



League
Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association

2023-2024 Season League Annual Report



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President's Report – Sharon Mitchell

The League of the CSOA has had an extremely exciting year filled with varied volunteer opportunities and successful events. My message and goal, as the President of the League of the CSOA, is to revisit our original mission and purpose. Our mutual passion for classical music, our pride in the beloved CSO, and our fervent desire to serve are the initial ingredients that bring us together. Volunteering for the numerous children's concerts (AIM), the senior and veterans' rehearsals (SVEP), as well as the Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artist Competition and the significant assistance our League have contributed to the CSOA for the yearly Open House Chicago events are essential examples of our vibrant spirit of volunteerism.

Our visibility comes from this volunteerism! Visibility is essential in growing our membership. My aspirations are that our League membership reflects our community and our school concert audiences, and that we share and interact with other CSOA organizations. We have enjoyed several events with the Women's Board and co-sponsored a reception with the Overture Council for the Civic Orchestra musicians. Additionally, the Executive Committee mirrors shared membership with the African American Network, the Latino Alliance, and the Women's Board.

Last March we were able to host the CSO Chorus for our traditional Endowed Concert Reception for the first time since 2019, due to Covid-19. League members also enjoyed attending Fall in Love with Music, the Musicians' Luncheon, Corporate Night, a tea honoring our 30-Year League members, as well as our three traditional Membership Meetings.

Last Year marked a new focus: Musician Engagement. Bobbie Huskey served as the first chair of the committee and Susan Synnestvedt was our first CSO musician ambassador. We also enjoyed celebrating with the Civic Orchestra musicians at two post-concert receptions which has become a League tradition. We also enjoyed stuffing goodies in the red League canvas bags for the Civic musicians for their annual Bach Marathon, also a League tradition, long remembered by those young professional musicians.

A particularly vital component of our mission is to share financially, by paying our dues, making our Annual Fund contributions, supporting sponsorships for Fall in Love with Music, and Corporate Night, and making Tribute Fund donations, which supports our Civic Orchestra fellow, and, as well, purchasing CSO concert and event tickets.

I want to thank each League leader, especially the Executive Committee, that I fondly refer to as the "Dream Team," whose names are listed with their VP reports. I also want to give my deepest appreciation to three past presidents: Mimi Duginger, Cheryl Istvan, and Sue Bridge. Each has tirelessly given me direction, great advice, and endless care.

I also want to recognize three other very dedicated League members who diligently serve. Until recently, Renita Esayian, was the hand behind all the kind thank you notes that you received when you contributed to the Tribute Fund. Carol Nykiel now graciously writes them. Thank you both for

your dedication to this important work. For the last two years, Sharon Quigley has taken on a highly valuable and nearly impossible task: the Musician Holiday Card project. Sharon, thank you for your tireless devotion to the League and our CSO musicians. I also extend my thanks to Merle Jacob, editor of 220 South, our League's newsletter whose dedication and creativity have given it a fresh and exciting polish.

The following League members have demonstrated unending commitment to important events and projects, and I thank them, each, for their tireless dedication: Christine Uhlig, Bill Ward, Liz Stein, and Nancy Friedman, all have given hours to ensure the success of the Young Artist Competition. Almost every time that I go to our League office on the 6th floor of Symphony Center, I am greeted by Fred Garzon, who is working diligently on our Archives project, which he has so skillfully designed to become digital, ridding us of tons of paper.

An enormous thank you to Brent Taghap, Donor Engagement Manager, who displays his caring dedication to the League every day and is so invaluable to us. His enthusiastic willingness to assist, his initiative spirit, and creativity is so appreciated. I also want to recognize and thank Lisa McDaniel, Director of Donor Engagement, for her caring direction and her knowledge of our history and her attention to our future. Thank you also to Kevin Gupana, Associate Director of Giving, for his infectious enthusiasm and assistance with the League exceeding our goal of \$25,000 for our sponsorship of the CSO for Kids PHILHARMONIA FANTASTIQUE. The League values the partnership that we have with the Negaunee Music Institute, especially Katy Clusen, Associate Director, Katie Eaton, Coordinator of School Partnerships and Carol Kelleher, Assistant for CSO for Kids.

