

AGMAzine

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SAFETY

How AGMA Keeps Us Safe

AGMA
AMERICAN GUILD of MUSICAL ARTISTS

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of America Affiliated with the AFL-CIO



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By Tim Smith
MMRC Chair,
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IN THIS JAM-PACKED issue, we explore some of the many ways “How AGMA Keeps Us Safe.”

We revisit an article from 2013 by Dancer Barry Kerollis, who offers great insight about the protections of working under an AGMA CBA versus a non-signatory. In that same vein, another member shines a light on the some-time perils of working at a non-union house; we fully support protecting anonymity, since sharing a story can sometimes have a negative impact on one’s career path. Chorister Christine Harper and Dancer Francisco Estevez give us articles reminding us that we are all part of workplace safety. Dancer Olivia Yoch shares the importance of the five-minute break. Chorister Margaret Osaki-Graves sat down with Stage Manager Brandon Ehrenreich and Soloist Earl Hazell to gather their advice on how our members can work toward our collective safety. We also felt it was important to talk about the process we ask signatories to go through, should they desire a one-time waiver of a contract provision. Since this is an ongoing concern, we revisit AGMA’s stance on the use of smoke and fog. Canadian Actors’ Equity Association had a great piece in their Winter 2017 edition of *Equity Quarterly*, reprinted with their permission here, Your Personal Safety Checklist, showing that safety is a universal concern.

Our Associate Executive Director, Deborah Allton-Maher, gives us an update on sexual harassment and the ways AGMA can help. Eleni Kallas, the Mid-Atlantic Representative and National Director of Organizing and Training, talks about the importance of Delegates and why you should consider becoming one. Also on the subject of Delegates, Chorister Mark Rehnstrom

shares a New York Concert Singer’s perspective as a Delegate.

We start this issue with some thoughts about the importance of contract enforcement and ways to prevent harassment from our National Executive Director, Len Egert. President Jimmy Odom reports on a recent trip to Washington, D.C. for Arts Advocacy Day. Later in the issue, President Odom highlights members who remembered the AGMA Relief Fund in their estate planning.

I hope you have noticed that AGMA (and *AGMAzine*) has a new look! I have included an article that described our need for new branding and the process we took to get here.

Not associated with the theme, Chorister Karen Grahn talks about the importance of paying your AGMA Dues. Soloist David Salsbury Fry discusses some ways to make the most of your AGMA membership. Soloist Jonathan Green gives us a fascinating piece of history, “Finding Fulton,” relating to the Seagle Music Colony and Fulton Fryar.

Featured in the Area News section are updates from Chicago/Midwest, Washington/Baltimore, Northwest, New England, New Orleans, Southern California and New York. You will also find many photographs in this issue from the various Areas.

The National Office is always willing to help any AGMA member and direct them to the proper place for help, but if you ever feel uncomfortable contacting staff, please know that your elected leaders are also there for you. Never be afraid to reach out and ask a question or raise a concern.

AGMAzine is YOUR magazine. No issue could be possible without contributions (blurbs/ thoughts, articles, and pictures) from YOU, the member. I am grateful that you take the time to share your stories with us. I must also express my extreme gratitude for the tireless work that goes into making *AGMAzine*. All involved are hoping that YOU, the membership, enjoy what you see. Thank you so much, everyone, for your part in making each issue of *AGMAzine* a reality. ■

Keep Contributing to AGMAzine

AGMA grows stronger with your valuable input. We invite you to write an article for *AGMAzine* and include some photographs to go with your article. AGMA members like to see photos of members doing AGMA work. Please share your rehearsal and backstage photos. All submissions should be sent for consideration to dbaker@musicalartists.org.

contents

2 National Executive Director's Report

3 President's Message

FEATURED ARTICLES

6 Why Pay Dues?

8 Sexual Harassment Update

8 Legacy Gifts to the AGMA Relief Fund

10 The Importance of Delegates

11 A New York Chorus Delegate's Perspective

12 The Waiver Process

12 AGMA's Stance on Smoke and Fog

13 AGMA Has a New Look!

20 Finding Fulton

22 Make the Most of Your Membership

26 AGMA Relief Fund Thanksgiving Bake Sale

27 Negotiation Updates

DEPARTMENTS

15 In Memoriam

28 AGMA Audited Financials

AREA NEWS

14 Chicago/Midwest

16 Washington/Baltimore

16 Northwest

17 New England

18 New Orleans

18 Southern California

19 New York

HOW AGMA KEEPS US SAFE

4 A View From the Other Side

5 Safety: Everyone's Business

5 The Essential Five-Minute Break

6 Safety in the Workplace and an Artist's Responsibility

7 "You Don't Know What You've Got 'Til It's Gone"

9 Keeping Ourselves Safe: Tips for Members

21 Your Personal Safety Checklist



The Importance of Contract Enforcement and Preventing Harassment



LEONARD EGERT NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Happy Spring! As we pause to reflect on the past year, I am reminded of the basic functions that AGMA provides. Our dedicated leaders, members and staff diligently negotiate terms relating to working and wages for approximately 7,500 members working under AGMA's jurisdiction across the country. The results of these negotiations are approximately 65 extensive, detailed, and comprehensive contracts which form the basis for protecting and enforcing our members' rights.

A cursory review of a typical AGMA contract, whether covering Opera, Dance or Concert, shows the whole gamut of conditions and protections provided: minimum wage rates, minimum number of weeks, scheduling, required breaks, annual increases, health and retirement provisions, health and safety conditions, rehearsal hours and pay, guaranteed holidays, sick leave, vacation or time off, free days, overtime, re-engagement and minimum number of positions, non-discrimination, meal penalties, media fees, standardized individual contracts—plus many, many more. Some of our more mature contracts number in the hundreds of pages detailing requirements and protections on the covered topics.

However, a collective bargaining agreement is only valuable if we enforce its terms. *This is where you, the member, comes in.* We rely upon each member working the contracts to be the necessary “eyes and ears” on the ground. You do not need to know each and every term in your contract, but you should raise any potential issues with your delegate or appropriate AGMA representative. We need to make sure that we are getting the benefits of our collective bargain. If there are violations identified, we will attempt to rectify the problem with the Company and, if necessary, file for arbitration to resolve any disputed matters.

There is one contractual enforcement area that is very topical right now—dealing with harassment and discrimination in the workplace. The veil of secrecy has been lifted as we hear of new and disturbing reports of sexual harassment and corresponding investigations in the entertainment industry.

AGMA has taken a proactive role in providing support to our members. Back in 2015 (well before recent high-profile reports of sexual harassment and abuse in many industries), AGMA established a confidential reporting system whereby members could seek counseling on how best to navigate claims of harassment (including discrimination) and protect themselves (see AGMA's Sexual Harassment Policy on our website). We are further expanding our efforts in this area by devising and providing resources to members confronting these issues.

First and foremost, your employer has an obligation to provide a workplace free from discrimination and harassment. Each employer should have an anti-harassment policy and should follow

its policy when informed of complaints. AGMA may also seek to enforce our anti-discrimination and harassment contractual provisions through the previously-mentioned agreements. In addition, members may also have recourse to local, state and federal legal protections. **If you have experienced workplace harassment or discrimination, you should contact your professional AGMA staff representative immediately.** AGMA staff will counsel you about how best to approach the situation so that you can seek the appropriate remedy under the circumstances. It is also important to note that you are protected under law for retaliation against you for bringing a complaint of harassment or discrimination.

Over the years, numerous negotiating committees, made up of AGMA members, expended considerable efforts to gain important protections in our contracts. Let us ensure that those measures are enforced so that all AGMA members can continue to benefit now and in the future. ■

President's Message



FROM THE PRESIDENT JAMES ODOM

On March 13, 2018, AGMA's National Executive Director Len Egert, Fourth Vice President J Austin Bitner and I attended Arts Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the day was to educate and advocate for support of the Arts in our country. Organized by the Department of Professional Employees, which now administers the Associated Actors and Artistes of America (4As), our group included representatives of Actors Equity Association, SAG-AFTRA, IATSE, AFM, and the Writers Guild of America, East. We spoke with aides to Senators Kamala Harris (CA), Tom Udall (NM), and Chuck Schumer (NY), as well as Representatives Leonard Lance (NJ), Louise Slaughter (NY), and Hank Johnson (GA). Our colleagues gave excellent presentations stressing the importance of the



AGMA's National Executive Director Len Egert, Fourth Vice President J Austin Bitner and I attended Arts Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. on March 13, 2018. We met in a hallway to stress our message about Arts funding.

Arts to the economy of our country, and the effects that recent legislation, particularly the recent tax bill, have on performing artists. In particular, they stressed the need to continue funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Because our colleagues did such an excellent job with the facts and figures, we were able to use our time to speak more to who artists are and how the Arts define who we are as a people. Although we did speak extemporaneously, fitting our remarks to those to whom we spoke, the following was our message.

The statistics regarding the contributions of the Arts to the United States' economy are clear and simple. Arts spending represents some 4.2% of the GDP—over \$760 billion. The economic impact does not affect just the Artists and patrons, but a myriad of industries from parking garages to restaurateurs to carpenters to seamstresses to hoteliers. Taxes on all those products and services help maintain local governments, as well.

However, the importance of Arts and Culture to our communities, our nation, our civilization goes far beyond simply financial aspects. When we look at the history of a people, we determine who they were by their art. The cave paintings of prehistoric man, the writings of the Babylonians and Sumerians. The architecture, sculpture, paintings, and plays of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. The music of Renaissance Europe. The theatre and dance of Asia. All these things show us the heart and soul of the people who created them and the people amongst whom they lived.

Art is who we are and what we value. Even when we fail to value Art.

There is a perception today that Artists are ivory-tower elitists with no connection to the "real" world. Nothing could be further from the truth. Artists get up every day and do the things

that everyone else does. They drop the kids off at school on their way to work. They come home after work and cook dinner. They worry about school funding and healthcare and their mortgages and the future their children will face and all the other things that everyone else worries about. They work with local charities and community organizations. They celebrate birthdays and weddings. They go to sporting events and they barbecue in the backyard.

There is only one thing that makes them different. They have the ability to show us who we are—to reflect the very core of who we are as a people.

It is not always what we want to see—but often it is the best of what we can be.

If for no other reason, this is why we should support Artists and the Arts.

Just days after our trip to Capitol Hill, Congress passed a budget bill that fully funded the NEA, NEH, and CPB. ■



We also met with aides to the late Representative Louise Slaughter (NY). It was with great sadness that we learned of Rep. Slaughter's death just three days after our meeting in her office. The Representative was a committed supporter of the Arts throughout her 31 years in Congress.

A View From the Other Side



By Barry Kerollis
former Pacific
Northwest Ballet
Dancer, former AGMA
delegate

When I was a student, I always dreamed of joining a big ballet company. For some reason, even at a young age, I was under the impression that a company wasn't significant unless it was an "AGMA" company. I was more than excited when I was offered my first contract as an apprentice with Houston Ballet. After a short year with the company, I moved up and over to Seattle to join Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB). I spent seven seasons with the company, three of them as a delegate.

As an AGMA delegate, I felt it was my full responsibility to speak for the dancer's needs, whether issues were relevant to me personally or not. In my last year with the company, I helped prepare and negotiate the dancers' future contract with AGMA's National Dance Executive Nora Heiber. Though I didn't share this with the dancers, I spent my final season at PNB with the knowledge that I needed to make a personal/career change and had already decided that I would leave the company. This was to their benefit, as I could fight even harder for their rights and needs without concern that I would be jeopardizing my own place in the company. In the end, this process was a great benefit to myself, too. During my three years as a delegate, and that last year closely reading contracts for negotiations, I learned so much about the benefits and workings of the union. In my search for work, though, I found myself moving across the country to accept a job with a non-union company.

To be completely honest, I was quite nervous to join a company that wasn't protected by an AGMA agreement. With my union knowledge, I knew that much of what had been promised to me wasn't necessarily guaranteed. If I had an issue with a change to my contract (like a change in work weeks, salary,

or work place rules), the only course of action I could take would be to take the issue up on my own or to hire a lawyer. Nonetheless, I joined the company with much excitement at the prospect of stretching myself as an artist and finding more self-fulfillment.

My short time with this non-union company was eye-opening. Being a former delegate, I noticed every time that we went longer than 55 minutes without a break. I sometimes found this to work to our detriment, while at other times, surprisingly, found it worked to our benefit. The company I danced for almost always used young, up-and-coming choreographers. Rehearsals were almost always run by different people with different ideas on how to run a rehearsal. Sometimes, we would work tirelessly for well over an hour because the choreographer just didn't think about breaks. But other choreographers would get in a great flow of creativity and a five-minute break would have been disruptive to the process. I started to understand why this tiny rule that is in most company contracts is, perhaps, the most debated item.

