

Noteworthy



A publication of The Wednesday Morning Music Club (Austin)

Website: musicclubaustin.org

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2023: Get Ready to Celebrate a Wonderful Year!

By Michelle d'Arcy

Huzzah! The Music Club of Austin has several reasons to celebrate 2023. Not only does next year mark the 100th year of the club's founding, but being an odd-numbered year, it's time for the biennial Bonnie Cummins Fielder Grant for Career Advancement competition.

The Fielder Grant was established in 2005 and funded by past president Bonnie Cummins Fielder to assist young singers with expenses incurred in pursuit of a professional career in classical music. This grant provides a total of \$12,000 to singers, ages 22 to 32, with promising vocal careers. The specific goal is to award financial assistance for expenses incurred in pursuit of a professional career in classical music. Bonnie was committed to the ongoing development of young artists and eager to see them flourish beyond the day when they won a Fielder Grant. She viewed the funds as seed money and tasked the Fielder Committee to check-in periodically with previous winners to hear how their careers are progressing and how the grant helps them pursue their goals.

Once again, the committee couldn't be more pleased. In catching up with the 2021 recipients of the Fielder Grant, we heard wonderful news from soprano Krista Renée Pape. She is now living in Kansas City and singing with the city's Lyric Opera (LOKC) company. Krista was grateful for the opportunities the grant provided her, and she's encouraging other singers to apply for the 2023 grant. She enthusiastically mentioned dozens of competitions and auditions in which she participated, simply because the grant eased travel costs. Last summer she was able to attend the Music Academy of the West as a vocal fellow; there she received coaching with world class musicians and could fund video recordings showcasing her talents.



Considering Bonnie's original intent of furthering musical education, we are sure she is pleased with Krista Renée's final thoughts: *"Obviously, the money doesn't last forever—but it aids in either competing or getting hired, so an artist can sustain themselves. Because I am now hired by LOKC, I even have time for the projects I've been dreaming about for a while. I am in the process of writing a massive grant proposal for a project that is geared towards education, furthering contemporary chamber music, and creating entertainment with current and accessible resource material. . ."* Bravissima, Krista!



The committee also heard from soprano Catherine Goode. In addition to being able to continue with routine career expenses such as voice lessons and pianist fees, Catherine was able to use her grant funds for all those useful, desperately needed, but often naggingly utilitarian, needs of a rising performer always travelling and on the go. She raved about what a lifesaver it is to finally have the funds to invest in up-to-date technology allowing her to have all her sheet music, opera scores, repertoire for her students in one place. Not only that, but she finally was able to invest in a set of high-quality luggage and proclaimed the relief she feels as she waits at the luggage claim knowing for sure her suitcase will appear all in one piece!

Catherine further provides a gift for us. She closes her note with the following:

"I'm planning to purchase an additional microphone soon to ensure that I'm able to continue making quality recordings for applications and virtual auditions. I just made new recordings earlier this month. Please feel free to share the following video with the rest of the club (be sure to click the link):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tQC4RA9_zE&ab_channel=MerolaOperaProgram"

Continued on page 2

2023: Get Ready to Celebrate a Wonderful Year! (Continued)

What a joy, especially with our continuing mission of supporting the education and career aims of young musicians and artists, to be involved with the triumphs of previous Fielder Grant winners. Consider Catherine's final words: *"I've shared this year's grant application link with a couple friends who I know will make excellent candidates. Again, I am so glad to hear from you and so grateful for (your) continued interest in and support for my career."*

The deadline for application submission was November 15. Our judges will begin their work after Thanksgiving. Notification of the results will go out to the applicants on or about January 15, 2023. Finalists will compete in person on Wednesday, March 15, 2023. Final selection of winners will be made and announced at that time. Stay tuned!



President's Musings

Angela Smith

Sam Cooke's 1964 hit, "Change Is Gonna Come," has been on constant replay in my head these past several days. As I've reflected on my first few months as your president and what our club has accomplished in that short time, I have so many reasons to be thankful and optimistic.

At our most recent program meeting, you voted to adopt a vision and mission statement, in essence giving us a "North Star" to set direction for our purpose and future. You also approved a recommendation to proceed with filing the necessary papers for a DBA (doing business as) Music Club Austin. Both of these are significant actions that will move our organization forward into its next 100 years.

I've made it clear that I'm not afraid of change, and I've been pleasantly surprised to know that more of us than not are of like minds. Certainly, change can be a little scary, but your support for these actions with far-reaching implications for the future tells me you have the courage to leave the comfort zone of the status quo and try something new. You are willing to break the bounds of routine and think outside the box, giving us hope as we move forward and ensuring more opportunity for our growth and progress.

Embracing change means being flexible and open. It means building on and starting a new chapter – better than the last. Too many organizations become dysfunctional because they don't accept change and as a result become stagnant, missing opportunities to improve and advance their mission. That doesn't mean we'll always agree on how that's to be done, but at least when we disagree, it will be with respect and with a desire to come to a better understanding of the other's viewpoint.

November is the month of thanksgiving, and among the blessings I count this year is being part of this club and its proud legacy. I am thankful for each of you who as members have entrusted me with the honor of serving as your president during this important time and turning point in our history. It's a responsibility I don't take lightly, especially considering the footsteps of past leaders whom I follow.

