

January 2022 Column

by Hartland H. Clubb, Jr., President VSA Board of Directors

Bringing Classical Music to Life: Behind the Scenes of the Valley Symphony Association

When audiences listen to the Valley Symphony Association (VSA), they most likely have no idea how much work goes on to make the music happen. Oh, they may understand that the musicians have to rehearse, but they probably don't realize that every single musician is a volunteer, and has been for the 50 years the VSA has been thrilling regional audiences.

This season we have over 100 performers who bring their skill, passion, and talent to the stage.

They are teachers, parents, neighbors, students. They have jobs. They have children. They have homes and schedules and commitments. They teach at local colleges, high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools. They work in business, the arts, government, agriculture, law enforcement, and health care. Some are retired. Some are entrepreneurs. Some are military veterans. They hail from towns throughout the Uncompahgre, Grand, and North Fork Valleys. Some of them are snowbirds. Some of them are teenagers. And they are all VSA musicians.

Making The Music Happen

Pulling back the curtain for a peek might help audiences understand just how much goes into our music making. Here are just a few of the thousands of details:

- At least nine months before the season starts, the music committee meets to plan the themes and music for the next season.
- Then comes all the work of visually branding each of those concerts—creating visual ideas to convey those musical themes—to use for posters, tickets, concert programs, website updates, ticketing program updates, and so much more.
- As a non-profit organization, the VSA is entirely reliant on the donations of advertisers, organizations, and sponsors, so we spend a great deal of time reaching out for new or continued support from concert partners, advertisers, sponsors, section and individual musician underwriters, and generally fundraising all year long.
- We secure and reserve rehearsal space and establish concert dates
- Conductors select music and prepare for rehearsals.
- Music is distributed. Musicians practice on their own. Ensemble rehearsals begin.
- Then comes the work of selling tickets to the community and administering those sales.
- As a concert approaches, marketing and publicity materials are finalized and circulated regionally. Posters are printed and distributed. Radio advertising and interviews are scheduled and recorded. From ensuring accurate advertising updates to revising musician rosters to gathering concert notes to capturing the concert order, all concert program and slideshow particulars and acknowledgements are addressed, edited, proofed, and printed on time to present to our audience.
- On concert day, the stage is set up with chairs, music stands, risers, and equipment, while the lobby is prepared for the event. Photographs are shot during the dress rehearsal, which takes place just before the doors are open, when we happily and gratefully greet concert goers.
- Then, the hall fills, the lights dim, the baton falls, and we all revel in making the music possible!

From this simplified list, you can see just how much work goes into a single concert. The bulk of the behind-the-scenes work is currently shouldered by four people who spend countless hours making sure all the details are covered.

The VSA is proud to be celebrating our 50th year as a regional, all-volunteer performing arts organization composed of musicians who live and work in our midst. There are so many more things the VSA would love to accomplish, so many ways to weave music into our regional communities. To do that, the organization needs your support. If you'd like to volunteer to assist the VSA, please can call 970-275-8676.

About Hartland H. Clubb, Jr., VSA Board President

Hartland H. Clubb, Jr., is the owner of Clubb's in Delta, a civic treasure, and a proverbial pillar of the Delta community. He has been an active member of the VSA in various ways for decades.

The VSA's 50th Concert Series at the Montrose Pavilion continues with:

"Seasons of Love in Song & Overture" – February 27 at 3 p.m.

"Flashback to the 70s" – March 27 at 3 p.m.

"Let's Dance" – April 23 at 7:30 p.m., and April 24 at 3 p.m.

About the Valley Symphony Association

Bringing classical music to life since 1970, the Valley Symphony Association has culturally enriched the community and its members by bringing together some of the best volunteer musicians from the North Fork, Grand, and Uncompahgre Valleys to discover and present works of great composers, past and present. Performances range from classical orchestral to upbeat pops, from purely instrumental to purely choral, to a combination of both.