

220 SOUTH – October 2025



A newsletter of the League of the CSOA

Merle Jacob, Editor

A WELCOME FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Welcome to the 92nd season of the League of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association! It's wonderful to be back and see everyone volunteering to help our beloved musicians.

We are starting to get very busy with a flurry of activities in October that includes our New Member Orientation, Fall in Love with Music and our Civic Orchestra Post-Concert event.

If you haven't already, please purchase a ticket or sponsorship for the League's Signature event, Fall in Love with Music. This is a "don't miss" event featuring Music Director Designate, Klaus Mäkelä and Violist Antoine Tamestit. **Run don't walk to purchase tickets for this event!**

November starts our AIM concerts and the kick-off for IMPACT. We began our support of IMPACT last year and are continuing this year. This is a new fundraising event for our friends at the Negaunee Institute. I encourage you to attend the kick-off party to learn more.

December features our Crain-Mailing preliminary youth auditions, another AIM concert and Bach Marathon goody bag stuffing for our Civic orchestra musicians.

As you can see, there are lots of things to become involved with. The more the merrier!

There is still time to fill out your interest survey so we know where you'd like to spend your League volunteer time. Contact myself or Allisa Gam if you need another form.

Because of you, the League has been able to accomplish a lot over its 92-year history. Let's all continue our strong history by participating in committees and events throughout the season.

With An Attitude of Gratitude,



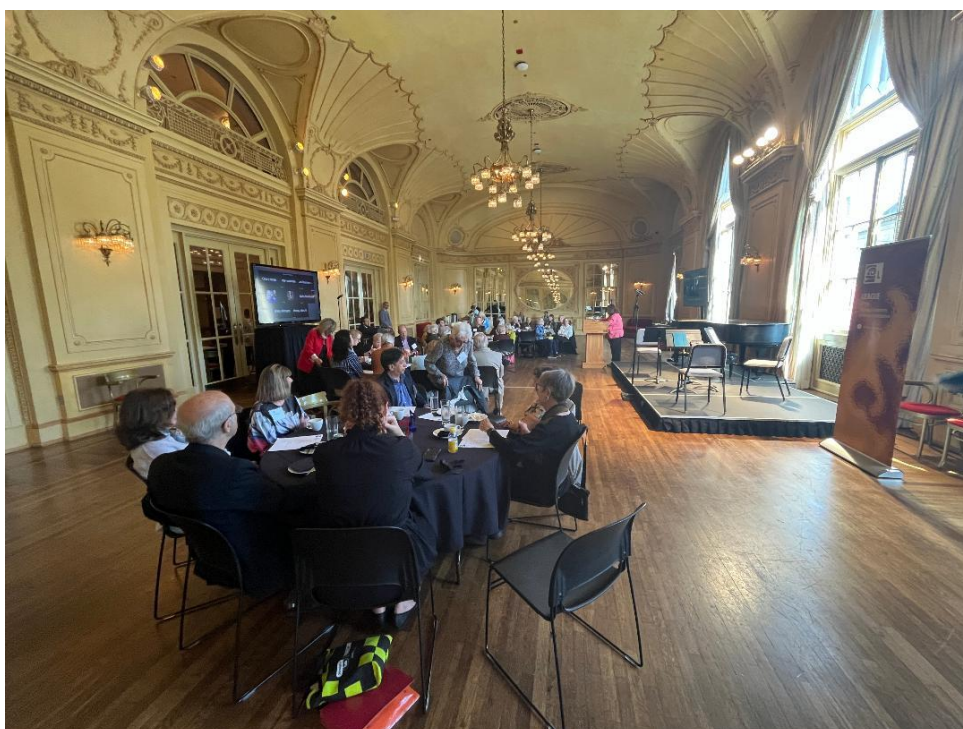
Sarah



LEAGUE FALL ALL-MEMBER MEETING

The All-Member Meeting on Sept. 24 opened this year's Leagues activities with a light brunch of pastries, fruit, and drinks for the 40 who attended in person and many more who attended virtually. The tables featured the new centerpieces of musical notes and symbols which will now be used at League meetings and programs. League President Sarah Good opened the meeting by giving a lively history of the League and all it has done throughout its years. She pointed out that many of the League's signature programs have a long history. The Musicians Luncheon was started in 1964 while the Docent program began in 1974. The highly popular AIM programs started in 1997 while the Crain-Maling Competition began in 1999. The AIM program and Docent Symphony Links program have both won Gold Ribbon Awards at conferences of the League of American Orchestras.

