

# AGMAzine

FALL 2019 VOL. 73.2



AGMA members and staff attended the 2019 New York City Labor Day Parade.

## AGMA Talks Harassment

A Look at Various Types and What to Do



FALL, 2019

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**By Tim Smith**  
MMRC Chair,  
AGMA Governor,  
Chorister

**IN THIS ISSUE,** we address the topic of harassment—both in and out of the workplace. In preparing for this, I did a little digging on the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC). They define sexual harassment as follows:

*It is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) because of that person's sex. Harassment can include "sexual harassment" or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.*

*Harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person's sex. For example, it is illegal to harass a woman by making offensive comments about women in general.*

*Both victim and the harasser can be either a woman or a man, and the victim and harasser can be the same sex.*

*Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).*

*The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.*

We start this issue with some thoughts about the state of our Union from our National Executive Director, Len Egert. President Ray Menard shares some insights on how to open a rational discussion on the subject of harassment.

Soloists Melody Moore and later Kathryn Lewek shed some light on what happened to them and what is happening across media toward women.

Soloist Lucas Meacham talks about stage romance etiquette. Chorister Ned Hanlon walks us through how they achieved better protections at the Metropolitan Opera. Third Vice President Teresa Reichlen shares some insights on how touching is addressed in the dance world. Joshua Dennis shares his opinion on #MeToo in the Opera world.

Aria Umezawa, who has presented at Opera America, as well as Los Angeles Opera, was generous enough to answer our questions on how we can all be better attuned to our environments and gain the courage to do something should we become aware of harassment. We also asked The Actors Fund to discuss some of the services they provide in situations of harassment. Respected pianist, opera coach, conductor, master teacher, and writer Kathleen Kelly was approached to elaborate on how "We can figure this out" and help to change the culture in our industry in regards to harassment. Finally, we have a report from the AGMA Anti-Harassment sub-committee on where we are currently with our plans for improving AGMA in the area of harassment.

In this narrowly-focused issue, we also post our financials as well as make our annual appeal for the AGMA Relief Fund. Please consider supporting this worthwhile member benefit. The National Office is always willing to help any AGMA member and direct them to the proper place for help, but if you ever feel uncomfortable contacting staff, please know that your elected leaders are also there for you. Any of these leaders can then bring your concerns to AGMA's Board of Governors for action. Never be afraid to reach out and ask a question or raise a concern.

AGMAzine is YOUR magazine. No issue could be possible without contributions (blurbs/thoughts, articles, and pictures) from YOU, the member. Thank you for the submissions that made this issue possible. ■

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**FROM THE NATIONAL  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
LEONARD EGERT**

Dear AGMA Members:

I want to congratulate you. Since I started my tenure as your National Executive Director (three-plus years ago), I have been fortunate to have visited multiple AGMA Opera, Dance and Choral companies throughout the United States. Usually, I am joining negotiations or a prep meeting at a theatre or opera house, or I am attending membership or Area meetings. On certain occasions, I get the opportunity to see a performance. Although the performances vary in size and scope, there is one constant: the excitement of the audience upon entering the venues, during the performances and at intermissions. You are the artists and professionals who create this buzz and excitement. You are the ones that the audience comes to hear and see and delight in. You are the ones that create and bring to life these beautiful art forms. The sound of your voices and the movement of your bodies create joy. There is no greater gift one can give.

Each time I board a flight to visit an AGMA signatory company, I am reminded that if the flight gets rough, I should put on my own oxygen mask first so that I am in a position to help others. I can say the same for you. You need to be able to earn a fair wage for your work; to be free from unsafe conditions and harassment; to make sure that you have sufficient breaks; and to ensure that you have adequate health coverage and retirement benefits, so that you can continue to give the joy and excitement that you impart performance after performance—and so

that you can serve as an example to other artistic professionals of the value and power of AGMA. That is why your predecessors formed this great Union. That is why our volunteer Governors continuously strive to improve our Union. That is why our negotiating committee members advocate for improvements in our contracts. That is why our Delegates diligently enforce the contracts we negotiate. That is why our hard-working Committee members seek to improve our services and operations. That is why young artists continue to organize and to join AGMA.

I am thrilled to report that AGMA is making great strides. The Board of Governors has embarked on a bold new plan to improve and grow AGMA. The BOG has approved, and our staff is implementing, a number of exciting new initiatives:

- First and foremost, we are strengthening our Union. We have embarked on a comprehensive education and outreach program. Over the past year, our staff has completed 40 member orientations across the country and the results are in: In our follow-up surveys, members have provided us with overwhelmingly positive feedback. New members appreciate the information and attention from union representatives. Seasoned members in attendance also welcome the refresher courses.

- Additionally, we have revamped our Delegate resources and materials. Over the past few months, your staff has conducted a dozen Delegate trainings in companies across the country. These trainings will continue throughout the rest of the year, will be refined based on feedback, and will be launched nationwide next year. This initiative will enable our Delegates to more effectively represent members in all our AGMA companies.

- We are creating a comprehensive communications strategy. We are actively recruiting for a Director of Communications to spearhead this initiative. Once implemented, communications will improve both to our membership and to the outside community.

- Your Administration and

Policy Committee is assiduously reviewing all AGMA policies. The Committee, in conjunction with our legal team, will be making recommendations that will improve operations and functionality at AGMA.

- Your Work Rules and Contracts Committee continues to review new contracts, waivers and arbitrations to make informed recommendations to the Board of Governors.

- Your Membership and Member Relations Committee is improving our website design, social media outreach, and union/member communications.

- Your Finance and Budget Committee is reviewing all financial policies and budgeting for the upcoming year.

- Your Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy Subcommittee is devising strategies to improve the culture of our workplaces, design trainings, provide resources to our members, and prevent harassment in the workplace.

- Your Personnel Committee is reviewing new staffing positions and benefits.

- Your Relocation Task Force is designing a new AGMA National Headquarters that will be more conducive to membership meetings, trainings and events, and will give us the ability to grow and expand in the future.

We are seeing tangible results from all these efforts and initiatives. Artists at companies throughout the country are recognizing the myriad benefits of joining AGMA. I am excited to report that we just filed a petition to represent the artists at Nevada Ballet Theatre in Las Vegas. We expect that an election will be scheduled before the end of the year. We hope that these artists will be part of the AGMA family as we enter the new year.

These are exciting and transformative times for our Union. We encourage you to contact your representatives or AGMA staff to contribute ideas or suggestions to strengthen and improve AGMA.

With best wishes for a joyous holiday season,

Len Egert  
National Executive Director ■

# President's Message



## FROM THE PRESIDENT RAY MENARD

As we are all well aware, AGMA has been deeply involved in the conversation about combatting sexual harassment and discrimination in the Arts. As a labor union representing Artists in an industry with a history of pervasive and often unmentioned misconduct, AGMA has unique responsibilities and challenges in this moment. Most importantly, our union must hold our signatories accountable and make sure that they provide our members with a safe work environment, free of discrimination and harassment. But we must also ensure that our members who are accused of misconduct receive due process and proper representation, and we must remain vigilant and make certain that Managements do not try to take advantage of this moment to gain more power and control over discipline in the workplace.

We owe it to ourselves, as fellow Artists

and as union brothers and sisters, to work together to rid our theaters and rehearsal studios of sexual harassment and discrimination. These forces undermine what we work so hard to achieve together: they silence voices instead of lifting them up, they diminish the beauty we try to create, and, if left unchecked, they erode solidarity between us and our fellow union members, weakening AGMA and leaving us less able to fight for real change in our workplaces. It is important, therefore, to remember that our efforts to eliminate harassment and discrimination from the industry are not just for our current union family, but also for those who will follow us in our profession and calling. For them, and for ourselves, we must push forward in this fight.

I am proud of the efforts AGMA has already made on this difficult project, but our work is nowhere near finished. What comes next are serious and difficult conversations about what constitutes acceptable conduct in our workplaces, conversations we must have together. We must confront tough questions about the code of conduct in the entertainment industry, what we owe to one another as bystanders and fellow union members, and AGMA's role as a labor union in redressing harassment and discrimination in the industry.

This issue of the *AGMAzine*, the last of the year, is an attempt to start those conversations. What follows are perspectives from many of your fellow AGMA members. I would ask that you carefully consider their opinions, even and especially if they are not your own. And I charge you to approach these conversations with grace, understanding, a willingness to learn and expand your perspective, and an assumption that our union brothers and sisters come to these discussions in good faith. Together, I believe we can make our industry safer and more just for our fellows and for future generations of Artists.

Finally, please know that if you are experiencing harassment or discrimination in your workplace, you can rely on your union to help. We are here for you. You can reach out to your Delegates, to your AGMA staff representatives, or make a confidential report at [reporting@musicalartists.org](mailto:reporting@musicalartists.org), an email account monitored by trained AGMA staff. Our staff will work with you to fix the problem, make sure you are taken seriously, and work with you to regain a safe work environment. Please don't suffer in silence—rely on your union to help you and we can work together to change the industry for the better. ■

### A bit of Holiday Cheer from your AGMA President Ray Menard

As this is the last issue of *AGMAzine* for the year, I would like to share with you a favorite holiday recipe as I received it from my grandfather...

### EGGNOG

#### Ingredients

1 pint Bourbon  
6 Eggs, separated  
3/4 cup Sugar  
1 pint Heavy Cream  
1 pint Milk  
1 fluid ounce Jamaica Rum  
Beat the egg yolks with 1/2 cup of sugar.  
Beat egg whites and 1/4 cup of sugar  
until very stiff.

Whip the heavy cream.

Mix egg whites with yolks, stir in  
whipped cream and milk.

Add Bourbon and Rum and stir  
thoroughly.

Serve cold with grated nutmeg.

Note: I am not much of a drinker, so I  
use 1/2 of the Bourbon and Rum that is  
called for in the recipe.

# Harassment



By Melody Moore  
Soloist

I was recently cast as, and performed, the role of Salome at Florida Grand Opera (FGO). Anyone who knows that score and knows Strauss KNOWS how incredibly difficult the piece is in tonality and physicality for the lead soprano. Our performances occurred in late January to February of this year and the role of Salome was double cast between myself and Kirsten Chambers. Ms. Chambers had performed the role multiple times. She stepped into a performance at the Metropolitan Opera to great acclaim as well.

