



# TASO NEWS

Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras

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

*Celebrating 51 Years Fall-2022*

## Texans for the Arts, 25 Years of Advocacy

Texans for the Arts (TFA) is a highly effective, non-partisan statewide arts advocacy organization that provides coordinated information about legislative activity related to arts issues and organizes advocacy efforts in order to protect and increase public funding for the arts at the state, national and local levels.

### *Mission*

Texans for the Arts, the official statewide arts advocacy organization, works to protect and increase public funding and to promote policies that support the arts.

### *Vision*

Where Texas leads the nation in investing in the arts and ensures that the arts are an ongoing part of the public dialogue.

### *25 Years of Advocacy*

Texans for the Arts led the legislative strategy in the 86th Session that led to the largest budget increase for the Texas Commission on the Arts in the history of the agency.

TFA has hosted hundreds of legislative visits with elected officials from Local, State, and Federal posts - including annual meetings with the offices of Texas Senators **John Cornyn, Ted Cruz**, many members of the US

House of Representatives, State Senators, State Representatives, Chambers of Commerce, City Councils and many more. TFA is our voice fighting for the arts each and every day in every corner of our government.

In large part due to the efforts of Texans for the Arts the 85th Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 1221 with the intent of increasing local government transparency while also allowing the public

to better understand the state's patchwork of municipal Hotel Occupancy Taxes. TFA Introduced Regional Conversations as a response to the COVID-19 shut downs to better connect the arts sector and focus on a unified response and action plan. These conversations are a chance for arts leaders in five geographic regions of Texas to connect and discuss the critical issues facing their local communities.



# President's Letter



Greetings to the Symphonies of Texas and to the wonderful leagues and guilds that support them,

I am so humbled and grateful to send my first letter to you as your president of the Texas Association of Symphony Orchestras. The 2021-2022 year ended in such fine style with the Lubbock conference. It was a wonderful send off to our first year back in person after the pandemic and now I am thrilled to welcome you to our new TASO year entitled- "The Symphonies of Texas", "The Greatest Shows on Earth!"

The year commenced with our kick off meeting the last weekend of June in Dallas and I want to thank so very much all those that were in attendance. We hope to see another great turn out the last weekend of September. I say this so that you wonderful hard-working volunteers back home in your respective cities that are reading this publication

may know that the TASO representative from your league or guild works very hard to help fulfill TASO's goal of seeing symphonic music continue to flourish and to let you know what is happening in other symphonies statewide.

I want to challenge you personally to be the catalyst for good things in the world of your particular symphony or in other words as we often here- Be the change that you see needed. To borrow from our TASO circus theme for this year, we are still in a balancing act so to speak to recover from the imprints of the changes that covid brought. Each league struggles with subscription sales, member retention, fundraising and other challenges. So, as you read through this newsletter may you know that these volunteers you see pictured with their events are just like you in your particular setting in many ways.

At our first TASO board meeting in June themed "IS THERE AN ELEPHANT IN YOUR BOARD ROOM?", we looked at some of the above-mentioned problems that plague each symphony but moreover all of the positive that is happening.

I hope to visit your city during these next few months so that I may see firsthand all the wonderful things I have always heard about and read about that you are doing. Please know that TASO is not only here for you but we want to hear from you. I would like to take this opportunity also to ask you to make plans to attend the wonderful Austin TASO conference happening April 14-15th! Don't miss this wonderful opportunity for networking and education in our beautiful capitol city.

Wishing you and your symphony the best year yet,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Candis Rodgers Hicks".

Candis Rodgers Hicks  
TASO President

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

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

## The Amarillo Symphony Guild

The Amarillo Symphony Guild held its annual member meeting on May 10, 2022 at the Amarillo Botanical Gardens. Music was provided by two of our Young Artist Project scholarship recipients, which was a special treat. Also at this meeting, the membership approved three proposed changes to our Rules of Procedures. The most significant of these changes was the removal of female pronouns from our organizational documents, which effectively opens membership and leadership in the Guild to men as well as women. This is an exciting prospect as we enter our 68th year of existence.

In July the Amarillo Symphony announced the selection of **George Jackson** as its 18th Music Director! Jackson was chosen by the Music Director Search Committee, comprised of board members, community representatives, and musicians. A native of England, Jackson has extensive experience with European orchestras in the areas of symphonic repertoire, opera, and contemporary scores. The Symphony's 99th season will commence this September with Jackson at the helm, and many of our perennial Guild programs will start at that time. Stay tuned for more updates as this year progresses!

