

# AGMAGAZINE

Official Organ of the  
American Guild of  
Musical Artists

A Branch of the Associated  
Actors and Artistes of America  
Affiliated with the AFL-CIO



Winter, 1987

Volume 41, Number 2



Best GREETINGS

from

Howard Chandler Christy

1937

# AGMAZINE

## Special Golden Anniversary Issue

### Winter, 1987

#### A G M A Z I N E

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**VOLUME 41 No. 2**

**Winter, 1987**

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We have enjoyed a proud and exciting anniversary year. 1986 has witnessed happy events, serious negotiations and a positive unfolding of AGMA's promise for the future. May you and yours find health and fulfillment in 1987.

**Nedda Casei**  
*President*

The past 50 years have been appropriately saluted by AGMA in 1986, beginning with a cocktail reception held by the Board of Governors on April 1 — the exact date at which the first meeting took place, documented in our minutes to the precise minute the gavel fell. The impressive array of talent assembled on November 3 at the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center drew some of the most favorable reviews imaginable. It was, of course, a one-time-only event, never to be forgotten by those lucky enough to witness so much artistry and achievement feted in just under four hours.

Now our attention and efforts must turn to the not-so-gala responsibilities of a labor union in 1987. AGMA has every reason to be optimistic, even in these times of union-busting and an anti-labor administration.

In a subsequent issue of AGMAzine, I shall deal in detail with multiple business particulars affecting all AGMA members: upcoming contracts, the effect of the tax reform in our professions, proposed special group credit card, discount prescription offer, and all of the annual procedures for this year's election of officers and members of the Board of Governors.

For now, in this Special Anniversary Issue, rejoice in our 50 years of proven worth, celebrate our healthy present, and enjoy a Happy New Year!

**Gene Boucher**  
*National Executive Secretary*

## AGMA — Past and present

AGMA's current officers (l to r: Fifth Vice-President Betty Baisch, President Nedda Casei, First Vice-President Eileen Schauler, Second Vice-President Elinor Harper, Third Vice-President Robert Manno, Treasurer Lawrence Davidson and Recording Secretary Yolanda Antoine) pose with photos of distinguished Guild members from the past (l to r: Lawrence Tibbett, George London, John Brownlee).

The occasion is a cocktail reception held in New York on April 1, 1986 to kick off AGMA's year long 50th anniversary celebration. The newly-framed portrait of former President George London (1967-1971) was unveiled, to be hung with the portraits of Presidents Lawrence Tibbett (1936-1953) and John Brownlee (1953-1967) in the reception area of the National offices.



# An interview with Roberta Peters

In the 1985-86 season, Roberta Peters celebrated her 35th consecutive year with the Metropolitan Opera, a record unequalled by any other coloratura in the company's history. She made her debut at the age of 19, singing Zerlina in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

Born in the Bronx, she attracted the attention of famed tenor Jan Peerce, who recommended that she study singing. After six years of intensive study, she sang for the late impresario Sol Hurok who immediately signed her and arranged for an audition for Rudolf Bing, then General Manager of the Met.

Best known for her roles as *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Gilda in *Rigoletto* and Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, among others, Ms. Peters maintains a busy schedule of recitals, concerts, musical comedy performances, recordings and personal appearances throughout the world.

She has represented the United States on two visits to the Soviet Union and during the second visit was the first American-born artist to receive the coveted Bolshoi Medal. She has been honored with doctorate degrees by Elmira, Ithaca, Westminster and Colby Colleges, as well as Lehigh and St. John's Universities and serves as an active trustee of Ithaca College. Ms. Peters also has served for many years as the National Chairman of the National Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Tennis is her favorite form of relaxation.

*"It is absolutely essential that artists have a union and we are very lucky to have it as well run as it is. I think it is important for the artist to have some representation. Not only their manager, but the union should be involved."*

stood how important it was to prepare early. William Herman was his name. He sent me to a French teacher, an Italian teacher, a German teacher and coach, so that I knew 20 operas before I got into the Met. I took acting lessons. I even took fencing and ballet, all in preparation for an operatic career. I do not know if teachers still teach that way, but I was required to learn not only the scales and the technique, but to understand how important it is to get into the style, the feel of an opera, to know exactly what each word means, *after* your technique is built. I do not know how many youngsters realize that today, but I feel it is very important and that it has helped me to remain where I am after all these years.

**Q:** How did you find this teacher?

**A:** Jan Peerce had heard me sing and sent me to this teacher. And Jan said, "I will come occasionally and listen to your progress. When I think that you are ready, then I will do what I think has to be done."

I had a lesson every single day. And I came down from the Bronx to do it. I had tried out for Music and Art High School in New York, but I didn't make it. They didn't accept me. And that was actually the turning point. I was either going to Music and Art or I was going to go to

William Herman. And that is the way it turned out. I was studying with William Herman and he would outline a program for me.

**Q:** How did you feel about that?

**A:** I was not a very good student and I was darn glad to get out!

I had a most unusual education. I studied languages and went to opera and concerts and theatres. I was thrown into an adult world right away. I missed a lot of things. That is the one thing in my life that I regret, perhaps. But, I had a wonderful life. The proms, the teenage life — that stuff I never had. I was never around. I was listening to Kirsten Flagstad, Lily Pons, that kind of thing. So, that is the one thing that I really missed — being with kids my own age.

**Q:** Is your husband in the arts?

**A:** No.

**Q:** Do you feel that is an advantage in maintaining a long and growing relationship?

**A:** I think it can be helpful. To have two in the business can be difficult. If one advances and one doesn't, then it is difficult. If one has to be separated that much the careers sometimes go in various directions. You cannot always be together and that is not so good. I think it has worked out for

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**QUESTION:** Do you find similarities between tennis and your work as a singer?  
**ANSWER:** In both there is a desire to do your best, to excel, to always be on your toes, always changing gears if you have to, but knowing your technique.

**Q:** How important is preparation?  
**A:** It is so important.

I was extremely fortunate. I was a New York girl, and I had a teacher who under-

us. We have been married for 31 years. And they said it wouldn't last! So, I feel very fortunate that my husband and I did get together. He has been very supportive.

**Q:** How did you get together?

**A:** I chased him until he caught me. He is from Brooklyn and I am from the Bronx, and we went to Cincinnati to meet. He had a hotel there and I was singing there. He tried to sit at my table afterwards for supper, but he could not get near the place. And then I was singing in New York where he also had a hotel. He asked if we would come to his hotel for supper afterwards. By the time he got to the table it was full, and he couldn't get near me again. So he said, "Can I take you home?" And I said, "Yes." Into the car piled my father and my mother and my grandmother. He did not have a chance. Then he wrote me a letter and I wrote back that I was very, very busy. But, I put my phone number on the bottom. And here we are!

**Q:** Do either of your children have aspirations for careers in the performing arts?

**A:** Oh goodness, no! Neither of them has a voice.

**Q:** Would they have liked to?

**A:** No. I do not think so.

**Q:** You have done many types of performing — classical and popular, as well. Is there any difference in your preparation, and what differences do you perceive in the audiences?

**A:** The opera audiences are getting more knowledgeable here. They were not that knowledgeable in the '50s when I started. There was always a certain amount of people who knew the opera, but I think because of the opera that is on TV audiences are becoming much more knowledgeable.

I do not think preparation is that different. I think you have your way of singing, and naturally with popular singing you don't give as much. You need the inner energy, but you don't have to give that much voice with popular music. With the classical music you really need a tremendous amount of reserve and breath control — all of those things that one does to prepare for a performance in opera, or even concert.

I really like to perform popular music. I have done *The King and I* and *Bittersweet* by Noel Coward and *The Merry Widow*, which is more operatic. I don't think there are too many roles for my voice. I do not want to scream like in *Kiss Me Kate*, which already would be too heavy for me. I am quite choosy and a little careful in

picking my repertoire. The same with the opera. I do not feel that everyone can do everything. You have to know what you can do. I have stuck with the coloratura repertoire, the high repertoire, and I try not to let any manager or anyone else convince me that I can do *Madame Butterfly*, because I can't.

**Q:** Have you ever tried?

**A:** Oh, yes, in the beginning. My teacher is the one who steered me right in the beginning. And I think that stays in your head, a little bit. I have seen singers come and go over the years because they have chosen the wrong repertoire and have hurt their voices. They were not able to work. My teacher, William Herman, wanted to become a singer so he knew about the voice very well.

**Q:** Are you saying that starting with a good teacher can make or break a singer?

**A:** I find that so important because there are so many charlatans. You cannot imagine the singing teachers that are charlatans.

**Q:** You have fluency in many languages. Did that come easily?

**A:** It did, because I started when I was 13. I was studying on a one-to-one basis. It was wonderful. I had the advantage of the time with the teacher.

**Q:** Do you still study?

**A:** I don't study languages that much anymore. I have a coach in San Diego now. I just came back from San Diego. He was my accompanist. He retired to San Diego and teaches there. Every couple of months I go out there. I call it my retreat. I do not see any people. I live there with him and his friend. We just study and work on a new repertoire, work on phrasing and

*(continued on next page)*



## PETERS

(continued from page 5)

different things that I am preparing for the future. I do not study singing, per se. By this time I think I should know what I have to do in warming up, in studying and preparing.

**Q:** Do you vocalize every day?

**A:** Almost every day. I would not be honest with you if I said I worked every single day.

**Q:** When AGMA had its 20th anniversary you were active on its committee. Do you remember that?

**A:** I remember it very well. Hy Faine was the head of AGMA at the time and we were very good friends. I remember that we spent a lot of time together. There were a lot of meetings and a lot of things going on. There was a great deal of excitement about it then. And I am sure there is now.

**Q:** What do you think the role of an artists' union ought to be in terms of the way the profession works today?

**A:** It is absolutely essential that the artists have a union and we are very lucky to have it as well run as it is. I am just talking in terms of the Metropolitan, which is the institution I know the best. The weekly artists, the artists who are on a weekly salary as opposed to the superstars who get per performance, really benefit. I think the union is important for the pay scale and also if there is anything that comes up with management. I think it is important for the artist to have some representation. Not only their manager, but the union should be involved.

I just sang for the stagehands' union. It was 100 years old recently. That was interesting. I like the stagehands. They have been wonderful to me. They are the last people you see before you go on. Don't forget. They can make you nervous or relax you. I always felt very comfortable and we have a nice relationship. They asked me to do this, so I sang.

**Q:** You recently did a recital at Carnegie Hall. Was this your first time there?

**A:** It was a solo recital. I have sung in Carnegie Hall many times, with an orchestra and dual concerts. But this time I played it solo.

**Q:** Were you nervous?

**A:** Was I nervous? I was scared out of my mind! Because Carnegie has almost a religious feeling when you walk out there. In my opinion, it is one of the greatest halls in the world. To be one person out there with

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no orchestra, just the piano and all eyes mainly on you, and to change moods . . . In a recital, I do almost 20 songs. Each is different. A change in the mood is very important. I think the recital is the most difficult of all the different types of performances that I do.

**Q:** Are recitals more difficult because of the abrupt changes?

**A:** I think it is because of the languages. You have to learn your French, your Italian. I do French art songs. That art, unfortunately, is dying out, from what I hear in my travels. That is a shame because that repertoire is so beautiful. People today are not coming out for single artists. Except for a Pavarotti. I am talking about the young singer today. People stay home and watch the black box. Unless they know who it is, they are not going to come out. Also, their attention span is shorter, because they can flip the dial if they do not like it. Off. What is going today, presenters tell me, are trios or groups, or duets even. Very seldom is it just the single artist.

**Q:** You said you were nervous at Carnegie Hall. How did you feel when you debuted at the Met at 19? That story reads like a typical Hollywood story of discovery — almost too good to be true.

**A:** I was set to make my debut as The Queen of the Night in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. However, at the last minute I stepped in for somebody else, singing Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. I actually made my debut earlier than anticipated and it happened so fast that I was practically numb before I went on. I didn't have time or sense enough to be nervous.

They called me at three in the afternoon

and I had never been on the stage before. Which is really true. I had never sung anywhere else. We were thinking about going to the opera that night. My mother was working and said she would come down about 5 o'clock. It all happened so fast. I was so busy going to see the conductor and getting dressed and getting ready and getting to the theatre. We had to take the subway. I couldn't get a cab because it was rush hour. It really came upon me very fast. And that was it. I was terribly fortunate to have that kind of a debut. Who knows what would have happened if I had made my debut in the opera in which I was scheduled to make my debut. You never know. The other had gotten so much publicity.

In the early '50s, 20th Century Fox wanted to make a movie of the story, but it never worked out.

**Q:** Nobody would believe it.

**A:** That's right.

**Q:** Did you know how unusual it was then?

**A:** Not really. I was carefully sheltered by my teacher who was so intent on my career. He wanted it badly and my mother wanted it badly. Therefore I was caught up in it. And I didn't have any influence from my peers at that time. I was nervous, but it all happened so fast.

**Q:** Is it true that you appeared on TV with Ed Sullivan 66 times?

**A:** Ed saw the publicity we were just talking about and he was on to that right away. Anyone coming up, he caught it right away.

**Q:** Was that new for you? Do you perform differently for TV? Do you hold back?

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# An eye toward long-term needs

by Abba Bogin

In a multi-faceted career that has spanned more than 35 years, pianist, arranger, conductor and teacher Abba Bogin has performed throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, North Africa and the Far East. Since 1948, he has been solo pianist with major symphony orchestras and conductors in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Houston and Kansas City; he has been musical director and conductor for more than 20 Broadway productions, including *Most Happy Fella* and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*; among his recordings are the complete Beethoven and Brahms sonatas for Cello and Piano (with Janos Starker), numerous original cast Broadway musicals and a number of film scores, and he has made numerous guest appearances as conductor of symphony, chamber orchestra, opera and ballet performances.

In addition, Mr. Bogin is a member of the staff and consultant for the Music Program of the New York State Council on the Arts, a member of the Board of Directors and Assistant Treasurer of the American Symphony Orchestra, Artistic Coordinator of the Lake George Opera Festival, Artistic Director of the Tappan Zee Concerts for the Rockland Center for the Arts and Associate Director of the Mohawk Trail Concerts in Massachusetts.

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AGMA is 50 years old, and I have been an active member of the Guild for almost 40 of those years. When I joined, in the late '40s, AGMA was actively working toward having instrumental soloist performers join, so that singers, dancers and instrumentalists who had a common management might have the greatest strength in their dealings with such management. Unfortunately, the struggles between AGMA and the American Federation of Musicians did not help to clarify how instrumentalists might be best represented, and the organizing of pianists, violinists and cellists became an almost lost cause.