In sharing this role, Kirsten and I were often toggling back and forth in stagings and dance rehearsals that were choreographed by the great Rosa Mercedes. Included in our choreography, as in many *Salome* stagings, was a short bit

of nudity. This nudity is, generally, waist up and is standard after the seventh veil is dropped in the famous Dance of the Seven Veils. Some people choose more extreme nudity and that is, of course, discussed with the director, company, costume department and even wig department if any of the nudity is to be partially covered with a fall of hair. The nudity in our show at FGO was, for my part, waist up and lasted about five seconds. For Kirsten, who is very comfortable with her body, the decision was full nudity, but the length was still around five seconds.

We practiced and practiced these dances, as you may imagine, until the timings were next to perfect - even with mistakes that can and will happen on stage. Ms. Mercedes is a consummate professional and was very proud of both her leading ladies. She even offered private brush-ups if we were feeling at all uncomfortable. The costume department also worked tirelessly to make sure I had a supportive but nude color panty with some rhinestones that would allow me to match my own skin tone and create the illusion of full nudity at a distance. The rhinestones used were to catch the light and glint as a body with some sweat would do. The entire company worked very hard and we had multiple dress rehearsals to try all these elements out. All audiences, public and private, found the dance very tasteful

and beautiful and many fellow colleagues remarked on just how passionate both our dances were.

I was in opening night cast of the opera and Kristen was in the audience to support me. As usual, press were invited to the opening. The only publication that brought any negative attention to my dance sequence and nudity (or to my voice for that matter) was a local review blog known as The South Florida Classical Review. A journalist by the name of Lawrence Budmen wrote a rather scathing review of my performance. In it, he not only called me generally problematic without explaining that term, but he shamed my body. Reviews are meant to help the public decide on whether or not to attend the opera. If the review mentions poor pacing or lackluster staging, a bad night for a singer, etc., this influences the public on whether to spend their dollars on such a night out.

Mr. Budmen focused mostly on my body and applied musical terms to my voice that complimented his ideas of my body. Never in my career have I been called wobbly or heavy of voice. I am known for a silvery quality of immense control. He compared me to Kirsten and her body in yet another article on her performance. He remarked poorly toward my dancing...although it was one of my proudest moments to dance the way I did. It was free and released and beautiful. There are clips, below, of both myself and Kirsten dancing. If you're not looking closely, you cannot tell that there are two people being shown. If I was so starkly different to Kirsten, why would that not be obvious in this clip? There are also images of the entire dance below. I challenge anyone to look through them and call me "workmanlike" (which, what does that even mean????) and "awkward." Mr. Budmen should be allowed his opinion of a musical event, but he should not be allowed to draw comparisons between two very different people, value one while devaluing the other and base that on size.

He states in Kirsten's review that she is **THE** Salome to see. This type of unfair



©Chris-Kakol

Melody Moore, center, in Florida Grand Opera's *Salome*.

(continues on page 12)



# Man to Man: Stage Romance Etiquette



By **Lucas Meachem**  
Operatic Baritone

Posted on June 27, 2018 on  
[thebaritoneblog.com](http://thebaritoneblog.com)

I've performed the role of *Don Giovanni* more times than I can count. As the Don, I'm expected to become him—no matter how much I may agree or disagree with his character traits. That includes kissing multiple women, touching them, and sometimes carrying them.

As obscene as this behavior may be, it's part of the story and the art form. The story of the Don is a timeless one, no matter how depraved or immoral one may find his actions to be. And yes, there is a way to portray the character accurately while respecting the professionals around me as individuals.

I realize that some young professionals may not know how to properly deal with romantic acting, and especially in light of the current times we live in, this is a *very* important conversation for any young male singer.

## Talk It Out

Just like stage combat, you *must* have a conversation with your stage partner about how a romantic scene will play out before you agree on a way to do it. No discussion is too much: **communication is key**.

When you're staging a romantic scene and you're expected to act out something with close, physical contact, like kissing, the best thing to do is ask your partner "how would you like to do this?" or, "how do you feel about this?" These questions really go far and show that you're there to make them feel comfortable above all else. From the very first day, start with this

attitude of compassion and careful attention to your colleague's comfort level, to set up a respectful working relationship.

From then on, make sure to often use phrases such as "how are you feeling" or "was that all right?" in order to make sure you're never out of line. It is especially important to do this at the beginning of every rehearsal, because your partner might be having a bad day, feeling a little sick, have back problems, or any other issue, and you want to be sensitive to their physical limits.

## It's All Pretend

In rehearsals, I've learned over time to not go "all out" with my character or get too carried away just because I am "in the moment." This matters most during intense physicality with a stage partner (either romantic or combat) because I don't want to unfairly sweep up my stage partner in "my moment" by going too far. I'm in control of my emotions and I make an effort not to impose my intense physicality onto anyone else.

For example, if I'm asked to grab a woman's body part in a show, I leave that until we reach the stage in full costume and makeup and we're running the show. In rehearsals leading up to that day, I'll either hover my hand over that body part or move my hand just below or aside that area. This indicates to my colleague and the director that **I know what to do when but am in fact saving it for later**.

The actual grabbing is not necessary for a rehearsal and I can easily pretend to make the motion. I did that once with Patti LuPone and she was very appreciative! I believe her exact words were "what a gentleman" right before telling me to go for it!

Luckily in opera, we mostly wear thick costumes, so when it may be time to grab someone's body parts, there's a way to grab their costume instead. And when you're done grabbing or lifting, don't linger your

hands on them. When I'm done grabbing or carrying someone offstage, I literally stick my hands out straight to avoid touching them any more than necessary.

For kissing in rehearsals, a deep hug while pressing each other's cheeks together or making a "mwah" sound can easily take place for the actual staged "opera kiss." It should rarely be practiced off the opera stage and NEVER alone.

One might say that this is "breaking character" to not actually kiss or touch your partner during room rehearsals—personally, I don't agree with this. I think it's entirely acceptable to respect the boundaries of your stage partner over developing your character. If your partner tells you they want to practice the full-on kiss before hitting the stage, you have every right to say that you're uncomfortable with it until that point.

However, if you've both discussed the physicality of the scene and have mutually decided to make the sexual action before you hit the stage then it should be fine. I would definitely have this conversation either with or in front of the director.

## Baciami

Actual stage kissing doesn't normally happen until everyone is onstage in full costume, wigs, and makeup and you are running the show from start to finish.

As a young buck in the opera world, I often felt awkward about kissing. I mean, I think we all are! It's pretty strange to lock lips with someone you may have just met or might not even like. Imagine you step into your office job and before heading to your cubicle, you say hi to your office mates and kiss them on the lips! It feels a lot like that.

To get over any awkwardness, I think of my character kissing another character, not Lucas (who's happily married to Irina!) kissing a soprano who has three kids. It's

*(continues on page 12)*

# Anti-Sexual Harassment Policies in Bargaining



By Ned Hanlon  
Chorister

In August 2018, AGMA came to an agreement for a three-year contract with the Metropolitan Opera. One of the committee's priorities during the negotiation was greater union input in matters of sexual harassment and discrimination to better protect and support its members. Happily, we were able to reach an extensive and ground-breaking agreement. As a result, a standing joint-committee was created to discuss prevention and training, mechanisms were put in place to guarantee union notification, and Weingarten Rights were expanded to guarantee the availability of union support in all cases involving sexual harassment or discrimination.

The committee, union staff, and legal team employed a number of different strategies to ensure success. As usual, some worked, and some didn't. Here are some of the lessons learned from the process.

## Know What You Want

Eight months before the contract deadline and five months before our first session with management, the committee was working closely with AGMA's staff and legal team. Over the course of

these early discussions, we developed an extensive and cohesive proposal to present on the first day of bargaining. During our early sessions with management, we referred back to our proposals repeatedly, indicating to the Met that this was not an attempt to position ourselves for a PR battle, but rather that an agreement on anti-sexual harassment and discrimination would be a necessary part of a wider final agreement.

## Solidarity Between Unions

Throughout negotiations, AGMA coordinated closely with our colleagues in Local 802 AFM, who represent the orchestra, associate musicians, and music staff; a partnership that reaped huge rewards. In the case of sexual harassment and discrimination, we saw two major benefits. Aligned with 802, we could plausibly say that our proposal reflected the views of all the musical artists and musicians at the Met. Furthermore, we were able to alleviate some of management's fears that their policy would become a hodgepodge of various union negotiations.

## Stay Away From Money

The most contentious issues in negotiations tend to revolve around money. Disputes about pay and benefits dominate proceedings, frequently making it impossible to fix other (still vitally important) aspects of the CBA. The formality of the Big Table makes it difficult to get into the nuance and detail needed for the finer points of contract discussion. To

overcome these difficulties, AGMA and management created small work groups composed of representative interests on the subject to meet in the months leading up to the deadline. The purpose of the groups was to find areas of understanding and reach tentative agreements contingent upon a final CBA.

Importantly, we repeatedly stressed that these sub-committees were not dead ends where proposals went to die; if we were dissatisfied with discussions in the small groups, we could always bring them back to the full committee. Furthermore, the small groups communicated closely with leadership and any agreements reached had to be approved by the full committee. Through this process, a number of benefits were negotiated, including the new anti-sexual harassment and discrimination language. By creating an environment in which a smaller group of interested parties was able to go into real detail, we were able to have productive discussions.

By employing these strategies, the committee added valuable union protections and oversight to the Metropolitan Opera policy. What we ended up with is by no means perfect, but it has put us in the conversation, both in future negotiations and in our day-to-day dealings with the company. Sexual harassment and discrimination are big issues and there are no easy fixes, but by prioritizing them on a local level during negotiations, we can make real and tangible strides towards addressing them. ■

**The Code of Professional Standards for Agents and Managers  
Representing AGMA Artists can be found on AGMA's website:**

**<https://www.musicalartists.org/policies-and-procedures/code-of-standards/>**



# Body Shaming: Judge our Work, Not Our Bodies



By Kathryn Lewek  
Soloist

Do you remember that ad campaign for the California Milk Advisory Board, “Great cheese comes from happy cows”? Perhaps using cows to open a piece on body shaming is a bit on the nose, but it’s in service of a very important point: it’s hard to produce your best work when you’re unhappy.

Birgit Nilsson offered a less bovine analogy when answering the question, “Is singing fun?” “Of course singing is fun. Everyone sings when they are happy—I’m sure you do, too, sometimes. The birds are singing when they are busy building their nests and having their family, and if they were not happy, they would not sing.”

