



# TASO NEWS

Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras

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

Celebrating 55 Years Winter - 2024



## Stephen Chang - Juanita Miller Concerto Competition Winner

Texas Association of Symphony Orchestras (TASO) held the 27th Annual Juanita Miller Concerto Competition at the Meadows School of the Arts on the campus of Southern Methodist University. Students in grades 9-12 from throughout the state of Texas competed in three divisions: strings, winds/brass, and piano. The three first place winners received cash awards and the Grand Prize winner will have the opportunity to perform with a Texas orchestra.

Judges selected from 16 piano contestants, 14 string contestants, and 10 the winds-brass division contestants. The 2024 winners of the Juanita Miller Concert Competition are: Grand Prize - **Stephen Chang**, Southlake - 12th  
First Place Winners  
1st Place Viola - **Stephen Chang**, Southlake - 12th; **1st Place Piano** - **Emma Oba**, McKinney - 10th; **1st Place - Flute** - **Joseph Park**, Allen - 11th; **Strings-Grand Prize** - Viola- **Stephen Chang**, Southlake - 12th; 2nd Place - **Violin** - **Lucas Yeh**, Frisco- 11th; 3rd Place - **Cello** - **Jin Han**, Flower Mound - 11th; **Piano** 1st Place - **Emma Oba**, McKinney - 10th; 2nd Place - **Piano** - **Minyang Xu**, Allen - 9th; 3rd Place **Piano** - **Melody Guo**, Dallas - 11th.

**Winds/Brass:** 1st Place - **Flute** - **Joseph Park**, Allen - 11th; 2nd Place - **Flute** - **Soomin Oh**, Austin



*Patsy Donosky, daughter of Juanita Miller; 1st place and 2024 Grand Prize winner Stephen Chang, viola. 1st place winners: Emma Oba, piano; Joseph Park, flute.*

- 9th; 3rd Place - **Bassoon** - **Bowie Wu**, Cedar Park - 12th.

The competition chairman was **Venise Stuart** from the Dallas Symphony Orchestra League. **Darlene Morford** from the Plano Symphony Guild serves as the TASO president. In attendance was **Patsy Donosky**, daughter of the late **Juanita Miller**. In 1997, Juanita and Henry S. Miller provided the initial underwriting and subsequent gifts to fund this youth competition, which now bears her name. It was Mr. and Mrs. Miller's dedication, vision, generosity and devotion to music that led to the establishment of a statewide youth competition for outstanding high school musicians. In hosting this competition, TASO continues to employ a professional approach for selecting the winners by choosing outstanding judges from across the country.

Piano judge **Rachel Heard** is

from Jackson, Mississippi. She currently serves as the Director of Millsaps Conservatory of Music. She is active as a performer/and teacher. She holds performance degrees from The Juilliard School and a doctorate from Rutgers University. **Emily Ondracek-Peterson**, strings judge, is Executive Director of the Diehn School of Music at Old Dominion University. Dr. Emily Ondracek-Peterson is a leader in numerous fields. She holds performance degrees from The Juilliard School and a doctorate in education from Teachers College, Columbia University. Winds & Brass judge **Mark Kellogg** is from the Eastman School of Music. He has embraced a wide range of musical roles throughout his career. In addition he holds the position of Professor of Trombone at the Eastman School of Music.

The competition is held annually with the next one scheduled on Sunday, January 5, 2025.

# President's Letter



I hope all of you had a very Happy Holiday Season! I love the family holiday traditions, the food, holiday decorations, holiday parties and concerts, and most of all, celebrating the season with family and friends.

The Juanita Miller Concerto Competition was held on January 7, 2024 at SMU. A special thank you to **Venise Stuart** and the JMCC committee for organizing this event. The day of the competition requires many volunteers. Thank you to all of the many volunteers.

Please join us at the Conference in Tyler in April. It is an event you will not want to miss.