Other aspects of working for a non-union company that were quite different were rehearsal schedules, performance weeks, and working conditions. With my new company, work could start as early or end as late as they wished. For the most part, what was promised to the dancers in the schedule, which nearly always arrived the night before, held true. Here and there, the schedule would change. Also, additional rehearsal days could be added to the week whenever space was available to do so. Once we entered the theatre, schedules changed considerably. While the company did its best to keep on schedule and maintain safe working conditions, there was no guarantee if something went wrong. But in the company's defense, I feel that they truly did their best to stay true to what they said they were going to do.

In the end, I learned an incredibly valuable lesson from my time working with a non-union company. While rehearsing for a touring conference, I injured my back. Due to the small size of the company, there were rarely understudies. I had to continue into performances with serious back

spasms. By the final performance of the tour, I couldn't dance, let alone walk. I was sent home to cover my own physical therapy and figure out how to keep my head above water financially. With no benefits like worker's compensation, health insurance, or sick pay, I was forced to continue dancing and teaching while injured just to pay my rent. After a few months trying to get better on my own, the company fired me. Around this time, I found out that my employment status had been changed during my time with the company and that this change offered me the benefits of workers' compensation during the last six months of my time there. The company had withheld this information from me. This led to a nearly six-month battle for my workers' compensation and unemployment benefits, which I finally obtained after proving that my employer was being dishonest in an attempt to save the organization money.

It seems that, even before my career started, I always understood that a union was an important part of the ballet world. Now, more than ever, I have experienced the necessity behind certain union protections. While I know that my situation is unique and that most non-union companies truly are looking out for the best for their dancers, when it comes to taking care of a dancer versus company concerns, things can take an unfortunate turn. For this very reason, I have continued to advocate for dancers throughout my performance and post-performance careers and continue to advise dancers in organizations who have been weighing the pros and cons of joining AGMA. .

[Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the Summer 2013 AGMAzine issue and is slightly updated.]

Since 2013, Barry has been traveling the country and using the knowledge he gained working with AGMA to manage a successful freelance performance career. He now works in New York City as a choreographer and dance educator at Steps on Broadway and Broadway Dance Center. He hosts the Pas de Chât: Talking Dance podcast on the Premier Dance Network and runs an informational blog about the post-performance careers of professional dancers, Dancing Offstage. ■

Safety: Everyone's Business



By Christine Harper
Northwest Area
Chorister

Those of us who work in and around professional theaters know that they are inherently dangerous places. There are risks everywhere that can only be made so safe—ropes dangling, set pieces flying, lighting and other design elements in and around the workspace, dark backstage spaces giving way to brilliantly lit stages, temporary scenery not securely fastened, rolling platforms, lighting standards, and hazards of every shape and size. Since all

of these risks are an integral part of our profession, it is really up to each and every performer to be on the lookout for the safety and well-being of our fellow professionals.

During rehearsals and performances, the backstage crew and stage management work together to make sure that all operations and all performers remain as safe as possible. It is the obligation of every performer to ensure that they are also working in a safe manner. Safety works best when it's fully integrated into the performing experience. As a work group, union shops should be thinking proactively about the best industry safety procedures to put into practice in the theater setting.

Many years ago, we had an incident during a production of *Aida*. Everyone needed body makeup—principals, two choruses, and a lot of

supers—over 100 people to get ready for each rehearsal and performance! When it was time, we were lined up and made to stand in small children's wading pools while makeup artists slathered us all over our exposed skin with actual paint brushes. They used the same paint brush for everyone, and the body paint was scooped up out of the wading pool for all the subsequent people. It was pretty horrifying. The next year, we negotiated more hygienic makeup practices, in accordance with our state law and regulations, into our contract.

As productions evolve and become more complicated and difficult, it's not enough anymore to just show up and sing. Workplace safety is a real issue that has consequences for performers' lives and livelihoods. Even simple injuries can cost months of employment to ourselves or our colleagues. Safety should be, must be, everyone's business!

Christine has been an AGMA member since 1985. ■

The Essential Five-Minute Break



By Olivia Yoch
Atlanta Ballet
Dancer

Fellow Artists, I'd like to laud a much-satirized aspect of the union ballet company: the five-minute break. In non-union companies, rehearsals may stretch on indefinitely past their time slots; this makes it difficult to pace one's physical and mental energy. For the dancers at Atlanta Ballet, the break is more than a simple pause every fifty-five minutes. It's an important policy that helps keep us safe.

The five is, of course, a time for physical rest. We get food and water. We use the time to stretch, sit

down, freshen up, change rehearsal attire, or move to different rehearsal spaces. The break creates a stop point. It cuts adrenaline and lets us take stock of our bodies—an essential tool to ward off injury. For those of us dancing en pointe, we may change shoes. Pointe shoes deteriorate as we rehearse, and we need time to adjust our footwear for proper support.

The mental and emotional benefits of the five-minute break are equally important. The break gives us an opportunity to review choreography at our own pace, without outside pressure or critique. It lets the brain rest, a necessity if we are learning a large amount of new material. It creates a safe space for us to manage our emotions, letting us blow off steam, leave the room for a change of environment, or spend a moment alone. Knowing I'll have a break in an hour gives me the mental space to intensify my focus. If the day is hard and

emotions are running high, knowing I'll be able to retreat for just five minutes helps me stay composed and professional.

Beyond the obvious mental and physical benefits, the five-minute break encourages efficient use of rehearsal time. There's nothing like a deadline to encourage productivity! I feel we all work more efficiently with the five in place. The break, though it may momentarily pause the momentum of creation, produces refreshed dancers, ready to work for another intense fifty-five minutes.

The guaranteed five-minute break is not a policy in every dance company, but it should be. At Atlanta Ballet, I am grateful that AGMA protects our right to the five. I believe it helps all of us use rehearsal time efficiently and creates a safe working space for both the body and the mind. ■

Safety in the Workplace and an Artist's Responsibility



By Francisco Estevez
Colorado Ballet
Soloist

As an artist, it is often easy to get caught up in the routine you are accustomed to and neglect other personal responsibilities when it comes to safety in the workplace. We often view our unions, our representatives, and our management as the ultimate authorities for safety in our day-to-day work lives, but it is important to remember that, ultimately, we are responsible for ourselves and our own safety. Third parties and contracts only go so far in laying down the foundation for our surroundings to be safe. Without adequate implementation of the rules and protocols for a safe workplace, they do little to protect us. For

this reason, we must keep ourselves from getting lost in a routine that could potentially keep us from realizing the potential risks involved in our respective art forms.

Routine can be very useful in maintaining our performances at high levels, but keeping to our routine while introducing different elements to our performances can lead us to overlook new hazards. As an example, from an experience I had with classical ballet, we recently went into tech week for Colorado Ballet's annual run of *The Nutcracker* and we happened to have new elements that we did not even consider. As the most senior Nutcracker Prince in the cast, I went in knowing what to expect from the production. I knew we had to prepare for the pyro explosion for the transformation of the Nutcracker Doll to the Nutcracker Prince. We usually have rehearsals for this and I did not need to check in with the crew or our staff, but I decided to do so this year on my own volition. When I did, I found out that the charges we usually used for the pyro transformation had been discontinued and we

had new ones that we had to be aware of. These new charges had been going off late and had at times left a flame behind temporarily. Although this would most likely have been addressed eventually without my preempting the conversation, my direct involvement ensured that I knew what to expect. Furthermore, I was able to relay this information to the other casts of Nutcracker Princes and most importantly to a dancer who had never danced the role before. My intervention not only guaranteed my safety but also helped ensure the safety of my colleagues.

While we have a union contract to set up a structure and foundation for a good working environment, we need to remember not to be a passive observer in its enforcement—especially when it comes to our safety. The issue of investing in your own safety is perhaps the most important example of becoming an active enforcer of your collective bargaining agreement. It is one of the only elements in our contracts that directly affects our health and ability to continue performing. We must also remember that our collective bargaining agreements are only as strong as our members make them. Every provision of our agreements requires our involvement and enforcement. So, make sure you are aware of how you can ensure your workplace is a safe environment conducive to your creativity. ■

Why Pay Dues?



By Karen Grahn
Board Member,
MMRC Secretary,
Chorister

I've been an AGMA Board member since 1996 and I'd like to address a question I've heard over the years from members, "What does the Union do for me?" and the new question, "Why should I pay so much to belong to AGMA?" My answer is this: You're better off being represented by AGMA than not.

If we didn't have a union, our wages would be low, the working conditions might be precarious and/or uncomfortable, and the rehearsal hours erratic (e.g., two hours in the morning and two more hours in the late afternoon). And if you speak up to complain, you run the risk of not getting hired again.

Belonging to AGMA means that a highly-skilled professional staff specializing in union activities can speak for us and convey our needs (proposals) across a negotiating table with management. A union has the right to request to see a company's financial records when their management says they have no money to pay wage increases. During a job, your elected delegate has the right and responsibility to approach management with any concerns

that come up. I didn't grow up in a union town or family, but I have since seen the benefits of belonging to a union, and now know that it's part of being a professional singer.

About the cost? Based on the information sent with the referendum for raising Basic Dues and the Initiation Fee, AGMA still has the lowest dues/fees of any of the entertainment unions. We members get a lot of benefits for the dues we pay. The AGMA staff is professional and represents us very well for negotiating and the enforcement of contracts. AGMA's website (www.musicalartists.org) contains current union-related information as well as each signatory's collective bargaining agreement. There is a Guest Artist Agreement you can use if you are offered a job with a non-AGMA company, and if you have a problem, AGMA will still help you. You can also find archives of *AGMAzine*—they all contain some useful articles and stories going back to 1936!

Paid-up AGMA members are fortunate to be

“You Don’t Know What You’ve Got ’Til It’s Gone”

By Name Withheld, AGMA Member

Recent work has taken me outside the United States and beyond the jurisdiction of AGMA. Some experiences abroad have led me to better appreciate (and yearn for) the rules and protections that I am guaranteed under AGMA’s Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs). One particular theater I recently worked at schedules four-hour rehearsal blocks with only one thirty-minute break! While that was annoying, other incidents that I experienced were downright dangerous.

During rehearsal for a certain production, I accidentally burned my arm on a lit candle. There was no first-aid kit in the room, and the staff wanted to continue with rehearsal, so I had to go searching for it—I didn’t find it. The assistant director finally found the kit, but it lacked anything beyond band-aids and wraps (including ointment for burns). So, all I could do was run cold water over the burn until I could get to a pharmacy.

During an evening performance at a different theater, the person holding a tray full of wine goblets (made of REAL glass!) lost control and several glasses fell and broke into pieces. Thankfully the act ended soon after that and everyone got off the stage. I waited for someone to go out and clean up the glass...and nothing happened. I continued waiting, and when I got a cue to go back on stage

for the next act, I was very concerned. I tried to explain to somebody what happened in a language that I barely spoke, but to no avail. They yelled at me to get on the stage. So, against my wishes, I went back on. The glass was still there, just waiting for someone to step or slip on. I knew that a colleague would be coming on soon with bare feet, so I acted quickly. I found an old cloth from one of the set pieces and began swiping the glass toward the very back of the stage—in character, of course. And the show went on. When I came off stage at the end of that act, I passed by a member of the stage crew with a broom and dustpan in hand. “A little late,” I said with a huff and a glare as I walked by.

Lastly, during an on-stage rehearsal at yet a different theater, a colleague of mine was asked to stand on a small platform that moved across the stage. She felt uncomfortable because the platform itself was almost too small to stand on and it was being pulled by hand, which resulted in jerky movements. She almost fell off the platform several times. When she expressed concern about the situation, the director berated the young woman for complaining about doing this. I had been yelled at and belittled myself by this director and didn’t want to confront her any more than I had to. But I now regret not speaking out at that moment.

Each of these incidents would either not have happened or would have been addressed and dealt

with under an AGMA CBA. A common rule in these CBAs states: “No AGMA member shall be asked or required to perform any activity which will endanger his/her safety or health, or be subjected to physical or verbal abuse.” There are additional provisions that, while the wording may vary among different companies, guarantee a safe, comfortable, and abuse-free environment in which to work. I am personally grateful for these protections and look forward to a future day when I can work under the AGMA umbrella again.

