



TASO NEWS

Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras

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

Celebrating 54 Years Spring - 2021

TASO 54th Conference All - Host - Virtual on April 10

Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras Awards of Excellence

Each year the Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras presents the TASO Awards of Excellence to a Business, Volunteer, Patron and Legislator. These Awards recognize their outstanding Service, Support and Promotion of the interests and growth of symphony orchestras. The TASO Award of Excellence represents the only recognition of its type by symphonies in Texas. The Business Award is given to a business that has shown exceptional service, support and/or promotion of the interests and growth of a symphony orchestra by their continued annual financial commitment to a symphony. Their support may also include supplying volunteer service and/or in-kind gifts.

2020 Business Winner

Happy State Bank - Amarillo
J. Pat Hickman, Chairman and CEO, Nominated by the Amarillo Symphony Guild.

2021 Business Winner

Robert M. Rogers Foundation - Tyler, Nominated by the Women's Symphony League of Tyler.

The Volunteer Award is given to a person who has served in a volunteer capacity above and beyond his/her volunteer role to support a symphony. This support is demonstrated by positions held in the volunteer organization over

REGISTRATION OPENS FEBRUARY 15TH.
TASOVOLUNTEERS.COM \$15 PER REGISTRATION

TASO VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

APRIL 10, 2021

- KARIN COX - KEYNOTE SPEAKER ON FUNDRAISING
- LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ON THE STATE OF THE ARTS IN TEXAS
- PRESENTATIONS FROM RECOGNIZED PROJECT WINNERS
- AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE WINNERS ANNOUNCED
- MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

the past 5 years. The award is based upon the time, commitment and dedication shown by the volunteer. **2020 Volunteer Winner Laura Hyde** - Tyler, Nominated by the Women's Symphony League of Tyler.

2021 Volunteer Winner, Anna Marie Speir - Austin, Nominated by Women's Symphony League of Austin.

The Patron Award is given to a person (or couple) who has given financial support to a symphony orchestra, but not necessarily been active in the member organization. This award is based upon the financial support given during the past 5 years or longer. Volunteer involvement may also be considered. The 2021 Patron Winner is **Mary Ann** and **Andrew**

Heller - Austin, Nominated by Women's Symphony League of Austin. **2021 Patron Winner Ambassador and Mrs. (Kay) Lyndon Olson, Jr.** - Waco, Nominated by the Waco Symphony Council.

The Legislator Award is given to a person who has shown support for the arts as a legislator. This is determined by their voting record in support of the arts/symphony during the most recent legislative session. Their history of supporting the arts and the value they place on the arts is also considered. **2020 Legislator Winner** - Mission, Texas, **The Honorable Oscar Longoria**, House District 35. **2021 Legislator Winner** - Carroll, Texas **The Honorable Giovanni Capriglione**, House District 98.

President's Letter



March 1, 2021

Greetings from the President:

“Can you imagine a day without music?”

As we all engage in “Moving our Texas Symphonies Forward,” the next steps forward may be difficult, like “dipping our toes in the water.” Currently our Plano Symphony Guild has been creative in finding projects, such as hosting our second “drive through” event to gather items for our upcoming summer Gala Fundraiser. We are planning social spaced school education concerts for the Spring, as well as other in person concerts April, May, and June 2021.

We all look forward to our TASO members meeting again soon, in person, and that may truly happen with recent opening developments. Until then,

we will continue to rely on technology with our upcoming April 10, 2021 TASO Virtual 54th Conference. **Beth Grimm**, Austin, and our V. P. of Conference, and **Deborah Brown**, Dallas, our Technology Director, are leading us to a great conference day.

Our keynote speaker **Karin Cox**, will engage us all in great fundraising ideas . . . one of our most important jobs in “Moving our Texas Symphonies Forward.” Also, **Ann Graham**, Texans for the Arts, and former Awards of Excellence Winner in 2019, will inform us of Texas legislative matters in the arts.

We will also have our 2020 and 2021 Awards of Excellence winners presented by Chair **Annette Findley**, Tyler. Recognized Project Chair **JoAnne Vaughn** will lead us to learn about several of the Recognized Projects submitted to our TASO group.