*"You'll never get bored when you try something new. There's really no limit to what you can do."  
Dr. Seuss*

Darlene Morford  
TASO President



**Top left:** Venise Stuart, JMCC Chair; Dr. Samuel Holland, Algur H. Meadows, School of the Arts, SMU; Darlene Morford, TASO President.  
**Center:** Piano Division Winners. **Right:** Winds Division Winners. **Bottom left:** Judges: Rachel Heard, Emily Ondracek-Peterson, Mark Kellogg.  
**Bottom right:** Strings Division Winners, Stephen Chang, Lucas Yeh, Jin Han.

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

## Dallas Symphony Orchestra League

*The DSOL Fashion Notes*

*Luncheon Hit All the Right Notes*

Proceeds will light the paths of aspiring local musicians through DSO's outreach and educational programs.

Guests stepped into the world of fashion and philanthropy with the 10th Annual Fashion Notes Designer Award Luncheon and Style Show, hosted by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra League (DSOL) at the majestic Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center on October 12.

The event was a scene of style and community spirit. The morning kicked off with a Champagne reception, a silent auction, and an exciting raffle, and a fashion presentation and a luncheon live auction.

**Jada Mowles** and **Laura Price**, curated a memorable fashion experience for all. **Karen Cox** and her daughter, **Isabella Cox**, were the Honorary Chairs of the event. They have long been devoted supporters of the Dallas Symphony. Karen is a former Fashion Notes Chair and served as Presentation Ball Chair earlier this year. Isabella was a DSOL Debutante in 2020 and now a member of the DSOL Assembly.

Musical magic was woven into the day's tapestry by the DSO Concert Truck, a traveling stage in an 18-ft box truck featuring pianists, and the melodious strains of Young Strings musician **Jacqui Torres** playing her cello. She later graced the runway



**Above:** Mothers **Samantha Wortley** and **Claire Catrino** and their daughters modeling. **Middle:** **Event Chair Jada Mowles**, Designer Award winner **Catalina Gonzalez**, **Event Chair Laura Price**. **Bottom:** Honorary Chairs **Karen Cox** and **Isabella Cox**.

as a model and shared her experiences with the Young Strings program, a beneficiary of the event's proceeds. Young violinist **Alan Milan** was tapped to accompany the models during their runway presentation. DSOL President **Nancy Labadie** emphasized the event's significance and impact. "We are fortunate to have Jacqui Torres with us. We wanted you to have a firsthand experience with where your support lands after you leave here today," said Labadie "What we are involved in changes lives and betters our community."

The runway came alive when symphony patron families modeled fashions from **LoveShackFancy** and **Dondolo**, along with the dazzling accessories by **Milliard Diamond Concierge** and chic boots by **Petite Paloma**.

**Meredith Land**, the popular NBC 5 news anchor, served as Emcee.



## Houston Symphony League

*Opening Night, September 29*

The Houston Symphony celebrated the start of the 2023-24 Janice H. & Thomas D. Barrow Classical Season with the annual Opening Night Concert and Gala on September 29, 2023 at The Corinthian Event Center.

**ConocoPhillips** served as the Concert Sponsor and Lead Corporate Gala Underwriter for the 37th consecutive year.

The Parisian-inspired event was a hit, raising \$638,000 for the Symphony's Education and Community Engagement initiatives. The evening—which celebrated honoree League member and symphony supporter **Beth Madison** for her contributions to the Symphony, other Houston performing arts organizations, and higher education institutions—was a delightful Parisian affair. The Corinthian, beautifully decorated with tables topped with French inspired blue linens, candelabras, and floral centerpieces, also featured a recreation of the Arc de Triomphe adorned with florals. Thank you to chairs, **Mariglyn** and **Stephen Glenn** for a wonderful evening.

### *Social Connections*

These special groups are formed for camaraderie and friendship for our League members in good standing. In addition, to the fun activities, they are expected to be available to usher at one Spring and one Fall student or family concert event.

