

220 SOUTH – April 2025



A newsletter of the League of the CSOA

Merle Jacob, Editor

A WELCOME FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear League of the CSOA members,

I want to thank all our members who have volunteered for this season's Adventures in Music (AIM) and Family concerts, the Senior and Veteran Open Rehearsals (SVEP), and the Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition. These opportunities to give of our time represent some of the most important work that we do for the CSOA.

The League also sponsored its annual Endowed Concert for the Chicago Symphony Chorus in March. I want to thank Merle Jacob for chairing this special event, which our chorus always enjoys.

On March 17, we hosted our Spring All-Member Meeting and it was so wonderful to see and catch up with you all and to enjoy a special performance by our Civic fellow, Kari Novilla.

The rest of our 2024/25 season is filled with many exciting events including additional AIM concerts, a Civic and a CSO posconcert reception, our annual Corporate Night (featuring Broadway star, Heather Headley) and our Annual All-Member Meeting on June 11th.

I hope that you won't deprive yourself of these exciting, upcoming events and opportunities!



League president Sharon Mitchell poses with CSO trombonist Charles Vernon at the 2025 Musicians' Luncheon

Musically yours,

Sharon Mitchell

President, League of the CSOA

LEAGUE EVENTS

THE CSO IN MIAMI

During the CSO's winter tour earlier this season, the CSOA hosted a preconcert reception in Miami which welcomed Miami locals, League members and their guests along with several CSO musicians in attendance. A delightful assortment of food and beverages were served. Jeff Alexander, President of the CSOA, welcomed all guests. Dale Hedding, VP for Development, and Major Gifts Officer, John Heffernan, also attended. Needless to say, all the guests fell in love with the CSO!

Under the baton of Maestro Muti, the CSO performed a wonderful concert which included selections by Bellini, Schubert and Tchaikovsky to a sold-out audience at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the performing Arts in Miami. What a wonderful performance!



Music Director Emeritus for Life, Maestro Muti, conducts the CSO at the Adrienne Arsht Center in Miami, FL





From left to right: CSOA president, Jeff Alexander; CSOA Director of Leadership Gifts, Allison Szafranski; CSO violinist, Susan Synnestvedt; League president, Sharon Mitchell, and League VP of Membership, Janice Young.



From left to right: League VP of Membership, Janice Young; League president, Sharon Mitchell; and CSO piccolo/flute player, Jennifer Gunn.



League president, Sharon Mitchell, poses with CSO trumpet player, John Hagstrom.



League president, Sharon Mitchell, poses with CSOA president, Jeff Alexander.

CIVIC ORCHESTRA ALUMS PERFORM WITH NEW WORLD SYMPHONY IN MIAMI

While in Miami, League President, Sharon Mitchell and League VP of Membership, Merle Jacob, attended a concert presented by the New World Symphony, an ensemble which many Civic Orchestra alumni are a part of. What a joy to hear this performance featuring Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances*.



From left to right: Civic Orchestra alumni Owen Ruff, Abby Black, Seth Van Embden, Nina Laube and Janani Sivakumar pose with League president, Sharon Mitchell, and League VP of Membership Janice Young.

Members of the orchestra are often featured in the playbill with their picture and bio. A video was shown before the concert highlighting an orchestra member shared their interests and hopes in the music field. Then the featured musician came out on the stage and spoke with the audience about their background and appreciation for the organization, mentors and even the ushers. This made the whole experience more personal! The concert was superb and it was wonderful meeting with former Civic musicians after the performance.

CRAIN-MALING FOUNDATION CSO YOUNG ARTISTS COMPETITION



From left to right: Ansuk Jeong (Competition Chair), Christopher Harding (judge), Michael Mizrahi (judge), Evangeline Wang, Jeremy Liu (winner), Tong-Bai Deng (first runner up), Joseph Gallwas, Caroline Hong (judge), Robbie Ellis (WFMT producer and presenter and host)

The League has been involved with the Young Artist Competition since 1967. This year, Ansuk Jeong served as the chair of the competition committee with Liz Branch and Nancy Friedman as co-chairs of the scholarship committee, and 12 League members volunteered on the day of the preliminaries. For this prestigious concerto competition, we had 35 pianists from all over Illinois for the preliminary on January 18. Four finalists were chosen to perform alongside the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, under the baton of Jerry Hou, on March 22. The finalists were

Joseph Gallwas who performed excerpts from Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Major*

Tong-Bai Dent who performed excerpts from Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor*

Evangeline Wang who performed excerpts from Chopin's *Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Minor*

Jeremy Liu who performed excerpts from Grieg's *Piano Concerto in A Minor*

At the concert, League members sat together to show our everlasting support for our young musicians. The judges ultimately selected Jeremy Liu as the winner and Tong-Bai Deng as the first runner up. All four finalists will have perform in a masterclass with Daniil Trifonov in April and Jeremy Liu will perform with Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 2026. Look out for the date of that special concert!



