



TASO NEWS

Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras

The purpose of this organization shall be, "To promote, develop and support symphony orchestras"

Celebrating 51 Years Winter - 2020-2021

TASO Conference in Waco Cancelled for 2021

CANCELLED!

After consulting with an Ad Hoc Conference Committee of TASO in October, The Waco Symphony Council (WSC) has no choice but to cancel Creating Connections TASO 2021 in Waco, April 8-10, 2021. The WSC was willing to postpone until April 2022, but the Lubbock Symphony Guild was unable to postpone their conference planned for 2022. We are sad about this decision but hopefully Waco will be able to invite TASO back in the near future when delegates will be able to once again hear the Waco Symphony and enjoy our beautiful city and the many opportunities it has to offer.

Rationale:

1. The Hilton Waco is not able to offer us all the services necessary to host the conference.
2. The 2021 Juanita Miller Competition was postponed until 2022 so there will be no winners to present in 2021.
3. Even if the Waco Symphony Orchestra is able to play the April concert, because of social distancing, it is unlikely there would be tickets available for TASO delegates.
4. Other options for meetings and/or meals were investigated but not feasible under the circumstances.

The Waco Symphony Council

**CREATING
CONNECTIONS
TASO 2021**

looks forward to the time we can welcome TASO back to our city for a conference and share and exchange ways to promote symphonies in Texas.

Our April 10, 2021 TASO Conference will be virtual. Plan to attend virtually!

Respectfully Submitted,
Fran Good

Waco Symphony Council President
2020-21

**Marsha K. Green, Dianne Sawyer
and Suzanne Alexander**
Co-chairs TASO 2021

TEXAS ASSOCIATION FOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS
ANNUAL CONFERENCE IS GOING VIRTUAL!

SAVE THE DATE

APRIL 10, 2021

KEY NOTE SPEAKER: KARIN COX, MFA
PRESIDENT OF HARTSOOK

President's Letter



December 1, 2020

Greetings from the President:

“What if today, we were just grateful for everything.” Quote by Charlie Brown

There are many things that we can be grateful – a sunny day, a healthy family, or one restored to health, a wonderful meal (think Thanksgiving), or listening to beautiful music, especially one of our Texas symphonies. Recently we got to see our orchestra play live in November. For all on stage, the maestro, the musicians, and the special guest, it seemed a dream. For those of us in the audience, socially distanced and wearing our masks, we were happy to see a live performance.

Yes, in this unusual year we must continue to look for silver lining. It's easy to crawl back, and not want to do the usual things. However, with technology we can stretch the possible. The concert, that we live-attended, was also live-streamed to people in many states and three foreign countries, including Japan.

Mr. Daniel Emmet, the live performer, said it was his first performance since Spring. He said more than once that he was grateful to be performing, and with the Plano Symphony Orchestra. Everyone there was grateful, with several standing ovations.

Our organization, founded in 1966 by **Mrs. Juanita Miller** and many other great Texas volunteers, got its synergy and enthusiasm of others, in the same room. There will be a time when we gather, in the same room. At our TASO quarterly September Zoom meeting, we appreciate that **Dr. Lee Colan** gave us information about “Orchestrating Attitude.” We are all “reaching inward” to pull out the best in us. Thank you **Deborah Brown**, keeping our Zoom meetings scheduled. And thanks to **Sandy Secor** for our Newsletter, keeping us informed.

Our many committees continue their work. Your Executive Committee, including **Susan Douglas, Darlene Morford, Ellen Jones, Betty Wall, Kathy Sheldon, Nancie Rissing, Terry Brown, Robyn Rhodes, Anne Blomeyer, and Beth Grimm**, has been at work behind the scenes. Our next quarterly meeting will be January 8-9, 2021, a Zoom meeting. We have postponed our beloved Juanita Miller Concerto Competition until 2022, after much work had been completed by our Chairman, **Terri McDowell**. Our SMU venue was not available.

And Conference 2021 will be yes, another virtual meeting. Our Waco Co-chairs of **Marsha Green, Dianne Sawyer, and Suzanne Alexander** worked tirelessly, to have plans changed after we could not use the locations planned. Our April 10, 2021 Virtual TASO Conference will be open to more people than most conferences, with an exciting speaker, and a minimum of business. Plan that day now on your calendar.

