



TASO NEWS

Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras

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

Celebrating 51 Years March 2022

55th TASO Conference in Lubbock April 28 - May 1

The Lubbock Symphony Guild is looking forward to hosting the 55th Annual Conference of TASO, April 28 – May 1, 2022. The committee is already hard at work to once again host the very best educational meeting in Texas. We have put together the A-Team of nationally known speakers and have received commitments to personally attend the conference here in Lubbock.

The Lubbock Symphony Guild has provided a lasting legacy for a love of music and education in Lubbock, and we are delighted to help instill this appreciation and love for music and education in our community with our visitors from throughout Texas. Thank you for your continued support and for all you do for TASO and Texas!

We can't wait to show off the newest gem in Lubbock, the Buddy Holly Hall of Performing Arts and Sciences designed by renowned **Diamond Schmitt Architects**. The new center is unique to any venue of its kind in the country.

Informative and timely seminars will help delegates improve our organizations' fundraisers and the quality of the programs that are offered to our communities. Social media seminars will enlighten us how to use these important tools to better promote our events. We



(L-r): Terri Byrne, Heather Hocker and Wendy Needham, 55th TASO Conference Chairs in Lubbock.

will be mentored in the best way to ask for funding for our projects and also learn how best to involve staff board members and volunteers in creating a long term strategic plan.

Along with our seminars, the Lubbock Symphony Guild will provide our delegates and guests a delicious meal in some of our most elegant homes in Lubbock on Thursday evening. The feast will continue at the luncheons at the Overton Hotel Friday, and Saturday at the beautiful Lubbock Country Club. Friday and Saturday's dinner will be hosted by the acclaimed Chef **Hector Hernandez** of Rave On at the Buddy Holly Hall.

The music will come alive as we have planned live and local

music at our Friday Luncheon, Welcome Reception and Award of Excellence Dinner. Live music will continue at the After Concert Reception at the beautiful and historic home of **Tim and Melissa Pridmore**. At the Buddy Holly Hall, we will enjoy a special concerto with the winner of the **Juanita Miller** Concerto Competition with the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra. Afterwards, the **BOYZ II MEN** will join the LSO.

Please encourage your fellow league and guild members to register for the TASO 2022 Conference. We look forward to showcasing our symphonic music and cultivating relationships amongst our symphonies, guilds and leagues. See you in Lubbock! We look forward to see you all soon!

President's Letter



Dear TASO Members,

It has been an honor to serve as TASO President this year! It is a true pleasure to work with outstanding leaders of symphony leagues throughout the state.

Congratulations to **Juanita Miller** Concerto Competition Co-Chairs **Beth Grimm** and **Terri McDowell** for an excellent 25th Anniversary competition. Thank you to our TASO volunteers who helped make this event run smoothly. We will have an opportunity to hear the Grand Prize Winner and First Place Winners perform at the upcoming TASO Conference in Lubbock.

Our inaugural year of Zoom educational programs was a great success! In November, **Ann Wolford** and **Sally Alvis**, presented a superb program on Fundraising. In February, **James Leffler**, Vice President of Development for the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, presented a very informative and useful program on “How to be an Effective Leader”. These programs can be viewed on our TASO website – tasovolunteers.com

The Lubbock Symphony Guild and Conference Co-Chairs **Terri Byrne**, **Heather Hocker**, and **Wendy Needham** have planned a marvelous conference. We will have a great opportunity to learn, network, and share ideas with fellow Texas symphony volunteers. I look forward to seeing you at the conference in Lubbock.

Please join me in thanking this year's Board of Directors for making this such a successful year!

See you in Lubbock,

Susan Douglas

Susan Douglas
TASO President
2021- 2022

Newsletter Deadlines; , August 1, 2022, March 1, 2023, December 1, 2023

TASO Newsletter Co-Editor, Sandy Secor, sandrasecor@icloud.com

Abilene Philharmonic Guild

ABILENE PHILHARMONIC GUILD HERITAGE BRUNCH

The Abilene Philharmonic Guild hosted the HERITAGE BRUNCH on February 26 in the upstairs ballroom of the Abilene Country Club. Party-goers celebrated the rich heritage of Abilene through the years displayed in numerous vintage photographs used abundantly in table centerpieces and exhibited throughout the ballroom. The annual event also celebrated the Abilene Philharmonic Orchestra and spotlighted the talented and committed youth who participate in the Belles and Beaus Program. This year nine seniors were introduced with their mothers: **Charlie Ruth Anderson, Lexie Bayouth, Lily Etter, Louise Ferguson, Brazos Lewis, Hope Longely, Berkley Paul, Kloie Robinson, and Kaitlyn Strain.** The Revolution Strings Musicians provided lively entertainment. **Amanda Biles** and **Pebbles Lee** served as event co-chairmen.

