



The Austin Symphony Orchestra performs at the Children's Halloween Concert, October 2021.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Welcome to the winter edition of the Women's Symphony League's Newsletter, **Take Note**, for the 2021-2022 fiscal year! It has been an exciting year so far, with in

person events beginning again after over a year of a pandemic necessitated virtual events. From the volunteer opportunities at the ASO summer concerts, to the festive Holiday Party, our members have been enthusiastic about gathering again and renewing connections amongst ourselves and the Austin Symphony Orchestra.

September brought us the **66th Annual Jewel Ball**. In order to make the three associated events happen, it takes all of our members doing their part to host upwards of 200 high-schoolers at Soiree, 600 guests at the Fashion Luncheon and over 1,100 guests at the Jewel Ball. At a time when the Austin Symphony Orchestra needs our support more than ever, we will be able to donate over \$350,000 of proceeds from our fundraising efforts! Special thanks to the **Jewel Ball Committee and Chairs**, Stacey Brewer and Meredith Wood; the **Jewel Committee and Chair**, Julie Baselice; the **Soiree Committee and Chairs**, Julie Lee and Shannon Meroney; and the **Fashion Luncheon Committee and Chairs**, Jennifer Johnson, Elizabeth

Rose, and Lisa Tully. Appreciation goes out to all of our table sponsors, in kind sponsors, silent and live auction sponsors, Royalty, Visiting Royalty and Junior Royalty participants, and all of our event guests. We couldn't do this without you!

The **Youth Leadership Council** kicked off our award-winning program in September at Abel's on the Lake, and also had two more meetings in the fall. Through this fundraiser, we are able to make an additional donation to the ASO at the end of the year. Thank you to the **YLC Committee and Chairs**, Dana Fisher and Trish McConnico for all you do!

Appreciation goes out to so many of our members for their **Service and Education Placement** efforts so far this year. The year began this summer with volunteer opportunities at the ASO's Hartman Concerts in the Park, and the 4th of July Outdoor Concert and Fireworks. Special thanks to the **Symphony Done-in-a-Day Committee**, and especially Melanie Walters and Stephanie Wilson for their coordination and efforts. **Yearbook Chair**, Julie Baselice created and printed the WSL yearbook/directory, which members should have received in the mail. The **Meetings Committee and Chairs**, Yoli Arriaga and Celeste Hubert, along with our home hostess Briana Shepard, graciously hosted our first in person general meeting of the year. Wendy Lary hosted a gorgeous Holiday Party in her home. The **Orchestra Relations**

Committee and Chairs, Holli Hill and Lindsey Parham, have been providing a delicious dessert bar to the Orchestra members at their dress rehearsal before each Masterworks concert, which they much appreciate! The **Young People's Concerts Committee and Chairs**, Tillery Castillo and Leslie Perkins, decorated the Long Center before the ASO's Halloween Children's Concerts, helping to create the spooky mood for the young concert goers. Karey Oddo, the Jewel Committee Chair, held the **Jewel Committee** meeting at Mary Ellen Borgelt's beautiful home. And last but not least, thank you for all of the behind the scenes work of the **Executive Committee** and **Board of Directors** for all you do for the WSL! I wish I could name you all here. It is my pleasure to work with such an amazing group of ladies.

Jennifer Bell
President, 2021-2022

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Women's Symphony League of Austin

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Noteworthy

We have a **new phone number!** Please update your address book to our new WSL Google Voice phone number, **(512) 265-5094**. This number can accept both voicemail and text messages!

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR TITLE SPONSORS

Crazy Little Thing Called Love presented by Knight & Mrs. Claymon A. Cipione | Kaighin & Clemons Advisory Team

The Women's Symphony League of Austin's 11th Annual **Red Haute** Valentine Party and Children's Style Show is coming in February! This event is the premier children's fashion show in Austin, presenting the season's hottest trends. The theme this year, **Crazy Little Thing Called Love**, will take you down memory lane and is guaranteed to be a good time for all. We hope you will join us at **Hotel Van Zandt** on **Sunday, February 13th, 2022**. Your participation is guaranteed to be fun and your purchase of a table sponsorship, underwriting opportunity, or an individual ticket directly supports the Austin Symphony Orchestra.