It is interesting to note that 50 years ago, in the formation of the Guild, many of the original founders were instrumentalists of world renown. They tried very hard to interest their younger colleagues to come along with them, but the pressures of the AFM coupled with an attitude of complete non-cooperation from the concert managers did not help to win the good fight. However, a number of us chose to remain active in both organizations. I, for one, found that AGMA was far more cognizant and interested in my problems as a concert artist, and as I learned more about the professional lives of my singing colleagues, I felt an interest and kinship with them. I became increasingly aware that the overall problems that face the world of music are so interlaced that it was my business to work for better working conditions for all performing artists, and that not only was my membership in AGMA important to me, but hopefully, I could lend support to the rest of the membership by actively working within the union toward the common good. In my earlier years, I served on the Board of Governors and as the Treasurer of the Guild, but as I became less active in concert performances and also saw that the major activities of the organ-



ization were not directed towards the activities of instrumentalists (because there were not that many instrumentalists within the ranks), I felt that the membership should be better represented by officers more familiar with the detailed problems facing AGMA. I have, however, continued to work within the union in various other ways, when called upon, and am proud to pay my dues each year.

I think AGMA has made great strides in recent years. The Guild is stronger because many young members are starting to realize the need for their union, what it can do for them, and what their own responsibilities are in developing a strong union. It's not strong enough yet! There are many areas where much may be done to increase the clout the union should have. I think, however, that some of the strength of all the performing unions also lies in the increasing awareness of the general public as to the status and work of artists and our art. Recordings, television, and highly improved transportation have all brought the performing arts to areas all over the world that knew little or nothing about good music, dance and the theatre. More and more small towns now have concerts, opera, ballet and theatrical performances brought to them, and they have developed high respect for performers, and the understanding that performers deserve to live and work in comfort and with dignity.

The effects of all good unions should be, not only in achieving good working contracts with sensible wage scales and respectable working conditions, but with an eye toward the long-term needs of their memberships. This includes health insurance, pension plans, life insurance and a solid welfare plan that can help the member in times of great need. AGMA continues to make great strides in these areas, and there is no better reason for a strong union!

AGMA is all of us; and on our 50th anniversary, I congratulate us. May the next 50 find ourselves getting closer and closer to a life-style, for all of us, that we need and deserve. We can do it if we all do it together, and in so doing we may hopefully find ourselves performing with even greater artistic achievement.

# Random thoughts on the dance

by Cynthia Gregory

Cynthia Gregory started dancing professionally with the San Francisco Ballet and quickly rose to soloist rank. At the same time, she danced with the San Francisco Opera where, at 18, she became a Principal Dancer. She joined American Ballet Theatre in 1965.

Miss Gregory has performed such classic roles as Swanilda in *Coppelia*, Kitri in *Don Quixote* (*Kitri's Wedding*), the title role in *Giselle*, Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake* and the Sylph in *La Sylphide*. In addition, she has inspired choreographers such as Michael Smith, Dennis Nahat and Eliot Feld to create new roles for her in contemporary ballets.

She has appeared as a guest artist with most of the major dance companies in the United States and overseas, including the Zurich State Opera Ballet, the Vienna State Opera Ballet, the Munich State Opera Ballet, the Stuttgart Ballet, the National Ballet of Cuba, the Berlin State Opera Ballet, the San Francisco Ballet, Ballet West and the New York City Opera. She was the recipient of the 1975 Dance Magazine Award, honoring her dedication to, and enrichment of, the art of dance, and in 1978 she received the Harkness Ballet Foundation's First Annual Dance Award. Miss Gregory celebrated 20 years with American Ballet Theatre at a Gala in her honor in June, 1985.

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Ever since I can remember, I've been dancing. It's what I was born to do, I suppose. Each one of us has at least one talent — one special thing that we do well — and dancing is mine.

It's taken me a very long time to accept this about myself. I've been resisting this concept because it seems so narrow and confining. There is so much to see and do in this world and dancing seems to consume so much of my time and energy.

I simply refuse, though, to accept the premise of *The Red Shoes* or the *Turning Point* — having to choose between one's art or one's life. If I manage to squeeze some "real life" in between the practice and performances, I feel enriched, refreshed, and all the better for my experiences. I need to be a regular person as well as a dancer.

The dance world has been good to me throughout the years. I feel quite fortunate that dance started to become more popular in the United States at the same time as my career started blossoming. Dancers were beginning to be paid more for their efforts and there was increased prestige connected with the art of dance. Through those years, we negotiated, we picketed, we talked to the press. We took ourselves and our jobs seriously, asking our managements and our public to do the same. I think that, slowly but surely, dance has become an important form of entertainment as well as an art form.

When I began to do guest appearances abroad, I felt proud and responsible as a representative of American dancers.

As I've often stated in my interviews, I am a champion of

*"I am a champion of American dancers. I praise their glories and hope the American public will someday understand that their own dancers are right up there — the very best in the world today."*

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American dancers. I praise their glories and hope the American public will someday understand that their own dancers are right up there — the very best in the world today.

Travelling in Europe, especially Germany and Switzerland, I found ballet companies filled with Americans, dancing their way into the hearts of the European public.

I believe that if we hope to continue to develop and prosper, we in the dance world should try to emulate the pioneering spirit and vision of those incredible men and women who founded the great dance companies — both large and small, classical and modern — that we take for granted today. We should not allow their basic founding principles to die out. Of course, progress is important, but sometimes the excitement is lost when a pair of gorgeous legs takes precedent over musicality and personality, or big business takes precedent over humanity and warmth.

Dance is people; dance is love; dance is joy. Dance can also be pain and frustration. It is up to us who love the dance to keep it alive and exciting — a human communication of beauty.

Congratulations, AGMA, on your anniversary!



Actress, singer Kitty Carlisle Hart is Chairman of the 20-member New York State Council on the Arts. Appointed by Governor Hugh Carey in August, 1976, Mrs. Hart previously had served on the Council as its Vice-Chair for five years.

Mrs. Hart made her debut with the Metropolitan Opera in 1967 in *Die Fledermaus* and during the summer of 1973 appeared in the Met's series of Operas in the Park. She created the role of Lucretia in the American premiere of Benjamin Britten's *Rape of Lucretia*.

She has appeared on Broadway (most recently in *On Your Toes* in 1984), in films and was a regular panelist for many years on the television show, *To Tell The Truth*.

Mrs. Hart, who was married to the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright-director Moss Hart until his death in 1961, has served as a Special Consultant to the Governor on Women's Opportunities; on the Board of Overseers of Harvard's Music School; on the Visiting Committee for the Arts at Massachusetts Institute of Technology; as a member of the board of the Empire State College and the Girl Scouts Council of Greater New York, and is an Associate Fellow of the Timothy Dwight College of Yale University. In addition, she holds an honorary doctorate in fine arts from the College of New Rochelle and honorary doctorates in humane letters from Hartwick College and Amherst College.

Born in New Orleans, Mrs. Hart was educated in Switzerland, France and England, where she studied both at the London School of Economics and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts.

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**QUESTION:** Was it culture shock to go from New Orleans, where you were born, to Switzerland and England, where you went to school?

**ANSWER:** No. What difference does it make whether you are in England or New Orleans when you are only 11 years old? That's all I was when my mother took me abroad to make a "brilliant marriage." In those days, ladies — American ladies, Henry James' ladies — took their children abroad to make brilliant marriages, so I was educated with an eye to making a brilliant marriage.

**Q:** So you decided to stay abroad and study?

**A:** I did not decide anything. My mother

## *An interview with Kitty Carlisle Hart*



decided to stay. In those days there was an enormous American colony in Paris. It was a little before my time, but the same era — Scott Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Gertrude Stein — there were 100,000 Americans, so it was not unusual.

I stayed there until we lost what little money we had. My father had been a doctor in New Orleans, and he died, which is why we went abroad, I think. I'm not sure

what my mother's motives were. When we lost the money, I had to go to work to support my mother. She said that I should go on the stage. She sent me to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, presumably to marry a Duke. In those days English chorus girls, known as Gaiety Girls, all married Dukes. It revitalized the British aristocracy.

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*"When the time has come when one can no longer dance, let's say, I think one must prepare ahead of time. That is awfully hard to do. You never feel a career is going to be over. I keep thinking that I will be able to sing until I am 80, which isn't true. So you have to think about it in advance."*

## HART

(continued from page 9)

Our money ran out after about eight months and I did not make it. I married a prince in the end. My mother was quite right: I went on the stage and because I went on the stage I found a prince and I married him. He was the prince of the theatre. His name was Moss Hart.

On my honeymoon we did one of his plays, *The Man Who Came To Dinner*, at the Bucks County Playhouse. He played Sheridan Whiteside and I played Maggie, the secretary. He was a Jekyll and Hyde. On the one hand he was the dearest man that ever lived. We thought it would be so romantic if we shared a dressing room. We did. He turned into an absolute monster when he could not get his beard on. I would never share a dressing room with him again! We played *The Man Who Came To Dinner* again the following summer and I played Blossom Girl. I was sensational as Maggie, and quite awful as Blossom Girl.

**Q:** What led to your debut at the Met in 1967?

**A:** Garson Kanin came to dinner one night with his wife, Ruth Gordon. He asked if I would like to do my old part of Prince Orlofsky in the new Met opera at Lincoln Center on New Year's Eve, 1966. He was going to direct it. I said, "You must be mad." He said, "No, I want to see you in those black tights again, up to here."

I had studied piano and singing very seriously, and anybody who studies singing seriously often dreams about singing at the Met. I had dreamed about it, but had put the dream aside. I did sing some opera. I sang in Benjamin Britten's *Rape of Lucretia*. I had done *Carmen* in Salt Lake City. In my day, operettas were quite akin to opera. You needed training to sing them. And I appeared in a lot of operettas. I played originally at the Morosco Theatre. This was my first Broadway show. They did *Fledermaus*. I played Orlofsky. It was a charming production. I made a big hit and went right to the movies.

**Q:** What do you think is the most demanding of all the media you have worked in?

**A:** The one that I am doing at the moment. Each one has its own demands. Opera demands a big voice, which I did not have. I did a TV game show for 23 years. That demands a very special type of per-

son. You had to have an enormous fund of information, a tremendous sense of show business, a good sense of timing. There were not that many good panelists around. Actually, I do not remember that much about the movies. The last movie I made was *A Night At The Opera* with the Marx Brothers. I am in the new Woody Allen movie. I only sang two songs.

People have asked me, "What is the title of the new movie?" My answer is, "Does he tell you? Well, he didn't tell me either!"

**Q:** What is he like to work with?

**A:** He is charming. I do not know him much to work with, but I know him socially. He came to dinner one night and asked me to do the film. Later, when I left the set after doing the movie I said, "What made you think I could sing?" He said, "Well, you told me that you practice every day."

I had no dialogue but I found out that he is an extraordinarily meticulous director. I had to lip-sync the songs. He stopped me on almost every line if every word was not in total sync. He stood under the camera and watched very carefully.

**Q:** What were the Marx Brothers like?

**A:** Very serious business, the Marx Brothers. They wanted to make a good movie and because they were serious, they made a classic. I thought I was slumming when I made that movie. I did not know I was making a classic.

They had extraordinary respect for writing. They had the best writers, including George Kaufman. They tried out the jokes and all of the schtick up and down the West Coast in vaudeville even before they went into the studio. They pruned the jokes and cut things out. They even did the cabin scene in vaudeville. I did not join them until the movie.

**Q:** Since becoming Chairman of the New York State Council on the Arts — by the way, do you prefer to be called "chairman"? . . .

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** . . . Has that role of arts administrator affected your perspective as a performer?

**A:** Not at all. The only thing that it gave me was a sense of delight and wonder that I had become an arts administrator. I owe a great deal of gratitude to Governor Cuomo for reappointing me to the job. He has been very generous to the arts.

**Q:** You have always had success in getting governors to be supportive.

**A:** They have all understood the impor-

tance. In the beginning when I first went to Albany I knew that the arts generated lots of money. I had no hard figures. Now we have that new study from the Port Authority and the Cultural Community Council which proves that the Tri-State area generates \$5 billion, \$600 million through the arts. The arts are very important to the economy, particularly in New York State. We are the arts capital of the world. Our Arts Council budget is now \$43 million. The nearest state is California with \$16 million. Every state in the union has come to realize that the arts are a magnet for better business. Every state is trying to lure films, our dancers, theatres and music to their states. We have to be very careful to maintain our position.

**Q:** Your TV series, *Living for the '60s*, which you did for The University Network, focused on men and women working out meaningful careers after their retirement. What is the answer to not being stuck as a performer if you are not supporting yourself as a performer?

**A:** I remember Moss telling young people, "Give yourself seven years as an actor. Give yourself seven years to make it — and I do not mean becoming a star, I mean supporting yourself in a dignified manner. If, after seven years, you can't do that, get out."

He felt that, particularly for men, it was a field that was not conducive to the kind of nine to five discipline that you need to go into business. Agents and theatre people wake up late. They work at night. He felt that their families should subsidize them if they could, as they would a dentist. If they did not make it, they should reeducate themselves to get into another field.

For people who have been performers for a long time and who find that the time has come when they no longer dance, let's say, I think the thing to do is prepare ahead of time. That is awfully hard to do. You never feel a career is going to be over. I keep thinking that I will be able to sing until I am 80, which isn't true. So you have to begin to think about it in advance.

Now I am doing a lot of lecturing, without singing, and I enjoy it enormously.

**Q:** If a young person could have the opportunity to ask you personally for advice on how to become a serious opera singer or ballet dancer, what would you say?

**A:** "Don't do it unless you will die if you don't do it." That is the only way to go into

the arts. It is so hard. Discouraging. You have to have the hide of a rhinoceros. The arts is an exercise in rejection. You have to be very tough to weather the kind of rejection that you get, no matter how big you are. I am still auditioning and getting turned down. I would not hire anybody unless they auditioned, if I were doing the hiring. Unless you feel that you would die without it, try to find something else to do.

**Q:** How did you get involved with the State Arts Council?

**A:** It was from *Woman On The Move*, my TV series. I have always been an advocate of equal rights for women. We grew up in the theatre, where we have the same opportunity, the same salaries and working conditions as men. I never understood about discrimination in the workplace until I got out in the world away from the theatre and found out what it was really like.

In the beginning of the feminist movement, in the early '60s, I had this show. It created a little stir, but we lost out to *Leave It To Beaver!* One of Nelson Rockefeller's aides called me and asked me if I would chair a three-day conference on Opportunities for Women that the Governor had called at the Hilton Hotel. I have an inborn inability to say no to anything. I said that I had never chaired anything, but I would try. The conference created so much excitement that the Governor asked me to tour the state and to write a report. So I did. Then he formed something called The Woman's Unit. I was the volunteer head of that for several years. Finally, I said, "Governor, darling, I think I have done all that I can for the Woman's Unit. Have you got another job? He mentioned serving on the State Arts Council and I said, "Sounds wonderful." I have never been on salary, but it has given me enormous pleasure.