The Heritage Brunch combined with the 2022 Heritage Gala in the evening, honored the service of **Joanne Bacchus Vaughan, M.D.**, as Grande Dame. She is a long-time Guild member and has served two terms as President; chairman of the Gold Medallion Ball, "A Night in Venice" and held numerous other leadership positions. She is a valued Board Member of the Texas Association of Symphony Orchestras. The Brunch and Gala benefit the Abilene Philharmonic Orchestra which annually presents a full season of Masterworks and Pops



Above: **Joanne Vaughan**, Abilene Heritage Gala honoree, and her husband **Daniel Vaughan**.

concerts, as well as many high-quality music education programs such as the Discover Music Children's Concerts, Abilene Youth Orchestra, Baby Music of Abilene, musician masterclasses and instrument petting zoos.

Amarillo Symphony Guild

The Amarillo Symphony's 2022 Conductor Search Season began in January. Each of our three finalists will conduct two masterworks concerts over the next few months. After the conclusion of the season, the 18th conductor of the Amarillo Symphony will be chosen and announced. The Guild has been featuring these candidates at our monthly Lunch and Listening programs, which occur at noon on the Friday of each concert weekend.

The 67th Annual Symphony Ball was held on Saturday, February 5, 2022 at the Amarillo Club. Our "Sunset to City Lights" theme celebrated the beautiful colors of the local landscape as well as the bright lights of our revitalized



Top: 2021-2022 **Symphony Belles and Beaux**. Bottom: 67th Annual Symphony Ball.

downtown. The breathtaking rose-wrapped spiral staircase was a masterpiece, especially when the time came to present our 2021-2022 Symphony Belles and Beaux! Financial reports are still being finalized, but we expect to make a sizeable gift to our Symphony's education programs soon! The Guild will hold a membership drive in May. We aim to recruit new members, facilitate membership renewals, and reconnect with our lifetime members. Guild representatives will be present on both evenings of the ASO's May concerts to assist with this process and to share information.

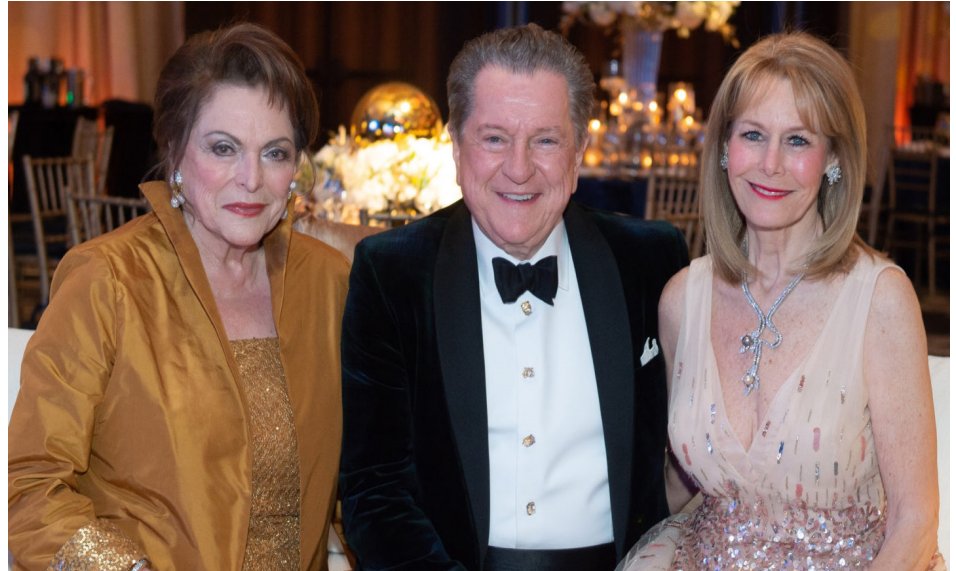
Houston Symphony League

Houston Symphony Ball "The Symphony World in Harmony"

