Asheville Symphony Society, Inc.
Annual Meeting Minutes – May 23, 2019
Celine and Company - 49 Broadway Street


UNABLE TO ATTEND: Doris Loomis, Tom Bolton (who provided his vote by proxy), John Cuellar, Dawn Grohs, Barbra Love, Kathleen Mainardi, Mary Sczudlo, Michael Selverne, Olivia Zahler.

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p. m. Due to Board President Doris Loomis’s absence, Irene Stoll, Past Board President, explained that she would chair the meeting and would present Doris’s prepared comments.

President’s Welcome and Introductions: Irene welcomed all attendees to the Annual Meeting. Minutes from the June 25, 2018 Annual Meeting were unanimously approved as presented.

Irene provided special recognition to Symphonette Sponsor Wendy Chiappini for her leadership this year and welcomed Jenny Pritchard who will assume to the role of Symphonette Sponsor for the upcoming year.

Irene recognized Guild President, BA Schenk, for her leadership of the Guild this past year and welcomed Sarah Van Gunten, Guild President and Board member in the coming year.

Symphony Chorus President, Sandra Tompkins, was also recognized for her leadership this year and will continue as both Chorus President and be on the Board for the coming year.

Keynote Speaker: Stephanie Pace Brown, President & CEO of Explore Asheville, presented information on the Explore Asheville organization, its programs over the past year and the plan for the Asheville community in the future.

President’s Report: Irene Stoll reviewed the 2018-2019 season, outlining the following accomplishments:

- The recording of the Asheville Symphony with American bluegrass band, the Steep Canyon Rangers.
- The exciting circus performers at our sold-out New Year’s Concert.
- Performances by Warren Haynes and his band, along with the Symphony.
- The highlight of up and coming soloists during our Masterworks concerts.
- Our delight in having Garrick Ohlsson join us for the Amadeus Festival.
• The outstanding Youth Orchestras and Percussion ensemble performances throughout the season.
• The growth of our Symphony Chorus to such an extent that they now have their own season brochure.

Irene spoke of the success of Darko Butorac as our new Music Director, who brings his creativity, passion and zest for life and music, matching that of our Executive Director, David Whitehill.

On behalf of Doris, Irene thanked the extremely busy ASO staff for the dedication, energy and incredible work in accomplishing all that happened this past season.

Special thanks went to David Whitehill for his unending dedication to the Symphony and Asheville community. His expansion of our footprint in the community is recognized by everyone. His hard work and encouragement have resulted in strides we never imagined were possible, all in six and a half years.

Financial Information: Ed Towson reported the financials for the past season were better than expected and we begin the year in a strong financial position.

Executive Director’s Report: David Whitehill looked to the future, presenting three strategic priorities and the vision for the Asheville Symphony:

Strategic Priorities

• Create concert experiences that are engaging and relevant for today.
• Identify which key indicators affect our growth and then dedicate time and money to those areas.
• Secure a new or improved performance hall that positions us to be the outstanding cultural service provider that our community deserves.

Vision

Our vision is an innovative approach that aligns programmatic, economic, and physical interests into a comprehensive plan to ENLIVEN, DIVERSIFY and GROW this important cultural community asset.

David thanked his staff for their tremendous effort and their accomplishments over the past season: Amy McGuire as Director of Development, Claire Allen as Development Associate, Sally Keeney as Orchestra Manager and Sherry Blakely in her newly promoted position of Controller. David welcomed Shanna Ungate as the newly hired Manager of Sales and Customer Experience.
David thanked Mary Ellen Dendy of the marketing firm Elly Wells for her exceptionally creative work in all the marketing programs for the Symphony. Mary Ellen was presented with a plaque in appreciation for her work with the Symphony. With Shanna joining the Symphony staff, marketing will be handled in house.

David recognized the wonderful work of Doris Loomis as Board President and expressed his immense pleasure in working with Doris over the past two years. David showcased two gifts which will be presented to Doris in appreciation.

**Election of Officers:** Irene introduced Bolling Farmer, incoming President of the Symphony Board. Bolling presented the four candidates for election to the Board of Directors for 2019-2020: Timothy Butts, Harry Durity, Nancy Cable and Mary Kirby.

On behalf of the Nominating and Governance Committee and with the concurrence of the Board, Bolling presented the written slate of new officers, returning board members and two ex officio voting board members to Irene for a vote. Irene asked if there were any other nominations from the floor. There were no further nominations brought forward. Irene called for a vote of the slate of officers as presented. The membership vote was unanimous.

**Approval of Bylaws:** Bolling presented to Irene the proposed changes to the Asheville Symphony Society, Inc. Bylaws, which had been approved by the Board. Irene asked for a vote from the membership on the Bylaws changes, which was approved unanimously. The summary of changes and the proposed revisions were provided in the Annual Meeting notice.

**Remarks by Symphony President Elect Bolling Farmer:** Bolling feels that the Asheville Symphony Society has a bright future due to the leadership and vision of David Whitehill combined with the skillful artistry of Darko Butorac. Together they will set our program to be true to the classical art form and to be innovative in bringing new offerings in new places.

David Whitehill’s vision shapes the society’s strategic priorities, providing a purpose and framework. The Board, as fiduciary agent, has the following priorities:

1. We will strive to enable David, Darko, the staff, the orchestras, and the affiliates to be successful in providing top quality music and education.

2. We recognize that patrons are our greatest strength. We will work to express our appreciation and to seek and be responsive to interests and feedback.

3. We will be diligent and committed to maintaining long term financial sustainability – developing operating funds, reserves, and endowment.

4. Finally, with David, we will lead the Asheville Symphony Society on a successful course to have an improved performance venue.
**Special Recognition:** Irene recognized Carol McCollum for her dedication to the Development Committee of the Board since 2015 with a certificate of appreciation.

**Adjournment:** Irene thanked everyone for attending and asked the Board members to join her for a short meeting to elect the new officers.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kirby