## Big Spring Symphony Guild

The Big Spring Symphony Guild has kept very busy even with COVID restrictions and plans to be back to full activities



*George Jackson, Music Director of the Amarillo Symphony.*

by January 2023, including reinstating the annual Spring Fundraising Luncheon and Fashion Show. In June, the Guild presented a \$14,000 check to the BSSO Board of Directors from their fundraising efforts. This past season, the Guild also raised money for the **Phyllis Graumann** Memorial Scholarship through selling bottled water sponsored by Culligan Water of Big Spring for any donation combined with the "Tips for Scholarships" program. A contactless system was set up because of COVID and people are giving much higher amounts by doing donations versus a set price.

Recently, four very talented High School music students were awarded the Phyllis Graumann Memorial Scholarship, which was started in memory of Phyllis Graumann, a celebrated and faithful supporter of the Big Spring Symphony and mother to its music director and conductor, **Dr. Keith Graumann**. The 2022 recipients received \$500 to further

their music education through an application/audition process. Thanks to the generosity of the community, there were funds available to award 2 instrumental and 2 vocal scholarships to the following recipients. **David Summers** auditioned on Piano and French Horn and completed his Junior year at Big Spring High School. **Abbigayle Keesee** auditioned on French Horn and completed her Junior year at Stanton High School. The vocalist recipients were **Robert Flerro** and **Krista Coffman** who both graduated with honors from Big Spring High School this past May.

The Big Spring Symphony Orchestra (BSSO) celebrated 40 years with a highly successful 2021-2022 Season. There were five performances in the season entitled, "Home is Where the Heart Is". One big challenge was the indefinite loss of BSSO's regular venue, the Big Spring Municipal Auditorium, to COVID related part shortages. Thankfully, the community stepped up and provided three different venues.

The September 25, 2021 Concert was held and the Big Spring High School Auditorium and was entitled, "A Breath of Fresh Air". In the first half, patrons were treated to "Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 'Pastoral Symphony', Hayden's Violin Concerto No. 2 in G Major with **Dr. Fagner Rocha**, as Guest Artist Violin. Dr. Rocha serves as Assistant Professor of Music at Angelo State University and directs the ASU Symphony. He frequently performs as Concertmaster for the Big Spring

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**Big Spring Symphony** Symphony and Ballet San Angelo. Following Intermission the audience was treated to a breathtaking performance of Grofe's "Grand Canyon Suite".

The December 18, 2021 concert was held at First United Methodist Church and was entitled, "Holiday Spectacular". There were many favorite seasonal songs in the program, including a Christmas Pop Sing-a-long and outstanding guest solos from tenor, Lawrence Thibeault, and soprano, Tara Trowbridge. Then, Big Spring High School Choirs led by their director, **Gershom Garcia**, closed out the concert with a spectacular performance of Shaw's "Many Moods of Christmas."

January 22, 2022 was the LONG AWAITED "Bohemian Rhapsody", featuring Guest Artists, **Jeans 'n Classics**, assisted by the **One Vision Vocal Ensemble** that was made up of area vocalists. It featured the music of Queen and had been rescheduled multiple times due to Canadian COVID travel restrictions. Jeans 'n Classic are a BSSO fan favorite and were worth the wait.

The February 19, 2022 performance was a celebration of the distinguished career of Maestro **John Giordano**, Guest Conductor, with his farewell concert entitled, "Thank You Maestro John!" Maestro John did a fantastic job leading the BSSO musicians shared his beautiful and talented granddaughter, **Sarah Austin**, as guest performer. Sarah is a



*Top: **Holiday Spectacular Concert.** Middle left: Maestro **John Giordano**, retiring Maestro. Middle right: **Marie Osmond**, and her nephew, **David Osmond**. Bottom left: **Robert Flerro** and **Krista Coffman**.*

Mezzo Soprano and delivered a breathtaking performance. The theme of the first half was "Magical Movie Music" and included "Overture to William Tell", Symphony No. 8, "The

Unfinished" and "Somewhere" from Westside Story. The second half was "Music from Out of this World" and featured selections from "Star Wars Epic Suite II", Debussy's "Claire de Lune" and Stravinsky's "Firebird Suite (1919)" The final piece was "Finlandia" by Sibelius and included a expanded orchestra with area honor band students performing "side-by-side" with the professional musicians.