Sarah then introduced the new Executive Committee and several; reported on their work at the start of this season.



- Margo Oberman discussed the IMPACT program which supports the work of the work of the Negaunee Music Institute. The goal is to raise \$200,000 and the League is being asked to raise \$7,500 towards that goal. Members are asked to save Nov. 17 for the IMPACT Kick-off Party.
- VP of Finance Jaun Solana reported that 30 members have paid due their dues and the League has raised \$3,000 to date. He encouraged all members to pay their dues as soon as possible.
- VP of Administration Allisa Gam reported on the member survey that has been sent out and

75 members have returned the forms indicating the programs they want to help with.

- VP of Membership Fred Garzon reported that the League has nine new members who will be attending the new member orientation in October.
- Fall In Love with Music co-chairs Mimi Duginger and Margo Oberman gave us a brief history of this popular fund raiser that begin in 2010. This is the 15th anniversary program and will feature Maestro Klaus Makela and violist Antoine Tamestit. This popular program will sell out quickly, so they encouraged all League members to get their tickets as soon as possible.

The program closed with a wonderful performance by the Civic Fellows String Quartet featuring violists Justine Teo and Annie Pham, violist Yat Chun Justin Pou, and cellist Buianto Lkhasaranov. The Quartet played Price's

String Quartet N. 1 in G Major, Debussy's *String Quartet in G minor*, and Mozart's *String Quartet No. 19*. They were roundly cheered by the League members.



League members enjoying brunch and renewing friendships at the Fall All Member Meeting.





President Sarah Good (left) opens the meeting. Jeff Alexander (right), President of the CSOA thanks the League for their support.



The Civic Fellows String Quartet (violinist Annie Pham and Justine Teo, violist Yat Chun Justin Pou, and cellist Buianto Lkhasaranov) perform for the League.

SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW: SARAH GOOD, LEAGUE PRESIDENT



Did you know that League President Sarah Good plays the bongos, snare drum, and timpani? “My husband Mark and I started a community band, Windy City Winds, in 2015. We both conduct the band, and we each play percussion while the other is conducting. We started with 30 musicians, but in three months we had 60 people in the band. Now there is quite a long waiting list,” Sarah said. The band meets weekly at St. Pauls United Church of Christ in Lincoln Park. They give three formal indoor concerts in the church and four or five summer outdoor concerts. Sarah explained, “The band gives opportunities for amateur wind musicians to rehearse and perform quality wind

music, and the public can hear and appreciate the music.” Both John Hagstrom and John Bruce Yeh from the CSO have been guest soloists with us.” Sarah has taken percussion lessons at DePaul University’s community music program and then at the Merit School of Music. She laughed as she explained, “We played the Mambo from *West Side Story* so I had to learn to play the bongos.”

As a lifelong Chicago area native, Sarah started music lessons in grade school growing up in Evergreen Park. “I was in fifth grade and decided to learn to play the flute. I really didn’t like playing it at first, but when I became better at playing, I really began to enjoy the flute and continued playing it in the high school band. When I went to the University of Illinois for college, I majored in music education,” Sarah said.

Sarah taught music for six years at the Argo School District teaching grades 1-6 and leading the elementary school band. “I loved teaching children and got along beautifully with all of them,” she explained. However, in the 1980s, as school districts were cutting back on music programs, she realized it was time to look for another career. She took a job as the secretary to the head of an IT department. When there was an opening in the database area, the company trained her, and she got the job. “I went back to college part-time and earned my master’s degree in information technology. I had to take numerous math classes so earning the degree took six years. My background in music easily translated into computer science. In fact, there are many musicians in software design.” After finishing her degree, she went into consulting and then to a company in financial services. Now she leads a team of analysts, programmers, and testers who work to ensure changes the business requested are working correctly.

Sarah started coming to the Chicago Symphony when she was in high school. She remembers seeing Maestro Solti and the CSO performing Copland’s *Rodeo* which is still one of her favorite pieces. She and her husband Mark have been CSO subscribers for many years. In 2002, Sarah joined the Docent program at the CSO. “I really missed teaching and being with children. Being a docent allowed me to go back to the classroom and be with the kids. I could talk about the music and teach them appropriate conduct at the performances. We would pretend to play instruments, and I even showed them how to conduct music. The kids just loved that.” In 2006, she joined the League when it was still called the Women’s Association. She chaired the AIM program then

became VP of Education and later VP of Fundraising. She has also served as chair of the Tribute Fund and the Nominating Committee.