Now we prepare our homes and our hearts for the holidays, Hanukkah, Christmas, and the New Year. Our celebrations may be altered, but remember to stay in contact with our loved ones, those who cannot leave their homes, and especially our Texas symphonies and musicians. This too shall pass. It makes the challenge great, that we continue “Moving our Texas Symphonies Forward,” the tagline that was chosen for this TASO year. Until our January meeting, have a blessed holiday season.

Sincerely,
Janie Orr
TASO President

Newsletter Deadline; March 1, 2021;
TASO Newsletter Editor, Sandy Secor, jwsecor@sbcglobal.net

The Amarillo Symphony Guild

The Amarillo Symphony Guild and the Amarillo Symphony have been moving forward and adjusting as we have to. Most of our activities are to start in January and we pray that things will calm down so we can go thru with them.

We held one Lunch & Listening in October and we have six students that are receiving virtual music lessons thru our Young Artist Project. We also were able to donate one musical instrument to AISD from Instrument Express. Things may be slow but not stopped.

Fingers crossed we will be able to have live concerts soon and our Symphony Ball in February.

May you all have a safe and Merry Christmas and may 2021 bring us all Healing!

LaDonna Tunnell
Guild President

Texans for the Arts

Registration is now OPEN for the Texans for the Arts Foundation Virtual Texas Arts Advocacy Summit 2021!

The Summit this year will be held sequentially on three dates: Tuesday, January 26, 2021 and Tuesday February 9, 2021 and Thursday, February 11, 2021.

Don't miss these three sessions which - together - set the stage to ensure your voice as an arts advocate is heard in the virtual halls of the Texas State Capitol!

Step 1: January 26, 2020 - 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM CST - "Setting the

Stage" - Virtual Training Session around how to set up a legislative meeting and what to accomplish followed by a panel discussion on how to use the media to tell your stories!

Step 2: February 9, 2020 - 9:00 AM - 12:00 Noon CST - "Speak Up Speak Out" Virtual Training Session on the key advocacy issues, guest speakers, art breaks and more!

Step 3: February 11, 2020 - 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM CST - "Celebrate and Next Steps!" Virtual Wrap Up and Online Happy Hour!

Join arts leaders and citizen activists from across the state as we gather to learn, share, and participate in the democratic process! Everyone has a story about how the arts make a difference in their own lives, in that of their families, and in their communities. Your voice (and your vote!) are the most important tools that you have in speaking up about the importance of investing public resources in the arts.

We face unprecedented challenges in our sector due to the devastating impact of COVID-19. It is more important than ever that we come together and share our stories about the challenges the pandemic has created, but also the vital importance of the arts in our lives.

Typically, we meet in the Texas Capitol in Austin, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic the building is closed to the public until further notice. We are excited to come together nonetheless!

At the Texas Arts Advocacy Summit Virtual Sessions on Tuesday January 26, 2021 and Tuesday February 9th, 2021 (and a virtual Happy Hour on Thursday, February 11, 2021), learn how to put your passion about the arts into constructive and informative advocacy through orientation, training, and more. Texans for the Arts Foundation will provide digital materials for you to share with your legislators on the issues most important to all of us:

* protecting public support for the arts

* protecting the municipal Hotel Occupancy Tax and the 15% allocation for the arts, particularly through the COVID-19 recovery period

* ensuring our vital resources provided by the Texas Commission on the Arts and their Cultural District program funding remain intact

* seeking additional support for COVID-19 relief for the arts and culture sector

* supporting other policies and programs including arts & the *military, arts & education, arts & the justice system and more.*

JOIN US as we demystify arts advocacy and set attendees off on productive and rewarding virtual visits with their elected officials.

Texans for the Arts Foundation's Texas Virtual Arts Advocacy Summit is generously supported by the Texas Commission on the Arts.

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The Dallas Symphony Orchestra League

The Dallas Symphony Orchestra League (DSOL) celebrated music and fashion at the 7th annual Fashion Notes Designer Award Luncheon and Style Show presented by Veritex Community Bank on Wednesday, November 4, at the Fairmont Dallas.

Mother-daughter duo, **Cile McCormick** and **Claire Catrino** served as Honorary Chairs. Cile is a devoted supporter of the symphony and a longtime member of DSOL. Her daughter Claire was a debutante, Assembly officer, and now serves on the DSOL Board. **Karen Cox** chaired the event and **Anne Ligon** is the DSOL President. The Luncheon was sponsored by Veritex Community Bank/**Darlene Ellison**, **TOOTSIES**, and Fairmont Dallas.