Competition winner, Jeremy Liu, speaks during a contestant Q&A on stage in Orchestra Hall.



Joseph Gallwas performing alongside the Civic Orchestra of Chicago for the YAC finals.

AIM: MUSIC OF OUR EMOTIONS CONCERTS



The school children crowd the lobby as they come for the concert.

On March 7 & 8, the CSO helped children (along with their teachers and parents) explore how music can help us understand and share our feelings – a wide range of emotions from anger and frustration to sorrow and joy and everything in between. Daniel Bartholemew-Poyser led the orchestra in a program featuring music from Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 4* and other extraordinary composers and had the children relating emotional emojis to the music they were about to hear. On Friday, both performances were sold out with nearly 5,000 concertgoers at both shows!

On Saturday, March 8, the Family Concerts includes activities on all floors of the Rotunda. 2,000 enthusiastic young patrons and their

parents were excitedly engaged in activities ranging from the Genesis Music and Arts choir and pianists to playing with Boomwackers to the always popular Mini-Maestro conducting station with the Civic Woodwind Quintet. Everyone

A special thank-you to the League members who lovingly welcomed everyone and helped out with the activities: Merle Jacob, Tracy & Kevin Staniel, Mary Plauche, Elise Masur, Mary Ann Harting, Mary Beth Dietrick, Sue Bridge, Jackson Chen, and Sherry Richards. We were very happy to have Rina Magarici from the Latino Alliance and Val Mayuga from the Overture Council.





Young children try out different instruments.



The whole family participates in an activity where they color pictures with faces that show different emotions.



A young man learns to be a maestro with Civic musicians.



Children experiment with Boomwhackers.



The Genesis Music and Arts choir singing at the Family Concert.

SVEP CONCERTS IN FEBRUARY

On Wednesday, February 19, Seniors and Veterans were welcomed to Symphony Center for an Open Rehearsal. Dame Jane Glover and the CSO musicians delighted the audience with Britten's *Suite on English Folk Tunes: A time there was...* After returning from the break, Dame Glover thrilled the audience with Elgar's *Serenade for Strings in E Minor*. As an extra bonus, there was a Q & A with Dame Glover and Carol Kelleher, an Assistant for CSO for Kids, which the audience greatly enjoyed. We thank the CSO Usher Corps for all their assistance.

We had planned for about 900 attendees, but the Chicago weather had other plans and with below zero temperatures, we had approximately 400 guests attend from all over the Chicagoland community.

Our next SVEP will be on June 18 with Maestro Muti. He will be conducting Verdi's Requiem in an afternoon Open Rehearsal.

We will need volunteers for this concert. If you are interested, please contact me at honye@obermail.net



ENDOWED CONCERT AND RECEPTION



The League of the Chicago Symphony
Orchestra Association is pleased to
invite you to its annual

ENDOWED CONCERT AND RECEPTION

HAYDN MASS IN TIME OF WAR

SATURDAY, MARCH 15
7:30 CONCERT

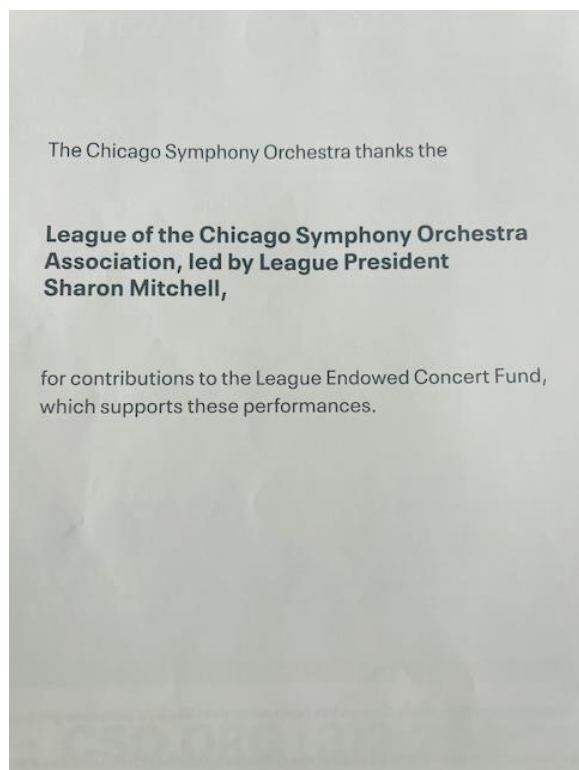
Followed by a Reception
in Grainger Ballroom

SYMPHONY CENTER
220 S. MICHIGAN AVE.