### *Exploring Houston*

The Social Connections group



*Top left: Opening Night chairs **Mariglyn** and **Stephen Glenn**. Top right: Social Connections Group Boat Trip.. Bottom: **Breakfast volunteers**.*

called Exploring Houston had a beautiful day for a boat trip on the Houston Ship Channel. Eighteen ladies and gents enjoyed the day and caught some activity on the Channel, then lunch at the Original **Ninfa's Restaurant** on Navigation. And, of course, we appreciated the complimentary transportation provided by Harris County Precinct 3.

### *Gourmet Group*

The Social Connections' Gourmet Group had a smash hit with the Tamales Class at **Sylvia's Enchilada Kitchen**. We've received rave reviews with

requests to please hold another class in the spring-this time on enchiladas ! So, we'll wait and see what dynamic duo co-chairs, **Carole Strachan** and **Diana Waguespack** come up with.

### *Orchestra/Staff breakfast*

November 9, 2023, chaired by **Donna Mello**. We had a great turnout for the orchestra/staff breakfast held on November 9th. The staff and musicians all appreciated our efforts. One of the positive comments: **Johnathan**, first chair oboist, said he had played with many orchestras, but we were the only ones to treat them to breakfast.

He made this comment as he grinned ear to ear. We believe that 80 orchestra members and staff were there along with seven league volunteers. Seven volunteers served the breakfast.

## Plano Symphony Orchestra Guild

### *Tune-N-Fork, A Community Music Party*

The mission of the Plano Symphony Orchestra is to inspire, educate, entertain, and involve the children, youth, and adults of our community in the enjoyment of great music. Like many orchestras, we are always looking for new ways to introduce the PSO to our community, especially young adults. While we have plenty of traditional and family oriented concerts, what we needed was a fun event in a casual environment that features music to involve more of the community. Thus, an outdoor event featuring small bites from local restaurants, beer, wine and soft drinks and plenty of music seemed just the ticket. The inaugural “PSO Tune-N-Fork, a Community Music Party” was held on October 7, 2023 from 7 to 11pm. The event was sponsored in part by the **City of Plano**, **Gregory Patterson**, and **Ellie and Ira Barash**. **Ellie Barash** and **Rebeka Ecker** were the co-chairs of this event.

We knew there would be a learning curve for this type event, so we wanted to start small with a target audience of 100 to 150 people. More than 125 people actually attended. While we would like to grow this event into a fund raiser for the PSO, this

year’s target was to cover our costs for the event and we were successful with that goal. We also achieved another goal of partnering with a number of local organizations to bring a fun event for the community.

The event was held at the ArtCentre of Plano, located in downtown Plano. The majority of the event was held outdoors, but access to the main and auxiliary buildings was included along with tables and chairs. **The Honorable John B. Muns**, Mayor of Plano, and **Councilman Rick Horne** attended. The mayor spoke at the event stating that he was delighted that the symphony is part of his city. He sees how the symphony reaches out to the community to all generations to give them the opportunity to enjoy this wonderful pleasure.

Food was donated by several different restaurants from Plano. The restaurants brought their favorite hot or cold food. There were appetizers, desserts, fancy cookies, and ices with or without liquor. The restaurants were asked to provide food for 150 people. Beer, wine and soft drinks were also provided. A food truck was added as a backup to ensure that there would be enough food. As it turned out, the seven restaurants provided ample food, so the food truck was not necessary. A variety of music was offered, from ballet to jazz. The entertainment included soprano **Haley Sickling**, **North Texas Performing Arts** (band and singer), **Ballet Metropolitan** and a **PSO sax quartet**.

The venue, food, entertainment,



Top: Tune-N-Fork event.



security, video recording of the event, and lighting were needed and secured. Volunteers were needed for setup, breakdown at the end of the event, serving of food and drinks, and registration. Volunteers included PSO Board and Guild members, high school volunteers with their parents, and the “Sign-Up Genius” app was utilized to obtain volunteers who were new to the PSO. Two of the high school volunteers are recipients of PSO music scholarships for free instrument lessons.