This year the DSOL celebrates its 75th anniversary. Throughout the last 75 years, the League has donated over 20 million dollars to the Dallas Symphony. This would not have been possible without all the amazing women who have served as Presidents of the League. The Past Presidents of the DSOL were collectively the recipients of the Fashion Notes Designer Award for their work in designing and guiding the league for 75 years.

As one of the few live events held this season, the morning began with a carefully orchestrated agenda respecting social distancing and CDC protocols. The DSOL acknowledged the safety and comfort with temperature taken upon arrival,



Top left: **Kim Noltemy**, Ross Perot President & CEO and **James Leffert**, Vice President of Development; Bottom left: The **Brodnax** family **Pepper**, **Allison**, **Maureen** and **Tucker**. Bottom right: Honorary Chair **Cile McCormick** with granddaughter **Katherine Catrino**.

only six guests per table, tables spaced more than six feet apart, and strict CDC protocol followed by hotel staff. Tickets were limited in order to adhere to CDC guidelines.

A reception and Mystery Notes gift pull was followed by the luncheon and style show, Fashion Notes Designer Award presentation, a live auction,

and a performance by DSO Young Strings cellist **Rahel Lulseged**. The latest fashions from **TOOTSIES** were featured, with **Nerissa von Helpenstill** and **Dustin Holcomb** of **TOOTSIES** serving as emcees.

Proceeds benefit the Dallas Symphony Association and its education and community outreach programs.

Houston Symphony

Zoom Craft Party

Leading up to the first Livestream Family Concert in 2020, the Craft Committee, led by **Kristin Turnak** and **Ann Tornyo**s, prepared a set of instructions for the featured craft – Spooky-Fun Shadow Puppets. The instructions contained patterns and directions about how to make Halloween-related shadow puppets and a shadow puppet stage out of a box. A Zoom Craft Party was held on October 7th to conduct a “dry run” (test) of the craft instructions before they were sent to all families attending the Livestream Family Concert on October 31st.

During the Zoom Craft Party, everyone shared their experience as well as showed off the shadow puppets and puppet stages they had made using the craft instructions and templates.

The Symphony Education Committee then collected the shadow puppet and shadow puppet stage examples made by the craft volunteers. These examples were incorporated into the final activity instructions sent to all families that would attend the Livestream Family Concert on October 31st.

The final activity instructions, which were displayed on a private web page, contained several activities the families could do together leading up to and the day of the Livestream Family Concert. These activities included fun educational activities, Halloween-inspired dessert recipes to bake, and the Spooky-



Fun Shadow Puppets craft project.



EDUCATION UPDATE:
I am happy to report that the Houston Symphony is continuing their work with supporting the

*Top: Shadow Puppets. Middle left: **Lilly Andress** and **Vicki West**. Bottom right: **Beth Wolff**, **Cheryl Byington**, Chair and **Fran Peterson**. Middle right: **Fran Peterson**, League President and **Betty Tutor**.*



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Chavez feeder pattern, which includes Lewis Elementary, Ortiz Middle School and Chavez High School. They are delighted to be working again with the Lewis Elementary after-school violin students soon and are grateful for the school's commitment to find creative ways to keep music in the students' lives during the Covid crisis.

Additionally, the Symphony wanted to share a recent project in which musicians from the orchestra created unique resources to help high school string students prepare for the Texas Music Educators Association's Texas All-State auditions. Musicians **MuChen Hsieh, Sheldon Person, Louis-Marie Fardet, and Andrew Pedersen** recorded each of the All-State excerpts and provided specific instructions on how best to prepare for these auditions for violin, viola, cello and bass students, respectively. This project is an example of how they have been able to use technology to reach students at a larger scale this year: In a normal year, they may have done similar in-person sessions for just a small number of students; this year, however, these videos were sent to 100 schools and 26 school district Fine Arts Directors. Here is a link for an excerpt of one video, created by violist **Sheldon Person**: <https://youtu.be/5YtBbBrIEr4>.

Neiman Marcus Fashion Show
THANKS to all the lovely Fashionistas who attended and/or donated to the Houston Symphony League traditional Neiman Marcus Fashion Show,

the event was 'sold out' and a huge success. We raised \$9100 for the Houston Symphony! The attendees were socially distanced for the seated champagne reception while experiencing a fabulous runway extravaganza narrated by NM Brand Experience Manager, **Heather Almond**.