It is with great anticipation that we will all get to participate at our April 10, 2021 Virtual 54th Conference (1/2 day), registering at our website TASOvolunteers.com. Those who register by April 1 will receive a goody bag and other TASO information. And do not let me forget to mention door prizes!

Our membership organizations number over 15 in our great state of Texas. Individual and Patron Memberships number over 20. Consider an individual membership, along with member organizations, for next year to keep our TASO organization strong. **Jan Woodward**, Abilene, has membership information for all types of memberships.

We will look forward to our next TASO year, with **Susan Douglas**, Austin, our new TASO President. Perhaps, we will meet in person later this year, and surely by next year 2022, in Lubbock for the 55th Annual TASO Conference.

Thank you to all the Officers and Chairs, and to all the members of TASO for an exceptional year. It is a privilege to work with so many symphony leaders within Texas. We will all look ahead to the next year in “Moving our Texas Symphonies Forward.”

Sincerely,

Janie Orr
TASO President

Thank you to the 2020-2021 Officers and Chairs see page 9

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

The Amarillo Symphony Guild

THE SYMPHONY – PART ONE Beethoven's 5th Symphony

While we await the chance to gather again in the hall this spring, the Amarillo Symphony is proud to present a new digital series at the start of this new year: a three-part series exploring three magnificent symphonies.

The first of these offerings is the unparalleled and immensely popular Fifth Symphony, by Ludwig van Beethoven. There is in the world music of more sophistication and simplification, but none that more surely makes itself understood nor so intensely exposes the failures and the triumphs of the human heart. Here, in the Fifth Symphony, is the potent, concentrated, and ultimate summation of the genius that was Beethoven: the superb courage, the impatience, and finally the heroic defiance often experienced in his music.

Please enjoy this wonderful interpretation of a classic piece by Maestro **Jacomo Bairos** and the intrepid musicians of the orchestra. And make sure to stay tuned next month for the second installment of our digital series, "The Symphony."

The Women's Symphony League of Austin

Jewel Ball to Yule Ball!

When the Women's Symphony League of Austin cancelled its primary fundraiser in 2020, the Jewel Ball, members quickly put their heads together to adapt a new fundraising strategy. WSL members pulled together a phenomenally successful virtual



Left: Yule Ball co-chairs **Celest Hubert** and **Megan Helmbrecht**. Right: **Wendy Lary** and **Mela Sarajane Daly**.



fundraising event, the Yule Ball.

Chaired by WSL members **Megan Helmbrecht** and **Celeste Hubert**, the two-hour virtual event starred WSL members and their families in a variety show format, including musical talent for the first hour, with an emcee hosting the program live from her home with humor and lightheartedness. Members shared their favorite memories of the WSL, highlighting the fun-loving friendships that have developed throughout the organization for more than 65 years. The second half of the event featured a slideshow of photographs collected through the years, accompanied by holiday music.

Guests watching the free livestream from home, organized themselves into watch parties of ten or fewer individuals, enabling small, socially distanced groups to gather over drinks and dinner. Different sponsorship levels were offered which provided anything from dinner for ten, champagne, floral arrangements, live musicians and in-person visits from Maestro **Peter Bay** and his wife, **Mela Sarajane Daly** to intimate dinner for two.

In addition to sponsorships, guests participated in an online auction and raffle for a pair of stunning diamond earrings donated by a local jeweler. The event netted over \$50,000, greatly exceeding expectations! Volunteers overseeing every detail created a memorable and fun evening for hundreds of homes in Austin!

Conroe Symphony Orchestra

Like most orchestras, the Conroe Symphony Orchestra has been idle since our last concert in February of 2020, but our governing board has been remarkably busy for sure, as we have a new Music Conductor/Director. It is our pleasure to Welcome **Anna-Maria Gkouni**, a native of Athens Greece and we are so excited to plan our future with this extraordinary conductor. Anna-Maria is an orchestral conductor, classical pianist, and piano instructor, as she holds a piano performance along with a music theory degree from Philippos Nakas Conservatory. Also, Anna-Maria earned her MA in Orchestral Conducting from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and currently pursuing her DMA in Orchestral Conducting at the

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Anna-Maria Gkouni



*Triple N Winery, mother **Nan Michelle**, grandmother **Nan Creel**, granddaughter, **Nan***

University of Houston. We are so proud to have Anna-Maria with the Conroe Symphony Orchestra, as there will be a formal Meet and Greet reception for her on Tuesday, March 16th at the Conroe Symphony Centre and we look forward to many exceptional concerts to come. The Conroe Symphony Orchestra will close this season with our Annual Free Patriotic Concert on June 26, 2021, as we honor our First Responders, Health Care Workers, Military and Beloved Veterans!