The entrance fee was a very reasonable \$35 per person that

included the small bites provided by our restaurant partners. Each attendee received a Visit Plano gift bag that included a bottle of water courtesy of **H-E-B**; a coupon for one free drink; four door prize tickets, a \$5 coupon for food truck purchase, along with other items. Everyone received a wristband in exchange for their ticket to show they belonged at the event as an easy reference for security.

During the event and afterwards, rave reviews were received from attendees who stated that they were looking forward to returning next year. Our community partners were also very pleased with the event and excited about participating next year. The PSO is looking forward to growing this event in the coming years and reaching more people within the community with great music.

## The Abilene Philharmonic Guild

The Abilene Philharmonic Guild has been busy little bees this first half of our 2023-2024 year. We are proud to have completed our student concert series on October 27th. **LuAnn Madison** did an amazing job coordinating this outreach education project that reached over three thousand students from Abilene and the surrounding communities.

Saturday, December 2nd, we were pleased to assist with the Philharmonic's first Pops concert this season. Ticket sales of over 1,600 were higher than we expected with people traveling from all over Texas to enjoy the



Poinsettias decorating the Abilene stage



Christmas in America Concert

Irish music, dancing, singing, and slides.

As part of this beautiful Christmas concert, the Guild purchases poinsettias from **HEB** to decorate the stage along with lighted garland and festive red bows. We sell the poinsettias as a fundraiser. This year the board designated the net profits from this fundraiser to be used to purchase new garland, bows, and a wreath for the Christmas 2024 concert. We want to express great appreciation to HEB for providing a grant to cover the majority of the costs to purchase the poinsettias.

We are diligently working to prepare for our Heritage Brunch and Gala scheduled for Saturday, February 24, 2024, at the Abilene Country Club. We will honor five Senior Belles for their volunteer efforts supporting the Guild and the Orchestra. The net profits from this beautiful event are given to the Abilene Philharmonic Orchestra.

## Waco Symphony Council

The 2023-2024 season of the Waco Symphony Orchestra is off to a great stellar start. The theme

for the year, Out of This World, is perfect as we explore music that makes us soar!

We started our 2023-2024 journey with a gathering to celebrate the new year with a brunch at **Liz and Lew Arend's** home on September 10th.

On September 26th, the WSC welcomed fourth graders to Waco Hall for the annual Children's concert. **Miguel Harth-Bedoya**, the conductor of the Baylor Symphony chose the theme: Music and Stories Spanning the World. Students listened to Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet and Rimski - Korsakov's Capriccio Espagnol. **Ann Harder** engaged the concert goers as Mistress of Ceremonies. Dancers from **Joy's School of Dance** made the music come alive. Watching the children as they entered Waco Hall was worth every bit of the planning! We always hope we inspire students to play an instrument or become future symphony attendees.

On Sunday, October 1st, we found ourselves at the home of **Priscilla** and **David Henry** for a brunch

# FASO News

honoring **Maestro Lawrence Loh**, a finalist for Music Director/Conductor of the Waco Symphony. We all enjoyed his insights into the music we were going to hear as it always make the music more special!

Our first concert on October 5th, Breaking Boundaries featured **Aaron Copeland's** Lincoln Portrait with narration by **Glenn Beals** and Dmitri Shostakovich's Symphony No 5.

On October 29th, the Waco Symphony Youth Orchestra made up of students from local middle and high schools performed in their fall concert under the baton of **Maestro Beau Benson**. **Gretchen** and **Sandy McCormack** welcomed us to their home on November 12th where we were introduced to **Maestro David Itkin**, the final music director/conductor candidate for the WSO. Having listened to his description of the music we were going to hear at the concert, we were all eager for the concert!

The November 16th concert, Larger than Life brought us **Richard Strauss' Don Juan** narrated by **Stephen Morscheck** and **Johannes Brahms' Symphony No 4**.