I also want to thank Jeff Alexander, President of the CSOA, Dale Hedding, Vice President for Development, and Al Andreychuk, Director of Endowed Gifts and Planned Giving, for their continued interest in the League and for their attendance at many of our meetings and events.

Serving as your president has changed my life, and I thank you for your confidence and encouragement, and I look forward to another year filled with opportunities for all of us to better fulfill the message of our powerful mission.



Send my Love & Gratitude to All of You

Sharon Mitchell

Executive Committee

(2023-2024)

- | | | |
|------|---|---------------------------|
| I. | President | Sharon Mitchell |
| | ▪ Secretary | Kathy Nordmeyer |
| II. | Vice Presidents: | |
| | ▪ VP Administration | Tracy Stanciel |
| | ▪ VP Area & Salon | Margo Oberman |
| | ▪ VP Education | Sue Bridge |
| | ▪ VP Events | Eileen Conaghan |
| | ▪ VP Finance | Mary Beth Dietrick |
| | ▪ VP Fundraising | Sarah Good |
| | ▪ VP Membership | Janice Young |
| III. | Chair of Technology And Strategic Planning | Ted Tabe |
| IV. | Editor of League Newsletter | Merle Jacob |
| V. | Members-at-Large | Allisa Gam Merle Jacob |



VP of Administration – Tracy Stanciel

The League had an exciting year! Our brochure was updated. We are saving on printing costs by not including the executive officers and the calendar.

The League Handbook update is nearing completion. It will be digital and will not contain all the previous calendars. So much of our technology has improved over the years that we are able to streamline many of our documents.

The League had its first ever history lesson on the Juneteenth holiday during our spring meeting.

This year's annual report reflects our new normal. Our pre COVID activities are back in full swing. The League 30-year membership luncheon has returned. A new committee was created to handle League marketing and public relations.

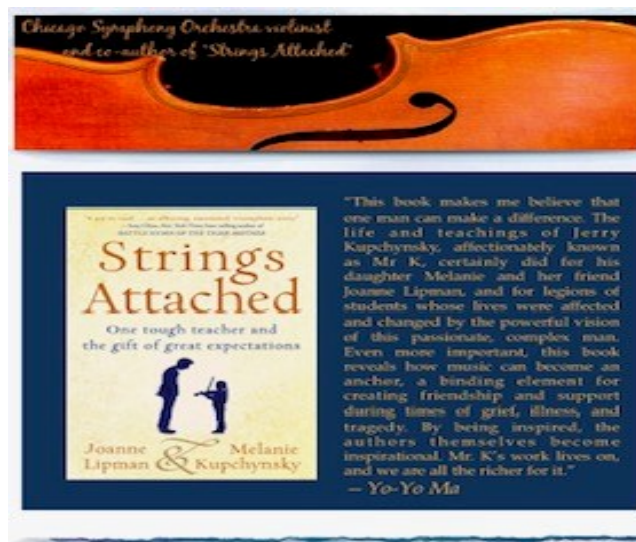
Our 2023-2024 season was filled with students, seniors, veterans and our lifelong patrons!



VP of Areas & Salon – Margo Oberman

Since the League calendar was full for the fall of 2023, we had a Zoom with Melanie Kupchynsky on March 4th, 2024. Melanie spoke about her book, “Strings Attached” that she wrote with Joanne Lipman. It is a wonderful, inspiring story of a teacher who pushed his students to do more than they thought they could and changed their lives. “Strings attached is a testament to the astonishing power of hope—and a celebration of the profound impact one person can have on the lives of others. That one person was Melanie’s father. Yo-Yo Ma is quoted as saying, “this book makes me believe that one man can make a difference. The Zoom took place in the 8th floor Conference Room, and we had approximately 50 attending the Zoom and raised over \$700 for our League Civic musician. The interplay of Melanie’s history, the photos and the music made for an incredible presentation that was enjoyed by all.