In addition to the fashion show and luncheon, the party will include professional photography, a chocolate fountain, and fabulous shopping at our Marketplace with a wide array of vendors! No Red Haute Valentine Party and Children's Style Show would be complete without the beloved Hugs & Kisses game. Pre-purchase your game entry and raffle tickets online!

ON SALE NOW!

See more about opportunities and purchase your tickets at www.betterunite.com/wsl-austin-redhaute2022-crazy-little-thing-called-love.

This charming event is destined to become your family's favorite Valentine tradition with all proceeds to benefit the Austin Symphony Orchestra. We look forward to seeing you there!

Contact Tiffany Galligan (512-731-4998) or Jennifer Owens (512-970-6388), RedHaute@wsl-austin.org, with questions.

Our Mission

The Women's Symphony League of Austin provides service and financial support for the Austin Symphony Orchestra and its programs, and offers educational opportunities for children and the community to further develop an appreciation of music.

Children's Halloween Concert

WSL PROGRAMS



The Austin Symphony Orchestra's (ASO) Children's Halloween Concert was held on Sunday, October 24 at the Long Center for the Performing Arts with a full crowd in attendance.

The concert was specially curated for children ages 2-10 who were encouraged to dress-up for the show. The fairy tale opera, *Hansel and Gretel* by Engelbert Humperdinck, was featured with narration by Bernadette Nason.

Women's Symphony League members provided support to the ASO by decorating for the event, which included setting up a spooky display along the Long Center's first floor entrance corridor. WSL Children's Concert Co-Chairs for this year are **Tillery Martin Castillo** and **Leslie Perkins**. If you missed your chance to volunteer at Halloween, don't

worry, another opportunity is coming soon with the Young People's Concerts. If you are interested in assisting the WSL's Young People's Concert Committee, be sure to sign up when the placement becomes available. If you have any questions about this committee, reach out to Tillery or Leslie; their contact information can be found online in the member directory or in the new yearbook.



Recipe Box

Did you know that WSL published a cookbook, "Enjoy! Recipes from the Women's Symphony League of Austin," in 1980? This charming red and white hardcover cookbook contains a treasure trove of hundreds of recipes contributed by WSL members, and also includes a special section of recipes shared by beloved local restaurants. A handful of the very favorite recipes in the book were even deemed worthy of The Golden Baton Award, and we couldn't agree more! The holidays may be over, but soup season is not! As Austin faces some of its chilliest weather of the year, cozy up with a scrumptious bowl of cheese soup from the iconic 1886 Cafe at The Driskill.

1886 ROOM CHEESE SOUP

1/4 cup butter
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
1/2 cup finely chopped carrot
1/2 cup finely chopped celery
1/4 cup flour
1 1/2 tablespoon cornstarch
1/8 teaspoon baking soda
4 cups milk - room temperature
4 cups chicken stock - room temperature
1 lb. processed cheese (Old English), cut in pieces
1 teaspoon salt
White pepper
1 Tablespoon dried parsley
Dash cayenne pepper
Dash paprika (optional)

Melt butter in heavy saucepan. Sauté vegetables until tender. Stir in flour and cornstarch. Cook until bubbly. Add stock and milk gradually, blending into a smooth sauce. Add baking soda and cheese pieces. Stir until thickened. Season with salt and pepper. Add parsley.

Before serving, heat thoroughly in a double boiler - **do not boil**.

Garnish with paprika.

Serves 6-8.