Nilsson is right, of course: we performing artists do our best when we feel our best. We all know that feeling, right? The exhilaration after a successful performance, the creative joy of building a production with a talented team, the delight of nailing that high note that has been elusive for three months: We’ve all had those elated feelings in connection with our craft or we wouldn’t be members of this union.

And yet we feel constant pressure to produce the very best we can give. Our obligation to provide truthful, unique, moving, and entertaining performances on the stage can also be soul-crushing. In that interview, Nilsson went on, “On the other hand, when you are a professional singer, it cannot only be fun because there are so many things to think about and everything has to be perfect. It’s like making and serving a meal in a restaurant—the guests should be satisfied, too. Most of the

time, one cannot enjoy one’s efforts as much as one wants. Even the chef in the kitchen cannot enjoy the good meal he’s serving to the guests in the restaurant.”

We itinerant performing artists know the hard work we do and the sacrifices we make for our “dinner guests.” Late nights on the stage or at rehearsals far from home often mean missing out on family events. The exhaustion associated with constant travel infringes on quality time even when we are home. We’re endlessly establishing new routines in new cities to try to keep our bodies healthy. We may connect deeply and quickly with the colleagues we are working with in a production, but still long for permanence in a community. For many of us, “living the dream” means living a life of intense loneliness. This does not make for great cheese. Happy cows live in herds.

Some of us are lucky enough to have supportive partners who can battle that loneliness with us. But many singing partners abandon the idea of becoming parents because it seems impossible to raise a family with the reality of their lifestyle. Those who do have children often have to leave them behind for weeks or even months at a time to maintain their careers.

When my husband and I decided to expand our family, I ended up singing on stage internationally well into my third trimester. I was very fortunate to work for companies that were accepting of my condition, though it was made easier for them that I was mostly singing Queen of the Night and nobody seems to mind if their Queen is with child as she swears to disown her daughter. (Good planning!) The end of my long pregnancy and labor was trying, but then along came the greatest gift of our lives: our beautiful daughter.

I was scheduled to resume singing on stage just six weeks later. The scar from my C-section was barely healed. I was exhausted and struggling with postpartum anxiety. I was adjusting to being a

new mom and supporting my family at the same time. I received the okay from my doctor to resume normal activity just the day before I went to the Met to rehearse *The Magic Flute*, which I would go on to perform less than a week later.

Since giving birth one year ago, I have traveled with my family to eight countries, and have driven thousands of miles with my daughter in the back seat. It’s hard enough to pursue this crazy, peripatetic career solo, but packing up the whole family to travel the world can daunt even the most dedicated singers.

I have breastfed my baby backstage or in between rehearsals at numerous opera houses in the USA and abroad and have also followed my singer husband to his jobs. We stick together like birds of a feather whenever our schedules allow, which means even more travel. I have nursed in dozens of airports and pitstops,

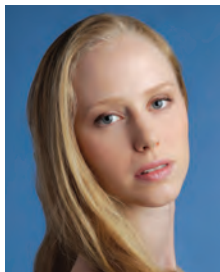


In The Metropolitan Opera dressing room in 2018 (7 weeks post partum)

and pumped breast milk into bottles in a myriad of odd places, such as theater shower stalls, restaurant bathrooms,

(continues on page 13)

# How We Touch in Dance



By **Tess Reichlen**  
AGMA Third Vice  
President and Dancer

Contact is necessary in all levels and aspects of our art form. It is ingrained in us from our first lessons that there is always a purpose behind every touch; dancers need physical guidance in order to achieve perfection of form. The elementary gestures and movements we are assisted with from the beginning of our studies morph over the career of a dancer into ways to express complex stories and emotions, and to entertain and move an audience with the beauty we are only able to attain with the help of others.

I am currently learning how to be a teacher to the youngest of dancers, and part of our training is how to approach touching dancers when first starting to train their bodies. There is only so much that can be accomplished by demonstrating something and hoping that a child

will be able to imitate it. Sometimes it is necessary to put their body in a position so that they can feel and sense the effort needed to attain the correct posture. We are told to ask if it is ok if we touch them in order to show them how to do something correctly. From the beginning it is a dialogue of trust and mutual effort to achieve a goal.

In classical ballet, the art of the pas de deux usually starts with teaching a young male dancer how to offer a hand and have the ballerina place hers delicately in his. It then progresses to teaching young men how to shift a woman's weight, and for the woman how to hold her body in such a way as to facilitate lifts, turns and promenades. There is a technique to partnering and specific methods that have been refined throughout the history of ballet so that every placement of a hand, arm or leg has been thought about thoroughly.

Personally, it is very rare for me as a dancer to think about where on my body I am being touched, aside from in a mechanical sense to maximize efficiency. I am often telling my partner exactly where to place his hands in order to perform choreography, or there is a coach at the front of the room helping to make sure everything runs smoothly and hash out any problems. Even though everything is choreographed, there are moments when hands slip and things go wrong. That is inevitable. But the intention is always towards creating something together, which takes a huge level of trust and cooperation. There are moments when you have to allow yourself to be vulnerable or put yourself at risk. As dancers, we rarely dwell on the danger of our practice because we have all worked so long and hard together, and we have been through such grueling training from a young age so that we can be reassured that our partners would not lower the art form in order to fulfill selfish desires or harm colleagues.

It would be highly unlikely for inappropriate touching to happen in the studio or on stage. Every move is dictated, and there is always an audience, be it a single ballet master in the front of the room, a corps de ballet surrounding you, or a paying audience. We need to encourage all members of our field to carry, on a daily basis, the same respect for their colleagues and our art form outside of the studio and into the dressing rooms, offices, and even outside the doors of the theater. In case any abuse were to happen, New York City Ballet now has a confidential, third party hotline to allow reports of ethics violations, which is a new and reassuring addition. But my greatest hope is that vulnerable and impressionable young artists will learn in this current environment that they deserve the same respect in the studio as outside of it, and that they will speak up if and when they are harassed and that there will be no tolerance for exploitation or artistic repercussions for reporting such events.

When there is talk of ballet being a "boys club" where all men do is get to touch women all day, it is a degradation to the long history of ballet and pas de deux. Like in any industry, there can be those who decide to take the privileges they have for granted and abuse the opportunities they are given. Have there been moments in our history that have led to a less than ideal culture in our industry? Of course. But I feel confident the dance and opera world are at a significant turning point that we will look back on with pride. I would venture to assert that once the orchestra is playing and the audience is in the house, that there is nothing but pure beauty, art and trust happening when dancers come together on stage.

Should you become the victim of harassment or discrimination, we encourage you to notify AGMA by reporting claims to [reporting@musicalartists.org](mailto:reporting@musicalartists.org). ■



AGMA governor Matthew Donnell assists a dancer.  
Photo courtesy of Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet

# #MeToo in Opera: It Was A Different Time Then



By Joshua Dennis  
Soloist

*The follow article was originally published in the Traveling Tenor Blog (<http://joshua-dennis.com/metoo-in-opera/>) on September 10, 2019. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of AGMA and its employees.*

In the wake of the newest Plácido Domingo investigation, I feel like I need to say something. “It was a different time then” is not an excuse! It’s a cop-out! #MeToo in the world of opera right now is alive and strong and it’s exactly what we need so that in 50 years from now we aren’t using the same excuse.

Dear older generations of people who are using this phrase to justify ugly actions for their fellow gen-whatevers: This isn’t an excuse. Do you want to know how I know it isn’t an excuse? Because not everyone behaved this way back then.

Sure, a lot of people did, I get it. A lot of executives did. A lot of powerful people did, could, and will continue to do so.

With that in mind, I would like to point out, with allegations popping up seemingly left and right, how many heads of companies and opera stars **aren’t** being called out for bad behavior right now.

MOST OF THEM!

## A Different Time, My Foot!

When someone says, “It was just a different time back then,” isn’t that insinuating that everyone was okay with it? Are you calling all of our fathers and grandfathers out? Did they all behave this way? I’m sure more than we want to admit did, but what about all the guys out there who are the same age as the accused and didn’t behave so poorly. They knew better!

I guess I have a really hard time lumping everyone in an entire generation of people who all thought that “sleep with me or else” was just part of the privilege of being born before 1960.

This isn’t a comment on sexual promiscuity. People have the right to sleep with whomever they want when it’s consensual\*. This isn’t a comment on guilt either, especially as there are multiple investigations happening. I’ll leave that to the experts.

This is simply a comment on the growing allegations from many other people in our field and how they’ve been explained away. If you haven’t read the “apology” letter from Bernard Uzan, here is the link ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/music/in-wake-of-post-allegations-a-music-director-leaves-the-field/2018/08/01/1fa4477a-95b9-11e8-80e1-00e80e1fd43\\_story.html?noredirect=on](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/music/in-wake-of-post-allegations-a-music-director-leaves-the-field/2018/08/01/1fa4477a-95b9-11e8-80e1-00e80e1fd43_story.html?noredirect=on)). This quote bothers me:

*“I come from a very different culture, I am of the sixties generation, which is not an excuse, but simply a fact, and I have made my mistakes throughout my life.”—Bernard Uzan*

Although I appreciate his apology, it has interested me that it comes with a disclaimer that implies it’s not his fault, but instead his generation’s fault.

## #MeToo did not Create Chivalry

How about the truth that says something like, “I used to know better, and at some point, I stopped caring.”

The problem is, I know people knew better back then, because I know people were taught better. For example, the Boy Scouts of America’s oath states:

*“On my honor, I will do my best... to **help other people at all times**; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and **morally straight**.”—Boy Scout Oath*

## Do you know when the Boy Scouts were founded?

William Boyce founded the Boy Scouts of America on February 8, 1910. Men knew then and know now how to behave lawfully and morally. They didn’t pull you aside and say, “Be morally straight, unless you are a powerful man trying to get something from a person that he or she won’t give freely.”

Some chose and choose not to behave in a moral way and thank goodness for the #MeToo movement in opera and everywhere for giving all of us the courage to speak up to these people who absolutely should have known better.

