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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bringing Classical Music to Life: VSA Bids Farewell to Longtime Board Members

Montrose, CO – At the upcoming April 20th and 21st concerts, which will wrap up the Valley Symphony Association’s 52nd season, the all-volunteer performing arts organization will bid farewell to long-time board members Hartland H. Clubb, Jr., and Priscilla Fry.

“Even within the VSA Orchestra & Chorus ranks, many are unaware of Hartland and Priscilla’s truly significant contributions to the VSA,” VSA Communications & Development Director Stacey Ryan said. “Proven through thousands of volunteer hours logged since the 1980s (for Hartland) and the 1990s (for Priscilla) in the name of music as both musicians and board members, they have been instrumental in ensuring that classical music has a sustained foothold in the region. They have worked tirelessly to ensure that the VSA will continue to bring classical music to life on the Western Slope.”

“Hartland and Pricilla have guided the VSA through 15 of its most tumultuous years,” VSA Board Vice President Stephanie Helleckson said. “It is a credit to them and their constant commitment to bringing classical music to life that we are where we are today. Keeping a large, volunteer-based organization moving forward in a coordinated way is no small feat, and Hartland and Priscilla have been doing just that for the past decade and a half.”

Hartland H. Clubb, Jr.

Clubb is the current VSA Board President and owner of Clubb’s Fabric Store in Delta and has been an active member of the VSA in various ways for decades. He played trumpet with the orchestra from 1981-1986, has sung with the chorus since 2004, and served on the board since 2010.

He hails from a little town south of St. Louis, MO, as his father’s travels with Ben Franklin stores took the family from there to Southern California and finally, in 1967, back to Colorado, Hartland Sr.’s original stomping grounds.

Music was an important part of the Clubb family. Hartland's mother—a teacher, pianist, and church organist—began her children's music education with basic theory and piano before they even started attending school. "When band was offered in 4th grade, it wasn't 'if,' it was, 'what instrument?'" Although he started out with a \$20 flute, "When I discovered that a trumpet made a lot more noise with only three valves, the Boehm system keys and open-holed stick was history," Clubb said.

He played through high school in Delta. At CSU, he studied trumpet and performed with the CSU Brass Choir, Wind Ensemble, and was principal trumpet with the University Symphony and Opera Orchestra in 1972 and 1973. When moved to Gunnison in 1974 to manage his father's second Ben Franklin store, "I soon met John Kincaid, the brass professor and director at Western State, who allowed and encouraged me to schlep in and out of many groups at the college."

Clubb has fond memories of his time with the VSA Orchestra. "We had a particularly active brass section, including Keith Cochrane, Ed Horton, Paul Good, and other excellent musicians, who organized events to play with the orchestra and some small ensembles up and down the river corridors until 1986."

In 1985, he met the love of his life, Michelle Stitzer, introduced by current VSA principal trumpet Dave Reddish. As their family began to grow, time no longer permitted Clubb to play in the orchestra. Marion and Nancy Hofman, charter members of the VSA, encouraged Clubb to join the chorus in 2004 where he's been contributing musically ever since as time allows.

The "family affair" with the VSA didn't stop there: Clubb's son, Aaron, is part of the VSA Orchestra's violin section now.

Outside of his musical endeavors, Clubb is a proverbial pillar of the Delta community, given his family's entrepreneurial presence for decades, as well as having served on the Delta Chamber of Commerce board, several advisory groups with retail organizations, and as the president of Our Redeemer Lutheran Congregation.

Clubb leads by example within the ranks of the VSA, too. "The VSA is an example of what can be done when a small group of determined individuals set their mind and hearts to the cause," he said.

"I will always cherish the friends I have met while on the board," says Clubb. "Because we shared a common duty to bring the VSA forward in its mission, we shared a rare thing. It has been a privilege to serve such a fun and great organization. Seeing the whole process of the season unfold through the planning stages to hearing the live performance is astonishing and heartwarming."