BSSO closed out the season on April 23, 2022 with a once in a lifetime performance by world

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## *Big Spring cont'd*

renown performer, **Marie Osmond**, and her nephew, **David Osmond**. "An Evening with Marie Osmond" took place at the Dorothy Garrett Coliseum on the campus of Howard College and was the best attended concert in the history of The Big Spring Symphony. For many, it was their first major live event since the 2020 shutdowns. The crowd included 125 assisted living and nursing home residents that had tickets donated to them and their caregivers in honor of the special occasion. With the help of the Big Spring Association Board members, the Big Spring Symphony Guild, Howard College and over 120 volunteers, the attendees were treated to a memorable night. Marie Osmond performed songs from multiple genres and mesmerized the audience with her incredible talent, timeless beauty and her love for her fans. This concert was made possible by special funding from The **Maria Hoag**

## **The Plano Symphony Orchestra**

*Plano Symphony Orchestra Welcomes Young Professionals*  
The Plano Symphony Orchestra, celebrating its milestone 40th Anniversary in 2022/23, has started a new community networking group for young professionals (20 to 40-something) in the North Texas Area.

Young Professionals for Plano Symphony Orchestra (YP4PSO) will bring together people interested in engaging with the PSO through attending concerts, social events, and exclusive

behind-the-scenes opportunities. The focus of YP4PSO is to create an environment where young professionals can volunteer, network, socialize, and host special events while working to support the PSO's many music, educational, and community enrichment programs.

YP4PSO will be run by a small steering committee consisting of its members which will develop the overall direction of the group, special events, and work to cultivate its membership.

The YP4PSO launch party was held on March 3, 2022 at the NYLO Hotel in Plano after being advertised via social media (including Facebook and Eventbrite). This first event introduced 25 people to the PSO's diverse array of programming. Attendees mingled amidst the sounds of the PSO as a small chamber group played from their repertoire. Co-Chair **Courtney Hitt** stated, "Launching YP4PSO alongside the Symphony's 40th Anniversary Season is an exciting way to create more buzz and bring more music to this community. I'm excited to get to work!"

YP4PSO membership will launch at \$100 per year with

access to four exclusive member events. There will be one event per quarter beginning in the late summer/early fall of 2022. Additional benefits are:

- pre/post-show cocktail parties
- behind-the-scenes access to the artistic process
- attending rehearsals
- community events
- volunteer opportunities
- and much more.

As a result of the event, longtime friend of the Symphony **Coral Glass** joined to serve as Co-Chair alongside **Courtney Hitt**. They, along with their steering committee, will be responsible for programming YP4PSO's member events. With the group's official kickoff event on the horizon, one member has not only joined YP4PSO - they also purchased season tickets for the PSO's 40th Anniversary.

The PSO is excited to engage the young professional sector of the community and to bring them into the PSO family.

<https://www.tasovolunteers.com>

## Women's Symphony League of Austin

### *Summer Full of Music*

The Women's Symphony League of Austin Enjoyed a Summer Full of Musical Experiences!

The Austin Symphony Orchestra with the wonderful volunteers of the Women's Symphony League of Austin, stayed busy this summer with such events as the Hartman Foundation Concerts in the Park, the HEB Austin Symphony July 4th Concert and Fireworks, and Tuneful Tales!

### *Hartman Foundation Concerts in the Park*

#### The Hartman Foundation

Concerts in the Park is in its 20th summer season and features free ensemble concerts which take place at the Hartman Concert Park in front of the Long Center City Terrace on Sunday evenings. Thanks to a gift from the Hartman Family Foundation, a past recipient of the TASO Awards of Excellence Patron category, these informal concerts for the Austin community allow Austinites to become acquainted or reacquainted with the classical music experience. Enjoying music from jazz and light classical to pops selection and film scores, concertgoers bring a picnic dinner and blanket for a fun evening of community and music!

### *HEB Austin Symphony July 4th Concert and Fireworks*

July 4th was such a special celebration as we gathered in-person for the annual HEB Austin Symphony July 4th Concert and Fireworks show. This year, the Symphony offered several



VIP packages which allowed on-stage seating, access to air-conditioning, private restrooms, as well as reserved parking. It was truly a joyous night celebrating our independence!!