*\*Not all relationships, even when consensual, are appropriate in the workplace, and individuals in relationships or seeking relationships with others in the workplace should consult company policy. ■*

**Remember to check the AGMA website ([www.musicalartists.org](http://www.musicalartists.org))  
for updated news and information.**



# Bystander Training: How You Can Help

A Q&A with Aria Umezawa, Director/Consultant



By Aria Umezawa,  
Director/Consultant

**Q: Tell us about your professional training in theater.**

*Although I technically hold a degree in voice from McGill University, during my time there I studied opera direction under Patrick Hansen. From there I spent two summers interning at the Brevard Music Program in North Carolina. In 2016 I was the Merola Apprentice Stage Director, and in 2017 I was awarded an Adler Fellowship through San Francisco Opera that lasted two years. Beyond that I cut my teeth in the indie opera community. I founded a company in Toronto called Opera 5 and served as its Artistic Director from 2011 to 2017. I have also worked for other organizations across North America as an assistant director and as a director.*

**Q: What motivated you to develop your presentation?**

*In 2018 I was working with two singers on an intimate moment for a scenes program when, during a reset, the soprano turned to me and said, "It's so nice to finally feel safe in a rehearsal room." That statement hit me like a ton of bricks for two reasons: first, because it had never crossed my mind that someone might feel unsafe in one of my rehearsal rooms. It seemed somewhat reckless to have left something as important as a respectful workplace up to intuition and chance. Second, because even accepting that her statement wasn't literally true, the fact that the thought had even crossed her mind seemed to suggest that there was something much broader at play. She was like the canary in the coal mine.*

*Meanwhile the #MeToo movement had*

*officially hit the opera industry, and many of our most illustrious figures were being exposed for decades of sexual misconduct (to say the least). All of a sudden, I became painfully aware of my own experiences in the industry, and I remembered all the stories my mentors and colleagues had confided in me about theirs. This wasn't just a headline; this was an issue that was and had impacted people I cared for and admired.*

*At the time, I didn't know what I could do, but I felt I had to do something.*

**Q: Can you describe the process you went through in putting your presentation together?**

*Step one was to talk to as many people in the industry as possible. I spoke with singers, administrators, fellow directors, conductors, repetiteurs, donors, and academics to get a sense of where people were at in conversations around harassment prevention, what their concerns were, and what was preventing meaningful action from being taken.*

*What started to emerge was that there is a lot of goodwill and great desire for change from all the key stakeholders. Nobody I spoke to expressed that they felt that there needed to be more harassment, but almost everybody expressed that they had no idea how to move forward. For example, two different General Directors I spoke to lamented that they had invested a lot of time into revamping their anti-harassment policies, but were justifiably concerned that people weren't taking them seriously. On the artists' end, there was a real sense of inner conflict from conductors, directors, and singers alike. Everyone wanted to be safe, and to make sure their colleagues felt safe, but they also wanted to make great art. Many felt caught in a bit of a paradox, because great art requires the courage to take risks and taking risks doesn't always feel safe. How do you draw the distinction between artistic growth and harassment? Where do you draw the line? What are the rules?*

*With the information gathered in step one, step two became looking for solutions that (a) address issues of harassment while also addressing the concerns about the creative process, (b) make people aware of the structures in place that were preventing meaningful action from being taken, and (c) empower individuals to take an active role in facilitating a culture change.*

**Q: How did you get interested in bystander intervention?**

*During my time as a student at McGill, I was trained as a facilitator and led Anti-Discrimination and Harassment workshops on campus. Initially, I went back to those materials to see if any of that could be adapted to serve my purposes. All of the information was still more-or-less relevant, but it didn't feel like it was getting to the root of the issue.*

*I led those sessions nearly a decade ago, and even back then I remember having to make adjustments to the presentation. The problem wasn't that people didn't have a working definition of harassment, or that they couldn't recognize racist or homophobic behavior; the problem was that they didn't believe they would ever do anything to cross the line, and therefore didn't understand the value of the training.*

*When I started to research best practices in anti-harassment training, I learned that many people shared my concerns. Traditional anti-harassment training forces a binary where a person is either the victim of harassment or the perpetrator. If that person is unwilling or unable to put themselves in that mindset, the training becomes less applicable.*

*By contrast, bystander intervention training takes the position that it is everybody's responsibility to maintain a safe space, and gives people the tools to intervene in a situation regardless of whether or not they are the target. In short, bystander intervention training is about changing a culture. The tricky bit for my presentation was figuring out how to take*

traditional bystander intervention tools and make them applicable to circumstances in the opera industry.

**Q: What kind of source material did you use?**

The workshop draws from a few resources: In “The Art of Effective Facilitation” there is a chapter by Brian Arao and Kristie Clemens entitled “From Safe to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue Around Diversity and Social Justice.” I found that reading incredibly helpful when thinking about how to create a space that was free of harassment, but also left room for a process of learning.

I drew from three bystander intervention training programs: Step Up! (a workshop for bystander intervention on college campuses); Hollaback! (an organization focused on tackling street harassment); and GreenDot (which looks at both schools and communities).

Finally, Intimacy Directors International has published *The Pillars for Theatre*, which was incredibly helpful in framing conversations around consent in the rehearsal room. They are doing really wonderful work.

**Q: What do you think motivates people to behave oppressively towards others?**

Generally, harassment is an expression of a power dynamic—it’s one person exerting control over another person. I can’t speak to an individual’s motivation for behaving oppressively towards others, as I suspect there are far too many individual reasons to name, but I can shed light on the fact that the processes and systems through which we assign power in this industry are vulnerable to people who would abuse them. It’s tempting to pathologize harassment and say that this is an individual problem, but really, it’s a systemic one.

I’ll stick to what I know and point out that, at least in the world of opera, leadership looks like the conductor on the podium who demands silent, unquestioning obedience from the orchestra. Leadership looks like the director belittling the cast and crew over the god mic. We call it a “god mic” in the first place! We romanticize the diva/o who locks themselves in their dressing room and refuses to come out for anything short of grand ovations. And there are consequences for those pursuing leadership who do not act in this way. Leaders who

don’t fit our image of a leader are not invited back. They are perceived as lacking vision, or being unprepared or too easily manipulated. I’m sure there are analogous figures in every art form, but the point is that as a society, we place a higher value on the person who can bend and break other people’s will to serve their own agenda, rather than on the person who builds consensus and collaboration.

If we are told that effective leadership looks a certain way, and if people trying to climb the ladder need to employ oppressive tactics in order to be perceived as effective in their fields, we are incentivizing harassment. We are maintaining the status quo.

**Q: Please describe the bystander effect.**

Strictly defined, the bystander effect is a social psychological phenomenon in which a person is less likely to offer help to a victim when more people are present. That’s just a fancy way of saying that we look to other people to determine how to act, and if no one else seems concerned, we doubt ourselves and do nothing, even if it is against our personal values.

**Q: How do people break the cycle?**

On The New York Times’ podcast *The Daily*, they recently did a two-part series on the Harvey Weinstein scandal. One of the big insights for me was that many of his victims signed settlement agreements that included a confidentiality clause. This isolated the women. Consequently, in spite of the rumors and jokes about Weinstein’s predatory behavior, it was impossible to get a sense of the scope of the problem.

When it came to breaking the cycle of Weinstein’s abuse of power, it only took a few individuals (namely Rose McGowan and Ambra Gutierrez) finding the courage to break the terms of their settlements by speaking out for the rest of the 80 women to feel safe enough to come forward. When people started to speak out, they realized they were far from the only ones affected.

The way to break the cycle is to accept two truths: the first is that you are not alone. There are countless people who have witnessed or experienced harassment in this industry, and there are many people championing change. The second is that you, as an individual, can have tremendous sway over the energy in the room. The bystander effect is easily broken,

because it only takes one person to give the whole room permission to act. It’s about finding the courage to take that first step.

**Q: Can you share with us what you’ve learned in doing this work?**

Oh, wow. There is a lot to say here, but I might just choose one piece of learning.

We are at a particularly sensitive place as a society, and it has been nearly impossible to run this workshop without big emotions coming out. It’s something I had anticipated in the abstract, but it was quite a different thing to encounter in practice.

Some of the participants have been in the industry for decades, others are just at the start, but regardless of where they are on their journey, there is a lot of fear, anger, guilt, and shame. As a result, people are putting a lot of pressure on themselves and others to enact big change now. I think it’s important to acknowledge those feelings as motivation to take action, but it becomes less helpful when the pressure is overwhelming to the point of being paralyzing.

A big theme in the workshop is the concept of kindness as a starting point for intervention: kindness when it comes to how you intervene (people often react better to interventions when they are given the opportunity to save face), and kindness when it comes to how you view yourself and your role in changing the culture. You might encounter a situation and determine that you do not have the appropriate tools, or the bandwidth, or the capacity to safely intervene, and that’s okay. It’s not about acting on every instance without regard for the context or your own safety. It’s about what you do in those moments when you know you can make an impact.

**Q: Can you share with us some of what you’ve learned from people who have participated in your presentations?**

It’s been really interesting to hear about how people all across this industry have intuitively taken action, even before participating in the workshop. I’ve met administrators who have convinced their bosses to revisit policies, or who have taken it upon themselves to roll out said policies in a more constructive way.

(continues on page 14)

## Harassment (continued from page 4)

bias can affect ticket sales. The culture of toxic opinion is dangerous, and Mr. Budmen used his articles to shame and undermine one half of the FGO's performances.... solely based on my size.

<https://southfloridaclassicalreview.com/2018/01/fgos-second-cast-soprano-makes-a-first-class-salome/>

—Mr. Budmen's review of Kirsten: *"The ideal Salome requires the sexy appearance and playfulness of a young girl and a voice of Wagnerian proportions. Few singers totally fulfill either requirement, much less both. Melody Moore, who is singing the role for the first time, gives a workmanlike portrayal that does not succeed on either level."*

*"Unfortunately, Salome's Dance of the Seven Veils, choreographed by Rosa Mercedes, was hardly that. (referring to the line previous*

*and the world "delicate".) Substantial of body, Moore is no dancer. Consequently, the dance was staged to be more suggestive than erotic, and only resulted in being awkward. The real work was done by four female dancers who accompanied Moore's veil removal. Alluring this dance was not."*

It is noteworthy that hundreds of people wrote in to contest his shaming of me and only four responses were allowed to be posted. One of the responses left out was that of Kirsten Chambers herself who firmly supported me and was a stellar friend throughout the process. When I contacted the editor, Lawrence Johnson, to ask why he would allow a journalist to fat shame, I received no response.