Graciously contributed by 1886 Room, Driskill Hotel

Olivia Derr

WSL MEMBER SINCE 2018 | VP OF TECHNOLOGY

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Olivia Derr has only been in the WSL for four years; however, she has packed a lot of service and enthusiasm into her time with WSL. She was encouraged to join by dear friend, Kerry Ugarte and sponsored by neighbor and former Jewel Ball Chair, Michelle Zurovec.

Upon completing her entry year, Olivia, with a

technology background from Compass Real Estate and Accenture, realized her natural path of service was to join the Technology Committee. In working closely with then VP of Technology, Sinem Szygenda, she worked on the WSL website with Neon to bring everything (including Jewel Ball tickets) online as well as worked diligently on the public facing and the back-end websites. In 2021, when the WSL had to pivot from the traditional in-person Jewel Ball due to the pandemic, Olivia was instrumental in making the virtual fundraiser, Yule Ball, a huge success. The complex virtual event included individual log in for various levels of participation, a recorded video that was edited into a program which she managed; and on top of all that, Olivia was live with the vendors on headphones during the Yule Ball.

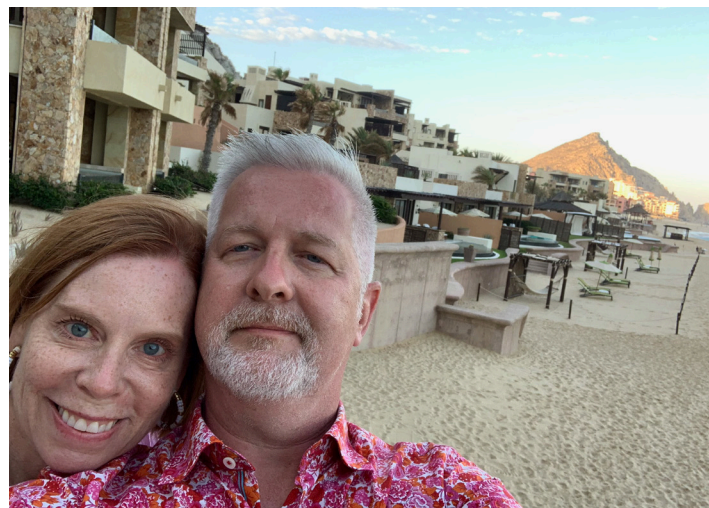
Olivia grew up in Round Rock, however her family hails from Llano. Olivia and her husband of 27 years, Mike, have two sons, Wyatt, 19, a Freshman at St. Edward's University studying Literature, and Eli, 17, a Junior at Westlake High School and a Team USA junior athlete, ranked 14th in the nation for junior triathlon. Wyatt was a Beau in the 2018 Jewel Ball.

Olivia's maternal grandmother, Palma Robinson Dailey, very much influenced her desire to be a part of the WSL. She was from Llano and in the last 30 years of her life she participated in their "Culture Club" which gave her immense joy and purpose as she aged. Olivia says that "WSL is my little version of that here in Austin". Within WSL, Megan Helmbrecht has been a tremendous influence on Olivia as well because "she is very professional, thoughtful and likes to tackle things that are helpful to the full membership".

When asked about her perspective of the future of the WSL, Olivia said she would love to see WSL modernize and be a "women's connecting force", suiting the organization towards the younger women in the WSL and bringing in the new ideas of the newer members. She also would love to see the Technology Committee expand by 2-3 people next year. She notes that the Technology Committee is a great placement for working members and only requires a willingness to dive right in and learn.

Her advice to new members is to "get involved in a way that feels natural for you". She continues, "I work in tech, and it's an area easy for me to get my mind around". And she encourages all members to collaborate on projects, giving everyone extra time to balance their deadlines and obligations with work and personal life.

Thank you, Olivia, for your willingness to serve and we look forward to seeing how you continue to shape the future of the WSL!



