

AGMAzine

Official Publication of the American Guild of Musical Artists

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

#WeAreAGMA

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SUMMER 2020

The American Guild of Musical Artists

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Written By
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MMRC Chair,
AGMA Governor,
Chorister

There's no way around it, this e-version of *AGMAzine* was created before and during very difficult times.

We began this issue in the months leading up to COVID-19. January and February seem a world away at this point! In the midst of a global pandemic, we trekked on, committed to creating a magazine that sincerely captured what many AGMA members were living through. And, this issue would not have been complete without dedicating pages to the second pandemic our world is facing: racial injustice.

We start this issue with an update on the state of our Union from President Ray Menard and National Executive Director Len Egert. We then explore pages of members' experiences leading up to March. Then, we face the COVID-19 and racial injustice pandemics head-on. Our resiliency and desire to make the world a better place as Artists really shines through and is documented within the pages of this magazine.

Even before all of this uncharted emotional territory that we have had to endure, the theme of this magazine was **#WeAreAGMA**. We had always planned on highlighting the amazing work and hearts of AGMA members. As work was shuttered for us and our stages went dark,

the light within us did not. We kept creating art, we kept reaching out to help someone else in need, we kept singing and dancing and creating. We hope you find both solace and perhaps some inspiration within these pages. We hope this issue of *AGMAzine* serves as a reminder that **#WeAreAGMA** and we will get through this together.

As always, *AGMAzine* is YOUR magazine. No issue could be possible without contributions from YOU, the member. Thank you for the submissions and accepted interview requests that made this issue possible. A tremendous shout-out and debt of gratitude goes to Alicia Cook, our Director of Communications. Given the timing of her onboarding, she has had to simultaneously "learn our ropes" while putting out fire after fire. She deserves great credit for helping us realize our pledge to improve communications, as well as our dream to publish a magazine on a digital platform. Thank you, Alicia, and thank YOU to our members for continuing to share content and ideas with us. ■

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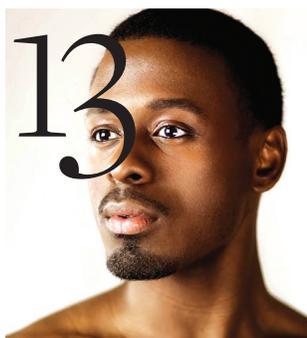
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AGMA honors Nedda Casei and remembers all those who have passed away



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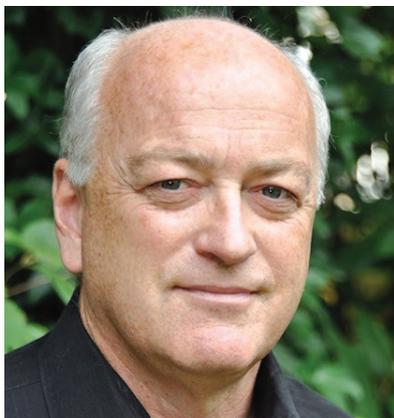


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Dear Members of the AGMA Community:



AGMA President Ray Menard



Leonard Egert, National Executive Director

Never in our history have we faced something quite this catastrophic. This is truly an unprecedented, unparalleled moment we are living through together. We want to start by saying: we will endure. We are AGMA and we are in this together.

Since March 10, AGMA has engaged in non-stop discussions and bargaining with management throughout the country to extend pay, benefits, and coverage as much as possible. We understand the significant and unique challenges that the Opera, Ballet, and Choral industries will continue to face and AGMA vows to keep

working tirelessly, around the clock, to assist and support our members.

What our members do requires the ability to collaborate closely. Their art is then shared with even larger groups of people who gather to share an experience together, at the same time, in the same place.

No one can say exactly when yet, but opera houses and ballet and choral companies will open once again, and we will get back to work. The health and safety of AGMA members will remain, as it has always been, AGMA's main priority. We

WILL emerge from this dark time, and we will do so deliberately, intelligently, and with utmost focus on our members' health and safety.

The three primary focuses of AGMA are as follows:

1. Safety considerations for return to work
2. Legislative and other efforts to provide financial assistance to members
3. Combating racial injustice within our industries

Over the past year, a lot has changed at AGMA (and the world) and that will be reflected within the pages of this magazine.

Now more than ever, we need to stand together and support each other. We hope you can take inspiration and find hope from the many thought-provoking stories in this issue of *AGMAzine*.

In solidarity,

Ray Menard, President

Len Egert, National Executive Director

Excerpts of this letter were originally shared with membership via email. ■



A New Day at AGMA



Written By
Karen Grahn
Board Member,
MMRC Member,
Chorister

During a recent meeting of the Membership and Member Relationship Committee (MMRC), I had a moment of awakening/awareness about our Union. Due to COVID-19, the meeting was held via Zoom, which was great, as it provided us a way to see each other for the first time ever. Most of MMRC was present and there were five, count 'em, five staff members also on the call. This had never happened before!

Now, why did this shock me so much? Back in the day (starting in 1998, when I became the committee's secretary), the Union lacked enough staff to do everything we members thought it should be doing. We would work on things like the handbooks, new member brochures, website content, and *AGMAzine*. As volunteers, we all had day and night jobs in our own artistic realms, so doing this work was in addition to our money-making activities.

Well, given enough time and fortuitous decisions, things can always change for the better. Thanks to National Executive

Director Len Egert and the Board, AGMA has brought in staff that has been putting together many new resources for AGMA members.

For instance, a few years ago, Griff Braun, Director of Organizing and Outreach, created a PowerPoint presentation to help MMRC's Pre-AGMA Awareness Committee. He has since turned it into a series of educational videos soon to be available on AGMA's website. This terrific development is only a small sampling of his excellent work at reaching out to members.

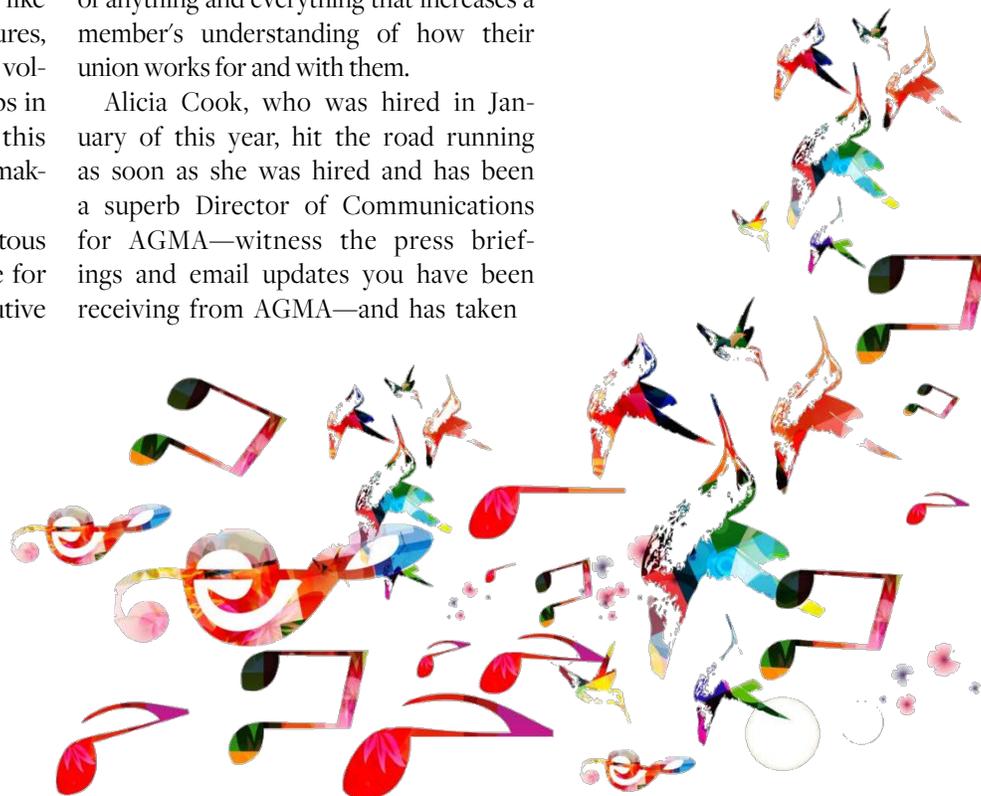
The current website contains so much information—I can't list it all here—that you must [visit the site](#) to believe it. And AGMA is now on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#). Social media might make me feel old, but I love the fact that staff and the rest of the committee have passed me by and are connecting with members where they are. I'm in favor of anything and everything that increases a member's understanding of how their union works for and with them.

Alicia Cook, who was hired in January of this year, hit the road running as soon as she was hired and has been a superb Director of Communications for AGMA—witness the press briefings and email updates you have been receiving from AGMA—and has taken

the *AGMAzine* to new heights of attractiveness with its new format. Thank you, Alicia!

I'll let you read about what the other staff members are doing in the rest of this issue, but the above items have been very important to me over the years. Let's get everyone educated about the value of being an active union member.

It's a new day at AGMA. ■



#WeAreAGMA: The Story Behind the Hashtag



AGMA staff members, Griff Braun and Alicia Cook, discuss #WeAreAGMA

Whether it's a branded term or call to action, nearly every organization on the planet has its own unique hashtag. Hashtags expressed with a “#” sign before the word or phrase, are known to increase social media engagement and brand awareness, and AGMA's staple hashtag is **#WeAreAGMA**.

Griff Braun, Director of Organizing and Outreach at AGMA, is the mastermind behind what has become AGMA's trademark hashtag across all of the Union's social media channels.

Prior to joining the staff of AGMA in 2014, Braun danced professionally with American Ballet Theatre, the Metropolitan Opera, the Royal Swedish Ballet, and the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, among others. He holds a B.A. in American History from SUNY Empire State College and a Graduate Certificate in Labor Relations from the CUNY School of Professional Studies.

[Alicia Cook](#), Director of Communications, hired in January 2020, talked with Braun about how the hashtag came to be and what it means now, to a currently shuttered industry.

Alicia Cook (AC): Griff, thanks for taking the time today! Let's get right to it. What inspired you to make #WeAreAGMA the Union's primary hashtag?

Griff Braun (GB): When I moved into the new role of Director of Organizing and Outreach last year, my first priority was, and still is, internal organizing:

engaging and educating the current AGMA membership about their union, their collective power, and the vital role they play in AGMA's success.

Many of the members, I felt, viewed AGMA as a service that they paid for—for representation, for handling crises, and for negotiating a contract every few years—rather than identifying themselves and their colleagues as the union, recognizing their collective power, and engaging and participating.

We'd begun to address this through consistent new member orientations at all of our shops, but we were also looking for a way to provide connection between AGMA members across the country—both to each other and to the collective concept of the union.

AC: So that's where social media came into play.