Even with strict rules and guidelines in place, things happen. If you notice contract violations or experience unsafe working conditions, there are resources and people to help you. Contact your AGMA delegate, staff representative, or the National Office. See <https://www.musicalartists.org/faq-help/help-page/> and <https://www.musicalartists.org/contact/>

To report abuse or sexual harassment (with the option of remaining anonymous), contact Associate Executive Director Deborah Allton-Maher at deborah@musicalartists.org. See also <https://www.musicalartists.org/agma-establishes-system-members-report-conduct-creates-hostile-work-environment/> ■

eligible for certain benefits that Union Plus, an AFL-CIO nonprofit organization, has negotiated for us—scholarships for you and your family members, a credit card, legal help, financial assistance, and discounts on flowers, theater tickets, rental cars, wireless plans, and many more surprises (www.unionplus.org). Another benefit worth exploring is The Actors Fund (<https://actorsfund.org/>), through which many excellent educational programs are run, like Career Transition For Dancers; best of all, they operate the intake for the AGMA Relief Fund (<https://actorsfund.org/>)

[services-and-programs/agma-relief-fund/](https://www.musicalartists.org/services-and-programs/agma-relief-fund/)), which has been known to be a real lifesaver for our members.

For those who also hear the siren call of Broadway, AGMA has negotiated a reciprocal arrangement with Equity for auditions and Initiation Fees that you can check out here: <https://www.musicalartists.org/faq-help/faq-page>

Bottom line? Paying the Initiation Fee and Basic Dues in order to be an AGMA member is a good deal. We all currently benefit from the work of previous members and staff so that it seems normal

now to have good wages and working conditions; this wasn’t always the case, and that’s why paying your dues is important. ■

Sexual Harassment Update



By Deborah Allton-Maher
Associate Executive Director

Dear AGMA Members:

As we are all aware, sexual harassment has been front and center in the news for several months now and a lot has happened even within our own community. We thought it would be helpful and timely to provide some additional guidance and suggestions that have evolved out of our direct experience. While our harassment policy has fundamentally remained the same, here are a few suggestions that may help to simplify and clarify what to do if you experience harassment or abuse in the workplace or if you are an AGMA Delegate and someone has come to you with an issue.

Any member who has experienced an incident

of harassment or abuse may of course still contact me, Deborah Allton-Maher, at my email address (deborah@musicalartists.org) to make a confidential report. However, there are other alternatives and choices that are available to you to report such incidents. You always have the option to report directly to your employer, usually the human resources department, but we suggest that if you have experienced an incident of harassment or abuse that you contact your AGMA delegate first, who will in turn contact the appropriate AGMA staff representative. The AGMA staff representative will confer with the Delegate and with the member to determine appropriate next steps and options.

Although it is rare, sometimes there is a conflict among or between AGMA members. In a situation that involves AGMA members of the same group, the first step we suggest is for the complaining party to notify their AGMA Delegate who will contact the appropriate AGMA staff representative. We will assign a separate staff representative to each party to represent their interests.

In this instance we would work with the AGMA Delegate and the parties to explore possible options to achieve an appropriate resolution.

Similarly, if the situation involves members of different AGMA-represented groups, the complaining party should notify their AGMA Delegate, who will reach out to the AGMA Delegate of the other party and the AGMA staff representative, who together with the parties will explore options for an appropriate and mutually agreeable resolution, if possible.

In any of these cases it may still be necessary for AGMA to contact the employer with the complaint, since ultimately it is the employer's obligation to create and maintain a safe working environment for all employees. In that case, the AGMA representative will inform the party of the intent to report the complaint to the employer. Understand, if the party maintains the position of anonymity, it may be difficult to get a satisfactory resolution.

If you wish to explore other organizations who can assist with issues arising from sexual harassment or abuse at the workplace, please see the list provided by The Actors Fund that appears in this edition of *AGMAzine*, or you can go to The Actors Fund website, www.actorsfund.org, for more information. ■

Legacy Gifts to the AGMA Relief Fund



By James Odom
AGMA Relief Fund Chair

Chris Mahan was a Stage Manager and Director who joined AGMA in 1954. He worked at the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago and San Diego Opera.

Elena Doria was a Chorister who joined AGMA in 1966. Her tenure at the Metropolitan Opera was almost 50 years, beginning as a Chorister and then taking on the duties of Director of the Children's Chorus. A Fulbright Scholar, she sang principal roles

in Italy and throughout the Americas before settling in New York and assuming her duties at the Met.

Elinor Harper was a chorister who joined AGMA in 1957. She was the first African American woman to receive a full-time Metropolitan Opera chorus contract. During her tenure at the Met, she served as Delegate and Chair of the AGMA Committee. Elinor served on the Board of Governors from 1964-2002. For a portion of that time, she was a National Officer. She was awarded the status of "Active Life Member for Distinguished Service to AGMA" in 1976.

These three individuals shared one other attribute; they were all loyal supporters of the AGMA Relief Fund. Indeed, as they were making their final plans, they each remembered the Relief Fund with a Legacy Gift.

The AGMA Relief Fund provides financial aid

for AGMA members who are in need. The Fund depends on the generosity of donors to have the resources to provide that aid. Many of the Fund's supporters donate annually, during the Holiday Drive at the end of December. But you also have the opportunity to make a lasting impact with a Legacy Donation when you are making your final plans. Please remember the Relief Fund when you are considering your legacy and how you can continue to aid your fellow Artists.

There is an In Memoriam section in each *AGMAzine*. Starting in this issue, special indication will be made of those we are remembering who have made Legacy Gifts to the Relief Fund. Although Mr. Mahan, Ms. Doria, and Ms. Harper have been listed in previous issues, they are being listed again in this issue, so that we might recognize their final gifts. ■

Keeping Ourselves Safe: Tips for Members



By Margaret Ozaki Graves
Doctor of Musical Arts, Arizona Opera Chorister

The environments of the opera house and concert hall present unique and specific safety concerns. Here at Arizona Opera, we are a regional touring company—mounting each of our productions in both Tucson and Phoenix—with artists and staff commuting between cities throughout the process of preparation and performance. As one can imagine, this makes for some exceptionally late nights during tech week for choristers, especially those who live two-plus hours away from the theatre. The Union has worked to help secure Company-provided transportation for all calls outside of Choristers' cities of origin—shuttling some component of our forces between Phoenix and Tucson up to six times a week—in addition to securing lodging as required and protecting safety on- and off-stage for all of our artists, regardless of union affiliation. These efforts have kept our choristers off the often-treacherous I-10 desert highway during rush hours and odd late-night hours and we are safer and better rested throughout the rehearsal and performance cycle, despite weathering the long round-trip commutes between cities.

So, how can we as members contribute to an environment of safety in the workplace? Two veterans of Arizona Opera, Stage Manager Brandon Ehrenreich and Soloist Earl Hazell, AGMA Governor for Southern California and Arizona Opera Delegate Emeritus, share their advice on how our members may make individual contributions towards our collective safety.

Brandon Ehrenreich is a stage manager and lighting designer based in Phoenix, Arizona. As a stage manager, Brandon has most recently worked at Arizona Opera, Opera Philadelphia, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. As a designer, he regularly lights concerts at the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix in addition to freelance design work. He holds a B.A. in Theatre Design and Production from Arizona State University.



Brandon Ehrenreich
Stage Manager

At Arizona Opera, Brandon is accustomed to negotiating safety issues with scenic and technical elements that are rehearsed and mounted in one city and then transported and remounted in the second city's venue for continued performances. This requires a great deal of paperwork, communication, and extra time and care walking the set and examining the scenic elements, and off-stage pathways.

Advice from Brandon:

- ▶ Walk the set and really look around. If you are able, practice all entrances and exits, examine for clear pathways.
- ▶ Break out and come up to the Stage Manager or have a conversation later if you are feeling unsafe.
- ▶ If you have any issues, physical or otherwise, with staging tasks and responsibilities, make it known prior to rehearsal, in person or in an email.

- ▶ A good member is someone that pays attention in rehearsal.

Basso cantante **Earl Hazell** has a multi-faceted career, incorporating opera, literature and modern jazz. A native New Yorker, Earl has performed with the New York Philharmonic numerous times, as well as productions throughout Europe and with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Tulsa Opera, Phoenix Opera and Arizona Opera, where he has worked as a soloist and bass chorister



Earl Hazell
Basso cantante

for seven seasons and is Delegate Emeritus. Earl currently serves on the AGMA Board of Governors for the Southern California Area and resides in Tempe, Arizona, with his wife, dramatic mezzo-soprano Alexis Davis Hazell.

In light of current events and activities of the #MeToo movement, Earl would like to emphasize the importance of safety in regards to conduct in the workplace. “Anytime you feel anything, please come and talk to a Delegate. Don’t let it become psychologically detrimental,” he says. “If people have any concerns in regards to physical safety (harassment) and the discomfort of being harassed or being around it, the Union exists for these purposes. If you are coming to work terrified, what’s the point? If someone says something off-color, bring it up.”

Advice from Earl:

- ▶ If you have a concern, share it with somebody.
- ▶ You are a tool to make the Company better.
- ▶ Virtually any concern a singer can bring up will [also] benefit the Company in many ways.
- ▶ Allow and push yourself to ask questions.

[Editor’s note: If you need to discuss a harassment issue, please contact the AGMA office or send a private email to deborah@musicalartists.org.] ■

The Importance of Delegates



By Eleni Kallas
Mid-Atlantic
Representative and
National Director
of Organizing and
Training

Delegates are invaluable to AGMA Artists. They are the first line of defense on the job in ensuring our members work in a safe environment under the terms of our collective bargaining agreements (CBA).

While their responsibilities can be many, the job of a Delegate can be both rewarding and fulfilling. Part of what makes any Delegate successful is an educated shop where the Artists know the terms



Washington National Opera Don Carlo Delegates: Sean Pflueger, Alexandra Christoforakis, Amy Allen and David Artz

of the CBA and understand the role of the Delegate and follow the chain of command. The solidarity of the members is instrumental to the success of any Delegate. It is the responsibility of the entire shop to support the Delegate and speak with one voice.

The best way to educate the membership is to hold regular Area or Shop meetings to discuss matters. Communication within the shop and solidarity amongst members comes through the sense of understanding professionalism in our art forms from both sides. While managements have the responsibility to uphold the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, our members also have the responsibility to act and perform in a professional manner. Quick Reference Guides of the Collective Bargaining Agreements can be created and distributed to the entire shop prior to

the commencement of each season (anyone needing a template for this can contact me directly at agmadc@comcast.net). With the most important terms of the CBA reduced to a few pages, all Artists can be educated quickly regarding the agreement under which they perform. With the widespread use of electronics, the quick reference guide can easily be saved and accessed by all members during the rehearsal and performance process when questions arise. For in-depth information, the entire CBA is also available to all members in good standing on AGMA's website musicalartists.org on the members-only portal, MY AGMA, under Contracts and Agreements.

The Delegate must be a diplomat on the spot. Knowing when and how to approach management to resolve problems is also important. It is imperative that safety issues be handled immediately,



San Francisco Ballet Delegates, left to right: Maggie Wierich, Steven Morse, Alexander Reneff-Olson and Madison Keesler

but for non-emergency issues, a greater amount of time and communication can be afforded. The Delegate must be able to approach colleagues and management in a professional and cooperative manner, demonstrating respect to each while remaining firm and committed to a fair resolution. When possible, Delegates should suggest solutions for the problems that need resolving as that helps management to act more quickly. It is important that a Delegate also know that every member's complaint may not be valid and sometimes a discussion with the Artist is necessary to clarify the boundaries of the CBA. Delegates within a production should communicate daily with each other and always present a unified front when approaching management.

With all the media attention on all forms



San Francisco Symphony Chorus Delegates, left to right: Terry Alvord, Elliott James Encarnacion and Leandra Ramm

of harassment in the workplace including the classical performing arts, it is important that AGMA Delegates realize that complaints of harassment, any form of abuse or hostile working environment be immediately reported to AGMA staff and management. Delegates should not try to address these matters alone. AGMA staff will support our members in these cases and discuss with management how they plan to resolve the situation. It is Management's legal responsibility to deal with these issues and insure a hostile-free work environment. Delegates should keep documentation of all events of this nature and any witnesses to such events.

Whether it is an injury or a form of harassment, Delegate notes play an important part for referencing details and documentation of the event. Delegates must remember that AGMA staff is always available to assist when the going gets tough, no matter what the issue.