Orchestra Relations

PLACEMENT SPOTLIGHT

The 2020 pandemic year hit everyone hard, even the Orchestra Relations committee. As co-chair of the Orchestra Relations Committee, Holli Hill, related, "In 2020, we were unable to offer meals to the musicians because of COVID, and we were all disappointed." The Orchestra Relations committee pre-pandemic provided musicians of the symphony an amazing meal during symphony rehearsal time. Committee members delivered a particular part of a giant meal spread (or had Uber Eats deliver their part of the meal). One of the favorite meals was Chili Night, where WSL committee members on Orchestra Relations each brought a few chili fixins. This was not to be outdone by Sushi Night or Soup/Salad night. While COVID took away the giant meal spread, the Orchestra Relations committee has found a spectacular way to provide WSL hospitality to symphony musicians.

This year, the Orchestra Relations committee is providing individually packaged desserts that musicians are able to enjoy at the end of their rehearsal. These desserts have been a huge hit! It may not be the giant meal spread, but symphony musicians have expressed their gratitude repeatedly.

Interested in helping out Orchestra Relations and spoiling our symphony musicians? The dates of the 2021-2022 orchestra dinners include:

Thursday, February 17, 2022

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Thursday, April 7, 2022

Thursday, May 19, 2022

If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to the Orchestra Relations Co-Chairs:

Holli Hill
Hhill37@gmail.com
512.653.1063

Lindsey Parham
Lindsey@lhpccompany.com
512.657.5200



PHOTOS PRE-COVID



Crescent City Celebration

JEWEL BALL 2021



After a one year postponement due to Covid, the **66th Annual Jewel Ball** was a true cause for celebration. On Saturday, September 18, 2021 more than 1,100 people gathered at the Fairmont Austin for a night of festivities inspired by the incomparable city of **New Orleans**. The thematic elements of the Jewel Ball were thoughtfully carried out throughout the evening, from the signature hurricane cocktail, to the brass band comprised of Katrina refugees which played during the pre-ball reception, to the menu, and even to the color-coordinated Mardi Gras "throws" which were in much evidence on the dance floor.

The evening officially kicked off with one of New Orleans' most beloved traditions, when Jermaine Devezin of the Ninth Ward Black Hatchet Mardi Gras Indian Tribe led a memorable Second Line parade into the Manchester Ballroom. Guests were absolutely delighted to discover lagniappe at each table, two bottles of wine generously donated by Twin Liquors and the Jabour Family. The main focus of the evening, the presentation of the

Royal Court, was a wonderful continuation of an important and long-standing tradition. King Brio LV, David Warren Douglas, presided over the historic coronation of the **two Diamond Queens**, Mary Catherine Dickerson and Annabelle Grier Hubert, nine Austin Princesses and their Escorts, eight Visiting Jewels and Escorts, and more than 140 Junior Royalty participants. As WSL President Jennifer Bell shared, "It was wonderful to get to know so many amazing ladies in the planning of the Ball! I was especially honored to share the experience with my family. The Jewel Ball has been a family tradition for 50 years, when my mother-in-law, Pamela Bell, joined the WSL."

Following the Royal Court presentation, Heath Hale and his Cowboy Auctioneers presided over an entertaining and competitive **live auction**, which included a few fun treats. One of the best moments of the live auction was when Anat Adi-Atias of Diamonds Direct surprised one winning bidder on the spot with a strand of pearls for every lady seated at the table!

Following the beloved Father-Daughter dance, partygoers had myriad entertainment options, including family photos on stage, casino games, and dancing the night away to the sounds of Stratosphere Band. "After the cancellation of the 2020 Ball, and the uncertainty of whether or not we could carry on planning the 2021 Ball, it was extremely rewarding to see so much of the WSL community turn out the night of the Ball. Everyone was so happy to be in each other's presence celebrating the traditions we hold dear," explained Jewel Ball Co-Chair, Stacey McLeod Brewer.