GB: Yes. Revamping and expanding AGMA's social media presence seemed to be a primary tool in this effort, but I felt we needed a theme for our members to connect with. In a conversation about member engagement with the staff at the Department for Professional Employees (DPE) at the AFL-CIO, it struck me that #WeAreAGMA says it all.

AC: It has a great ring to it. As a former dancer, longtime AGMA member, and now union staff member, what does “We Are AGMA” mean to YOU?

GB: To me, it is an assertion and an affirmation by the members that the power of the union comes from their *collective* will, engagement, and participation. It is a way of saying that the union is not a “third party” in the relationship between the artists and their employers, but that the artists are the union.

AC: So, the “we” in “we are AGMA” is the membership—the soloists, choristers,

dancers, choral singers, stage managers, stage directors, choreographers, and staff performers that make up our union?

GB: Exactly right. Plus, by extension, AGMA's staff embraces the meaning behind the hashtag and uses it as well.

AC: When should members use this hashtag? Can they be creative with it?

GB: I think members should use the hashtag anytime they are posting about their lives as artists and union members. I hope that being an AGMA member is an important part of our members' identities and that they will proudly proclaim #WeAreAGMA at every opportunity. I also hope that if they see areas where the union could be better, they get involved. Again, the union is only as strong and effective as the members make it.

AC: That's a good point. Why are collective messages important to AGMA and the union as a whole?

GB: Not to give a history lesson but... [laughs]...Workers form unions to have a voice in their workplace and in their industry. Back in 1936, artist workers formed AGMA for exactly the same reason. Workers coming together in union creates collective power—power that individual workers don't have on their own—and I think it is vital for all labor unions, including AGMA, to remember that our ability to make positive change in our workplaces and in our industries is directly related to how engaged, educated, and involved all members of the union are.

AC: I appreciate the lesson.

GB: Being an AGMA member is something to be proud of. It means you are a professional and an artist. It also means that you are part of an ongoing movement to ensure that careers in opera and dance and concert choral work are viable in the United States and that the artists who

make these art forms possible are treated with respect. Collective messages are important for AGMA and for unions generally because they remind us that only together do we have the power to make positive change.

AC: What you just said leads me to my next question, actually. With shuttered productions and thousands of AGMA artists out of work, what does #WeAreAGMA represent right now, in this moment?

GB: I think it continues to stand as an important affirmation of collective power, but in this crisis it is also an acknowledgment that we're all in this together and the way that we get through this is together, as a union.

AC: How have you seen the AGMA community come together to live out the meaning behind #WeAreAGMA during the pandemic?

GB: The AGMA community has come together and continues to come together in many, many ways during this pandemic. In dealing with the shutdowns and cancellation of work around the country, AGMA artists have come together to bargain and work with signatory employers to ensure that they and their colleagues receive as much help as possible.

AC: I've seen a lot of grassroots advocacy for the AGMA Relief Fund too. Even if they can't support the fund financially, they are doing so by spreading its message with their networks.

GB: Absolutely. AGMA artists across the country have raised critically needed funds for the AGMA Relief Fund through individual and collaborative efforts. AGMA artists have also played a critical role in our lobbying efforts at the federal, state, and local levels for governmental relief funding for the Arts and Artists. AGMA's members have come together in this crisis to organize, identify the needs of their community, and work to strengthen the Union for the future. These are just a few examples of the many ways in which AGMA members are working with each



other and for each other during this unprecedented moment.

AC: It's really an amazing thing to see unfold, this solidarity.

GB: Perhaps the most poignant example I've seen so far of the relevance of #WeAreAGMA happened on May 6. Dancer representatives from *every* AGMA dance company across the country came together, for the first time, to share their experiences, to support each other, and to simply connect, both as artists and as union members.

With all the bad news that we've gotten over the past two months, those two hours reminded me that, ultimately, AGMA is about artists standing together.

AC: A new hashtag has been floating around during this crisis; #AGMAendures. Let's talk about that. What does it mean? How will AGMA endure?

GB: It's clear that COVID-19 has, for now, taken away a fundamental element of AGMA artists' work: the ability to collaborate closely with others to create something meaningful and beautiful. It's important to acknowledge, though, that by separating AGMA artists from their work, their workplaces, and from each other, this pandemic has also attacked a fundamental element of what it means to be part of a labor union: the collective, the group.

From the outset of this crisis, I felt that maintaining a sense of unity, shared struggle, and shared purpose within our membership would be paramount in getting through this, however long it takes. I've also come to

believe that it is vital for the performing arts in the United States that the labor unions whose members make the art happen remain viable and strong—again, for however long it takes.

AC: And so, #AGMAendures was born.

GB: #AGMAendures is simply a statement of fact. It is an artistic, economic, and just plain *human* imperative, affirming that this union will continue to function and do the work necessary at every stage to ensure that, when we're on the other side of this crisis, opera and dance and choral performance will remain viable work in which artists are valued and respected. ■

Everyone Remembers Their First Opera

Written by Sara Heaton, Chorister

Most opera fans vividly remember their first encounter with opera. Heck, even most non-opera fans remember their first encounter with opera! It's not something one easily forgets. In addition to the grandness of it all, there's that visceral experience of hearing the human voice create a sound so powerful, so emotional, and so beyond anything you could have imagined that sticks with you. It's usually a make-or-break moment, the turning point when you either dive headfirst into opera obsession, or do a one-eighty and opt for alternate musical genres.

For me, that moment was clearly of the former variety. I was five when I attended my first opera, my parents having the genius intuition that their young daughter would a) be able to quietly sit through a whole opera, and b) that *Carmen* would make a good first impression. Right they were. The story goes that I walked out of the opera and exclaimed, "I want to be Carmen when I grow up!" Mission accomplished.

During February 2019, it was thrilling to be on the other side of that equation in a concert designed to introduce opera to young kids. The Met Chorus Artists were invited by the [Howland Chamber Music Circle](#) in Beacon, NY to present a concert on their Classics for Kids series.

That Sunday afternoon, five members of The Met Chorus Artists, accompanied by pianist Carol Wong, played to a packed house with audience members ranging in age from less than one to over 60. The theme of the concert was the operatic voice and what it can do. We entered singing the Act IV opening chorus of *Carmen*, an easily recognizable tune with an exciting finale. Chorister Nathan Carlisle served double duty as both performer and Master of Ceremonies, seamlessly moving the program along while connecting with the audience in a genuine and personable way.

We gave them examples of the extremes of the operatic voice. We showed how sometimes we sing really high (soprano Lianne Coble-Dispensa belted out a super-loud high note! Sometimes we sing super-fast (baritone Ross Benoliel wowed them with "Figaro la, Figaro qua ..."! We gave examples of arias, explaining the different voice types, and of

what it sounds like when we sing all together, giving a rendition of the finale from *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

The goal of the performance was to help the audience understand how opera conveys emotion through the music, allowing us to understand what the character is experiencing even if we don't understand their words. To help with this task, we brought along something every opera singer loves—props! Ours were emoji faces (oh-so-very *au courant*) that depicted three emotions: "sad," "happy," and "in love." The kids loved guessing which *emoji* the singer was experiencing. Then Nathan picked a few kids to pick an emoji out of hat, and whichever emotion they picked, we sang a corresponding aria. To finish off the performance, we blew their socks off with the final chorus from *Candide*, "Make Our Garden Grow."

By far the most gratifying part of the day was seeing the reactions across the kids' faces in the audience—awe, fascination, bright smiles, and, in some cases, hands over the ears. Several piped up to ask questions, or share their experiences with opera or singing in general.

For those in attendance that day, it certainly wasn't everyone's first operatic experience (there were even some adults who came without children just to hear some opera! But for those kids and adults who got their first taste of opera, who knows? It could have planted a seed that will grow into a lifelong love of the art form.



Ageism in Ballet



Written By Matthew Donnell
AGMA Governor,
MMRC Member, Dancer

When I was first hired by the Kansas City Ballet at age 19, I felt “old.” I now realize how silly, and perhaps even vain, that sounds. However, I was trained in a world where I was made to feel that if you didn’t land a job with a major ballet company by the time you walked across your high school’s graduation stage, you wouldn’t “make it.” Here I was, one year out of high school, and I finally caught my break—at the ripe age of 19—and I felt old.

Another gentleman, whom I respect greatly to this day, was also hired. I knew this wasn’t his first gig, as he had danced extensively with other ballet companies, but one thing I didn’t know was his age. In fact, the subject was off the table to ask even about. At the time, I thought it was weird, and a possible power grab, for he also wouldn’t tell the director. When asked “how old are you again?” his response was, “Don’t worry about it. How is my dancing?”

Fast forward.

I retired from a wonderful ten-year career intent on transitioning to my first love: Musical Theater. I received my Actors Equity Membership before moving to New York, and, in my crash course training—primarily through the reading of audition technique books and summer stock gigs—I learned an important industry standard:

Never put your age on your resume.

I was floored. I didn’t know this was something that you could omit. While it made sense instantly, it was mind-boggling to me that the ballet world didn’t operate this way. Then memories

came flooding back. If my colleague had disclosed his age, would he have been given the job? I hope so, but would he? It wasn’t a power grab at all. It was self-preservation.

I now teach ballet on the faculty of the world-renowned Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. Many of our students are in the process of auditioning for ballet companies. When I told them not to state their age on their resumes, they said, “Well, all the companies are asking—even AGMA companies.”

Through my research, and through the incredible resources and support of AGMA, we discovered that the law is extremely vague on this issue. While it is illegal to discriminate based on age, it is not illegal to ask someone their age on a job application.

I take huge issue with this. While knowing the age of an extremely talented 18-year-old may work in their favor now, what protection does it offer for someone who is just a few years older? If a director is presented with two dancers of equal ability, talent, and strength, but knows one is 18 and one is 25, they may be inclined to cast the younger of the two because they know they can likely get more years out of them.

Here’s the rub: Situations change. People lose their jobs for various reasons, and some simply want to explore different companies to see if they are a better fit. The way this is currently set up, it is extremely difficult to take this chance.

#WeAreAGMA. I propose we lean heavily on company management and encourage them to adopt an application process that, in lieu of asking for a dancer’s age, simply asks if a dancer is a legal adult. HR will eventually learn their age, but upper management doesn’t need to know. Let’s level the playing field as much as we can. We owe it to our members to make sure they’re receiving the opportunities they are qualified for, regardless of their age. ■



The Money Stories We Tell Ourselves



©Kate Raines

Written By Maren
Montalbano
Chorister

I grew up in a musical household. My mom was a classical violinist; my dad a jazz trumpet player. We never had enough money and both my parents were constantly hustling for the next job. They often could not afford childcare and I spent many of my nights and weekends at their rehearsals or performances. “Gig” was one of the first words I learned.

