



Symphony Notes

A publication of the Livermore-Amador Symphony and Guild

Vol. 58, No. 2, February 2021

A Message From Your Music Director



We are living through extraordinary times. Like many of you, I find myself alternating frequently between feelings of profound loss, and great hope.

Here in our close-knit community, we have suffered the consecutive losses of two amazing women, both long time Guild members, and founders of this orchestra, **Virginia McFann and Marie Ruzicka**. My heart goes out to their families, and I am full of gratitude to both of them for all they did to lift up our community over so many years. They are profoundly missed, and we look forward to celebrating their legacies through our music making.

Through such a difficult time, it is particularly cruel to be robbed of the catharsis that shared musical performances can bring. We need music and art more than ever. I am filled with hope that we now can see light at the end of the tunnel, and opportunities on the horizon to once again connect our community through symphonic music, and begin to joyfully release the tension of these times.

It brings me such joy to plan for this future, and a resumption of music making with the Livermore-Amador Symphony. We are preparing a 2021–2022 season with creativity and flexibility to ensure we engage our musicians and our audiences with repertoire that meets the moment. The remaining uncertainties of the ongoing pandemic that we must take into



account have the interesting benefit of forcing artists of all stripes to reimagine their approach to performances, and LAS is no exception. We are planning an eventual return to large scale full symphonic works, while simultaneously

exploring all kinds of wonderful music for brass, woodwind and string ensembles, and chamber orchestra repertoire, that would allow us space to physically distance as needed in rehearsal and performance.

Challenging times bring with them opportunities for growth and renewal. As LAS and orchestras everywhere reimagine the future, we also continue to broaden our exploration of the music, elevating the beautiful and insightful compositions of Black, Hispanic and women composers. The constraints of COVID have created opportunities to play and hear the lesser-known chamber ensemble works of big-name symphonic composers of the past. Being forced to think outside the box has the benefit of igniting creativity and openness, which brings with it a breath of fresh air to our musicians and audiences.

Despite sheltering in place, LAS has been an ongoing presence for our community, and a growing online audience. I'm so grateful to our musicians who reached out to us with joy and frivolity from home this winter playing "Sleigh Ride." Our scheduled soloists, their concerts cancelled, embraced the chance to connect directly with our community with personal, intimate performances

Livermore-Amador Symphony is a Resident Company of the Bankhead Theater and a member of the Livermore Cultural Arts Council (LCAC).

A Message From Your Music Director, continued

and interviews from home. All this and more are available on our website at liv-ermoreamadorsymphony.org/performances.

LAS violinist and board member Anne Anaya's third graders have created original artwork to accompany our musicians in a special video presentation of *Peter and the Wolf*. This collaborative effort between students and symphony will be made available to the schools, as well as to the public. Alan Frank has spent countless hours creatively putting student artwork and music together. Several of

our musicians are featured on video from home, and even former Mayor John Marchand, who narrated the original performance, makes an appearance. Huge thanks to Anne and Alan, and all the contributions of our musicians and student artists. We know you'll love seeing this, so stay tuned!

I'm filled with hope for the future and joy at the prospect of gathering again together with you all!

Lara Webber, LAS Music Director and Conductor

"Sleigh Ride" LAS Performers (from their homes)





From GUILD PRESIDENT BETH WILSON

Our Symphony Guild board has continued to be active, with our usual monthly meetings and an excellent winter all-Guild meeting.

Helen Moore, who has served as Guild historian for many, many years, has retired. Helen has kept all our Symphony concert programs from the very beginning, as well as many other pertinent items, and we sincerely thank her for all her years of faithful service. **Claudia Barry**, a new Guild member, has agreed to be the new historian. Our thanks to Claudia, who was willing to jump in and work on this task! The online sale or auction we had planned won't go forward due to the COVID restrictions, but we're always on the lookout for fun ideas for events that can also be fund-raisers, or, as **Tim Barry** says, "friend-raisers"! We hope to make plans to go ahead with our *Sipping with the Symphony* event in September.