The Houston Symphony's signature Symphony Ball was a brilliant success! Thank you to everyone who attended and supported Chairs **Beth Wolff**, **Cheryl Byington** and **Bill Stubbs**, as well as Jerre Williams and Susan Osterberg. It was a star-studded event and exceeded all fundraising goals. Congratulations! The Post Oak Hotel ballroom was filled with 350 enthusiastic guests. More than \$1.1 million dollars were raised.

Houston Symphony CEO, **John Mangum**, was awarded the **Raphael Fliegel** Award for Visionary Leadership for his leadership of the orchestra. "When the pandemic struck, John, in close collaboration with the Board, musicians, staff, and other stakeholders, maintained the orchestra's activity," Beth Wolff said from the stage. "Under his leadership, the Houston Symphony was the first major American orchestra to return to live performance, the first to welcome live audiences, one of the few to achieve a full 2020-21 Season, and the only orchestra in the world to make a full season of ticketed performances available via livestream and seen in 39 countries worldwide."

Margaret Alkek Williams, who established the Margaret Alkek Williams Executive Director/CEO Chair as part of the Houston Symphony Endowment and donated the organization's largest contribution by an individual over



Left to right: **Beth Wolff**, **Bill Stubbs** and **Cheryl Byington**, Houston Symphony Ball.

the last decade, received the Lifetime of Philanthropy Award. Former Houston Symphony president and energy executive, **Janet F. Clark** received the Ima Hogg Philanthropy Award, named for the late Houston Symphony co-founder.

Women's Symphony League of Austin "Crazy Little Thing Called Love"

Red Haute Valentine Party & Children's Style Show
Austin's favorite children's fashion show, the Women's Symphony League of Austin's annual Red Haute Valentine Party & Children's Style show commenced on Sunday, February 13th, at the super chic Hotel Van Zandt in downtown Austin. Combining fashion, fun, and philanthropy for an ultra family-friendly event, Austin's finest gathered to celebrate Valentine's Day in style.

This year's event chairs, **Tiffany Galligan** and **Jennifer Owens** threw an extravaganza with

shopping, games, and a multi-level tiered chocolate fountain. Emceed by the WSL's own **Julie Null**, with games by fan favorite **Celest Hubert**, guests enjoyed lunch and an adorable runway show featuring some of Austin's littlest style stars.

Produced by **Sue Webber**, kids rocked down the runway in fresh spring designs by participants:



Tiffany Galligan and **Jennifer Owens**, Chairs of Red Haute Valentine Party & Children's Style Show.

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Women's Symphony League of Austin

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Addie Rose Boutique, alexa james baby, Grove Hill ATX, Lemon Drop, Lilly Pulitzer, Pajama Princess, and Wendy Wells Jewelry.

All proceeds from the event directly benefit the Austin Symphony Orchestra and its education programs for children.

Photos right from the Fashion Show.

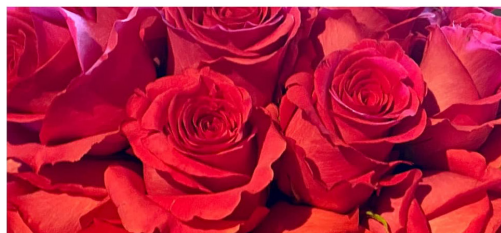
Like us on Facebook!

TASO Conference Underwriting

The 55rd Annual Conference and the host organization, the Lubbock Symphony Guild has set aside monies to help defray the cost of the Conference, but funds are still needed. Please consider making a donation. Every contribution helps! All Donors/Underwriters will be recognized in print during the Conference.

Tote Bags	\$1500
Notebooks	\$1000
Printing	\$1000
Transportation	\$1000
Floral	\$500
Signage	\$300
Name Tags	\$200
Gifts/Favors	\$200
Hospitality/Favors	\$200
Piano Tuning	\$200

Underwriting Registration:
Online or VENMO-
LubbockSymphonyGuild-
Inc. ADD: TASO Conference
donation in comment section.