Since 1985, the League has endowed a performance featuring the Chicago Symphony Chorus through the financial support of its members. This year's concert featured Haydn's *Mass in Time of War* with soloists Joelle Harvey (soprano), Jennifer Johnson (mezzo-soprano), Andrew Haji (tenor), and Joshua Hopkins (baritone). Maestro Manfred Honeck led the chorus and orchestra in Haydn's masterpiece which was having its Chicago premiere. Lawrence Johnson in *Chicago Classical Review* praised this concert as one of the highlights of the current season and commented that the "chorus sang magnificently throughout."

After the concert, the League held its annual reception to honor the chorus. Since the chorus usually doesn't eat before they sing, they came to the reception hungry, and they were not disappointed. The chorus was delighted with the hearty offerings and with the League's show of love and support for them.

League President Sharon Mitchell thanked the donors and recognized Merle Jacob and League members who attended the event mingled with chorus members to show our appreciation and love for all they do. CSOA President Jeff Alexander and Associate Chorus Director Cherel Frazer Hill gave out awards to the retiring members.



Right: League recognition in the program book. Left: Cheryl Frazes Hill, Associate Director of the Chorus, gives remarks.



League president, Sharon Mitchell, poses with that evening's four soloists.



The hearty reception food, provided by Levy.



Jeff Alexander, President of the CSOA, awards Natalie Conseur and Rebecca Moon plaques for their retirement.



Left: League member Elise Masur. Right: Maestro Manfred Honeck stopped by the reception to mingle with Chorus and League members.

IMPACT: SHOWCASING MUSIC EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT THE CSO

On March 17, we bore witness to the extraordinary power of music and discovered how the Negaunee Music Institute empowers musicians to learn, grow and serve Chicago's diverse communities with an event called IMPACT. The evening began with a delicious dinner in Grainger Ballroom which featured a special performance by the CSO Horn Quartet honoring Judy and Scott McCue for their extraordinary impact on the CSOA's educational and community engagement efforts.

We were then captivated by performances by the Civic Orchestra, musicians from the CSO, Percussion Scholarship Program students and Young Artist Competition winner Jaden Teague-Núñez that demonstrated the unifying and transformative power of music in Chicago communities.

After the concert, guests had a chance to mingle with performers while enjoying desserts, wine and cocktails in Buntrock Hall. The IMPACT goal was \$175,000 and this was supported by all the auxiliary groups of the CSOA: The League, The African American Network, The Overture Council, The Latino Alliance, The Women's Board, Governing Members, The Negaunee Music Institute Board and Trustees, each having fundraised for the programs that make NMI's impact possible.

We all experienced the warmth of community as we celebrated NMI's mission of fostering access to music for all!



A CSO horn quartet plays a fanfare to honor Judy and Scott McCue for their support of the CSOA



Young Artist Competition winner Jaden Teague-Núñez returned to give a stunning performance for IMACT



First-Year Percussion Scholarship Program (PSP) students perform on stage at Orchestra Hall.



ATLYS, a quartet of Civic Orchestra alums, performs alongside Simbryt Dortch in an original piece.



From left to right: League members, Rosalind Jackson, Margo Oberman, Sharon Mitchell (League president), and Juan Solana, pose with NMI Board Chair, Leslie Burns (middle).

SPRING LEAGUE ALL-MEMBER MEETING



On March 19, the League hosted its Spring All-Member Meeting which began with lunch and a chance for members to chat and catch up with friends. After lunch, President Sharon Mitchell opened the meeting by paying tribute to all the past presidents and Executive Committee members, asking them to stand and be recognized. Past President Mimi Duginger then paid tribute to long time League member Bonnie McGrath who passed this past December. Newsletter editor Merle Jacob honored Dr. Hilda Richards for her remarkable life and her dedication to the League.

Strategic Planning/Technology Chair Ted Taber explained that his committee has worked on updating the League's bylaws for the past two years. The membership unanimously voted to approve the new bylaws.

Treasurer Mary Beth Dietrick said that 116 members have paid their dues and that we are very close to meeting our goal of \$10,000 for the League Tribute Fund which supports a Civic Orchestra fellow. The annual fund is now at \$85,000 towards our \$100,000 goal. Vice-President of Events, Eileen Conaghan, highlighted the upcoming Musicians Luncheon and encouraged all members to attend the event.

Committee Chairs Joan Dattel and Claretta Meier discussed their plans for Corporate Night, the League's biggest fund-raising event.

Joan Dattel then spoke about the upcoming Salon that Vice-President for Salons, Bobbie Huskey, is planning for June 22 with the Plymouth Trio. More information will soon be sent out. Vice-President for Education, Kathy Nordmeyer's, report was read by Brent Taghap who reported that over 5000 children attended the recent school and family concerts which League members gladly helped with. Ted Taber discussed how his committee is working with the CSOA to update the League's technology and social media presence.