**Q:** One of the programs of the Arts Council is the Decentralization Program. Would you talk about that?

**A:** I am very proud of it because it is something that I started. The Decentralization Program is for grassroots organizations which are not able to apply to the Council because they are not professional enough. They are very necessary in their communities. The program administers small grants, under \$3,000. For instance, say a small community theatre group needs \$150 for scripts, costumes and lights. Well, under this program they can get it in a hurry.

(continued on page 12)

## Greetings from Alvin Ailey

Alvin Ailey's seven-member company, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, made its debut in 1958 in New York. Since then the Company has toured extensively, with performances throughout the United States, Europe, the Orient, Africa, the Far East, the Middle East, Latin America, and even Russia, where it was the first American modern dance company to appear since the days of Isadora Duncan.

Mr. Ailey's career in dance began with Lester Horton, a West Coast choreographer who organized the first multi-racial modern dance company in the United States. He has worked on Broadway as a dancer, actor and choreographer and has staged or choreographed several operas, including Virgil Thompson's *Four Saints in Three Acts*; Samuel Barber's *Anthony and Cleopatra*, which opened the Met's new Lincoln Center home; and Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*, which opened the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. He also created a full-length ballet for the world premiere of Virgil Thompson's opera, *Lord Byron*. He has choreographed more than 50 works for his company, and his works have been in the repertoires of American Ballet Theatre, The Joffrey Ballet, The Harkness Ballet, Bat-Dor Company of Israel, Ballet International de Caracas, the Royal Danish Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, Aterballato, London Festival Ballet and the Pittsburgh Ballet.

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It gives me great pleasure to wish AGMA happy 50th anniversary and to participate in the celebration.

To be a dancer is a rich and rewarding experience; it increases and expands our personalities and characters by providing us an opportunity to express many of the most central emotions and feelings of the human experience, encouraging the possibilities for personal growth and social change.

My Company and I have been fortunate enough to be ambassadors of dance and ambassadors of this country through dance, hopefully easing, if only briefly, the tensions that exist between men and between nations.



The Alvin Ailey Company performs *Caverna Magica*.

## HART

(continued from page 11)

**Q:** What are other criteria for Council assistance?

**A:** We do not fund individual artists. Individual artists are funded through the New York State Foundation for the Arts. We give them \$1,300,000 for fellowship programs. But under our programs, individual artists have to be attached to an organization, and the organization will apply.

We have a new dance program to develop choreography for the ballet. And we have a new program for pocket orchestras, so that small dance and opera companies do not have to depend entirely on canned music.

**Q:** Where do you think that the opera and ballet are going? Will they always have to lose money at the box office?

**A:** Of course! There has never been any kind of an arts organization that has been self-supporting — never through the years.

**Q:** If the theatre can do it, why can't opera or ballet?

**A:** Because they do not need those huge companies. Danny Kaye once did a program at the Metropolitan Opera. It was for kids. At one point he said, "I want you to see how many people are involved in putting the opera on." He walked all the way to the back wall of the Met — two city blocks. Then as he walked forward to the

proscenium, out from the wings poured the staff: scenic designers, grips, scene painters, costume people, wardrobe mistresses, wig people, make-up people. There were 350 people on the stage when he finally got to the proscenium.

Look at all of the people that you need for the ballet. The problem with the arts is that they are labor intensive.

You cannot play a Brahms Quartet with two people. You need four and you will always need four and there is no way out of that one.

**Q:** Do you think that TV broadcasts of opera and ballet are helpful?

**A:** Yes. I went up to Rochester to talk to the Rochester Symphony and other people, and they were very concerned because they were going to put on *La Boheme* at their opera company four weeks after *La Boheme* was being shown on TV. They thought that it might kill their whole performance. It turned out that the reverse was true. They could not fit the people into the auditorium because so many people wanted to see it live once they had seen it on tape.

I think it is very good for opera and for ballet to be seen on TV. Very important. Technology and innovation will not kill the theatre, nor will oral reproduction kill books. It is an "add on."

**Q:** I want to ask you about Moss Hart. He was such a unique and remarkable man. Would you tell us what he might have

taught you that influenced you the most?

What did you learn from being his wife?

**A:** I have thought about that many times. I think he taught me compassion, not to judge people. Moss never judged anybody. He understood all human frailties. He was very conventional in our own life. Our friends were very conventional. I look back now and realize that none of our friends ever got divorced. They all have been married all these years and have children. They went to the country in the summer. They lived very conventional lives. Our life was very glamorous. Moss was larger than life, and you know, he had this enormous personality. People wanted him around all the time. They wanted to entertain him. He made every party go. But he taught me not to judge people and to be more understanding. I was always quick to make snap judgments, to be scornful. I do not do that anymore. He really was a very good teacher, and he was very understanding of people's problems.

He was a very compassionate director. He liked actors, which some directors do not. He said, "You have to understand when an actor walks in the stage door, he does not just have a part in his hand. He has his whole life in his hand. That is why you have to be very understanding with actors and their temperament."

He also said, "Actors never misbehave unless they are frightened." I think that is true. An actor that really does not feel secure either in the hands of the director or with the play tends to behave badly. Mostly frightened. I behave very badly when I'm scared.

**Q:** Is there anything else you would like to say?

**A:** I would like to say another word about the Arts Council. Although we fund non-profit organizations, the Broadway theatre also has profited enormously from our work because of non-profit organizations that have produced plays that have found their way to Broadway. Everyone profits from the Council, but a lot of people in the performing arts don't really know what we do. I found that out when I was in *On Your Toes* on Broadway. I would like to tell everyone who reads this that if they have the chance to talk to or write their state legislators when budget time comes, starting in November, please be sure to help the Council, because the money will wind up in your pocket. That is also true in the fields of opera and ballet.

## Hooray for ignorance!

For an example of cross-fertilization in the world of entertainment, take the opera *Madame Butterfly*. It began as a short story written by a Philadelphia lawyer; the story was read by David Belasco, who turned it into a successful stage play. One day, Giacomo Puccini was strolling up Broadway and the name *Madame Butterfly* on a theatre marquee caught his eye. He attended a performance of the show and decided then and there that it would make an excellent opera. Not a single person concerned with *Madame Butterfly* had ever been to Japan or had any authentic information about that country or its culture. The opera bears witness to the fact that ignorance need never stand in the way of creating works of art. — From *The French Connection* by Brendan Gill, an article which appeared in New York Magazine on May 12, 1986, reprinted by permission of Mr. Gill.

Yolanda Antoine is a long-time member of the AGMA Board of Governors, an Active Life Member and current Recording Secretary of AGMA. She has performed as a chorister with the Metropolitan and New York City Operas, the Connecticut Grand Opera, State Opera of Stamford, New Jersey State Opera, in Mexico, Santiago, Chile and Caracas, Venezuela as well as on Broadway and TV.

She began going to the opera as a young child when her parents worked at the old Chicago Opera Company. Later, the family moved to New York where her father was a costume designer for the Met and her mother worked in costume and wardrobe.

**QUESTION:** At what age did you begin singing in the chorus?

**ANSWER:** I was very fortunate. I started very young. I was about 21, and I have been working ever since.

**Q:** Was it something that you wanted to do or were you kind of pushed into it?

**A:** No. No. The opera was the only thing that I knew.

**Q:** Did you train?

**A:** Oh, yes, I studied. My mother knew Fortune Gallo from the San Carlo Company. He said when I joined the union to let him know and he would give me a job.

At that time in order to get into the union you had to audition for it. There were several judges sitting there judging you. And you had to sing a repertoire. They did not ask you to sing any arias. You had to have a knowledge of 15 or 20 operas and they would ask you to sing various parts of various operas. You never knew what they were going to select. These were tough judges, people who had worked all of their lives, people from the Met and from Chicago and other places. At that time, you really could not work anywhere unless you already were a member of the union.

I went to a teacher and said I wanted to learn the chorus in this opera and that opera. He said, "Nobody learns opera choruses." And I said, "I do. I enjoy it." And I worked all of the time.

**Q:** Is there as much work now?

**A:** There are more companies now, but they are all regional. Actually, I have very little work compared to what I had before. I used to work at the Met. I have worked at City Opera. Then I married and raised two children. Before that I traveled all the

## *An interview with Yolanda Antoine*

*Yolanda Antoine wanted to sing in the opera chorus, and has since age 21. She has sung all over the world, with the greats and not-so-greats. For her, performing without a rehearsal was not only unsurprising, but normal.*



time. We used to have a company in Venezuela that we visited every summer. You had to know your opera because a lot of times we would go into a performance with no rehearsal whatsoever.

**Q:** Never having sung with the principals?

**A:** Never, not even an orchestra rehearsal. For example, 20 years ago, we would travel to Connecticut, do the performance and leave the same night. They had a local chorus of their own and would bring in a minimum of New York people just to do the show. There was never a rehearsal. Later on as the companies got more money they might have one brief rehearsal. Then maybe two.

But you had to know the basic staging, which was always the same for any opera.

We knew what it was. And you had to find a costume that would fit, and you would wonder who the conductor was going to be, and how many cuts he was going to make in the opera.

Once a conductor was late because he got stuck in traffic. Every conductor has his own openings and cuts and it was not until we were actually performing and we saw him making a scissors with his fingers as he was conducting that we knew a scene was cut.

**Q:** Have things changed?

**A:** I had a great opportunity because most of the things I did were in the '50s. That was a great era, with all big stars. Today, we only have a few stars and unfortunately they cannot sing everywhere, all the time. Today, we do not have as many people with the voices and the charisma. It is the same thing in the movies.

**Q:** Has there been a lowering of standards, do you think?

**A:** Sometimes things today are overrehearsed compared to things that were never rehearsed before. Sometimes you can rehearse so much that a show becomes dull and dead by the time it opens.

**Q:** Do you think that the broadcasting of opera has kept some companies from going down the tubes?

**A:** I think it is a wonderful thing that we can see these things on TV. People who never would think of ever going to an opera at any time now have the opportunity

*(continued on page 32)*

# CELEBRATION!



Donald Saddler plans the November 3rd event with host Beverly Sills.



The Dallas Ballet's Krista Welch, Jacob Sparso and Nancie Woods in Fleming Flindt's *La Ventana Pas De Trois*, performed in the buoyant Bournonville style.

Dance Theatre of Harlem's Judy Tyrus and Eddie J. Shellman bring to life a dazzling technical display as the Princess and the Slave from *Le Corsaire*.



Highlight of AGMA's 50th anniversary festivities was a Golden Jubilee Gala, a celebration of music and dance saluting 50 years of dedication to the performing arts, at the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center on Monday, November 3.

Hosted by Beverly Sills, this once-in-a-lifetime performance was directed by Donald Saddler.

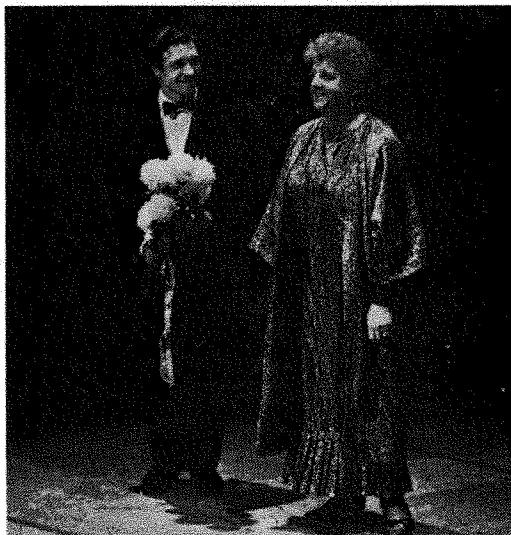
Act One was a salute to opera and featured performances by John Alexander, Lucine Amara, Richard Cassilly, Patricia Craig, Michael Devlin, Ezio Flagello, John Macurdy, James McCracken, Robert Merrill, Paul Plishka, Louis Quilico, Samuel Ramey, Renata Scotto and Frances Yeend, and a salute to Licia Albanese, Rose Bampton, Kitty Carlisle Hart, Delia Rigal, Regina Resnik, William Warfield and Vera Zorina. The Act ended with the New York City Opera performing the Act Two Finale from *Die Fledermaus*.

Act Two of this extraordinary program focused on dance. Introduced by Mummerschitz, the renowned mime group, it opened with an excerpt from *Vienna Waltzes*, performed by the New York City Ballet. Dance companies participating included the Milwaukee Ballet, Dallas Ballet, Martha Graham Dance Company, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, San Francisco Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Chicago City Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem, The Joffrey Ballet, American Ballet Theatre and the New York City Ballet in the rousing finale from *Stars and Stripes*. Introducing various segments of the program were Natalia Makarova and Suzanne Farrell. Alexandra Danilova, Frederic Franklin and Nathalie Krassovska, distinguished artists of the Ballet Russe, were saluted, along with distinguished choreographers Alvin Ailey, Gerald Arpino, Agnes DeMille, Murray Louis, Alwin Nikolais, Jerome Robbins, Anna Sokolow, Zachary Solov and Glen Tetley.

A Gala Supper followed the performance.

Smaller celebrations and parties were held throughout the year, including a cocktail reception in New York on April 1.

*Highlight of AGMA's 50th Anniversary observance was the all-star gala at Lincoln Center, which drew unanimous raves.*



Delia Rigal smiles at a warm greeting from the audience before receiving a bouquet from William Badolato.

Introduced by Beverly Sills, William Warfield receives an ovation as a recorded minute of *Ol' Man River* fills the air.



Richard Cassilly sings *Sigmund heiss ich* from the first Act of *Die Walkure*.

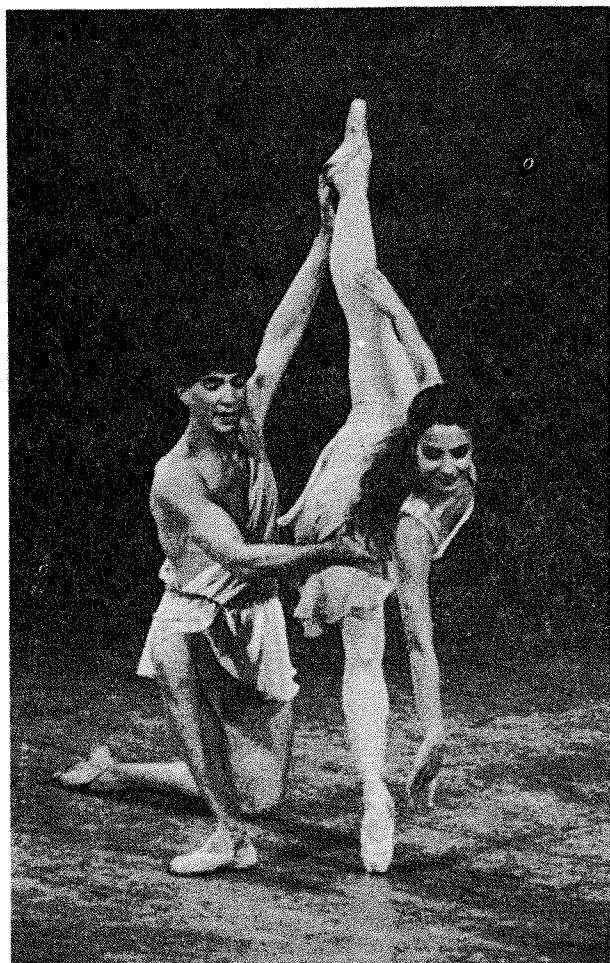
With Dominic Cossa leading off with the moving phrases of Dr. Falke, the New York City Opera presents the finale to Act II of *Die Fledermaus* to close the operatic half of the program.





