



**75**  
YEARS

1944-2019

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING**

# inter nos

*"Between Us"*

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Association Notes	1
Independent Teacher Associate Editor	4
President's Update	5
2019 Membership Renewal	8
International Notes	10
2017 Fiscal Year Audit Summary	11
In Memoriam	11
NATS Installs 2018-20 Officers	12
National Committee Assignments	13
<b>INDEPENDENT VOICES</b>	
Re-evaluating Risk and Readiness	15
Eyes on the Horizon	17
Getting the Most out of Membership	19
Student Performance Venues	21
NATS 75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	18
NATS Chat 2018-19 Schedule	22
55 <sup>th</sup> NATIONAL CONFERENCE Recap	23
Watch Conference Videos Online	27
Mentoring Over Coffee	28
55 <sup>th</sup> National Conference Sponsors	30
National Student Auditions	32
Pedagogy Trip to Germany, June 2019	35
Education Commission Survey Results	37
2019 Art Song Composition Award	39
NATS Intern Program	41
NATS Foundation-Rise to the Challenge	43
Order National Conference DVDs	44

## ASSOCIATION NOTES

### Ethics and You

In a previous employment setting, our faculty was informed late one fall semester that over the winter break we would be getting new studio doors with windows in them. It was surprising as the building was relatively new and had the "latest" in sound isolating doors. It seems that there had been a complaint against one of the faculty and part of the resolution resulted in the university undertaking this costly project. I was never personally concerned about this change to my studio and in fact came to find it as an important protection for me as a teacher who spent a majority of his time in a studio setting. Later, as an administrator managing a major facility renovation, I required of the architect that all studio and practice room doors have windows. A few questions were asked about this but most everyone was satisfied with my answer that this window sends an important message that we foster an open, transparent, and comfortable environment for teachers and students.



**Allen Henderson**  
NATS Executive Director

In my Spring 2018 column I alluded to the work of the NATS Ethics Committee in reviewing and updating the Association's Ethics Policy. I am pleased to report that their recommendations were unanimously approved at our annual board meeting in June and are now posted on our website at <https://www.nats.org/code-of-ethics.html>. During the upcoming membership renewal period, as with each cycle, each member will reaffirm their support of the policy as principles that guide our professional relationships with one another, our students/clients, and the profession at-large. In preparation for placing your check in that box when you renew your NATS membership this fall I hope you will take some time in advance, perhaps now while you are reading this issue, to familiarize yourself with the revised policy and all of the information on the expanded ethics page on our website. We added specific

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## continued: Association Notes— Ethics and You

guidance for you regarding the mediation of ethical issues, submission of formal ethics complaints, and a clear process we follow in addressing and resolving possible violations.

With continuing reports of additional ethical lapses by a growing number of individuals in the performing arts, including the voice teaching profession, we **MUST** remain vigilant in our efforts to hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards in creating and maintaining respectful environments for all. Inherent in our profession is a rather unique power dynamic that, left unchecked, is open to abuse and imbalance. Not only is our most common teaching construct potentially fraught with complications, our conversations about text, character, interpretation, and the use of our bodies in singing can also be complex. Careful thought, conversation, and a healthy professional trust between all parties, must not devolve and open the door to inappropriate actions by either or both parties.

While we have recently seen a much needed emphasis on exposing past transgressions, we must do all we can to prevent such behavior from ever happening. This is the focus of NATS' efforts with this policy and our educational efforts surrounding it. NATS will always have as a goal to do all we can to prevent such behavior from happening at all. We must individually and corporately pledge to speak up, seek support, or ask for help when witnessing, experiencing, or suspecting any form of harassment. Silence may enable abusive situations.

Our best opportunity to be a positive influence is to be prepared to handle a variety of scenarios that we may encounter.

- If you work at an institution, know what anti-harassment and zero tolerance policies are in place as well as the reporting mechanisms available.

- If you work in a group setting with other colleagues in a voice department or multi teacher independent studio, have conversations with your colleagues on how you collectively agree to combat bias and minimize stereotypes.
- If you have a window of any kind in your studio door and you have covered it, remove the covering now!
- If you are an independent teacher, become informed about some of the policies in place at institutions in your area. While your setting may be different, understanding these policies and why they are in place can help you formulate a solid perspective on what type of welcoming, comfortable, and inclusive environment you want to create for those who enter your studio.

At the Opera America Conference this past June in St. Louis, there was a session on Confronting Sexual Harassment, Abuse and Assault led by Adrienne Davis. A recording of the session can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NW6uoe-gx4A>. I think it provides an excellent overview of the major issues we all face in the performing arts relative to this topic and will be instructive as you seek to be an advocate in your local area.

The NATS Code of Ethics is an aspirational statement. It provides a framework for our professional pursuits within the profession. While I have focused this column more heavily on the issues of the day and their relation to our Code, the Code is more expansive and sets forth an expectation that we will be transparent and professional in our interactions with one another as colleagues and our students. More conversation and communication will be forthcoming on various aspects of the Code as we work to create a more informed membership.

As always I welcome your feedback and comments at [allen@nats.org](mailto:allen@nats.org).

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## Job Opportunities at NATS

### NATS Competitions and Auditions Coordinator

NATS is offering an opportunity to a dedicated member on a part-time basis and at a distance to serve as Competitions and Auditions Coordinator. This is a great opportunity to contribute to the future development of NATS competitions and auditions.

### NATS Membership Services Coordinator

The Membership Services Coordinator is responsible for the strategic direction and management of NATS membership recruitment and retention efforts ensuring members are served efficiently.

### Do you have a job opportunity to announce?

The fall academic season brings a new cycle of music faculty openings as well as opportunities for independent studio teachers. Start the process to attract the best candidates by advertising on the [NATS Job Center](#).

Log on to the [NATS Job Center](#) for details.