I spent my childhood busking with my dad in front of Macy’s at Christmastime and coloring backstage at the symphony while my mom rehearsed Mahler. I got a chance to see a lot of different ways to make money as a musician.

I learned early on that musicians were poor, because as a child, I never met a musician who actually had money. Or if I did, I certainly didn’t know it!

“I’m never any good with money,” my dad would complain. “I think it’s because I’m an artist.”

My mom, long divorced from my dad, would also lament her financial circumstances. “I’m too nice,” she would say when I would ask why she didn’t raise her teaching fee. “I just don’t want to make anyone uncomfortable.”

By the time I was accepted into New England Conservatory and decided to pursue a musical career, I had already absorbed the following lessons:

- Being an artist means you can’t be good with money
- If you charge too much, people will not like you
- Nobody pays artists what they are worth

By the time I graduated from college,

both my parents had declared bankruptcy and I had to pay off my loans myself. I accumulated credit card debt very quickly and due to the high interest rates, had a hard time paying them off.

It wasn’t until several years after graduation, one night when I was bemoaning my circumstances to my boyfriend, that I heard a familiar phrase being parroted back to me. “Well, you’re just not good with money,” he said. “Maybe it’s because you’re an artist.”

That stopped me in my tracks.

I realized right then that I had been telling myself these stories about the way the world worked that were definitely not true.

- I began hearing similar negative money stories from my peers:
- You can only make true art if you don’t have any money
- The only artists who do have money were born into it/married into it/sold out
- If you are lucky enough to get hired by a big house and make a living, it’s never going to last

No wonder none of us were making any money! We were holding onto these beliefs that equated money with bad things.

I decided to make a change. I started telling myself:

- *I am an artist and I am also good with money.* (All of a sudden, I was able to reconcile my bank accounts more easily)
- *My worth has nothing to do with how much or how little someone pays me.* (I felt compassion for and was willing to work with nonprofits who couldn’t afford my fee but whose mission still attracted me)
- *The more I value myself, the more others will value me.* (Soon I stopped taking low-paying gigs and used AGMA rates as my guide when I had to negotiate fees on my own.

Spoiler alert: These methods work!

Now, I did learn other valuable and more positive lessons about money from my parents. For example, there are tons of different ways to earn a living as a musician, and there is freedom and flexibility as a freelancer. Those lessons have helped me navigate the gig economy pretty well, and I am thankful.

Money isn’t intrinsically evil or good; it’s just a tool. The only power it holds is in the stories we tell ourselves about it.

Luckily, we can change our stories. As we grow, we can replace old beliefs that no longer serve us with a more expanded view of the world that can energize us and move us toward success.

What are the beliefs that are holding you back? And how would you change the stories you tell yourself? ■

The Story Behind WILD PLUM ARTS, in the Founder's Words



Written By
Lucy Schauer
Soloist

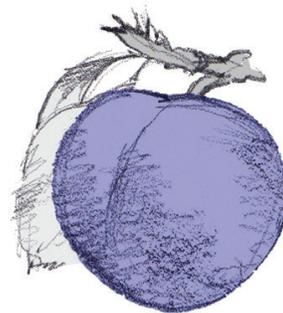
By nature, those of us in the creative arts are do-ers. If we're not working, we are teaching, cycling, cooking, writing, knitting or coaching the kid's soccer team. "Doing" because that's how we're made. I make jam, chutney, cakes and pies - *producer, performer, and purveyor of fine jam*, that's my tag line. I'm also artistic director of **Wild Plum Arts**, a community interest company (UK equivalent of a non-profit) dedicated to getting new music written and performed.

[Wild Plum Arts](#) was established in 2018 with my husband, tenor and writer, Christopher Gillett. We have developed the Wild Plum Songbook which so far includes 12 new works, and we've established our artists residency program, *Made At The Red House*, in collaboration with the Britten-Pears Foundation [now Britten Pears Arts]. This is the first residency program in the UK created solely as a collaborative think space, based on the models of Yaddo and MacDowell. Our residencies take place at Britten and Pears' home, The Red House, Aldeburgh, where the archive and library are available for study and the paths to the sea where Ben and Peter strolled beckon. Chris and I cook all the meals, using fresh fruit and vegetables from The Red House garden or from local farms, incorporating a green initiative into our ethos. We invite industry leaders to supper because not all composers and writers have the advantage of knowing the gatekeepers, and it's a valuable exchange for everyone. I'm proud of our residency program as it's been my dream ever since I was a fellow at Tanglewood to support and nurture creative artists and to build a community of excellence. My ethos has always been about commissioning and performing new music that makes our bones vibrate, illuminates who we are today in order for us to

move forward into a viable, vital, vibrant artistic future.

Wild Plum Arts has co-commissioned with Wigmore Hall and the Cheltenham Music Festival, and we've toured the UK and made our American debut at the Ravinia Festival. We collaborated with [PRS for Music](#) in 2019 and developed a composer's workshop weekend and plans are in the works for 2021. We will be recording selections from our Songbook this year, and plan to distribute on our own label. By the time this goes to press, the composers and librettists chosen for 2020's residency will be announced.

So, if I'm not in the kitchen preserving something, practising, or on the road, you'll find me fundraising and seeking out new voices who deserve to be heard. We are often asked how we came up with our name. You see, Chris and I have lived in the west of England for 25 years and forage the hedge rows every autumn for wild plums. The symbolism of the trees yielding their abundant fruit unconditionally year after year for others to enjoy was too good to pass by. ■



WILD
PLUM
ARTS

OPERA America Panel Explores Balancing Act Between Career and Family

Written by Alicia Cook

On Monday, February 24, 2020, OPERA America compiled a diverse panel of Artists to discuss work/life balance. Soloists Talise Trevigne, Blythe Gaissert, and Christian Van Horn joined stage director Sarah Meyes, artist manager Ana De Archuleta, and Dallas Opera Director of Artistic Administration David Lomeli inside OPERA America's National Opera Center in New York to discuss "The Challenges of Mixing Family and Career." The group provided insight into raising families while being a working artist.

Following the event, AGMA caught up with Talise Trevigne. Trevigne, a full-time international opera artist and full-time mother to an aspiring athlete in the MLB Elite Development Program, is also on the Steering Committee for the **Women's Opera Network at OPERA America**.

"The two most challenging parts of managing as a full-time mother and full-time professional are letting go of guilt and managing calendars!" the soprano told AGMA, reiterating the first point made during the panel. "Organization, having a team of support, and weekly family scheduling meetings are non-negotiables in my home. This helps to stay on top of the tiny details and to make sure that everyone's needs are being met."

The description of the panel alluded to the "unspoken obstacles" surrounding working as an artist. Topics spanned the gamut, from managing relationships to planning travel for a family, to missing major events to supporting your children's talents or special needs, to caring for elderly family members.

"I was shocked to learn that women still



©Photo of Talise Trevigne by Nicholas Korkos

feel the need to hide pregnancies in the business. This has shaken me in 2020!" she added.

Christian Van Horn and David Lomeli provided the male perspective.

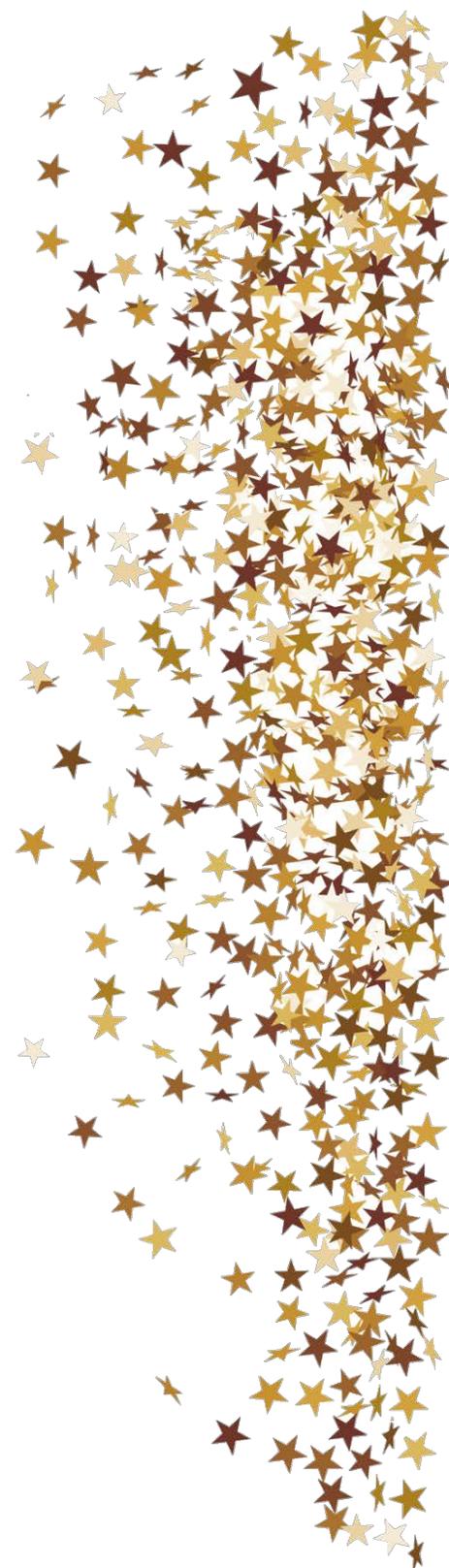
"I need my career, but I also need to be a father and husband," Lomeli was quoted saying during the panel. He also discussed caring for aging parents and noted, "The hardest part is when you have to take care of someone and all you can do is be a workaholic just to be able to send a little back and support them."

It has long been debated that it is not sustainable to balance a career and family, that at some point, one would have to make a choice. Trevigne and the rest of the panel eased many minds that night, by getting beyond the idea that career and family is an either-or choice.

"I am so very proud to be part of an industry that serves, and, more importantly, works together to have deeper conversations about this," said Trevigne. "It is through taking care of one another that the industry will continue to thrive. I became my most efficient and creative self after becoming a mother."

"Real talk," concluded Trevigne.

"You can have everything."



A SOLOIST'S FIRST NEGOTIATION(S)

Griff Braun, retired dancer and current Director of Organizing and Outreach at AGMA, sat down with Megan Marino, soloist and member of the AGMA Board of Governors, to discuss her first-ever experience with collective bargaining and why more soloists should grab a seat at the table.

Griff Braun (GB): Meg, congratulations on Central City Opera's negotiations! Was this your first experience participating in collective bargaining?