Now as President of the League, she wants to get more League members involved with committees. She wants the League to have its own website where members have easy access to League materials, and she wants the League more involved with social medias so the members and public are aware of all the League does.

When asked what concerts she is looking forward to this season, Sarah smiled and said, “Anything with Maestro Muti and Maestro Makela! Of course, I can’t wait to hear Yo-Yo Ma and later Copland’s *Lincoln Portrait*.” When asked what she does for fun with her busy work, League, and music schedule, Sarah laughed and said, “We love to travel, even if it’s just for a weekend. Wherever we go, we try to hear a concert by the orchestra in that city. We also love to go out for dinner and try new restaurants.”

The League’s very active new President is truly a Renaissance woman and someone you should know.

UPCOMING LEAGUE EVENTS



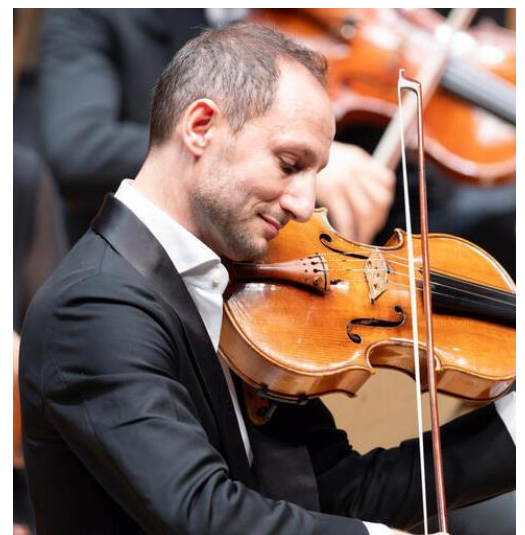
FALL IN LOVE WITH MUSIC

We know that everyone in the League is looking forward to our signature fundraiser, “Fall in Love with Music!” This will be the 15th year that our event will raise funds for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association.

Our luncheon will be held on Friday, October 17, in Presidents Hall in the historic Union League Club of Chicago, 65 W Jackson Boulevard with check-in at 11am.

We are thrilled that our special guest will be **Zell Music Director Designate Klaus Mäkelä!** He will conduct the CSO in that week’s performances of *Symphonie fantastique* and *Harold in Italy*. Maestro Mäkelä will be joined on the program by French violist,

Antoine Tamesti, who will solo in those CSO performances as well as during our event. There will also be a moderated panel discussion hosted by CSOA President, Jeff Alexander, featuring Klaus and Antoine. Invitations were mailed on September 5. We urge everyone to purchase their tickets as soon as possible. More information can be found at our website: cso.org/fallinlove. We are very optimistic that this event will sell out quickly! Ticket prices will be \$250. The CSOA has set our fundraising goal this year at \$50,000. We kept the ticket prices at 2023 levels with the hopes that those who are able will also purchase a sponsorship. Our goal is to secure 70 sponsors! Our Underwriting and Sponsorship Co-Chairs, Pam Andrews and Marguerite Guido, in addition to many League volunteers are hard at work helping us reach that goal!



In celebration of 15 successful years of “Fall in Love in Music”, a short presentation was given at our September 24th League meeting. All past co-chairs were recognized, and notebooks and posters from those fundraisers were displayed.



The League members who gave their time to stuff and seal over 600 invitations.



Event cochairs, Mimi Duginger and Margo Oberman.

LEAGUE SUPPORT FOR THE CIVIC ORCHESTRA

The League is a major supporter of the Civic Orchestra through its Tribute Fund, Post Concert receptions, and the goodie bags for the Bach Marathon. Through its Tribute Fund, the League supports a Civic member with a \$10,000 fellowship. Harpist Kari Novilla is this year’s fellow. Each time a member donates to the Tribute Fund

— either in honor of or in memory of — that money goes toward our \$10,000 goal. Of course, un-designated donations are also completely welcome. You can make your donation to the League Tribute fund at www.cso.org/league. Contributions can also be made to the Tribute Fund by calling the Development Department at (312) 294-3100.

The League will also sponsor a Civic Post Concert Reception on Oct. 27 after the Civic's first concert of the season. The reception is the annual pizza party for the Civic members and is open to all League members. Be sure to reserve your ticket and come meet and mingle with the Civic members. Tickets can be reserved two weeks before each concert or by members making a donation to the Civic. Go to CSO.org/givetocivic for complete information on tickets.