Since my term is over, I want to thank Sharon Mitchell and her “dream team” for their guidance, input and help in planning these events with me. A special shout out to Lisa and Brent for all their guidance and commitment. I know the League is in great hands for the new 2024-2025 Season!



VP of Education – Sue Bridge

Summarizing all the activities of the Education Committee into one or two pages is a real challenge. Here is a condensation of all the program in which so many of our League members helped to make them successful:

1. **Adventures in Music Program (AIM) – Chair by Kathy Nordmeyer**

In this program, 27 League members committed 317 hours of their time in support of AIM concerts this season. These concerts included pre-school concerts (age 3-5), elementary school concerts (age K-6) and concerts for age 6 and up to high school. We saw nearly 20,000 students along with their teachers and chaperones in 23 AIM concerts. Amazing educators and chaperones joined our members to help ensure that the young people of Chicago had an extraordinary experience. We aim to host a new record of 21,000 guests in our next season and enjoy every moment of the concerts ourselves.

2. **CSO Crain-Maling Foundation Young Artists Competition**

Co-Chairs: Bill Ward and Christine Uhlig

Judge Coordinator: Elizabeth Stein

Camp Scholarship Coordinator: Nancy Friedman

Under the direction of the Negaunee Institute and our League co-chairs, the preliminary competitions were held on January 13, 2024, and the final competitions were held on February 24, 2024. This year's competition was unique which involved young musicians on a wide spectrum of instruments including oboe, horn and clarinet. This led to a truly engaging and impressive group of finalists: Elyse Schlesinger (horn), Chloe Nam (flute) and Jaden Teague-Nunez (steelpan). Jaden was chosen as the winner and will perform with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra next season. Elyse was the League's guest artist at this spring's Annual meeting. The judges also chose three competitors to receive summer scholarships. They are Madison Barber on oboe, Julian Kolthammer on horn and Christopher Chung on clarinet.

3. **Community Engagement Program (Senior & Veteran)**

Co-Chairs: Margo Oberman and Mary Plauche

The 2023-2024 concert season gave us all the opportunity to enjoy a wide variety of superb conductors. We were hoping that those guest conductors would embrace the tradition of inviting seniors and veterans and community centers from across

Chicagoland to attend three Open Rehearsals during the spring season. We were not disappointed. On February 29, April 17 and June 5, Orchestra Hall welcomed hundreds of excited guests to enjoy great concerts which they might otherwise have been prevented from attending because of financial, physical or transportation concerns. We are looking forward to continuing this rich and vital tradition in the 2024-2025 season.

4. Community Engagement Docent Program

Chair: Sherry Richards

Docents: Bill Baar, Tom Bowling, John Burrell, Matt Corey, Judy Hays, Mimi Gember, Sherry Richards

Our 7 dedicated docents provided 25 well prepared presentations at 12 varied venues for 3 rousing rehearsals during 2023-2024 concert season. The engaging talks were accompanied by slideshows filled with audio examples and video excerpts for attendants a better understanding of the composers and their music. The joy and appreciation from attendants at the sessions is immeasurable.



VP of Events – Eileen Conaghan

There were many wonderful events held in the 2023-2024 season. The endowed concert reception was held on April 13, 2024, Musician Luncheon was held on May 2, 2024, Civic post-concert reception was held on May 3, 2024, and CSO post-concert reception was held on June 14, 2024.

1. The Endowed Concert

Since 1985, through the generous support of its members, the League has endowed a CSO performance featuring choral music. The event was held on April 13 and The League sponsored a reception following the concert honoring the Chorus.

2. Musicians Luncheon

The CSO musicians were invited to have lunch with the League members to celebrate and appreciate their musical talents to enrich our community. It was also a fantastic opportunity to meet CSO musicians in person.