Finally, President Sharon Mitchell closed the League meeting by paying tribute to some special League members who give so much of their time:

Carol Nykiel for writing thank-you notes to those who have contributed to the League Tribute Fund

Fred Garzon for working on the League Archives digitization project

Merle Jacob for serving as the editor of *220 South*, the League's newsletter

Margo Oberman for her work on IMPACT and chairing the nominating committee

Sharon Quigley who chaired the Musicians Holiday Project

Lisa McDaniel and Brent Taghap whose work makes all that we do possible

The finale of the meeting was the wonderful program of harp music by our Civic Orchestra Fellow, Kari Novilla. Kari showed the versatility of the harp by playing an Irish song, then Debussy's *Claire de Lune*, and finally the jazzy *The Girl from Ipanema*. Then Betsy Berry interviewed Kari who explained how the harp works and discussed the variety of music written for it. She answered questions and thanked the League for supporting her and helping her live out her dreams.



Dr. Hilda Richards talks about her life with Merle Jacob.



League member enjoying the program and each other.



League members enjoying Kari's performance.



League member, Betsy Berry, interviews Kari about her life and career.

THE LEAGUE'S ANNUAL MUSICIANS' LUNCHEON

This year's Musicians' Luncheon was, as always, a joyous celebration of our beloved CSO musicians. This long-time event was well-attended with over 100 attendees, including League members, CSO musicians, and CSOA administration members. The event opened with a reception in The Thomas Club, 8th floor, where guests could mingle and chat with each other over drinks and hors d'oeuvres.

League President Sharon Mitchell opened the luncheon in Grainger Ballroom by welcoming everyone and thanking the Musicians' Luncheon committee, which included Peter Bouchard and Merle Jacob as cochairs and committee members Liz Branch, Jackson Chen, Kathy Nordmeyer, and Margo Oberman. After lunch, President Mitchell spoke about the League's tradition of hosting the Musicians' Luncheon for over 90 years, and the League's love for our CSO musicians. CSOA Board Chair, Mary Louise Gorno, then welcomed everyone and thanked the League for all the work we do for the CSO musicians and the CSOA.

CSOA President Jeff Alexander then presented an award, an engraved silver bowl, to Assistant Principal Trumpet Mark Ridenour, who was our 30-year honoree. Jeff related Mark's remarkable career starting with when he began his trumpet studies in college through his years with the CSO. Jeff also shared with us the sad news that Mark would be retiring at the end of this season. Mark thanked everyone and shared many wonderful stories from his time with the CSO. Jeff then presented special CSO lapel pins to our newest orchestra members: Gabriela Lara, violin, (who was unable to attend) and Teng Li, Principal Viola.

Following these remarks, we had our ever-popular gift card raffle. The raffle is always a high point of the event, and this year's was no exception. This year's donors included Adorn Restaurant (Four Seasons Chicago), The Exchange, Exchequer, The Gage, Italian Village, Millers Pub, Miru, The Peninsula, Russian Tea Time, and the Wigwam (Union League Club of Chicago). Peter Bouchard held the basket of gift cards while Merle Jacob held the bowl with all the musicians' names. Jeff Alexander then selected the 17 names and each musician then came up and picked their prize. The musicians were widely applauded as they came up. This year's prizes were valued at over \$1,700!

Cynthia Yeh, Vice-Chair of the Orchestra Members Committee and Principal Percussion, then thanked the League for all it does for the musicians and the CSOA. President Mitchell then



closed the luncheon thanking all who came and reminding the musicians that we had one more gift for them—they could take home the beautiful floral centerpieces. With that this wonderful event closed!



Left: President Sharon Mitchell with CSOA major gifts officer, John Heffernan. Right: League member, Marguerite Guido, poses with past League president, Mimi Duginger.



From left to right: League members Joan Dattel and Maryann Harting pose with CSO violinist Susan Synnестvedt.



From left to right: League members Mary Goodkind, VP of Events Eileen Conaghan, and Kathleen Solaro pose for a photo in the Thomas Club reception.



From left to right: League VP of Finance Mary Beth Dietrick and League member Lois Wolff.



From left to right: CSOA Board Chair, Mary Louise Gorno, poses with League members Mary Lee Gosz and League VP of Administration Allisa Gam.



Ever the gracious hosts, Musicians' Luncheon cochairs, Merle Jacob and Peter Bouchard check in on guests during the luncheon.



Mark Ridenour accepts an award for reaching 30-years with the CSO.



CSO principal timani, David Herbert, shares a hug with League member Liz Branch.