On December 9 and 10, we brought toy soldiers and the Sugar Plum Fairy to Waco Hall for Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Ballet. We will welcome conductor, **Beau Benson**, and the **Ballet Frontier** to help us make memories for families. A wide assortment of nutcrackers and themed ornaments will be available for



Waco Symphony Council.



sale. WSC volunteers will be hard at work making sure the event goes off without a hitch!

There is lots more exciting music to come in the second half of our season including our April 7th concert: Sun, Moon, and Superstars as we get ready to welcome the amazing solar eclipse on Monday, April 8, 2024.

We will be announcing the name of our new music director/conductor shortly, so stay tuned. In the meantime, enjoy the holidays!

## FASO/ Brazos Valley

Symphony volunteers in Bryan-College Station staged a wildly successful fund-raiser Oct. 19, the second annual "Puttin' on the Ritz" luncheon and fashion show at **Miramont Country Club** in Bryan. The dazzling event, sponsored by Friends Association of the Symphony Orchestra (FASO), attracted more than 200 attendees and raised about \$30,000 for the Brazos Valley symphony Orchestra (BVSS).

This year's theme, "Into the Wild," provided the inspiration for a massive decorative jungle

backdrop at the registration table, intricate tablescapes at each of twenty-one luncheon tables and even the ensembles models wore in the fashion show. All evoked patterns, impressions and moods of the jungle, safari and the "Wild, Wild West." Many patrons joined in the spirit of the festivities by wearing costumes or outfits that featured exotic florals, animal prints, leather, rhinestones, studs, faux fur and western hats. In fact, prizes were awarded to several attendees for their creativity in dressing for the theme.

Emcee of the gala was local media personality, **Mary Mike Hatcher**. Following an invocation delivered by **Mark Taylor**, FASO President **Sandy Farris**, BVSO conductor **Marcelo Bussiki** and BVSS President **Cathy Loving** offered introductory remarks about the various entities involved in promotion of the Brazos Valley Symphony.

The highlight of the occasion was the fashion show, in which about twenty-five models strutted the runway in high-fashion clothing ranging from ultra-casual sportswear to glamorous formal attire, all exhibiting "Into

the Wild” colors, patterns, motifs and even accompanying music. Some models were recruited from the community and others were provided by **Witt’s End Boutique, Sabi Boutique** and **Suede Boutique**. The businesses also loaned fashions for the show. Children and youth from Brazos Valley Troupe clad in animal costumes cavorted on the runway in the manner of “The Lion King.” **Mark Taylor** injected a comic element in his exaggerated vocal rendition of the 1960’s pop classic, “Wild Thing.” Weaving among the tables in a dramatic nightclub fashion, he drew hearty laughter and capped the entertainment with a whimsical touch.

FASO has sponsored symphony fund-raising teas and fashion shows in Bryan-College Station in the past, but the most recent version was dubbed the first annual “**Puttin’ on the Ritz**” luncheon and vintage fashion show in 2022. One of the first galas held locally after the decline of covid, that event garnered impressive attendance, raves from the patron community and a record-breaking financial donation to the symphony.

The October 2023 event was underwritten by FASO Board and BVSS Board member, **Sue Lee** and **BMW/Mercedes** of College Station. FASO fashion show committee members included **Sandy Farris, Sue Lee, Jane Miller, Sinead Dunne, Becky Hall, Anne Prescott, Carol Wagner, Karen Melvin, Julie Beazer** and **Julie Flores**. Tablescapes and the registration table decorative installation were created by **Karen Melvin**, and **Shawna Davis**.



Top left: **Belles** at Gala. Top right: **Dianne Sawyer, Marsha Green, Liz Arend, Paula McReynolds** and **Jennifer Richie** at TASO. Bottom left: **Ann Harder**, WSA Pres; **Suzanne Alexander**, WSC Pres; **Wesley Schulz**, Guest Conductor; **Carolyn Bess**, WSA ED; and **Sue Blaker Jacobson**, WSO Concert Master. Bottom right: WSO musicians performing.