As is mentioned elsewhere in the *Notes*, we lost two of our founding members recently. **Marie Ruzicka** was active in the Guild and on our Board until the very end, serving as the co-chair of our estate sales committee as well as being on the nominating committee and attending our Zoom meetings. We all certainly feel her loss.

Virginia McFann had been active on the Guild Board over the years, filling a variety of positions including President. Marie was her stand partner, playing violin, when they joined the Symphony at its very inception. And Virginia was my stand partner the last few years before she retired from the violin section. Life's quirky little connections.

Our winter meeting on January 17 was highlighted by excellent performances of three selected entrants from the Symphony Competition, **Ethan Shin, Dustin Breshears, and Alexander Canicosa-Miles**, who made video recordings for our entertainment. **Jutta Massoud**, chair of the Youth Competition, introduced them, and all our attendees really enjoyed hearing and seeing these outstanding young musicians.

Although there are a number of Guild activities and services we aren't able to perform during these secluded times, I'm so glad we're able to continue communicating through our *Symphony Notes*. Many thanks to all our Guild members and our faithful supporters!

LAS Guild Board Members 2020-2021

| <u>Officers</u> | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| President | Beth Wilson |
| Vice President | Joan Green |
| Secretary | Lou Anne Martin |
| Treasurer | Joan Dickinson |
| Immediate Past President | Kathy Streeter |

| <u>Committee Chairs</u> | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Budget | Joan Dickinson |
| Estate Sales | Nancy McKenzie |
| Historian | Claudia Barry |
| Luncheon | Tim Barry |
| Membership | Linda Miller |
| Nominating | Joyce Brown |
| Pops Concert | Linda Tinney |
| Publicity | Mary Anne Rozsa |
| Refreshments | Sheila Fagliano |
| Season Brochure | Joan Dickinson |
| Season Tickets | Joan Dickinson |
| Social Correspondence | Pat Mann |
| <i>Symphony Notes</i> | Marcia Elchesen |
| Telephone | Joyce Brown |



From LASA PRESIDENT ALAN FRANK

The pandemic continues and we still can't say when we can again present a full concert to a full audience at the Bankhead. Through this last period, we have been concentrating on keeping our musicians together and bringing you virtual productions on the web. We have begun the process of seriously planning how to restart our programs as the threat from the virus eases. Clearly, we cannot just pick up where we left off. We initially expect that not all our musicians and soloists will be able to re-join us immediately. We don't expect to be allowed to fill the stage or the hall at first.

We have been defining what we can do in three phases.

- The current shut down
- Gradual opening
- Full reopening

We recently had a Music Committee meeting to discuss the sort of works we should be looking towards for the different phases. Our first priority is planning for full reopening as that requires the most advanced planning. Soloists missed last season and this; John O'Connor and Frederic Chiu have now committed to return once we reopen. When things do reopen it will take some time to regroup. Lara noted that we should be thinking of works that are both comfortable for our musicians and familiar to our audience. We should not jump right in with the challenging repertoire we had planned for the lost season.

As things gradually reopen, we need to choose works that can be rehearsed in small, socially separated situations. This will largely depend on the ever-changing County rules and procedures. This past fall, until the recent surge of the pandemic, we had a few sessions of string players and one of woodwinds able to rehearse in Lara's backyard with appropriate procedures. We have been rehearsing works that can be performed with limited numbers of musicians. We hope to restart these rehearsals as things improve. Hopefully, we will be able to perform some of these works at an outdoor concert either at a winery, in front of the Bankhead, or some other appropriate venue.

For the shutdown we have been using recordings of our past concerts to create videos for the website. Upcoming in March we will release one of our most complicated productions yet. In 2015 we did *Peter and The Wolf*, with Mayor Marchand narrating. We have now teamed up with third grade students at Emma C. Smith School here in Livermore to provide illustrations for the story. I think the results are enchanting and so will you.

Most of the orchestra has been meeting regularly on Zoom and are looking forward to making music together again.