Additionally, the new General Manager for NM, **Chris Hendel**, gave brief remarks about his background, coming to Houston and supporting the Houston Symphony. After the runway show, the attendees shopped, received 'Gourmet-to-Go' box lunches from the Mariposa Restaurant, and a gift bag from Givenchy. Additionally, the first

25 attendees who purchased their tickets on-line were treated to a 'swag bag' of goodies, compliments of the Houston Symphony, Tenenbaum Jewelers, HEB and **Cheryl Byington**, Chair of the Neiman Marcus Fashion Show.

Special thanks to.....**Brigitte Kalai** and **Betty Tutor** for their wonderful additional donations, **Stacey Swift** and **Julie Busch** from the Symphony staff who handled the money, as well as coordinated the lists, **Roz Cooley**, the RSVP Chair and **Leslie Siller** and **Leslie Nossaman** for handling the check-in.

Like us
on Facebook!

Plano Symphony Orchestra

The purpose of the Plano Symphony Orchestra (PSO) scholarship program is to provide the life-changing opportunity of private music instruction to young instrumentalists in the Plano Independent School District (PISD). Private lessons are vital in developing instrumental technique and many Plano families cannot afford the additional cost. The number of scholarships awarded is based on the funding available and the number of applicants. The PSO was recently awarded an ArtCentre of Plano "For the Love of the Arts" award for the scholarship program.

The PSO Education Scholarship program awards funds to provide weekly private instruction for both fall and spring semesters to deserving students in middle school that have shown clear musical potential and a demonstrated financial need. Applications are submitted by 6th and 7th graders in the spring. As a part of the application process, each applicant has to submit a referral form from their music director, an essay on why they want to take private instrument lessons and how the lessons will improve their musical abilities, provide character reference and parental approval. A committee selects the award recipients during the summer months and they are notified prior to the beginning of the school year. A student is eligible to win scholarships for both years.

Approved PISD private instructors are assigned to recipients by

A MUSIC LOVER

Lives Here



PROUD SUPPORTER OF PSO MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

school music directors. Normally, private instruction is in person, but during these challenging times, instruction has continued virtually.

To date, 57 scholarships have been awarded. Fifteen scholarships were awarded for 2019-20. The winners were announced via social media. A Sunday afternoon virtual reception was held for new scholarship winners and patrons for a personal connection.

Funding for the program comes completely from donations from the community. The PSO has partnered with numerous sources including the PISD Council of PTAs, the Dallas Asian American Youth Orchestra and the Plano International Festival to raise funds for the program. In the past, the PSO has had a "white

envelope" campaign where at every Board and Guild committee meeting, a white envelope was passed and committee members were encouraged to donate \$1.00. Because of the pandemic and all meetings being virtual, the Education committee developed a new campaign for raising funds for the 2021-2022 scholarship program. The scholarship committee designed and had printed yard signs saying "A Music Lover Lives Here" as shown in the photograph. During October, 2020, patrons of the PSO were asked to give \$25.00 or more as a one-time donation. As a reward for this donation, yard signs were delivered to each patron who donated. The campaign was advertised through email and social media. Approximately \$3000 has been raised through this easy campaign.

East Texas Symphony Orchestra

East Texas Symphony Orchestra reaches audience with Sundown Events

As with all orchestras in 2020, the East Texas Symphony Orchestra, based in Tyler, TX, has had to find new ways to connect with audiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. In October 2020, ETSO hosted a series of four small-ensemble concerts in the community that reached both long-time patrons and new audiences.

“Sundown with the Symphony” featured string, wind, and brass ensembles from the orchestra’s core group of musicians performing outdoor programs of light classical and popular music. Limited space was available at each venue for live, socially-distanced audiences. In addition, each performance was livestreamed on the orchestra’s Facebook page to reach a broader audience. Events were held at the city’s three country clubs: Willow Brook, Hollytree, and The Cascades. The fourth venue chosen for the series was the popular local hangout True Vine Brewing Company.

For many of the musicians involved in these programs, this was the first time they were able to perform for an audience in months. “Everything got canceled [with the spread of COVID-19],” said ETSO Music Director **Richard Lee**. “We miss playing. Really, I don’t know if people understand how crazy it is to lose your livelihood.”

Lee was referring to the fact that for the orchestra musicians, many



of whom play with a number of different ensembles, there has been little to no work since the pandemic struck.