Left: The table settings for the luncheon featuring vibrant spring colors. Right: Programs for the afternoon with chocolate music favors from Piron, the Belgian chocolatier.



League member, Allisa Gam (right), chats with CSO violinist Lei Hou (left).



CSO horn player, James Smelser, wins a raffle prize!



A group photo of all League members present at this year's Musicians' Luncheon.

SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW

Dr. Hilda Richards, League member

Activist, trail blazer, and innovator, these words accurately describe longtime League member Hilda Richards, and she is someone you should know. When asked what made her an activist and trail blazer for women's rights and African American equality, Hilda answered definitively, "My Mother! She was a strong and bossy woman who believed in education and in fighting for what she believed in. She said I would go to college, and I did. If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't have accomplished all I did in my career." Hilda's mother Rose came from a long line of strong women who went from being enslaved to being schoolteachers. Even when her mother couldn't find a decent job, she insisted on sending Hilda to an integrated Catholic school in St. Louis so she could get a good education.



Hilda went into nursing after hearing about the profession at a career day in high school. As she said, "I thought it would be cheaper to go to nursing school than to college." Since this was in the 1950s, she couldn't go to a white nursing school in St. Louis so she began her studies in the only integrated nursing school in Springfield, MO. However, because her grades were so superior, she was finally sent to St. John's where she was the first Black woman to graduate from their school of nursing. She became the first Black nurse in Payne Whitney Hospital where she worked as a psychiatric nurse. While there, she helped start the National Black Nurses Association and ultimately served as the organization's eighth president. She also helped start the *Journal of the National Black Nurses Association*. After getting both her masters and doctorate at Columbia University, she helped Medger Evers College of Brooklyn establish a nursing program and became its Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. "It was the provost of the college who pushed me further to academia. Throughout my career I was helped by many who saw my ability and encouraged me," Hilda explained.

In 1979, Hilda was appointed dean of the College of Health and Human Services for Ohio University. She was the first Black academic dean and the first female dean. Then in 1993, she became chancellor of Indiana University Northwest (Pennsylvania) where she became the first black chancellor in the IU system. Hilda said, "The IU campus was a commuter college and I realized the school had to reach out to working people and people of color, so we set up flexible class scheduling for evenings and weekends so that people could attend while holding jobs." She set up childcare centers, scholarships for minority students, and opened new buildings to make it a vibrant and diverse campus.

In 1999, she retired and moved to Chicago. “While living in Gary, I often came to Chicago to go to the Symphony so it was logical to retire here. I wanted to move where it was convenient for me to visit my Mother who at that time was in a nursing home in Crown Point, IN.” Hilda became involved with The League when she ran into an old friend from Gary. Her friend insisted she join The League. As Hilda explained, “I’ve always loved classical music. My Mother and I would listen to the Texaco Metropolitan Opera broadcasts on Saturday. One of my first gifts to my Mother was a record player with a recording of Bizet’s *Carmen*, her favorite opera.” Besides being a League member for over 16 years, Hilda volunteered at the Art Institute for 15 years. “I’ve always enjoyed giving back. So many people helped me throughout my career, and now I try to help people, especially young Black children so they can also succeed.” Hilda Richards has had a remarkable life and is one of the many League members we should all know and cherish.

Merle Jacob

JENNIFER GUN—PICCOLO AND FLUTE



Piccolo player, flutist, chamber musician, teacher, and guest artist—these are just a few of the careers of Jennifer Gunn, who holds the Dora and John Aalbrektse Piccolo chair and is a member of the flute section, and someone you should know. She is also the League’s CSO musician ambassador. Jennifer was appointed flute and piccolo player by Maestro Daniel Barenboim in 2005, but she came to the Orchestra in a somewhat roundabout way. As Jennifer said, “I didn’t come from a musical family, but when I was in fourth grade, my twin sister and I were introduced to instruments at our public school. I first picked the saxophone to learn but then turned to the flute because it was smaller and shiny. My sister chose the clarinet.” Jennifer only became seriously interested in classical music while in high school and then decided to major in music in college. Her parents convinced her to major in music education as she would then be assured of finding a job. Jennifer laughingly said, “After my first semester in college, I knew I wanted to focus on the flute and told

my parents very dramatically that I wanted to change my major to music performance.”

When I asked her how she became interested in the piccolo, Jennifer explained that all flutists have to learn to play the piccolo, so she studied it as an undergraduate. One day, she had to play

the piccolo in Prokofiev's *Lieutenant Kije Suite*. After she just whipped off this very difficult piece, her professor said to her "you're going to be a piccolo player someday." During additional graduate studies at the University of Akron (Ohio) she continued focusing on the flute and piccolo, but she said, "I still thought I wanted to be a principal flute player and subsequently won the principal flute chair in the Fort Wayne Philharmonic."

