

AGMA MEMBERSHIP FAQs

for Solo Singers | Principal Artists



What is AGMA?

AGMA is the national labor union of singers, dancers, stage directors, stage managers, choreographers, and actors in opera, dance, and choral performance – made up of the thousands of artists who have come together in union to:



- Have a voice in their workplace
- Protect their legal/contractual rights
- Improve wages, hours and working conditions
- Ensure fairness and fair treatment
- Have the **power** to change things





Some Recent AGMA Collective Bargaining Achievements for Solo Singers



Metropolitan Opera
One Year Agreement (26-27)

- ***Wage increase:*** 4.1% to base rates (2.5% from 25-26 does not sunset)

- Retirement Contribution: All Non-Plan Solo Singers shall receive a 3% retirement contribution up to an annual $1000 cap
- Cover Fees: Cover fees will now be in the collective bargaining agreement and go up with wage increases. 27-28 rates will be $3100 (major roles), $2200 (non-major roles)

From 25-26 Agreement:

- New Bypass Pay: If the Met skips over a soloist cover within 36 hours of a show, that first cover gets full performance pay (whether they sing or not)
- Public recognition: All soloists will be named, credited, and pictured on the Met's website by role and production
- Ongoing COVID protections: Safety protocols and paid leave for illness, vaccination, or COVID-related absences continue for short-term and per-performance principals

Boston Lyric Opera
(Ratified in July 2025)

- ***Minimum rates for Principals increased*** by 5%, 5%, and 3%
- Guarantee of up-front payment for Principals

Pittsburgh Opera
(Ratified in July 2025)

- Principals will receive ***wage increases*** of 6%, 5%, 4%, 4%, and 4% over the five-year contract

New Orleans Opera
(Ratified in February 2026)

- ***Wage increases*** of +3% in Year 1 and +3% in Year 2
- Significant "per diem"/meal allowance increases for out-of-town Artists
- Maximum consecutive workdays reduced from 10 to 8
- New conditions governing rehearsals on performance days when Artists are engaged in two concurrent productions with a Leading or Featured role

San Francisco Opera
(Ratified in September 2025)

- ***Pay raises:*** 1% in Year 1; 3% in Year 2
- Adler Fellows win equity: Full pay when performing leading roles in the Opera House—no more freebies hidden in stipends

- Better work-life balance:
  - Tighter span of day and stronger free day protections
  - Higher per diems with clearer breakdowns
  - Advanced schedule overviews provideds
- Payments up front:
  - Eligible for per diem? You can receive it up to two weeks before rehearsals
  - Not eligible? You can get 25% of performance fees up to two weeks early
  - Overtime pay, for real: No more loopholes—Principals now receive full overtime compensation
- More health security: Extra sick leave for weekly soloists

Los Angeles Opera
(Ratified in May 2025)

- ***Wage Increases:*** Secured annual wage increases of 3%, 3%, 3%, and 4% over the four-year agreement, along with increased retirement contributions for Principal Artists.

- Young Artist Support: LA Opera will cover AGMA initiation fees and first-year dues for new AGMA members in the Young Artist Program, helping ease the financial burden for artists entering the profession.
- Safety & Respect: Established requirements for Intimacy Directors and Fight Directors when needed, and protections ensuring that no artist can be asked to participate in intimate or vulnerable content without consent.
- Work-Life Balance: Secured earlier release of next-day rehearsal schedules, giving artists greater predictability and more control over their time outside the rehearsal room.

Do I need to join AGMA?

NO ONE is required to join the union.

However, artists who work under an AGMA Collective Bargaining Agreement benefit from the protections and representation secured through collective bargaining. In about half of the states, unions and employers agree that workers covered by a collective bargaining agreement must contribute a fair share toward the costs of union representation. In those states, artists working an engagement longer than 30 days will be required to pay an agency fee equal to the dues and initiation fees paid by AGMA members.

When working in these states – if an artist chooses not to join the union – rather than being a Member in Good Standing, they would be classified as an **Agency Fee Payor** – in compliance, but forfeiting the benefits of AGMA membership.



For more information about an Artist's rights working under a union security clause, please visit https://www.musicalartists.org/your-rights-under-union-security-clause/.

When Does Union Security Apply?

1. Your contract takes place at a Signatory Company in a state **where Union-Security Agreements are permitted.**

2. Your contract is **over 30 days in length***

AGMA OPERA COMPANIES WHERE AGENCY FEES APPLY

BLO BOSTON LYRIC OPERA
CHAUTAUQUA OPERA
chicagoperatheater
CINCINNATI OPERA
Detroit Opera
LITTLE ISLAND
LA OPERA
Lyric OPERA OF CHICAGO
LYRIC OPERA KC
The Metropolitan Opera
NEW YORK CITY OPERA
Opera Philadelphia
OTSL OPERA THEATRE of SAINT LOUIS
PAC NYC PERELMAN PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
PITTSBURGH OPERA
PORTLAND OPERA
SD OPERA
SAN FRANCISCO OPERA
THE SANTA FE OPERA
SEATTLE OPERA.
TRI CITIES OPERA
WASHINGTON CONCERT OPERA
WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA

*If you work a contract under 30 days at this same Signatory Company earlier in this performance season (i.e. "earlier in the 2025-2026 season") and you are now returning to work another contract, you are now required to join the union as long as your first contract's start date is more than 30 days in the past.