Depending on the hiring practices of each company, Delegates will be elected at the beginning of the season or prior to each production. Before electing a Delegate, members should think carefully to ensure that the potential Delegate possesses the following qualities:

- ▶ Reasonable and level headed
- ▶ Knowledgeable about the contract



Pacific Northwest Ballet Delegates Miles Pertl and Leah Merchant



Seattle Opera Shop Steward Laura Eichelberger



Portland Opera
Shop Steward
Anders Tobiason



Opera Philadelphia
Delegate Evelyn
Santiago-Schulz



The Washington Ballet Joint Committee Members, left to right: Brooklyn Mack, Daniel Roberge, Francesca Dugarte, Eleni Kallas, Esmiana Jani and Andile Ndlovu

- ▶ Good communication skills with colleagues and management
- ▶ Able to work as a team with other Delegates
- ▶ Personable to encourage membership
- ▶ Ability to know when to call AGMA Staff for assistance
- ▶ Methodical in documenting incidents
- ▶ Recognizes the limits of their authority and understands that only the Board of Governors can approve waivers

It is important that the job of the Delegate be held by different members. There should be both male and female Delegates. Depending on the size of a company or production, it may be necessary to have more than two Delegates. In these instances, it is even more imperative that the communication between Delegates be constant to ensure effectiveness and unity in representation. In some companies, we have started a shadowing process whereby someone who is a bit apprehensive in taking on the responsibilities of the Delegate,

shadows the elected Delegate to learn the process and then later feels better equipped to undertake the position.

Every company is different, and every management is different. What works best in one company may not be the solution in the other. There is no magic solution that works in all companies and each Delegate will find the best ways to resolve issues in his/her respective companies. AGMA has posted a Delegate Handbook on our National Website for your reference and convenience and can be found at <https://www.musicalartists.org/document-library/member-forms/>. We also perform Delegate Training seminars for membership throughout the country. All the resources and staff to assist you in becoming better Delegates is available to you from AGMA, so please do not hesitate to contact the National Office at (212) 265-3687. ■

A New York Chorus Delegate's Perspective



By Mark Rehnstrom
Co-Chair of New York Area Concert Singers Committee, Chorister

Mark Rehnstrom here, a proud member of AGMA since 1986. For the past thirty years I have been making my living solely from singing, and singing mostly with professional choirs in the New York City area.

In the past few years I have had the honor of being elected/selected as the AGMA Delegate for the Union choruses I sing with, namely, Musica Sacra, Voices of Ascension, and with the professional choirs employed by the New York

Philharmonic. Because every concert with these groups is hired per engagement, it is a necessity, therefore, to elect a delegate for each job.

The most visible duty for the delegate is to keep track of the time: starting times and ending times, and especially the most treasured break time! I have found that this duty is not only appreciated by the singers but also by management.

The delegate acts as liaison between the shop, management and the AGMA office. After being elected by the shop, the delegate should receive from management a roster of singers for that particular job. The delegate will then check with the AGMA membership department to see if there is anything that needs to be addressed regarding any member's status, dues and the like. If there are any messages for the entire shop, the delegate will make these announcements—for example, the recent dues and initiation fee increases.

The delegate also must deal with the occasional problem that occurs during the rehearsal and performance periods, such as the warmth or coolness of a rehearsal venue or any safety concerns with the performance space. When these conditions can be resolved easily, it is very satisfying. When there are more chronic problems, the delegate reports these to the Union and/or to the Concert Singers Committee in search of a more permanent solution. For instance, the Concert Singers Committee met with the New York Philharmonic recently and presented to them many of the singers' concerns, such as the width of chairs on stage, call times when there are staged or semi-staged works, increases in the memorization fee, and conditions in the rehearsal spaces.

If I am your delegate in any upcoming job, please do not be afraid to approach me with any questions or concerns you may have.

I would also encourage everyone to be more involved with the Union. AGMA is your union: use the website, review the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) of the particular groups you are working for, share your concerns with members of the Concert Singers Committee, consider joining the Concert Singers Committee, and finally, have no fear of serving as your shop's AGMA delegate. ■

The Waiver Process

One of the ways AGMA keeps us safe is through contract enforcement. It might be helpful to see the process we expect the signatories to follow, should they seek a one-time change or “waiver” of a contract clause. Each of the signatories receives a letter, reminding them of our process.

In the event a company requests a one-time waiver of a provision in the AGMA collective bargaining agreement, please remember that it is necessary to follow AGMA’s standardized waiver request procedure to permit sufficient opportunity for consideration. Please also remember that the only entity with authority to act on requests for waivers is the AGMA Board of Governors. No AGMA officer, AGMA delegate, AGMA area representative or AGMA member has any authority whatsoever to consider or grant a waiver. All requests for waivers should be addressed, in writing (preferably electronic), to Membership Department Supervisor Candace Itow.

The request must specify:

- a. The specific provision(s) of the contract for which you are seeking a waiver;
- b. The reason(s) for the requested waiver;
- c. The facts, time, dates, duration and any other relevant circumstances relating to

the waiver being sought, and the reason(s) why proceeding without a waiver would be impossible or unreasonable;

- d. Whether the requested waiver is sought for all AGMA-represented employees or only a portion of the unit with an explanation for the proposed exclusion; and
- e. Information about any corresponding waivers sought from, and granted or denied by, other unions representing employees at your company involved in the production.

The request should be made well in advance of the need for action by AGMA. If less than two months’ advance notice is given, the waiver request must clearly state the reason for the late notice.

Upon receipt of a waiver request in compliance with all of the foregoing, we will process it as expeditiously as is possible. It is inappropriate and ultimately counterproductive for any management official to discuss the waiver request with individual members of the bargaining unit prior to AGMA’s consideration of the request. Please remember that AGMA’s Board of Governors, in its sole discretion, retains the constitutional authority to deny a waiver even if a

majority of a bargaining unit is in favor of it.

Please note that requests for waivers of contract provisions regarding smoke and fog effects are rarely, if ever, granted. Any such request must be submitted at least two months in advance and must demonstrate conclusively, with ample scientific evidence, that the effect sought to be used is substantially equivalent to water or dry ice effects, and will not harm or endanger the health or safety of any AGMA member.

Please also note that regarding “emergency” waivers made at the last minute, the conditions giving rise to the last minute or “emergency” nature of the request must be specified in detail and must have been unforeseen and unforeseeable. Any waiver request that reasonably could have been made within the two-month period specified above will be summarily denied as untimely.

The provisions in AGMA contracts are the result of collective bargaining with the employers of its members and protect the wages, terms and conditions of employment, health and safety of those members. Consequently, waivers of those provisions are granted only in compelling circumstances.

Protecting the integrity of our contract provisions, with a process to allow some flexibility, is an important way that AGMA keeps us safe. If you are concerned about an issue in your shop, please consult a Delegate, your Area’s professional staff, or contact the New York office. ■

AGMA’s Stance on Smoke and Fog

AGMA is concerned about our health and well-being, so this *AGMAzine* is a great place to reiterate our stance on the use of chemical smoke and fog products. This policy has been in effect in many contracts since at least 1996, and was codified as official AGMA policy in 2002.

We share with you the information that gets sent to a signatory when they ask for, and are denied, a waiver request to use chemical smoke or fog.

Rather than issuing a blanket denial to allow the use of atmospheric effects other than water or dry ice, which is AGMA’s national smoke and fog standard, we think it is essential that you understand the basis for AGMA’s position

and why we remain committed to limiting our Artists’ exposure to the chemicals used in current theatrical effects.

As the union that represents opera singers, ballet dancers and stage production staff, our members’ health and safety on and near the stage is one of the most critical protections we are responsible for. It has been proven that the use of these effects exposes our members to adverse health conditions including asthma, upper respiratory and mucous membrane inflammation, headaches and even pneumonia, among other conditions.

Complaints of these conditions by our members increased so much from one company

that the Hazard Evaluation System and Information Service (HESIS) of the California Department of Public Health was compelled to investigate the use of these products, including the use of smoke producing propane torches. It concluded that the use of these products was the likely cause of the health conditions that were the basis of the complaints and recommended appropriate substitutions, increased ventilation, and prior notice of the use of smoke and fog products.

Requests from employers who are seeking to use these products have cited safety guidelines established for their use, however, those are set by the manufacturers and not by any neutral party

AGMA Has a New Look!



By Tim Smith
Membership and
Member Relations
Committee Chair,
Chorister

As you have (hopefully) seen by now, AGMA has adopted a new logo and look.

I'd like to take some time and talk about the re-design for the AGMA logo.

As you may recall, AGMA was part of a joint letter in May of 2017 to support continued full funding of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) in Fiscal Year 2018. After seeing the different logos of the other participants, AGMA leadership began a conversation regarding the "look" of AGMA. At this past summer's Leadership Conference, it became very apparent that, while

beloved, the AGMA Lady was not as clear or recognizable as we would like AGMA to be.)

Ray Menard, Linda Mays, Julie Condy, Evelyn



Santiago-Schultz, and I were tasked with exploring how the AGMA logo and overall look could be updated and modernized.

We sought bids from three design firms and awarded the job to Celery. Celery's approach to

talking to us was very thorough and informative. Their design process included a questionnaire asking who AGMA was, who we served, what we were trying to do, etc. With the assistance of Jimmy Odom, Gerry Angel, Drew Rosenfeld and Len Egert, we spent over six months discussing our answers and reviewing ideas and drafts with Celery.

I would like to thank everyone named above for their commitment, insight, and participation that brought us to this point.

A great deal of time and effort has gone into creating this new design with you, the members, in mind. Although our affection for the AGMA Lady is not diminished, we determined during the design process that AGMA needed a logo that is clear, clean, easily read.

Our goal was to create a refreshed, updated, and clearly identifiable identity that reflects the values and traditions of AGMA. The design firm we engaged heard us and delivered a look that shows AGMA as unified, inclusive, strong, organized, professional and trusted.

The new logo is clean, classic and effortless, and was inspired by music and dance notation. Please enjoy the dynamic flourish that evokes a feeling of energy, movement and vitality.

AGMA is moving forward, and this logo helps point us in the right direction. ■

or government agency. Even if these guidelines provided safer use of the products, the constantly changing conditions of the theatrical environment in which these effects are used make it impossible to effectively monitor their use to prevent over-exposures.

Employers have also cited studies which have alleged that these chemicals can be safely used, however all have concluded that certain individuals will be adversely affected by exposure to these products. Moreover, these studies are inconclusive with respect to the effects of long term or repeated exposure since none of the studies were conducted under these conditions nor did they consist of a sufficient rate of participation to be relevant.

With respect to the use of glycol and mineral oils, there is no safe level of exposure that has been identified, and in fact, there is an increasing amount of information available which indicates

that not only are those working with the product at risk, but audience members can also be affected. Although there are products that claim to be water-based, those claims are misleading. They still contain chemicals or other oils that have not been adequately tested or have already been proven harmful.

Over the past decade or more, as AGMA received complaints or inquiries from our members about their exposure to smoke and fog effects, AGMA has consulted industry experts to investigate, analyze and in some cases, testify to the effects of exposure to some of the newer machines and substances. Among those experts include Monona Rossol, an internationally recognized industrial hygienist and research chemist who has written books on theatrical safety, and Harry Herman, Diplomat in Forensic Engineering, who has analyzed the Equity study and served as an

expert witness in litigation arising from the exposure to glycol and mineral based fog effects. Both have concluded without dispute that there is no established "safe level" of exposure to these effects and the variety of additional chemical compounds and their respective decomposition make it impossible to determine the full risk of the exposure to these dangerous products. However, through these investigations we have since identified a product by the name of LN2 (Nitrogen) as a safe product and a few signatories have negotiated specific conditions for its use. We have the Material Safety Data Sheet available upon request. In conclusion, AGMA has and will continue to rigorously protect the health and safety of its members in all circumstances, which includes limiting to every extent possible their exposure to hazardous conditions and substances that adversely affect their health and their ability to safely perform their art. ■

area news

Chicago/Midwest



By Cole Seaton
AGMA Governor,
MMRC Member,
Chicago/Midwest Area
Committee Secretary,
CSC Committee,
Chorister

The Chicago Symphony Chorus kicked off their 60th Anniversary season in early October with performances of the Poulenc's *Gloria* and Gounod's *Saint Cecilia Mass*.

Other concerts featuring the Chorus included Schubert's *Mass No. 6 in E-flat Major* in late March and Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe* in early April. The women of the Chicago Symphony Chorus sang Debussy's *Nocturnes for Orchestra* in mid-April. Unfortunately, due to the sad, disheartening and alarming number of sexual abuse and misconduct allegations in our industry, alongside so many other industries like media, film, political and other workplace environments, the Chorus will lose several concert engagements this season and will no longer be singing under previously scheduled conductors Charles Dutoit and James Levine.