Megan Marino (MM): Thank you. Yes, it was! I worked one season as a mainstage principal artist with Central City (*Così fan tutte*, 2017), and they were one of the first companies to give me an opera-tunity [*winks*] at the end of grad school when I was participating in their outreach shows and concerts during their off-season as a local touring ensemble artist. I've been a resident in the state of Colorado since I entered the master's program at the University of Colorado in 2005, so I have a vested interest in seeing to it that our arts community is vibrant for my fellow Coloradans, and provides my fellow artists with the types of environments that they want to come work and share their talents in.

GB: How did you participate in negotiations?

MM: I was in on the initial CBA brainstorming meetings where we decided on what items needed addressing/contract clean up, held via Zoom with about 10 of us soloists who had worked at the Company over the last three years and led by Nora Heiber, AGMA's Western Executive. I happened to be fortunate enough to be working "from home" at Opera Colorado this fall and was able to be physically present to sit at the table with the negotiating committee. The timing worked out so perfectly!

GB: Sounds perfect. Describe your role in the negotiations to readers.

MM: Because I was physically present, I was able to give immediate feedback, insight, and comparisons from the gamut of different types of AGMA and non-AGMA companies I've worked with over the years. Central City has a robust apprentice artist program, and a lot of our time was spent nailing down the details and cleaning up their contract. A lot of the feedback we received in our initial brainstorming meetings focused on their needs, and it was clear that times had changed since the last time their portion of the contract had been given a solid update. It was helpful to Nora to have an active member, who the company had also "invested in" in the room. Since we had done our caucusing before the meeting, we had a clear plan of action and I didn't do much of the talking; which for those of you who know me is something of a marvel! I was there to "back her up" with facts from the field and personal experiences.

GB: All that being said, was the experience what you expected?

MM: Yes, though I honestly didn't know what to expect...

GB: Fair answer! I appreciate your honesty. As a soloist, were you nervous to participate directly in negotiations?

MM: YES! I was worried that I would possibly suffer retribution—not be hired back—or be perceived as ungrateful for the opportunities they'd given me over the years. I was worried that they'd take the things we wanted changed to be personal attacks since we all work so hard for our artform, on all sides of the table, and give a lot of ourselves. It's somebody's blood, sweat and tears you're saying needs changing.

I am thankful I had a fellow soloist "at" the table in the form of my colleague who participated via Zoom from Europe. That was very helpful as far as solidarity

and shared, differing experiences. Could we have used another soloist or two? ABSOLUTELY! There's strength in numbers—the more the merrier!

GB: So true. How did the management react to your presence at the table?

MM: I don't think they knew I was going to be there until I showed up at the office. I didn't intend to catch them off-guard, and I did sense that it took them a while to get in a groove with "Meg the union organizer," instead of "Meg the quirky hot-mess student singer" they've seen grow into a professional soloist, albeit still quirky, over the years. But once we got used to "union organizer mode," we were able to speak frankly, disagree, and get the work done respectfully.



© Dario Acost

GB: Was participating in bargaining a good experience for you?

MM: Overall, yes. Looking back on it, very positive and very informative.

GB: Do you feel it was a learning experience?

MM: Yes! As soloists, we're not usually able to sit across the table from the folks who run a company and ask why they've made the decisions they've made, or what they're up against as far as the logistics of how their unique company functions.

GB: The million dollar question: what did you take away from the experience of participating in negotiations as a soloist?

MM: There's power in showing up for

yourself and your fellow artists. I made the decision going in that if they never hire me back again that it would be okay and I'd get by. I'm lucky, in that I work in many theaters across the US—union/non-union alike—and Europe, so if it meant I never worked at CCO again because of this, it wouldn't cut into my bottomline the same way that it might for an artist who works there regularly, year after year.

Ultimately I felt it was more important to stand in solidarity with my colleagues, especially the young artists coming up who have very little voice at all. I made a choice when I ran for the Board of Governors that I would do this whole-heartedly and cannonball into the pool, however cold the water might be. Sitting on the committee, at the table, was incredibly eye-opening and has informed me in ways that I'm certain will keep revealing themselves as the years roll by.

GB: I believe you already answered this, but please share once again what you feel are the barriers to greater soloist participation in negotiations?

MM: Fear of retribution. By nature of the word “soloist” we're doing our own thing, functioning separately. It's a scary thing to wrap the head around.

GB: Do you feel that it would be beneficial to AGMA for more soloists to be directly involved in contract negotiations?

MM: ABSOLUTELY! Because we're not always sitting at the table and speaking for ourselves, some of our key issues are lost. This is not to say that whomever sits for us doesn't have our best interest in mind, but that they don't live our lives. Just like I would probably not be the ideal person to rep one of my colleagues of another member category. There are just certain things that only someone who has lived it and worked it recently and knows it intimately can bring to a table.

GB: How has the COVID-19 crisis directly affected your work?

MM: Well, my work as a singer was canceled through the summer. That's artistically and professionally disappointing. However, because our industry is in this state of limbo, it has presented us with the unique opportunity to gather, coalesce, and we're now starting to see some of those ideas in action. With everyone out of rehearsal, Zoom has been an invaluable tool. We had already taken steps just before this crisis took hold, to restart the Soloist Caucus. The soloist activity and involvement are unprecedented and we're finally, for the first time in recent history, attempting to turn a bunch of 'lone wolves' into a 'pack.'

GB: With AGMA signatory companies across the country invoking force majeure clauses and cancelling work due to the pandemic, AGMA finds itself engaging in bargaining over the effects of those cancellations on our members. Have you participated in any of this “effects bargaining”?

MM: I was brought into the Met effects bargaining in mid-March. It was a different outcome than we had hoped for soloists. That “no” was painful, and I'll never forget its sound and the

subsequent weight I've been carrying around since. I've since participated in effects bargaining for Central City Opera and Santa Fe Opera. Every company's circumstances are different and I do understand that everyone on ALL sides of the table is in a very tight spot. The immense shared human experience of it all has served as a catalyst in me to want help my colleagues to coalesce and enact changes in how our contracts are drawn and the need for things like job security and national bargaining priorities.

GB: Was the effects bargaining experience different from your experience with regular contract bargaining?

MM: Effects bargaining is a way different experience. We're essentially going to a company and appealing to their humanity. They don't have to give us anything, but most have. That generosity should not go unrecognized, and we give our signatory companies that have been able to support their artists during this unprecedented and uncertain time big-ups!

GB: Do you have sentiments you'd like to share about union solidarity during this difficult time of separation?

MM: There's safety in numbers. We are stronger together, even as a big ol' mess. Full “Marinoland” transparency, it's been hard. Zoom fatigue is real. I am burned out. I have become an apologist. Everybody has their limit to how much incoming ordinance they can continuously catch from all sides before they need a break. Fighting to help our union leadership find common ground and work in transparency with all members, but especially soloists who for years have felt left out and distrustful of the union and its leadership, is hard. But it's a fight worth having.

GB: How are you holding up?

MM: It has been overwhelming to process my own grief over what's happening in the world, our industry, and my own private losses while trying in earnest to help organize my colleagues. My work in helping to organize and mobilize soloists has brought me equal parts extreme joy and extreme heartbreak. The day before the first big town hall soloists meeting, I flew back from France and arrived home to a very sick husband. The next day was effects bargaining for the Met and the “no” we received sounded like my personal war cry. And then we hit the ground running with multiple Zoom meetings every single day. To use an analogy that we can all understand, I forgot to secure my own oxygen mask before helping others. I'm spent and I haven't always been my best self. I've misstepped. I own it and I'm sorry, and I am actively learning to be the very best human I can be for myself in my little bubble locally and all the way on out into our global community at large.

**Note for the reader: the above Q&A was first composed at the beginning of March 2020 (pre-COVID-19). Months later, it was revisited to further illuminate effects bargaining and organizing experiences. Ms. Marino is no longer affiliated with the Soloist Coalition.*

AGMA Endures

In March, two AGMA dancers shared openly how COVID-19 instantly impacted their lives and careers.

Demetrius McClendon

Dance is the rhythmic beat of my **heART**; its pulse reminds me that I have a profound purpose in the world: one that requires me to share/shape my gifts so they may be used to create, build, and sustain a beloved community. Beyond a career, dance is a profound spiritual practice that invites/challenges me to be more conscious of how I move through the world so I am able to make concrete choices that honor and expand my/our possibilities.

That being said, this particular time that demands physical distancing is deeply saddening, to say the least. Everything about my heART, from development to performance, requires close proximity



©Tiffany Matson

with others; so much of what informs the magic of dance is explored with, shaped by, and communicated through touch. Because of this situation, as a dance performer, I have no idea what is next. My dance contract with Owen Cox Dance Group in April, which included a

performance tour in Ukraine, has been cancelled as was my summer musical contract (money I was really depending on to sustain myself the rest of this year). I have been freelancing the last few years which means I am not able to collect unemployment and am not prepared to deal with the financial toll created by COVID-19. Sadly, I know that I am not alone as so many other working heARTists are experiencing similar realities and facing the same critical question: how will I support myself during this time?

It can be rather terrifying to be in a space of such deep unknown, but I have come to understand (especially after freelancing for so long) that I can't live inside of fear—I can live with fear, yes, but I cannot move forward with all of me when I am stuck inside of fear. So, I choose faith, which has brought me this far.

Investing in the heARTistic community at this critical time would make an immediate impact. We need it more than ever. We give so much of ourselves to feed the art/community because we know the mission is greater than ourselves; we realize it is our responsibility to use our gifts to paint/inspire a contrast-filled world in need of more light, more love. This is what you support when you invest in our community.

Peace & Much Love,
[Demetrius](#)

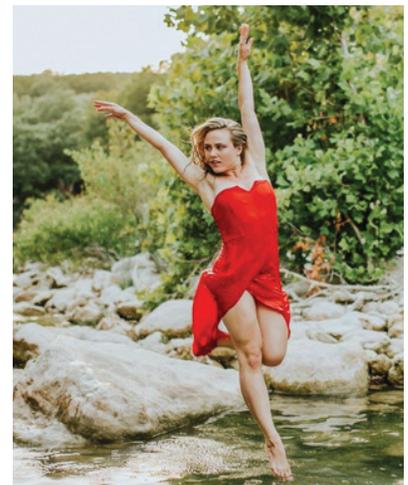
Jordan Beyeler

Hi there, my name is Jordan Beyeler and I'm a Chicago-based AGMA dancer and dance teacher. My professional performance credits include Wife/Apache Dancer in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Music Theater Works), Soloist Dancer in *La traviata* (Lyric Opera Chicago), Kristine in *A Chorus Line*, Chastity in *Anything*

Goes (Metropolis Performing Arts Centre), Norwegian Cruise Line, Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre, Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, and Visceral Dance Chicago. When I'm not in the studio, I judge dance competitions for Applause Talent Competition, Drop the Beat, and Triple S Talent along with teaching at numerous studios around the Chicagoland area.

