

## ASO Guild Annual Meeting Minutes

July 2, 2020

Zoom interactive meeting

**President Sarah Van Gunten** called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and welcomed members to the 2020 Symphony Guild's Annual Meeting. Sarah outlined the Zoom ground rules for a smooth meeting, noting that there will be an opportunity for questions to the various speakers.

**David Whitehill, ASO Executive Director** described the Music in the Schools initiative for next year. Because of the current Covid-19 situation, most public Symphony events have been cancelled until February 2021, but much creative planning is underway for a revised Music in the Schools program, one of the Guild's and the Symphony's most important community outreach programs. Plans include the preparation of extensive virtual programs for an expanded number of schools (private, charter and home school organizations as well as all Asheville and Buncombe county public schools), libraries, literacy organizations and enlarged age groups (grades 2-5) together with correlative teaching materials that encompass language arts as well as music. These programs are not meant to substitute for the visits of Symphony musicians to the schools when this will be possible but are seen as supplementary and are envisioned as more flexible, meeting current needs. It is planned that 2020-2021 programs will include such elements as the involvement of Secret Agent 23 Skidoo (formerly seen performing *Mozartistic* with the Asheville Symphony), the Brothers Grimm fairy tales, hip-hop culture, rhythm and other workshops and Moog and Make Noise synthesizers, in addition to the emphasis on classical music.

The Symphony planners, including David Whitehill, Darko Butorac, the Symphony's Music Director, and Sarah Reincke, chair of the Guild's Music in the Schools program, are working with consultants in education for maximal effectiveness for the age groups targeted. Symphony musicians will participate in these programs on a virtual basis until they can again perform in the schools.

**Sarah Reincke, Committee chairperson for Music in the Schools**, reinforced David's enthusiasm for these programs emphasizing the creativity. Teacher training will commence in August with programs planned to be available in late September/early October, 2020.

With a nod to Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts, it is possible that these programs could eventually be a licensable product to be marketed beyond Asheville and Buncombe County.

Current seed funding for the program development is coming from a \$5,000 grant. Proceeds from the Brunk/Guild Auction (October) and Pass the Hat (now planned for the March concert) together with other Symphony funds, will also support these programs.

**Robin Harben, Brunk/Guild Auction Committee** reported on this current fund-raising effort for the Music in the Schools program. Together with other committee members, Betty Fox and Sylvia Cassel, Robin piloted the effort throughout the month of June working with Brunk staff in preparation for donated items to be included in Brunk's auction to be held on Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020.

This massive effort started with an eblast to members in early June and was continued by some 12 volunteer callers from the Guild with roughly 350 initial calls and many additional follow-up emails and phone calls, resulting in some 140+ donations from 65 donors (to date), 75% of whom are current Guild members and 25% being from former Guild members or friends. Robin expressed the committee's thanks to the volunteer callers and to all those who were responsible for donations.

Photographs of donations are in the hands of the Brunk experts who will decide which items will fit their market. They will contact all donors and will schedule delivery of accepted items by July 13. Upon delivery, donors will sign a contract specifying that the very favorable 10% commission was granted because the proceeds are a donation to the Asheville Symphony Guild. Upon receipt of the check from Brunk, donors will then make this donation to the Guild, with appropriate donation documentation being sent from the Symphony.

Brunk's online catalog with pictures of the items will specify that sales of these items are in support of the Asheville Symphony.

Donations can still be made this week by sending photos as soon as possible to Robin Harben at [robharben@yahoo.com](mailto:robharben@yahoo.com) who will forward them to Brunk.

Sarah Van Gunten reminded members that in addition to the Brunk/Guild Auction, the Guild is planning an "Estate Sale" in conjunction with the Bridge Foundation (formerly Care Partners) in the spring of 2021.

**David Whitehill** briefly presented the Symphony programs for the coming year including the Masterworks Concerts in February, April and May and the Amadeus Festival in March. These spring programs will include artists Sarah Chang, Aaron Diehl and the American Brass Quintet in programs that will highlight works by Brahms, Beethoven, Bernstein, Mahler, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and a wide variety of other music including the Grateful Dead for Kids. Details are available on the Asheville Symphony website.

In the meantime, the Symphony is collaborating with other Asheville community projects to raise awareness in these times of cultural shifts. They are helping to memorialize downtown murals working in conjunction with the Asheville Art Museum and celebrating George Walker's *Lyric for Strings*. David noted that this difficult period is also a period of enormous creativity and experimentation, with an opportunity to rethink collaborative music making, community involvement and preparing for the sustainable future of the Symphony.

David commended graduating high school students and especially Youth Orchestra seniors who are all continuing their education, several in the field of music.

He mentioned that masks with a Beethoven theme will be in the mail to members soon.

**Nancy Gettys, co-chair of the Musical Feast Committee with Kathy Dambach**, reported on the past year's Musical Feast programs and the plans for the upcoming year. She noted that although

many programs had to be cancelled, the year was quite successful financially thanks to donations of cancelled tickets, with \$30,000 raised for the year.

The committee has organized exciting programs for the next year, many of which will be small gatherings or outdoor events, with the first event scheduled for September 17. Most of the events will be held later in the year and next spring. No Musical Feast booklet will be printed for the coming year but the list of events will be on the Guild website in early August. There will be two sign-up periods, November and March.

She expressed thanks for the hard work and contributions by committee members, donors and hosts who continue to make the Musical Feast programs interesting, enjoyable and the Guild's major fund-raising program in support of the Symphony.

**Sue Luther, co-chair of the Membership committee with Pam Prosser,** reviewed the 2020-2021 membership renewal campaign with the twin goals of increasing new membership and encouraging members to be active in the Guild committees and events. She indicated that the committee's emphasis last year was to have a larger Guild presence at Symphony functions with improved signage and availability at Guild tables. To date, there have been 146 renewals through the Guild website and an additional 15 renewals through the season ticket order process. She reminded those who haven't yet renewed their membership that it is one of the best ways to support the Symphony together with being an active Guild member.

**Otis Philbrick, Treasurer** briefly reviewed budget items for 2020-2021. He noted that the budgeted income for Musical Feasts would be \$20,000, a sharp reduction from last year. It was also noted that, with the Guild's offer to match donations up to \$4,000, approximately \$1,600 was donated for the Youth Orchestra with matching funds raising it to \$3,200. The budget will be voted on at the July Guild Board meeting.

**Sarah Van Gunten** introduced the slate of Guild officers for 2020-2021:

President - Sarah Van Gunten

Vice-president - Betty Fox

President Elect - Sue Luther

Treasurer - Otis Philbrick

Past president - B A Schenk

Recording Secretary - Sylvia Cassel

Corresponding Secretary - Honey Solomon

Sarah called for a vote which was held on-line through a Zoom poll. The slate of officers was approved unanimously.

Sarah showed the list of the Committee chair people for the next year which will also be available on the website as is all important information about the Guild. She encouraged members to check that source regularly for Guild news and activities.

**Committee Chairs**

Music in the Schools - Sarah Reincke

Membership - Sue Luther and Pam Prosser

Hospitality - Robin Harben and Sarah Seepe

Musical Feasts - will need new chair people for the 2021-2022 season. Nancy Gettys and Kathy Dambach will continue to oversee the Feast planning for 2020-2021.

Sarah thanked all the Committee members and Guild members who had worked to make this year a success.

Sarah Reincke, in turn, commended Sarah Van Gunten on her hard work and good management of the Guild as President and her continued stewardship for the coming year.

Sarah adjourned the meeting at 2:20.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sylvia Cassel, Recording Secretary