FASO News

Friends of the Symphony Orchestra (FASO)

Greetings from the Friends of the Symphony Orchestra (FASO) in Bryan-College Station

This has been a year of transition from social isolation back to in-person concerts and traditional events for the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra and FASO. The BVSO has been celebrating its 40th anniversary this season and **Maestro Bussiki's** 25th anniversary as conductor of the orchestra!



FASO helped with the BVSO Golf Tournament fundraiser in October. Early November we held our annual Fall Reception at The Woman's Club in Bryan. Students from the music program at Allen Academy entertained us while we visited and enjoyed appetizers and wine.



The BVSO's Christmas market was held in early December. A number of our volunteers helped and did our part to shop. The Holiday Concert on December 12th was followed by a reception hosted by the Symphony Belles. Packages of cookies and bottled water were served.



The annual Children's Concert was held January 24th. Around 2,000 children from area schools attended. Among pieces heard was "Peter and the Wolf" acted by the Ballet Brazos. Two student conductors had the thrill of conducting the orchestra in "Plink, Plank, Plunk". Art and essay contests have been judged and a reception for the winners will be March 27th, after the next concert.

FASO at this moment is organizing a silent auction as part of the BVSO's fundraiser, "Derby Day", May 7th. This is the largest fundraiser for the orchestra. The

annual meeting/Spring Luncheon will be in May. A new board will be elected at that time. We are already planning events for the fall of 2022.

Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras Awards of Excellence

Since 1990 the Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras has annually presented Awards of Excellence to Texans who have supported Symphonies and the Arts by sharing their expertise and time and by giving their financial support. This year is no exception. We selected four very deserving honorees.

The Business Award of Excellence goes to **Spec's Wines-Spirits & Finer Foods/Spec's Charitable Foundation** owned by **John** and **Lindy Rydman**. They were nominated by the Houston Symphony League. Spec's is the Houston Symphony's largest corporate donor and has contributed more than six million dollars over the past 25 years. They also support the Alley Theatre, Art League Houston and the Houston Museum of African American Culture. John Rydman has served as a longtime member of the Houston Symphony Board of Trustees and led it as President of the Houston Symphony Society beginning in 2020. The Houston Symphony was able to achieve a full 2020-21 season in spite of the pandemic. He ensures that events like Opening Night, the annual Ball, and the Wine Dinner and Collector's Auction are outstanding experiences for Symphony donors. He has supported the Houston Symphony by being an underwriter for all Houston Symphony performances in the month of May, provides a discount on wine for all fundraising events, advertises in the Houston Symphony program, supports music education programs, and encourages his

employees to volunteer for the Symphony.

The Legislator Award of Excellence goes to Representative **Mary González** from District 75. As Vice Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, and Chair of the Appropriations Sub Committee, Representative González played a leadership role in the 87th Texas Legislative Session. Her proactive support of the \$10 million appropriation for the TCA's Cultural and Fine Arts District grant program and her support of protecting the base funding for the TCA, was consistent with her recognition of the value the arts play in our communities both as an economic engine as well as vital to the quality of life for our residents and visitors alike. She continued to stand up for arts and culture, recognizing that even in the most challenging of times – in fact because we were in the most challenging of times – she recognized and supported the ongoing investment in the arts as a means of providing meaning, comfort, solace, and connection to all Texans. In addition, Representative González's work to ensure the financial support of the TCA Cultural District grant program continues to strengthen the program and grow its impact across the state. We thank Representative González for her legislative leadership in the Texas House.

The Patron Award of Excellence goes to **Lee** and **Candyce Pfluger**, nominated by the San Angelo Symphony Guild. The Pflugers have contributed to the San Angelo Symphony and the community by giving their

financial support and sharing their expertise. Among numerous awards and recognitions, Lee is a past recipient of the Spirit of San Angelo Award and San Angelo's Citizen of the Year. Candyce is a recipient of the highest award given by the San Angelo Symphony Guild – "The Circle of Honor". Both have served as symphony board president and have made significant improvements to board and symphony procedures. Especially of note is the restructuring levels of subscriber patron packages and initiating new summer subscription fundraising dynamics. These changes increased revenues for the Symphony. The Pflugers have been major underwriters for numerous events including the Symphony of Horses, securing **Peter Hedges**, author of "Dan in Real Life", and Timothy Green for two major fundraising events, and serving as a host home for progressive dinners. They are responsible for a major collaboration/partnership with the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. They also support the West Texas Rehab Center, The Texas Historical Foundation, Angelo State University, San Angelo Cultural Affairs Council, Texas Tech Ranch Heritage Center, and many other civic efforts.