Each year in December during the Back Marathon, Civic members visit senior centers, schools, and nursing homes playing Bach's music to appreciative audiences. The Civic will close the day at the Bach Marathon Finale at the Fourth Presbyterian Church on Dec. 15 at 7 pm. The League supports these intrepid musicians by distributing goodie bags filled with all types of essentials—hand warmers, CSO hats, snacks, and more—to keep them going through the day. In November, Merle Jacob, chair of the goodie bag committee, will be asking for volunteers to help stuff and distribute the bags. This is a fun way to meet the members of the orchestra and for them to know how the League supports them.

AIM CONCERTS

Just when you think that the **Adventures in Music** concerts can't get any better, the amazing team at the Negaunee Institute come up with another incredible season. A shout out to Katy Clusen, Katie Eaton, and Carol Kelleher who keep the hits coming!

AIM Program chair Kathy Nordmeyer says, "I'm so looking forward to welcoming all of you to the new AIM season in November! Please let your friends and families know that they are welcome to enjoy the experience of the children who will be filled with joy and awe with the amazing music and musicians. We welcome you for any and all of these performances. Please consider joining us to help welcome the children to these concerts. You'll walk away filled with amazement and with a real sense of joy. As we get closer to the concerts, I'll send out reminder emails asking that you let me know if you are able to join us."

Wednesday & Thursday, November 12 & 13, 2025 – School Concert for Grades 6-12

Sounding Together

Thomas Wilkins raises his baton once again to conduct the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as he probes the importance of creating a community of belonging. Through musical masterworks, this program recognizes that a society, like an orchestra, is made up of individuals working towards a common goal. Featuring the winner of the 2025 Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition, this concert takes inspiration from the word "symphony," which means "sounding together."

Friday, November 14, 2025 – School Concert for Grades K-8

Saturday, November 15, 2025 - Family concert for Ages 5-12 with Activities in the Rotunda

What Instrument Should I Play?

Five-time Grammy-nominated children's-music songwriter Justin Roberts joins conductor Andrew Grams and

the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for an engaging investigation of the timbres and techniques that make each instrument both unique and a vital part of the orchestra.

Monday, December 8, 2025 – Once Upon a Symphony School Concert for PreK & K

The Ugly Duckling

A young duckling is teased for being different. After facing loneliness and other struggles, the duckling matures into a stunning swan, realizing true beauty comes from within. Explore this musical portrait of self-discovery, acceptance and inner strength.

CRAIN-MALING COMPETITION

The 2025-26 Crain Maling Foundation - CSO Young Artists Competition is for string instruments. Pre-college musicians in violin, viola, cello, and double bass will compete in the preliminary on Dec 7th, and then the finalists will perform with the Civic Orchestra on Jan 17th, 2026. Mark your calendar for the finalists' concerts. Volunteers will be needed for the preliminary auditions on Dec. 7th (Sunday). Volunteers greet the young performers, take them to the practice rooms and then to their audition performance. If you know you want to participate in this intimate opportunity to listen to and connect with these wonderful young musicians, email the competition chair, Ansuk Jeong at granble@gmail.com.

IMPORTANT LEAGUE INFORMATION

LEAGUE DUES & ANNUAL FUND

Welcome to the 2025/26 League Season! We look forward to another exciting year at Symphony Center. As a League member, you enjoy exclusive benefits such as VIP ticket services invitations to events with CSO musicians, and opportunities to support the CSOA's various community programs. We take this opportunity to inform you that **membership dues for the 2025/26 season are now payable** (deadline: December 1). Early payment is greatly appreciated, as it helps us plan effectively.

Membership Levels

Active Member: \$150 dues + \$150 minimum League Annual Fund contribution

Supporting Member: \$150 dues + \$250 minimum League Annual Fund contribution

Annual Fund contributions may be made any time during the fiscal year, but we encourage payment by April 1, 2026. Many members choose to pay dues and contributions together for convenience.

Ways to Pay

1. **Online:** cso.org/league
2. **Phone:** Call 312-294-3100 (credit card)
3. **Check:** Payable to "Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association"
 - o Note dues/Annual Fund in memo line
 - o Mail to: *Brent Taghap, League of the CSOA, 220 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60604*
4. **IRA Account:** Please Contact CSOA Gifts & Records at **312-294-3100** or gifts@cso.org to set up an account.