Alan Frank
2020–2021 President
Livermore-Amador Symphony Association

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COMPETITION for YOUNG MUSICIANS

Valery Breshears and Lauren Kim were selected as winners of the Symphony’s 48th annual Competition for Young Musicians.

The Livermore-Amador Symphony Association conducts this competition each October. The winners are awarded \$500 prizes and perform as soloists with the Symphony, normally at the February concert. Valery and Lauren, both violinists, will be invited to perform their winning pieces with the Symphony once public health conditions allow a return to rehearsal and the performance stage.

Lauren, a senior at San Ramon’s Dougherty Valley High School, performed Camille Saint-Saëns’ Violin Concerto No. 3 in B minor, Opus 61. Valery, a sixth grader at the Crowden School in Berkeley, performed Zigeunerweisen, Opus 20 by Pablo de Sarasate.

The competition was an entirely virtual event this time, with eighteen contestants who auditioned via YouTube video. In consideration of the participants’ health and to create equal footing for all, each performed without accompaniment. Judges were LAS Music Director Lara Webber and Jo Ann Koopman, piano teacher and chair of Del Valle Fine Arts selection committee.

We look forward to eventually having these talented musicians perform in concert with our Livermore-Amador Symphony at the Bankhead Theater.



Lauren Kim



Valery Breshears



Sneak preview of coming attraction to be released soon!

*We were all deeply saddened to learn that two pillars of the Symphony organization, **Virginia McFann and Marie Ruzicka**, died one day apart in late December 2020. They had shared a music stand as violin players in the early days of the LAS orchestra and both remained very active in their support of the symphony throughout the years.*

IN MEMORY OF VIRGINIA MCFANN April 16, 1932–December 26, 2020

Virginia died on December 26 at age 88, due to complications from a fall at home. She is survived by her husband, Charles; her four sons and daughters-in-law, Gregory and Josephine, Brian, Garret and Julie-Ann, Kent and April; her grandchildren, Steven, Caitlin, Donovan, Aidan, and Mark; and her longtime caregiver and friend, Zakia Hazrati. Due to concerns about Covid-19, the memorial service has been postponed until it is safe to gather again. A virtual service is pending. Donations may be made in Virginia's memory to the Livermore-Amador Symphony Association.



Virginia and Charles married in 1955 and settled in Livermore in 1962, where they became active in the community. Virginia was a founding member of the Livermore-Amador Symphony and played violin in the orchestra from its first concert in January 1964 through its 52nd season in 2014-2015. She was involved in every part of the symphony organization throughout the decades—orchestra, Guild, and Association board. She held a number of positions including many years as the orchestra's manager, terms as Guild and LAS Association presidents, chairing the Youth Awards committee, and many more. The breadth and depth of her knowledge about all things LAS was legendary—Virginia was the go-to person for just about any question. LASA President Alan Frank, who described Virginia as “the heart and soul of the orchestra for most of the existence of the Symphony,” noted that she also represented LAS for many years at annual conferences of the Association of California Symphony Orchestras.

Virginia was passionate about supporting music in the Livermore Valley. After retiring from her position in the Livermore schools where she served as a special education paraprofessional, Virginia helped young musicians by volunteering with the Junction Avenue Middle School strings program. She played in the orchestra for hundreds of community theater productions and also played a role in helping students obtain scholarships to study music.

Some Special Memories

Music Director Lara Webber: *“Virginia was orchestra manager when I guest-conducted in 2012. She was still playing in the second violin section for the first few seasons of my time as a music director. I always looked forward to seeing Virginia in the lobby after every one of our Bankhead Performances. She had detailed responses and feedback for our performances, and just loved every one of us on the stage—exuding her joy always. I'm very grateful to have known her.”*

LAS 2nd Violin Principal Ursula Goldstein: *When I joined the orchestra in 1984, Mary Ann Butler was second violin section leader and always insisted that Virginia sit next to her on the first stand because Virginia was such a reliable player and page turner. When I took over as section leader several years later, I was more than happy to have Virginia sit to my left for the same reason. We eventually decided to be a bit more fair to the other members of the section and started rotating people through this seat.”*