The Lyric Opera and Lyric Opera Chorus kept quite busy this past fall and winter with several either newly mounted (or new to Chicago) productions. They opened their 2017-18 season in September with a beautiful production of Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice*, which also featured our fellow AGMA collaborators at the Joffrey Ballet! In October, audiences were thrilled by a fantastic new-to-Chicago production of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, followed in November by the opening of a brand new and magnificent production of Wagner's *Die Walküre* and a new-to-Chicago production of Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles*. The first week of December saw the mounting of yet another new-to-Chicago production of Puccini's *Turandot* that ran through the end of January. To this listener's ears, having heard five of the seven incredible



1 Lyric Opera of Chicago's production of Turandot 2 Lyric Opera of Chicago's production of Rigoletto 3 Chicago Symphony Chorus 4 Amanda Assucena and Miguel Angel Blanco dance in The Joffrey Ballet's production of The Nutcracker.

Chicago/Midwest Area News (continued)

operas this season, I must commend my amazing colleagues and friends in the Lyric Opera Chorus for some of the most glorious and beautiful singing I've heard from this chorus in my 20 years of attending Lyric Opera while living here in Chicago. February will see the opening of Bellini's *I Puritani* and Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and in March the company will perform a new production of Gounod's *Faust*. From April 27 through May 20 members of the Lyric Opera Chorus were featured in Jesus Christ Superstar.

The Joffrey Ballet, as noted above, danced beautifully in Lyric Opera's September opening of Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice* and then went on to open their full season in October with the Joffrey Premiere of *Giselle*, staged by Lola de Ávila

with music by Adolphe Adam. The company then went on tour in November to Berkeley, California, where they danced three ballets at Zellerbach Hall. They headed back to Chicago in December for their annual performances of Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, choreographed by Christopher Wheeldon. In February, the dancers performed a lovely production of *Modern Masters*, which included the Joffrey Premiere of *The Four Temperaments* by choreographer George Balanchine with music by Paul Hindemith; the ballet *Body of Your Dreams*, by choreographer Myles Thatcher and music by Jacob ter Veldhuis; the World Premiere of *Beyond the Shore* by choreographer Nicolas Blanc and music by Mason Bates; and a Chicago Premiere of *Glass Pieces*,

choreographed by Jerome Robbins with music by Philip Glass. In March, they again hit the road on tour to Los Angeles to perform both with the LA Opera and at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. In the month of April, audiences will see their North American Premiere of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, choreographed by Alexander Ekman with music by Mikael Karlsson.

Chicago Opera Theater opened their 2017-18 season in November with Menotti's *The Consul*. In February, the company staged the World Premiere co-production with Opera Philadelphia of *Elizabeth Cree*, music by Kevin Puts and Libretto by Mark Campbell. This opera is based on the novel by Peter Ackroyd. In April, Chicago Opera Theater performed the two one-act Donizetti operas of *Il Pigmaliione* and *Rita*. ■

IN MEMORIAM

Roger Andrews, *Chorister*

Candida Arias-Duazo, *Chorister*

Emile Belcourt, *Soloist*

Lee Blakeley, *Director*

Ariel Bybee, *Soloist*

Frank Coffey, *Chorister*

Frank Corsaro, *Stage Director*

James B. Davis, *Soloist*

Gemze De Lappe, *Dancer/Choreographer*

Elena Doria, *Chorister*◆

Becky Dornon, *Chorister*

Dale Emde, *Chorister*

Ronald Forsmo, *Chorister*

Richard Getke, *Stage Director*

J. Wingate Greathouse, *Chorister*

Sir Peter Hall, *Stage Director*

Elinor Harper, *Chorister*◆

Dmitri Hvorostovsky, *Soloist*

Jouvanca Jean-Baptiste, *Soloist*

John Kimberling, *Chorister*

Ruth Ann Koesun, *Dancer*

Gloria Lane, *Soloist*

Vincent LaSelva, *Conductor**

Sean Lavery, *Dancer*

Brenda Lewis, *Soloist*

Dorothy London, *Dancer*

Chris Mahan, *Stage Manager*◆

Tamaki McCracken, *Chorister*

Dejan Miladinovic, *Director*

Carol Neblett, *Soloist*

Alan D. Olsen, *Chorister*

Edward Ozaki, *Chorister*

Patrick Ridolfi, *Chorister*

Michel Senechal, *Soloist*

Howard A. Shaw, *Chorister*

Craig A. Smith, *Chorister*

Phillip Sneed, *Chorister*

Robin Tabachnik, *Soloist*

Charles Taylor, *Soloist*

Laura Thomas, *Chorister*

Karin von Aroldingen, *Dancer*

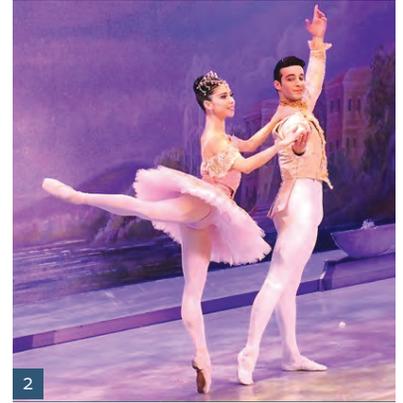
Pamela Warrick-Smith, *Chorister*

Gerald Whitney, *Chorister*

*Indicates a distinguished individual in a related profession

◆Indicates Legacy Gift made to the Relief Fund

Washington/Baltimore



1 Washington/Baltimore Fall Membership Meeting. **2** Venus Villa and Rolando Sarabiain in Washington Ballet's *The Nutcracker*. **3** Washington National Opera's chorus ladies from *Aida*. **4** Florida Grand Opera's negotiating committee, left to right, seated: Donna Lane, Jennifer Wilson, Nina Wall, Danielle Krause, Lisa Pittman, Ravenna Maer; standing: Bryce Bullock, Miguel Llerena, Enrique Estrada, Eleni Kallas (Mid-Atlantic Area Representative), Ismael Gonzalez and Pablo Menvielle.

Northwest



1 "What was particularly satisfying about this meeting, aside from the fact that we had enthusiastic, mutually supportive, generally excited, almost 100% shop attendance, was that we were able to use the IATSE's Local Hall, fully supported by their business agent and the participation of Northwest Area Chair George Scott and Area Chair Committee Members Maria Leatha and Jennie Spada, immediately offering these OBT artists a look at the larger family of artists and union members they are now connected to. It was a pretty fantastic evening," stated National Dance Executive Nora Heiber. **2** Pacific Northwest Ballet's 2017 *Snow Scene*. **3** Pacific Northwest Ballet corps de ballet dancer Dammil Cruz as Dr. Stahlbaum, and PNB School student Samrawit Saleem as Clara, with company dancers. Photos 2 and 3 are from George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*®, choreographed by George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust, and taken by © Angela Sterling.

Chicago/Midwest

Kansas City Ballet's 60th Anniversary Celebration



By Matthew Donnell
AGMA Governor,
MMRC Member,
Dancer

I recently had the privilege of attending the 60th anniversary celebration of the Kansas City Ballet. Having been where I spent my entire ballet company career, Kansas City Ballet will always hold a special place in my heart. This was the first time I had seen the company do a mixed repertoire performance since I retired in 2010. Devon Carney's programming was incredible. The company performed works by Matthew Neenan, Jiri Kylian, and George Balanchine. Technically, the artists of the company are performing better than I have ever

seen, and they're being stretched and pushed in ways that are making them thrive.

As I watched, I couldn't help but be moved to tears as I reminisced about the history of this incredible organization.

While hearing presentations about each era of the company, I let my mind drift back to a time that I am most proud of in the company's history—a time a little over ten years ago when we came together to change the face of Kansas City Ballet by choosing to become members of AGMA. The questioning, the conversing, and sometimes even the arguing, taught us in those early days a lot about how to discover and use our voices. Many of us "grew up" through that process, and as a result, while some may no longer be performing on the stage of the ballet, we have scattered and have taken the tools we learned through that process and are applying them to our current endeavors worldwide.

As I looked at the beautiful dancers pouring



Kansas City Ballet dancers recreate a photo used in the "William Whitener Era" video shown at KC Ballet's 60th Anniversary celebration. At least eight of the above dancers were involved in the first negotiation process.

every ounce of their hearts into their art this weekend in their still shiny-new Kauffman Center home, and together as we listened to tributes dating back to our roots, I allowed myself to breathe calmly. These dancers have wonderful contracts and a management who supports them and is fair to them, and I know firsthand that management has continued to grow a successful relationship with AGMA.

It was a shared dream that we had a decade ago to leave the company we loved even better than when we arrived, with a security system in place for dancers of future generations. I am proud that we took the leap, and I am honored to be a member of AGMA and part of the legacy of the Kansas City Ballet. ■

New England

Boston Ballet Dancers Conclude Negotiations



By Deborah Allton-Maher
AGMA Associate
Executive Director

Congratulations to the AGMA Dancers Committee and the Dancers of Boston Ballet for a successful conclusion to very difficult contract negotiations! The

AGMA Committee led an aggressive and creative campaign in response to extreme and concessionary management proposals that included reducing wages, virtually eliminating seniority pay; cutting paid sick leave; eliminating health reimbursements; decreasing access to on-site physical therapy and eliminating supplemental unemployment benefits. Through the use of online social media, open displays of solidarity, full company participation in negotiation meetings, and courageous leadership by the Committee, AGMA succeeded in pushing back every management proposal to ultimately secure substantive wage increases, improved



Boston Ballet dancers after completing their contract negotiations.

access to physical therapy, increases in health reimbursement, and increased the guaranteed number of dancers by five, while compelling management to withdraw the remaining concessionary proposals. This was a major success and a validation of the power of union solidarity and successful consensus building. Individual congratulations go to the members of the AGMA Dancers Committee: Delegate Andres Garcia, Delegate Paul Craig, Patrick Yocum, Drew Nelson, Samivel Evans, Lia Cirio, Hannah Bettes and Corina Gill.

Well done, everyone, it was a privilege to work with you! ■

New Orleans



By Julie Condy
New Orleans Area
Chair, AGMA
Governor, Chorister

The year 2017 has ended on a high note for the New Orleans Opera chorus. Thank you to all of the New Orleans AGMA membership for your strong turnout prior to and during negotiations. Kathy Rehage, Bart Folse, Alan Gandolfi, Bonnie Knowles, Julianna Starr, Juan Williams, Julie Condy, Michelle Johnson, Carrie Deyo, Maureen Bellina, Stacy Clement and Larry Lydon attended a preliminary meeting held at the home of Julie Condy to discuss contract negotiations. Then on Friday, August 23,

John Ward, AGMA's Midwest Counsel, led the team of New Orleans members with Julie Condy, Julianna Starr, Juan Williams, Maureen Bellina, Larry Lydon, Bart Folse, and Vicki Moran present during the negotiations. Success! An 18% pay increase over five years! The joint effort by the membership was key to our success!

These successful negotiations have truly revived the spirit of AGMA members with quite a few new members joining our ranks as members of AGMA.

Being a union in a right-to-work state presents many challenges to new member recruitment. A big one is the education of new choristers to the purpose of the union, which is often a brand-new concept for the chorister. The New Orleans Opera is the only performing arts company under AGMA within a five-state area hence it is likely that a singer new to our company does not know about AGMA much less about what is an artistic union is and what means to be a member. A common question is, "If I do not have to join to get the contract benefits, then why should I pay the money to join?" You, as an AGMA member know that answer, which has been published here in the *AGMAzine* many times. As the New Orleans Area Chair, I address this in detail at the AGMA Welcome meeting at the start of each production with lots of handouts.

As a happy result of all of these meetings, the New Orleans area now has a steering committee of seven members including Bart Folse, Juliana Starr, Stacy Clement, Michelle Richards, Carolyn



On September 23, 2017, 22 members attended the New Orleans Area Meeting held at the Louisiana Pizza Kitchen, left to right, front row: Julie Condy, Kathy Rehage, William Alber, Matthew Jacob; second row: Brindley McWhorter, Alicia Kelley, Maggie Probst, Vicki Moran, Stacy Clement; third row: Aaron Ambeau, Maureen Bellina, Carolyn Deyo, Julia Tuneberg, Justin Blanchard, Rafiq Mandal, Alex Lucas; back row: Juliana Starr, Kristen Marchiafava, Larry Lydon, Richard Hofler and Eric Lincoln

Deyo, Juan Williams and Julie Condy, AGMA board member with new AGMA members, Kristen Marchiafava representing young professionals and, Alex Lucas, representing collegiate choristers. Plus, there is a healthy number of new members. Look for info on our new members in the next *AGMAzine*.

The 2017–18 season is the 75th anniversary season of the New Orleans Opera. We, the AGMA members, are proud to work for this company which for this current 2017–18 season has employed choristers in all four major productions and two smaller productions. We are looking forward to the final production of the year, the 75th Anniversary Gala, in which we will all be singing! ■

Southern California



LA Opera's production of Bernstein's *Candide* proved to be an amazing experience for all.