Another unanticipated obstacle pertained to the Junior Royalty dresses. "Due to supply chain constraints and severely limited dress selection and availability, we thought we were exercising an abundance of caution by sourcing fabric locally and working with an Austin designer to create and fabricate our dresses," said Jewel Ball Co-Chair, Meredith Presley Wood. Unfortunately, less than ten days before the Ball, the designer let the Ball Chairs know that he would be unable to finish the dresses pursuant to his contract. To

make matters even worse, the Chairs soon discovered that the dresses were far less complete than had been reported by the designer. "It is not an exaggeration to say that **Victoria Cundiff of Fashion Alterations** saved the Jewel Ball," Meredith said. "Victoria hired every available seamstress in Austin, farmed these dresses out all over the city, and heroically came through for every single one of these young women. Victoria also refused to charge any markup whatsoever for these extraordinary efforts, beyond covering her labor costs, since so many of her regular clientele are members of the WSL."

An evening more than two years in the making, inspired by a magical and iconic city, and honoring those families who proudly support the Austin Symphony Orchestra and its programs, the 66th Annual Jewel Ball was another successful chapter in a long-standing and proud Austin philanthropic tradition.

Rhonda Hissey

WSL MEMBER SINCE 2016

How did you first learn of WSL, and what motivated you to want to join?

I met Meredith Wood at Casner Christian Academy when both of our youngests were in the kindergarten class together. We were so excited to learn we were neighbors! In fact, three kids from our small neighborhood were in the same class, and my daughter became fast friends with these two neighborhood boys ("the 3 Stooges"). In the spring, Meredith approached me about signing my daughter up to be a trainbearer along with her son. She said she'd like to sponsor me if I wanted to join. I really didn't ask many questions because Meredith has such a way with words that it just seemed fun and that was enough for me.

What has been your favorite or most rewarding placement or committee?

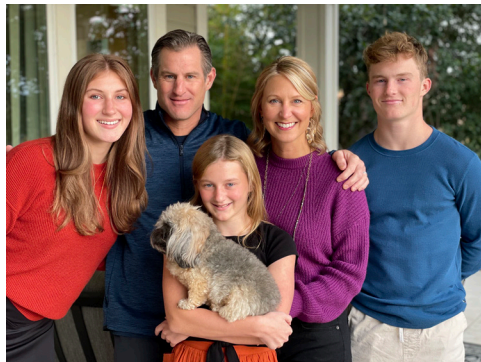
I've really enjoyed the Orchestra Relations Committee, especially prior to Covid. I was happy to support the musicians whom mostly have day jobs and then rush straight to orchestra rehearsal and bring joy to so many people. The first time I participated, I was touched by the appreciation the orchestra showed to the WSL members. When else do you provide a meal and clean up and receive a standing ovation or get serenaded on stage?

Do you have a favorite WSL story or memory?

Some of my favorite WSL memories include watching my two daughters walk the runway at the Red Haute Valentine event (my older daughter definitely doesn't share these sentiments!) and seeing the photos that Susan Lambert took of my 5-year old dancing with Meredith's 5-year old at their first Jewel Ball together. They were so darn cute that I regret not seeing them dance in person!

What has been a highlight of your time in the WSL?

The success of the new format for the WSL Fashion Luncheon. Three years ago, I co-chaired the event with Jennifer Vinklarek and



Meredith Wood. Due to extenuating circumstances, a new format was needed from the traditional formal runway show. Meredith had the idea of a speaker and was successful in getting Tim Gunn from Project Runway. We paired his interview with informal modeling from Neiman Marcus and a pick-a-prize game with Kendra Scott jewelry. Despite the initial reaction of "what have I gotten myself into?", it turned out to be a great experience and a memory that I'll cherish. I am proud of the accomplishment and loved getting to know so many wonderful members that served on the board or the Jewel Ball committee that year. Later we learned the event won the TASO (Texas Association of Symphony Orchestras) gold award which was just icing on the cake.

What are your favorite places in Austin?