“The symphony orchestra is one of the greatest instruments and organizations mere mortals have been given. I hope and know the VSA will continue to fulfill the desire of musicians and audiences alike to enjoy the best musical works together. I plan to be a part of the symphony and chorus, whether I’m in the audience or on the stage.”

Priscilla Fry

Fry has held the board positions of secretary and treasurer, sometimes both positions at once, for many years, as well as singing with the chorus since she moved to the area.

Fry comes from a family of talented musician-singers she has been singing all her life. She started with a solo at age 5 in "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" at a little country church where her aunt was the pianist. She wanted to play the harp, but her father convinced her she would look silly trying to lug a harp down the football field with the band, so she started the alto saxophone at age 10 and took up the oboe in 8th grade.

Fry moved from Mansfield, OH, to Montrose, CO, in January 1994. “When I first heard about the Valley Symphony being all-volunteer, I was surprised. I came from a city that had a paid professional orchestra. From that moment, I was determined to do anything I could to help the organization evolve. I no longer played an instrument, so I decided to give money and time,” says Fry. “From the fall of 1994 through the September 2019 *Pops in the Park* concert, I continued with my music by singing with the various groups that eventually became the VSA Chorus, like the Grand Mesa Singers. As part of the Christmas in the Valley chorus, I drove to Cedaredge for practice and purchased my own music.”

Like Clubb, Fry’s experience as a VSA performer had family ties, too: she performed on stage as part of the VSA Chorus alongside her daughter Vanessa and grandson Kaycee.

For many years in the late 1990s and early 2000s, these groups were seasonal contributors alongside the Valley Symphony, mainly for Christmas concerts. The “Valley Symphony Orchestra” (VSO) became the “Valley Symphony Association” (VSA) to include the chorus along with the orchestra in 2002, which is the season the chorus started doing their own performances along with the orchestra’s seasonal subscription of concerts. Since then, the chorus has been provided music and a paid director.

“I am proud to have helped establish the chorus as part of the VSA, because having both entities attracts more people to participate, musicians, and concertgoers alike,” Fry said.

“I am an avid reader. The end of a really good book is always a bit sad, but I am always excited to pick up the next book and see what is in store,” she said. “The same could be said for the VSA. I moved across the country and knew no one except my family. I began singing in the chorus in the fall of 1994, and these fellow singers became my friends and family. When the chorus became part of the VSA, I got more involved, and in 2008 I joined the board. There have been

many highs and lows, challenges, and accomplishments. It has given me joy and pride to be part of the musical family of Montrose and the surrounding regions. It will be fun to join the audience for the concerts with my only responsibility being to show up and applaud. It is the final chapter of my VSA book, but live music and the relationships it brings is high on my 'reading' list. I look forward to the future success of VSA and have treasured my time as part of this wonderful organization."

The VSA Orchestra & Chorus thanks Clubb and Fry for their considered, thoughtful leadership of the VSA and decades of devotion to their musical family.

"Hartland and Priscilla have spent the last 15 years setting the VSA up for success," says Helleckson. "Thanks to their tireless efforts, we are moving into Season 53 with good resources, a strong community, and an undimmed passion for bringing classical music to life. We will miss them greatly, and we wish them the absolute best as they move into their next chapters."

The organization recently announced that Cheryl Zahniser and Cathy Hoffman, both of Montrose, have been elected to the VSA Board to help continue the tradition of excellence that Clubb and Fry blazed over the years.

For information, visit the VSA on Facebook @valleysymphonyassociation or at ValleySymphony.net. Tickets for all season 52 concerts at the Montrose Pavilion are also available online; in Delta at Clubb's (417 Main St); and in Montrose at season co-partner Cimarron Wealth Management (1731 E Niagara Rd) and Colorado Smiles (601 S 3rd St). Other inquiries may be directed to 970-765-8323 or info@ValleySymphony.net. Help support the VSA's new YouTube channel, "Valley Symphony Association - Montrose, Colorado," by subscribing.