If you have questions about dues or contributions, please contact us at goods@cso.org, juanbsolana@gmail.com, or taghapb@cso.org.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

If you would like to volunteer for the Goodie Bags for the Bach Marathon, please contact Merle Jacob at mljacob@sbcglobal.net

If you would like to volunteer for the Crain Mailing Competition, please contact Ansuk Jeong at granble@gmail.com

If you would like to volunteer at Community Open Rehearsals/SVEP, please contact Margo Oberman at honye@obermail.net.

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

If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Good (League President) at goods@csso.org, Allisa Gam (VP of Administration) at gama@csso.org, or Brent Taghap at taghapb@csso.org.

Dine in Style at Symphony Center

As a valued member of the League, support the CSO and enjoy the sophistication and convenience of The Richard & Helen Thomas Club. With a seasonal prix fixe menu and elegant ambiance, it's the perfect way to begin your concert experience.

Reserve your table today by contacting VIP Services at **312-294-3020** or at vipservices@csso.org.



League Events – 2025/26 Season

Updated as of October 8, 2025

October 17, 2025	Fall in Love with Music (11 AM Union League Club of Chicago)
October 27, 2025	Civic Postconcert Reception #1 (9 PM Grainger Ballroom)
November 12, 2025	AIM: Sounding Together (9 AM Orchestra Hall)
November 13, 2025	AIM: Sounding Together (9 AM Orchestra Hall)
November 14, 2025	AIM: What Instrument Should I Play? (9 AM Orchestra Hall)
November 15, 2025	AIM: What Instrument Should I Play? (10 AM Orchestra Hall)
November 17, 2025	IMPACT Kick-off Party (8:30 PM Club 9)
December 7, 2025	Crain-Maling YAC Prelims (8:30 AM Orchestra Hall)
December 8, 2025	AIM: The Ugly Duckling (9 AM Orchestra Hall)
January 17, 2026	Crain-Maling YAC Finals (1 PM Orchestra Hall)
February 2, 2026	AIM: The Ugly Duckling (9 AM Orchestra Hall)
February 18, 2026	SVEP: Strauss with Klaus Mäkelä (10 AM Orchestra Hall)
February 27, 2026	Salon: Kari Novilla, Harp (5:30 PM 840 N Lake Shore Dr)
March 9, 2026	AIM: The Bremen Town Musicians (9 AM Orchestra Hall)
March 15, 2026	IMPACT Benefit Concert (6:30 PM Orchestra Hall)
March 18, 2026	Spring All-Member Meeting (11 AM Grainger Ballroom)
March 21, 2026	AIM: Classical Elements (10 AM Orchestra Hall)
April 7, 2026	Musicians' Luncheon (12 PM Thomas Club/Grainger)
April 13, 2026	AIM: The Bremen Town Musicians (9 AM Orchestra Hall)
May 8, 2026	AIM: Mother Goose & The Cabinet... (9 AM Orchestra Hall)
May 9, 2026	AIM: Mother Goose & The Cabinet... (10 AM Orchestra Hall)
May 16, 2026	Endowed Concert Reception (9:30 PM Grainger Ballroom)
June 1, 2026	Civic Postconcert Reception #2 (9 PM Buntrock Hall)
June 17, 2026	Annual Meeting (11 AM Grainger Ballroom)
June 23, 2026	Corporate Night (6 PM Forte)

THE LEAGUE ONLINE INFORMATION

While we are creating our own webpage for the League, social media accounts will be our resources for information sharing.

If you have an account on Facebook, visit <https://www.facebook.com/theleagueofthecsoa> and “follow.”

If you have an account on Instagram, follow the League at <https://www.instagram.com/theleagueofthecsoa>.

If you want to share something on these accounts, feel free to send pictures and contents to Ted Tabé (the chair of Technology) at theodore.b.tabé@gmail.com.

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>

2025/26 LEAGUE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President Sarah Good

Vice President of Events: Betsy Berry

Vice President of Finance: Juan Solana

Vice President of Fundraising: Sharon Mitchell

Vice President of Membership: Fred Garzon

Vice President of Administration: Allisa Gam

Vice President of Education: Kathy Nordmeyer

Vice President of Outreach: Bobbie Huskey

Vice President of Strategic Planning & Operations: Ansuk Jeong

Secretary: Liz Branch

Members-at-Large: Rosalind Jackson & John Zimnie