Some of my favorite places in Austin are still Mt. Bonnell and the UT Tower deck. I love being able to see so much of our beloved city at once. I recently took my dad to the Texas Military Forces Museum at Camp Mab-

ry and loved it. We've always shared an interest in war history and touring college campuses together.

What are your hobbies? I enjoy reading, doing Shutterfly memory albums, and getting together with friends. I also love the lake and traveling but Covid has definitely affected the latter. Unfortunately, my mother was recently diagnosed with an aggressive cancer so helping her and just spending time together has become my priority.

Tell us about your family and pets.

My husband, Michael Hissey, and I are celebrating our 20th anniversary this year. We met when I was only 18 years old and he was 20 while we both worked at the newly opened Pappasitos restaurant in Humble, Texas. My husband also graduated from the University of Texas at Austin, where he received an electrical engineering degree in 1994 and a law degree in 1997. He currently operates his own law firm (Hissey, Mulderig & Friend, PLLC). We have three children - Jake (age 17), Rylee (age 16) and Jenna (age 11). The older two attend McCallum High School and enjoy football, soccer and volleyball, while Jenna attends Highland Park Elementary and enjoys volleyball and basketball. All three also love the lake and snow skiing when they get the chance. A 5 lb. cavapoo named Lexi completes our family. Despite being 5 years old, she looks like a perpetual puppy because of her size.

What advice would you share with anyone interested in joining WSL?

My advice for anyone interested in joining WSL is to get involved. Volunteering together builds relationships at the same time you serve the greater good. The old adage "you get out what you put in" is so true. Pick a placement or committee that interests you (or fits into your schedule best) and the journey will unfold from there in ways that may surprise you.

TASO

Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras

The Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras, or TASO, is an organization designed to promote, develop, and support symphony orchestras across the state of Texas. TASO was founded by Dallas member Juanita Miller on March 13, 1967 and is still going strong today. TASO is currently composed of over 23 voting member organizations, each of which is allowed a representative on the board of directors. Additional support for the organization is provided by its 27 affiliates and patrons (non-voting members).

The members that make up TASO include large Texas cities like Houston, Dallas, and Austin, as well as smaller towns like San Angelo, Tyler, Big Spring, College Station/Brazos Valley, and everything in between! The board meets quarterly each year, three times in Dallas and once more each at the site of its annual conference, which rotates among member cities. This affords all the member organizations the opportunity to see different cities, orchestras, and volunteers. The 55th annual Conference will be held April 28 - May 1 in Lubbock. In 2020, co-chairs **Susan Douglas** and **Beth Grimm** worked hard to host the event in Austin, but sadly had to cancel due to the pandemic. Susan is currently serving as President and Beth has served in numerous roles in TASO over the years.

Each year at its annual conference TASO recognizes and celebrates outstanding contributions to the arts, specifically music and symphonies, through its **Awards of Excellence**. Each member organization is eligible to apply for the opportunity to present projects in communications and technology, education, fundraising, or leadership and service at the annual conference. Member organizations may also nominate businesses, patrons, legislators, and volunteers for the Award of Excellence. These awards are given annually and are presented at the spring conference. Austin

has had 21 distinguished individuals/corporate citizens recognized with these awards over the past 25 years.

In 2021, WSL of Austin was honored to receive a Project Award for "A Modern Websites for Modern Times" and an award in the Volunteer category recognizing former TASO President and longtime WSL member Anna Marie Speir for her commitment and countless hours of extraordinary service. **In 2022, WSL is presenting the award winning "Symphony Sips" and "Yule Ball" at the annual conference.** We look forward to presenting these successful activities to the other TASO members and sharing these wonderful ideas!