The Volunteer Award of Excellence goes to **Tim Collins** of Lubbock, nominated by the Lubbock Symphony Guild. Mr. Collins, as Chair of the Lubbock Entertainment and Performing Arts Association (LEPAA), was a key figure in the planning and construction of Lubbock's new Buddy Holly Hall for the Performing Arts

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and Sciences (BHH). BHH is a jewel on the South Plains of West Texas, and Tim's leadership made that incredible facility possible. Tim has also been instrumental in creating collaborative partnerships in the community, including a concert held by LEPA, BHH, and the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra that featured Broadway star **David Gaschen** and which benefitted all three organizations in a sold-out performance. Currently, he is working with the LSO and LSG creating fun activities with the upcoming concert with **Kristin Chenoweth** in October and helping with the 2022 TASO Conference. Tim has also served as Chair of the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce. When he agreed to chair the LEPA, no one realized that he would play a major role in a 9-year commitment resulting in a world-class performing facility. Tim estimates that he has worked 10+ hours a week with LEPA and the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra over the last 8 years. Tim Collins has been the leader of one of the greatest and most impactful community projects Lubbock has ever seen. The sounds of the LSO will bear witness to that story and to Tim's humble and selfless service for generations to come.



Top left: The Patron Award of Excellence recipients, Lee and Candyce Pfluger. Top right: The Legislator Award of Excellence recipient, Mary González Bottom left: The Business Award of Excellence recipient Spec's Wines-Spirits & Finer Foods/Spec's Charitable Foundation owned by John and Lindy Rydman. Bottom right: The Volunteer Award of Excellence recipient Tim Collins, pictured bottom right.



Lubbock April 28 - May 1

Dallas Symphony Orchestra League

A Noteworthy Night

Intimate evening featured renowned pianist Garrick Ohlsson

Renowned pianist **Garrick Ohlsson** was the guest artist for Dallas Symphony Orchestra League's A Noteworthy Night on Wednesday, October 13 in the library of **Kathy and Harlan Crow**. Ohlsson was in Dallas to perform Beethoven's Emperor with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. The event was limited to 75 guests for an intimate evening starting with wine and hors d'oeuvres, followed by a brief performance by Ohlsson.

Honorary Chairs for the event were **Donna and Herb Weitzman**, long time patrons of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Event Chair **Therese Rourk** and DSOL President **Venise Stuart** greeted guests. A Noteworthy Night is a series of DSOL events held in unique venues with limited attendance, offering a small, intimate experience with featured performers. Two additional events are scheduled in the coming year. The next event on February 2, 2022 featured DSO Music Director Emeritus, **Andrew Litton**, and the second on May 25, 2022 will feature Conductor **Gemma New** and composer **Jessie Montgomery**.

36th Annual Presentation Ball

The Dallas Symphony Orchestra League 2022 Debutantes were introduced at the 36th Annual Presentation Ball which was held on February 12, 2022 at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony



*Top left: **Therese Rourk**, **Garrick Ohlsson**, and **Venise Stuart**. Right: Debutante **Miss Abigail Kristine Brannon**. Bottom: **2022 Dallas Symphony Debutantes**.*

Center. There were numerous parents who have had debutante daughters and honor guard sons in prior years. **Janie and David Condon's** daughter **Grace** was the third debutante in the family to be presented. **Margaret and Barry Hancock's** daughter **Katherine** made her debut and the family knows the debutante season well. Daughter **Mary Margaret** made her debut in 2016 and son **James** was an Honor Guard in

2020. However, their history with the Presentation Ball dates even further back starting with the first ball held in 1987 when Barry was an Honor Guard. He met Margaret the next year when she made her debut and they were married a few years later.

The Presentation Ball was created with the vision of long-time League member **Tincy Miller**, who also chaired the first ball.