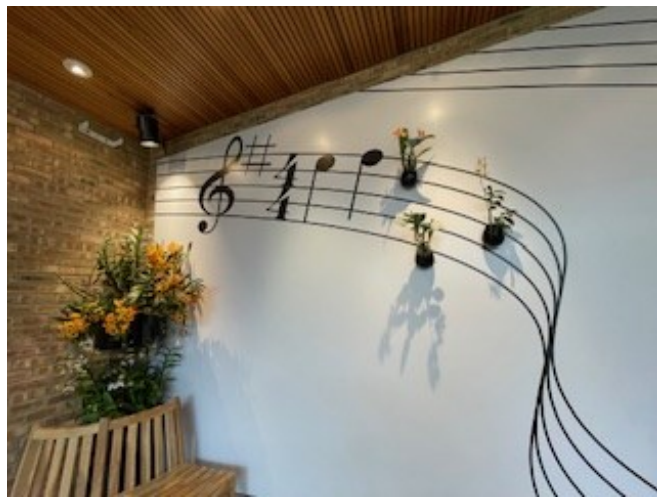
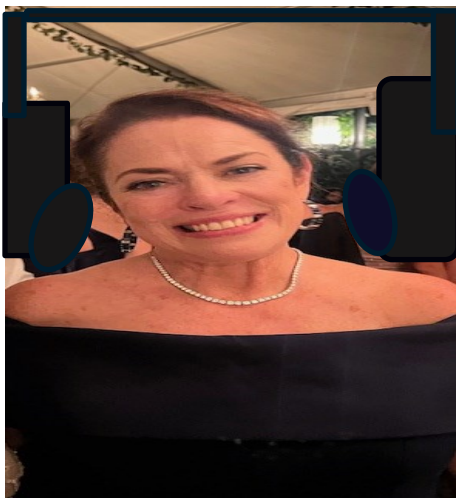
3. Civic Post-Concert Reception

It was a fun time to meet young musicians of CSO Civic Orchestra after their superb performance at the reception. Many times, league members have good conversations with young musicians about their aspirations, future goals, and musical careers.

4. CSO Post-Concert Reception

It was a very casual reception to meet CSO musicians in a very relaxing post-concert reception. Some musicians shared their CSO musical career journeys with League members. They appreciated the continued support from the League year after year.

Many thanks to Brent Taghap and Lisa McDaniel for all their hard work on all those events.



VP of Finance – Mary Beth Dietrick

The League supports the CSOA in many ways, reflecting the efforts of many volunteers. These activities help to promote appreciation of symphonic music and to encourage a commitment to music education. We also raise funds, either through direct contributions or through events that generate revenue.

At the beginning of this fiscal year the League increased its dues and its required Annual Fund contribution from \$100 to \$150. This was well received, most likely because we hadn't asked for an increase for many years, and the benefits make these amounts look like real bargains!

| Fund Resources | 2023-2024 Goal | 2023-2024 Final | 2022-2023 Final |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Annual | \$100,000 | \$98,120 | \$97,184 |
| Tribute | \$9,500 | \$9,840 | \$7,470 |
| Dues/person | \$150 | \$18,600 | \$12,800 |
| Events Fundraising: | \$50,000 | | |
| Fall in Love with Music | | \$24,550 | |
| Corporate Night | | \$42,185 | |
| Pink Martini | | | \$50,101 |

Annual Fund

Each volunteer organization has its own Annual Fund, with its own goals. For the League, it is one of the highest targets for revenues. At the end of the fiscal year the money is transferred to the CSOA's Annual Fund, to be used wherever needed. Our goal this year was \$100,000 – a reduction made to reflect the reduced number of members. Your annual fund contribution can be made at any time before June 30th, 2025.

Tribute Fund

This fund can be used at the League's discretion. For several years we have funded a Civic Fellow from this fund. Our contribution this year for that purpose was \$9500. Our Civic fellow was cellist Lindsay Sharpe. Our goal for 2023-2024 is \$10,000, as the amount of the Civic stipend has increased. We will have a new Civic fellow. A contribution to the Tribute Fund is a great way to thank someone, congratulate someone, or recognize the memory of a loss.

Membership Dues

This number comes close to matching the number of members. Active members pay \$150 per year and Supporting members pay \$250 per year.