### *Tuneful Tales*

After a two-year hiatus, the Austin Symphony Orchestra (ASO) kicked off this summer's Tuneful Tales at the Austin Public Library downtown. Tuneful Tales programs are free fun-filled summer family events that feature

ASO ensembles performing music to well-known children's stories. Youngsters can visit the Instrument Zoo where they can see, touch, and play the instruments; talk to Symphony musicians; and hear them play their instruments. Big thanks and praise go to our enthusiastic and organized committee chairs **Alexis Simón Moore, Emily Avila and Karin Foster** for kicking off the first WSL volunteer opportunity for the 2022-23 year! – a wonderful way to spend a Wednesday morning.

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*Austin Symphony left page: HEB Austin Symphony July 4th Concert and Fireworks. This page top: Tuneful Tales at the Austin Public Library downtown. Right: Hartman Foundation Concerts in the Park.*



## San Angelo Guild

What's happening in San Angelo from Guild President **Kim Rike**.

Here's what we've been doing this summer: At our Board retreat June 1, we passed a new membership level for Young Professionals, for 20-30 year-olds (pending General Membership approval). This was an idea I got from a speaker

at TASO. we will specifically be targeting this age group for membership this upcoming year. We also decided to add a spring fundraiser, a children's style show and tea. Also an idea I got at TASO!

Since the retreat, we were able to pass updates to the Standing Rules to consolidate committees so that all of our volunteers are being affectively utilized, and none have a one and done job. One of the things I heard at TASO was that if you don't use your volunteers you will lose them. So we made this update to that effect. We also held a snow cone social and informational meeting for potential incoming beaux/belles. It was well attended, and everyone there has joined. Since June 1st, we've gone from 17 active members to 39 active members. And we have 12 incoming 7th grade beaux/belles.

We have also started the process of an official Beaux/Belle Scholarship Fund, so that deserving, yet financially challenged, students can participate in the program. We are tweaking it for permanent inclusion in the Standing Rules, but passed a preliminary scholarship program for now, which will aid two students this year! We wish you all a great year!

**Like us on  
Facebook!**

## Dallas Symphony Orchestra League

The Dallas Symphony Orchestra League introduced the 2022-2023 debutantes during Announcement Week festivities held May 25 - May 28, marking the official start for the season of events culminating with the 37th Presentation Ball, which will be held February 11, 2023. The Presentation Ball Chair is **Karen Cox** and DSOL President is **Cynthia Beard**. Karen's daughter **Isabella** made her debut in 2020 and Cynthia's daughter **Jane** was

presented in 2008.

The events started with a moms' meeting and a rehearsal with the announcement party held at **Stanley Korshak**. Stanley Korshak hosted a reception in the gown salon featuring many gowns designed by their in-house designer **Mackenzie Brittingham**. The final event was a Fiesta Meet & Greet held in the evening at El Fenix Downtown for Debutantes, Honor Guard members and their families.

## Dallas Symphony Orchestra League Receives Award at Conference in the Nation's Capital

The Dallas Symphony Orchestra League was a recipient of the Innovator Award from Association of Major Symphony Orchestra Volunteers (AMSOV) in recognition for their Junior Symphony Ball (JSB). The JSB was carefully executed by more than 750 committee members with over 2800 students from 35 schools attending the celebratory evening with dinner, dancing and music, raising a record setting \$446,000.

## AMSOV's 43rd Conference

A delegation of Dallas symphony patrons attended AMSOV's 43rd North American Biennial Conference in Washington, D.C. on June 2-5, 2022. It marked the second time the Conference has been held in the nation's capital. The host of the conference was the Volunteer Council for the National Symphony Orchestra with the REACH at the Kennedy Center as the site of the conference sessions. The Dallas delegation was led by **Marena Gault**, the President of AMSOV, **Venise Stuart**, Immediate Past President of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra League, DSO Director of Volunteer Services **Allison Brodnax**, **Karen Cox**, **Rose Gault** and **Deborah Brown**.

*Top left: Debutantes. Top right: **Marena Gault** and **Venise Stuart**. Left **Karen Cox**, Ball Chair and **Cynthia Beard**, DSOL President. Bottom right: Miss Barcus.*





## The Women's Symphony League of Tyler

The Women's Symphony League of Tyler has had a busy and productive summer planning 2022-2023.

The East Texas Symphony Orchestra had the opportunity to perform with Texas Country Reporters **Kelly** and **Bob Phillips** this summer as part of the symphonic concert celebrating Texas history, music and culture. "A Texas Tribute" had two sold out performances in Tyler at the newly renovated **Rogers Palmer** Auditorium on the Tyler Junior College campus. It was a truly incredible experience for both the orchestra and the audiences. Junior Symphony League members acted as ushers for the events.