For more about Virginia: livermoreamadorsymphony.org/mcfann

See also the article about Virginia written by Ruth Roberts in *The Independent's* January 7, 2021 edition:

[Community Mourns the Loss of Orchestra Manager](#)

IN MEMORY OF MARIE RUZICKA June 10, 1929–December 27, 2020



Guild member and current Estate Sales co-chair Nancy McKenzie shared this special remembrance:

"I met Marie about 12 years ago when I was volunteering at the Livermore Senior Center in the library. Marie and another friend came in after their exercise class. We got chatting. 'Hello, I'm Marie Ruzicka.' She mentioned she was part of the Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild and in fact was in charge of running the Estate Sales for the symphony. I jumped on that! Short story, Marie was my introduction to this wonderful group of ladies and gentlemen who volunteer their time to raise money for the symphony. Marie's smile, sense of humor, and incredible knowledge of the history of the Guild were wonderful. Several years ago, after taking on other responsibilities in the Guild, I started co-chairing the Estate Sales with her. What a team we were. She taught me everything about organizing the sale and gathering volunteers. Marie, along with Maude Kuening, were the first co-chairs of the first Estate Sales 16 years ago. Marie will be missed and remembered."

Marie was very active in the Symphony Guild from the start. Among other positions, she served as Guild president from 1983–1985, several stints on the Nominating committee, and long-running Estate Sales chair/co-chair, serving in that position right up until her death. Marie excelled at managing, preparing for, and publicizing major fundraising activities of the Guild, from Treasures & Trivia sales to Appraisal Days to estate sales. She also had a knack for promoting Guild fundraising events with her infectious enthusiasm, her long-time hairdresser Marti Silva recalled fondly. Estate Sales committee member Patti Fredericks described Marie's "passionate dedication" to raising money for the symphony. She believes that Marie's personal connections with a wide variety of community members played a big role in getting sales booked and noted that Marie knew all the regulars who patronized the sales and what their interests were.

Marie and George married in 1954 and moved to Livermore in 1958. Her love of music and eventual connection with Livermore-Amador Symphony began back in grade school when she took up the violin, then played in her high school and college orchestras. As a member of the local chapter of American Association of University Women, Marie became involved with the formation of the Livermore-Amador Symphony. She played violin in the Symphony's first season in 1963 until 1970, thereafter attending concerts as an avid audience member.

Marie died on December 27 at age 91. She is survived by her three sons and daughters-in-law, George and Lori, David and Christy, and Christopher and Laura, and her grandchildren, John, Ashley, Natalie, Stephanie, Edward, and August. She was preceded in death by her husband, George. Due to concerns of the pandemic, a memorial service has been postponed until it is safe to gather. Donations in Marie's memory may be made to St. Bartholomew's Church in Livermore, the Livermore-Amador Symphony Association, or Our Lady of the Rockies in Butte, Montana.

For more about Marie: livermoreamadorsymphony.org/ruzicka

*The Guild extends heartfelt
appreciation to
HELEN MOORE
who has served as
Guild Historian
for over twenty years!*

Helen was surprised and delighted with a drive-by parade of family and friends to celebrate the occasion of her 97th birthday, May 2020.



Helen joined the Guild about 1989 at the invitation of the late Juanita Vidalin, a fellow student in her exercise class. Juanita was a long-time LAS flute player and Guild member who took Helen to a Guild meeting after enticing her with a description of the group and the fun they had supporting the orchestra. Helen jumped right in, working on Estate Sales, and serving as Guild secretary for two years. She also has fond memories of assisting with post-concert receptions for the orchestra at the home of Roger Ide. She mentioned that she brought her friend and neighbor Pat Wintemute into the Guild as well.

Helen took over the post of Guild historian from the late Bev Eckley and has served in that position since, documenting the history of LAS through concert programs, issues of *Symphony Notes*, newspaper articles, photos of various Guild and symphony events, and more. Over the years, she also received additional treasure troves of records from a number of orchestra members to add to the historical collection.