The Dallas Symphony Orchestra League

*Dallas Symphony Orchestra League presents
Savor the Symphony*

The hybrid event allows ticketholders to choose where they will dine: at home or at the Ritz-Carlton

Patrons of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra League's annual Savor the Symphony were disappointed

last year when the event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 precautions in place at that time. This year the fundraiser will be held as a hybrid event – ticket holders can enjoy the event in person at the Ritz-Carlton or they can opt to have their three-course dinner delivered to their home with the event program streamed directly to them.

For those attending in person, Savor the Symphony will be an elegant evening with a three-course dinner and silent auction held at the Ritz-Carlton, Dallas, on Thursday, April 29. The evening will begin with a champagne reception and silent auction followed by a seated dinner and program at 7:15 p.m.

The Honorary Chair is **Roberta Corbett**, a longtime supporter of the DSO and the Dallas community. **Sharon Ballew** is the event chair and **Anne Ligon** is the **DSOL** President. Event Advisors are **Barbara Bigham**, **Carole Ann Brown**, **Mari Epperson**, **Renee**

Farren, **Jill Goldberg**, **Bettina Hennessy**, and **Venise Stuart**. Honorary Chair **Roberta Corbett** currently serves on the Board of the Dallas Symphony Association, funded the **Tom and Roberta Corbett** Director of Education position, and assisted in the founding of the **Lynn Harrell** Concerto Competition.

The program for the evening will feature two past chairs of Savor the Symphony who also happen to be the owners of Texas wineries: **Rose Mary Gatlin** from Inwood Estates Winery and **Nan Michelle Anderson** of Triple N Ranch Winery. **Rose Mary Gatlin** and her husband **Dan** are owners of Inwood Estates Winery with locations in Dallas and Fredericksburg.

Triple N Winery is excited to offer a multi-generational Texas-women owned winery showcasing the best Texas grown grapes and wines. The winery is located in the beautiful East Texas Cedar Creek Lake area.

Houston Symphony

EDUCATION REPORT

Musical Explorations videos are for middle and high school band and orchestra students. Individual musicians are featured and weaved into excerpts from a classical piece to help to give the students something to listen for when they hear the piece. This link explores the finale of Schubert's Symphony No. 2, and is led by Community-Embedded Musician and bassist, **David Connor**, who is joined by flutist, **Judy Dines** and principal second violinist, **MuChen Hsieh**.

Meet the Instruments videos are personal introductions from Symphony musicians to their instruments, including why the musician was drawn to their instrument. Both of these links are part of the Houston Symphony's Community section on their webpage:

<https://houstonsymphony.org/community/education/>

In addition, the Symphony is excited to announce that they were featured as the Opening Concert for this year's Texas Music Educators Association convention. This is the first time a professional orchestra has been featured during the convention. Over 35,000 music educators were in attendance.

Darlene Clark, HSL VP Education

Wine Time

Wine Time celebrates the Houston Symphony with League members sharing a glass or two of wine for fun, friendship, and fabulous conversations. Wine Time, part of the League's Social Connections program, was established in the midst



Heidi Rockecharlie

of the pandemic in 2020 and has been hosted virtually on the first Thursday of the month. Wine Time Chairman, **Heidi Rockecharlie** has created an invitation each month that is sent to nearly 230 League members; most of whom were not keen on meeting by Zoom. She encouraged participation by enlisting the help of professional Sommeliers to enrich and enhance members' knowledge and appreciation of wines from around the world.

One Sommelier discussed the specialty of pairing certain wines with pungent and mild cheeses, and with various cuisine courses. Another Sommelier donated four unique wines to taste during a virtual Zoom Wine Time Tasting. While a donation of a wine tasting was a very generous offer, the fact that it had to be done virtually did present a few challenges. With only 14 bottles of wine donated, Rockecharlie limited member participation by accepting only the first 25 members to respond. The event

was "sold out" within less than two hours.