After three years in Fort Wayne, and a subsequent year with the Louisville Orchestra, the position at the CSO opened up and she auditioned for it! "When I made the finals, I was thrilled, but didn't believe I'd win so I wasn't very nervous at the audition. When Maestro Barenboim offered me the position I was thrilled and grateful for all I learned from him."

When asked the difference between playing the piccolo and the flute, Jennifer explained, "The piccolo is half the size of the flute. It's tiny and the hand positions are much smaller and a bit awkward. Also, the air pressure is more concentrated and the air stream leaves no room for error." Jennifer owns four piccolos and two flutes. She needs to rotate the piccolos as they are made of wood and blowing through them leaves moisture which must be constantly wiped out. Over time these rubbings change the size of the bore and the sound of the instrument.

When asked about her favorite pieces to play, she said, "I have a love-hate relationship with Shostakovich. Playing any of his pieces is very difficult as they are extremely athletic and very high pitched for piccolo. I also love French music such as Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe*. Maestro Muti introduced me to Verdi and playing Verdi with him is exceptional and very challenging. It would be hard to play Verdi with anyone but Muti, as he brings out so much in the music."

Jennifer also discussed how lucky she has been to have been able to work with so many wonderful conductors. "I learned so much from Barenboim, Boulez and Haitink as they were very knowledgeable and extraordinary teachers. Maestro Muti demands a level of precision that is exhausting, but exhilarating; he teaches us so much. We all feel that with Maestro Mäkelä's appointment. the orchestra is going in the right direction. Just like we all knew we wanted Muti as our music director, we all wanted Mäkelä in that position."

Jennifer also enjoys playing at festivals around the country and the world. As she pointed out, "It is fun to have a change of scenery and meet colleagues from around the world." She also gets to perform with her husband, Jonathan Gunn, clarinet professor at The University of Texas at Austin, Butler School of Music. She has also done a number of special programs at prisons both in Chicago and in Italy with Maestro Muti. "I got to see the gentler side of the Maestro. He cares so much about the arts and bringing music to these incarcerated people. It was a wonderful experience for me."

With this very busy schedule, Jennifer just loves her free time in Texas with her husband where she can relax, and they can enjoy being out on Lake Travis. This fascinating woman and outstanding musician is one of the treasures of our Orchestra. Jennifer Gunn is someone you should know.

Merle Jacob

IN MEMORY

BONNIE MCGRATH



Bonnie McGrath died suddenly on December 22, 2024, at age 73. She was born in Chicago and grew up in Hyde Park and Uptown. She attended Senn High School and went to the University of Illinois and then the University of Missouri to get an MS in Public Health. Her career path began at Illinois Bell where she was one of the few women telephone installers. She then began a career in journalism in the City News Bureau. She also wrote articles for the *Chicago Reader* and the *Chicago Journal* besides writing a column in the *Chicago Tribune*. In 1991, she decided to go to law school and attended John Marshall Law School. Her law career included working as a prosecutor for the City of Chicago, working in every division of the Cook County Court system, and working at hundreds of bench trials.

Bonnie joined the League in 2015 and served as Secretary on the Executive Committee and Member-At-Large. She worked on and chaired numerous committees including the Endowed Concert Reception, Musicians Luncheon, Corporate Night, and Fall In Love with Music. She also volunteered for the AIM concerts and the Crain-Maling Young Artists Competition. Bonnie is survived by her daughter Molly and her long-time partner Bruce Oltman. Bonnie was a woman with an infectious smile, a zest for life, and a love for volunteering and giving.

For more information on Bonnie go to www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/bonnie-mcgrath-journalist-attorney-chicago-obit/

REMEMBERING LORETTA MARIE FOXGROVER

A lifelong scholar of literature and philosophy, an avid traveler, and a devoted friend, Loretta Marie Foxgrover died on March 12, 2025, at the age of 98.

Loretta served on the Women's Association Board of Directors. Tribute donations, in her memory may be made to the CSOA.



