

Welcome to the **SPRING/SUMMER 2025 ISSUE**

# Take Note



## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WOMEN'S SYMPHONY LEAGUE OF AUSTIN



Women's Symphony League of Austin

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### 2024-2025 TAKE NOTE COMMITTEE

**CHAIR / EDITOR:** Andrea Jacobs

**WRITERS:**  
Laura Lee Daigle Kristin Marlow  
Amber Dodson Jennifer Rieck  
Julie Tewes

*Save the Dates!*



*Jewel Ball*

THE  
PLATINUM  
JUBILEE

**70TH ANNUAL JEWEL BALL**

*The Platinum Jubilee*

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2025 | PALMER EVENTS CENTER**

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**FASHION LUNCHEON**

*Cheers to 70 Years!*

**SEPTEMBER 19, 2025 | PALMER EVENTS CENTER**

• • • • •

**SOIRÉE PLATINE**

*The Purple Reign*

**SEPTEMBER 14, 2025 | HOLEY MOLEY**

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[WSLAUSTIN.ORG/EVENTS](https://wslaustin.org/events)**

# From The President

As we wrap up the 2024-2025 WSL member year, let's look back at some of the great things we've accomplished since our Winter Newsletter edition.

Our Membership Committee, led by VP Belen Benavides, started working in January 2025 to bring new members into the fold, while ensuring that existing members were renewed in a timely fashion. Our friendly New Member Recruitment chairs Ashley Lewis and Paige Richards Krause helped shepherd more than 50 new members into WSL in March. Our superb New Member Coordinators Lauren Taylor and Tiffany Williams began their work for the new member year by hosting the 2025-2026 New Member Orientation at Lauren's beautiful home in Westlake. They also completed the 2024-25-member year by hosting a wine event to celebrate our 2025-2026 new active members.

The 14th Annual Red Haute Children's Style Show and Luncheon themed, "Two of Hearts", was held at the JW Marriott Austin on February 2nd. Chairs Allison Edwards and Courtney Edwards and their committee raised over \$33,000 while presenting the latest fashions on the runway and in the marketplace. Special thanks to Sue Webber for her creativity, vision, and steady guidance as show producer.

In March, leadership attended the 58th Annual TASO Conference hosted by the Waco Symphony Council. This year's conference was very special as it celebrated the leadership of WSL Past President Beth Grimm's year as TASO President. WSL members, Molly Benson, Susan Douglas, and Anna Speir served on Beth's board. WSL's project "A Symphony of Success – Putting Your Lazy Cash to Work" was recognized as an Award of Excellence winner, and our fabulous longtime donor, AT&T Texas, was honored with the Patron Award.

The Education Committee, led by VP Allison Smith, helped to bring the new YPC Docents program into fruition while having a very successful run of spring Young People's Concerts where a record number of WSL members ushered schoolchildren in and out of the Long Center. YPC Docents, a beta program for 2024-2025, has now been incorporated into the Education Committee for 2025-2026. YPC Docents visit area schools ahead of the Spring Concerts and present a preview of the concert offering, teach them about show etiquette, and what to expect. With the implementation of the YPC Docents program, WSL returns to providing direct music education to students in schools, which is something that has not occurred in some time. Thanks to all the docents, and to Young Persons Concert chairs Eldarose Cardenas and Jeannie Mayfield for their hard work this year!

The Community Affairs Committee continued their work wrapping up with final concerts in May. Hardworking and organized Orchestra Relations chairs, Geri Candow and Allison Shaw and their committee provided dinners at ASO rehearsals, Symphony Welcome chair Karen Blackburn and her willing

committee welcomed concertgoers to the Long Center, while Nicole Oria and Stephanie Wilson lead the Done in A Day Committee in assisting the Maestro's Dream Event and other ASO administrative tasks.

