

220 SOUTH – February 2024



A newsletter of the League of the
Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association

Merle Jacob, Editor

A WELCOME FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Recently, someone asked me what the highlight has been since I became the president of the League of the CSOA, and I could not honestly answer. There have been so many; however, I am the most grateful for the Executive Committee. Each member is engaged, creative, supportive and committed.

Our Adventures in Music program has been very robust this fall, and the Seniors and Veterans Engagement Program Open Rehearsals are now tentatively scheduled. The preliminary auditions for the Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition were held in January and will conclude on February 24.

As a new president, while attending the 30 Year Member Tea, I was so taken by the years of friendship that were created and nurtured in the name of the League and the CSOA. Although many attendees had not seen each other for some years, their love for their fellow members was palpable, and the stories were touching, funny and memorable.

My personal mission for the League is to expand our membership to represent diversity not only of age but also of culture, race and gender.

A privilege for the League of the CSOA is to celebrate with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and honor their talent and commitment to orchestral music. The pizza party that the League held for them after the October concert was fun for all. The Civic musicians were also very appreciative of the “goody bags” that the League provided prior to the fabulous Bach Marathon.

I encourage all of you to review our upcoming calendar of events. Do not miss the March Membership Meeting; there will be a surprise! The Endowed Concert Reception for the Chicago Symphony Chorus, and our Musicians’ Luncheon are also coming up soon.

I look forward to enjoying these special events with you, the League’s dedicated and generous members.



League President, Sharon Mitchell speaking at the League’s annual Fall in Love With Music event.

Sharon Mitchell

NEW LEAGUE DONOR ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



Brent Taghap, a 30-year-old violinist from the Tampa Bay area, has been named a donor engagement manager and will work with the League. Brent holds degrees from Florida State University, where he received his BM in 2016, and DePaul, where he completed his MM in 2018. Brent also earned a Certificate in Performance in 2020. He was a member of Chicago's very own Civic Orchestra and has also performed with numerous other ensembles including the Oistrakh Symphony, the Matt Jones Orchestra and

a conductor-less chamber orchestra. Brent has spent countless summers at music festivals and institutions; his highlights include the Varna International Music Festival in Austria and Italy, The Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival in Vermont, and the National Repertory Orchestra in Colorado.

As an educator, Brent was a mentor with the Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative and teaches privately. His students represent all ages and backgrounds.

In addition to his studies of traditional western music, Brent is also interested in preserving, cataloging and performing works by Filipino composers, in the hope that they will become part of the canon of works for violin.

Other interests include going to art museums, hanging out with friends and playing with his cat, Wren.

LEAGUE EVENTS

OPEN HOUSE CHICAGO 2023

On October 14, 2023, Symphony Center opened its doors for Open House Chicago with League members Merle Jacob, Margo Sorgman, Roseann Druian, Patty Weber, Mary Beth Dietrick, Fred Garzon, Margo Oberman and Sharon Mitchell there to greet visitors.

Over 4,500 people were welcomed in the lobby and given information flyers about the building and the CSO. The Theodore Thomas Club and Buntrock Hall were open for viewing, with the instrument petting zoo in the morning and concerts by Civic Orchestra members in the afternoon. Visitors could also go onto the Armour Stage and be photographed on the maestro's stand.

The League and other CSOA volunteer groups had information tables in the Grainger Ballroom. Rosalind Jackson and Juan Solona became new members because of meeting League members that day. Participation by League members helped make this a most successful Open House Chicago for the CSOA.



Visitors listen to students from the Percussion Scholarship Program perform during Open House Chicago.



A young child trying out a violin at the very popular instrument petting zoo during Open House Chicago.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

Discover the
world of the CSOA



Please join us for an afternoon exploring
your CSOA membership and
touring Symphony Hall

Friday, October 20th from 1:00-4:00pm
Buntrock Hall, 6th Floor
67 E. Adams, Chicago IL

RSVP janicey1@aol.com by October 15th

Light refreshments served

A new member orientation for the CSOA League took place on October 20, 2023. Our new members enjoyed a tour of Symphony Center including a behind the scenes visit. They then enjoyed a history about the League given by Mary Goodkind. The day ended with new members learning about the numerous opportunities to participate in during this season.