## Texans for the Arts

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 (TCA) in the history of the agency, including the first \$10 million appropriation to fund the TCA’s Cultural District project grants.

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 speaking up for the arts, culture and creative industries 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 state, county and municipal Hotel Occupancy Taxes.



# TASO News

## Symphony League of Tyler Conference

The 2024 Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras (TASO) 57th annual conference will be hosted by the Women's Symphony League of Tyler and held on April 5 through April 6, 2024, in Tyler, Texas. Approximately 75 individuals will attend the conference to gather information, network with colleagues, as well as attend the East Texas Symphony Orchestra's performance of "Totality Of The Sun," celebrating the eclipse. In partnership with Tyler Junior College, and conducted by **Maestro Richard Lee**, the eclipse Concert will feature the East Texas Symphony Orchestra playing celestial favorites with beautiful visuals provided by the TJC's Earth & Space Science Center.

Topics for the conference include interactive workshops and presentations on the importance of the arts in one's community, fundraising, leadership, advocacy, and the state of the arts.

Nationally known speaker **Susan Howlett**, author of "Boards on Fire" and "Getting Funded" will present the Keynote address and workshop, "Reinvigorate, Inspire and Grow Your Board." Susan has been helping organizations thrive since 1975. She has helped thousands of groups clarify their missions and goals, create plans, and raise money from every type of source - joyfully!

A panel discussion of The Importance of Volunteer Leadership will include President and CEO of the League of

American Orchestras **Simon Woods**, Director of Learning and Leadership, **David Styers**, Vice President of Advocacy **Heather Noonan**, LAO Volunteer President **Laurie Skjerset** and Liaison to the Volunteer Council, **Melanie Hausemann**.

**Chris Kiley**, Executive Director for Texans for the Arts, will bring the latest advocacy news from across the state.

The TASO Conference will highlight the winners of the

Recognized Projects Program in the areas of fundraising, education, communications/technology, and leadership/service.

The distinguished Awards of Excellence will be presented to winning candidates in business, volunteer, patron, and legislator categories.

We hope attendees will return home with new information, skills and ideas that will impact their organizations.



TASO TYLER 2024

April 4-6

Registration fee for the conference is \$350  
Register at [tasovolunteers.com](http://tasovolunteers.com)

The Hotel is the Holiday Inn  
Rooms are \$119  
903-561-5800

ask for Vicki to Register at the Hotel

# WASO News



## The Women's Symphony League of Austin

The Women's Symphony League of Austin celebrated the 68th annual Jewel Ball in September. The WSL presented The Austin Symphony Orchestra with the proceeds from the ball in December. WSL was well-represented as we handed over a check for \$313,000! We hosted Visiting Jewels from **Lubbock**, **Tyler** and **Waco**. We are accepting nominations for the September 21 Ball.

Please email **Molly Benson** at [mollywb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mollywb@sbcglobal.net) for more information and an application packet.

In October, the WSL welcomed central Texas children to the Palmer Events Center for the traditional ASO Halloween Concert. The program took guests on a magical journey through family-friendly classics, inspired by witches, sorcerers, and enchanted creatures. The beloved music of **Tchaikovsky's** Swan Lake, was brought to life with lively narration. The afternoon also featured a trio of teeth-chattering classics by master composers **Mussorgsky**, **Humperdinck**, and **Gounod**.

The WSL invites you all to The



*Top: The WSL presented The Austin Symphony Orchestra with the proceeds from the ball. Right: Jewel Ball President and Chair Party.*

WSL Red Haute Valentine Party and Style Show! This has become Austin's premier Valentine's event, featuring a one-of-a-kind children's fashion show introducing the season's hottest trends.

The theme of our next Red Haute is "Love, Audrey." The experience will be a tribute to the timeless films of **Audrey Hepburn**. We look forward to seeing you at the Four Seasons Hotel Austin on Sunday, February 11th, 2024.

Please see <https://wslaustin.org/> for ticket information.