Meeting Chairs Sarah Heidler and Jane Stein, along with their committee hosted our April General Membership Meeting at the gorgeous estate of Shannon Green, they also held the May General Membership Meeting, a fiesta themed event held at Chateau Bellevue, complete with margaritas and catering from Pappasitos. Special guests from ASO included CEO Justus Zimmerman, Assistant Conductor Pablo Zamora, and our own Linda van Bavel (President of the ASO Board). WSL's 2025-2026 Board of Directors were presented by Nominations Committee Chair and Past President Araminta Sellers. Justus Zimmerman announced that the Education Office at ASO Headquarters will be named for WSL. Past President Araminta Sellers' efforts over the last two membership years helped to ensure WSL's naming recognition and are most appreciated.

Marion More became a Gold Member in 2025, recognizing her 50 years of service to WSL. Susan Douglas was revealed as the First Chair Award winner which recognizes dedicated service to WSL over time. WSL owes a debt of gratitude to both Marion and Susan for all that they have done for the betterment of our organization. The first ever WSL Awards of Dedication were given to very deserving members who have gone above and beyond to make sure the work of the WSL is accomplished. Their incredible involvement doesn't just encompass this member year but reflects the steadfast generosity and dedication these women have exemplified throughout their WSL careers. These deserving winners are Jennifer Bell, Belen Benavides, Olivia Derr, Andrea Jacobs, and Ashley Hyten-Reischman. Please join me in sending your heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to these seven incredible women whose contributions have helped shape the WSL into the amazing volunteer organization it is today.

Our Property Team consisting of Brittany Moore and Stephanie Walden outdid themselves with the transformation of the storage unit. A special thanks to Brittany Moore's company, B. Moore Organized for their \$5,000 in-kind donation of labor and supplies. New racks and bins were installed to optimize organization for easy location of WSL property in the unit. VP of Business Affairs Anne Lasseigne Tiedt and Yearbook/Directory Chair Charlotte Blakemore produced a beautiful and well-organized member yearbook, and the Take Note newsletter committee to bring you well written and informative content through this publication.

Thank you for the bottom of my heart to the Board of Directors for serving alongside me this year. And to our entire membership, the selfless sharing of your time, talent, and treasure will remain an inspiration to me.



With admiration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stacey McLeod Brewer".

**Stacey McLeod Brewer**  
President, 2024-2025

# Introducing WSL'S NEW DOCENT PROGRAM

by: **LAURA LEE DAIGLE**

Did you know that WSL and ASO kicked off a new Docent program this year? For years, Austin 4th and 5th grade students have enjoyed field trips to the Long Center to experience ASO's Young People's Concerts, featuring the full orchestra. Through the new Docent program, volunteer Docents visit area elementary schools to give a specialized presentation to 4th and 5th grade students as a lead-up to their field trip. Docents receive training and are given a PowerPoint presentation with embedded audio tracks and an accompanying script to share with students as well as additional background resources. The materials are designed to preview aspects of the concert theme, composers and music selections as well as concert etiquette for the students prior to their field trip.

The goal for the Docent program is to prepare students attending ASO Young People's Concerts so that they are able to appreciate and enjoy the concert experience on a deeper level, maximizing impact. The new initiative is modeled after a long-standing Docent program administered by the San Antonio Symphony League in support of former San Antonio Symphony Young People's Concerts as well as similar events produced more recently by the San Antonio Philharmonic. ASO Director of Education and Community Engagement, Jeremy Brimhall, previously worked for both organizations and saw an opportunity to create something similar here in Austin.

Docents sign up at the beginning of the season and then meet with ASO Education staff in late fall for one session of training and for a guided introduction to the presentation. ASO Education staff then provide WSL Docents with a sign up form to select schools that have indicated interest in receiving a Docent presentation. Docents contact the schools (usually the music teacher) to arrange a date and time for the presentation and then prepare using the visuals and script, internalizing and personalizing as



**"It was so much fun to do the Docent presentations. Jeremy prepared us so well and the presentation materials were so interactive. The kids from the elementary schools I visited said they all understood the story of the Young People's Concerts so much better because they had been a part of the Docent presentation ahead of time"**

**— Katie Kaighin, 2025 Docent**

DOCENT KATIE KAIGHIN (LEFT) WITH KATIE THOMA (RIGHT),  
AN ATTENDEE AT ONE OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERTS.

needed. During the 2024-2025 season, seven WSL Docents conducted 17 school presentations for a total of nearly 3,000 students, or roughly 25% of the total number of students that attended the March field trips — excellent numbers, particularly for an inaugural year.