Although Mr. Budmen is clearly enamored with a more "lean" definition of beauty, which is his right as a person, he draws conclusions that are unfounded and speaks of an "ideal" Salome as a physical/sexual entity. An ideal Salome is someone who can sing the score and portray the story. He is judging, actively, the term

"sexy appearance" as thin. He asserts, by the fact that I am "substantial," that I am not "sexy" and that is blatantly shaming and untrue.

Below are the clips, photos and blog entries that I speak of above. Also included are some blurbs outlining Mr. Budmen's campaign against fat.

<https://www.danielazoulaydancephotography.com/p42699657/hA26C5370#ha2f605e1> (still images of dance of the seven veils #1911-1958, page 96-98 of 103)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oneBlknQGjI>—FGO's promotion of Salome showing both Kirsten and me dancing

<https://southfloridaclassicalreview.com/2018/01/a-problematic-princess-dilutes-impact-of-fgos-dramatic-salome/>—Mr. Budmen's review

Thank you for the opportunity to shed light on what happened to me and what is happening across media toward women. ■

## Man to Man: Stage Romance Etiquette (continued from page 5)

Don Giovanni kissing Zerlina. Also, the kissing makes more sense for your character when you're running the whole show, rather than just parts of a scene.

**Never just wing a stage kiss in rehearsal.** What I mean is, don't get so "caught up in the moment" that a kiss just happens spontaneously. Again, a respectful conversation must take place beforehand with both partners and the director present.

If there's any blow-out from your director for not kissing, just say, "I'm sorry, I was just being respectful of my colleague. If it's okay with my colleague, we can now show you what it looks like." Always play it safe, my friends.

Also, NO kiss should ever include tongue. TV acting is very different than opera acting and no audience member can see the details of a kiss. That's why it's fake. HD broadcasts may be an exception and if you are at that point in your career, then you can make your own mutual decisions (to any HD performers reading the blog, HOLLA!!)

In my recent Met HD Broadcast of *La bohème*, my romantic stage partner Susanna Phillips and I locked lips for our big kissing moment in Café Momus, which is more than what I normally do. Even though I've known Susanna for a long time, we had a clear and professional conversation before this happened. I felt

comfortable with her and made the extra effort to make her feel comfortable, too.

Might I add, be considerate with your meal choices: avoid garlic or coffee and carry mints!

## Stage Kissing Techniques

1. **The Pucker**—you lock lips, pucker up but don't suck, and move your heads slowly and passionately without moving your lips (most realistic one)

2. **The Sidemouth**—you plant your lips on the corner of each other's mouth and then move your heads slowly and romantic-like, without any lip motion (most common)

3. **The Cheek-to-Cheek**—one person turns the other's head upstage, so you hide the kiss with your body, and then you nuzzle the person by placing each other's cheeks together

4. **The Big Thumbs**—the bigger person places the smaller person's face in their hands, plants their thumbs over their partner's lips, and then kisses their thumbs (more for aggressive kissing)

## Not a Joking Matter

When rehearsing a romantic scene, do not make any sexual jokes and avoid sarcasm. Sometimes, in an attempt to make an awkward situation less awkward, you end up doing the opposite. The situation may feel weird (because it is) but resist the temptation to joke about it because you don't know what your partner may be feeling.

A lot has changed in the opera world lately, but your job or



someone's feelings aren't worth making a joke.

### The Male Dilemma

I'm not gonna preach why it's important to respect women because dudes, I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt and trust that you have learned this vital life lesson. What I will say is that just because you are a man does not mean that you're not susceptible to unwanted sexual advances, too. You're not weak for speaking up about something that made you feel taken advantage of, and no job is worth the subjection of your physical comforts.

Young Lucas would have benefited from having had a talk like this one about stage romance. There was a time when a soprano asked me to her dressing room. She told me that she didn't think our kiss was real enough. She proceeded to make out with me

right then and there with full on tongue, alone. I wasn't really sure what or how to feel or what to do. It never happened again but I learned an important lesson: I never wanted to make someone feel the way I did that day.

What I've learned is to always err on the safe side (see kissing techniques) because even if your partner seems "cool," **you never want to push them out of their comfort zone.** End every physical scene with a compassionate question, like "are you ok?" or "was that all right?" Those quick questions go a long way and make you look like a true professional and a gentleman.

One last thing—if by chance you feel like your partner digs you more than a stage partner and you're feeling it too, by all means... consent, consent, CONSENT!! And be a classy dude and ask him/her out to dinner before making a move. ■

### Body Shaming: Judge Our Work, Not Our Bodies (*continued from page 7*)

parking lots and in dressing rooms during wig and makeup changes. Along the way I have struggled to show myself love, patience and understanding; I have tried to be as kind to myself as I would be to a friend who was returning to work so soon after enduring major surgery. I have sought to heed the supportive words from family and friends who insist that I am a badass fierce and sexy new Mama-Diva. But even this fortress of support could not protect me from carelessly cruel critics this past summer while I was performing at the Salzburg Festival.

Opera is a multimedia experience, and so there are many elements to be critiqued. The singers, crew, design team, director, conductor, chorus master, and orchestra all have a part to play. We are all creators. Critics, too, have an important role: to inform the broader public about our art. The best critics provide insights that are accessible to the uninitiated, but also probe the depths of the work and its interpretation.

Yet too often in opera criticism today, we are confronted with amateurish evaluations of the visual experience while scant attention is paid to the work of the vast majority of an opera's creators. The work that all those people contribute to the art should be scrutinized, of course. But the shape of a singer's body? How is

that relevant? That the soprano is "stocky" or "buxom," that the staging consists of "fat women spreading their legs"? Critics who so blatantly lack self-awareness, empathy and plain decency should not have the privilege of having their words published as their profession. For the English translation, the link is: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2019/aug/28/us-soprano-kathryn-lewek-accuses-opera-critics-body-shaming>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-49522172>

But alas, it's not only the critics. After my recent body shaming fracas, many of my singer friends and colleagues wrote to me with their own (often far worse) experiences, and far too many of their stories involved people on our side of the business, even supposed mentors. Voice teachers and coaches who body shame their students under the guise of "career advice" should feel ashamed of themselves. Casting directors who insist on hiring a great body over a great voice should be reeducated on the reasons audiences buy tickets, donate money to opera companies, and give standing ovations. Audiences don't come because the soprano literally looks like she's dying of consumption; they come because of her dedication to her dramatic art and the sheer mastery of her voice and technique.

It's because when she finally collapses in the last thunderous cadence of the orchestra, she made you feel as if a part of you died with her.

A healthy body is the foundation of a healthy instrument but being skinny is not an indication of health for everybody. I have spoken with many successful singers of all shapes and sizes about the immense role that health plays in having a sustainable career on the stage. We all agree it's not about being skinny. It's about keeping our bodies in whatever healthy shape they need to be to do our jobs; to produce the Olympian sounds that can pierce the gloom over the orchestral ocean like a lighthouse guiding wayward ships home; to sing.

We are not objects. We are humans living our lives, often in a vulnerable state. Sometimes we are pregnant. Sometimes we are ill. Sometimes we are on medications that wreak havoc on our bodies. Sometimes we are homesick. Sometimes we are mourning the loss of a loved one. Sometimes we just added a new loved one to the family, and despite the pain, exhaustion and physical limitations, we still must support our families with our work.

None of us chose this career because it was easy. We deserve respect for the sacrifices that we bear in order to bring more light into this dark world.

Judge our work, not our bodies.

*Nilsson interview with Bruce Duffie from 1988: <http://www.bruceduffie.com/nilsson.html>. ■*

*There was a conductor who intervened when he witnessed a member of the music staff being harassed by a famous singer. An assistant director who took it upon himself to remove a gratuitous rape scene from a show he was meant to remount. And there have been countless singers who have intervened by doing everything from directly confronting the situation to alerting their AGMA reps.*

*This is information I hold onto because it reminds me that there are many people across this industry doing what they can to make a difference. That gives me the courage to keep going when I have my own moments of doubt.*

**Q: How do people in this kind of work, where so much depends on personal relationships, find the courage to stand up for each other?**

*The professional concern is a real and valid one. The truth is, we are all a part of a broken system that rarely rewards people for taking action. We only need to read the news to find*

*examples of individuals who have experienced grave consequences for standing up to their harassers. It makes perfect sense that there would be an instinct to protect and preserve.*

*Part of the issue lies in that word: individual. Paradigm shifts do not happen as a result of one, large, explosive action, but by many smaller actions taken together. We place a lot of pressure on the individual to address instances of harassment, when really, we should be viewing it as a shared responsibility. What good is anti-harassment training or mandating intimacy choreographers if we don't intend to address the underlying power structures that got us here in the first place? If we want meaningful change, we need to shift the culture, and that is going to take a focused, group effort.*

*I started this journey by talking to my colleagues, and by recognizing that many people share my concerns and aspirations. They empowered me to take action. I think many people would feel empowered to act if they*

*recognized that they aren't alone. I mean... I'm writing this for a labor union's magazine... I don't think I need to sell you on the concept of collective bargaining!*

**Q: What do you think AGMA can do to help facilitate mutual support in the workplace?**

*For the members themselves, AGMA can hold forums for people to come together for training or discussions around our shared responsibility in the workplace. There is a lot of power in naming things, in allowing people to share their experiences, and in providing people with tools to move forward. As the consistent presence across the industry, there is a real potential to reach a lot of people.*

*More generally, moving forward, companies will need to rework their anti-harassment policies so that they make sense for contract workers with no permanent ties to the organization. When this happens, they need to be crafted with the input of the people they are meant to affect. As the middle ground between performers and administrators, AGMA is well positioned to listen to the membership, and to voice their concerns to the people in charge. ■*

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the AGMA Relief Fund  
in your will.*

## IN MEMORIAM

Alicia Alonso, *Dancer*  
Herbert Beattie, *Soloist*  
Harold E. Bergman, *Soloist*  
Francisco Casanova, *Soloist*  
Judy Cope, *Chorister*  
Paul Coutant, *Chorister*  
Claudia Cummings, *Soloist*

Julia Farron, *Dancer*  
Marcello Giordani, *Soloist*  
Robert L. Kelly, *Chorister*  
Rosemary Kuhlmann, *Soloist*  
Joanna Levy, *Soloist*  
Jessye Norman, *Soloist*  
Robert Orth, *Soloist*  
Rolando Panerai, *Soloist*  
Harold Prince, *Director*

Kristin Rothfuss, *Chorister*  
Gloria Rydgren-Basch, *Chorister*  
John Salyers, *President of the IATSE dressers local in Chicago and long-time dresser at Lyric Opera of Chicago\**  
Arizeder Urreiztieta, *Chorister*

*\*Indicates a distinguished individual in a related profession*

**Greetings from Raymond M. Menard**  
**AGMA President and AGMA Relief Fund Chair**

Dear Colleagues and Friends of the AGMA Relief Fund,

What would you do if you found yourself sick, injured, out-of-work and unable to provide for yourself and family? I write to ask for your special year-end, renewed or commemorative gift to the Relief Fund.