The Plano Symphony Orchestra

Collin County Young Artist Competition

The Plano Symphony Orchestra (PSO) Guild has conducted the Collin County Young Artist Competition (CCYAC) since 1985 and has seen many talented young musicians throughout the years. The PSO Guild chairman for the event is **Gladys Chan** who has done a fabulous job with the event over the many years it has been held. The event is labor intensive and takes 35 to 50 volunteers to assist on the day of the competition. The competition is divided into three categories: piano, strings, and winds/percussion. There are two divisions: Junior-grades 1-8 and Senior-grades 9-12. Participants must either live in Plano, Frisco, or Collin County; attend a Collin County, Plano ISD or Frisco ISD school, study with a teacher who resides in Plano, Collin County or is a PSO core musician, or be a child of a PSO core musician. Each participant must memorize and perform one or more movements of a concert from the approved repertoire list. Up to twelve Finalists are chosen who then compete for the three Grand Prize positions. The three Grand Prize Winners may come from any category and division and perform their concertos with the PSO orchestra at the March concert.

As the competition has grown, it has gone through some changes in the past few years. With several years of over 120 contestants, it was necessary to find a way to limit the number of contestants so each student would have a



Left to right: The Grand Prize Winners were **Ella Tran** (11th grade pianist), **Steven Lu** (10th grade violinist), and **Reina Shim** (8th grade flutist).

reasonable amount of audition time. A great problem to have! Initially, each teacher was limited to seven contestants. That approach was not successful because some teachers found ways around that rule or did not want to limit the number of students they entered. That led us to go to pre-screening videos in 2020 to limit piano and string contestants to 25 in each category. Wind students did not have to submit videos because there were usually less than 25 wind contestants. In the first year for videos, students were not required to have their music memorized which proved difficult for the pre-screening judges as it was hard for them to predict how much a student would progress in the two months between the videos and the live preliminary round auditions.

There were 86 contestants in the 2020 competition with 73

contestants qualifying to advance to the live auditions. The three Grand Prize Winners chosen in January 2020 were scheduled to perform with the Plano Symphony on March 21, 2020. Due to the pandemic, that concert was cancelled and rescheduled for October 17, 2020. It was the first 2020-2021 Plano Symphony concert held at the Eisemann Center with a live audience since the September PSO concert also had to be rescheduled. The venue had many COVID rules for safety. No one was allowed to enter or exit the stage without a mask. Musicians had to sit 6 feet apart and wind musicians had transparent barriers placed in front of them. Consequently, the number of musicians on the stage was limited. A short slideshow is shown introducing each Grand Prize Winner before their performance while the stage is being reset. Following their performance, the Grand Prize Winners are normally

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presented with their trophies on stage. Since no one was allowed to be handed anything on stage, the Grand Prize Winners picked up their trophies backstage and all walked back on the stage together holding their trophies for their final bows. The concert was live-streamed online for any patrons who did not want to physically attend the concert. The 1,500 seat venue had detailed seating rules which limited the audience to about 400 people.

Since there was no room in the revised 2020-2021 PSO concert schedule to fit in another Young Artist concert, the CCYAC was suspended for 2021. For 2022, all contestants (including winds) were required to submit videos for pre-screening and the music had to be memorized. For various reasons, only 52 contestants submitted applications and videos. There were 27 String, 14 Piano, and 11 Wind contestants. Since two of the string contestants were very young and had short concertos, all the string contestants were allowed to advance to the live preliminary round auditions on January 8, 2022. The longer string concertos were limited to 10-minute auditions in order to fit everyone into the audition schedule. The piano and wind contestants could play their entire

concerto movements because there was ample time in their schedules. The seven senior division wind contestants had a conflict with All-Area Band Auditions on the same day. Our afternoon schedule had to be flexible and was extended to allow them all to audition whenever they could get to our competition. Two expert judges in each category were secured for the preliminary round auditions.

Twelve contestants (5 string, 4 piano, and 3 wind) were chosen to perform in the finals that evening. All six judges chose the three Grand Prize Winners from the twelve finalists. The Grand Prize Winners were **Ella Tran** (11th grade pianist), **Steven Lu** (10th grade violinist), and **Reina Shim** (8th grade flutist). Ella and Steven participated in the TASO Juanita Miller Concerto Competition the next day and were awarded 2nd place in their categories. Interestingly, these three Grand Prize Winners were also Finalists in the 2019 Collin County Young Artist Competition. Their perseverance and hard work have been rewarded.