But there is room to grow! There was actually much greater demand from schools for Docent presentations than were able to be accommodated. Going forward, an important goal will be to grow the Docent cohort from seven current members to (ideally) 20 members or more.

ASO also has long term plans to expand its Young People's Concert program and offer additional performances, including at satellite venues, accommodating more schools from around Central Texas. As this program grows, so will the demand for Docent presentations.

## INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE OR JOINING THE DOCENT COHORT?

We need more Docents! This program is for anyone who has a love for symphonic music and an interest to share about it with others. Teaching experience great but not required. ALSO, all are welcome to come to a training session to learn more and then decide whether it's a good fit for them or not.

Reach out to Stacey McLeod Brewer, WSL Program Lead/President at [stacey@elbuey.com](mailto:stacey@elbuey.com) for more information, or contact Jeremy Brimhall, ASO Director of Education, at (512) 617-0489 or [jbrimhall@austinsymphony.org](mailto:jbrimhall@austinsymphony.org).

# Getting to Know Our Friends AT ASO:

JUSTUS ZIMMERMAN AND PABLO ZAMORA

*Building Community Through Music*

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by: **Kristin Marlow**

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When Justus Zimmerman speaks about his role as CEO of the Austin Symphony Orchestra (ASO), his enthusiasm is palpable. Just a few months into his tenure, which began February 1, 2025, Zimmerman already has a clear vision for the orchestra's future. "Every city worth its salt has an orchestra of one description or another," Zimmerman says. "I want to make sure that the Austin Symphony couldn't be replicated anywhere else."

This vision is particularly apt for Austin, given the meteoric growth the city continues to experience. In many ways, Austin is the epicenter of culture in Texas – with its influence radiating beyond the state. "It should truly be Austin's symphony," Zimmerman envisions, "When you're in Austin, there are three things you need to do: you have to go to ACL, you have to try the tacos, and you have to go to the Symphony."

Zimmerman brings impressive credentials to his role, having previously served as Executive Director of the South Bend Symphony Orchestra, where he increased ticket sales by over 70% from pre-pandemic levels. Zimmerman believes deeply in community collaborations. "There's a real power in collaborating with other community organizations and businesses. Not only do you share the risk and reward, but you expand creatively into areas you wouldn't otherwise explore and reach audiences you wouldn't otherwise meet."

Unlike many in the orchestral world, Zimmerman didn't come from a traditional music background. After a decade as an actor in Los Angeles and running a toy company, he sought a career in the arts that would allow him to give back. He joined the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra as a

marketing professional. A pivotal mentorship with Simon Woods, now-CEO of the League of American Orchestras, encouraged him to grow in the field.

"I was worried there was no appetite for someone from 'the outside' in this world," Zimmerman reflects. "The longer I stayed, the more ludicrous that seemed because so many of us came from the outside or came because we believe in the arts and community building."

Zimmerman will partner closely with Music Director/Conductor Peter Bay, and Pablo Zamora, the Austin Symphony's new Assistant Conductor and Music Director for the Austin Youth Orchestra. Reflecting on his first year with the ASO, Zamora describes it as "beyond my imagination."

Zamora, originally from Costa Rica, speaks glowingly of working with Music Director Peter Bay. "Peter Bay has a fantastic vision for the orchestra. There are very few conductors that can program the way Peter programs the season," he says.

Both Zimmerman and Zamora share a deep commitment to community engagement and acknowledge that the Women's Symphony League plays a critical role. The WSL is "a powerful group of like-minded people who have expressed commitment to supporting this symphony," Zimmerman explains. "When we invest in the arts here, there are real ripple effects. There is a direct correlation between investing in organizations like the symphony and how our communities exist."