Rockecharlie enlisted the help of two League volunteers to prepare 100 wine labels and 25 gift bags, one for each participant. Rockecharlie poured each of the four wine selections into small, individual containers and labeled each sample. She packed each gift bag with the four wine samples and Swiss chocolate truffles. She then arranged to have the samples picked up by the members the evening before the event.

After several months of virtual Wine Time events, the word is out and the program has become a success. League members are now on the lookout for their monthly Wine Time invitation.

INTERVIEW WITH A HOUSTON ICON, DOMINIQUE SACHSE *The Annie Cafe and Bar*

What a delightful afternoon the League is planning and inviting you to be part of as you will be meeting the beautiful **Dominique Sachse**, anchor of Houston's KPRC channel 2 news for 25 years and our Houston ICON. Dominique will be interviewed by our chairs, Ann Ayre and Marla Hurley who are also underwriting this event. Please find one of her videos on U-Tube and enjoy her lovely personality before you have the chance to experience her beauty and talents in person! You will be in store for a magical afternoon.

Tickets are priced at \$150. and the event is limited to 50 people.

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Lubbock Symphony Guild Symphony Debutantes

Houston continued

Invitations to follow about March 15th. First come, first fifty participate in the fun - so RSVP ASAP.

Social Connections

In addition to volunteering and fundraising the League has instituted a new project this year called Social Connections for camaraderie and friendship for our members in good standing. This year we started with the following six Social Connection groups.

Gourmet Dinner Group – a tasty activity to get to know the music-loving gourmards in our midst and savor the creations.

Mah Jong – which meets weekdays in private homes in small groups once a month

Symphony Soles' Walking Group – this group meets once or twice a week at Memorial Park to enjoy a leisurely walk, fresh air and camaraderie

Wine Time - Celebrate, Sip and Socialize – Celebrate the Symphony with friends and wine! Initially a Zoom event and hopefully soon to become a small

in-person social arranged by Zip code.

Book Club This semiannual event is extremely popular with League members and offers intriguing weekday discussions on musical literature. It is designed to be a social and educational experience and to encourage a deeper understanding of the Symphony's upcoming repertoire. It offers a more integral involvement in both the League and Symphony's missions.

Destination Experience - Join fellow Houston Symphony League members in an Aspen get-away. It is the perfect respite from the heat and city chaos.

The Lubbock Symphony Guild

The Lubbock Symphony Guild kicked off 2021 with a fundraiser that showcased several local artists. The calendar was a collaboration between The Lubbock Symphony Guild and West Texas' most talented and

generous artist, who love their community and the arts. We hope members will enjoy this compilation of art throughout the year. We hope to repeat this fundraiser next year!

We are also thrilled that the **Buddy Holly** Hall of Performing Arts and Sciences is now open. Members of the LSG were treated to an exclusive preview tour in January. The Lubbock Symphony Orchestra has preformed Vivaldi's Four Seasons on January 23rd and Peter and the Wolf on Saturday February 27th and Sunday February 28th. The LSG Symphony Debutantes have served as ushers for all performances.

Finally, The Lubbock Sypmphony Guild is pleased to announce that it will honor 39 young ladies at the Two thousand Twenty One Debutante presentation on Sunday, May 2nd at the Lubbock Memorial Civic Center. We will also honor our Jewel Debutante, **Chandler Wallace**.

Like us on Facebook!

The Marshall Symphony League

The Marshall Symphony League recently held a zoom membership meeting and are making plans to resume in person meetings in April. The League moved its annual Ball to July but will start the year by assisting the Marshall Symphony Orchestra with its annual Downtown Concert Week as listed below:

•Tuesday, May 4, 2021
7-8:30 p.m.
Dixieland on the Square

•Wednesday, May 5, 2021
7-8:30 p.m.
Cinco de Mayo Concert

•Thursday, May 6, 2021
Coffee with the Conductor
Central Perks
6:00 p.m.

•Friday, May 7, 2021
Voices 2 Rehearsal
Harrison County Historical
Courthouse
East Side
8:00 p.m.