New members and EC members in attendance were Liz Branch, Mary Goodkind, Allisa Gam, Janice Young, Lynda Soucie, Angela D'Aversa, Ben Ruff, Kathy Nordmeyer, Tracy Staniel, Joan Dattel, Tom Carmichael (Chicago Architecture Center docent), Kevin Staniel, Eileen Conaghan and Sharon Mitchell.



New League members pose for a photo on the Armour Stage of Orchestra Hall.



New League members gather in Grainger Ballroom to learn about Symphony Center from volunteer tour guide Tom Carmichael.

30 YEAR MEMBER COFFEE



On Tuesday, September 26, 2023, the League honored members with 30 or more years of service to The Woman's Association and the League of the CSOA.

Each member was given a CSOA pin and a booklet with information about the service of each honoree. They also had the opportunity to speak to the group and share stories. Members of the Executive Committee and CSOA President Jeff Alexander attended.

Mr. Alexander thanked them for their commitment and expressed his gratitude for their enthusiasm and service to the CSOA.



League members who have been in the League for over 30 years pose for a photo.



CSOA President Jeff Alexander addressing League members.

FALL IN LOVE WITH MUSIC

The League's treasured fundraising event, Fall in Love With Music, was held on Sunday, October 22, 2023. Those attending enjoyed each other's company in the beautifully appointed Grainger Ballroom over lunch.

After, we were entertained by pianist Conrad Tao, who was performing with the CSO that week. Following, Cristina Rocca, the CSOA vice president for artistic planning, provided a vibrant conversation with Maestro James Gaffigan and Mr. Tao.

Sarah Good, the League vice president for fundraising, appointed Claretta Meier and Joan Dattel as co-chairs for this exceptional day. Lisa McDaniel was recognized for her special guidance and commitment to this special League tradition.



League members chat with featured guest artist, Conrad Tao, during the Fall in Love With Music event.



League members stuffing the invitations for Fall in Love With Music.



League President, Sharon Mitchell, poses with other League members during the Fall in Love With Music event.



League members have a joyful conversation during Fall in Love With Music.

CIVIC ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS' PIZZA PARTY

On October 23, following the first Civic concert, the League hosted a well-deserved party for our young, incredibly talented musicians. It is always a privilege for the League to celebrate with them and honor their talent and commitment to orchestral music. In addition to the musicians, Maestro James Gaffigan, who conducted the concert, also attended. Many of the CSO musician mentors also enjoyed the festivities.



Maestro James Gaffigan (right) addresses the room during the post-concert reception.

BACH MARATHON 2024



The League again showed its support for the Civic Orchestra's Bach Marathon event by assembling goodie bags for those Civic musicians who participated in this Civic tradition. Prior to the day of the performances, League volunteers purchased, assembled and distributed the goodie bags. They had essentials for the daylong event including such items as handwarmers, granola bars, hand sanitizers, CSO key chains, Kleenex and of course, chocolate.

Volunteers Merle Jacob, Bobbie Huskey and Sharon Mitchell attended the rehearsals and received many "thank-you's" and hugs, as they handed out the bags to the very surprised and delighted young musicians.

Many League members showed their support for the Civic by attending the evening concert at the Fourth Presbyterian Church on December 4, 2023. This year's Marathon included three Bach Concertos and two Bach Cantatas with the Chicago Symphony Chorus. This event is always a sell-out and one the League is proud to support.



Members of the Chicago Symphony Chorus perform alongside members of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago in a Cantata by J.S. Bach at Fourth Presbyterian Church.