The Relief Fund's mission is to provide temporary financial assistance and other support to AGMA members. Life challenges such as accidents, illness, disability, addiction, fires or natural disasters can affect us at any time. Examples of assistance are help with medical bills, rent, utilities, funeral costs and other basic living expenses. In addition, the Relief Fund offers referrals for counseling, legal services, elder- and childcare.

AGMA members can participate in workshops on financial education, options for health insurance, retirement planning and how to locate affordable housing. Last year these programs helped over three hundred members across the country solve problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Since its founding in 1945 by prominent artists of the day, the Relief Fund has been helping our members preserve their dignity with compassion and confidentiality.

This charity is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization administered by The Actors Fund. Your tax-deductible contribution will go toward providing the aid, benefits and services that give hope to our colleagues in times of crisis.

In addition to making an outright contribution to the Relief Fund, please consider your legacy by remembering the Relief Fund in your estate planning. Please join me in support of this worthwhile organization.

Thank you.

Raymond M. Menard

**Donation Form — Please send to:**

Susan Davison, c/o AGMA Relief Fund; P.O. Box 908; New York, NY 10108;

Phone: (800) 543-2462

E-mail: [susan@musicalartists.org](mailto:susan@musicalartists.org)

[www.agmarelief.org](http://www.agmarelief.org)

Make checks payable to the AGMA Relief Fund

My contribution to the AGMA Relief Fund is (contributions \$25 and over may be charged to your

**Visa or MasterCard):**

\$500 \_\_\_\_\_

\$100 \_\_\_\_\_

\$50 \_\_\_\_\_

\$25 \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Bank V Code: \_\_\_\_ (last 3 digits on back of card)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_ In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person to receive acknowledgment letter: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

☐

I will be including the AGMA Relief Fund in my will.





*In September, Houston Ballet and Houston Grand Opera members attended a joint orientation presented by Tracy Jones, Griff Braun and Hope Singer.*



*Atlanta Ballet supports Nevada Ballet Theatre (NBT)*



*Joffrey Ballet Supports NBT*



*Pennsylvania Ballet orientation*



*Former AGMA presidents Gerald Otte and Linda Mays with AGMA President Ray Menard at the 2019 New York Labor Day Parade.*  
©www.tonyasimpsonphotography.smugmug.com



*The Metropolitan Opera Chorus supports NBT*

*In September, the Stage Managers' Association presented its annual Del Hughes Lifetime Achievement in the Art of Stage Management Award to Barbara Donner, in recognition of her body of work. AGMA National Executive Director Len Egert proudly holds the award with Barbara.*



*President Ray Menard, former Presidents Jimmy Odom and Linda Mays, Recording Secretary Louis Perry and AGMA staff supports NBT*



*Oregon Ballet Theatre supports NBT*



*Kansas City Ballet supports NBT*



*Sacramento Ballet supports NBT*





*New York City Ballet supports NBT*



*Ballet West orientation*



*Los Angeles Opera supports NBT*



*American Ballet Theatre supports NBT*



*Colorado Ballet supports NBT*



*Houston Ballet supports NBT*



*New Orleans Opera Chorus orientation with Melinda Fiedler (far right) and Allison Beck (far left). Area Chair and Governor Julie Condy sports an AGMA t-shirt.*



*Martha Graham supports NBT*



*AGMA members and staff attended the New York City Labor Day Parade  
©www.tonyasimpsonphotography.smugmug.com*



*In September, Don Cavanaugh (AGMA CFO), Linda Mays (AGMA Relief Fund Director of Development), and Len Egert (National Executive Director) celebrated AGMA Relief Fund night at Citi Field.*

# We Can Figure This Out



**By Kathleen Kelly**  
Coach, Conductor,  
Pianist, Teacher and  
Writer

*I'm honored that AGMA invited me to write for this issue as a guest. I submit the following with the greatest respect for AGMA's membership and with gratitude to the leadership for featuring this topic. Thanks to RT, AS, and EHS for the eyes and ears—KK*

From the beginning, music and theater served so many functions of prime importance in my life. They opened an escape hatch into a world of richer identity; through them, I could channel my anxiety and fantasies into work and even beauty. I loved to be inspired by words, by music, and by the performers and teachers whose work and charisma could transport me and push me to be better. I loved the chance to follow their rules and be rigorous in one moment, and at the next to follow their lead in daring experimentation. Music and theater meant both solitary practice and teamwork, discipline and play, disappointment and faith. I learned to enjoy the trip across those boundaries, which elsewhere seemed so impenetrable.

In my choir, or at the piano, or on the stage, I was suddenly not so shy. I could dare to say things I otherwise wouldn't. The pressure started to increase along with the attention, and even when I was scared, I was exhilarated. I learned to love crossing between those two states.

When I decided to be a serious student, taking on the scary trust exercise of seeking mentorship, I didn't know what I didn't know. When I started to take riskier steps, experiencing failure on the road to progress, it often felt terrible and wonderful at the same time. I was often most discouraged right before a big leap forward. I learned to expect and hope for

that delicious shift as well.

So on that night when I was the only person on the top floor of the music building, when the conductor of the new music ensemble suddenly entered my practice room without knocking and stood blocking the door, when he said his wife was out of town and he knew my husband was too, when he invited me out for a drink and laughed that he wouldn't take no for an answer, when he joked that maybe there'd be nothing more for me to play in the ensemble if I kept turning him down, I am sure that I laughed with him, I am sure that my face flushed, I am sure that my admiration for him was visible alongside my discomfort. Maybe it was all that he saw or chose to see.

But eventually, he went home. And after the next concert, I was out of the group. Where was the boundary I hadn't seen? Who had crossed it?

*I don't know those answers, I thought. I can't figure it out.*

My first job, right out of my first apprenticeship, was in an opera house. It was the life of my university taken to the nth power. The Great Works of the canon I'd learned were pared down even further to a slim, revered repertoire, the execution of which was ruled by an oral tradition handed down by expert practitioners. This collection of charismatic, brilliant, inspiring musicians was overseen by equally charismatic artistic and musical directors. Apprentices worked with and learned from these great artists, and eager assistants seconded their famous and powerful colleagues. The clear hierarchy was reflected in our rehearsal rooms, with conductors and directors in charge. Famous leading singers were much more able to demand and maneuver than their younger colleagues. Contact with the people at the top of the hierarchy was absolutely essential for advancement.

Compared to my university, it seemed that women were everywhere, which was

very exciting. Singers, colleagues, board members—women had clout and agency. They could also be flamboyant and outspoken, more so than in any other milieu I'd experienced. I felt empowered in their company.

But when the famous conductor, objecting that a young woman had been assigned to conduct the four offstage horns during his performances, insisted I come to his dressing room every night to conduct in front of him, my boss supported his request and explained that it had to happen because the man after all was a legend who had conducted a whole raft of legends. His stature warranted the small concession of my dignity, waving a silent pattern to prove my competence as he stared at my chest and wondered aloud whether the backstage horn players would know where to look.

When my female colleague and I arrived for the piano dress rehearsal she was scheduled to play, and the conductor told us with five minutes notice that I'd be playing instead because, in his words, she "wasn't experienced enough to comprehend" the opera (despite her playing weeks of successful rehearsals with that conductor, despite my not having played it in months, despite us being equal in experience and competence and, of course, youth), we understood that it was up to us to roll with it, turn a blind eye to the sabotage, get the job done without complaining or showing any nerves or anger.

And when my superior said, "what were you thinking, being alone with him?" after I was assaulted in an elevator one night by a colleague, I felt stupid for my ignorance and never spoke about it again through the next three weeks of rehearsals and performances.

I confided some things to my sister, who worked in a large corporation. Don't you have an HR department? she asked. How can those things be acceptable in your workplace?

She had to explain to me what HR stood for. But I objected to the characterization of my magical, turbulent theater as some mundane workplace.



*Boundaries are different for us, I said. But I'll figure it out.*

I'm writing this piece many years after the stories above; my elevator attacker has died, as have both of the conductors. I've passed decades with the big classical music and opera community, in rehearsal rooms, on stages, in studios, at coffee shops, in airports, on FaceTime. I did figure it out, to an extent, in a fairly typical way. I worked hard and was sometimes chosen for big opportunities on the merit of that work—but sometimes, for other reasons more personal, random, or circumstantial. I was denied things too, for a similar array of reasons. Stories like the ones above ran in a constant thread through it all, though more and more in the background as I gained status and savvy.

More than once I wondered aloud with friends about what would happen if we all told our stories. At the same time, I was ignorant of the supportive structures that pioneers like Tarana Burke and Karen Kelsky were building in preparation of that very possibility. And now it's under way. Already, in these early stages, the effects are seismic. Recently, I've watched colleagues and mentors step away from their positions in disgrace or in secrecy, and have seen others face an almost unspeakable onslaught when they spoke out about their experiences. More numerous and shocking to me are the many, many stories that people have shared with me, with no plans to make them public.

There is so much damage in our community that exists regardless of whether we hear about it.

The significant things that attract us to music and theater are real. Inspiration is real, and so are excellence and expertise. Charisma is real. Skill and technique are real. We pass these things on through mentorship, which is deeply personal, terribly intimate, and inherently risky. When that process occurs within an unquestioned hierarchy, one that heavily values and protects (and compensates) a small group of stars and gatekeepers while systematically minimizing or even silencing the concerns of numerous strivers, an

atmosphere develops in which everyone is focused on the journey up the food chain, in which unequal treatment is rampant, and in which abuse can take root and fester.

