



Association UNiSSON
Press release
21 April 2020

UNiSSON is an independent association providing advice, guidance and support to opera soloists under contract in France.

Our current priority is to collect and share information regarding cancellations due to the Covid-19 outbreak. We understand that in these uncertain times, the initial solutions presented to the artists were highly discordant, due to the complexities and bureaucratic differences of the various theatres and companies.

While artists are often contracted abroad as *self-employed*, french labor laws establish a clear body of rules for them. Indeed, contracts signed in France usually place the artist in a position of *salaried* individual, thus protecting their rights under the terms of general employment.

The authorities have answered the need for an undifferentiated approach and we are now reviewing the measures announced by the government on April 17, as well as their effects on cultural institutions and how our employers will comply with them.

We will closely monitor the way these decrees are put into practice.

We are committed to helping the most deeply affected performers.

Created in March 2020, UNiSSON formalises the efforts of numerous opera soloists who initially received divergent replies to their concerns when the cancellations were announced. Following informal messages, a tight-knit group of performers decided to share information and urging employers and agents into coordinated and fair action to prevent discrimination between artists.

We are fully aware of the contradiction in terms, but we are undoubtedly a collective of soloists : we welcome confirmed professionals, young artists along with students, and hope to strengthen the solidarity within our profession.

We extend our support to foreign colleagues performing in France.

In the future, UNiSSON wishes to take the following actions:

- survey contracts, work conditions and good governance
- examine the changes introduced by digital media
- offer a safe place of dialogue and share legal information
- create a fund for members facing financial difficulty
- reflect on the future of opera together with employers, agents, unions and sponsors
- promote new ideas to maintain the quality and sustainability of the art form

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