# THE AUSTIN SYMPHONY

Zamora, who attended the Jewel Ball, is equally impressed with the WSL.

“Knowing that there is this tradition and history of people that support the orchestra, support the arts, support the community—it’s been one of the most positive surprises.” Connecting with Austin’s communities, “Put a face to why I am making art. It gives meaning to what I’m doing.”

Looking ahead, both leaders are excited about the symphony’s future. Zamora is particularly passionate about family programming, recalling how families showed up to last year’s Halloween concert in matching costumes. “Making the orchestra a place where families can come and share and create core memories... it is just a beautiful blessing,” he says.

The arrival of Zimmerman has further energized the ASO team. Zamora describes his new colleague as having “a fascinating brain and heart combination,” and says “we are all very sure that he is going to drive the organization to very cool places.”

On a personal note, Zimmerman, his wife Liz (who has recently joined the Women’s Symphony League), and their two daughters (ages 5 and 7, whom he calls “future WSL members”) are enjoying their new home in Austin. He explains that the WSL has given his wife Liz an anchor into a whole community of women, which is really wonderful. He and Liz have also enjoyed discovering how green and outdoorsy Austin is. No doubt, there are layers of Austin to discover...

It is an exciting time for the ASO, now with a dynamic leadership trio. With Peter Bay continuing his exceptional artistic direction, Justus Zimmerman charting the course for bold growth, and Pablo Zamora shaping the hearts and minds of the next generation of musicians, the future of orchestral music in Austin (and beyond) looks incredibly bright.



*Justus Zimmerman*  
CEO, Austin Symphony Orchestra



*Pablo Zamora*  
Assistant Conductor, Austin Symphony Orchestra

*Welcome!*  
*to the Incoming*

## 2025-2026 WSL BOARD

*Leadership, Service, and the Power of Community*

by: **JENNIFER REICK**

The Women's Symphony League of Austin is delighted to announce the 2025–26 Executive Committee and Fundraising Chairs—volunteer leaders who will guide the organization with dedication, collaboration, and a shared commitment to supporting the Austin Symphony Orchestra.

This incoming board reflects a cross-section of seasoned leaders and rising voices in WSL. Their diverse experiences and skills ensure that WSL supports the Austin Symphony Orchestra and continues to have a strong community impact.

### 2025-2026 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**PRESIDENT:**  
ASHLEY HYTEN  
REISCHMAN

**TREASURER:**  
MICHELLE LUPTON

**PARLIAMENTARIAN:**  
SHANNON GREEN

**PRESIDENT-ELECT:** MELANIE  
MAHAFFEY

**TREASURER-ELECT:**  
ELLEN WILLIAMS

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:**  
STACEY MCLEOD BREWER

**RECORDING SECRETARY:**  
CHRISTIAN WELLS

### 2025-2026 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE VICE PRESIDENTS

**VP BUSINESS AFFAIRS:**  
ANNE LASSEIGNE TIEDT

**VP FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT:**  
JULIA NULL

**VP MEMBERSHIP-ELECT:**  
NICOLE ORIA

**VP COMMUNITY AFFAIRS:**  
STEPHANIE WILSON

**VP FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT-ELECT:**  
LAURYN CORNISH ROBISON

**VP TECHNOLOGY:**  
KATIE COMER

**VP EDUCATION:**  
KARIN FOSTER

**VP MARKETING:**  
AMY REINARZ

**VP TECHNOLOGY-ELECT:**  
ROBIN MILLER

**VP MEMBERSHIP:**  
BELEN BENAVIDES



MAY WSL GENERAL MEETING: PASSING OF THE GAVEL  
STACEY McLEOD BREWER AND ASHLEY HYTEN REISCHMAN

## 2025-2026 FUNDRAISING CHAIRS

Fundraising Chairs play a critical leadership role in WSL's most high-profile events.

