

OMAI OPERA MANAGERS ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL



Dear OMAI Colleagues,

June 2023

As another busy season comes to a close I am looking forward to summer festivals, time with family and friends, and reflection on all that is good in our lives and our profession. I want to take this time to thank all of my colleagues at OMAI for their dedication, work, and friendship. It is rare to find a group of individuals that come together for the common good of an entire profession and certainly the example we have set at OMAI is one we can all be proud of.



Accomplishments this season are numerous and at the top of the list is the hiring of our new Managing Director, Zenaida des Aubris. Zenaida's achievements in the opera profession are many and she has quickly become an integral member of our association.

Certainly at the top of the list of accomplishments we owe a huge debt of gratitude to our colleague Marc Mazy and the entire Conference Committee for setting up what was a wonderful conference in Madrid. It was one of the most enjoyable weeks of the year for me and informative on many levels. Congratulations also go out to Tali Calderon leading the newly formatted open Opera Committee meetings. I found the meetings insightful and the discussions engaging as we continue to discuss the ongoing issues we face as managers.

As we look to the future, I am happy to announce that in the fall I will be forming the OMAI Business Committee. This committee will assist me as your president in the ongoing discussions with our fellow associations IAMA, AEAA, DOKA, ARIACS, AFAA, and the many singers associations. It is through this committee that we will continue our work with Opera Europa to create better working relationships between managers and houses. The expanded committee will also deal with issues such as commissions, artist transfers, and business structures for the modern manager.

Finally, I want to thank our Communications Committee. Without their dedication and insights none of the work we do as an association would be available to our members. So, a huge thank you to Markus, Sarah, Robin, Marc, and Marie-Catherine.

I will see all of you in a few months. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing highlights of your summer travels on the OMAI Members Social Group on WhatsApp.

Mitchell Piper, President

OMAI 2nd Annual Conference Madrid, April 19-21, 2023

The most significant step taken in planning the OMAI conference in Madrid was to invite representatives of the European singers' associations. Since our founding, our goal has been to have a seat on the table. Often opera managers are not seen as equal partners in decisions on the future of the opera business. After our successful and important discussions with Opera Europa in Berlin, it was now time to have the singers on board.



Professional Practices: Agents & LyriCoalition

This was an open dialogue session – for the first time with singers – in which we exchanged our viewpoints, and sometimes very different viewpoints. We discussed how cooperative agreements between managers and singers could be structured, what services should be offered to the artists and what payment structures (commissions) are to be expected. We all agreed, these were important first steps in getting to know each other and look forward to talking more.

Carlos Álvarez, Secretary of Institutional Relationships of ALE, comments: “The OMAI meeting in Madrid served, fundamentally, to stage the need for understanding and close collaboration between the professionals who participate in the lyrical activity, establishing, from that moment, the obligation of a better and deeper knowledge of the needs and aspirations of each of the sectors involved in it.”

And Nicola Beller Carbone from krea[K]tiv adds: “During OMAI / Madrid we realised that the constructive dialogue and solidarity between agents and artists has set an important symbol and it became tangible for all that we undoubtedly belong together. In any partnership, transparency, respect and fair play are the basis for successful development. We believe that the willingness of both players to listen sets the basis for a future in which agreements are worked out and kept together.”

Spanish Musical Institutions

One of the highlights of our conference in Madrid was the opportunity to learn more about the current situation of classical music in Spain with a panel of high-level participants. We were able to share many impressions and valuable information. It was full of insights and very useful. We feel certain that this was the starting point dedicating cooperation between Spanish opera associations. Only by pulling in the same direction we can become stronger. We would like to express our gratitude to:

Nieves Pascual | General Coordinator of Ópera XXI (Association of Spanish Opera Theaters)
Andrés Lacasa | AEOS President (Assoc. of Spanish Orchestras), Intendant of Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia
Aquiéles Machado | Artistic Director of Opera Festival at La Coruña
José María Marco | Madrid Correspondent for Ópera Actual, the only magazine dedicated exclusively to opera in Spanish
Francesca Calero | ALE (Syndicate of Lyric Artists of Spain)
José Miguel Pérez-Sierra | Conductor





Opera Europa & LyriCoalition

A panel of Opera Europa members came to Madrid to participate in our 2nd open conversation between opera managers and the continuation of the Berlin protocols achieved last year. We invited the singers' associations to join us in what was a lively and productive discussion addressing many of the main issues confronting our business today.