LAO opened its seasons on Oct 7, 2017 with *The Pearl Fishers*.



LAO's very first opening night was on October 7, 1986 for *Otello*; LAO's most recent opening night was October 7, 2017 for *The Pearl Fishers*. The five people in the photo above were involved in both of those productions (and hundreds in between): left to right, Natalie Beck, Aleta Braxton, Plácido Domingo, Jennifer Wallace and Mark Beasom.

New York

New York Area Meeting



By Louis Perry,
New York Area Chair,
AGMA Recording
Secretary, Chorister

The New York Area meeting was held at the AGMA National Office on Monday, December 17, 2017.

We celebrated a first with the Area meeting's being teleconferenced. Governors and members online expressed delight and gratitude for having the opportunity to participate by phone.

Linda Mays, Raymond Menard, and David Ward were elected to fill expired positions on the New York Area Committee. Continuing committee members include Kim Araki; Ruth Ann Cunningham; David Salsbery Fry, vice chair; Jann Jaffee; Robert Kuehn; Louis Perry, chair; Mark Rehnstrom, and Raven Wilkinson.

Following the election, Area members enjoyed a report from our special guest, President James

Odom. The president declared the state of our union to be excellent. In particular, he spoke of upcoming negotiation challenges facing AGMA in 2018, especially touching upon crucial negotiations with the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Metropolitan Opera.

Len Egert, National Executive Director reported a healthy state of our union as well. He related news of the successful and on-going organizing campaigns with Sarasota Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theater, and Sacramento Ballet. He addressed, to the extent he could legally, the union's responses to recent sexual harassment allegation issues related to our signatories. Mr. Egert discussed implications of the tax law recently enacted, prompting a lengthy discussion and questions from members.

Deborah Allton-Maher, Associate Executive Director, reported the successful conclusion of contract negotiations with New York City Opera. As well, she discussed negotiation strategy issues relevant to all AGMA areas. Ms. Allton-Maher acts as AGMA's point person in dealing with sexual harassment allegations. She, Mr. Egert, and AGMA counsel are proactively addressing these issues.

Griff Braun, AGMA New York Area Dance Executive, reported on the ten-month long negotiations with American Ballet Theatre. He said that bargaining with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has just begun. Mr. Braun also reported on the activities of the new arts advocacy organization, Arts & Entertainment Worker Resource Center (AEWRC) of which Mr. Braun is a member of the steering committee.

Derek Davis, Executive Director of the AGMA Retirement and Health Funds, spoke at the meeting. He reported that the investments of the Retirement Plan have performed very well over

the past two years. He also reported that the Fund Office is diligently preparing for an upgrade that will allow members to log in online to review their benefit information. Mr. Davis also reminded members to continue to submit eligible medical expenses to ASO in order to claim the balance remaining in their still active Plan B accounts.

Mark Rehnstrom, a co-chair of the concert singers sub-committee, reported on 2017 negotiations with New York concert signatories. Agreements were reached with Music Before 1800, Voices of Ascension, and Melodious Accord. One-year agreement extensions with The Discovery Orchestra and Opera Orchestra of New York were approved, with the understanding that they notify AGMA should they resume performing. Negotiations with the New York Philharmonic are on-going. The New York Area Concert Singers Committee can be reached at agmaconcertsingers@yahoo.com.

On behalf of the Area, I thank and congratulate Mr. Egert, Ms. Allton-Maher, Mr. Braun and all negotiators, both staff and members, for their successful work on behalf of the New York Area members.

As always, a special thanks to Ms. Gerry Angel, Director of Operations, for arranging for the delicious food and drink and for tending to all the details that facilitated yet another smooth and successful Area meeting.

As well, our gratitude goes out to all the National Office staff who keep this Area and the entire union operating so successfully.

Our annual thank you goes to The Actors Fund for providing complimentary flu shots prior to the meeting. ■



American Ballet Theatre authorized a strike on January 17, 2018. Above, the entire company wore AGMA t-shirts at one of the negotiating meetings.



Alvin Ailey negotiates at the AGMA office.



Craig Montgomery, Marco Antonio Jordão, Patrick Miller, Dustin Lucas and Edward Hanlon in costume for The Metropolitan Opera's new production of Norma.

Finding Fulton



By Jonathan Green
AGMA Governor,
Work Rules Contracts
Committee Member,
Soloist

The threat of light rain and cool temperatures was welcome as my wife and I drove north from the mid-July 2017 heat of New York City toward the Adirondack Mountains and the Seagle Music Colony, which lies a bit below the Canadian border. My friend, Darren K. Woods, is the Artistic Director of the oldest program of its type in the U.S., teaching vocal technique and stagecraft to a select group of university and conservatory students every summer since 1915.

The Colony is a scatter of main and out-buildings astride a mountain road above Schroom Lake, NY. Darren gave us a tour of the theater, costume shop, wig room, the beautiful new rehearsal spaces, and introduced us to The Closet. It's a dilapidated, shed-like room, and we heard the story of its 1950s resident, the first African American student at Seagle, who had to live apart from the white students because of his skin color. Upon entering the tiny space, we were amazed by the painted words and images covering its walls with references to the bible, musical notation, lines from a Tennyson poem, and part of his name painted on the inside of the front door. When that door is wide open and pinned to the outside wall, a visitor reads, "Always Welcome to The Closet the Home of Fulton Fr..." The painting was skillful, and, to me, those markings were a voice from 60 years earlier of a young man coping with the then common practice of blacks not rooming with whites. This first response to the moving story of The Closet was amplified by the revelation that it had been condemned by the town and was slated for demolition "before the first snow," an early occurrence in the Northland. Darren added, "We want to save it, but the Colony has no room. We can't even store scenery from our

productions." My reaction? This must NOT happen, and time is of the essence.

I'm a photographer and took many shots, inside and out, to at least preserve a record of the painting and lettering in case the building were to be demolished. I sent them to the Adirondack Experience Museum and Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH). Both organizations preserve significant regional buildings and were intrigued by the story, but nothing was certain despite the urgency to save The Closet. Steven Engelhart, the director of AARCH and an experienced preservationist, took the lead. I provided research and probably too many annoying how-are-things-going phone calls.

At the heart of this effort, a mystery remained.



Fulton Fryar decorated "The Closet" to make it pretty because there were no curtains. The images have lasted these past 60 years because Fulton used sign painter's paint that was supposed to last and lasted it did!



"The Closet," where Fulton Fryar resided for two summers in the 1950s.

Who was Fulton Fr... and what became of him? When I enlarged a photo of his name on the front door, there were light 60-year-old pencil marks of the letters Y, A and R. His name was Fulton Fryar! My crack researcher and wife, Roberta Fels, did some internet detective work and found a Fulton Fryar on Facebook and then his phone number. An hour after leaving a voicemail message, my phone rang. We had found him.

Fulton and I had a long conversation and he filled in much of his story. He had been a high schooler singing in rural North Carolina when he was recommended to voice teacher John Seagle, son of the founder of the Colony, and was invited to participate that summer. He leapt at the opportunity. Upon his arrival, however, his adolescent and high tenor voice started to change and John Seagle broke the news that he would never be the African American version of his favorite singer, Mario Lanza. "I didn't want to be the Black Mario Lanza. I wanted to BE Mario Lanza." He learned he would probably end up a baritone or, to him, worse, a bass-baritone. Tough news for a 17-year-old tenor hopeful. Still, he continued his voice lessons and performed in Colony stage productions and recitals, but he also chose to build and paint sets for the Colony's musicals and operas. He did so for two summers. I asked if he was bitter about having to live apart from his colleagues and he said, "No. I spent two of my happiest summers there. Don't forget, I came from a small town in North Carolina where, to get food from my favorite restaurant, I had to stay outside and be served through a sliding window. The Seagle Colony was wonderful." I also asked about the fine quality of the images on the wall and why he thought they lasted so long. He

explained he had been a sign painter as a youngster and developed lettering and drawing skills. He added that everything was drawn in sign painter's paint that was supposed to last. And why did he paint the walls as he did? "There were no curtains. I wanted to make it pretty."

In mid-September, I received a call from Steven Engelhart. He and Laura Rice, the head curator at the Adirondack Experience, visited The Closet and Laura announced that she and the museum were thrilled to accept it as part of their collection. It would be stabilized, transported to the museum, restored and be the museum's first African-American artifact as part of the new *Life in the Adirondacks* exhibit. The entire process took two and a half months, far shorter, Steven said, than an often litigation-filled five to six years common to historic preservation. Clearly, this was achieved by the common goal and easy working relationship

between Darren K. Woods and Laura Rice.

After his summers at the Seagle Music Colony, Fulton continued his college education. Later, he served four years in the Air Force with brief assignments in Vietnam, after which he had a career working for Catholic Charities, the State of New York, and Letchworth Village, a residential community for the physically and mentally disabled in New York's Rockland County. At Letchworth, he was a counselor who put to use the musical skills he learned at the Colony, teaching singing and music to children. He is now retired and lives in Willingboro, NJ, not far from Philadelphia, where he serves as deacon in his church. He still has a voice. It's one of those measured and deep speaking voices that would be just right describing natural wonders on a PBS special or introducing an opera to the listening public.

Fulton Fryar's hope to become a professional

singer didn't come to pass. However, the humanity, decency and creativity he so positively expressed on the walls of his Adirondack Closet makes it a small building with a big message. It's a capsule of American and Adirondack race relations 60 years ago and teaches how one man with art and imagination can teach a peaceful message of dignity.

Progress Report:

Since writing this piece, I met Fulton and his wife, Barbara, and in early October, drove north to the Colony for two days of press coverage and celebrating the saving of The Closet. Since then, a preservation team from *The Adirondack Experience* visited the site and on October 27 lifted The Closet onto a flatbed truck, and transported it to the museum. We are looking forward to "The Big Reveal" in the Spring of 2018. ■

Your Personal Safety Checklist

By Barb Farwell

Reprinted from the Winter 2017 issue of *EQ—Equity Quarterly*, with the permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association (www.caea.com)

Health and safety is both a right and a responsibility for artists working in live performance.

"You have the right to be protected—but you also have the responsibility to participate in making your workplace safe," says health and safety expert Janet Sellery.

A former stage manager, Sellery pioneered a health and safety program for the Stratford Festival before becoming a consultant. She says that while there are safety regulations that all engagers are obliged to follow, live performance is full of unique situations—like flying effects and rigging, use of a firearm, and working onstage with fog or pyrotechnics.

Here is a list of things you can do to stay safe on stage.

1. Ask what activities your role involves

"You need to find out what your specific role entails

and understand what precautions have been put in place," says Sellery. This includes having unguarded edges, such as elevated platforms without a railing and orchestra pits, clearly marked with contrasting tape, glow tape or LEDs to help you move safely in low lighting, as well as backstage spotters or safety sensors to make sure you are out of the way before scenery is moved. "You need to be protected even if you make a mistake."

It even applies to understanding basic safety precautions like what to do when the fire alarm rings and knowing where to find the first aid kit.

"Always take the initiative to find out about the venue you are working in," says Sellery.

2. Tell your engager anything they need to know

It's also important to volunteer any personal information that might affect your health in the production—such as allergies and sensitivities. There could be nuts or dairy in a banquet scene, a costume made of wool, or scented laundry products used to wash your costumes.

Or maybe you have a previous injury that makes

it difficult to lift something heavy, or kneel for a long time.

"Make sure the stage manager is aware in advance so they can anticipate the situation and find a solution," she says. "They can give you knee pads or make sure you don't have to kneel for two hours."

"If you feel unsafe in the moment you have to say 'stop'—even if it is inconvenient.

There will never be a better time to solve the problem than right then."

3. Be prepared

You can also stay safe by considering the physical demands of the production and preparing yourself. That includes making sure you are in good physical condition to deliver what you need to do.

4. Speak up if you don't feel safe

The most important thing you can do is speak up if you have questions or don't feel safe. "Trust your spidey sense and follow your gut," says Sellery.

"Figure out who is your point of contact for safety concerns. It could be the stage manager, fight director, choreographer or Equity Deputy," says Sellery. "It's the job of these people to anticipate safety concerns—but no one knows how it will feel except you.

(continues on page 24)

Make the Most of Your Membership



By David Salsbery Fry
New York Area
Committee Vice Chair,
AGMA Governor,
Administration and
Policy Committee,
Soloist

I believe in the labor movement. I believe in the power of collective bargaining to serve as a bulwark against exploitation. I am proud to be a member of AGMA and to play a role in its governance. But the strength of a union is not in its governance—it is in its members. The more active you are in your membership, the better off you and all your Union brothers and sisters will be. With that in mind, I'd like to offer some thoughts on how to make the most of your AGMA membership. I hope they will resonate with new and longtime members alike.

