AGMA opera singers achieve new three-year National Agreement

AGMA has just completed another six months of national opera negotiations, coordinating all opera singers' various proposals into a new three-year National Opera Basic Agreement. Negotiations were held mainly "on the road," in Dallas, where the AGMA executives did multi-employer bargaining, resulting in exceedingly complex negotiations. Salaries will be increased by approximately 8% per year commencing on August 1, 1982. The weekly per diem will be increased to $35 in the first year, $37.50 in the second year and $40 in the third year of the new agreement. AGMA singers in all companies can be proud of their delegates and committee members who contributed many long hours to produce these substantial results. The new National Opera Basic Agreement speaks to the betterment of wages and working conditions for singers throughout the United States, as they follow AGMA's leadership role in raising the standards of the opera profession in both wages and working conditions. We urge all singers to confer with their own company delegates concerning the specific details of the agreement and to read it carefully that they may be informed of their rights and privileges as AGMA members.

Gene Boucher is new Executive Secretary

DeLloyd Tibbs retires

Metropolitan Opera baritone Gene Boucher, who has been President of the Guild since 1977, took over the position of National Executive Secretary of the union on September 1, replacing DeLloyd Tibbs, who retired as of that date after 26 years of service to AGMA, twelve as National Executive Secretary.

Boucher, who just completed a successful run of South Pacific in Pittsburgh, accepted the Board of Governors' request to fill the post with permission to fulfill his singing commitments at the Met for the coming season. He will appear in the opening performance of La Gioconda and later in the season, will repeat his portrayal of the Black Cat in L'Enfant et les Sorcieres of Ravel.

Boucher began his musical career with the St. Louis Municipal Opera. While a Fulbright Fellow in France, he won every honor in Voice at the Conservatoire de Lille. As winner of the American Auditions, he made his operatic debut in Milan in 1958. Prior to joining the Metropolitan in 1965, Boucher appeared with the companies of Tulsa, Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia; Brooklyn; Chautauqua and the Metropolitan Opera Studio. He has sung as soloist with the Little Orchestra Society of New York, the American Symphony, the Orchestra of America, the American Opera Society, Clarion Concerts, the Robert Shaw Chorale, the Chicago Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Eastman-Rochester Symphony and the Bethlehem Bach Festival.

First Vice President Don Yule became AGMA's President as Boucher assumed executive duties. Yule, a basso with the New York City Opera, is the sixth President of the union, in a coincidental tradition that has seen only basses or baritones in the position.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Opera rates as of August 1, 1982</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single Performance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading and featured roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solo bit roles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage Director and Stage Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choreographer/Ballet Mistress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ass't. Stage Director and Stage Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solo Dancer</td>
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<td>Per Diem</td>
</tr>
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The union in transition
by Gene Boucher
National Executive Secretary

The shift in titles and responsibilities at AGMA during the past few months brings no new faces to AGMAZINE, but it clearly requires some explanation and elaboration. Towards that end I shall begin my first column with a description of the transition.

Together with the other officers and members of the Board of Governors, as President of AGMA, I had been much involved in pursuing merger with our sister union, AFTRA. We also were very much aware that Mr. Tibbs would become eligible for retirement in the fall of 1982. As the projected administrative merger of the two unions would occur at approximately the same time, it was understandably assumed that our organization would adjust and change to meet the newer structure, less one executive.

The most recent and most advanced meeting of the two merger committees occurred at exactly the moment AFTRA’s financial position became seriously compromised by its loss of major litigation. Much of the technical and legal paper work for merger had been done, but obviously further movement towards merger of our two treasuries could not proceed when one of the two was in jeopardy.

Merger with AFTRA is, in my opinion, still a worthy and necessary step for AGMA. As AFTRA’s President, Bill Hillman, and I have agreed: Our project is on a “back burner” until more is known about AFTRA’s immediate future. Contrary to an article in Variety, talks between AGMA and AFTRA have not “broken off.” The timetable for merger is in question; our intentions are not.

Since merger was not feasible as soon as first thought, Mr. Tibbs’ decision to retire as of September 1st meant that his position would need to be filled for the best continuity of our business.

During the deliberations of the Board of Governors’ Committee IV (Business and Administration), my name was suggested. It was the view of the committee, after having considered several alternatives, that there was both a logic and an advantage to my becoming AGMA’s full-time National Executive Secretary. As I had served as the union’s President for the past five years, as a lesser officer for seven years previous, and as a member of the Board continuously since 1962, no one else outside the union’s staff had as much knowledge of AGMA’s business as I. I accepted the Committee’s request and the Board’s subsequent offer, with the understanding that I would perform my roles at the Met in the scheduled current contract. This short overlap of professions will allow me to “leave the stage” when I had anticipated doing so and permit me to continue to be closely tied to my chosen field — in the service of the labor union to which I am dedicated.