I graduated from Columbia College Chicago with a BFA in dance. Connect with me at [@jbeyeler](#) or [www.jordanbeyeler.com](#). Due to the COVID-19 and all the closings in my field, I'm currently unemployed and without future assistance.

I completely understand that there are thousands of other artists like me and I think it's best to spread the love as much as we can. If you are finding yourself in a position to give, please



©Angela Doran Photography

remember those in the entertainment community have put their blood, sweat, and tears into your current pastimes. The very shows you are streaming, the music you're playing, and books you are reading—that's our artistic community's contribution to society. We need your help to be able to still create long after this pandemic is over. Thank you for your time and support!

Stay safe and sanitized,
Jordan ■

#TenorTuesday: Fran Roger's Quarantine Series Takes Off

Written by Alicia Cook

In early March, Fran Rogers, AGMA soloist, was wrapping up tech week for Boston Lyric Opera's production of *Norma* when word started to spread that events were being canceled due to COVID-19. *Norma* was sadly canceled the day before opening night.

Overnight, Rogers found himself with a growing list of lost work and income, and back at home with his wife and two-year-old daughter.

"All in all, I feel very lucky to be safe and healthy. I know there are artists in much more difficult positions than I'm facing, but it's all scary and frustrating and difficult," expressed Rogers.

On Saint Patrick's Day, on a whim, Fran Rogers stepped out onto his front porch and began to sing. Rogers belted out a few of his favorite Irish drinking songs and, of course, "Danny Boy." His neighborhood, already aware an opera singer lived next door, took part in the spontaneous front porch concert. Rogers had the forethought to live stream the moment for his family and friends who did not live within the radius of his home.

Saint Patrick's Day happened to fall on a Tuesday of quarantine this year, and thus, #TenorTuesday was born.

"I was inspired by a lot of quick-thinking artists who were just trying to reach out to folks around them to provide a reprieve from the situation, to spark a little connection, but mostly just to bring a little bit of joy to people I love," shared Rogers, who regularly plugs the AGMA Relief Fund.

Since that first Tuesday, Rogers has serenaded his neighbors every Tuesday with



a few trusty selections from his repertoire as well as new pieces.

"It's beneficial to me to get the performance practice in and motivates me to learn new material, but more than that it feels like a healthy way for our neighborhood to provide more support and stability for everyone in a format that feels completely natural: listening to music," said Rogers. "Ultimately, my hope is that we, collectively, remember what has been true all along: that the Arts bring people together and bring beauty into the world."

His neighbors have been encouraging and receptive; one even contacted a local news station, another offered her legal expertise. Quipped Rogers, "I joke that at the end of this I'm going to have assembled a very strong support staff!"

"Everyone looks forward to the social aspect and this gives them a great reason to get out," continued Rogers. "It feels normal to come together and watch a performance... one of the things you don't realize you miss until it's absent."

With each Tuesday that passes, his audience grows. People drive to his street

and sit in their cars, ride their bikes, or walk their dogs over to take part in #TenorTuesday. Rogers' opera series has even strengthened the support ties between his neighborhood's residents.

"We check in with each other and see if anyone needs things from the market. It has become a great way to strengthen our community," Rogers explained.

To watch the next installment of #TenorTuesday, find Fran Rogers on [Facebook](#), YouTube ([Fran Rogers, Tenor](#)), Instagram ([@franrogerstenor](#)), or connect at [franrogerstenor.com](#).

During quarantine, Rogers also founded [Sparrow Live](#), a platform that gives artists and audiences a space to come together, regardless of circumstance or geographical location. Through Sparrow Live, audiences experience incredible live performances and artists earn a fair wage. A number of AGMA artists have already joined the platform.

"My hope is that I can demonstrate the effectiveness of live streaming as a means of making art and that the experience of deprivation from gathering together around the Arts launches a renaissance of appreciation and participation. All artists deserve the ability to be supported in creating their art in any situation," added Rogers, at the end of the interview. "This pandemic has made clear how important the Arts are to our society. I hope that we create a solution in which society can more easily and sustainably support all artists."

Coffee and a Song Delivers Music, Caffeine, and Hope During Pandemic

Written by Alicia Cook



Pictured left to right: Lawrence Brownlee (Photo by: Shervin Lainez), Susanna Phillips, Myra Huang, and Nicholas Phan

In a time of social distancing and shuttered performances, AGMA opera singers Lawrence Brownlee, Nicholas Phan, and Susanna Phillips, and pianist Myra Huang, have virtually joined forces with their livestream series [Coffee and a Song](#) (also known as [#CoffeeAndaSong](#)).

“Art is necessary! It is essential,” said [Brownlee](#), who told AGMA he lost two mentors to the virus. “We must produce art in these times. For me, it is not work. I create art because I am an artist. I cannot turn it off, nor do I want to. The best thing I have ever done could be birthed during this period. As an artist, this is what keeps me going.”

Brownlee’s first contract to be canceled due to COVID-19 was a recital with Huang. Brownlee, no stranger to virtual events and having always wanted to do something “like a virtual Schubertiade,” called Huang to suggest they collaborate online, from their homes.

“In America, we have such a lack of education in the Arts that some people don’t even realize what constitutes art, and how their lives are full of art,” shared Huang. Huang herself lost several concerts, as well as a residency in St. Petersburg at the Mariinsky Theater with the Atkins Young Artists Program, her regular coaching with the Lindemann Program at The Met, and her annual residency at The Ravinia Steans Institute of Music. “I know that

this time of quarantine and isolation has forced many of us to turn toward the soul, to tend to it, to confront it. The Arts allow us to heal and to grow at that level and will be the medicine that helps us recover from the pain that we are experiencing.”

From there, they brought in Phan and Phillips, and *Coffee and a Song* was born.

“Some of the greatest art in history was created in response to times of crisis,” said Phan, who has seen over 20 performances canceled. “We will be here when this is over, and I look forward to seeing how the Performing Arts flourish after a fallow season of dark venues shuttered because of this pandemic.”

Coffee and a Song brings just as much light to the lives of the founders as it does to their dedicated audience.

“For me, the greatest loss has been being able to collaborate with my fellow musicians and the audience,” said Phillips. “Getting to join forces with Nick, Myra, and Larry has been amazing! It’s different from what we would normally do, but it’s such a joy to feel like we’re working together and collaborating on this project even though we’re all in different places and experiencing different things. It really is a pleasure.”

The series, which is released in parts, each with a different theme, always promotes the AGMA Relief Fund, MusiCares, and several other emergency relief funds

for artists.

“Being an artist is very hard. I’ve been fortunate in my career and it is a responsibility of mine and my fellow colleagues to look out for one another. We are a big family,” explained Brownlee. “Due to the nature of our profession, we have no safety net in terms of payment for contracts not performed. So much has been cancelled for the foreseeable future and therefore people will have no income. Many artists are already struggling and more will struggle eventually. We must support and advocate for those in need.”

“We are all in this together! I can’t think of a time where it would be more necessary to unite in solidarity and do our best to help our fellow artists out. The only way we weather this storm is together,” echoed Phan.

The positive reception has motivated and encouraged the group to think even bigger.

“In the future we plan to have special guests, so some fellow AGMA members might become involved,” said Brownlee. “I think it is still evolving. I see an opportunity to expand on what we are doing beyond the quarantine, but creating a beautiful, relaxed space of sharing is the goal right now.”

“One of my favorite things about this project, aside from the amazing music making, is the text thread between the four of us. The community that we have with one another during this time is priceless,” added Huang.

If *Coffee and a Song* has helped to reinforce one thing, it is that the Arts are an essential part of everyone’s lives and will be a major component to the healing and revitalization of the world, long after COVID-19.

“We advocate for everyone involved

because everyone is important,” said Phillips. “There are so many amazing musicians out there. Right now, around the world, people are singing like they do in Italy, from their balconies to communicate. And it’s not about any one individual, it’s about the art form as a whole.”

Keep up with the masterminds behind #CoffeeAndASong on social media:

Lawrence Brownlee:
[@brownleetenor](#) on all platforms

Myra Huang:
Facebook: [Myra Huang, Pianist](#)
Instagram: [@myrahuang](#)

Nicholas Phan:
Facebook: [nicholasphantenor](#)
Instagram: [@grecchinois](#)
Twitter: [@grecchinois](#)

Susanna Phillips:
Facebook: [Susanna Phillips, Soprano](#)
Instagram: [@sopranosusannaphillips](#)
Twitter: [@sopsus](#)
[www.susannaphillips.com](#) ■

Black Lives Matter

On Sunday, May 31, AGMA released the following statement [on social media](#):

The American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) is made up of diverse Artists who put more beauty into the world by coming together in union to create tremendous works of opera, dance, and song.

It is clear that our society remains unequal and unjust. In recent weeks, the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, and the resulting protests by Americans all over the country, have again reminded us of the plight faced by our black brothers and sisters in America. Black lives matter and AGMA stands in solidarity with those who are fighting for a more equal and more just future.

We call on elected leaders at all levels of government to come together, like our members, to address the systemic and institutionalized origins of these tragedies, and enact meaningful policies to end them and begin the healing process.

The actions AGMA has taken will be announced shortly. These efforts include forming a Black Caucus to drive reforms in our industries and drafting language and ultimately negotiating terms for CBAs to enact reforms.

Our society is facing two pandemics right now, one of disease and one of injustice. Both are taking a devastating toll on mental health. If you find yourself in the most uncharted emotional territory of your life, you are not alone. AGMA is here for you.

If you feel isolated or overwhelmed, please reach out to your union. In

partnership with The Actors Fund, AGMA can help you [find information and care](#).

AGMA ARTISTS: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Andile Ndlovu



Photo by Luis A. Negrón

Dancer with The Washington Ballet
Instagram: [@zuluboy_ndlovu](#)

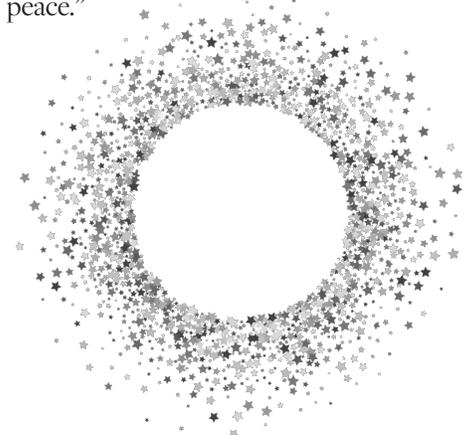
I feel this hard. I am tired, scared, numb, hurt, hopeless, and grieving. I am left with a hole in my chest from seeing my American community in pain, it is a pain I share as well. I am a South African male, Black classical ballet dancer. I am an artist that came to America for a better future and have devoted my work to this country I call “home.” The words, “land of the free,” are now very far from what I have ever imagined.