Proclaim Your AGMA Membership

One of the simplest steps you can take to help our cause is to add a mention of your AGMA membership to your bio, everywhere it appears. It is a badge of your professionalism and the seriousness with which you take your craft. It also helps to raise AGMA's profile. Put it everywhere you can: your website, your press materials, your program bios. Every mention helps.

Pay Your Dues

Staying current with your dues helps you to avoid reinstatement fees and helps AGMA to have more predictable income, which in turn makes the budgeting process easier. Even if you don't have an AGMA gig in the near future, there are benefits to remaining a member in good standing. Through AGMA's Guest Artist Agreement, you may be able to continue growing your retirement savings while working non-union gigs. You'll also remain eligible to vote in AGMA's elections. If you anticipate a protracted period of time when you will not be working at all, please take the time to apply for Honorable Withdrawal rather than letting your membership lapse.

Show Up

Be on the lookout for AGMA events in your area, and attend if you can. Whether it's an annual Area meeting, a bake sale to benefit the AGMA Relief Fund, or standing behind an AGMA banner in a Labor Day parade, your presence forges a greater connection that will benefit us all.

Serve

There are an incredible number of opportunities to play a role in the life of your union. AGMA needs Delegates to be its eyes and ears and keep a channel of communication open between its members and the National Office. We need members to serve on Area Committees and on the Board of Governors to keep the wheels of AGMA turning. We need members of every category to serve on negotiating committees, where you can have an immense impact on the agreements we form with the companies for which you work.

Take Full Advantage

Membership in AGMA conveys some benefits you may not be aware of, many of which are not administered directly by AGMA. For example, there are an array of consumer discounts available to AGMA members through Union Plus (<https://www.unionplus.org/>), from renters' insurance to movie tickets to Disney vacations. The services of The Actors Fund (<http://www.actorsfund.org/>) are also fully at your disposal, including counseling and a wide variety of useful workshops. The Actors Fund also administers the AGMA Relief Fund (<http://www.actorsfund.org/services-and-programs/agma-relief-fund>), which can provide financial assistance to AGMA members in times of need. For example, some of our members who work on a per-performance basis and receive 1099s may have difficulty collecting unemployment between gigs. In that circumstance, some assistance with rent and utilities can mean the difference between getting by and financial collapse. If you have the need, please apply.

Use the Guest Artist Agreement

If you are working for a non-union employer, I

strongly encourage you to add AGMA's Guest Artist Agreement (GAA) as a rider to your contract. Each clause of the GAA is optional, with one exception: acknowledgment of your AGMA membership in program materials, which, as I mentioned earlier, is of immense value in raising AGMA's profile. One of the main ways it can benefit you is by directing some of your compensation to AGMA's Retirement Fund if you choose, making saving for retirement a lot easier. If we can achieve more widespread adoption of the Guest Artist Agreement, we may be able to strengthen it. In time, I suspect it could prove of great value in bringing health insurance to more of our members, so please make use of it whenever possible!

Strike up a Conversation

We're all so focused on the concerns of our own careers that it can be difficult to see the bigger picture. We may have a good grasp of the concerns facing those in our own line of work, but the day-to-day realities of a stage manager might be a complete mystery to a soloist unless you really make an effort to connect and converse. We spend much of our work days surrounded by our union brothers and sisters, whether fellow AGMA members of different categories or members of IATSE or AFM, to name but a few. Chat up some stagehands. Ask them what being a union member means to them. Soloists, converse with choristers, and vice versa. We are all in this together, and that becomes so much more apparent when we broaden the conversation. If you want to zoom out even further, I highly recommend following the Department for Professional Employees of the AFL-CIO on Twitter (@DPEaflcio).

Vote

There is no single act of greater importance in shaping the future of AGMA than to participate in its elections. Turnout for our elections is chronically poor. The more members take the time to vote, the more accurately the Union will reflect the priorities of its membership, so please, every time there is an election, make sure you get a ballot, and make sure to turn that ballot in.

Make the Most of Your Membership (continued)

Speak Up

AGMA cannot seek to solve a problem if it does not know the problem exists. As your union works to determine its priorities for negotiations as well as its own internal initiatives, no piece of information

is more useful than what isn't working for you. What do you expect from your union? Where does AGMA fall short? Let us know. Make us earn the dues you contribute. Hold us accountable. In this article, I invited you to take pride in your union

membership. In return, I hope you'll join the conversation to help make this union one you can truly be proud of. ■

AGMA Notice and Agency Fee Objection Policy

This notice and policy were developed to comply with applicable legal requirements. It will be published annually by AGMA. A copy also will be provided to individuals who are about to become subject to an AGMA collective bargaining agreement that includes a union security clause and to AGMA members who resign from AGMA membership.

Individuals who are AGMA members enjoy a number of benefits available to members only. These benefits include the AGMA Relief Fund; Union Privilege, insurance, health, and loan benefits; the right to attend and participate in Union meetings; the right to run for Union office and to nominate and vote for candidates for Union office; the right to participate in contract ratification and strike votes; the right to participate in development and formulation of Union policies; and the right to participate in the formulation of Union collective bargaining demands.

You have the right to decide to not be an AGMA member. If you make that decision, you forfeit the right to enjoy AGMA member-only benefits, including all of those listed above.

All individuals working under a collective bargaining agreement between AGMA and an opera, ballet, dance programming, concert, or other company producing operatic music, dance, concerts, or other types of productions containing a union security clause (referred to hereafter as an AGMA collective bargaining agreement) are required, as a condition of continued employment, to pay dues

and initiation fees to AGMA. Any individuals covered by an AGMA collective bargaining agreement who elect not to be AGMA members nevertheless remain obligated, under the union security clause, to pay an agency fee to AGMA equal to regular AGMA dues and initiation fees, subject to a possible reduction as set forth below.

Each year, AGMA's auditors will prepare a report that verifies the breakdown of AGMA expenditures, by major categories of expenditures, between those that are devoted to "representational" activities and those that arguably are devoted to "non-representational" activities (the Audit Report). Representational expenditures include those for: negotiations with employers; enforcing collective bargaining agreements; meetings with employer representatives; member and staff committee meetings concerned with matters relating to employment practices and/or collective bargaining provisions; discussion of work-related issues with employers; handling employees' work-related problems through grievance and arbitration procedures, before administrative agencies or in informal meetings; union governance meetings; and union administration, litigation, publications, and professional services relating to any of the above. Arguably non-representational expenditures are those for: community service and charitable contributions; lobbying; legislative efforts and political activities; members-only benefits; external organizing; and litigation which is not germane to collective bargaining, contract administration

or grievance adjustment or advancement of the employment-related interests of AGMA-represented employees. The most recent Audit Report indicated that approximately 99% of AGMA's expenditures were devoted to representational activities.

A non-member has the right to object to financially contributing to AGMA's expenditures for non-representational activities. Any non-member who wishes to make such an objection must submit an objection between December 1 through December 31 (the Annual Objection Period) to the AGMA Membership Department Supervisor, 1430 Broadway, New York, New York 10018. All objections must contain the objector's current home or mailing address. Non-members who submit an objection within the Annual Objection Period will have their agency fees (and, if applicable, initiation fees) reduced for the 12 months beginning January 1 and running through December 31 to reflect only the portion of AGMA expenditures spent on representational activities. Individuals who have not previously been subject to an AGMA collective bargaining agreement with a union security clause and who decide to not become AGMA members, and AGMA members who resign their membership, will have thirty days from receipt of a copy of the AGMA notice and agency fee objection policy to submit an objection, and if they do submit a timely objection, their agency fees will be reduced for the

(continues on page 25)

Pamela Warrick-Smith, *AGMA Warrior, Singer, Composer, Activist*

By Karen Grahn, Co-Chair of the New York Area Concert Singers Committee

Pamela Warrick-Smith inspired me. She had that special something that is almost indescribable. She had class, wit and integrity. Did I mention her determination? Oh, and her immense musical talent. Every AGMA member who knew and worked with Pam will look back in time and know that on April 25, 2018, we lost a guiding light. Even the doctors who saw her through her 21-year battle with multiple myeloma admired her strength of will.

An AGMA member since 1982, Pam was elected to the Board of Governors in 1987 and served as Fifth and Second Vice President and on several standing committees. As a singer in many New York choral groups in the early '90s, she

recognized the need for organizing the concert singers and did something about it. She gathered the singers together, advocated for action, and people responded. She started the New York Area Concert Singers Committee and brought five new choral groups to the negotiating table with AGMA. When she decided to step down from being the chair of the committee, it took three of us to replace her!

Pamela's low, rich contralto voice lent itself to opera, cabaret, and her beloved chain gang songs. Her Met debut was as Schwertleite in *Die Walküre* and she won a Backstage Bistro award for her cabaret show. She loved variety and stayed true to



herself. The title of her first solo album, "Work, Fight and Pray," describes her ethos perfectly.

While Pam's gift for words, song and humor will be greatly missed, her spirit and legacy live on within each of us. ■

Your Personal Safety Checklist (continued)

"If you feel unsafe in the moment you have to say 'stop'—even if it is inconvenient. There will never be a better time to solve the problem than right then."

5. Support your fellow performers

It's often the case that younger performers are reluctant to speak out. "Seasoned performers can support inexperienced performers and make those conversations comfortable," says Sellery. "Make them feel it is okay to say 'Hey, I noticed this. Does it bother you?'"

Don't let the time pressures of the theatre deter you from feeling safe either.

"I love complicated shows—but the company must make sure to allow enough time and have the appropriate expertise and resources to make everyone safe," says Sellery. "Bottom line—if the company can't afford to do it safely, they can't afford to do it at all."

Sellery believes everyone wants to create a safe place where artists can do their best work. "They want you to concentrate on playing Hamlet, not worried about being clobbered on the head. But if you raise an issue and don't get a satisfactory

response, talk it over with your Equity Deputy and contact your Business Representative," she says. "Recognize when a creative risk crosses the line and becomes a safety risk. Then make sure it's worked out before you try it."

De-stigmatizing asking about safety

Don Parman, performing arts advisor for B.C.'s Actsafe, agrees with the importance of speaking up.

Actsafes, a safety association for people working in the entertainment industry, sends Parman across the province to visit theatre companies and venues to advise on safety issues. "A big part of what I do is de-stigmatize asking about safety," says Parman. "You should never be scared to ask a question."

Funded by a payroll levy applied to employers in B.C.'s live event, special event, film and television production industries, Actsafe is governed by both employer and worker representatives to help keep live performance and film and television artists and crew safe. [For Equity members, employers should be considered engagers and producers.]

The focus is on prevention, and Actsafe provides information and training on everything from fall protection training to firearm safety.

"If you feel unsafe in the moment you have to say 'stop'—even if it is inconvenient. There will never be a better time to solve the problem than right then."

In Canada, workplace safety regulations are under provincial jurisdiction, so regulations vary across the country. Producers and engagers are obligated to follow the legislated health and safety regulations in their province, just like any employer, says Geoff Teoli, Actsafe's executive director.

The performing arts and motion picture industry in B.C. is large, so the province is fortunate to have distinct policies and guidelines developed specifically for it, says Teoli.

While Actsafe does not directly lobby the provincial government on issues, it does work with the government to explain why certain overarching legislation may be challenging for the entertainment industry.

"For example, the regulations for fall protection work well for typical hazards in the construction industry, but might be harder to apply to a performer flying across the stage in a custom built harness," he says. "This is where we can work with the regulator and industry to

collaborate on developing policies, guidelines and variances that put things more in context.”

Multi-purpose venues

Another aspect that makes the live performance industry different is the fact that one theatre or venue can be home to many different companies and used in completely different ways. For example—it could be a performance venue for a theatre production but also a dance studio and a rehearsal space.

So while the venue must have regulated requirements like washrooms and fire exits, it is up to the dance or theatre company to ensure it meets all the safety needs for its artists, like having a well-supported sprung dance floor.

The employer also needs to make sure it has all the required licences and a well functioning health and safety program to keep people safe. “They are required by law to ensure everyone has the orientation, training and supervision they need.

Performers have a right to know what they are getting into,” says Teoli.

While we often think of safety issues affecting performers, the stage crew is often put in the most precarious positions. Parman says the most common safety concern he hears about is working at heights, usually hanging and focusing lights. “If you take care of the crew, the safety precautions you put in place will also help keep the performers safe.”

Actsafes’s mandate is to help protect people working in the entertainment industry in B.C., but its resources are free to anyone to access. This valuable resource is one more tool for Equity members to use to stay safe.