ADVENTURES IN MUSIC CONCERTS

We have had two extraordinary days of joyful concerts this season. For one, we welcomed nearly 4,700 excited young people to the Global Perspectives concerts, and our young patrons were a very enthusiastic audience. Jenise Sheppard, the house manager, and the ushers were so grateful for the League's welcoming presence and help in getting everyone into the hall so quickly.

On Saturday, October 14, we saw the return of the activities for the Family Concerts. Katy Clusen and Katie Eaton did an extraordinary job of designing a group of activities that resulted in an amazing outpouring of joy and happiness. The League's presence was invaluable in helping our young patrons engage with the many musical activities in the Rotunda. The children and their families enjoyed the Scavenger Hunt (thank you, Eileen), Instrument Petting Zoo (thank you, Christine), an opportunity to learn a square dance (thank you, Sharon & Allisa), the opportunity to make their own



tambourine (a huge shout out to Fred, who managed the very popular activity on his own) and the Mini-Maestro conducting opportunity — complete with mini tuxedos — accompanied by the Civic Brass Quintet (thank you, Angela). The Rotunda was filled with excited families who were thrilled with their hands-on experiences with music.



On Friday, December 11, we welcomed more than 500 wee ones, ages 3-5, to Buntrock Hall for the first Once Upon a Symphony concert. The children were delighted by the presentation of The Three Little Pigs. Where else can you hear our incredible CSO musicians (Emma Gerstein — flute, Cathy Brubaker — viola, Karen Basrak — cello, and Gene Pokorny — tuba) with color coordinated costumes and the amazing Shawn Pfautsch narrating the story.

The children enthusiastically waved their hands, sang and danced — and were delighted by Gene Pokorny as the Big Bad Wolf. A special thanks to Eileen Conaghan, Joan Dattel, Mary Beth Dietrick, Tracy Staniel, Sharon Mitchell and Sue Bridge for being the warm and friendly greeters. Their presence set the stage for a wonderful concert for these children.

COME SEE YOUNG ARTISTS!

Do yourself a big favor and plan to attend the finals of the Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition! This year's competition was open to woodwinds, brass, harp and percussion. Fourteen young artists, ages ranging from 14 to 17, competed in the preliminary auditions on January 13 in Buntrock Hall. Featured were an oboe, a clarinet, a tuba, two trumpets, two horns, three flutes, three marimbas, and a steelpan. Thirteen League members volunteered to help with the auditions.

The three finalists chosen were:

Jaden Teague-Núñez (steelpan)

Chloe Nam (flute)

Elyse Schlesinger (horn)

Each of the finalists will play on the stage of Orchestra Hall, accompanied by the Civic Orchestra. After all have played, the judges will confer, and the winner will be announced to the audience. The finals will take place at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 24. Admission is free, but you must make a reservation. The free tickets will be available on the CSO website beginning on February 9. Please come — and expect to be amazed by the amount of young talent displayed!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR COMMUNITY

OPEN REHEARSALS

Please mark your calendars for Thursday, February 29, when we will need League volunteers to meet and greet for our Seniors and Veterans Engagement Program. The music being presented will be Mendelssohn, Schubert and Beethoven. Please arrive by 9:00 a.m. for the 10:00 a.m. rehearsal; the Open Rehearsal will conclude at 12:30 p.m. If interested, notify Margo Oberman (honye@omeda.com) or Mary Plauche (maryplauche4@gmail.com).

NOTES FOR PEACE

On Tuesday, March 19, the Negaunee Music Institute invites you to *A Notes for Peace Celebration* highlighting the impact of Notes for Peace and the work of Purpose Over Pain. Notes for Peace is a remarkable program that empowers Chicago parents who have lost children to gun violence to create original songs of tribute. Imagine the healing power of music when parents — guided by Fellows of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and artists from the Irene Taylor Trust — compose, perform and professionally record their heartfelt creations. To date, over 100 families have found solace through this program, turning the pain of loss into a melody of remembrance. There are two VIP ticket options available:

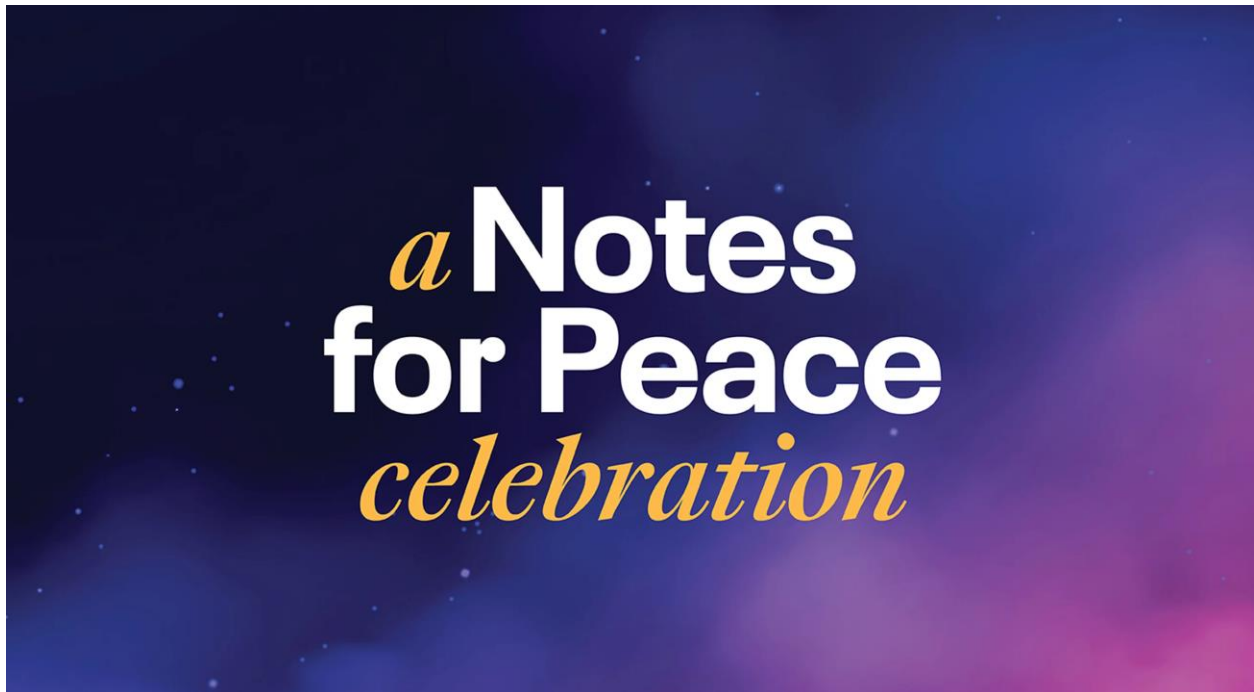
Leader Package — \$250

Includes reserved VIP seating and postconcert reception with Hilary Hahn

Champion Package — \$350

Includes preconcert reception with families from Purpose Over Pain, Includes reserved VIP seating and postconcert reception with Hilary Hahn

The preconcert reception will begin in Buntrock Hall at 5:30 p.m., followed by A Notes for Peace Concert at 7:00 p.m. and finally a champagne and dessert reception with CSO Artist-in-Residence Hilary Hahn at 8:30 p.m. in Grainger Ballroom. We hope you can join us for this special evening. [Click here for more information.](#)



CSOA DOCENT PROGRAM

The purpose of the Senior and Veteran Engagement Program (SVEP) is to enrich the lives of seniors and veterans attending any of the CSO's free Open Rehearsals by providing a quality presentation which provides information about the music, composers and performers in an engaging manner.

This is done by contacting centers that have been invited to the Open Rehearsals and arranging for a visit from a docent or docent team. In the meantime, John Burrell and Matt Corey research and prepare a draft of the material to be shared. When finished, Judy Hays finalizes the script and creates a slideshow with embedded music and video, which is then sent digitally to docents to practice and present. The docents do this because they love the CSO, the greatest orchestra in the world. If you feel the same way, they would love to have you join them! The joy and appreciation expressed by the seniors and veterans is priceless, and it is also great fun to learn new things about the CSO repertoire! Contact Sherry Richards at sherryrichards@comcast.net or call her at 630-561-9116 if you would like more information.