America needs sustainable transformation! We do not want to go through this anymore! I want to fight for the basic right of humanity so when a cop is driving

behind me, I don’t have to clench and be tense! I want to be free and be safe not to worry about every step I take. I do not want to go through this again. I want to be hopeful every day, but I am told I cannot speak, dress, walk, dance, like “that” and be “too ethnic” when I just want to express myself and my art.

I have love for all races but there comes a point when if you love me yet you don’t stand beside me, your love does not mean anything! There comes a time now when I am tired of being the bigger person and giving love to another race and not getting love in return. When you are a Black kid growing up, you have to protect and provide at a very early stage of your life and do not have the privilege to live and enjoy being a young Black boy or man.

As a proud Black man, you have to be strong, especially where I come from, in order to survive and be successful. It is 10 times harder for us. “Courageous people do not fear forgiving, for the sake of peace.”



Chyrstyn Mariah Fentroy



Chyrstyn Fentroy in William Forsythe's *Pas/Parts*; angelasterlingphoto; courtesy of Boston Ballet

Soloist with Boston Ballet

Instagram: @ChyrstynMariah

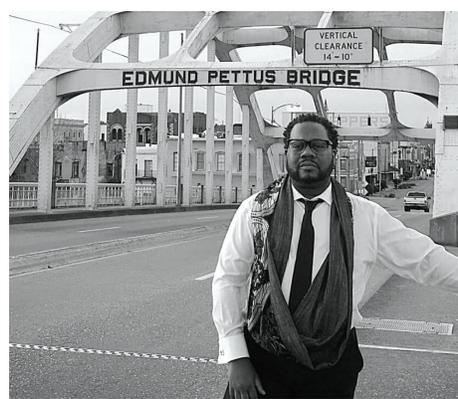
It isn't always possible to see the money that is put into things—what we see is action and someone who is QUICK to support all of their community, despite their background. The longer leaders in the Arts are silent, the more it becomes clear that they are more afraid to insult the few that might disagree than to represent the individuals who are directly affected and the many who do support those individuals.

There is a clear lack of leadership coming from our elected officials but when the people feel heard and supported, that's when the space for real change is created. As artists, we have a responsibility to bring people together. That responsibility is a tool we must exercise in a time like that. And that starts with the organizations that we call "home."

It's a matter of principle. If people choose not to give money to your organization because you are starting up for basic human rights, do you really want that person to have any sort of "say" in what the company represents?

This is my cry to the Arts for support. You wanted us here. You flaunt our diversity in your companies. We need you to stand with us.

Kenneth "Kenny" Overton



Soloist

Associate Producer of the film [Black Opera](#)

Host of Black Opera Live

Instagram: @kennyttheoverton

I will NEVER forget the feelings I had walking across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. When I think of where we are today, it makes it even more poignant.

JUNETEENTH

When the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, slavery still existed in America. We celebrate Fourth of July, but we weren't all free. Far from it. Black people were not declared free for another 87 years. Even after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, it took two more years for the last people to be freed in Galveston, TX, on June 19, 1865. Juneteenth commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. AGMA celebrated the day as a launching pad for learning more about the history of Juneteenth and how AGMA can better support the Black artists in its industries.

Two AGMA members share what the day means to them.

Jeanette Blakeney



Soloist

Instagram: @jeanetteblakeney

Happy Juneteenth! This special holiday has been celebrated by African Americans since the late 1800s. We are still far from being completely free, as the world is now finally opening its eyes to see. However, I continue to celebrate the progress that has been made, and is still being made, today.

Marquita Richardson



Chorister

Instagram: @guitarichoice

I celebrate Juneteenth through reflection and gratitude. I have exercised my right to vote and donated to causes that are fighting for my siblings' liberation everywhere. If the original liberation day reminds us of anything, let it be that we cannot be free until we are ALL free. ■

Meet the “Ballard Opera Man”

Written by Alicia Cook

Stephen Wall, AGMA member since 1977, has used his time in quarantine to bring joy to his neighbors, and thanks to the internet, the nation.

Since the start of April, the classically trained tenor and longtime Seattle Opera artist, has been performing opera from his yard at 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. He makes sure his setlist is different each day. He likes to weave together recognizable arias with more unknown pieces. On Fridays, he attempts to engage his younger attendees, even appearing as the Cowardly Lion.

The concerts, which run 15-20 minutes, first attracted neighbors, then Facebook, then major news outlets like The Seattle Times, ABC, NBC, CBS, and Fox.

The first day Wall performed happened to be the Monday before Good Friday and was on a whim. He had wrapped up his Zoom voice lessons for the day, and the sun was still shining. He decided to take his 500-watt bass amplifier and do some, as he puts it, “in your face opera.” Without cars or airplanes on the road or in the air, neighbors heard it all over his community.

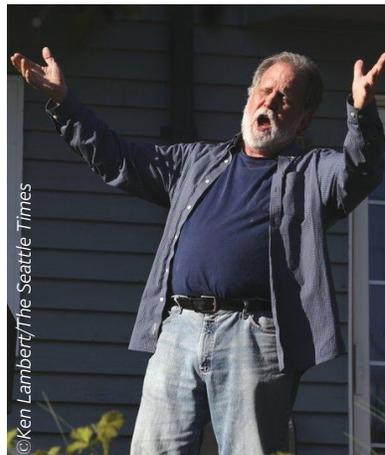
“Martha Strickland, who has since been very helpful in promoting this event, called out from the street, ‘Are you going to do this every day?’” Wall remembered. “I looked at my watch and replied absent-mindedly, ‘Sure, let’s do weekdays at five o’clock.’”

The next day, a little before 5:00 p.m., Wall was bringing in groceries and saw that people in face masks were already sitting on the street waiting. He opened the sliding door, waved hello, and Strickland called out, “Aren’t you going to sing?” Remembering his promise, he quickly set up his area and performed. By Good Friday, a top music critic with [The Seattle Times](#) had seen Wall perform thanks to Facebook, and the rest, as they say, was history.

Wall admits that a lot of how this came

together was because of his history as a street musician and restaurant singer. For instance, the whole show could not have happened if he didn’t have a particular adapter from Radio Shack.

“My life since the shutdown has been Zoom lessons and this concert,” said Wall, who is also the chorus personnel coordinator at the Seattle Opera. “Then the press



interviews began rolling in. I am a huge advocate for opera education, so having a chance to grow that garden, I feel duty bound to respond as much as possible.”

On the education front, Wall’s voice students have gone on to professional singing careers, been winners of Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and have won scholarships to several different young artists programs.

Wall’s wife, “Ginna,” has been on the frontlines of the pandemic since its onset as head of human lactation services at Washington Medical Center. “She’s been a warrior,” he expressed. “Her career has brought her to this moment.” A 40-year healthcare veteran, between shifts she has been assisting him with streaming his concerts. At the end of each concert, Wall encourages frontline workers to raise their hands so the crowd can applaud for them and their tireless work.

“This unprecedented time has brought with it a shift, something is changing here

emotionally,” Wall observed. “Acts of human compassion have been seen. The way my parents talked about how people did things together and pulled together during World World II is very similar to how we are coming together now.”

Wall noted that his concerts have brought back the thrill of performing live, a joy that COVID-19 had essentially stripped overnight from artists. “The imperfections of a live performance add to the realness and the appeal,” he said. “My music has stopped, the iPad has overheated...”

“I am not giving polished performances, but I have had people write to me to say they were having a bad day until they went to my show or heard it streaming,” he continued. “It’s not perfect, but I am making an effort. When the people are leaving, there’s this haze of emotion. I have never been all that fuzzy, but I am catching up in that department.”

You can watch him on [YouTube](#) and also on Facebook by searching “[Ballard Opera Man](#).” Wall has received positive reviews from people all over the world. In June, he cut down his performances to once a week, to make the concerts more sustainable.

His first reworked show brought together 75 socially-distanced people, and Wall performed the last two verses of “Blowing in the Wind” in honor of George Floyd.

He shared with *AGMAzine* that his first show with Seattle Opera was in 1981, and it was his 100th production that was canceled in March. He has “every intention” of continuing with the Seattle Opera, as both an artist and the chorus personnel coordinator, when it is safe to do so.

“Opera is about homeruns a lot,” he said. “Particularly with arias, there’s a visceral thrill. We wait for the performances that we know the audience will remember for the rest of their lives.”

Special thanks to George Scott, 5th Vice President and Northwest Area Chair, for connecting Stephen Wall with AGMA for this AGMAzine story.

Retiring Artists of AGMA

For AGMA artists who are retiring this year, COVID-19 has made their long-anticipated farewell season or farewell performance impossible. This pain is particularly acute, as their final moments on stage have been abruptly taken from them.

Though there is no substitute for a final performance or retirement ceremony, we would like to honor the veteran AGMA artists whose retirement plans have been spoiled by the global pandemic by highlighting them and their stories. AGMA received the following text submissions from members:

**Margaret Mullin,
Pacific Northwest Ballet,
AGMA Member for 12 years**

This is such a difficult time around the world in many ways, so although this is far from how I imagined my departure from Pacific Northwest Ballet, I am mostly focusing on gratitude. I am grateful to have been an actual ballerina, in a beautiful theater, in an incredible city for 12 years.



©Lindsay Thomas

I think as hard as this time is, it could also be an incredible opportunity for positive change; a time to seek new levels of growth within ourselves and within our fields. I look at this as a moment to dig deep and commit.

I'm proud of the work I've done and am trying to remain hopeful about my next chapter. I hope to continue to dance as a freelance and guest artist. I will focus more on my other endeavors like my choreography, podcast, documentary film, and teaching. I am also working hard to prepare for my future goal of becoming the artistic director of a ballet company.

I fell head over heels in love with ballet after seeing a performance when I was four. I had always dreamt of making it my career. Follow [@margaretmullin](https://twitter.com/margaretmullin)

**Tracy Jones, Colorado Ballet,
AGMA Member since 2013**

I started dancing when I was five years old in a small dance studio in Cork, Ireland. I have been dancing professionally since 2006. I just completed my 14th professional season.



©Francisco Estevez

I knew that retirement would be hard. It was a difficult decision for me to make and one that I feel was partially made for me thanks to a bad knee injury that resulted in two knee surgeries. That said, I had imagined what my final bow would look like: my parents flying in from Europe to see my last performance, one final show dancing alongside friends who are like family, a final bow on stage, and a celebration of a career I have dedicated my life to. Having all of this taken away is hard, and I am still processing those feelings, but I

am constantly reminded of how lucky I am to have had this beautiful career and even luckier to be safe and healthy during these unprecedented times.