ETSO held a jazz performance at **True Vine Brewery** and will perform a Concert in the Park in September. The venue for this is a large, historical park in the heart of Tyler on a modernized amphitheater that has been the venue for outdoor concerts since the 1940's! The ETSO concert season will commence in November with "Opening Night with Yoav Talmi" and will include Berlioz's Symphony fantastique.

The initial WSL event will take place at Tyler's premier upscale grocers, Fresh by **Brookshires**, in September. It will be the first meeting of the year. "Fall, Fresh and Friends" is a fundraising project and a meeting. It is an opportunity to fulfill both a meeting and fundraising requirement of WSL members.



Top left: Guests at **True Vine Brewery** Jazz Concert.. Top right: **Women's Symphony League** members. Middle left: **Monster Bowl**. Right: **Women's Symphony League** members. Bottom: **Monster Bowl**.

In October, the Junior Symphony League will celebrate with its annual "Monster Bowl". The contributions raised will benefit the East Texas Youth Orchestra and WSL's Music Education programs. Last year, over \$13,000 was donated. "Monster Bowl" is held

at a local bowling alley, and JSL members compete for costume prizes, enjoy pizza and lots of candy, and they actually bowl! The Women's Symphony League of Tyler looks forward to the events for 2022-2023.

## Houston Symphony League

### Family Concert Series

League volunteers were privileged to provide assistance to families attending **Robert Franz'** last Family Concert on Saturday, April 23. Volunteers staffed the Instrument Petting Zoo, provided information about the costumes from Robert's many Family Concerts over the years, handed out piggybanks and sunglasses, and provided assistance to the Dobie High School String Quartet who provided entertainment in the lobby. We were also able to enjoy the Wands and Wizards concert and join the audience in a standing ovation for Robert who was concluding his fourteen year tenure as Associate Conductor of the Houston Symphony where he was recently honored with the Raphael Fliegel Award for Visionary Leadership for his immense success in advancing the symphony's education activities.

### Musician Appreciation Breakfast

On Friday, May 27, on behalf of the League, breakfast was served backstage in Jones Hall. All the Symphony musicians rehearsing for the weekend concerts were invited, in appreciation for all they do. **Leslie Nossaman, Bob Chanon, Darlene Clark, Susan Binney, Deborah Happ and Mary Fusillo** served and thanked them. In fact, we were entertained by the rehearsal - distantly!

### Can't Say No To Clicquot!

This year the Houston Symphony League participated in the hugely successful Wine Dinner and Collector's Auction held on Friday, May 13, 2022 by raising

\$2500. in Veuve lot donations. The dinner itself raised \$656,000 to support our Symphony's industry-leading Education and Community Engagement initiatives. Our generous League donors include **Susan Binney, Terry Brown, Cheryl Byington, Paige Cawthon, Robert Chanon, Penny Derrick, Joan Duff, Claire Fontenot-Gray, Deborah Happ, Gaye Jackson, Vesna Jurick, Debra Laws, April Lykos, Michelle Matzer, Barbara Moore, Grace Murray, Leila Perrin, Fran Fawcett Peterson, Maria Reynolds, Mary Sage, Donna Shen, Leslie Siller, Vicki West, Nancy Willerson, Jerre Williams, Connie Kwan-Wong and Jo Dee Wright.** We are so proud to represent the League in such a bubbly and impactful way!

### "La Nuit Du Caviar" Fundraiser

On Monday, October 3, 2022 the Houston Symphony League will hold a new fundraiser. From the creator of Truffle Masters, DR Delicacy presents "La Nuit du Caviar" a black tie event benefiting the Houston Symphony League at The Astorian, 2500 Summer



Street. It will be an adventurous culinary experience, part competition and part celebratory showcase. Houston Celebrity Chefs will create original delicacies featuring the finest caviar from around the world. A full bar and entertainment are included. Guests will be invited to sample each dish and choose the evening's best cuisine. A special reception from 6:30 to 7 pm awaits attendees who have purchased a table while the main event for all guests will unfold from 7 to 9:30 pm.



Top: **Robert Franz**, Associate Conductor of the Houston Symphony. Bottom left: Musician Appreciation Breakfast. Bottom right: Wine Dinner and Collector's Auction.