

**From:** [AGMANY@aol.com](mailto:AGMANY@aol.com)  
**Subject:** To AGMA-Represented Artists With Future Met Contracts  
**Date:** February 4, 2014 at 2:57:13 PM EST  
**To:** [agmany@aol.com](mailto:agmany@aol.com)

To: Agents of Singers Contracted to Appear At The Met  
In September, October and November 2014, and all  
AGMA-represented artists with future Met contracts.

From: Alan Gordon, Executive Director, AGMA

Re: Possible Lock-Out

Recent events, including the loss of box office income, the Met's focus on media, other apparent financial problems at the Opera and the termination of Joe Volpe as chief negotiator, send a troubling signal about the course of this summer's negotiations with AGMA, the Orchestra and the Stagehands.

Peter Gelb's removal of Joseph Volpe from the renegotiation of the Met's contracts, intending instead to negotiate the contracts himself, is a clear and unmistakable forewarning that Gelb wants to restructure labor relations at the Met. From every indication we have, the Met plans to attack our decades-old contract protections and seek an across-the-board 10% or 15% reduction in compensation and fees, along with other deep contract concessions.

That approach to negotiations could vastly impact upon your contracts, your income, your way of life, and your well-being.

Gelb's actions create a risk that the Met will eventually lock-out its artists when they refuse to accept destructive contract cuts, or will force its performers to strike by eventually declaring a negotiating impasse and then unilaterally imposing a non-negotiated contract, eliminating protections and reducing compensation.

Despite the fact that dealing with union members directly is an unfair labor practice, it is possible that Gelb will, once again, contact principal singers and ask them to take significant, voluntary cuts in their contracted rates. Just

the request itself implies (directly or indirectly) that refusal might impair future work at the Met.

DO NOT subject yourselves or your clients to any such coercion. Your unwillingness to lower your contracted fee will NOT, in our opinion, make one iota of difference to the Met's overall finances, and you should ignore that request if and when it comes.

The real issues in the upcoming negotiations have little to do with salaries or fees paid to our members. Rather, the question is: what's gone wrong at the Met since our last contract, and what can be done about it. Asking for a reduction in AGMA members' compensation and working conditions is simply an attempt to shift the real focus of the negotiations away from failure at the box office, over-reliance on High Definition theatercasts instead of audience growth and a gross waste of millions of dollars on unnecessary and avoidable expenses.

It would be prudent for all Met employees to anticipate and prepare for the absence of Met income in the fall and winter of 2014, and perhaps even longer. Agents should likewise begin to explore other work opportunities for their clients who have contracts with the Met for the fall season.

The way in which the Met has thus far approached these negotiations foretells what may be an epic battle to protect your contracts, your way of life, your income and our efforts to save the Met as we know it.

We will keep you advised as things get closer to the actual negotiations. Of course, it is our hope that none of these dire events will come to pass and that, once again, we will be able to renegotiate a mutually beneficial contract. It is always wise, however, to be fully prepared for any eventuality in the defense of our members' rights and livelihoods.