In addition to his own 26 years of loyal service to AGMA (14 years as Assistant and 12 years as National Executive Secretary), Mr. Tibbs has shaped an admirable staff at the national office and with our representatives around the country. The employees of AGMA have been remarkably constant and
AGMA says farewell to DeLloyd Tibbs

On June 28, National Board members, office staff, friends and colleagues gathered at the AGMA offices to bid farewell to National Executive Secretary DeLloyd Tibbs. The occasion proved a happy combination of good friends, good food and good cheer. Long-time friend and AGMA Counsel Mortimer Becker praised Mr. Tibbs for his dedication and devotion to AGMA and Fourth Vice President Muriel Costa-Greenspon presented a plaque dedicated to “a man who has given unstintingly of himself for the well-being and good of the membership.” A duplicate plaque now hangs in the AGMA offices.

DeLloyd Tibbs, surrounded by friends, receives a plaque commemorating his service with AGMA from 4th Vice President, Muriel Costa-Greenspon.

AGMA Counsel Mortimer Becker (center) spoke of Mr. Tibbs’ long association with the Guild.

Mr. Tibbs chats with Associate National Executive Secretary Joan Greenspan as Karen Brown of the Dance Theatre of Harlem looks on.
Conference in New York studies career transition for dancers

A Conference on Career Transition for Dancers, attended by dancers, choreographers, union executives and other prominent members of the dance community, was held at the Metropolitan Opera House on June 8. Agnes DeMille served as Honorary Chairman for the event and Richard E. LeBlond, president of the San Francisco Ballet, was Chairman. Speakers included Kathleen Bannon, International Program Officer of the National Endowment for the Arts; Robert Hirschhorn, Senior Vice President, Martin E. Segal Company, Actuarial Consultants; Sidney E. Cohn of Cohn, Lurie, Ostrin, Lubell and Lubell; David Earl Sutherland, Director, Rural Gerontology and Associate Professor of Sociology at Ohio University, and Margaret Lawford, Administrator of the Dancers Resettlement Fund in London which served as the inspiration for the Conference.

The Conference was sponsored by the Labor Institute for Human Enrichment, created by the AFL-CIO Department for Professional Employees, and was funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and Actors' Equity Association. Edward Weston, Equity's Western Regional Director, was Project Director.

AGMA was represented by Associate National Executive Secretaries Joan Greenspan and Alan Olsen and by Ellen Wagner, Administrator of the Pension and Welfare Funds.

Labor on parade

National Executive Secretary Gene Boucher led representatives of AGMA, including locked out members of the American Ballet Theatre, in New York City's Labor Day Parade. The AGMA delegation joined thousands of other trade unionists and their families in focusing public attention on the need for jobs. This year's parade marked the hundredth anniversary celebration of the first Labor Day parade, held in New York on September 5, 1882. AGMA, as well as the other performing arts unions, all marched under the auspices of the Associated Actors and Artistes of America, their international parent body.

(Far left) Carla Stallings and Scott Schleifer bring the story of the American Ballet Theatre's labor woes to the Labor Day Parade. (Right) The banner says it all.
AFTRA hit by legal woes

AGMA's sister union, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), with which AGMA had been holding merger discussions, is appealing the verdict of a San Diego jury which ruled in favor of Tuesday Productions, a local non-union jingle house which had sued AFTRA for alleged anti-trust violations stemming from the union's attempt to administer its commercial contracts. The judgement is for approximately $10 million, with triple damages awarded in anti-trust cases. AFTRA is appealing the decision and is awaiting a ruling from the federal judge who tried the case as to the amount of bond the union must post pending its appeal. AFTRA contends that rulings by the Federal District Court in San Diego were incorrect, and that the evidence presented at the trial does not justify the verdict. The case almost certainly will eventually go to the Supreme Court of the United States. Anti-trust actions against labor unions have not heretofore been filed in such cases and, if permitted to stand, the verdict may have serious implications for other unions.

Following the verdict against AFTRA, Tuesday Productions then filed a similar suit against the Screen Actors Guild. AFTRA and SAG jointly negotiate and administer their commercial agreements.

"Wanted: The LaGuardia 20,000"

With these words, the Committee of Friends and Alumni for LaGuardia High School have announced an international search for the 20,000 graduates of the High School of Music and Art and the School of Performing Arts.

In September of 1983, the High School of Music and Art and the School of Performing Arts will be combined in a new, eight-story, $50 million home in the Lincoln Center area, to be called the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School. The modern state-of-the-art facility will contain a 590-seat theatre, a 1,200-seat auditorium, five drama studios with stages, as well as many specially designed studios for the performing and visual arts.