The Milwaukee Ballet's Paula Weber and Peter Schetter perform the charming Act III Pas De Deux from *Coppelia*.

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's Maria Teresa del Real and Miguel Campaneira draw gasps from the capacity audience as they perform *Spring Waters*.



Beverly Sills introduces Vera Zorina in a salute to distinguished artists. Miss Zorina receives a presentation bouquet from Lawrence Leritz.

The San Francisco Ballet's Evelyn Cisneros performs *Confidencias*, a solo choreographed by Helgi Tomasson.



Patricia Craig at the close of Doretta's Song from *La Rondine*.

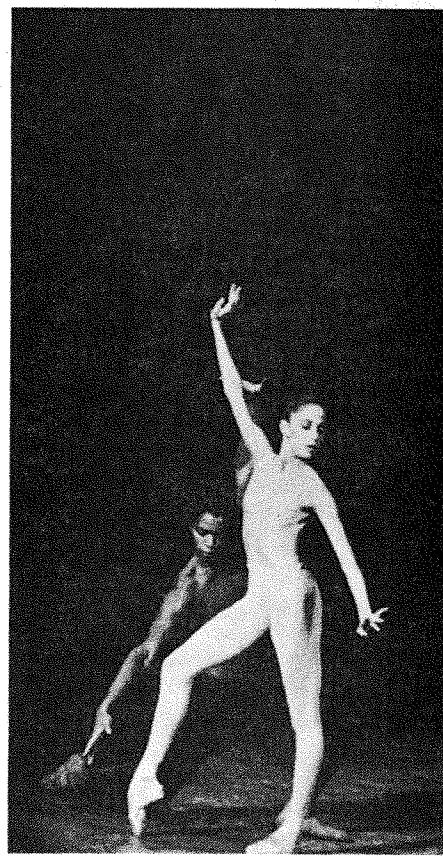




The Martha Graham Dance Company's Takako Asakawa performs a riveting excerpt from *Cave of the Heart*.



Beverly Sills, Peter Martins and the New York City Ballet waltz in an excerpt from Balanchine's *Vienna Waltzes*.



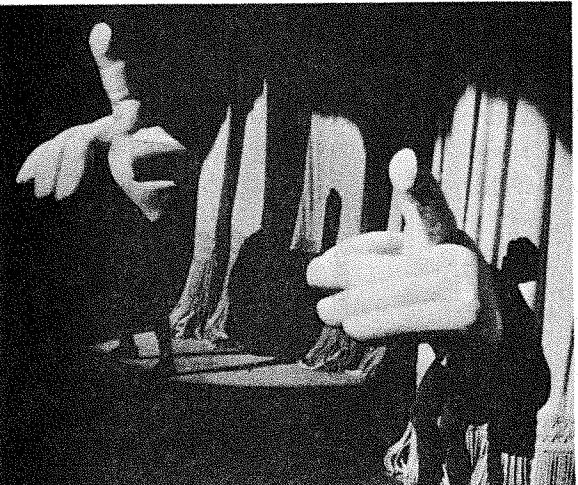
Maria Terezia Balogh and Joseph Malbrough, artists of the Chicago City Ballet, perform *Webern Pieces*.

Regina Resnik, famed prima donna and prominent AGMA Life Member, presents a brief moving salute to AGMA's founders, reading the special celebration greetings from Founding Vice-President, Jascha Heifetz.



*Revelations*, performed by the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and concert chorus members, has the audience clapping in unison.





The delightful and unique Mummenschanz open Act Two of the Gala.



Martine Van Hamel and Kevin MacKenzie, stars of the American Ballet Theatre, draw ovations as Kitri and Basilio in Baryshnikov's *Don Quixote* Pas De Deux.



The Pennsylvania Ballet's Marin Boieru and William de Gregory compete in a duet from Lynne Taylor-Corbett's *Great Galloping Gottschalk*.

All the participants come on stage, in front of the Stars and Stripes backdrop, to salute the benefit audience and to witness the balloon cascade from the top balcony of the New York State Theater.





John Macurdy proves his prowess with the bass Verdi aria par excellence, *Il lacerato spirto*.



Taking a final curtain call are (l to r) Frances Yeend, Suzanne Farrell, Peter Martins, Beverly Sills, Jerome Robbins, Natalia Makarova and Alexandra Danilova.



Elizabeth Hoeppel was the founder and first president of the Grand Opera Artists' Association, which held the original charter from the Associated Actors and Artistes of America for jurisdiction over opera singers. The first issue of ARIA (Artists Rights in America), the official publication of the GOAA, was dedicated to Ms. Hoeppel: "A splendid artist and courageous woman, who with her sincerity of purpose, intelligence and pleasing personality, has been a source of inspiration and confidence to all of us."

The GOAA merged with AGMA in 1937 and Ms. Hoeppel became a member of the merged organization. She served on AGMA's Board of Governors from 1937 to 1969, including terms as the Recording Secretary from 1940 to 1959 and Fourth Vice President from 1960 to 1969. She continues to serve as an AGMA Delegate to the Four A's. Ms. Hoeppel was honored for distinguished service to the union with the AGMA Merit Award in 1961 and an Active Life Membership in 1964.

**QUESTION:** Why did you form the Grand Opera Artists' Association?

**ANSWER:** Because of the abuses taking place. The situation was quite bad. Even famous artists were not getting paid. They performed and never got their money. I was approached by artists and asked if I would start a union for opera singers. There was a stagehands' union and a musicians' union and opera singers wanted to be organized, as well. So, I started out in 1935. At first, I could not find one student lawyer at Columbia who would be willing to help. Not one. So I had to go ahead and start out on my own. I went to Equity and asked Frank Gillmore to kindly organize the opera singers. He said I should go ahead and organize them. So, instead of having one union, one initiation fee, one set of dues, you have all of these unions instead of having one union.

I hired a room in Carnegie Hall. I sent out notices and members came. We had three meetings and discussed it thoroughly. And then they were finally ready to sign.

**Q:** How many people were involved at first?

**A:** About 200. They all worked like beavers.

We had our troubles. I was told if I entered a theatre I would be slapped. But I did go there to give the artists the power

## *An interview with Elizabeth Hoeppel*



Elizabeth Hoeppel (r) with President Nedda Casei.

and the courage to say, "I do not perform unless I get paid." Many times we were not paid. I said, "After the first act if you are not paid, you stop the performance." I was always there.

**Q:** Why did they come to you when they first wanted to organize?

**A:** I did not sing unless I was paid first. I was sure of my performance, but never sure of my payment. Therefore, I was always paid. So many came to me because they were not paid. Can't you help us start a union, they asked. I had belonged to a German union.

**Q:** Was the German union strong?

**A:** Absolutely.

**Q:** Is it still strong?

**A:** Of course. The Italians have a union. The French have a union and the English have a union.

The chorus at the Met was organized. And the stagehands had a union. Everyone had a union. But the soloists had none.

**Q:** It is interesting that in 1935 there was a woman who was head of a union. Were you the first woman ever to head a union?

**A:** I have no idea. I have never given it a thought. In Germany I had done a great many things. I would never think about whether I was a man or a woman. If you can do it, you do it. If you cannot do it, don't do it — whether you are a man or a woman makes no difference to me. If a man is not able and a woman is, a woman

should take the job. If a woman is not able, she should not take the job. If she is as able as a man, she should be paid the same amount. Sex makes no difference to me. It is the power of what you can do. You are not getting paid because you are a man or a woman. You get paid for the job you are doing.

**Q:** You had a distinguished career in Germany. How did you come to America?

**A:** My husband was a businessman. I met him because I sang for the soldiers in the first World War. He was an officer. Then he came to America. I had to stay in Germany at first because I had a contract to sing and I couldn't get a release. My husband was here, so I followed when I could.

I have made many mistakes in this country. For instance, I turned down an important role. They said they would give me a week to consider. I said I did not need one day; I would not take it. What a mistake. What money I could have made at that. It would also have meant leaving New York City and my husband's business was here.

I have never had regrets. I am not one who is after money. You cannot take money along when you are dead. You cannot eat out of two plates or live in two houses. You cannot ride in two cars. I am satisfied with the way it turned out.

**Q:** How did you feel about America?

**A:** I was born in 1900. We were brought up differently. We were more reserved and obedient and we had manners. I used to kiss the hand of old ladies. When I came here, I was already too old to change completely. This part is still with me. When I watched people here, there were certain things that I did not like or approve.

**Q:** What was the first professional engagement you had in the United States?

**A:** I do not remember. It was 1924.

**Q:** Did you come here without speaking English?

**A:** No. I spoke English. I had studied it in school for about five or six years. And French. But, never having spoken it, I had to get used to it in this country. This country does not speak English too well! When I first came, everyone said, "Yeah, yeah." I told my husband, "Everyone speaks German here. What is yeah?" I have made it a point not to say "yeah."

**Q:** Can you talk a bit about the early days of AGMA?

**A:** First we had to overcome the antipathy of our managers against a union. Then, I told them, the members, they were their own enemies. "You like to sing," I said, "whether you are paid or not. If a manager can get you without paying you, he will!" So, they really needed a union to help them. They never asked how much they were getting paid. If you have a big name, then you can command. When you are an average singer, you cannot. You are happy to sing and make a living.

In 1935, we introduced a bill in Congress to protect American singers. Some impresarios at the time were bringing in foreign artists instead of hiring American singers. The artists were happy doing anything in America and the American singer was without a job. I went to Congress and to the committee studying this bill and told them, "American singers want to eat. They have families and they are hungry. Why should you bring somebody here when we have oodles of singers already right in this country? Good singers!" So we fought for reciprocity with foreign countries and for legislation so that before a foreign artist was brought into this country, it must be shown that a similar artist could not be found in this country.

Even some American people always thought only an Italian or other foreigner could sing opera. They never realized what talent they had in this country.

I saw the name of Congressman John

*An AGMA founder, creator of its predecessor union in 1935, Elizabeth Hoeppel has "no idea" whether she was America's first woman union president and has "never given it a thought. If you can do it, you do it, whether you are a man or a woman."*

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Hoeppel in the newspaper. My father used to tell me that anyone with the name of Hoeppel was a relative. So, I wrote him a letter. I told him I had seen his name in the newspaper and wondered if we might be related and if he came from Bavaria, also. I got a very nice letter from him, saying that he was born here but his father was from Bavaria. He came to New York and we met. It was just at the time I had started the union. We talked and he introduced the bill in Congress.

**Q:** How has the union changed?

**A:** In time people realized that there is a musical history in this country. And if there is something wrong, you go to the union. Now AGMA has power. There are artists that want to sing and get the money and never mind the rest of us. But others, like Lawrence Tibbett, worked to help his fellow artists. When I was young I thought if I lost my voice I would commit suicide. I could not live without singing. All of a sudden the union entered my life and took possession of my brain and everything. I forgot about singing so I could help other people to get a job.

**Q:** So it did not grieve you too much that you were not performing?

**A:** No, it did not. I never had time to sit down and grieve. I am not that type of person. I have never had regrets.

**Q:** Is it true that after you started the union, you did not work?

**A:** Yes. I did not work.

**Q:** Did you ever confront anybody and ask them why? You did not get paid for your work with the union. How did you earn a living?

**A:** I was married and I had money. I was in the fortunate position that I did not have to make a living. Otherwise I could not have done it. I put my money in it. I paid for the hall, the mailing, and after two

years we had no debts and I think there was over \$1,000 in the bank. It all went to AGMA when we merged.

**Q:** We do not have a tradition of going to opera in this country, do we?

**A:** That has nothing to do with it. You do not get a tradition if you do not lay a foundation. When people came out of the cave, there was no tradition. In Germany, we made a tradition by living a certain way of life and we continued a certain way. We built homes and castles and they lasted for 1,000 years. Here, something is built and two years later it has to be torn down. How do you get tradition when you do not work for it? Tradition is something you keep, not throw out.

**Q:** How do you develop the kind of tradition here that you had in Europe regarding the opera?

**A:** The first thing you would have to do is go to the AFL-CIO and discuss the possibility of involving members. There must be some people who love music. They could easily buy out the house — the Met — for a night and have it filled by union members. There are hundreds and thousands in some unions. Among 100,000 people, there must be 2,000 that love music. If the leaders would say, let's try it, it could be done. If necessary, it could be done in English. I am also for opera in English. In Germany we only sing German. Why should I pay and go in and not understand it? I am very much for English.

**Q:** What about subtitles?

**A:** That is all right, too.

**Q:** Is it true you will be 87 in February, 1987?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Would you mind if we mentioned that in AGMAzine?

**A:** They do not believe it anyhow. My doctor does not believe it.

Hy Faine served as National Executive Secretary of AGMA from 1946 to 1970. Prior to joining AGMA, he served as a National Field Representative and Executive Secretary of the Chicago Local of the American Federation of Radio Artists and was a labor lawyer in New York City. While on a leave of absence from AGMA in 1955-56, Mr. Faine served as an Advisor on Labor Relations to the Minister of Labor, State of Israel.

Currently, Professor of Arts Management at UCLA, Mr. Faine has been an arts and labor consultant and lecturer and has published numerous articles and papers on the arts.

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My 25 years of serving AGMA and its members is a sizeable period of time! I had the pleasure, pain, and more often than not, success in being the National Executive Secretary during those years: 1946 to 1970. They represent half of AGMA's life-span and one-third of mine.

Since I left New York, 15 years ago, AGMA has grown, changed, and been molded by the times and events that have since transpired. I feel good about all that I was a part of and pleased by its continuing existence and further development. I wish AGMA continued advances in the role it is playing in helping to develop the musical arts and aiding the men and women who create those arts.

I look back to 1946 and the singers, dancers, choreographers, instrumentalists, stage directors and managers who created and nurtured the union. My mind goes back to the soloists who merged with AGMA their own Opera Artists Association; to the Grand Opera Choral Alliance which gave up its own independent union for the good of a larger group; to the dancers in opera, ballet and the modern field, who found a commonality of purpose with their fellow artists; to the instrumentalists who "dared" their managers as well as the American Federation of Musicians to join a union which would look after their rights and well-being. I remember all these men and women and salute their courage and foresight: the "name" stars and the many, then "unknowns!"