**JEWEL BALL CHAIRS:**  
ELIZABETH DOUGHTIE  
AND TRICIA MOOSE

**JEWEL BALL CHAIRS-ELECT:**  
MILDRED HAMMOND  
AND LAWANNA TURNER

**RED HAUTE CHAIRS-ELECT:**  
AMY HAJDU AND  
KELSEY SMITH

These leaders will oversee programs and events that bring in significant funding for WSL's mission, supporting both the Austin Symphony Orchestra and the musical education of children in our community.

## How is the **WSL BOARD** Chosen?

The selection of the WSL board is guided by a transparent, thoughtful process that ensures strong leadership grounded in the organization's values and member engagement. Each year, a Nominating Committee is formed in accordance with the WSL Bylaws. The committee is composed of six members:

- Immediate Past President, who serves as Chair
- Past President prior to the Immediate Past President
- President-Elect, serving in a non-voting capacity
- One member of the Board of Directors, elected by the Board
- Two members from the general membership, appointed by the President

The committee is officially appointed at the November Board meeting. This is at least six months before the membership votes on the new slate. In late November and December, the committee invites all members to submit nominations, either for themselves or others. This early and inclusive outreach ensures that every member has a voice in shaping the League's leadership.

In January, the committee begins reviewing nominations and determining which positions need to be filled. The process is collaborative and often involves numerous phone calls, outreach conversations, and matchmaking to find the best fit between the League's needs and members' talents and availability.

As Nominating Committee member Araminta Sellers explains, "We are looking for members willing to lead with integrity, dependability, and positivity. Then we make a lot of phone calls, exploring interested members' preferences." Once the committee has finalized the slate—including all Executive Committee positions and Fundraising Chairs—it is presented to the Board of Directors for review. The Board votes to recommend the slate to the general membership for election at either the April or May General Meeting. Once the slate is approved by the membership, the President-Elect completes the full leadership team by appointing all remaining board roles—including committee chairs, liaisons, and advisors, as outlined in the WSL Directory.

This structured but personal process reflects the spirit of the League itself: rooted in tradition, guided by its members, and always looking ahead. Congratulations to the 2025–2026 board, and thank you to all the members who support WSL's enduring mission through leadership, service, and heart.



# New Member Spotlight

by: JULIE TEWES

Each year, the Women's Symphony League of Austin welcomes a fresh group of passionate, dynamic, and inspiring members whose stories, talents, and passions contribute to our organization and community.

From business owners to artists, committed mothers to international travelers, each of these women brings her unique spark to the League, and we are excited for you to meet them! We asked them a few fun and thoughtful questions to learn about their backgrounds, interests, and what inspires them.

Margaret Johnson

**Who sponsored you into WSL?** Lindsay Branson

**Where did you grow up?** Houston, Texas

**Where did you go to school?** Tufts University

**Do you have children? If so, how many and what are their ages?**

Lydia (5) and Phoebe (19 months)

**What are your hobbies or interests outside of WSL?**

I work on the media team for GoodRx and love getting to travel for work and play! I'm also a needlepointer and love hiking around Austin.

**What's a fun fact about yourself that most people don't know?**

I still watch *I Love Lucy* episodes as my comfort show!

**Who inspires you?** Serena Williams

**What's one item you can live without?** Coffee

**What are you currently listening to?** The Boxcar children audiobooks - so fun and nostalgic

**Favorite place you've traveled?** This might be cliché, but we love the South of France!



Melanie Roy

**Owner of The Rose Bakery by Julie Myrtille**

**Who sponsored you into WSL?** My sister Julie Tewes

**Where did you grow up?** Paris, France

**Where did you go to school?** Paris-Panthéon-Assas University, Sorbonne Law School and Utrecht University - European Union and United States Law

**What are your hobbies or interests outside of WSL?** I love baking, exploring farmers' markets, and making floral arrangements.

**What's a fun fact about yourself that most people don't know?**

I've met the last two French presidents—Macron even gave me his personal email, before he was elected!