A new venue had to be found for 2022 because Collin College, where the competition has traditionally been held, was not

taking reservations for 2022 when a venue needed to be selected. Since the PSO had held some of their concerts at Christ United Methodist Church in Plano, it was decided to check into their facilities to see if it would fit the needs of the CCYAC. The church had enough rooms but not as many grand pianos as needed. A grand piano was required as the second piano for the piano auditions in the sanctuary. Thankfully, **Steinway Hall Plano** became a sponsor of our Competition and donated the rental of the second piano.

COVID took its toll again in 2022 with 8 of the 35 volunteer monitors cancelling because they or their spouse tested positive or were sick. Luckily, replacements were found for most of them. Only one of the 52 contestants cancelled because of COVID. The contestants and teachers were very appreciative that the PSO was able to have our CCYAC this year. The Grand Prize Winners will perform at the March 19, 2022 concert with the PSO. It is always an amazing concert to hear these young talented musicians. As their schedule allows, they will also have additional opportunities to play for smaller audiences and special events.

<https://www.tasovolunteers.com>

Texans for the Arts

The Official Arts Advocacy Organization for Texas

Holiday concerts are behind us and I hope you were able to all host performances through the thick and thin of the Omicron variant. We all hunger to be together, and I hope the holiday time afforded that opportunity – through no better way than listening to music together!

Now we are all back into the “Interim” of the Texas Legislature, already gearing up for the 88th Texas Legislative Session which begins in January 2023.

The first thing on the horizon is working with the Governor’s Office of Tourism on the distribution of American Rescue Plan Act dollars.

In December 2021, we shared the outcome of the Texas Legislature’s Special Session #3. Relevant to our work in the arts, is “Tourism, Travel, Hospitality, and Business Aid. The final Bill – SB8 - provides \$180.0 million to the Trusteed Programs within the Office of the Governor to implement a new tourism, travel and hospitality recovery grant program.” These grants will be capped at \$20,000. The Governor’s Office of Tourism has started taking steps to develop a grant program by which these funds will be distributed across the “tourism and hospitality” sector. We are “in the room”, working to ensure that the arts, culture and creative industry is a part of this opportunity. Just last week, the Governor’s Office of Tourism convened a meeting with stakeholders kicking off the research phase for the grant program. We will keep you apprised of any and all progress on this important front. Hopefully, by the time this newsletter comes into print, we’ll have answers!

The second thing is helping us build “Champions” for the arts throughout the legislature. We are so fortunate to have the joy of music to share with our audiences AND our legislators! One of the most important things you can do right now is make sure your elected officials know who you are and the wonderful and impactful work you are doing in your communities. Invite them to a performance or to attend a gala/fundraiser. Follow them on social media and glean the issues that are important to them. Send them your newsletters to keep them apprised of what all you are doing and how that benefits your entire community.

By the time you read this, the primary election will be behind us and we’ll all be gearing up for the November 2022 General Election. Between now and November is a good time to meet with your legislators and their staff and ask them why the arts are important to them! It’s our job to inspire legislators to appreciate the arts and to recognize the value they bring to the communities they represent! Ask them what their favorite books are. Favorite music. Favorite movies. Favorite paintings. Do they have family members engaged in the arts? Let them know how important the arts are to constituents and that constituents vote! The November election in 2022 will be a pivotal one for all of us working to grow the public investment in the arts – and the more arts champions we have as decision makers, the easier it will be to achieve our goals of making the arts more accessible to all across Texas.

Join Texans for the Arts in helping spread the word about our creative work and how it sustains communities across the state. How the value of the investment of the Texas legislature leverages a significant increase in private philanthropy, all part of a healthy eco system of sustainable support for the arts.

I will hope to see everyone in Lubbock at the next TASO Conference – and rejoice in the thought of being together in person to celebrate what makes life rich and whole for each and every one of us - beauty, joy, love, thoughtfulness, gratitude, and the gift of music! Thank you!

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