•Saturday, May 8, 2021
Voices 2 Concert
Harrison County Historical
Courthouse
East Side
8:00 p.m.

This concert event will feature Auditions on April 3, 2021 in Marshall at Telegraph Park, April 10, 2021 at the Jeffersonian Institute in Jefferson, Texas and the Final Auditions on April 17, 2021 in Marshall at Telegraph Park. All auditions begin at 7:00 p.m. Voices 2 will again feature



Plano 2020 Drive through - Martin Gallagher (Santa Claus), Beverly Gallagher (Mrs. Claus) - Seated, Beverly Wester, Zema Fitzgerald, Mirna Lynch, Marcela Schweers, Sue Wood, Irma Landis, Lillian Stankunas - Standing.

old and new popular Country Tunes. The League will hold its annual **“Swinging for the Symphony”** Golf Tournament in June.

Plano Symphony Orchestra

The Plano Symphony Orchestra rescheduled its 2021 Gala to June 26, 2021 in order to have an in-person gala. The theme for this year’s gala is **“For the Love of Texas and Country”**. It is western themed complete with dancing to the country sounds of **Zane Williams and The Wilder Blue**. We will have a silent and live auction, delicious cuisine, great wine and best of all, will be with people again! There is also an after party featuring Bourbon, Bubbles and Beer. The co-chairs,

Tammy and Charles Miller and Mirna Lynch, have done a great job of putting this together and we have great sponsorship for the gala. We are ready to get together in person to party and raise money to support the PSO artistic and education programs.

The PSO Guild is normally responsible for gathering items for the silent auction and this year is no different. In years past, the Guild would include requests for wine and gift cards for the wine and gift card pulls, and silent auction items in events preceding the gala such as our annual Festive Eve in early December. But, alas, these events have turned into online events, not in person events. Not very conducive for gathering wine, etc.

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Plano continued

for the gala. But our clever Guild Board came up with two drive through events to collect these gifts as well as give some personal safe interaction.

The first of these events was held on Friday December 18, 2021 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the home of **Mirna Lynch**. Guild members and patrons were requested to drive by and drop off one or more bottles of wine valued at \$25 or more. As a special treat, Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus accepted our invitation to attend and were there to greet everyone, wave hello and to wish every one a happy holiday. Everyone who came by was given a holiday themed gift bag. The event was lots of fun and approximately 40 bottles of wine were collected for the gala wine pull. The next event is scheduled



for Saturday, March 13, 2021 from 2 to 4 pm at the home of **Sue and Will Wood**. This event has a St Patrick's Day theme. Guild members and patrons are requested to bring by gift cards of any kind, wine or alcohol of any kind, and items for silent auction



gift baskets. Participants will be given a St. Patty's Day goodie bag. One lucky person will have a special gold coin in their goody bag and will receive a special pot of gold with coffee, Irish liquor, coffee mugs, etc. It will be another fun event!

HEAD'S UP...TASO MEMBERSHIP OPPORUTNITIES NOW OPEN!

Here's a heads up to all of you receiving this newsletter that Membership opportunities are now open for the upcoming 2021-2022 TASO year.

TASO brings Guilds/Leagues (Organization Members) together to work throughout Texas to promote the exchange of ideas through leadership, networking, education and advocacy for orchestras. Please make sure your President or TASO Representative fills out the form and returns it so your guild can become a member for the new year and be eligible to continue sending a Representative to the quarterly Board meetings.

Individual Members, both Patron and Affiliate, give TASO the ability to further support meaningful work in the areas of advocacy, musical performance, competition and education. This year we enjoyed membership at the Individual Level with 23 Patron and 2 Affiliate Members. The goal for the 2021-2022 year is to have even more! These members will receive recognition throughout the year in various ways. May we add your name?

Go online to <https://www.tasovolunteers.com/join> to start the process. Under the Membership tab you'll be able to fill out the forms and pay electronically, or you may download, print and mail in your payment to Jan Woodward, 1509 Woodridge Drive, Abilene, TX 79605. Again, please check to make sure someone from your particular guild has filled out the form for your group; and then please consider joining yourself as a Patron or Affiliate Member.