REMEMBERING ESTELLE HARRIS

By Matt Corey, John Burrell, Zoe Quan, Raeleen Horn, Lois Wolff and Sherry Richards

Estelle Harris is remembered by the Docent Committee as a wonderful person, talented musician and great music educator with a passion for teaching at the elementary schools. She served as a docent for both School and Youth Concerts, for the seniors and veterans through the SVEP Program, pioneered co-docenting in the LINKS Program and supported new docents joining the team. Through her warm and genuine style, Estelle was thoughtful, responsible and cared dearly about her craft. She not only accessorized her outfits with scarves but used them as creative props in the classroom to get students up to dance. Estelle loved the CSO with all her heart and soul and attended many concerts often with her docent friends. Routinely providing continuing strength and support to the family members she raised and cared for may be why her email address was "MotherNature". Her wonderful sense of humor and kindness will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

UPCOMING LEAGUE EVENTS

The League has numerous volunteer opportunities and programs coming up this Spring. **Corporate Night**, on June 3, is one of the League's big funding raising opportunities and with Broadway star Heather Headley as our featured performer, this will be an exciting event. Plan to attend this wonderful event. Our **Annual All-Member Meeting** and luncheon and meeting will be on June 11. We will also need volunteers to help with our **AIM** student concerts on April 6, May 2, and May 10. Volunteers are also needed for our **Family Concerts** on May 3. The final **Senior and Veterans Concert (SVEP)** is an exciting one with Maestro Muti rehearsing Verdi's *Requiem*, and volunteers are needed to help our seniors. These are wonderful volunteer opportunities that will warm your heart and make you smile as you see the joy these concerts bring to our students, seniors and veterans.

CSOA VOLUNTEER MEET-UP DAYS

Here is an exciting new opportunity to meet members of our other affinity groups in a fun way before going to the Civic Concerts. No need to sign up, just come and enjoy meeting other people who love the CSO and support it. See the flier on the next page for full details and dates!

VOLUNTEER MEET-UP DAYS



Meet-up days are a great new opportunity for members of our affinity groups to meet and mingle, grab a drink and enjoy a Civic Orchestra of Chicago performance together.

Sunday, April 6, 7:00 PM

Prieto Conducts Shostakovich 7

→ **Meet at:** The Palmer House Lockwood Lobby Bar | 17 E. Monroe St.



Saturday, May 17, 7:00 PM

Civic Fellows Chamber Music

→ **Meet at:** Cindy's Rooftop | 12 S. Michigan Ave.

Monday, June 2, 7:30 PM

Respighi, Tarrodi & Sibelius 2

Please also join us for the League's postconcert reception in Grainger Ballroom!

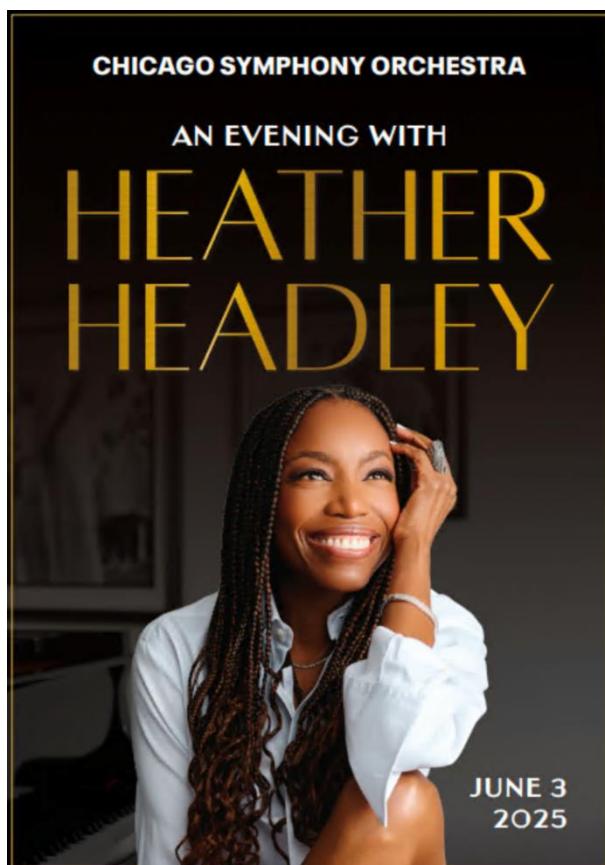
→ **Meet at:** The Gage | 24 S. Michigan Ave.

Volunteers will meet at 5:30 p.m. and head over to Symphony Center no later than 20 minutes before the concert.

Since Civic Orchestra performances are general admission, we encourage you to sit with a volunteer you might not know well. We also encourage volunteers to reserve their tickets for performances ahead of time to avoid lines at the box office prior to the performance.



CORPORATE NIGHT CONCERT



This year's star performer for Corporate Night, Tuesday, June 3, 2025, is Tony and Grammy Award winner, singer, songwriter, record producer and actress Heather Headley.

She is a Diva. Heather's starring roles on Broadway include her role as Nala in *The Lion King* and in Elton John's *Aida* as Aida herself, for which she received the Tony for Best Actress in a Musical. She has also appeared in *The Color Purple*, *Into the Woods* and *The Bodyguard in London*. As a singer she has appeared in many national and international venues. She has won Grammy awards for some of her singles from her albums. As an actress she had a recurring role on *Chicago Med* and can be recently seen on the Netflix series, *Sweet Magnolias*.