ETSO principal trumpet, **James Sims**, echoed Lee’s sentiments prior to the event at The Cascades: “When we had the show at Hollytree it was literally for some of those people the first time playing with other people in months. It’s crazy for a musician to go that long and not play together with anyone.”

The balancing act that had to be found for the events was to care for the health and safety of the musicians and audience while meeting the desire to enjoy live performances in person. Through the challenges, the end result proved popular enough that the orchestra is looking at continuing such small, pop-up events in the future, even after it is safe for the full orchestra to return to the concert hall.

“Sundown with the Symphony” was spearheaded by ETSO Vice-

Chair of Development Debbie Kavanaugh, ETSO Board Chair Laura Hyde, and community volunteer Helen Israel. Special cocktails and dinner menus were offered to guests at the country club events. ETSO board members Annette Findley and Diane Thomas assisted Debbie and Helen in creating table decorations for each event. These ETSO performances were sponsored by Joyce Buford, Dr. Rachel and Matt DeVaney, Annette Findley, Laura and H. T. Hyde, Helen and Dr. Noah Israel, Michelle Neilson and Mark Russell, Julie and Dr. Suman Sinha, and Joi and Dr. Gary Smith.

The East Texas Symphony Orchestra is a professional, per-service orchestra, based in Tyler, Texas. Founded in 1936, the orchestra mission is “to engage and inspire our community through exceptional music education and performance.” Additional information about the orchestra is available at www.ETSO.org.

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The San Angelo Symphony Guild

The San Angelo Guild is enjoying a productive start and great time with our circus theme for our 2020-2021 year, "The San Angelo Symphony Guild – The Greatest Show on Earth".

The October meeting entitled "Juggling into a New Year" seemed to fit how we all feel in this time.

"Under the Big Top", our November luncheon meeting, went well in a beautiful backyard with music provided by one of our guild scholarship winners.

The Beaux and Belle program moved forward with their annual Halloween monster bowl party at which time they presented donations they had gathered for a local homeless ministry.

The high school ambassadors have had guest speakers at their meetings teaching public speaking, resume writing, job interview pointers and other important life skills. Both organizations will assist with the Symphony's fundraiser "Santa's Musical workshop" in December and carol in Heritage Park in downtown San Angelo.

"Winter with a Whirl" and our annual gala fundraiser are on the horizon for spring.

Wishing you the very best holidays and much success in 2021, The San Angelo Symphony Guild.



COMING IN JANUARY

The San Angelo Symphony Guild presents

Winter
with a
Whirl

Bentwood Country Club

The Women's Symphony League of Austin

Unable to meet in person this fall, The Women's Symphony League of Austin has been having its Board and General Meetings virtually. While League members aren't able to meet in person, the League leadership has risen to the occasion by providing informative and entertaining meetings.

A new tradition – Symphony Sips – was created by our membership chairs. This creative idea was developed so that members could gather together safely and visit with one another. Members volunteered to be hostesses for weekly coffees or happy hours. These gatherings were held in the front or backyard of the hostesses. Attendees brought their own everything – beverages, snacks/dinner, chair, facemask – and enjoyed the lovely company of Symphony League members in the comfort of a front or back yard. Masks were required except while eating and/or drinking.

The gatherings were so popular that waiting lists had to be created for each event. In addition to being able to meet in person, attendees did not hesitate to donate \$25 to help the Austin Symphony Orchestra. This was a win-win for both the Women's Symphony League of Austin and the Austin Symphony Orchestra!

Here were the guidelines:

- 10 person maximum attendance
- Only front yard, backyard or poolside
- Must bring your own chair & refreshments

- Sign Up Genius registration; first come served
- A different zip code every week, but any member from any zip code can attend any Sip Session
- Only outdoor meetings allowed; NO RESTROOMS AVAILABLE
- We request a \$25+ donation to support our Austin Symphony Orchestra
- By signing up, you acknowledge the inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19, and you agree to abide by all federal, state, and local

laws, ordinances, and guidelines. You agree to hold the Women's Symphony League of Austin and their officers, volunteers, representatives, and agents harmless from any and all liability under any theory. You further acknowledge that this event is not an official meeting or required event of the Women's Symphony League of Austin. You agree to not attend if you have recently tested positive for COVID-19 or have been exposed to COVID-19.



Symphony

Sips!



Women's Symphony League