I hope you'll embrace with me all that TASO has to offer its members. We'd love to have your participation. Together we'll work towards keeping beautiful music alive for all generations of Texans, today and in the future. Please do not hesitate to email or call me with any questions – **Jan Woodward**, Membership Chairman, janw.taso@gmail.com/325-668-7879.

Recognized Projects 2020-2021

Despite this year of lockdowns, masks, social distancing, and virtual concerts, TASO member organizations have been active with educational programs, fundraising soirees and zoom gatherings. Several of our TASO member guilds/leagues have completed wonderful projects that have brought music education, fundraising, and awareness of our orchestras to our communities. Several organizations have been chosen to be recognized at the annual TASO conference for their outstanding projects that bring awareness of their work to the community.

This year, the Recognized Projects committee received many outstanding entries. We chose seven projects to be recognized and presented at this year's virtual conference.

The Recognized Project winners for this year are:

Communication/Technology - A Modern Website for Modern Times by the Women's Symphony League of Austin

Leadership/Service - Wine 101 by the Houston Symphony League

Education - Lewis Elementary Violin Residency Program – Expansion Project by the Houston Symphony League

- Young Artist Project by the Amarillo Symphony Guild

Fundraising - Symphony of the City by the Waco Symphony Council

- Fundraising Pop-Ups by the Houston Symphony League

- Junior Symphony Ball by Dallas Symphony Orchestra League

The PowerPoint presentations for these and last year's winners

can be found on the TASO website. Everyone is encouraged to review the presentations as they offer amazing ideas that can be incorporated into your own organizations whether large or small.

Thanks to the 2020 - 2021 TASO BOARD from President Janie Orr

PRESIDENT-ELECT - Susan Douglas, Austin
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT - Kathy Sheldon, Amarillo
VICE-PRESIDENT FINANCE - Nancie Rissing, Dallas
VICE-PRESIDENT ADMINISTRATION - Terry Brown, Houston
VICE-PRESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS - Robyn Rhodes
VICE PRESIDENT PROJECTS - Anne Blomeyer, Dallas
VICE PRESIDENT CONFERENCE - Marsha Green, Waco
PARLIAMENTARIAN - Betty Wall, Lubbock
SECRETARY - Darlene Morford, Plano
TREASURER - Ellen Jones, Amarillo
2020 JUANITA MILLER CONCERTO COMPETITION -
Terri McDowell, San Antonio;
Vice-Chair - Beth Grimm, Austin
2021 TASO CONFERENCE -
Co-Chair -Marsha Green, Waco
2022 TASO CONFERENCE - TBD

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

ADVOCACY - Beth Grimm, Austin
ARCHIVES - Grace Boner, Austin
RECOGNIZED PROJECTS - JoAnne Vaughn, Abilene
Vice-Chair - Darlene Clark, Houston
AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE - Annette Findlay, Tyler
Co-Chair - Anna Marie Speir, Austin
BYLAWS - Paula Floeck McReynolds, Waco
MEMBERSHIP - Jan Woodward, Abilene
Vice-Chair - Candis Hicks, San Angelo
E-NOTES - Sandra Secor, Dallas
PUBLIC RELATIONS/MARKETING - Joi Smith, Tyler
TECHNOLOGY MANAGER - Deborah Brown, Dallas
GRANT WRITER - Jana Shafer, Dallas
DALLAS SPECIAL EVENTS - Candis Hicks, Dallas

The San Angelo Symphony Guild

The San Angelo Symphony Guild continues forward with our wonderful circus theme.

“Winter with a whirl” was held in January and incorporated the theme as will our upcoming gala March 27 entitled *“Cirque du Soleil.”*

Our January meeting was held with both an in person and a virtual option as was the plan for February but cold weather got in the way. Virtual hot chocolate and cookies helped to warm up the evening.

The March 2 meeting featured both zoom and in person options as other meetings have this year and featured a very special guest speaker to align with our theme for the meeting “The greatest showman on earth”. we were honored to have our fabulous maestro **Hector Guzman**.

We are 17 days away from our gala and counting down to a fabulous time on March 27th at the historic and beautiful hotel Cactus.

Spring membership drive and Belle and Beaux recruitment lay ahead and we are anxious and hoping to return to all in person meetings in the fall of this year.