We thank the panelists, led by new OE President Karen Stone, Joan Matabosch/Teatro Real Madrid, Josef Fuchs/Reisopera Enschede, Laura Canning/Opera North Leeds and Boris Ignatov/Staatsoper Stuttgart and the singers' representatives of the LyriCoalition: Tijn Favets, Nicola Beller Carbone, Martina Bortolotti von Haderburg and Carlos Álvarez for their active and valuable participation.

This first-time dialogue with producers, managers and singers in the same room is necessary to bring awareness to the different sides of the issues important to all of us. We are encouraged by this and plan to continue these conversations in the newly formed OMAI Business Committee to seek common ground and move the needle forward.

Operabook

Special guest at the 2023 OMAI conference was Dr. Susan Werger, the Membership and Services Manager of Operabook. She gave an informative overview of Operabook and answered many of our questions. Operabook was developed as a response to the need expressed by Opera Europa members for an independent and objective search tool. It gathers data from over 350 opera companies worldwide. The developers were able to devise a cutting edge, user friendly, professional tool that serves Operabook members. It is a multi-database platform which hosts historic production and casting information since the 2011-2012 season with performance dates and casts. At the OMAI conference, we discussed changes in their platform to make it more user friendly, and to allow more information without logging in, including adding management contacts.

Along with [OMAI](#), Operabook is endorsed by and is the preferred service of [Opera Europa](#), [IAMA](#), [AFAA](#), [AEAA](#), [Ariacs](#) and [CMA](#) (Classical Music Artists). Operabook: <https://operabook.org/en/about>

OMAI Talks

On February 15, 2023 Elisabeth Sobotka, incoming Intendantin at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden Berlin, was our guest for our **10th OMAI Talk**. She gave an engaging talk on her vision of the need to make programming changes and use more effective marketing tools to attract new and younger audiences to the opera. Sarah Stephens has made another video summarizing this productive conversation with our members.

OMAI Talks-10 [Elisabeth Sobotka speaks with Opera Managers](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jVt4HYi7f0>



On June 21, 2023 our special guest Sam Wheeler, AGMA National Executive Director, spoke with opera managers for an **OMAI One-Off Talk**. The focus was on non-resident foreign artists and the benefits they also receive when performing in the US. Many other important issues were also addressed such as membership conditions and fees, the status of Young Artists and more.

We were joined by other association leaders and non-member managers for this talk. A trailer will be available soon. Please check our **OMAI YouTube Channel** for more videos.

Membership

The Board and the Membership Committee of OMAI (Samuel Krum, Membership Chair and Treasurer) is beyond thrilled to welcome those agencies joining our organisation so far this year:

Stellis Polaris Management (Oslo, Norway), Mark Kendall Artists Management (Hargrave, UK), Eliasson Artists (Stockholm, Sweden), Arien Artists (Gent, Belgium)

The strength of an organisation such as ours comes from our collective expertise and perspective on the industry, and with each new member that extraordinary knowledge and understanding grows even stronger. We welcome these new members and look forward to hearing from them and seeing them at our future meetings and conferences.

Next OMAI Conference in Stockholm, May 2024

We are delighted to announce the **3rd OMAI Annual Conference** to take place in Stockholm in May of 2024. We are excited to join our colleagues in the Scandinavian countries and learn more about their practices. More details will follow. Mark your calendars!

Sarah has made a trailer of the Madrid conference. Have a look. We hope it inspires you to join us - again or for the first time - at the conference in Stockholm!

OMAI 2nd Annual Conference Trailer Madrid: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RH2vUVICvGY>

We are very proud of our accomplishments since founding OMAI in October 2020. We continue to grow and expand our important conversations with other organizations and amongst ourselves. We are making a difference in our profession. Thank you for your membership and participation to make this possible. Only together can we make things better!

Hope to see you all in Stockholm in 2024!

Yours,
Markus Laska & Sarah Stephens
And the Communications Committee
operamanagers.org
[Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/operamanagers/](https://www.instagram.com/operamanagers/)
[Facebook: Opera Managers International](https://www.facebook.com/OperamanagersInternational)