True, those were the days in United States history, the 1950s and the 1960s, when labor was legitimatized and unions were given the legal and moral support of American society. Yet these pioneers of AGMA molded a union heretofore un-

## Changing winds

by Hy Faine

known in the musical world. It had all the attributes and roots of growth, solidity and responsiveness to the members' needs and wishes. It solidified disparate elements: choristers and soloists; group and individual performers; those who were employees of organizations and those who depended for their careers on concert managers and presentors of concerts.

We created a cohesive organization which could act nationally through a National Board and through conventions, and yet retained the character of disparate regions such as Los Angeles, San Francisco,



Philadelphia, Washington, New Orleans, Chicago, Texas and the Northwest — all of which gave it the flavor and the problems of a great nation. We could act for a single unit in a single area, as well as for a single person in a large unit. Above all, the organizational structure was sufficiently flexible and democratic to give voice and vote to all of these different entities and individuals.

We allied ourselves with our fellow artists in other fields — the theatre, motion pictures, television and radio. We supported, and were supported in turn, by other workers, technical and artistic, in all

the arts and in the various technical means of presenting these arts to the American and world public. We joined and played an important role in national and international bodies when we had common interests.

Above all, we joined forces with the organizations and individuals in American society, by testifying before Congressional and State Committees, by marching, by voting, by petitioning — to see that our government — in Washington, in State capitols and in municipal halls — finally began to assume the responsibility, both financially and politically, to further the growth, development, continuity and birth of existing and newly-formed arts organizations. The National Endowment for the Arts, the various State Arts Councils, the many Municipal and County Arts Commissions — all came into being as the result of the above activities, with the noble objective of helping arts institutions, individual artists and the many ethnic and geographical groups which make this a United States.

While we were not the only ones to work for and encourage these initial government supports, nevertheless, AGMA's inner strength and growth put AGMA in the forefront of these efforts. The results redounded to the benefit of each and every individual AGMA member and each and every part of AGMA, both artistic and geographic. The structure was and is there, strengthened in battle and responsive, when and if the union must call upon it.

Since 1971, I have been a Professor at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) as creator, director, teacher and advisor in the first broadly-based "Management in the Arts" Program in the United States. We train the people who administer those very organizations where our members are to seek to be employed, to bring their artistry to the American people. We have trained over 120 men and women who now have positions of top management in symphony orchestras, opera companies, dance companies, museums, arts councils and various other visual and performing arts organizations all over the United States. I have always been in favor of such training because, in the long run, it is equally good and necessary both for the institution and for the artists. I have confidence that their training makes them more responsive to the needs of the individual artist as well as to the or-

*(continued on page 35)*

Robert Merrill has sung in the most prestigious opera and concert halls in the world; performed in musical theatre and at major musical festivals throughout the United States; starred in night clubs, on television and recordings, and for 18 years, has been the New York Yankees' "Star Spangled Baritone," singing the National Anthem live at Yankee opening games and on tape at all home games.

He debuted at the Metropolitan Opera in Verdi's *La Traviata* and has also performed in *Carmen*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Rigoletto*, *Tosca*, *Il Trovatore*, to name a few.

Throughout his career, Mr. Merrill has performed as soloist with every major orchestra in the United States, conducted by many of the world's greatest conductors, including Arturo Toscanini, Leonard Bernstein, Erich Leinsdorf, Georg Solti, Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ormandy and Zubin Mehta.

In addition, Mr. Merrill has performed for every United States president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

He is a recipient of the Handel Medallion, New York City's highest cultural award and holds an Honorary Doctor of Music Degree from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota.

Mr. Merrill recently celebrated the 40th anniversary of his debut with the Metropolitan Opera.

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**QUESTION:** In your 40 years at the Met, have you seen significant changes?

**ANSWER:** The audiences really have not changed. The dress has changed. People do not wear black- or white-tie on Monday any more. It is a very casual audience. I think people today are just as well informed and they listen more to recordings, so most of them know exactly what the operas are about. Maybe performers have changed.

**Q:** In what respect?

**A:** When the seasons were shorter, the repertoire was smaller. You could cast an opera and keep the artists around. Today they fly in and they fly out. You need to fill up a tremendous repertoire of operas. It is difficult to cast. Sometimes, the performances are not as good. It is not saying that every performance in the '40s, '50s, '60s was great. But we worked as a team, you see. It is more difficult for the company today. The world has opened up to opera. In past years some countries had one or, at

## *An interview with Robert Merrill*

*"You used to rehearse the day of the performance until two or three o'clock and then go on and sing. It was very wearing and tiring and it put a lot of pressure on the artist. The union did away with that."*

the most, a few companies. Today they have hundreds of companies.

Television has introduced opera to more people. But managements just can't keep artists. They are all over the place.

**Q:** As opera has become more available to more people, has it become less special — more of an art form for the masses?

**A:** It has always been an art form for the masses. But it has become terribly expensive to stage grand opera. The productions are larger. You have to charge more money. Costs went up tremendously, so it

is more difficult to stage grand opera in a grand way.

**Q:** Do you think opera has become imprisoned by the trappings? Do you think that opera could be effectively staged in a simpler setting?

**A:** Yes, but people are spoiled now, they want bigger productions. They see them on TV, and in the movies. Everything has to be grand. Toscanini said, "Opera is in the throat and in the heart." In other words, it is still a vocal art. Beautiful scenery is only the frame of a good painting. I



would still look at a Monet and a Renoir without a frame.

You do not need new productions that often. Some people are donating a lot of money for productions these days. I think some of that money could be used in other ways.

**Q:** How?

**A:** To keep casts together so they do not have to fly around the world. Guarantee that they do eight or nine performances of one opera in one place.

**Q:** What do you regard as your favorite role?

**A:** *Traviata* was my debut role in 1945. I sang with Toscanini that very same year. He chose me to sing Germont. Perhaps that would be a favorite. Then, I have always loved *The Barber of Seville*. Musically, it was so bubbly. *Otello* was a challenging role. *Rigoletto* was the most challenging role, vocally and physically.

Favorites usually lasted the season. If I did the role for the season, it was my favorite. Then you wait for *Rigoletto*, *Traviata* to come back. You look forward to singing those roles again.

**Q:** How many operas could you go on and perform?

**A:** Twenty-five. If I had not done them in several years, I would need a while to put them back in my mind. But they were there. Remember, I did 774 performances with the Met. The Met is still the greatest opera house in the world, I think. To sing at the Met is a fulfillment for any artist. It really has not changed. Every era feels that its time is the best: the Golden Era, the so-called Caruso Era. We felt that during the years I was in it — the middle '40s to the late '60s — with many great artists, was also golden. I am sure that the artists today feel that this is the Golden Era, too. The audiences change. They do not know the difference between one era and another. Their era is the best. Today, audiences are a little younger. They come out of colleges that have opera workshops. They have so many records and albums to look back on. They are very well informed.

**Q:** Are the artists as well prepared as they were?

**A:** I think so. They do not stick with repertoires long enough, they jump too much from one opera to another instead of touring in a role. But they are well prepared and they work hard.

I think an opera singer should know whether he or she is ready for a certain

role. I did not sing *Rigoletto* for several years. You have to know yourself, when to accept offers. You cannot fool yourself. And it is the artist that makes the decision, not the management. When the time comes that you are mature enough for the role, you will do it better, and you will be more in demand.

**Q:** Is there a difference in the way you prepare to sing popular and classical music?

**A:** Preparation is the same. You will have to go over it over and over again. The operas are, of course, more complicated. You are not only performing solos, you are doing duets and quartets, and it makes it more complicated. Learning an opera is much more difficult than learning a musical comedy or learning a repertoire of

new songs, no doubt about it.

**Q:** How do you keep your voice in shape?

**A:** I keep vocalizing and practicing. I was lucky to have a good teacher in the beginning. I got myself a good foundation, good technique. I could always fall back on it. Sometimes it is rough to find a good teacher. My mother found my teacher for me, Samuel Margolis. I was lucky that she found him, but, again, I knew that he was good. There is a talent to knowing when you are studying correctly. Sometimes people go on and on and do not know if they have a good teacher or not. That is important.

**Q:** How did your career begin?

**A:** My mother started me. She was a singer. She had come here as an immigrant at an early age. She had a mild career,

## Reflections on birth and growth

by Lawrence Tibbett

(Written on the occasion of AGMA's 20th anniversary and reprinted from AGMAzine, June, 1957)

The 20th anniversary of the founding of AGMA prompts us all to look back over the past 20 years, to see what we started out to become and where we are today. Personally, I find it a deeply rewarding experience . . . this reflection on the Guild's birth and growth. It came into being because it was necessary that it exist. The life of an artist . . . be singer, dancer, instrumentalist . . . is a difficult one at best, and until 1937 the artist was required to delve into the "business" of being an artist. He had to make the best arrangements he could make for himself. If you had a head for business, as well as for art, you might do pretty well. But business acumen and artistic expression seldom go hand in hand.

It was obvious that something had to be done so that basic conditions would exist, according to the needs in each of the performing fields. In those days, there may not have been a ceiling on fees . . . and you dickered to get as much as you could . . . but there also was no floor!

Gladys Swarthout, Frank Chapman, Eva Gauthier, and many others, the list would fill page after page, we decided to lay that floor. We worked with our many colleagues and the membership to keep building, on that foundation, until today we have the solid structure that is your Guild.

I have had the honor of being President of AGMA for many years and today enjoy the distinction of being the Guild's Honorary President. I would like to remind you earnestly that, just as we look back over the past 20 years, so we must look ahead to the future. The Guild is the product of the time and energies, the thought, the sacrifices, of many men and women. You have them to thank for the gains which have been made for you in your working conditions, your compensation, your security. The only way they want you to thank them is by taking an active part in continuing to build AGMA. It needs now . . . it will always need . . . your spirited interest, your ideas, your cooperation, your help.

while trying to raise a family in The Depression era. She influenced me. I did not realize it then. I wanted to play baseball. I wanted to do everything that young guys do when they are growing up. But she found Mr. Margolis and he really influenced me. He took me to the Metropolitan Opera to see a performance. He was really a great influence on me. His studio was at the Met studio building. Listening to other singers, I realized that singing is a great art. Then I started making a living doing it.

I made \$5 or \$10 for singing in a church, the temple choir, or at various functions. People were earning \$10 working six days a week, and I was making \$10 for singing just one night. It became a great racket. All of those baseball fantasies faded very fast.

**Q:** Speaking of baseball, what about the Yankees?

**A:** The Yankees have to do it next season. With the casualties they had early in the season, they fell apart and they could not put it together again. It is very difficult to redo things when the season starts. That is what happens in baseball.

**Q:** How did you become such an avid Yankee fan?

**A:** As an eight-year old kid I was playing in the streets. I went to Yankee Stadium and saw Babe Ruth. Later I became a semi-professional pitcher. I was also a Dodger fan, but they deserted me for greener pastures. Then I began to sing the National Anthem at the important Yankee home games. The kids around Yankee Stadium call me the "Oh-say-can-you-see kid!"

**Q:** How do you feel about AGMA, and the union's proper role?

**A:** You used to rehearse the day of the performance until two or three o'clock and then go on and sing. The union did away with that. It was very wearing and tearing, and it put a lot of pressure on the artist. Several other things. Larry (Lawrence Tibbett), of course, was a great influence. A great man. He was AGMA's first president.

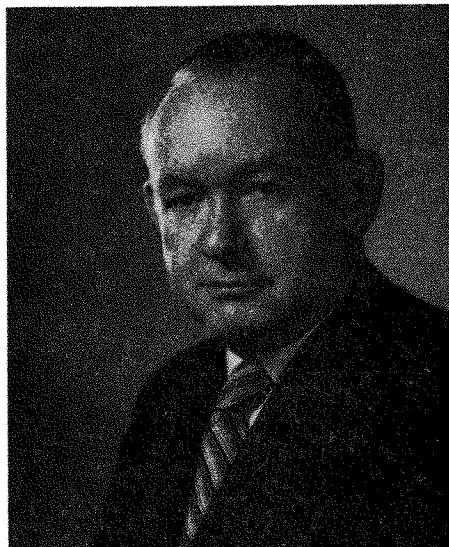
I saw through the years how it helped the performer. It eased the burden of the artist.

**Q:** How about AGMA's future role?

**A:** We have to work together with the management. They have their problems, too. Costs have rocketed. There needs to be more harmony.

## The skeptics were wrong

by DeLloyd Tibbs



DeLloyd Tibbs was the National Executive Secretary of AGMA from 1970 until his retirement in August, 1982. He joined the AGMA staff in 1956, serving as Assistant and then Associate Executive Secretary. Prior to this, he had been a Chorister with the New York City Opera Company and a delegate and member of the Board of Governors for several years.

When I joined the AGMA staff in 1956, AGMA was preparing to celebrate its 20th anniversary. Now, in what seems like only a short time, AGMA has arrived at its 50th birthday.

It has been said that AGMA arose from a deep-seated desire and a need on the part of musical artists in the United States to join together to protect their common interests. At the time of AGMA's founding skeptics conceded that a union of soloists, choristers, dancers, stage managers and directors was necessary. But, in their view, a combined union could not be achieved since performing artists could not strive together. This 50th anniversary proves that the skeptics were wrong.

Prior to the organization of AGMA

many serious abuses existed in our profession to which every artist, irrespective of his or her eminence as a performer, was subjected. One of the most serious abuses, and not an uncommon one, was for artists to find after performing that there were insufficient funds to pay their salaries, or they found themselves stranded on the road with no transportation back home. Almost without exception the AGMA basic agreements, "Pay or Play" contracts, and security bonds eliminated these serious problems.

AGMA's history is replete with victories, defeats and, yes, delays, but AGMA persevered. A comparison of current basic agreements with those of only a few years ago attest to the degree of AGMA's achievements.

In affiliation with the Associated Actors and Artistes of America (AFL-CIO) and the Department for Professional Employees (AFL-CIO), AGMA pursues matters of extreme importance to AGMA members such as legislation pertaining to government support for the arts, competition from foreign artists, tax matters and other important matters that affect performing artists.

Many of us believe that with the current unfavorable climate for labor unions in the United States, continued progress by AGMA will call for greater effort, greater devotion, greater loyalty and greater sacrifice on the part of AGMA members to sustain the past accomplishments and to assure achievements for the future.

Looking back from retirement, I am both happy and honored to have had the opportunity of playing a small role in working for the good of the American artists in our field.

May I extend my very best wishes for a happy 50th anniversary, and thank you again for having had the opportunity to work with and for you.

