

Getting the Most Out of Your NATS Membership

by Nancy Bos, Vice President for Membership

What is the role that NATS plays in your life? Could it do more? We are all equal and important parts of the NATS family, but do we all get the same benefit? We have all invested the income from a few hours of work to pay annual dues, and filled out the application forms at the beginning of our membership. For some that is the extent of their commitment to NATS. For others that is the tiny tip of the iceberg of what they give to and receive from NATS. But no matter where we fall on that spectrum, the benefits and opportunities of membership are all available to all of us. Those benefits are so numerous it is hard for anyone to be aware of them all!

So where do we begin — how do we chart the benefits of membership and how can we best utilize them? Perhaps we each need a curator to help uncover the potential ways to benefit, and an advisor to help us balance our time while taking advantage of them. But at this point, it is up to each of us to research and discover how we can most profit from our investment. And what level of time and money investment gives us the most return for our professional and personal lives.

So how to begin? By being clear about where we are in our personal careers and what we hope to get out of NATS membership.

In the Fall 2017 *Inter Nos* I wrote an article called Transitions: Learning to Fly. In that article I looked at the different stages of a voice teacher's career and what tools they might need to acquire. At that time I didn't know I would be the next Vice President for Membership for NATS. I didn't know that I would have the rare opportunity to learn about all of the benefits of membership and be considering ways to communicate them to you. Before reading further, before taking in this information treasure trove, I encourage you to consider if you are in a heavy knowledge acquisition phase, a networking and career building phase, or if you are in a time when you are most driven to give back to our field.

After we each assess our current needs, the next step is to find ways to fulfill those needs. Needs might include:

- Enhancing Your Network
- Broadening or Deepening Your Knowledge
- Improving Your Resume and Career
- Finding your Passion and the New Friends Who Share It

- Giving Back to the Community
- Strengthening the Field
- Staying Inspired

The benefits you seek and pursue should line up with your needs. Many of the benefits available from the national level can be found easily on the footer banner at NATS.org. They are things like:

- National Workshops
- National Conferences
- NATS Chats
- Live Learning Center videos
- Vocapedia
- *Journal of Singing*
- NATS Job Center
- Find-a-Teacher Directory
- Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition
- NATS Artist Awards (NATSAA)
- National Music Theater Competition (NMTC)
- Art Song Composition Award
- NATS Intern Program
- Emerging Leaders Award
- Joan Frey Boytim Award for Independent Teachers
- Development opportunities for Collaborative Pianists
- Intermezzo e-newsletter
- Van L. Lawrence Fellowship
- International Travel Tours
- NATS Wellness Blog
- Voice Pedagogy Award
- Student NATS Chapters

Most of these benefits have been developed and are maintained by volunteer NATS members, people just like the rest of us. And there is room for even more great sharing within this

continued: Getting the Most Out of Your NATS Membership

organization. If you have a great program idea you'd like to see implemented on the national level, reach out to a Board Member or our Executive Director with your proposal.

One thing many of our benefits have in common is that they've started at the grass-roots level, through programs developed and vetted in the chapters by hard working local volunteers. NATS has 14 Regions, 57 Districts, and 84 Chapters, all maintained by volunteer leaders solely for the benefit of members and their students. Many chapters offer scholarships, programming, social gatherings, mentorships, leadership opportunities, and more.

Perhaps one of the biggest benefits I've received from NATS is the opportunity to volunteer. Volunteering increases self-confidence, self-worth, and happiness. As a volunteer we do good for others and the community. We receive accomplishment, pride, identity, and knowledge. We find that we are helping our field and other people. And none of this is possible without investment from hundreds of NATS members.

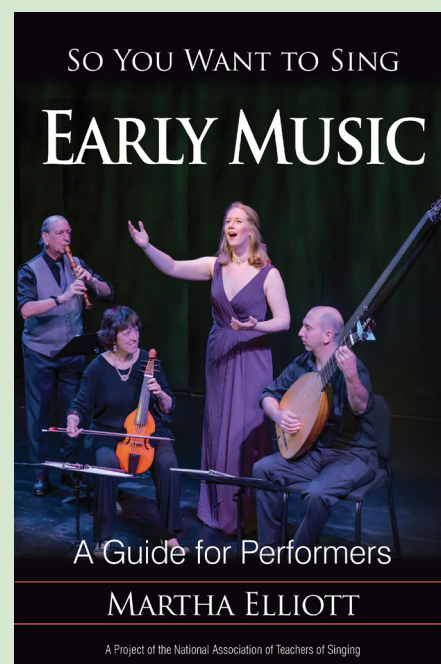
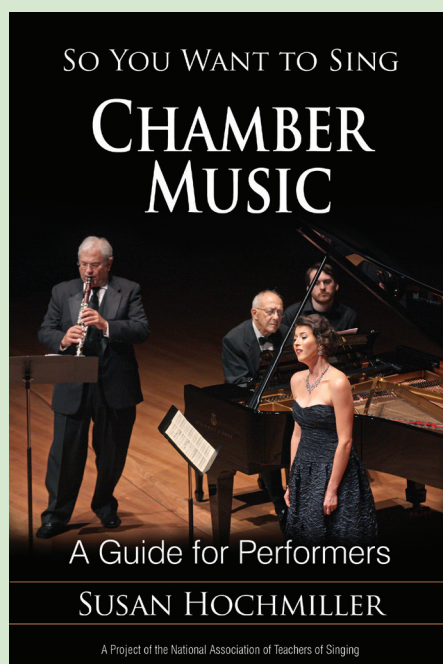
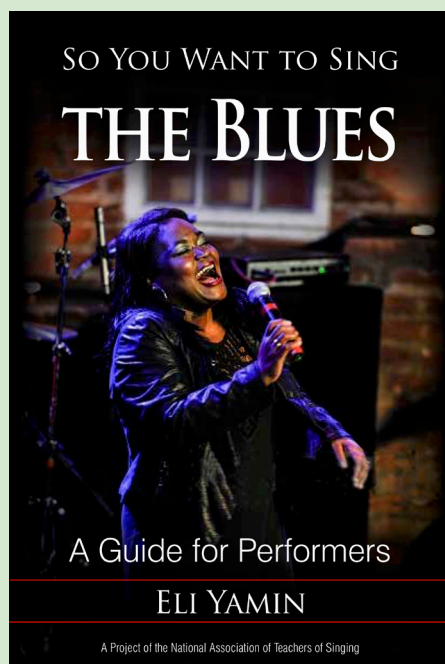
Making the most of your membership in NATS requires budgeting your time and money wisely, as well as dedication and involvement, but your involvement will help you stay on top of what is happening in our field and serve to fulfill that thing you hope to get out of your NATS membership.



Nancy Bos is an independent teacher in the Puget Sound Region of Washington State. On her website, she offers the Singing 101 Vocal Exercises for free as well as links to her Every Sing podcast and her blog. Nancy is the author of Singing 101: Beginning Voice Lessons and The Teen Girl's Singing Guide. She is the NATS Vice President for Membership and previously served as NATS Northwestern Regional Governor. www.nancybos.net

New So You Want to Sing Books

NATS is pleased to announce the latest volumes in our So You Want to Sing book series: *SYWTS the Blues*, *SYWTS Chamber Music*, and *SYWTS Early Music*. Books are available for pre-order. **Save 30%** when you order any of the books in the series. Use discount code: **7A30AUTHF** at Rowman & Littlefield or call 800-462-6420.



For a complete list of books in the series log on to <https://rowman.com/Action/SERIES/RL/SCPWTS>