In the academics and companies where I came of age, this was the situation. I find it extraordinarily painful now, as people begin to come forward, to hear the many voices within our own profession debasing and doubting those stories. We collectively traded those stories freely as gossip when the goal was to drop a famous name and show our proximity to power. But now, when people less starry wish to center their experiences, the crowd backs away.

Theater and music have also sometimes been able to provide certain expressive platforms for people who couldn't find similar traction in other social and political arenas. Focusing on this, we've collectively chosen to ignore our field's many inequitable and discriminatory mechanisms. As we scramble to adopt the language (much less the practice) of equity and inclusion, there is still deep division on these topics within the profession, even as our contemporary culture lopes ever farther past us.

There have always been incredible examples of those among us using their powers for good. Just the other day, reading online tributes in response to a beloved colleague's passing, a friend recounted how he had once intervened in a rehearsal when she was being bullied by a director. I can't count the number of assists I received in situations both critical and trivial, or the number of colleagues who inspired entire rooms with good humor, kind actions, and generous hearts.

But right alongside the beauty and comradeship of this profession, which has at times been greater than I ever dreamed possible or can adequately describe, stand countless examples of abuse, discrimination, and injustice. An insignificant number of those were mine to bear. I turned my eyes from so many more, or made sure I wasn't around to see them.

And very often, when I did see, I tried to offer comfort and support in the shadows while making no moves to challenge the



*Kathleen at work teaching*

status quo, and I thought that was good enough for a very long time.

That, right there, is one of the biggest challenges we face: a deep examination of our shared responsibilities within this system we've constructed. I hope we can look at our belief in cultural and social hierarchy, so that we can open our ears and eyes to other practices, sounds, looks, and artistic impulses. I hope we'll try to unpack the romance we've built around the idea of genius in order to interrogate the fairness of our workplaces. I hope we'll confront our fears about money so that we can gain confidence in our dealings with those who possess it. I hope we can talk about why we don't trust each other, so that we can find a way to bear the sheer weight of the silences we have required.

So many are already doing this work. If we can all join in, it's possible to create an environment in which honest communication can begin to take root. How do we start? I think we can turn to our practice for guidance, playing both sides of the same boundaries that fascinated me as a young musician. We can be both rigorous and daring: rigorous in clearing up murkiness of boundaries and communication, and daring in putting ourselves on the line, especially when we possess greater agency and traction in a workspace (an awful lot of the risk is currently borne by people who have less power and fewer protections). We can combine solitary practice and teamwork, examining our own assumptions and blind spots while helping to create an atmosphere in which people can trust each other. And by accepting both disappointment and faith, we can make space for our current lack of skill and inevitable error while remaining

*(continues on page 20)*

## We Can Figure This Out (continued from page 19)

confident of progress.

Our profession has taught me this: if we listen, we truly can learn from each other, inspire each other, and make each other better. Together, we are capable of so much more than we realize.

*We can figure this out.*

*Kathleen Kelly is well-respected in the opera world as a coach, conductor, pianist, teacher, and writer. Kathleen was the first woman and*

*first American named as Director of Musical Studies at the Vienna State Opera. She was head of music at Houston Grand Opera, and music director of the Berkshire Opera before moving to Vienna. Since returning to the USA in 2015, Kathleen has conducted at the Glimmerglass Festival, Wolf Trap Opera, Arizona Opera, the Merola Program, and has been a visiting coach for the prestigious young artist programs of Chicago Lyric Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Washington National Opera, and the Canadian Opera Company. Kathleen is an Associate Professor of Opera Coaching at Cincinnati Conservatory. ■*

# Subcommittee on Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy Report



**By Julie Condy**  
Committee Co-Chair,  
Board member, New  
Orleans Area Chair,  
Chorister



**By Tim Smith**  
Committee Co-Chair,  
Board member,  
MMRC Chair,  
Chorister

In February 2019, AGMA's Board of Governors created a Subcommittee on Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy, charged with strategizing and implementing an incremental approach to strengthening AGMA's policies and practices on the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace. This subcommittee works with the National Executive Director (NED) and consists of two members each from the Administration and Policy, Personnel, Finance and Budget, and Membership and Member Relations committees (eight members). Each of the committees named appointed its representatives to the subcommittee, taking into account the need for diversity on such a subcommittee.

Immediate focus was put on and action was taken toward strengthening and more broadly distributing member education materials regarding AGMA's efforts on this issue and current practices for

reporting and taking action on incidents of harassment. As part of its charge, the subcommittee will help to improve and enhance what is already present in our stated policy, on our website, and in our staff professional training. Further, the subcommittee will continue to evaluate the additional strengthening of AGMA's response and practices, taking into consideration the efforts made by other performing arts unions and how those efforts might be adapted to AGMA workplace situations that differ from those other unions. The subcommittee shall report to the Board of Governors as to their progress, as well as put forward any recommendations to the Board and relevant Committees for action. The Board shall review the necessity of the subcommittee at the beginning of each Board year until such time as the subcommittee may be discharged.

The subcommittee was completely staffed by March and has been in regular communication via teleconference and electronic means since then.

We immediately reviewed the good work that AGMA had already done on this subject and what could still be improved. Some short-term upgrades included improvements to the website and refining what AGMA's position on harassment were. Long-term goals include developing a video to be posted on AGMA's website and to be used in local training sessions, and a review of the policies of our signatories. NED Len Egert had demanded that all signatories provide AGMA with their anti-harassment policies, as well as a description of the kind of training they give their employees. These policies are slowly being sent in to the National Office.

Member education is a priority, as well as relating the urgent need to report to AGMA any possible harassment so that it can be addressed in a timely manner. Once again, if AGMA is not aware of a problem, it can do little about it. It is vital to get the necessary support to any target of harassment, so we need every member to feel comfortable to come to AGMA with their concerns.

It is best practice for an employer to

engage a third-party service, since some employees might be hesitant to go directly to their company's Human Resource department. After some discussion, we came to the consensus that AGMA is the third-party best suited to be the reporting conduit for its members. AGMA serves this function by taking reports and giving whatever support the member needs, asks for, or we can suggest for them. Further, we agreed that our resources at this time should go to the development of a professional video on harassment for the AGMA website.

We have created a new auto-response for the reporting mailbox ([reporting@musicalartists.org](mailto:reporting@musicalartists.org)) that

has been implemented. This mailbox is monitored by three trained AGMA staff attorneys who will respond in a timely manner.

AGMA has also revised the current website language to include definitions and examples of harassment and to make it more descriptive of our current initiatives.

We are in the process of reviewing what sister unions are doing on this front, to see if there are relevant policies and practices that AGMA might adapt.

We want to develop and emphasize "If you see something, say something" training: How to recognize it when it happens to you, when it happens to someone next to you, and knowing when to recognize

unacceptable behavior. This training will be applicable both in the performing space as well as in the member's day-to-day life. Learning how to say "no" and stand up for others is empowering.

This topic will evolve more as we receive more information about what the signatories are actually doing. We also refer back to the need for more training to empower our members to come to AGMA with concerns or actual acts—so that we can address them head-on.

If you would like to bring something to the attention of the subcommittee, please contact co-chairs Julie Condy or Tim Smith via the National Office at 1 (800) 543-2462. ■

## Plácido Domingo Investigation Update

In August AGMA became aware of serious allegations of sexual harassment made by multiple women against Plácido Domingo. We contacted our employers to demand investigations into these allegations. Additionally, we reached out to our members in opera companies who may have been affected to offer guidance and support. We continued to closely monitor this situation, making the safety of our members our first priority.

AGMA condemns all sexual abuse and sexual harassment and commends those who come forward to report these incidents in their workplaces. AGMA is fully committed to ensuring that the artists we represent have safe workplaces that are free of sexual harassment. Members who have experienced sexual harassment in their workplace may contact AGMA's trained professional staff through [reporting@musicalartists.org](mailto:reporting@musicalartists.org), or call AGMA's National Office at (212) 265-3687 to be directed to the appropriate staff member.

AGMA was concerned that the companies that have begun their own investigations may be unwilling or unable to provide AGMA with sufficient assurances about the scope and timing of their investigations, as well as whether or not the findings will be publicly disclosed or otherwise made available to the Union. In response, on September 6, 2019, AGMA announced that the union had retained an independent investigator to investigate allegations of sexual harassment and discrimination made by AGMA members against Plácido Domingo. To date, over forty individuals have been interviewed, and it is expected that a final report will be issued early next year. Any members who have relevant information and wish to speak with the investigator should contact Wendy LaManque at [wلمانque@musicalartists.org](mailto:wلمانque@musicalartists.org) or by phone (212) 265-3687. Communications regarding this

investigation will remain confidential and shared only with the independent investigator.

"Given the uncertainty surrounding the investigations of our signatory companies, AGMA's internal investigation will not be limited to conduct that occurred at a specific company or at a particular time," said AGMA National Executive Director Len Egert. "Our investigation will also examine the systemic failures within the industry that could have allowed this conduct, if substantiated, to continue unchallenged for decades. In light of the seriousness of the allegations, and the number of AGMA members who may have been affected, we believe this investigation is necessary at this time."

On October 2, 2019, AGMA learned that Mr. Domingo had resigned as General Director of the Los Angeles Opera. AGMA decided to continue its independent investigation despite Mr. Domingo's resignation. "Our internal investigation has never been just about allegations against one individual," said AGMA National Director Len Egert. "AGMA is committed to confronting systemic problems in our industries which can cause our members to suffer unlawful discrimination and harassment at work, and to protecting the health and safety of our members in all of AGMA's signatory companies. We owe it to our members to continue our investigation."

"The health and safety of AGMA Artists is of paramount importance to the Union," said AGMA President Raymond Menard. "Every AGMA Artist has an absolute right to go to work without fear of sexual harassment, discrimination, or assault. As a labor union, it's our job to make sure that our employers keep our members safe at work." ■



# Addressing Harassment in the Workplace

By Lillian Gallina, LCSW Supervisor, The Actors Fund

A life in the arts is a dynamic and interesting one—flexible schedules, various work environments and time spent with co-workers both at work and outside of work hours. However, a career in arts and entertainment does not mean that you don't have the same rights as someone who works in a more traditional workspace. When it comes to issues of harassment and discrimination, the non-traditional work environment can bring its share of challenges. For instance, many performing arts professionals find themselves with multiple employers at one time, each with their own policy and person to report to. Or they may be working in very close quarters or having to undress or change costumes in front of or near coworkers. And that is just to name a few!