# An interview with Karen Brown

Dance Theatre of Harlem's co-director, Karel Shook, saw Karen Brown perform in a festival in Virginia in 1973 and offered her a scholarship to study at DTH's summer program. She later was made an apprentice and became a full company member in 1975. Her performances with Dance Theatre of Harlem have included Desdemona in *Othello*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the Waltz Girl in *Serenade*, the Mother in *Banda*, *Voluntaries*, *Giselle* and Lizzie Borden in *Fall River Legend*. Reviewing *Fall River Legend* in the New York Times, Jennifer Dunning said, "Karen Brown danced a Lizzie that suggested that this is her role, setting new standards of interpretation . . . Miss Brown's performance is almost unbearable to watch in its raw self-exposure and extraordinary technical discipline. It might profitably be studied by anyone interested in the purely physical expression of emotion."

**QUESTION:** Is it true that you are originally from Oklahoma?

**ANSWER:** Yes, Okmulgee, Oklahoma. I was born there.

**Q:** Were there any opportunities for a dancer there?

**A:** I only lived there for six weeks. My mother was originally from Okmulgee and would go there to have all her children. There are seven of us. Actually, we lived, and I grew up, in Augusta, Georgia.

Ron Colton who was in the New York City Ballet with Arthur Mitchell came to Augusta and established a regional ballet company and school. And that is where I studied dance.

**Q:** How did you find your way to New York?

**A:** During my summers in high school I studied at Joffrey on scholarship. I was on the road and Ron always gave me the telephone number and said to call Arthur Mitchell at Dance Theatre of Harlem when I was in New York. Finally, in my last year of high school, Ron contacted Arthur Mitchell and asked him to watch me per-

form. He came to Richmond, Virginia for the Southeastern Regional Ballet Association festival. This is a weekend of dance. Companies from all over the southeast come to perform and take classes with major dance teachers and learn choreography. And then there is the gala performance at the end of that weekend. It was on the basis of all of that that I was selected for a scholarship to DTH that summer. I came to New York and worked with the company downtown at City Center. After four weeks they asked me if I wanted to be an apprentice with the company. I thought I could try it for a year. But that turned into another year and another year. My father said, "When are you going to go to school?" and I said, "Well, this is the best time for me to dance now." I did one year of correspondence classes at New York University.

**Q:** What were you going to study in college?

**A:** Medicine. There were not that many ballet role models in Augusta, Georgia. I never even thought of dance as a career until I came here and saw what was happening. Professional dancing was something that was very far removed from what I understood or knew anything about in Augusta, Georgia. My mother took me to see Arthur Mitchell perform in Atlanta with Lydia Abarca. I met him and he told me about the company, what they were doing, places they had been and the people they had worked with. I had talked with some of the dancers in the company that summer and I decided that I would like to try it and see. Initially, I started on a trial basis. I thought it might be fun for a year, but I got more than I had bargained for.

**Q:** Was it harder work for you?

**A:** Yes, in a way. It was longer. I was used to just taking one class a day and then rehearsing all day on Saturday. With DTH, I had to rehearse all day, every day. It was much more than I had envisioned. Up until about six years after I had started, I still thought I would go back to study medicine. But now, I would not want to. I

don't want to start all over again and to devote that much time to establishing a career. My heart is not in it anymore.

**Q:** What got you interested in AGMA? How did you get involved?

**A:** The union gave me structure and a responsibility and a political outlet. I had been president of my senior class in high school. I was on student council. I was doing all sorts of things in school. And then I got here and I really didn't have anything to do but learn the repertoire and wait in line and see how far I would go. We had two excellent union representatives in the company, but because they were principals they really did not have the time to be as meticulous as necessary. No one else wanted to do it. I only did one ballet a night, once a week. So I had plenty of time to put up notices and that sort of thing. So I fell into it that way. Then they needed dancers on the Board of Governors. They always need dancers. Even now. One of the reasons is that meetings are on Mondays at three o'clock. Unless you are in season, you do not have Monday off. Our day starts at 11:30 and I would have to leave here at 2:30. That is the middle of my first rehearsal.

**Q:** When did you start to feel an integral part of the company?

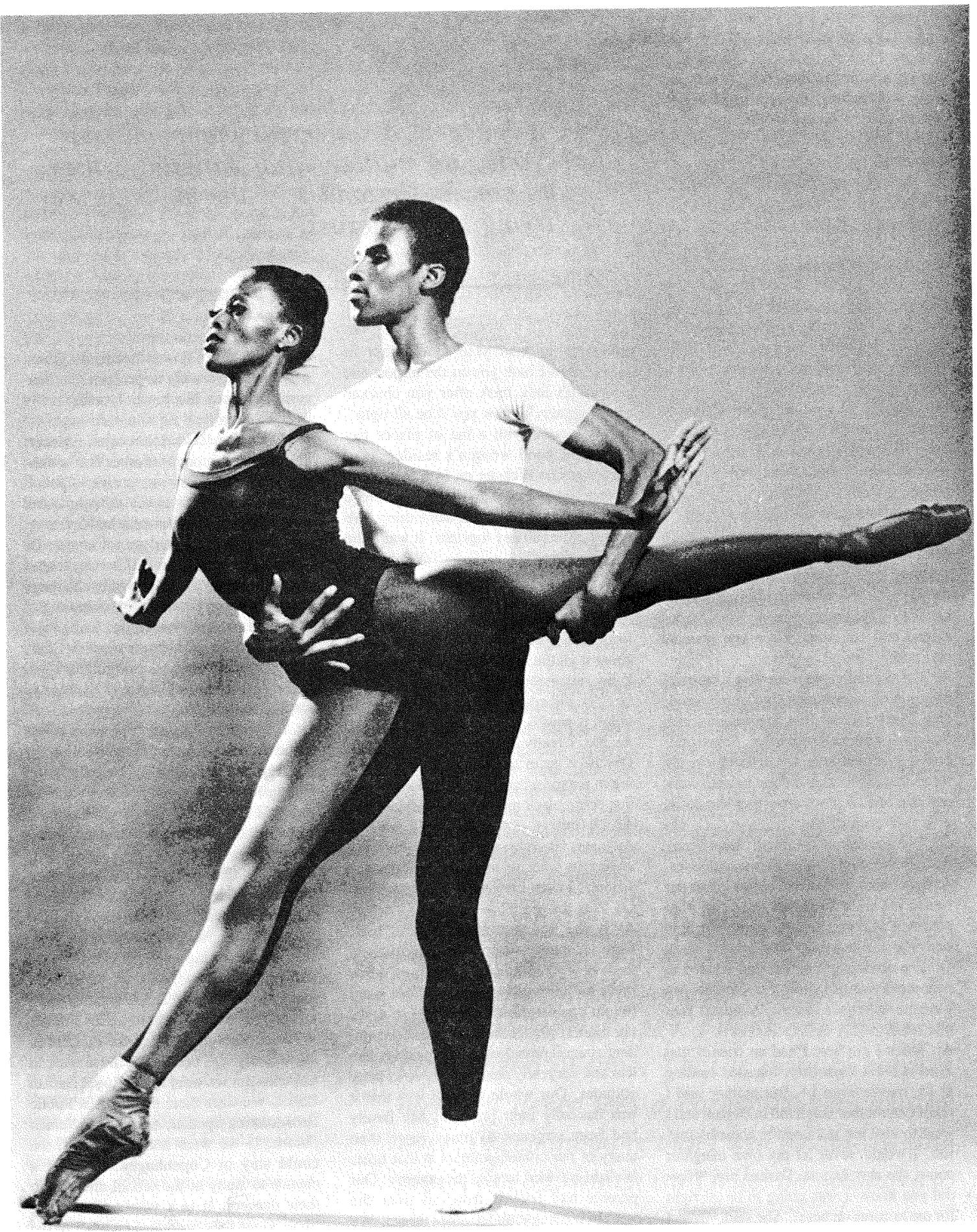
**A:** I always felt a part of it. But the first major thing that happened was when Geoffrey Holder choreographed *Banda*. I think it was in '78 or '79 — five or six years after I got here. Then I had more responsibility and there was more pressure on me. It was very dramatic and showed a different aspect of my dancing.

**Q:** How did you feel about the wonderful review you received in the New York Times for *Fall River Legend*? I never read anything like that for anybody except Laurence Olivier. Were you ready for this? Did it take you by surprise?

**A:** It did. I did not realize that the re-

*(continued on page 28)*

**Karen Brown with former DTH dancer Keith Saunders in *The Four Temperaments*.**



**BROWN**

(continued from page 26)

viewer was in the audience. It was just really wonderful. I thought I had a great performance. And my mother was there. So that was enough. Agnes DeMille was there, too.

**Q:** What did Agnes DeMille say to you?  
**A:** She said, "Karen it was wonderful." She went through the whole ballet. "I like when you did this and I liked when you did that! You still have to do this. You don't have this right. It is good! It is good!"

**Q:** Had you known Miss DeMille before?  
**A:** Yes. I had worked with her before. I also worked with the American Dance Machine when they did a tribute to her in 1983.

**Q:** You and your mom are close and she has obviously encouraged you in your career. That must have been difficult for her with seven children. What directions did you all go in?

**A:** One brother is an accountant. I'm a ballerina. There's also a flight attendant, a restaurant owner, an entrepreneur, one studying to be a surgeon and one who wants to be a clinical psychologist.

**Q:** You are all wonderful — very highly skilled and educated. Were you poor as children?

**A:** No. Actually, we were very fortunate. My father is a physician. We were considered upper-middle class. We were not rich though — with seven children. Seven children is a lot to provide for. It was fortunate for us that my mother did not have to work and she had so much love that she could give it to each of us.

**Q:** Did she encourage your career?

**A:** She did. She would take me to classes. As I got better, there were more classes per week. We all had to know what the other person was doing so she could schedule our pick ups and drop offs.

**Q:** She obviously knew if you wanted to become a serious classical dancer you were going to have to leave Augusta. Was that hard?

**A:** When I got here I had no friends that lived in New York City. I started coming at 15, maybe even 14. But mother said I had a Godmother that lived in Detroit and I went to visit her at 11 on the plane by myself. I would never let my own daughter come, the way I came. I asked her, "How did you know it was going to be all right for me to come up here?" She said, "When

*"... dance is a universal communicator. Everyone, no matter what language they speak, can understand . . . the message we are trying to get across."*

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you went to visit your Godmother in Detroit and I took you to the airport and you didn't look back after you checked your luggage, I knew you'd be all right."

So, I came with a list of places that would be good women's residences. I stayed at The Webster on 34th Street, between Ninth and Tenth. There were a number of girls doing the same thing. We went on the subway together. It was quite an adventure.

**Q:** Had you heard of the Dance Theatre of Harlem before you met Arthur Mitchell?

**A:** I had not met him. I just saw him perform, and then I went home and talked about it all the way home. I really did not know much about the company.

**Q:** You did not really know what an institution it was?

**A:** No. I really didn't.

**Q:** Did it occur to you at any point wanting to pursue a career as a serious dancer, that being black might be a disadvantage?

**A:** Definitely. Even though I lived in Augusta, Georgia, and it was a red-neck town, we went to predominantly white schools. I even integrated a white school.

**Q:** Was that hard?

**A:** It was not hard for me. Sure, there were incidents. And when I think about them now, it should have incensed me or made me angry. My mother said the way I fought against those things was to make the highest grades in class and to be student council president — to do things like that and not really deal with the low, petty attitudes. Our whole premise was that it was basically their problem. My family had been exposed to much more than many of our contemporaries at that time. We had traveled around the country. Our parents had friends from all over the world. We knew about other things. We

knew that is not how it had to be. There were no role models as professional dancers, white or black, so I never really thought about it.

**Q:** Once you decided to become a dancer, did it occur to you to be other than a classical ballerina?

**A:** It never did. I never thought about Broadway because it would be hard to do the same show every night for a year. Or longer. No variations and no challenges once you really got it. The only challenge would be to go out and do it every night. All that I studied was ballet. Until I got here. Then I had to learn modern, jazz, ethnic, tap and even take singing lessons. It was called Dance Theatre of Harlem, so we had to do it all.

**Q:** Do you have any feelings about dance in the overall scheme of things — where it is going and what kind of shape it is in? Have you noticed a difference in your audiences? Is business good? How do you feel about the condition of the dance in the country now?

**A:** I think that dance is a universal communicator. Everyone, no matter what language they speak, can understand a visual concept, what we are doing and the message we are trying to get across. We are like ambassadors when we go to different parts of the country. That's what is going to bring the whole world together, I think.

I wish that the funding for dancers in this country was better. When we were in Copenhagen we went to the Royal Danish Ballet. We were there making that Public Broadcasting Special, *A Streetcar Named Desire*. If we were not being used, we could stay in Copenhagen. We had a chance to study at the school and talk to their dancers. It is a whole other thing there. Once they become a member of the

company, they are supported by the state. They have their job, they have their union, and they have an apartment. It is not the struggle that it is here to try to develop as an artist, because you do not have to worry about your economic situation. And I think that we should have more funding here for dance.

**Q:** Do you think about the future when you cannot dance anymore?

**A:** We have Career Transition for Dancers here. It is a wonderful idea. Most dancers, like me, who begin at a very young age don't really think about their future. When you begin, you think you will be able to dance forever, and you are not really concerned about how you are going to make money later. Personally, when I can no longer dance, I will leave the theatre world. I do not want to teach and I do not want to choreograph. I do not want to teach because it is too stationary. I am used to traveling around.

**Q:** Do you like to travel?

**A:** I love it! I have never even thought about choreography. I just do not have a desire to do it. I am more creative in sewing or crocheting, things like that. I would really like to go into business. I would like to have a mail-order company in handicrafts. I could travel because I would have to buy little things to sell. I could deal with the business end. That is what I really want to do, I think. I thought about going into acting, but I don't think I want to take the time to establish a whole new career from the beginning. We will see.

**Q:** Do you think there is anything that AGMA should be doing for dancers?

**A:** Dancers come in when they are so young. They really do not know how business works. They do not know how to negotiate. All year long, dancers say we should do this or that, and then when it comes around to contract time, they do not realize that is the time they should implement the things that they want to have changed for next year. Somehow, the dancers have to be educated.

And everyone should understand why they have a union — what their union should be doing for them, and how to get their union to do more for them. I think we need something to educate dancers as to how to make their union work for them. I am always trying to think of how we can do this. A really good way would be to have meetings when dancers can attend them.

## ROBERTA PETERS

(continued from page 6)

**A:** Not really. As a singer I do not think you perform differently. If you are doing acting work, yes. But in singing, I do not think that matters. But with Ed Sullivan, the orchestra was a mile away. In those days they did not have the orchestra right in front of you. My mind was trying to be relaxed for the camera and wondering, "Am I with the orchestra?"