Who is an AGMA Member in Good Standing?



REQUIREMENT #1:

Submission of **AGMA Membership Application**

REQUIREMENT #2:

Payment of **Basic Annual Dues & Initiation Fee:**

- **$100** Basic Annual Dues *(for the year you're joining AGMA)*
- **$1,000** Initiation Fee *(**$500** for members of AEA or SDC, and for newly organized Signatory Companies through the first year of their first CBA)*

You are considered a Member in Good Standing for as low as a $150 initial payment – $100 Basic Dues and $50 toward your Initiation Fee – *as long as you set up automatic recurring payments for a minimum of $50 per month, which can be paused during any months you are not working under an AGMA CBA!*

For more information about AGMA's Union Dues, please visit https://www.musicalartists.org/union-dues/.

AGMA Dues Structure

Initiation Fee

$1,000

Payment Plan Option

Minimum of $50 Per Month

(i.e 5% of your initiation fee per month)

As an AGMA member, you pay a one-time Initiation Fee of $1,000, one of the lowest among performing arts unions. This Initiation Fee will be reduced by 50% for artists joining AGMA who are working in a newly organized company or who are members in good standing of Actors' Equity Association (AEA) or the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC).

Basic Dues

$100 per year

Billed Annually
Due on January 1 of each year

Basic Dues are the annual minimum payment that all AGMA members make to support the continuing operation of their union.

All AGMA members pay Basic Dues in the amount of **$100 per year**. Basic Dues are billed annually and are due on January 1 of each year. Dues can easily be submitted online by logging into your MyAGMA account.

Please ensure that your Basic Dues are submitted in a timely fashion to avoid any suspension of your membership.

Working Dues

2% of the first $100,000 of gross annual AGMA income

Maximum of $2,000 per year
Deducted directly from your paychecks

Working Dues are the payments that all AGMA members make when they are working under an AGMA contract.

All AGMA members working under an AGMA contract will have **2% of the first $100,000 of gross annual AGMA income (maximum of $2,000 per year)** deducted from their paychecks and remitted by the employer to AGMA, according to the terms of the collective bargaining agreement.

"Suspension" occurs if Member fails to address outstanding dues and/or fees after receiving a 10-Day warning notice of the deadline. This can happen following the first 30-days of their union secure employment OR during the Annual Basic Dues Billing Cycle.

Reinstatement Fees:

- **$25 Reinstatement Fee - *Suspended for up to 30 Days***
- **$75 Reinstatement Fee - *Suspended between 31 and 60 Days***
- **$250 Reinstatement Fee - *Suspended more than 60 Days***

Restart Again as a Non-Member:

- ***If artist is Suspended for more than 4 years**

The AGMA Membership Department Process

(As early as) 6 Weeks in Advance of Your Contract Start Date

AGMA Membership Department Staff reaches out to **all new Artists,** asking them to complete their AGMA Membership Application, and **all existing AGMA Members in arrears** with invoices for their outstanding dues/fees balances.

1 Week After Initial Communication

Routine follow-up communications are sent to any new Artists or existing Members who have not taken action.

Employment Start Date

First Day warning notices are sent to Artists or existing Members in arrears who have not taken action yet.

At least 20 Days after the start of the Contract

Suspension Warning Notices are sent to Artists in arrears on or around the 20th Day of an Artists contract. They are Suspended on or around the 30th Day of their contract.

