's going to have to slow the tempo way down while he waves the baton with one hand and fumbles with the string with the other."

Sure enough, when they got back to the stage they hadn't missed their entrance, but one look at their conductor's face told them they were still in serious trouble. Katims was furious! After all................

It was the bottom of the Ninth, the basses were loaded, the score was tied, there were two men out, and the Count was full.

From the website - http://www.musicandaudio.com/storyjokes.htm