**Q:** What is the best time you have ever had as a performer?

**A:** I think it was when we were doing a new production of *Barber of Seville* at the Met. I had three terrific colleagues — all Italian. Two of them spoke English and one did not. And it gave me a chance to use my Italian a lot. Cyril Ritchard was the director. I was not married yet, so we would go to El Morocco. We were the Four Musketeers around town. I think it was 1954. At that time it was all so new! Cyril Ritchard was one of the first Broadway directors that Rudolf Bing ever brought to the Met. It was a whole new approach. We were used to this sort of European director being very stodgy about everything. So, it was a very happy time.

**Q:** What was the worst time you ever had?

**A:** The worst time I ever had was with *Barber of Seville* again, when the Met went to Paris. It was the same production. They didn't want us then. There was a very anti-American feeling in Paris at that time, in the mid-'60s. People started boozing. It was received very poorly. That was sort of a shock. I never had that kind of a feeling on stage before. Not only myself, but everybody. It was a real shockeroo. If I had to say the worst, I would have to say that was the worst.

Another bad time is forgetting a line. That does not happen very often to me because I do speak the language. So, I usually think that way.

But one time in a production of *Cosi Fan Tutte* with Eleanor Steber, things didn't go so well. She was about to go into her big aria, but before the aria, she says a few words and I say a few words. She said something. I said something. And then I thought I was through. So, I gayly pranced off. I forgot I had a couple of more lines with her before she could even get to her aria. I walked off and Mr. Bing was stand-

ing there in the wings. He said, "What are you doing here?" I did not realize it until that moment that I had made a mistake and I had left this poor lady to sing my lines, her lines, my lines, her lines, until she got to her aria or else she would still be standing there!

If I make a boo-boo it is a biggie. I do not make little ones!

**Q:** You talked about Carnegie Hall being one of the great halls of the world. Do you have other favorites?

**A:** The Vienna Opera House is glorious. I have not sung at La Scala, so I don't know. I am talking in terms of acoustics. There is even a marvelous hall in Boston which is a concert hall. It is superb. We have really nice halls here in the United States. These are the best, in my opinion.

**Q:** Since you have been a little girl you have had a lifetime that has been full of remarkable achievements? What are you proudest of in your whole life?

**A:** My kids! They have given us an awful lot of pleasure. They just missed that really bad time at the high school when kids were overdosing with drugs. They missed the worst part — the very beginning part when parents did not know what to do and kids did not know what to do. Not that it is much better now, with Crack. Isn't it horrible? My children are very caring and I have to say that my husband helped a lot in that. Because when I was away, it was not easy for them. He helped breach that gap a lot.

**Q:** How old are your children?

**A:** They are both boys — 26 and 29.

**Q:** Is there anything professionally that you have not done and would like to do?

**A:** I would love to do a Broadway show. It would have to be something that was written for me or a revival. And I do not know if I could make it. Eight shows a week is a very difficult schedule to keep up. Especially if you are not used to it and do not start out as a young person knowing how to pace. When I sing a performance at the opera or the concerts which I do two to three times a week, I know how to pace. But singing eight shows a week is very difficult. You really have to learn how to do that. It is very wearing on you vocally and physically.



## Buried Treasure

by Annelise Kamada

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Annelise Kamada has been with AGMA for many years, beginning as secretary to then Assistant Executive Secretaries DeLloyd Tibbs and Howard Laramy before assuming duties as Administrative Assistant. In 1983, she became Director of the Membership Department.

Mrs. Kamada's background is one of art and music, combined with a "passion" for Medieval history. That interest has led her to write, and publish, two novels set in 14th century England, which were praised for the rich and well-researched authenticity of their background. She is currently working on a modern novel dealing with the world of opera.

She is a member of the Medieval Academy of America, The National Society of Arts and Letters, as well as The Women's Welsh Club of New York. A contributor of articles to the Welsh-American Newspaper, Ninnau, she recently has become a regular correspondent to that paper for the activities of the Welsh Club.

The metal file cabinet, covered by a light coating of dust, sat in a corner of Mr. Tibbs' office, battered and worn from obvious use. The AGMA office in the early 1960s was much as it is now, incredibly hard-working, seeming at times to explode with a variety of activities, and the staff had little time to pay more than scant attention to its existence. The cabinet had belonged to Lawrence Tibbett, AGMA's first President and one of its founding fathers, and had been delivered shortly after his death, preceded by a brief legal communication that its contents were bequeathed to us. AGMA was not ungrateful for having been remembered, just — busy.

The summer that year was hot, and staying in the office at lunch time far more pleasant than venturing out into the broiling New York City heat. One noon hour, having forgotten to bring my book and searching for something to read, I decided to look inside the cabinet. When I pulled out the first file folder, it smelled of dust, old paper and another age, stirring a vague feeling of excitement in me. I have always felt an affinity for time other than my own, and here were letters written in long hand, the ink already turned brown, some carefully and precise, others scrawled carelessly across the brittle, yellowing notepaper. They spoke of forming a guild for musical artists, for the solo artist, both instrumental as well as vocal. The correspondence between determined colleagues began to lay down the foundation of the organization that, by the time the first issue of what later was to be called AGMAZINE was sent out in October 1936, already was called The American Guild of Musical Artists, Inc.

Carefully typed minutes for a meeting held on March 11, 1936 surfaced unexpectedly. Richard Bonelli called the meeting to order at 4 p.m. The first order of business was "to entertain a motion to organize an Association of Musical Artists." Mr. Tibbett moved, seconded by Mme. Alma Gluck, and by unanimous vote, AGMA came into existence at 4:35 p.m. on that spring afternoon. Others present that fateful day were Jascha Heifetz, Gladys Swarthout, Frank M. Chapman, Jr., Charles Hackett, Frederick Jagel, Deems Taylor, Mario Chamlee, James Melton and Donald Voorhees.

It is all there — in the files, folder after folder, AGMA's first tentative steps, which quickly gained confidence as the Guild's membership roster grew and began the task of making its presence felt.

AGMA's first officers and Board of Governors included, besides those members already mentioned, Frank La Forge, Richard Crooks, Eva Gauthier, George Gershwin, Howard Hanson, Queena Mario, Ernest Schelling, Frank Sheridan, Albert Spaulding, Fred Waring, Paul Whiteman and Efrem Zimbalist.

Fortunately for us, those were the days before the telephone replaced the long, written correspondence, and television took the place of much of the printed news. The cabinet continued to share its enchanted world with me — an era of fund-raising teas, of executive meetings, Board meetings and general meetings, held in Mr. Tibbett's home, in the Plaza Hotel, and finally, in AGMA's first offices at 551 Fifth Avenue. Everything was discussed at those meetings, passionately, vehemently and very thoroughly, from office expenditures to the possibility of television rights. All this in 1936!

In Leo Fisher, AGMA had a first Executive Secretary whose letters dealt not only expertly with the business at hand, but who was able to evoke the spirit of the mid-1930s with his timely comments and a decided flair for the popular idiom of the day. Mr. Tibbett, at the height of his formidable career, was an internationally renowned artist, active throughout the world. Although he traveled a good deal, he maintained a close relationship with the AGMA office through a continuous barrage of telegrams and cables. What romantic thoughts those names awakened . . . Schloss Aigen, Salzburg; Lancaster Hotel, Paris; Grand Hotel, Stockholm; Hotel Angleterre, Copenhagen; Hotel Dunapalota-Ritz, Budapest; Hotel Astoria, Leningrad . . . Wherever Mr. Tibbett went, AGMA followed, and I could almost touch the time.

It was 1936 . . . 1937 . . . before the Second World War and another lifetime. Clippings from old newspapers reveal that Broadway ticket prices were 50¢ to \$3.50 to see James Barton in *Tobacco Road*, *The Women* at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre, and the Booth Theatre was presenting that year's Pulitzer Prize winning play, *You Can't Take It With You*. Twenty-five cents got you into the Strand movie theatre to see Claude Rains and a very young starlet named Lana Turner in *They Won't Forget*; Shirley Temple was *Wee Willie Winkie* at the Roxy and Jean Harlow's last film, *Saratoga*, co-starring Clark Gable, could be seen at the Capitol Theatre. And AGMA was already in the midst of its on-going battle for the improvement of artists' fees and working conditions.

At the time that AGMA was invited to join the Four A's in 1937, the leaders of Actors' Equity included Frank Gillmore, Katharine Cornell, Osgood Perkins, Florence Reed, Peggy Wood, George Arliss and Frank Morgan. Screen Actors Guild was led by Robert Montgomery, James Cagney, Joan Crawford, Dudley Digges, Jean Hersholt, Fredric March, Ralph Morgan and Franchot Tone! An awesome group indeed to whose ranks the fledgling AGMA was being added. It was obvious that at that point in history, the enthusiasm towards establishing a strong and valid Guild in the classical music field had created just the proper kind of springboard for AGMA.

A yellowed flyer proclaims a Benefit for the Flood Relief Fund of the American Red Cross, presented under the auspices of AGMA at Carnegie Hall on Saturday, February 20, 1937. It featured AGMA members Josef Hofmann, Jose Iturbi, Lotte Lehmann, Lauritz Melchior, Lily Pons, Elisabeth Rethberg, Albert Spalding, Gladys Swarthout, Lawrence Tibbett and Efrem Zimbalist. A year to the day later, AGMA gave a Gala Concert at Carnegie Hall to raise funds for the possible establishment of a National Department of Fine Arts, meant to give artists in America the same public recognition and encouragement which they received in Europe. For a ticket ranging in

price from \$1.50 for a box to a balcony seat costing \$1, one heard such artists as Richard Bonelli, Helen Jepson, Giovanni Martinelli, Ezio Pinza, Lawrence Tibbett, Rose Bampton, Marjorie Lawrence, Walter Damrosch, Charles Kullman . . . the list goes on and on. What a glittering, exciting evening that must have been! Did it snow? Did it rain? Was the weather cold? Or was the evening unseasonably mild, as it sometimes can be at that time of year? There are still people who remember that evening, and who probably could speak of it, but for the rest of us, we can only imagine the wonder of it, the marvelous vitality which, in its early days, AGMA brought to the classical music scene.

Mr. Tibbett, speaking at AGMA's second annual meeting on April 5, 1937 at the Plaza Hotel, admitted his astonishment at the phenomenal progress AGMA had made in one short year, and at its acceptance by the performing artists themselves. Two years earlier, there had been no AGMA at all, only a vague, luminous vision. In the spring of 1936, it was a reality, and on the day of the first annual meeting, there were 22 members. Within just one year, AGMA's membership had grown to nearly 300, filling Mr. Tibbett with justifiable pride, for he had worked hard to create the Guild — he and his fellow artists who shared his dream.

In reading through the many pages of the drafts of the original Constitution, it is amazing to realize that, in spite of the countless changes that have occurred throughout AGMA's years of existence, the fundamental concepts of its founders were so basically sound and right, that they are the very foundations on which the Guild stands today. A copy of the first membership application, tucked in among office correspondence, asked only for a member's name, address and performing category. The Initiation Fee was \$50 and annual dues cost \$25. Of course, one must remember that AGMA's system of membership was also simpler in those days — the complexities of the second half of the Twentieth Century had not yet touched anyone's life.

There is so much more that could be written about those early days, but then, the file is still here in the AGMA office — only now it is referred to as the AGMA Archives. Assured that they will be in the best of hands, Gene Boucher has put me in charge of the files. Recently two young archivists from the Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives of the Tamiment Institute Library, New York University, came to the office, anxious to see what kind of material we had to offer and apprehensive as to what conditions they would find. They were relieved to discover, instead, a wealth of well-documented historical data. In order to preserve the delicate letters and reports with their fading ink and brittle, crumbling paper, the archivists instructed me in the proper way of prolonging their life. Soon the files will be transferred into acid-free paper folders, safe at least for the next generation.

And I am happy, for at long last the little file cabinet has been recognized for the treasures that it contains — treasures that once lost can never be duplicated or replaced. The American Guild of Musical Artists, Inc. was founded just once, in 1936, and although it later merged with and absorbed the Grand Opera Artists' Association and the Grand Opera Choral Alliance, there still remains but one AGMA, and its heart and its soul reside in the dusty old files of a small battered cabinet which once stood in a corner of Mr. Tibbs' office.

## ANTOINE

(continued from page 13)

to see it. I think it has brought opera to the masses and has helped create more regional opera companies.

**Q:** Has a particular conductor or performer especially influenced your feeling about the opera?

**A:** Many of them. I took a little from each one along the way. Everybody, no matter what they are doing, is a student. They all have that big desire to sing the big part one day. I have the desire and am still studying. I know I am not going to do it because I am not getting younger. However, I still have that love of wanting to do it. I still look around and compare, to see who did this, and who can't do it. I cannot single out any particular person. They are all great artists and they all have something special, otherwise they would not be there.

**Q:** Have you worked with Roberta Peters?

**A:** I have worked with Roberta Peters many times.

**Q:** She attributes her longevity as a performer to being realistic about her capabilities, and not trying to do things that she knew would shorten her career if she did them. How do you feel about this?

**A:** I would agree with that. She is a very intelligent artist. I like her. What amazed me was when we were doing a performance together in Philadelphia and Roberta had been singing for so many years, that when I had to take her hand at one point, her hands were ice cold. I thought, "She has the same nerves that I do." It is nice to know that everyone is human.

**Q:** How did you get involved with AGMA?

**A:** I have been involved with AGMA for many years. Someone asked me long ago if I would like to run for the Board of Governors. I really did not have the time when they asked me, but they said, "Think about it. We need some active voices from the freelance group." That is how I became a member of the Board of Governors. This goes back quite some time.

**Q:** Have the opportunities for women increased or diminished in opera?

**A:** It is always the same. It never changes.

**Q:** What about new operas that have been written since you began your career? How

do you feel that they compare with the old ones?

**A:** They don't. The only things that bring people into the theatre, unfortunately, are the same old standards. If you want to bring people into your theatre, you do *Carmen*, *La Boheme* and *La Traviata*. You always have a full house. You can do these every day of the week and just change your cast.

**Q:** It has been said that opera is virtually the only performing art form in which there has been no new important work created in many years. Do you agree?

**A:** A great work that has been done is *Susannah*. But they do it once and do not repeat it for a number of years. New works have been written, but they do not get performed. It costs a lot of money to perform them. They do it once and they just do not do it again. People are not going to the opera, even the Met. They spend a fortune and the house is empty.

**Q:** What would you say to anyone that is 20 years old and who wants to do what you did — break into the business today. Would you tell them not to?

**A:** No. I would not tell them not to. You cannot tell anyone not to. You do not know if they are going to be the one to get the lucky break, the one who is going to have the finger pointed at them. You do not know this. I would never discourage a person because if that is really what they want, they should not be discouraged. I think that you just tell them that it is very difficult. That once a person has a job at the Met or City Opera in the chorus they are not going to leave it. But if this is really what one wants, go do it! All I could say is, "You probably will not be able to get a job. Some of the most talented people will never sing. Some of the most untalented people are up there."