League Cochairs Joan Dattel and Claretta Meier, and their committee are planning an elegant experience for both the Corporate and League guests. The League event will feature a

Drinks & Bites reception before the concert in the Forte event space, featuring an array of heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages. The cost of the event package, which includes the preconcert reception and prime seating for the concert, is \$295. Invitations will soon be going out.

Place it on your calendars, June 3, come and invite your families and friends!

SAVE THE DATE FOR AN EXCITING SALON IN JUNE

Please save the date for the latest Areas Salon scheduled for **Sunday, June 22, 2025, from 1:00-3:30 pm**. We are thrilled to have the Plymouth Trio to entertain us with a musical performance. The Trio consists of CSO musician violinists Lei Hou and Qing Hou, and violist Larry Neuman.

The event will be held at Margo Oberman's beautiful estate nestled in the bucolic woods of Mettawa, Illinois.

The details will be shared with you next month. In the meantime, please mark your calendar for June 22, 2025, and join us for music and refreshments on a relaxing Sunday afternoon.

Save the Date!

Sunday, June 22, 2025, 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM

League Salon with The Plymouth Trio



Featuring CSO musicians:

Lei Hou, violin Lawrence Neuman, viola Qing Hou, violin

Venue: Margo Oberman's Home
15351 West Little St. Mary's Road
Mettawa, IL 60048

More details to follow!

LEAGUE EVENTS – 2024/25 SEASON

Updated as of April 10, 2025



League

Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association

May 2	AIM: School Concert (10:15 AM & 12 PM Orchestra Hall)
May 2	League Interactive Intermission (Intermission/ Granger Ballroom)
May 3	AIM: Family Concerts (11 AM & 12:45 PM Orchestra Hall)
May 10	AIM: Once Upon A Symphony (10 AM & 11:45 AM Buntrock Hall)
May 17	Volunteer Meet-Up Days #2 (5:30 PM/ Cindy's Rooftop)
June 2	Volunteer Meet-Up Days #3 (5:30 PM/ The Gage)
June 2	Civic Postconcert Reception (9 PM Grainger Ballroom)
June 3	Corporate Night (6 PM Symphony Center)
June 6	CSO Postconcert Reception (3:15 PM/ Green Room)
June 11	League Annual All-Member Meeting (11 AM Grainger Ballroom)
June 18	SVEP concert with Maestro Muti (time not set/Orchestra Hall)
June 22	League Salon ft. The Plymouth Trio (1 PM/ The Oberman Residence)

If you would like to volunteer at Community Open Rehearsals/SVEP, please contact Margo Oberman at [**honye@obermail.net**](mailto:honye@obermail.net).

If you would like to volunteer for Adventures in Music (AIM) concerts, please contact Kathy Nordmeyer at [**nordmeyerk@gmail.com**](mailto:nordmeyerk@gmail.com).

If you have any questions, please contact Brent Taghap at taghapb@csso.org

IMPORTANT LEAGUE INFORMATION

A REMINDER ABOUT OUR TRIBUTE FUND

For many years, the League has funded, through our Tribute Fund, a stipend for a fellow in the Civic Orchestra. Our annual contribution for this purpose is \$9,500. Currently we are in the first year of providing support to harpist Kari Novilla, whom many of you heard at our recent March meeting.

So far in our 2024/25 season, we are very close to achieving our goal in order to honor this commitment. While contributions to this fund are voluntary, we would like for you to keep this fund in mind and help it grow. Some of you have kindly made memorial donations, however, donations are a nice way to thank or honor someone for any reason. Of course, un-designated donations are completely welcome. You can make your donation to the League Tribute fund at cso.org/league.

Contributions can also be made by calling the Development Department at (312) 294-3100.

WEB LINKS FOR LEAGUE MEMBERS

League CSO page: <https://cso.org/support/get-involved/the-league/>

League Symphony Store: <https://symphonystore.com/collections/league-of-the-csoa-apparel>

League Tribune Fund: <https://order.cso.org/donate/q/12>

League Membership Dues: <https://order.cso.org/donate/q/8>

League Annual Fund: <https://order.cso.org/donate/q/7>

League Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/theleagueofthecsoa>

2024/25 LEAGUE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: Sharon Mitchell

Vice President of Events: Eileen Conaghan

Vice President of Finance: Mary Beth Dietrick

Vice President of Fundraising: Sarah Good

Vice President of Membership: Janice Young

Vice President of Administration: Allisa Gam

Vice President of Education: Kathy Nordmeyer

Vice President of Areas: Bobbie Huskey

Strategic Planning/Technology: Ted Tabe

Secretary: Liz Branch

Members-at-Large: Ansuk Jeong, Juan Solana