Want to learn more about health & safety on the job? Actsafe (British Columbia) www.actsafe.ca

Personal Safety Checklist

- ▶ **ASK:** What activities does this role involve that could cause an injury or health issue? What precautions are being taken to

protect me? What do I do if the fire alarm sounds or I need first aid?

- ▶ **COMMUNICATE:** What does the engager need to know about me to keep me healthy and safe?
- ▶ **PREPARE:** What can I do to be ready for this role? Am I in physical condition to deliver what I need to do?
- ▶ **SPEAK UP:** Who do I go to if I have a health or safety concern during this production?
- ▶ **SUPPORT:** How can I encourage my fellow performers to speak up and work together to find solutions? ■

Dues Objections (continued)

balance of that calendar year. Non-members desiring to retain “objector” status must renew their objections during each Annual Objection Period.

The most recent Audit Report will be provided to non-members who submitted timely objections. Timely objectors have the option of challenging AGMA’s verified calculation of the reduced agency fees/initiation fees before an impartial arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association. In the event of such a challenge, a portion of the fees charged to such challengers reflecting sums reasonably in dispute will be held in escrow pending the arbitrator’s decision. Details concerning the arbitration process will be provided to any objectors who challenge the fees they are charged.

Before anyone decides to become an objector, we would hope they would take into consideration that without the concerted political activity of the union movement many of the most important legislation that protects and benefits working women and men—such as the Social Security Act, the Family Medical Leave Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, minimum wage laws and the Occupational Safety and Health Act,—would never have been enacted. The role of organized labor remains even more vital today. In our opinion, not only activities characterized as “representational,” but also community service, legislative activity, lobbying, political activities, external organizing, and litigation related to broader issues of concern to

Union members as citizens, are critically necessary for the improvement of working conditions of all members we represent. It is for this reason that we believe that it is essential for AGMA to support such activities that benefit all working people in the United States. We hope you will decide to be part of this important effort. ■

AGMA Relief Fund Thanksgiving Bake Sale



By Linda Mays
AGMA Relief Fund
Director of
Development

The Metropolitan Opera Chorus' Thanksgiving Bake Sale to benefit the AGMA Relief Fund was a spectacular beginning to the Holiday Season, raising over \$2,500. This monumental undertaking was once again creatively conceived by Laura Fries and Meredith Woodend. The traditional pies, cakes, cookies, cranberry chutney, holiday tea breads, corn pudding, cheese balls, scones, cheesecake bars, and steamed dumplings were all decoratively displayed and ready for sale during the Verdi *Requiem* dress rehearsal on November 22, 2017, the day before Thanksgiving. Beautiful and delicious gluten-free delicacies were especially popular.

The unbelievably skilled and creative bakers,

listed below, are current and retired choristers, stage managers, stage directors and dressers: Deb Cole, Maria D'Amato, Karen Dixon, Suzanne Fall-etti, Laura Fries, Theresa Ganley, Jimmy Holder, Claire Kuttler, Gina Lapinski, Elyssa Lindner, Linda Mays, Ray Menard, Brandon Mayberry, Juli McSorley, Asako Nagasaki, Rose Nencheck, Anne Nonnemacher, Martine Ogawa, Christopher Schaldenbrand, Carolyn Sielski, Barbara Simpson, Theresa Teng, Jane Thorngren, Beverly Withers and Meredith Woodend.

Volunteers Louis Brown, Barbara Curran, Laura Fries, David Salsbery Fry, Marvis Martin, Linda Mays, Christian McArthur, Jane Thorngren, Holly White, McManus Woodend and Meredith Woodend were invaluable in the set-up and execution of the sale and auction. AGMA Board of Governors members David Salsbery Fry (set-up and salesperson extraordinaire), Theresa Ganley (family recipe cheese balls), Mary Kristine Hughes (cat litter cake), Christopher Schaldenbrand (pâtis-sier), AGMA Treasurer Ray Menard (cranberry chutney), and 5th Vice President Jane Shaulis



Volunteers Holly White, Jane Thorngren, Louis Brown, David Salsbery Fry, Linda Mays and Barbara Curran.

(photographer) made outstanding contributions of their time and eclectic talents to benefit the AGMA Relief Fund.

"It takes a village" to produce such a tremendous event and the impressive results not only raised vital money, but also raised awareness as to how we need to support each other in both good times and bad.

The Metropolitan Opera Chorus Ladies graciously offered their beautiful lounge for the special festivities. Congratulations and Thank You to all Bakers, Buyers, Sellers, Decorators, Organizers, and Promoters for a wonderful and \$Successful\$ day.

So sorry if anyone was inadvertently omitted from this "thank you." ■

**Midwest Counsel John Ward has a new office address:
200 West Jackson Boulevard
Suite 720
Chicago, IL 60606
His phone number is still the same: (312) 628-7830**

Northwest Negotiations



By Nora Heiber
National Dance
Executive

AGMA completed the negotiating of two agreements in the Pacific Northwest: Portland Opera and Pacific Northwest Ballet.

Portland Opera AGMA artists will be receiving

increases ranging from 2% to 7% in compensation in each year of this new three-year agreement. Special thanks go to negotiating committee members, Paul Wright, Anders Tobiason, Sherrie Van Hine, Brian Langford and Dru Rutledge, AGMA's 3rd Vice President and Northwest Area Chair George Scott and AGMA Board members Maria Leatha and Jennie Spada, who have been participating in negotiating sessions since October of last year.

In contrast, it took nine days to complete the negotiation of a four-year contract at Pacific Northwest Ballet which includes compensation increases of 3% to 3.5% for our AGMA dancers.



Pacific Northwest Ballet negotiators triumph!

This feat couldn't have been done without the time and effort offered by the following negotiating committee members: Miles Pertl, Leah Merchant, Maggie Mullin, Leta Biasucci, Kyle Davis, Ezra Thomson, Cecilia Iliesiu, Sarah Pasch, Ryan Cardea and Lucien Postlewaite. ■

Sarasota Ballet Completes Second Contract



By Eleni Kallas
Mid-Atlantic
Representative and
National Director
of Organizing and
Training

AGMA negotiations for a three-year successor agreement took place with The Sarasota Ballet on the weekend of April 21, 2018.

Substantial gains were made in wages and

benefits as well as language to cover travel conditions and travel per diems, lay-offs, temperatures, work rules regarding student performances, guest artists and the inclusion of the new AGMA logo.

While the committee worked many weeks to discuss and craft proposals tailored to The Sarasota Ballet over the preceding months, the actual negotiations were completed quickly with the demonstration from both sides of mutual respect and cooperation. The contract was unanimously approved by all the company dancers. Members of the negotiation committee included: Daniel Pratt, Christina Harward, Eleni Kallas



The fabulous Sarasota Ballet delegates and negotiating committee!!

(National Director of Organizing and Training and Mid-Atlantic Area Representative), Ryoko Sadoshima and Richard Bertoni. ■

AGMA Audited Financial Statements

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF AGMA:

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of American Guild of Musical Artists (the "Guild"), which comprise the statements of financial position as of December 31, 2016 and 2015, and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended. Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal

control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the American Guild of Musical Artists as of December 31, 2016 and 2015, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

– BUCHBINDER TUNICK & COMPANY LLP

AGMA Statements of Financial Position

December 31, 2016 and 2015

	2016	2015		2016	2015
ASSETS:			Other assets		
Cash and cash equivalents:			Cash - security deposits	97,843	97,746
Operating accounts	\$523,647	\$981,908	Prepaid expenses	22,274	26,558
Money market funds	20,248	36,145	Security deposits	48,805	48,408
Total cash and cash equivalents	543,895	1,018,053	Total other assets	168,922	172,712
Certificates of deposit	103,959	102,716	Net property assets	33,059	15,696
Other assets	29,775	30,035	Total assets	\$13,981,664	\$12,838,752
Investments, at fair value:			LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS:		
U.S. treasury obligations	11,492,665	11,221,359	Liabilities:		
Mutual funds and exchange-traded funds	1,278,320	-	Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 868,326	\$ 798,334
Total investments	12,770,985	11,221,359	Security deposits payable	97,802	97,802
Receivables:			Total liabilities	966,128	896,136
Dues	330,668	277,828	Commitments and contingencies		
Other	401	353	Net assets - unrestricted	13,015,536	11,942,616
Total receivables	331,069	278,181	Total liabilities and net assets		
				\$13,981,664	\$12,838,752

Statements of Activities

For the years ended December 31, 2016 and 2015

	2016	2015		2016	2015
REVENUE:			EXPENSES		
Membership revenue:			Program services:		
Working dues	\$2,539,989	\$2,568,561	Member services	2,487,469	2,451,784
Basic dues	607,757	629,669	Supporting activities:		
Initiation fees	313,878	298,453	Administrative expenses	1,381,933	1,273,229
Reinstatement fees	14,234	18,501	Total expenses		
Total membership revenue	3,475,858	3,515,184		3,869,402	3,725,013
Visa fees	1,209,251	1,114,755	Change in net assets	1,072,920	954,291
Unrealized appreciation in fair value of investments	8,691	707	Net assets - unrestricted		
Realized gain on investments	18,194	-	Beginning of year	11,942,616	10,988,325
Interest and dividends	9,452	6,101	End of year		
Life insurance proceeds	175,350	-		\$13,015,536	\$11,942,616
Other	45,526	42,557			
Total revenue	4,942,322	4,679,304			

Statements of Cash Flows

For the years ended December 31, 2016 and 2015

	2016	2015		2016	2015
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:			Net cash provided by operating activities		
Change in net assets	\$1,072,920	\$954,291		1,079,337	973,317
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:			Cash flows from investing activities:		
Depreciation and amortization	12,148	13,192	(Purchase of) property assets	(29,511)	(5,730)
Unrealized (appreciation) in fair value of investments	(8,691)	(707)	(Purchase of) certificates of deposit	(1,243)	(1,154)
Realized gain on investments	(18,194)	-	(Purchase of) Investments	(28,155,384)	(32,668,613)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:			Sale of Investments	26,632,643	31,671,789
Decrease (increase) in other assets	260	(30,035)	Net cash (used in) investing activities	(1,553,495)	(1,003,708)
(Increase) decrease in dues receivable	(52,840)	50,746	Net (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(474,158)	(30,391)
(Increase) in other receivable	(48)	-	Cash and cash equivalents:		
(Increase) decrease in cash - security deposits	(97)	54	Beginning of year	1,018,053	1,048,444
Decrease in prepaid expenses	4,284	6,477	End of year		
(Increase) in security deposits	(397)	(683)		\$ 543,895	\$ 1,018,053
Increase (decrease) in accounts payable and accrued expenses	69,992	(20,018)			

CONTACT LIST OF ASSISTANCE AND MEMBER-ONLY SERVICES

Actors Federal Credit Union

(212) 869-8926 in NYC (8:00 p.m. EST)
actorsfcu.com

Outside of NYC

(800) 2.ACTORS (800-222-8677)

The Actors Fund

www.actorsfund.org info@actorsfund.org
New York City (212) 221-7300;

(800) 221-7303

Chicago (312) 372-0989

Los Angeles (323) 933-9244;
(888) 825-0911

AGMA Relief Fund

Donations (800) 543-AGMA (2462)
susan@musicalartists.org

Intake New York City (212) 221-7300 ext. 119
intakeny@actorsfund.org

Intake Chicago (312) 372-0989
shaught@actorsfund.org

Intake Los Angeles (323) 933-9244 ext. 55
intakela@actorsfund.org

AGMA Retirement and Health

(Plan A, AGMA Retirement Plan and AGMA Health Plan)
(212) 765-3664

www.agmafunds.org
agmareirement_health@yahoo.com

AGMA Health Plan B

("Administrative Services Only")
(866) 263-1185 (Toll free)
(516) 394-9443 (Outside of the U.S.)
www.asonet.com

Artists Health Insurance Resource Center

New York City (917) 281-5975
Los Angeles (855) 491-3357
www.actorsfund.org/services-and-programs/
artists-health-insurance-resource-center

The Career Center

(formerly The Actors Work Program)
www.actorsfund.org/services-and-programs/
career-center

New York City (212) 221-7300 ext. 259
careercentereast@actorsfund.org

Los Angeles (323) 933-9244 ext. 450
careercenterwest@actorsfund.org

Career Transition For Dancers

New York City (917) 281-5992
pschwadron@actorsfund.org

Chicago (312) 414-0500
mlanghout@actorsfund.org

Los Angeles (323) 330-2472
skozak@actorsfund.org

www.actorsfund.org/services-and-programs/
career-transition-dancers

Union Privilege/Union Plus

(800) 472-2005; (202) 293-5330
www.unionplus.org