**Q:** Would you suggest that they have a second skill?

**A:** Everybody should have a second skill. I do not think you can say, "I am going to be an opera singer and that is all there is to it," and not know anything else. I do not think it works that way. I am sure if this is really what they want they will get there. It does not have to be in New York.

**Q:** Did you study even after you began to perform?

**A:** No. I did not study after I began to perform. I was busy traveling all the time, so it was really very difficult.

**Q:** Can a good teacher make or break an artist?

**A:** Vocally, yes. You can have the wrong technique, and there is only one right technique.

**Q:** Is it different for everyone?

**A:** No. It is the same. There is only one way to sing. Some teachers are not teaching it. If you have the wrong technique, you can sing for awhile, but you will not last. You will also have problems all of the time. Once you sing properly, you can sing and sing. The only thing that may make you tired is that you have to travel too much and too far, or your days are a little too long. You will be physically tired. When you sing right, you can sing anything, anywhere. But, you can go to a teacher and study for years and completely have the wrong technique.

**Q:** Can you hear when someone is singing wrong?

**A:** You can hear when it is wrong. Some people have a technique that is wrong, but it gets them through. But, they may not have a long career.

**Q:** Do a lot of performers start in the chorus?

**A:** No. A lot of people just want to start singing and they start in the chorus and think, "This is what I want to do," and then they go from there. A lot of people have gone into the chorus, for example, because they have had a little regional company, perhaps. They have started off in the chorus and have gone on to be principal singers.

**Q:** Have you done only opera? How about popular music or theatre?

**A:** I have always been working in opera. I have done TV work. I was on Broadway in *I Remember Mama*.

**Q:** How many operas do you know?

**A:** Maybe 30, 35. There are 20 that I could do right off the bat. If they said, "Could you do this right now?" I could say "yes" and I would not have to look anything over. I think that is because those are my favorites. There are others for which I would at least have to open a book and look and maybe have the words sink in a little bit more. There are also operas that you hear but do not like and as soon as they are finished you do not remember one word, or even what it was like. There are some, no matter how many times you do them, that stay with you. You could do them at any moment.

**Q:** When you say you "know" an opera, do you mean you know the general theme and know all of the scenes that you are in or do you know the whole opera?

**A:** No. I know everybody else's part, too.

**Q:** Even the scenes that you are not in?

**A:** Sure. I used to stand and listen to everything.

**Q:** Do most people do that?

**A:** I do not think so. Some people just know the scenes that they are in and that's all. At the Met, for example, not everyone is in the whole show in certain operas. Sometimes they do not take the time to learn the whole show. They will only know the acts that they are in.

**Q:** You do not do that?

**A:** The chorus has to be in everything. We have to be in the whole show. For example, in *Traviata* they might only use a few choristers in the first act and then a different chorus in the third act. The people in the first act might not know the third act. We have to do everything. I enjoy listening. There are certain parts and certain operas that I would just run up to hear. I love the music, and I figured if anyone was sick I was available. If they fell down I was there.

**Q:** Did you ever go on?

**A:** Once, when I was in Chile with my husband I was standing there and the stage manager came up to me. He said, "I understand you sing." I said, "Yes, I do." He said, "I wonder if you could help us out." I said, "What can I do for you?" He said, "We are doing *Butterfly* tomorrow night and we do not have a Kate Pinkerton. Our singer is very sick." I said, "You mean in all of Santiago, Chile you do not have a Kate Pinkerton?" He said, "We don't. Will you sing it for us? Otherwise we cannot do the show." I said, "I would be thrilled and delighted." That is how I sang in Santiago, Chile — by just being there, standing there and knowing the part of Kate Pinkerton.

**Q:** Were you nervous?

**A:** Not really, because even though the scenery was new and the director and conductor were new, I knew the opera.

Today it would be different. They do not have the touring companies that they had before. When we went out on tour, we did a different opera every night. It kept you on your toes and I enjoyed it. I found coming back and doing one show all the time or two shows a week very boring.

## Greetings from all over

### Chicago

#### Jacqueline Fabish

*Jacqueline E. Fabish is a long-time member of the Chicago Lyric Opera Chorus. She has served AGMA as a Lyric delegate; on the Executive Committee in Chicago; Executive Chairman, Chicago area; National Board member and Life Member.*

In an age when the computer has managed to replace people, we are now approaching a decade when the "voice" itself is being simulated by computers. Skilled performers like AGMA members remain an oasis in what is becoming a world where only hi tech has the market share. However, to date, we still are needed and it appears our finely honed skills cannot be duplicated by a machine. Our industry has changed radically in recent years to compete visually with television, but it has also made us more current and competitive in the area where we reign supreme: LIVE performances. We bring many skills to our craft and, with a little bit of luck, we will continue to remain one of the "hottest" tickets in town.

### Los Angeles

#### Lola Montes

*Lola Montes is a member of the Board of Governors and the Los Angeles Area Executive Committee. She has served on the Nominating and Liaison Committees with Los Angeles dance companies. She is founder and Artistic Director of Lola Montes and Her Spanish Dancers, the*



**Jacqueline Fabish with Luciano Pavarotti in *Ballo In Maschera*.**



*only Los Angeles dance company to work under AGMA Basic Agreement.*

Unfortunately, ours is the only company performing under the Basic Agreement and the number of AGMA dancers in this area is small.

On the positive side, however, I have seen AGMA diligent in efforts to better the conditions of our singers, both in choral and opera companies. Tenacity and persistence on the union's part have won these well deserved benefits.

I feel that being a member of AGMA allows me to practice my craft with dignity and professionalism, and to be a respected member of the performing arts community.

#### John E. Radic

*John E. Radic, who was honored in 1984 with a scroll from Pope John Paul II commemorating his 90th birthday and his 55 years of singing with St. Anthony's Catholic Croatian Church in Los Angeles, continues to be active with the church. Born in Baskavoda, Austro-Hungary in 1884, Mr. Radic came to the United States at the age of 18 to pursue his dream of singing professionally. Inspired by hearing Caruso sing at the Metropolitan Opera, he traveled west, working in Washington and Oregon, then in San Francisco and, finally, in Los Angeles, where he worked for the Southern Pacific Railroad and attended night school to perfect his English. He sang in cabarets, took opera lessons, sang at the opening of the Holly-*



**John Radic holds a scroll sent to him by Pope John Paul II honoring him for 50 years of singing in St. Anthony's Catholic Croatian Church in Los Angeles.**

*wood Bowl, then, later, with the Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago opera companies, was a featured tenor on radio and coached many actors at MGM Studios.*

I worked over a period of two years, along with other charter members now deceased, namely, Hilda Romain, Eva Sammet, Saul Silverman and others to accomplish the establishment of AGMA. We must not forget the artists who so generously contributed financial support to accomplish our goal to establish a professional union: Lawrence Tibbett, Jascha Heifitz, Gladys Swarthout and others.

### *New Orleans*

#### **Mary S. Bertucci**

*Mary S. Bertucci has been a member of the AGMA National Board for 27 years, has served on the New Orleans Local Board and has been a member of the New Orleans Opera Association for 30 years. She recently was awarded a Life Membership in AGMA.*

Being a National Board member of AGMA for almost as long as I've enjoyed membership in the New Orleans Opera Association, has been rewarding, educational, enlightening, a pleasure and an honor. Serving on the Board for almost 27 years has taught me much about our union and the manner in which it assists its thousands of members with their employment, their working conditions and standards, their rate of pay and their security for the future.

I hope our members realize the immeas-

urable benefits provided by AGMA, such as our insurance, our basic agreements with our employers, legislative assistance to help secure the arts by contacting our Congressmen and making it possible to earn a salary when working for conventions, private engagements and various jobs. I am very fortunate to have been made a Life Member and recently was presented with a Gold Life Membership Card in honor of the 50th anniversary of AGMA.

AGMA celebrated its 50th anniversary in many wonderful ways. I can still remember when I was invited to New York to help celebrate the 25th anniversary. There was a wonderful reception, and we



had the opportunity to meet many of our National Board members from all over. We were also invited to a National Board meeting, where we voiced our opinions on some of the issues and brought them up-to-date on our local problems and future plans.

Thanks, AGMA, for giving me the opportunity to really belong by accepting my membership, and my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for many happy and successful years to come.

### *Philadelphia*

#### **Bert H. Kornfeld**

*Bert H. Kornfeld has been a member of AGMA for 34 years, a member of the Executive Committee for 31 years, Chairman of the Executive Committee for 18 years and a member of the Board of Governors for 15 years. He has been a Chorus member of the Philadelphia Opera Companies since 1952. In addition, he is a School Administrator in the Philadelphia Public*

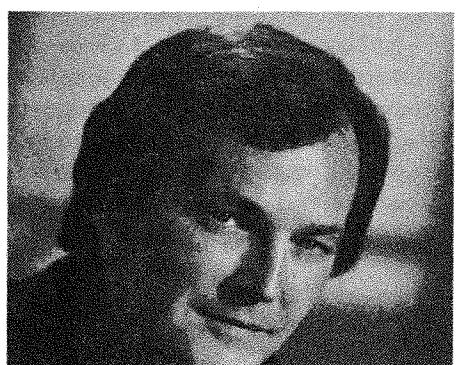
*School system and a member of the Philadelphia Association of School Administrators.*

When AGMA announced the 50th anniversary celebration, I was reminded that when I joined AGMA our union was a youngster of 16. Still, in 1952, I joined a union that was already highly respected, well organized and rapidly expanding. While the half century mark is always a time for congratulations, it is to the charter members — the pioneers who paved the way for us — that we should pay the greatest tribute. The foundation they laid for us and the contributions they made are the cornerstones for all the gains made in these 50 years. They have made it possible for us to enjoy today's benefits and have given us so many reasons to be proud of our union. Throughout the years, AGMA has been a faithful friend to those who work for the performing arts, which in turn, makes AGMA one of the greatest contributors to ballet and music.

### *Pittsburgh*

#### **Frank Kerin**

*Frank Kerin, a current member of the Board of Governors, has been AGMA's Pittsburgh Representative, Chairman of the Executive Committee, Local Representative, and has served on the Negotiating Committee for the Pittsburgh Opera and Ballet Theatre. He has performed with the Pittsburgh Opera, Cincinnati Op-*



era, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, at the Pittsburgh Playhouse and on educational television.

AGMA, along with the arts in Pittsburgh, has become a viable, cohesive unit of credibility — numerically stronger, professionally wiser, and an important part of the renaissance in our city.

One of AGMA's major accomplishments was bringing Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre into AGMA after a few short weary months and hundreds of negotiations: a bit of labor history.

### *San Francisco*

#### **Eugene Lawrence**

*Eugene Lawrence has been a member of AGMA and of the San Francisco Opera for 30 years. A member of the Board of Governors and a Life Member, he also serves on the San Francisco Area Executive Committee and has been an AGMA delegate to the Bay Area Labor Council.*

I feel very honored to be included in this issue of AGMAzine and to be considered one who has played an important role in the union's history.

From the time I was a very small boy right up to the present, I have been an avid admirer of Lawrence Tibbett. It was my good fortune to meet him as well as see and hear him in everything he did at the Metropolitan from the premiere of *Simon Boccanegra* in 1932 on, in the play *Rain, Fanny*, all his movies (many times over), radio and TV. As a result, I also learned of his AGMA and AFRA (not AFTRA) activities as well. By the time I was accepted as an AGMA member in 1958 when I joined the San Francisco Opera, I was interested in doing more than just sing.

As a member of the AGMA-AFTRA Merger Committee, I would like to recommend that we give our best efforts to explore all the possibilities of such an undertaking by both sides and see if such a move is feasible. One might keep in mind that the founder and first President of AGMA was also President of AFRA (now AFTRA) for five years.

At the same time, we should keep improving AGMA as a whole as well as in our individual areas.

I trust that down the road there will be more interest in AGMA by the individual members in the attendance at meetings,



reading their basic agreement, contributing ideas to improve contract conditions, etc. Many say they don't have time, but show up when they need something or have a complaint. Lawrence Tibbett, who was making his debut as Iago in 1936 here in San Francisco, met for three hours with the Executive Committee working on the Chorus contract on the same day! This was passed on to me by Colin Harvey, a 50-year AGMA member now a hale and hearty 82, who performed with the San Francisco Opera from 1936 into the early 1980s.

I am proud of the many things we have accomplished in San Francisco, most notably the full time contract with the Opera. None of these could have been accomplished without the support and input from the committee members, our excellent San Francisco representatives Harry Polland and Donald Tayer and, more recently, Marie Rongone, and our membership.

In 1987, our seventh year of full time work, we have a guarantee of 31 weeks and three weeks' paid vacation. We implemented the Pension and Welfare Plan in 1968. In 1981 we joined City Center Opera and the Metropolitan as a full time chorus. We are not year-round yet, but we have come a long way since 1981 and there are still things to be done.

In 1985, I appointed James Meyer to be Chorus Representative, which was passed by our Committee and was an official division of the job the Chairman had done since 1937. Jim is doing, and has done, an excellent job. Our Executive Committee is made up of members of the San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco Symphony soloists, San Francisco Opera Ballet who also have their own ballet representatives and in this way the Chairmanship is open to anyone from these organizations when elections come up. And one person doing two jobs

cannot accomplish what two people can for the membership.

In closing, I want to highly commend the members of our Chorus and San Francisco Opera Company staff. 1987 will be my 30th anniversary at the San Francisco Opera and my 30th as a member of AGMA. I am proud to be a member of AGMA, the National Board of Governors Merger Committee and the San Francisco Area AGMA Executive Committee. Furthermore, I deeply appreciate the honor of being made a Life Member by the National Board. I also have enjoyed working in one of the best opera companies in the world.

May I wish AGMA and all its members and officers a very happy 50th Anniversary.

### **HY FAINE**

*(continued from page 22)*

ganization. In my mind, my work at UCLA is but a continuation of what I was able to do while with AGMA.

However, I have observed that times have changed; that financial support, both governmental and private, has limitations, both because of the increase in costs (labor is only a *limited* part of this) as well as the changing winds in the government and in the economy.

That is but a temporary phenomenon, I believe. I do not think that today is a portent of the future and that the remedy should be at the cost of labor. But I do believe that the times call for cooperation between labor and management in reaching their mutual goals. This is necessary until the tremendous growth in the Sixties and Seventies will have been integrated into the economic and social structure of American society. When this is done, and it will be, then the forward march of the arts and artists, performing and visual, can once more resume and continue its momentum and growth.

Then, as before, AGMA will be in the forefront of bringing more and a greater diversity of art to the American public. Then, as before, will the American artists continue to benefit, economically, artistically and individually; the one is a concomitant result of the other.

I wish I could live for the *next* 50 years in order to be present as it all happens. Congratulations, AGMA — on your past 50 years and the years ahead!



**AMERICAN GUILD OF MUSICAL ARTISTS**  
**1936–1986**