TASO also sponsors an annual state youth concerto competition in Dallas each year. Named after Founder Juanita Miller of Dallas, the concerto was held in Dallas on Sunday, January 9, 2022. At the concerto, high school musicians from across the state had the opportunity to compete before a select panel of judges from elite musical institutions. The musicians submitted their audition tapes for pre-screening for the judges to review. The final 10-15 finalists then competed among three categories- Strings, Winds/Brass, and Piano. Pianist Bryant Li from Katy, TX was the grand prize winner, and will have the opportunity to play as a guest performer in the symphony of one of the participating cities. It is a treasured event and opportunity for budding musicians throughout Texas!

TASO continues to serve its members by providing ongoing opportunities for member organizations to gather and share information of mutual benefit with each other. We are so fortunate in WSL to have such great representation from our committed volunteers that make our organization shine while also sharing creativity and success with members from other cities for their benefit of the arts and symphonies of Texas!



Gay Gaddis

WSL MEMBER SINCE 1990
SILVER SPOTLIGHT

The Women's Symphony League is fortunate to attract and maintain such accomplished members of our community who do so much to support others. One such member is Gay Gaddis, who is in the Silver Spotlight, a feature that helps us get to know members with 25-49 service years in the WSL.

Gay is a visual artist; she paints Texas skies and landscapes and has always been an advocate for art and art education. She's been on the forefront in supporting women's issues and is delighted to be part of the WSL. One of her personal missions is to help women rise. She has recently launched a women's development program entitled Women Who Mean Business at the University of Texas' McCombs School of Business. Through the program, her book Cow-girl Power, and her involvement with organizations such as WSL, she can help women rise with confidence.

Gay joined WSL in 1990, and told us that some of her fondest family memories are of the numerous Jewel Balls that her children and the whole family participated in. Gay's daughter Rebecca was member of the 2003 Royal Court having been presented as a Princess, and she reminisces that her sons Sam and Ben "could not say no when Mrs. Shoop called upon them to be Escorts".

When asked about her favorite volunteer tasks within WSL, Gay said that when she was CEO at T3 (the advertising agency that she founded in 1989), she was very proud of the design and unique concepts her team put together which included very creative Jewel Ball invitations and programs for several years.

Gay encourages new members to get involved and enjoy meeting members with similar interests. Gay says, it's wonderful to engage with educational programming, and it's exciting to lend your unique talents to help support and promote the love of music in our community!

To learn more about Women Who Mean Business, visit: <https://utexeced.com/womenwhomeanbusiness>.



WSL Holiday Party

DECEMBER 6, 2021



Thank you to all who attended the WSL Holiday Party at the home of **Wendy and Trey Lary**. It was an evening filled with holiday cheer, laughter, friendship and music from the **Austin High School Jazz Band**. Thank you again to Wendy and Trey for hosting the WSL in their stunning home as well

as meetings co-chairs **Celeste Hubert** and **Yoli Arriaga** for their planning and organization, **Sylvia Jabour** and **Twin Liquors** for providing the wine, **Taco Shack** owner Yoli for donating the smoked turkeys, and Primzie Catering for the delicious bites.



Women's Symphony League of Austin

P.O. Box 5998
Austin, Texas 78763



Final Notes

UPCOMING EVENTS

February

- 13 Red Haute - Hotel Van Zandt, 11:30am
- 18-19 ASO's Masterworks Series: *Remarkable Romantics*
- 22 New Member Recruitment Event - Hearth and Soul, 4-7pm
- 26 Butler Pops Series: *West Side Story* (film)
- 27 YLC - Abel's on the Lake, 5pm
- 28-3/3 Young People's Concerts

March

- 1 New Member Proposals Due
- 1 2022-23 Member Dues Deadline
- 11-12 ASO's Masterworks Series: *Hemispheric Sounds*
- 24 Peter Bay 25th Anniversary Celebration
- 27 YLC Awards Reception

April

- 8-9 ASO's Masterworks Series: *The Mighty Russians*
- 18 General Membership Meeting, 6pm
- 28-1 TASO Conference - Lubbock
- TBD New Member (2022) Orientation