The Committee is, therefore, attempting to contact graduates of both schools in order to create an ongoing Alumni organization, which will then be kept informed of the upcoming activities, highlighted by a week-long celebration of the school's opening.

All graduates are asked to contact Cecé Wasserman, Director, Committee of Friends and Alumni for the LaGuardia High School, 2 Columbus Circle, New York, NY 10019. Telephone: (212) 581-8920.

Alan D. Olsen
Music and Art, Class of '54

HAVE YOU MOVED?

Sending AGMA notices, announcements, AGMAzine and other Guild documents to wrong addresses is costly and wasteful. Please be certain that AGMA has your correct address in its files. If you have moved recently and have not notified AGMA of your new address, please do so at once.

GENE BOUCHER
(continued from page 2)

have remained to provide a great reservoir of knowledge and expertise. I feel truly fortunate to be sharing responsibilities with Mr. Tibbs' two assistants, Joan Greenspan and Alan Olsen, who thoroughly merit their new titles, Associate National Executive Secretary. My first month in my new "chair" has been one of more questions than decisions, and I shall continue to rely upon our very able staff.

I have been truly gratified by the response of our members and the staff to my appointment, as well as by indications from sister unions and various management and organizations that AGMA had made a "wise and logical" choice. I shall try to live up to the trust placed in me with my continued earnest devotion.

Deceased

Adelaide Bohls (Winter)
Pauline L. Gatter
Frederick Jagel
Maria Jeritza
Eugene Loring
Bennie Ray
Otto Von Rohr
Harriet Jackson Young

Wed

Jolinda Menendez, former Solo Dancer with the American Ballet Theatre and Principal Dancer with the Pennsylvania Ballet, was married on June 26, 1982 to Patrick Bissell, Principal Dancer with the American Ballet Theatre. A wedding reception was held at the Sheraton Hotel in New York City attended by many of their colleagues.

Former AGMA Board of Governors member Socrates Birsky married Joanna Redding on August 8, 1982 in St. Sergius Russian Orthodox Church on the grounds of the Tolstoy Foundation in upper New York State. Mr. Birsky joined AGMA as a member of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet.
Non-signatory list

The organizations and individuals listed below are not signatories to AGMA agreements, and therefore may not have agreed to observe the minimum terms and conditions of employment provided for therein which are vital for your protection. AGMA members are therefore advised that it is not in their best interest and the interest of their fellow AGMA members to accept employment from these organizations and individuals:

Artists Internationale, Inc.
The Bronx Opera Company
Community Opera of New Jersey — Floyd Worthington
Laszlo Halasz and the Concert Orchestra & Chorus of L.I.
Michigan Opera Theatre
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
New York Lyric Opera Company
Opera/Omaha
Providence Opera Theatre
Michael Signorelli and the Lyric Opera Company of L.I.
Virginia Opera Association
Roger Wagner Chorale
Dennis Wayne Dance Theatre

Naming Names

It is a common practice for performers to use a variety of professional names, for their own good reasons. But unless AGMA members notify the AGMA membership department about the various names by which they are known, considerable confusion results. Please take a moment to write or phone the National Office, to register with the Membership Department each name by which you are known. It’s in your best interest.

New arrivals

A Joffrey Ballet baby was born on June 28, 1982 to dancers Krystyna (Jurkowski) and Jerel Hilding. Dennis Jozef Hilding weighed in at 7 lbs. 5 oz. Parents are both members of the Joffrey Ballet and Mr. Hilding is a former member of AGMA’s Board of Governors.

Aaron Stefan Gerberg, 7 lbs. 4 oz., was born August 27, 1982 to AGMA member Diane Orio of the Joffrey Ballet, and her husband, Alan Gerberg, former stage manager for the Joffrey and presently in an administrative position with Metropolitan Opera Presentations.

A word about Honorable Withdrawals

Members are advised that requests for an Honorable Withdrawal from AGMA must be made in writing and will not be accepted unless so submitted.

There is a form for this purpose which can be obtained from the AGMA office, or member may simply write a letter giving reasons for the request. But only a written request will be considered.

A Withdrawal will not be granted unless the member is paid up to the current dues quarter.

An Honorable Withdrawal suspends payment of dues during a member’s period of inactivity in fields of AGMA’s jurisdiction, provided the member remains inactive for a year or more. If work in AGMA’s jurisdiction is resumed before one year has passed, dues are payable as though the Withdrawal had not been granted. If this return to AGMA field is made after one year has expired, the member will be required to pay only current dues at that time plus a service charge of $2.00.

The AGMA Group Life Insurance Policy does not cover members on Honorable Withdrawal. However, once a member is again in good standing with AGMA, he is immediately covered by the policy.

ZIP CODE NUMBERS
HELP SPEED YOUR MAIL!
USE THEM IN
ALL ADDRESSES