These past few months have been a real test and it is okay to be feeling whatever feelings you are feeling. I have personally felt so inspired by seeing so many AGMA Artists and non-AGMA Artists across the globe share their art with the world in whatever way they can. I truly believe that with dark times comes opportunity and I think that this is an opportunity to test your strengths, focus on yourself, and come out of this united and with a deeper appreciation for our art forms. Follow [@tracyannejones](https://twitter.com/tracyannejones)

**Ansa Capizzi, Oregon Ballet,
AGMA Member since 2018**

I still can't believe what is happening all over the world. I still can't believe I have been working with Oregon Ballet Theatre for 17 years. It just doesn't feel like I am living my life now. Our careers are short as it is. There is no time for regret. In my case,



©Janine Nangtung

it took 13 years to become a professional ballet dancer and 17 years to live out my dream. I put so much effort and time into ballet. Ballet was my life. We are lucky to be dancers. Follow [@ansagirl](#)

**Laura Eichelberger, Chorister,
Seattle Opera,
AGMA Member for 24 years**

It is with great sorrow that my career ends in such an abrupt way. My granddaughter was to sing in the production, *La bohème*, also. It would have been her



first opera and my last. It would have been a great way to finish singing 24 seasons with Seattle Opera! To all the Artists carrying on, I wish you immense joy in your pursuit of this incredible art form.

**Chandra Kuykendall,
23 seasons at Colorado Ballet,
AGMA Member for 14 years**

I began dancing at age 6 and loved it from the beginning. I've been a professional ballerina since 1997. I just ended my 23rd season. I feel robbed by the fact that I



© Francisco Estevez

dedicated 23 years of my life to this art form and I did not have a final goodbye. I wish I had the luxury of knowing “this will be my final rehearsal,” or “this will be my final performance.” I wish I was able to have a final bow. At the same time, I'm very grateful when I think back over my career. It was the career I dreamed about!

This is a tough time for the Arts. We need the financial and physical support of our patrons and fans and it is so uncertain. I guess it's a little bit like an injury—you don't know when you will be back to full strength, but you try to stay motivated and excited throughout your recovery. It's comforting that we are all going through this together and I love to see the support and love amongst our community. Even though I won't be going back to the stage, I will always be an Artist. Follow [@crkuykendall](#)

**Benjamin Griffiths,
Pacific Northwest Ballet,
AGMA Member for 17 years**

Ever since seeing *The Nutcracker*, I was fascinated by ballet. My mother put me in lessons at age seven. The more time I spent in the studio, the more I fell in love. After my early training in Boise,



© Angela Sterling

I left home at age 15 to train at the School of American Ballet in New York. I have been a working artist for 18 years.

While I am grateful for all the blessings in my life and for the wonderful career that I've had, I am

sad and frustrated that the last four months of my career have been taken by COVID-19. Though it's easy to dwell on what we're missing right now, our careers are much more than any one moment. Rather, they are the sum of a lifetime of work, love, and dedication. That is something that I'm striving to remember each day as I reflect on my career. Follow [@bengi313](#)

**Arianna Ciccarelli,
Colorado Ballet, AGMA Member**

I feel extremely fortunate to have experienced this career over the last eight years. Becoming a professional



© David Andrews

ballet dancer was something that I dreamed about as a child. Dancing for Colorado Ballet, Ballet Arizona, and Washington Ballet made me a better dancer and a better person. I am forever grateful for the memories and friendships that I have made. Through all of this, I have had AGMA's support and guidance, which was instrumental for me as a young artist. COVID-19 did not allow many of us to have the retirement that we imagined, however, I am very excited for my next chapter. I hope to return to the Arts once I receive my CMPC® (Certified Mental Performance Consultant) certification. In many ways, AGMA has inspired me to do my part, and make the Performing Arts a more holistic place for artists to grow and develop. Follow [@ariannaciccarelli](#) ■



Dear Colleagues and Friends of the AGMA Relief Fund,

Since 1945, the AGMA Relief Fund has provided temporary financial assistance and other support to AGMA members in need.

Now, more than ever, I think we all realize that life challenges can affect us suddenly, at any time. AGMA Artists have been critically impacted by COVID-19. They were the first to lose their jobs, and it has become abundantly clear that they will be among the last to return to work.

COVID-19 has changed everything. In just the first six weeks of this pandemic, the AGMA Relief Fund received more applications for assistance than it had received in the last three years combined. Maintaining the viability of the Fund in order to assist as many AGMA members as possible in the days and months ahead will remain the Fund's number one priority.

The AGMA Relief Fund is 100% dependent on donations to confidentially provide both financial and other temporary, emergency assistance to AGMA members. If you are in a position to donate, please consider contributing to the AGMA Relief Fund. Your gift will immediately help artists who spend their lives bringing joy to people across the country.

The AGMA Relief Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization administered by The Actors Fund. Your tax-deductible contribution will go toward providing aid, benefits, and social services to AGMA artists in crisis. In addition to making an outright contribution to the Relief Fund, please consider your legacy by remembering the AGMA Relief Fund in your estate planning.

The performing arts in the United States are a vital part of our economy and our identity and will be an essential part of our recovery process from this global crisis. Please help AGMA members now, when they need it most.

www.agmarelief.org/donations

Thank you,

Raymond M. Menard
AGMA Relief Fund Chair

area news

Northwest

Written by George Scott, 5th Vice President, Northwest Area Chair, and Chorister



Left to right: George Scott (Area Chair and 5th Vice President), Hannah Davis, Karl Reyes, and Maria Leatha (Board Member)

We, the members of the Pacific Northwest Area, hope all our fellow AGMA family members here at home and around the world are safe and well from the COVID-19 pandemic. I am sure this crisis has caused the cancellation or postponement of nearly all of our artistic involvement with our AGMA signatory companies Pacific Northwest Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Portland Opera, and Seattle Opera. This has created much anxiety, financial hardship, sadness, and perhaps some anger. We are thankful to the companies who have provided financial remuneration to our AGMA artists due to the cancellation of productions that were in process or contracted to begin.

In crisis moments like this, we need to remain as strong and positive as we can and know that this is a temporary interruption of work. The best is yet to come when this health pandemic is eradicated. I hope that happens sooner rather than later. You are all valued and talented artists, but at this moment, please stay safe and well by wearing a mask, practicing social distancing, and frequently washing your hands.



Left to right: Sherrie Van Hines, Teddy Watler, Kathryn Van Meter (Board Member), and Stephen Wall

Chicago/Midwest



Written by
Cole Seaton
AGMA Governor,
MMRC Member,
Chicago/Midwest
Area Secretary,
Chicago Symphony
Chorus Committee
member, Chorister

Here's hoping that our fellow AGMA members and signatories around the country are managing to stay well amidst this worldwide pandemic which has affected us all and shuttered our industry since March. Normally, most houses would be finishing up our regular seasons and ramping up our rehearsals for upcoming performances at summer music festivals, music camps, and young artists or study abroad programs. Due to statewide lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, that is no longer the case. However, on a happier note, I'm glad to report that, prior to the pandemic, the 2019-20 season began with great performances and was in full swing back in September here in Chicago.

Before the Illinois state closure in March, the Chicago/Midwest Area held their annual meeting and dinner at the Exchequer restaurant in Chicago. We were happy to have such a robust and successful turn out of around 50 members from three states! It was terrific to also welcome AGMA President, Ray Menard, along with Chicago Area Chair and 1st Vice-President John Coleman and Midwest Area Counsel, John Ward. It was truly a great and informative gathering.

The Lyric Opera of Chicago and Lyric Opera Chorus began their season with the opening of Gioachino Rossini's most humorous of operatic comedies, *Barber of Seville*, which ran throughout October. The outstanding international all-star cast was incredible to listen to and watch, as was the great singing of the Lyric Opera Chorus, who made the production all the more entertaining and fun! Also in October, the Company presented Giuseppe Verdi's beautifully romantic opera, *Luisa Miller*. Presented by Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1982, it has been nearly 40 years since audiences in Chicago last heard the beautiful arias, duets, and ensemble singing in this new-to-Chicago Production. In November, audiences were riveted by an emotionally powerful and profound Lyric Opera Premiere and new-to-Chicago Production, *Dead Man Walking*. The first opera composed by American Jake Heggie with libretto by playwright Terrence McNally was based on the book of the same name by Sister Helen Prejean, C.S.J. Also opening in mid-November and running

through December 8, was opera's iconic classic, *Don Giovanni*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

The first week of December brought to the stage *The Three Queens*, a trilogy which features Sondra Radvanovsky singing the finales of *Anna Bolena*, *Maria Stuardo*, and *Roberto Devereux* by Gaetano Donizetti, as she takes on the roles of Mary Stuart, Anne Boleyn and Queen Elizabeth I. Throughout December, Creative Consultant at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Renée Fleming, starred in *The Light in the Piazza* by Adam Guettel. In February, Lyric Opera of Chicago audiences were treated to Giacomo Puccini's beautifully staged and richly sung *Madama Butterfly*, which ran until March 8. Also in February, they mounted the romantic thriller, *Queen of Spades*, by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and libretto by his brother, Modest Tchaikovsky.

Unfortunately, in April, life changed and the sold out performances of the highly anticipated, long awaited new *Ring cycle* were all cancelled just weeks before it was to open.

This past November, the AGMA negotiating committee of the **Chicago Symphony Chorus (CSC)**, a committee which I am proud to sit on, worked hard and diligently over several months to get the best possible contract for our shop members. This was an especially difficult, strategic, and meaningful contract for our shop of over 150 AGMA members, in part, because our Chicago Symphony Orchestra colleagues had been on strike for nearly six weeks in 2019. Our negotiating committee, headed by our amazing shop steward, Scott Uddenberg, and assisted by our Midwest legal counsel, John Ward, and Midwest business representative, Jimmy Odom, put in long hours negotiating with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA). During the first week of November, we had reached a tentative agreement on a new five-year contract (the longest contract we've ever secured). This agreement was ratified by AGMA, the CSC shop, as well as the CSOA Board of Trustees and was made retroactive to September 11, 2019.

The Chicago Symphony Chorus brought its first concerts of the season to the stage November 21 through November 24 at Orchestra Hall, as the women of the Chicago Symphony Chorus performed Gustav Holst's *The Planets*. The full chorus was on stage for the popular holiday performances of *Merry, Merry Chicago!* with six performances from December 14 through December 23. In February, the GRAMMY-winning Chorus went on to perform the one-act opera *Cavalleria rusticana* by Pietro Mascagni under the baton of Maestro Riccardo Muti.

The singers were to have taken the stage in May for several performances of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, but those concerts were all cancelled. The Chicago Symphony Chorus would have finished their season at Symphony Center in June, with performances of *Beethoven's Symphony No. 9* in celebration of the composer's 250th birthday. Sadly, once again all concerts at Symphony Center were cancelled.