We feel that we navigated this very unusual year very well and we wish the very same for you!

Sending our best from the wild west!



Texans for the Arts - 87th Texas Legislative Session Update

We are currently in the thick of the 87th Texas Legislative Session and have our hands full! This Session is unlike any others with the impact of COVID-19, the impact of the polar vortex - all leading to critical economic and social challenges. The legislature got off to a moderate paced start with the election of the new Speaker of the House, **Dade Phelan** (1-Beaumont) and the selection of new Committee Chairs and members. The budget process in the Senate Finance Committee (SFC) and then the House Appropriations Committee (HAC) got underway followed by SFC and HAC Subcommittees over Article I, which is where the Texas Commission on the Arts sits. Texans for the Arts has already testified at hearings for both and is keeping its finger on the pulse of the budget, reaching out and connecting with key legislators.

Our goals for the arts and culture sector for the 87th Texas Legislative Session are focused on protecting the resources we secured in the 86th, knowing that budgets are tight with the state's tremendous reduction in revenue.

According to the Texas Comptroller, the Hotel Occupancy Tax collections since the pandemic dropped



Left: Texas Legislature. Right: Ann S. Graham

48.5%, the steepest drop of any Texas taxes.

Our primary three goals are to:

- * secure full funding for the Texas Commission on the Arts including the \$10 million appropriation for the TCA's Cultural District grant program;
- * protect the Municipal Hotel Occupancy Tax provision of "up to 15% for the arts"; and
- * secure additional COVID Relief for the arts and culture sector.

The new dollars we are working to secure are COVID Relief funds from the new \$1.9 Trillion American Rescue Plan's commitment to helping small businesses, nonprofits, performing arts venues and individual artists.

Texans for the Arts Foundation conducted its first virtual Arts Advocacy Summit between January 26th, February 9th and February 11th. Over 240 advocates participated

"virtually" from across the state, representing over 90 Texas legislative visits. Content included advocacy trainings, issue brief review, and guest speakers imparting important information to advocates headed off to meet virtually with their own legislators.

The most important role you can play as an advocate is to reach out to your elected officials and let them know how your orchestra is doing in the wake of the pandemic. Texans for the Arts looks forward to the April 2021 TASO Conference, to celebrating the Awards of Excellence for Legislator of the Year (2020 and 2021!) and hearing how you and your orchestras are continuing to have a presence in your communities despite the pandemic.

Thank you!

Ann S. Graham, Executive Director, Texans for the Arts.

TASO News



Lubbock Symphony Guild is excited to serve as host for the 55th Annual TASO Conference April 28 – May 1, 2022, “Where the Music will Come Alive”!

From savoring award-winning wines and locally crafted beers to exploring local art galleries and shopping, the Hub City offers a variety of activities for visitors to enjoy. Learn more about the iconic rock ‘n’ roll legend, Buddy Holly and celebrate his legacy, in Lubbock’s newest premier venue, The Buddy Holly Hall of Performing Arts and Sciences. This 220,000 square foot, state-of-the-art campus features two theaters, event space, a full-service restaurant and the home of Ballet Lubbock all under one roof. Designed by internationally-renowned Diamond, Schmitt Architects out of Toronto, Canada, both theaters feature an acoustic value of NC15 offering artists an opportunity to perform on stage in a world class venue.

Convention delegates will be able to experience the Hall on Friday night at The Award of Excellence Dinner, prior to attending the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra’s Masterworks Concert on Saturday night. The Juanita Miller’s winners will have an opportunity to perform in one of the theaters as well.

Those attending the conference will gain new information that will benefit their leagues, guilds and symphonies. Informative and timely seminars will give an insight of how to adapt to our changing times while supporting our local symphonies. Expert speakers will be addressing topics that will prove to be very beneficial to all that attend.

Throughout the conference, delegates will also be treated to wonderful local entertainment utilizing the many talented artists from Texas Tech University. Also, a treat for all delegates are the private dinners planned for Friday night at some of the most magnificent homes in Lubbock. Make plans to come to Lubbock in April 2022.... “Where the Music will Come Alive”!

Conference Co-Chairs: Terri Byrne, Heather Hocker, Wendy Needham