VALENTINE'S DAY PROJECT

The League again expressed its admiration and appreciation to the outstanding musicians of the CSO through its Valentine's Day Project. The League Musicians' Engagement Committee, spearheaded by Sharon Quigley, asked members to volunteer for the project. Members were assigned an individual musician or musicians and asked to reach out to the musicians by sending them a personal note or card expressing their gratitude for all they do. A contribution to the League Tribute Fund in honor of the musician is also made by the member. Cards will be given out on February 14, showing the outstanding musicians that they are the "HEART" of the music they perform and are loved by the League.

THE ARCHIVE PROJECT

Anyone entering the sixth floor, where the League office is located, cannot overlook the cabinets lining every wall holding years of redundant League files. Fred Garzon, the archive chair for the League, has come up with a “miracle” solution to this endless paper — digitalization! He has tirelessly developed a process, that in time, will rid us of most paper except for important programs and pictures.

The following CSOA contributors have worked with Fred to ensure institutional security and acceptance and include Doug Bolino (IT Department), Frank Villella (CSOA Archive Department), CSOA Help Desk, and the Volunteer Program Office (sixth floor).

This project has two phases:

Phase one: To create an automated process in which the **League Emails** will be consolidated into a generic Email account that will serve as a central repository for all incoming League mail, as well as an archive for reference purposes.

Phase two: To create an automated process in which all the hard documents — residing in 35 cabinets located on the sixth floor, — will be reviewed, scanned and stored to a dedicated server within the CSOA Systems Network.

CORPORATE NIGHT 2024



The CSOA's annual Corporate Night is approaching on June 4. This annual event serves as a salute to the Chicago's corporate community and is an opportunity to invite increased corporate support of the CSOA's artistic and educational endeavors. The theme for this year's event is "Shaken, not Stirred" and features music from the James Bond movies. The CSO will be joined by Broadway star and vocal powerhouse Capathia Jenkins and conductor John Morris Russell in this tribute to the notorious secret agent.

The League, in conjunction with Nick Magnone (CSOA director of Corporate Development), will help plan the evening. If you're interested in attending, tickets for the non-corporate package cost \$295 and include delicious bites and specialty drinks plus prime seating at the concert.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR LEAGUE MEMBERS

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 second year of providing support to cellist Lindsay Sharpe, whom many of you heard at our September all-member meeting.

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. 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.

NEW LEAGUE BROCHURE

As the vice president of administration for the League, Tracey Stanciel has been working on and updating the League brochure, and it is soon to go to the printer. It has been designed to be used for many years to save on printing costs. Tracey is also assembling a committee to work on updating the League handbook.

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/i/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>

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

- 2/12 Once Upon A Symphony Concerts (volunteers needed)
- 2/16 AIM Concerts (volunteers needed)
- 2/17 AIM Concerts (volunteers needed)
- 2/24 YAC Concert
- 2/29 Community Open Rehearsal (formerly SVEP) (volunteers needed)

MARCH

- 3/19 A Notes for Peace Celebration
- 3/21 League Winter Member Meeting

APRIL

- 4/8 Once Upon A Symphony Concerts (volunteers needed)
- 4/13 League Endowed Concert and Reception

MAY

- 5/2 Musicians' Luncheon
- 5/8 AIM Concerts (volunteers needed)
- 5/9 AIM Concerts (volunteers needed)
- 5/10 AIM Concerts (volunteers needed)
- 5/11 AIM Concerts (volunteers needed)
- 5/20 Once Upon A Symphony Concerts (volunteers needed)

JUNE

- 6/3 Last Civic Concert with Postconcert Reception
- 6/4 Corporate Night
- 6/14 CSO Postconcert Reception
- 6/19 Annual Meeting and Lunch



League
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