Helen grew up in southern California, moving to Livermore in 1958 when her husband Gordon took a position at LLNL. They raised daughter Karen and sons Jerry, Ron, and Chuck here. Helen continues to reside in Livermore at the family home, and she is thankful that her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren all live nearby.

In addition to her work with the Guild, Helen has been a member of a Livermore doll club for many years. She continues to serve as the group's treasurer, attend monthly meetings (for now via Zoom) and work on the club's monthly projects. She has been happy to share her knowledge of dolls to help pricing such items for Guild estate sales. She is also active in her church, including regular meetings with her women's bible study group, currently on Zoom.

Helen misses the camaraderie of working on Guild Estate Sales and is looking forward to the time when it is safe to resume. Meanwhile, she has a reminder she hopes we all take to heart: "When you send photos to the historian, *please* make sure the people are identified and the photo is dated!"

2020-2021 STUDENT AWARD WINNERS

The Symphony Association administers four awards, given to recognize high school seniors who are active in music during their high school careers. These awards are based on participation in musical events and activities, particularly activities that support music education and music in the community.

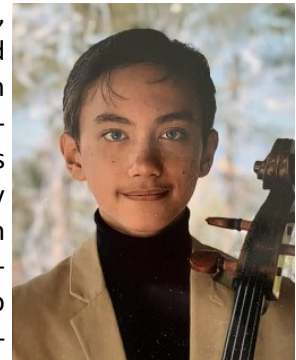
Symphony Association Award, this year given in memory of Marion Stearns:

Andrew Choi is a student at Amador Valley High School whose violin teacher is Helen Kim. He was concertmaster of the AVHS orchestra during 9th grade, principal second violin in 10th grade, and has been concertmaster since then. Andrew has played violin in the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra throughout high school and was principal second violin during a European tour with the group. A first-prize winner at the Silicon Valley Concerto Competition and the Concerto Competition of the Korean-American Music Supporters' Association, Andrew is also a mentor with the Korean Young Dream Orchestra. He cofounded Music4Heart with three other young musicians in 11th grade. Their group provided music at senior centers in person prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; now they perform virtually and have, for example, raised funds to help provide Pleasanton Unified School District staff with safety equipment like masks and face shields. Andrew plans to study economics and business in college while continuing to study music.



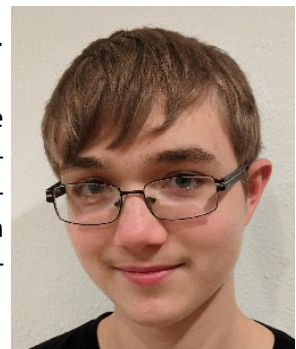
Arthur P. Barnes Symphony Association Award, in honor of LAS Music Director Emeritus Barnes:

Alexander Canicosa-Miles has been a member of the LAS cello section, a winner of our 2018–2019 Competition for Young Musicians, and a featured performer at LAS concerts at four Dublin and Pleasanton elementary schools in April 2019. He has played in Valley Dance Theatre and Ohlone College pit orchestras and in the 2019 UC Berkeley Summer Symphony. This is Alexander's third year as a cello student of Jonathan Koh in the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Pre-College Division. Homeschooled, Alexander has performed in chamber groups and small orchestras at SFCM and has won competitions ranging from the Burlingame Music Club Student Competition, in the Bay Area, to the Madeline Schatz-Harris Youth Concerto Competition of the Kamuela Philharmonic, in Hawaii. Alexander plans to continue his studies in music as he faces "the challenge of planning for a certain future in a very uncertain world."