Chicago Opera Theater opened their season November 16 at the Harris Theater, with a double bill and two Chicago premieres, performing *Everest*, with music by Joby Talbot and libretto by Gene Scheer, along with *Aleko*, Sergei Rachmaninov's first opera,

with a libretto by Nemirovich Danchenko. In February, the company presented a World Premiere of *Freedom Ride* with music and libretto by Dan Shore. In May, Chicago Opera Theater was to present another Chicago premiere entitled, *Soldier Songs*, with music and libretto by David T. Little and starring world-renowned baritone Nathan Gunn. Unfortunately, this production was cancelled.

Joffrey Ballet danced onto the stage in mid-October to kick off their 2019-20 season, their final season performing at Chicago's historic Auditorium Theatre. *Jane Eyre*, a Chicago premiere featuring choreography by Cathy Marston and music composed by Phillip Feeney. In November, while on tour, the Company performed at the Michigan Opera Theater in Detroit, Michigan. Joffrey's two days of dancing included performances of *Vespertine*, by Liam Scarlett, *Beyond the Shore*, by Nicolas Blanc and *Joy*, by Alexander Ekman. Of course, the holidays wouldn't be the same without experiencing Joffrey's *The Nutcracker* choreographed by Christopher Wheeldon and set to the music of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Their month-long run of *The Nutcracker* began November 30.

The Company next performed several premieres throughout the month of February. The set of five ballets, entitled *The Times Are Racing*, include *Commedia*, choreography by Christopher Wheeldon and music by Igor Stravinsky, as well as the Chicago premiere of *Mono Lisa* with Itzik Galili, choreographer, and music by Thomas Höfs. The third ballet in this set was *Bliss!* with Stephanie Martinez, choreographer, with music by Igor Stravinsky. The fourth and fifth ballets were both Chicago premieres and are entitled, *The Sofa*, choreographed by Itzik Galili, with music by Tom Waits and *The Times Are Racing*, choreographed by Justin Peck, with music by Dan Deacon. In March they headed on the road again for a tour to Zellerbach Hall at the University of California, Berkeley, where they were to reprise four of the ballets from the season above. In April, the company was unable to present *Don*

Quixote with choreography by Yuri Possokhov and music by Ludwig Minkus.

Florentine Opera proudly announced its first season under the leadership of a new General Director and CEO Maggy Olinger. She is only the seventh individual to take the helm at the 85-year-old company. The Company opened its season in mid-October with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. On February 8, the company's Baumgartner Studio Artists presented a Showcase at the Wilson Theater at Vogel Hall in the Marcus Performing Arts Center. These young artists-in-residence were featured in various opera scenes as well as Leonard Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*. In March, the Florentine mounted a 90-minute chamber opera production entitled *The Tragedy of Carmen*, by Peter Brook. In May, Florentine Opera was to present the grand opera, *Macbeth*, by Giuseppe Verdi, with libretto by Francesco Maria Plave, however this performance did not take place.

Michigan Opera Theater held its opening night Gala on October 12 with acclaimed American tenor Michael Fabiano and principal dancers from the American Ballet Theater. The opera opener ran October 19–27, featuring Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. The Company closed its successful run of Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* on November 24.

BalletMet returned to Detroit's Michigan Opera Theater for an eighth visit to present *The Nutcracker* November 30 and December 1. On February 29, the Company went into its production of what some consider to be the funniest one-act operas ever written, *Gianni Schicchi* by Giacomo Puccini. The libretto, by Giovacchino, is based on an incident mentioned in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. In March and April, *Champion*, an "Opera in Jazz" production by jazz composer and trumpeter Terence Blanchard, was to have made its Detroit Opera House debut. Unfortunately, this production did not come to fruition. ■



In Memory of AGMA's First Woman President

Written by Alicia Cook



Nedda Casei, who made history when she became AGMA's first woman president, passed away on January 20, 2020. She was 87 years old.

"Though I never had the pleasure to know Nedda personally, her legacy echoes through AGMA," said Raymond Menard, AGMA president. "Not only did she make history as AGMA's first woman president, but her strong commitment to the musical arts and dedication to our union made her one of our strongest supporters even in the years following her presidency. She was beloved by her colleagues and will be greatly missed. We will continue to honor her memory."

Casei's decade-long tenure as AGMA president began in 1983 and concluded in 1993. During her time as president, she fought for copyright laws to protect performers; worked on health care reform in Washington; and helped open doors beyond AGMA's own membership to encourage foundations and private donors to help shape the Emergency Relief Fund, which culminated in the AGMA Relief Fund Million Dollar campaign during the 50th anniversary of AGMA.

"A vital aspect of Nedda's living legacy is the [AGMA Relief Fund](#)," shared Linda Mays, former AGMA president, and current AGMA Relief Fund Trustee. "During her historic presidency, and after, Nedda used her fame, her warm and generous personality,

and powerful friendships to create an endowment which continues to provide a secure future for the Relief Fund, a safety net for AGMA members in need."

Additionally, as president, Casei helped organize singing competitions and assisted in creating ties to Fordham University for Career Transition For Dancers.

During AGMA's 75th anniversary in 2011, Ms. Casei said, "Looking back on my ten years as president, I am proud that we were able to build more communication across the country and a more cohesive union to [combat] the challenges that artists continue to face today. It is the reason for AGMA. It's the heartbeat."

Prior to becoming president, the mezzo-soprano made her operatic debut at the Royal Theatre of La Monnaie in 1960, with her Teatro alla Scala debut that same year. According to her obituary published on OperaWire, from there, she performed at a number of major opera houses including the Teatro San Carlo, Prague State Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Salzburg Festival, Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, and the Metropolitan Opera in 1964, where she became a fixture. She appeared with the company until 1984 in over 280 performances. Throughout her time with the company, she appeared in such operas as *Rigoletto*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La traviata*, *Salome*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Carmen*, and *La forza del destino*, among others.

She was a teacher of voice, having been Visiting Professor of Voice and Opera Staging at the Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts and Music in Japan. She taught master classes at numerous universities, music schools, and festivals. Among her many accolades were the New York State Study Grant (1979, 1980, 1981), Outstanding Young Singers Award, (1959), recipient of the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music (1962-64), Community Leaders and Noteworthy Americans (1975-1976) and the Woman of Achievement Award (1969). ■

IN MEMORIAM

Gabriel Bacquier, *Soloist*

Betty Baisch, *Chorister*

Cecil Baker, *Chorister*

Donna Joy Baldwin, *Chorister*

Patrick Bell, *Chorister*

Lydia Burks, *Chorister*

Wilhelm Burmann, *Dancer*

Zoe Caldwell, *Soloist*

Silvano Carroli, *Soloist*

Nedda Casei, *Soloist*

Constance Chesley (Connie
Webber), *Chorister*

Ellen Chickering, *Soloist*

Marianna Ciraulo, *Soloist*

John Currie, *Conductor**

Rosalind Elias, *Soloist*

Gerald Freedman, *Stage Director*

Mirella Freni, *Soloist*

Neil Peter Jampolis, *Stage Director*

Paul L. King, *Stage Director*

Kent Kornmeyer, *Chorister*

Peter Lightfoot, *Soloist*

John Macurdy, *Soloist*

Peter Maravell, *Chorister*

Franz Mazura, *Soloist*

Michael McArthur, *Dancer*

Helen McGehee, *Dancer*

Joseph McKee, *Soloist*

Terrence McNally, *Librettist**

Giorgio Merighi, *Soloist*

Jonathan Miller, *Stage Director*

Iлона Murai, *Dancer*

Joshua Quesada, *Chorister*

Joel Revzen, *Conductor**

Elinor Ross, *Soloist*

Valéry Rvkin, *Conductor**

Nello Santi, *Conductor**

Arlene Saunders, *Soloist*

Dean Schoff, *Soloist*

Lloyd Thompkins, *Chorister*

John Todd, *Dancer*

Maria West, *Chorister*

Ralph David Westfall, *Soloist*

** Indicates a distinguished individual in a related profession*

A contribution to the AGMA Relief Fund through your estate establishes your legacy and ensures that AGMA Artists will have continued access to emergency grants and services when they need them most. A planned gift will continue to positively impact AGMA members for years to come.

For information, please email Susan Davison at sdavison@musicalartists.org.

Closing the #WeAreAGMA SUMMER 2020 issue of *AGMAzine* is a score written by Met AGMA Committee Chair Ned Hanlon (chorister), the Met's Jeremy Little (chorister), and AGMA Eastern Counsel Sam Wheeler. They wrote this song to encourage AGMA members to stay strong and stick together during the COVID-19 pandemic. **We invite you to perform this song and tag AGMA on social media with the hashtag #WeAreAGMA.**

Lyrics by Sam Wheeler,
Ned Hanlon, & Jeremy Little

Solidarity Forever

AGMA 2020 Version

1. You have seen us in the spot - light, But we're Wor - kers just like you, And U -
2. Our voi - ces sing the a - ri - as, We dance up - on the stage, With our

NI - TED we are stand - ing strong as AG - MA through and through. For to -
act - ors we tell sto - ries of the lov - ers and the brave. Our di -

ge - ther we are migh - ty, Yes, we know this to be true: The Un - ion makes us strong.
rec - tors and stage man - a - gers pull beau - ty from the page.

So - li - dar - i - ty For - ev - er, So - li - dar - i - ty For - ev - er, So - li - dar - i - ty For - ev - er, The Un - ion makes us strong.



P.O. BOX 908
NEW YORK, NY 10108

RESOURCES FOR AGMA MEMBERS

AGMA COVID-19 Resource Page

Access through the AGMA homepage

The AGMA Relief Fund

For information or to donate:

www.agmarelief.org

The Actors Fund administers the AGMA Relief Fund:

New York:

intakeny@actorsfund.org

800-221-7303

Chicago:

intakechicago@actorsfund.org

312-372-0989

Los Angeles:

intakela@actorsfund.org

888-825-0911

Union Plus

Union Plus helps union members through times of uncertainty with unique Hardship Help benefits

www.unionplus.org

800-472-2005

202-293-5330

The Actors Fund

www.actorsfund.org

AGMA contracts with The Actors Fund to administer the AGMA Relief Fund as well as to provide comprehensive social services including:

- Virtual Workshops
- The Career Center
- Financial Wellness
- Health Insurance
- Housing
- Social Services
- Mental Health services

AGMA Retirement and Health

Plan A, AGMA Retirement Plan, and AGMA Health Fund

www.agmafunds.org

212-765-3664

info@agmafunds.org

AGMA Health Plan B

866-263-1185 (Toll free)

516-394-9443 (Outside U.S.)

www.asonet.com

Actors Federal Credit Union

212-869-8926

Member Services -

msservices@actorsfcu.com

Lending Services -

lservices@actorsfcu.com