At least 31 Days after the start of the contract

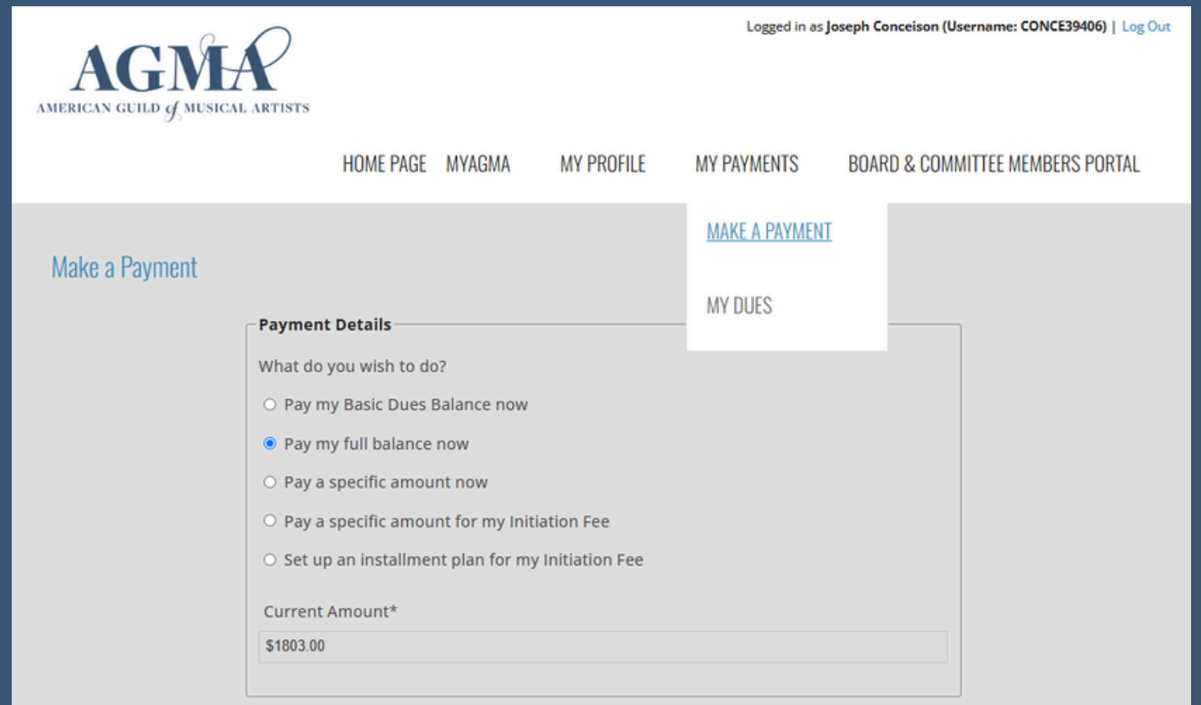
Artist is Suspended, and sent a Post-Suspension Notice requesting that deductions of dues and fees be remitted by the Company, to avoid a request for termination.

At least 45 Days after the start of the contract

AGMA Requests Termination of the Artist if they remain in arrears.

How Do I Pay AGMA Dues & Fees Online?

Artists can pay their dues and fees by logging into their "MyAGMA" account online at myagma.musicalartists.org, going to the "My Payments" dropdown menu and selecting "Make a Payment." On this page, you can issue payment for each balance (for Basic Dues, Initiation Fee or their full balance) via credit/debit card or ACH transfer.



Video to help navigate the portal (with timestamps) is linked here:



Honorable Withdrawal

- A member who has been an active member in good standing *(fully-paid-up)* for at least eighteen (18) months who is not employed or actively seeking employment in the Union's jurisdiction and who is not indebted to the Union may become an inactive member on Honorable Withdrawal upon written application to the Union, in accordance with policies and procedures adopted by the Board of Governors.
- The fee for reinstatement from Honorable Withdrawal is $50 *(in addition to the $100 Basic Annual Dues for the current year)*.
- Should a member on Honorable Withdrawal request reinstatement or who perform in AGMA's jurisdiction sooner that 12 months from the effective date of their Honorable Withdrawal will be required to pay the reinstatement fee plus the Basic dues for the intervening period.
- ***Member reinstating from Honorable Withdrawal shall not be eligible for Honorable Withdrawal for a period of three calendar years from the date of reinstatement.***

Honorable Withdrawal Application

- Honorable Withdrawal Application form is available on the MyAGMA Portal *(credentials required)*: **https://myagma.musicalartists.org/AGMAHonorableWithdrawalApplication1.aspx**
- If artist has difficulty accessing, the PDF version (LINKED HERE) can be completed and submitted to membership@musicalartists.org.

So, why join AGMA?

Member Benefits!

- Emergency financial relief from the **AGMA Relief Fund**;
- Scholarships, discounts, and other benefits from **Union Plus**;
- The programs and resources of the **Entertainment Community Fund**;

AGMA RELIEF FUND

UNIONPLUS

Entertainment Community Fund
Supporting a life in the arts

Collective Power in Our Union

- The right to **run for Union office** and to **nominate and vote for candidates for Union office;**
- The right to **develop Union policies and bargaining priorities**; and
- The right to **serve on negotiating committees** and participate in **contract ratification and strike votes.**

Collective Power in Our Signatories

Click the icons below to check out how your fellow Artists' collective power has been used to improve lives by fighting for better and safer working conditions – and more viable careers --at our Opera Signatories across the country!