John H. Green Memorial Award, established by Tot and John W. Green in memory of their son, John H. Green:

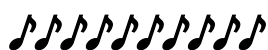
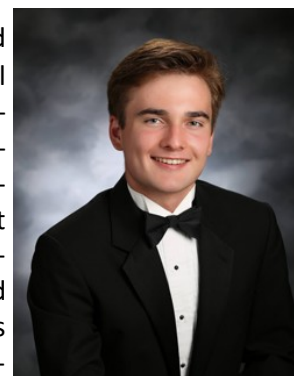
Konrad Owczarek is a student at Livermore High School. He is a trombone player and took private lessons throughout high school until the COVID-19 pandemic intervened. Konrad played in the LHS concert band in 9th grade, marching band during 9th and 10th grades, and symphonic band starting in 10th grade, where he is now principal trombone. He has played in the Livermore-



Amador Symphony Youth Orchestra, been a Tri-M Honor Society member at LHS, participated in the Livermore School District Solo & Ensemble Festival, and even given a presentation about the trombone in his LHS FIT (Freshman in Transition) class. Konrad played the national anthem as a member of a trombone choir at a concert at the Bankhead Theater, an Oakland A's baseball game, softball and football games, and a police forensics seminar. He plans to major in software engineering or a similar field in college but hopes to continue playing the trombone throughout college and beyond.

Bill King Memorial Award, established by Jean and Walter King in memory their son, Bill:

Igor Aprelev, a student at Amador Valley High School, plays clarinet and alto saxophone and sings. Joe Bonfiglio is Igor's clarinet teacher, and Michael Hernandez is his saxophone teacher. He was a winner of our 2019–2020 Competition for Young Musicians. Igor has played clarinet in the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra since 11th grade. At AVHS, he has sung as a bass vocalist in the chamber choir and played clarinet in the marching band, concert band, wind ensemble, and orchestra. He has played clarinet in the pit orchestra for a Pleasanton School District production of *Cinderella* and been accepted to California All-State Honor Bands on clarinet and All-Northern Honor Bands on saxophone. Igor intends to major in economics in college, but he also expects to participate in musical ensembles, with music continuing to be a key part of his life.



**Livermore-Amador Symphony
Planned Concert Dates
Bankhead Theater, Livermore
No concert dates are currently planned**

Please stay tuned and stay in touch. Your community orchestra is here for you even if we can't be in concert together.

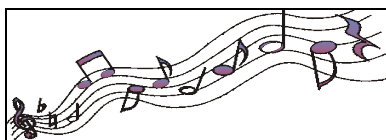
<https://livermoreamadorsymphony.org/season.html>

ENJOY ONLINE PERFORMANCES AND OTHER VIDEOS!

*Access from the LAS website homepage
or click on the links in red:*

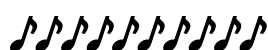
<https://www.livermoreamadorsymphony.org/performances.html>

[Meet the Musicians page](#)



Have you seen the Carter/Webber interview?

Chris Carter
Executive Director of the
Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center and
Lara Webber
LAS Music Director and Conductor



Website: <https://livermoreamadorsymphony.org>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LivAmSymph/>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/livamsymph>

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Website: www.livermoreamadorsymphony.org



Mark Your Calendar Now!

Don't miss these important meetings.

♪ **Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild
Annual Spring Business Meeting
Thursday, April 15, 2021, 7:30 p.m.**
Online via Zoom
See Election Slate below.

♪ **Livermore-Amador Symphony
Annual Association Meeting
Tuesday, April 20, 2021, 7:30 p.m.**
Online via Zoom
Association Board members are elected.

**Zoom links and additional meeting information will be sent to
Guild and Association members in early April.**

Guild Election Slate for Annual Spring Business Meeting

Officers:

One-year term July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022

Beth Wilson, President
Joan Green, Vice-President
Sally Swanson, Recording Secretary
Joan Dickinson, Treasurer

Nominating Committee Members:

Two-year term July 1, 2021–June 30, 2023

PJ Wells and **Patricia Wheeler**

Nominations also accepted from the floor with the consent of the nominee.

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**2020–2021 Nominating Committee**

**Joyce Brown**, chair; **Judy Eckart**, **Mary Ann Johnston**, and **Sarah Wharton**.