**Who inspires you?** My mom—her energy, resilience, and unwavering courage continue to inspire me every day.

**What's one item you can live without?** Coffee - at least 3 cups a day.

**What are you reading?** *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas

**If you could teleport anywhere in the world right now for a day of fun, where would you go and what would you do?**

I'd escape to the South of France, savoring mussels and wine in a tiki restaurant by the sand, with a Mediterranean view.





# New Member Spotlight

Elise May Costa

**Lead Concierge at Austin Concierge Company**

**Who sponsored you into WSL?** Charlotte Brigham

**Where did you grow up?** Jamestown, Rhode Island

**Where did you go to school?** The New School - Parsons to study Design

**What are your hobbies or interests outside of WSL?** I love creating flower arrangements for friends and family. I love to spend time outside and especially on the water!

**What's a fun fact about yourself that most people don't know?**

While working as a stewardess on a yacht, I once helped a group of refugees off the coast of Cuba. It was a moment that really put life into perspective.

**Who inspires you ?** My 94-year-old grandmother

**What's one item you can live without?** My lip gloss

**What are you reading or listening to ?** *Let Them* by Mel Robbins

**Favorite place you've traveled?** The Great Wall of China was one of the most spectacular places I've been.

**If you could teleport anywhere in the world right now for a day of fun, where would you go??**

I would teleport to Greece if I could go anywhere this summer!



Lauren Reed



**Who sponsored you into WSL?** Lindsay Boroush

**Where did you grow up?** Portland, Texas

**Where did you go to school?** Texas A&M University

**Do you have children? If so, how many and what are their ages?**

2 boys - Arthur (6) and Joe (3)

**What are your hobbies or interests outside of WSL?**

I'm an active Member of The Junior League of Austin, Active member of St. Theresa Catholic Church and School, Mahjong, recently started taking golf lessons and love playing with my boys.

**What's a fun fact about yourself that most people don't know?**

I was active in 4-H from the ages of 8-18. I showed steers and pigs all over the state and was our county A&H Show Queen.

**Who inspires you ?** My grandmother. She has always been a great example of a kind, Christian, educated woman.

**What's one item you can live without?** Social Media

**What are you reading or listening to?**

Currently listening to *None of This is True* by Lisa Jewell

**Favorite place you've traveled?**

My favorite place that I have traveled would be Rome.

**If you could teleport anywhere in the world right now for a day of fun, where would you go and what would you do?** I would head to San Diego and enjoy the day at the Del Coronado on the beach.



# The Lime Light

## A PHOTO MONTAGE OF THE RECENT WSL MEMBER SOCIAL SCENE

NEW MEMBER EVENTS, SYMPHONY SIPS, MEETINGS, AND MORE IN SPRING 2025







APRIL WSL GENERAL MEETING



MAY WSL GENERAL MEETING: STACEY McLEOD BREWER WITH FIRST CHAIR AWARD WINNER SUSAN DOUGLAS

MAY WSL GENERAL MEETING: STACEY McLEOD BREWER WITH AWARDS OF DEDICATION WINNERS (ASHLEY HYTEN REISCHMAN, BELEN BENAVIDES, JENN BELL)  
NOT PICTURED: OLIVIA DERR AND ANDREA JACOBS



MAY WSL GENERAL MEETING: PASSING OF THE GAVEL AMONG PAST PRESIDENTS (STACEY McLEOD BREWER AND ASHLEY HYTEN REISCHMAN WITH JILL POWELL, MOLLY BENSON, SUSAN DOUGLAS, ELEDITH FALK, BETH GRIMM, JENN BELL, ARAMINTA SELLERS AND ANNA MARIE SPEIR)





Women's Symphony League of Austin

P.O. BOX 5998  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78763

## Final Notes

### Upcoming Events


#### JULY


- 1 The Beginning of the New WSL Volunteer Year Begins!
- 4 Star Spangled Fest by ASO


Have a  
Wonderful Summer!


### 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.

 (512) 265-5094

 [wslaustin.org](http://wslaustin.org)

 WomensSymphonyLeagueofAustin

 [wslaustin\\_org](https://www.instagram.com/wslaustin_org)