If you are experiencing or witnessing some form of harassment or discrimination in your workspace, it can be difficult to know how to navigate. There are many reasons why someone may decide not to report a situation to their employer. Some reasons include not knowing how to report or who to report to, fear of not being believed or retaliated against, being confused or unsure of what harassment is and if what you experienced is considered harassment. What's important to remember is that your employer is responsible for providing a safe work environment, free of harassment and discrimination. They are obligated to address any concerns you may have about your work life and safety. Just because you don't work in an office, doesn't mean you can't do something about it!

If a **member, worker, or someone pursuing work** experiences offensive, intimidating and potentially harassing behavior, they can and should follow the 3 R's:

## Record-Respond-Report

**Record:** *It is important to document each incident of harassment\* by gathering the following information:*

- What happened (as detailed as possible)
- What was said (record as best you can)
- When did it occur (date and time)
- Where did the incident take place (be specific)
- Who was present (names and roles)
- Who has been told (both professional and personal)

*\*The employer's legal obligation to address the issue is linked to having knowledge of the incident(s).*

**Respond:** *If the person is comfortable, they can tell the offending party that their behavior is unwelcome and needs to stop. Responding directly will not always change the behavior, but it does communicate that it is unwanted and educates the harasser on their behavior.*

- Be firm
- Be specific
- Suggest alternate actions or behavior
- Never apologize

## Respond Statements:

"It's not funny to me. Stop. I don't like it."

"Please stop doing that."

"I want you to stop doing that right now."

"I feel uncomfortable with..."

- a) this conversation,
- b) how you are talking to me,
- c) what you are doing."

"I am not interested in \_\_\_\_\_."

"I do not want you to \_\_\_\_\_."

## Report

- **A worker can report to the employer:**
- The employer may be obligated to take action to resolve the issue with or

without the member's consent.

- It is the responsibility of the employer to address a worker's concerns.
- The worker may not know who the employer is. Find out.
- **A worker can report to a third party:**
- Someone may not feel comfortable or ready to inform his or her employer of the situation or to file a complaint.
- Connecting with a resource such as The Actors Fund, community supports, local agencies, or your union may help them to move forward with addressing the issue.

The Actors Fund provides free confidential options including counseling and mental health resources for any performing arts and entertainment professional who has experienced a workplace issue.

Please reach out to us at:

## The Actors Fund

[www.actorsfund.org](http://www.actorsfund.org)

### Los Angeles:

323-933-9244

[intakela@actorsfund.org](mailto:intakela@actorsfund.org)

### New York:

917-281-5919

[intakeny@actorsfund.org](mailto:intakeny@actorsfund.org)

### Chicago:

312-372-0989

[intakech@actorsfund.org](mailto:intakech@actorsfund.org)

**The Actors Fund,  
for everyone  
in entertainment.**

## AGMA Notice and Agency Fee Objection Policy

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

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

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

All individuals working under a collective bargaining agreement between AGMA and an opera, ballet, dance programming, concert, or other company producing operatic music, dance, concerts, or other types of productions containing a union security clause (referred to hereafter as an AGMA collective bargaining agreement) are required, as a condition of continued employment, to pay dues and initiation fees to AGMA. Any individuals covered by an AGMA collective bargaining agreement who elect not to be AGMA members nevertheless remain obligated, under the union security clause, to pay an agency fee to AGMA equal to regular AGMA dues and initiation fees, subject to a possible reduction as set forth below.

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

The most recent Audit Report indicated that approximately 97.46% of AGMA's expenditures were devoted to representational activities.

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

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

Before anyone decides to become an objector, we would hope they would take into consideration that without the concerted political activity of the union movement many of the most important legislation that protects and benefits working women and men—such as the Social Security Act, the Family Medical Leave Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, minimum wage laws and the Occupational Safety and Health Act—would never have been enacted. The role of organized labor remains even more vital today. In our opinion, not only activities characterized as "representational," but also community service, legislative activity, lobbying, political activities, external organizing, and litigation related to broader issues of concern to Union members as citizens, are critically necessary for the improvement of working conditions of all members we represent. It is for this reason that we believe that it is essential for AGMA to support such activities that benefit all working people in the United States. We hope you will decide to be part of this important effort. ■

# AGMA Audited Financial Statements

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

### TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF AGMA:

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of American Guild of Musical Artists (the "Guild"), which comprise the statements of financial position as of December 31, 2018 and 2017, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the years then ended. Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Our responsibility is to express an

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

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

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

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

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of American Guild of Musical Artists as of December 31, 2018 and 2017, and the changes in its net assets, its functional expenses, and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

– BUCHBINDER TUNICK & COMPANY LLP

### AGMA Statements of Financial Position

December 31, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017		2018	2017
<b>ASSETS:</b>					
<b>Assets:</b>			<b>Other assets:</b>		
<b>Cash and cash equivalents:</b>			Cash - security deposits	98,327	97,580
Operating accounts	\$1,610,066	\$1,123,081	Prepaid expenses	19,722	53,044
Money market funds	281,118	35,724	Security deposits	50,426	48,467
Total cash and cash equivalents	1,891,184	1,158,805	Total other assets	168,475	199,091
Certificates of deposit	104,798	104,484	Net property assets	64,942	65,045
			<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$16,633,096</b>	<b>\$15,377,389</b>
<b>Investments, at fair value:</b>			<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS:</b>		
U.S. treasury obligations	12,212,429	12,032,341	<b>Liabilities:</b>		
Mutual funds and exchange-traded funds	1,561,538	1,484,842	Accrued expenses	\$ 325,784	\$ 316,994
Common stock	277,227	-	Dues received in advance	323,041	274,642
Total investments	14,051,194	13,517,183	Dues refundable to members	407,746	432,350
<b>Receivables:</b>			Security deposits payable	98,327	97,802
Dues	352,503	332,241	Total liabilities	1,154,898	1,121,788
Other	-	540	Net assets without donor restrictions	15,478,198	14,255,601
Total receivables	352,503	332,781	<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>\$16,633,096</b>	<b>\$15,377,389</b>



## Statements of Activities

For the years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017
<b>REVENUE:</b>		
<b>Membership revenue:</b>		
Working dues	\$ 2,636,284	\$ 2,673,858
Basic dues	785,584	604,370
Initiation fees	479,643	334,632
Reinstatement fees	<u>122,579</u>	<u>14,135</u>
Total membership revenue	4,024,090	3,626,995
Visa fees	1,425,500	1,296,250
Unrealized (depreciation) appreciation in fair value of investments	(86,102)	153,353
Realized gain on investments	171,409	83,944
Interest and dividends	35,718	24,936
Other	<u>35,417</u>	<u>39,572</u>
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>\$ 5,606,032</b>	<b>\$ 5,225,050</b>

	2018	2017
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>Program services:</b>		
Member services	3,369,115	3,051,021
<b>Supporting activities:</b>		
Management and general	<u>1,014,320</u>	<u>933,964</u>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>4,383,435</b>	<b>3,984,985</b>
Change in net assets	1,222,597	1,240,065
<b>Net assets - unrestricted</b>		
Beginning of year	<u>14,255,601</u>	<u>13,015,536</u>
<b>End of year</b>	<b>\$15,478,198</b>	<b>\$14,255,601</b>

## Statements of Cash Flows

For the years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Change in net assets	\$ 1,222,597	\$ 1,240,065
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation and amortization	20,541	16,844
Unrealized depreciation (appreciation) in fair value of investments	86,102	(153,353)
Realized (gain) on investments	(171,409)	(83,944)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Decrease in other assets	-	29,755
(Increase) in dues receivable	(20,262)	(1,573)
Decrease (increase) in other receivable	540	(139)
(Increase) decrease in cash - security deposits	(747)	263
(Decrease) increase in prepaid expenses	33,322	(30,770)
Increase (decrease) in security deposits	(1,959)	338
Increase accrued expenses	8,790	35,992
Increase in security deposit payable	525	-

	2018	2017
Increase in dues paid in advance	48,399	110,000
(Decrease) increase in dues refundable to members	<u>(24,604)</u>	<u>9,968</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>1,201,835</u>	<u>1,173,166</u>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>		
(Purchase of) property assets	(20,438)	(48,830)
(Purchase of) certificates of deposit	(314)	(525)
(Purchase of) investments	(43,392,721)	(47,157,571)
Sale of investments	<u>42,944,017</u>	<u>46,648,670</u>
Net cash (used in) investing activities	<u>(469,456)</u>	<u>(558,256)</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	732,379	614,910
<b>Cash and cash equivalents:</b>		
Beginning of year	<u>1,158,805</u>	<u>543,895</u>
<b>End of year</b>	<b>\$ 1,891,184</b>	<b>\$ 1,158,805</b>

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.**



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## CONTACT LIST OF ASSISTANCE AND MEMBER-ONLY SERVICES

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

### The Actors Fund

<https://actorsfund.org> info@actorsfund.org  
New York City (800) 221-7303  
Chicago (312) 372-0989  
Los Angeles (888) 825-0911

### AGMA Relief Fund

Donations (800) 543-AGMA (2462)  
susan@musicalartists.org  
Intake New York City (212) 221-7300 ext. 119  
intakeny@actorsfund.org  
Intake Chicago (312) 372-0989  
shaught@actorsfund.org  
Intake Los Angeles (323) 933-9244 ext. 55  
intakela@actorsfund.org

### AGMA Retirement and Health

(Plan A, AGMA Retirement Plan and AGMA Health Plan)  
(212) 765-3664  
www.agmafunds.org  
agmareirement\_health@yahoo.com

### AGMA Health Plan B

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

### Artists Health Insurance Resource Center

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

### The Career Center

(formerly The Actors Work Program)  
<https://actorsfund.org/services-and-programs/career-center>

New York City (212) 221-7300 ext. 259  
careercentereast@actorsfund.org  
Los Angeles (323) 933-9244 ext. 450  
careercenterwest@actorsfund.org

### Career Transition For Dancers

New York City (917) 281-5992  
pschwadron@actorsfund.org  
Chicago (312) 414-0500  
mlanghout@actorsfund.org  
Los Angeles (323) 330-2472  
skozak@actorsfund.org

<https://actorsfund.org/services-and-programs/career-transition-dancers>

### Union Plus

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