Events Fundraising

-The Corporate Night

The revenue is raised by the League's tickets for its reception and donations.

-The Fall in Love with Music

The revenue is also raised by ticket sales and donations.

Many diligent volunteers contribute their time and ideas to our fund-raising events, which are a lot of fun in addition to raising funds for the CSOA. More information about these events will be found in the report of the Vice President of Fundraising.



VP of Fundraising – Sarah Good

1. Fall In Love with Music 2023 – *Co-Chairs Joan Dattel & Claretta Meier*

The 2023-24 fundraising season kicked off with a warm, lovely day in October. Our guests for Fall in Love with Music included Mr. Conrad Tao and Maestro James Gaffigan. Mr. Tao is a distinguished pianist and composer. Maestro Gaffigan serves in multiple music director positions across the international stage and is a much sought after guest conductor.

The event was beautifully set in the Grainger Ballroom with a tasty luncheon followed by a Q&A session with our guests moderated by Vice President for Artistic Planning, Cristina Rocca. Close to 70 people attended! We raised just short of \$25,000 through ticket sales and donations. Thanks to everyone who attended.



2. Corporate Night 2024 – *Co-Chairs Jessica Erickson and Liz Branch*

This year's corporate night (2024) concert had a James Bond theme: "Shaken not Stirred" and featured John Morris Russell, conductor and guest vocalist Capathia Jenkins. Both gave a wonderful performance. During the performance, we were treated to extra comments by the conductor who was truly knowledgeable about the music being played. What a treat!

This year featured a change for the League from a sit-down dinner to a "drink and bites" mingling event on several levels of the Rotunda. James Bond cutouts were available for some great selfies and the food was excellent and plentiful. It was an enormous success!



VP of Membership – Janice Young

This year has been a remarkably busy and productive one. At the beginning of the season, we sponsored a 30-year Member Coffee to honor those members who have given thirty or more years of service to the League.

For our newest members, we had an Orientation event to introduce them to the history, activities, and mission of the League. We were delighted to have a Behind the Scenes tour of Symphony Hall!

The following members are new:

Bill Baar, Betsy Berry, Peter Bouchard, Lizbeth Branch, Mary Lee Gosz, Mary Ann Harting, Rosalind Jackson, Sarah Forbes Orwig, Ben Ruff, Juan Solana, Lynda Soucie, Linda, and John Zimnie.

Our newcomers have been involved in many activities and committees this year. The winner of two Symphony tickets to any concert was Lynda Soucie. All members are eligible to be part of this raffle if dues have been paid by October 31! Rosalind Jackson graciously took on a co-chair role for the Musician's luncheon this spring. In addition, she and her husband, Juan Solana are involved with other organizations supporting the CSO. Liz Branch helped with the Musician's Luncheon and provided gift cards donated by the Gage. Many of our new members have helped with the AIM concerts throughout the season. We are so happy they have joined the League.



Picture of 30-year League members

CSOA League Newsletter

Editor-in-Chief: Merle Jacob

220 South is the official publication of the League of the CSOA that publishes news about the people, events, and activities that the League supports and presents. The President of the League appoints the editor who collaborates with the President, the Executive Committee, and the chairs of various committees to ensure that articles are written about pertinent activities of the League and its members. The newsletter also features other significant CSOA related individuals, such as musicians and CSOA employees. Published three or four times a year, the newsletter connects League members to upcoming events while documenting all the activities of the League through stories and pictures. League information such as weblinks, an event calendar, and Executive Committee names and emails are included.



Technology & Strategic Planning – Ted Tabe

Bylaws Committee

- This season the League Executive Committee approved the proposed revisions to the bylaws.
- As a next step, the law firm of Latham & Watkins has begun reviewing the revisions to the bylaws. The Executive Committee is waiting for the process of legal review and approval of the revisions to complete.

Strategic Planning

- Next season will see the creation of a new committee named Public Relations and Marketing. The Public Relations and Marketing Committee will help to achieve the long-term strategic goal of increasing the public visibility of the League and all the League activities in support of the CSO.