AGMA @ BOSTON LYRIC OPERA

AGMA @ CHAUTAUQUA OPERA

AGMA @ CENTRAL CITY OPERA

AGMA @ chicago opera theater

AGMA @ CININNATI OPERA

AGMA @ the dallas opera

AGMA @ Detroit Opera

AGMA @ The Florentine Opera

AGMA @ Florida Grand Opera

AGMA @ Houston Grand Opera

AGMA @ LAOPERA

AGMA @ Little Island

AGMA @ Lyric OPERA OF CHICAGO

AGMA @ LOKC

AGMA @TheMET

AGMA @ New Orleans Opera

AGMA @ OPERA COLORADO

AGMA @ Opera Philadelphia

AGMA @ OTSL

AGMA @ PITTSBURGH OPERA

AGMA @ PORTLAND OPERA

AGMA @ SAN DIEGO OPERA

AGMA @ SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

AGMA @ THE SANTA FE OPERA

AGMA @ SEATTLE OPERA.

AGMA @ WASHINGTON CONCERT OPERA

AGMA @ WOLF TRAP OPERA

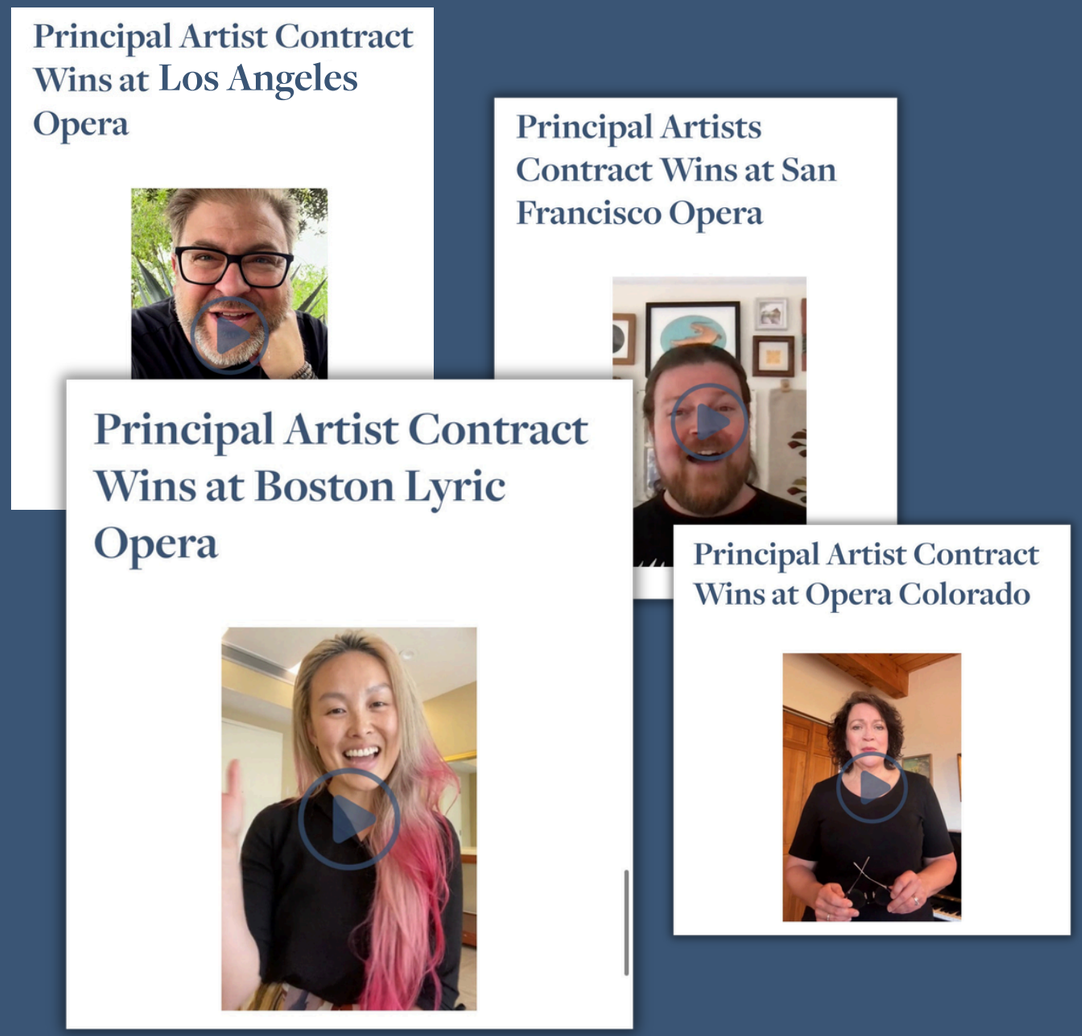
AGMA @ WNO WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA







RESOURCES FOR AGMA SOLOISTS FROM THE SOLO PRINCIPAL ARTISTS CAUCUS



https://www.musicalartists.org/resources-for-agma-soloists/

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www.musicalartists.org