Among life's certainties is the inevitability of change. Change is part of the natural course of our human evolution. That song from 1964 will always ring true – "Change Is Gonna Come." But whatever change comes, I'm confident our club will handle it – with courage, honor, and grace. Hope you had a Happy Thanksgiving, everyone! May your coming holidays be filled with good food, good music, and the loving fellowship of family and friends.



Angela Smith

Editor's Note:

For those of you who'd like to know a little more about our club president, here's some info on what she's been up to – past and present.

Angela Smith is a native Texan from Beaumont and a first generation American. Her first language was Italian, and her father, a classical music lover, was her first piano teacher.

Her first big life-defining experience came when she flunked Jell-O making in seventh grade. On the wise counsel of her home ec teacher, she went in another direction and took up journalism and music. Her current culinary expertise is limited to opening a bag of Cheetos.

A graduate of the University of North Texas, where she majored in journalism and minored in music and math, she was the first female editor-in-chief of the daily campus newspaper. Until then only male students were allowed to be editor because of an early curfew for women. She took on the dean of women and won that battle not only for herself but for other women who would serve in that post in the future.

The day after she got her degree, she went to work for the Associated Press and was assigned to the Capital Press Corps to cover President Lyndon Johnson and his administration. After leaving AP, she went into educational PR and then served for nine years as executive director of the Writers' League of Texas. She now proudly holds the title of Executive Director Emeritus, which she describes as a cushy job with no responsibility other than to act like the queen mother.

Today she spends most of her time working as a freelance writer and editor and nonprofit management and communications consultant. She also serves on the boards of several organizations, including the Mayborn School of Journalism at the University of North Texas, School of Arts and Humanities at St. Edward's University, West Austin Rotary, Zonta Club of Austin, American History Club, and Inside Out Steelband. She is national co-chair of the First Amendment Network and serves on the board of National Federation of Press Women.

As a published author, her most recent books are STEEL DRUMS AND STEELBANDS: A HISTORY and WOMEN DRUMMERS: A HISTORY FROM ROCK AND JAZZ TO BLUES AND COUNTRY, which has been the basis for two documentaries. She's also written a math book for kids and co-authored a book titled THE TEACHER'S JOURNEY.

She's involved in numerous music activities and plays the steel drum, cello, piano, hammered dulcimer, and is now trying to learn lap steel guitar. She's also an avid amateur astronomer and loves helping others take that first look through a telescope eyepiece to see the rings of Saturn. Because of her work with youth in astronomy, the Smith-Brown Observatory in Canyon Lake is named after her and a colleague who partnered and founded the outdoor education program, RavenStar.

One of her more recent adventures was being cast in a PBS movie on women's suffrage called CITIZENS AT LAST. You can still catch it on PBS on demand and YouTube.

Her philosophy of life: Every day is another chance to get it right.



Wednesday Morning Music Club

Holiday Coffee, December 7, 2022

9:30 AM

Program

Program Leader: **Gena Tabery**

Song Leader: **Charles Palmer**

Accompanist: **Kathryn Govier**

Together We Sing: I Heard the Bells, p. 48

♥ II. *Andante* and III. *Allegro* from Sonata No. 2 in D major for Viola da Gamba, BWV 1028
by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Performed by cellist **Terri Freeland** and pianist **Melanie Richards**

♥ Holiday Songs

A Slumber Song of the Madonna
by Michael Dewar Head (1900-1976)

In The Bleak Midwinter
by Sherri Porterfield (1995), words by Christian Rossetti (1830 -1894)

Still a Bach Christmas: Still, Still, Still and Air from Orchestral Suite in D
by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Pine Cones and Holly Berries and It's Beginning To Look a Lot Like Christmas
by Meredith Wilson (1902-1984)

Performed by soprano **Elise Ragland**, baritone **Charles Palmer**, flutist Pat Yingst, and guest pianist **Maxine Gomes**

♥ Nocturne et Allegro Scherzando
by Phillipe Gaubert (1879-1941)

Performed by flutist **Pat Yingst** and pianist **Brian Grothues**

♥ O, Holy Night by Adolph Adam (1803-1856)

Performed by soprano **Katharine Shields** and pianist **Mary Parse**

♥ My Christmas Song for You (1944)
by Hoagy Carmichael (1899-1982) with lyrics by Furniss Peterson ((1890-1956)

The Christmas Song (1945)
by Mel Torme (1925-1999) with lyrics by Robert Wells ((1922-1998)

White Christmas (1942)
by Irving Berlin (1888-1989)

Performed by baritone **Charles Palmer** and pianist **Kathryn Govier**

♥ SING-A-LONGS, Hanukkah and Christmas Carols

Poems Inspired By Music, Part 2

(From the presentation by Michelle d’Arcy at the Oct. 8 TFMC District VI Fall Conference)

Our youngest poet, Cyrus Cassells, was born in Dover, Delaware in 1957. He grew up in the Mojave Desert north of Los Angeles and began writing poetry in high school. Cassells received a B.A. from Stanford University in film & broadcasting in 1979. As a young poet, he quickly made his mark when, at the age of 25, his first published work was a National Poetry Series Selection. That triumph was quickly followed by a Pulitzer Prize nomination. He is the recipient of the William Carlos Williams Award and a Pushcart Prize, as well as fellowships from the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. He works as a translator, film critic, actor, and teacher.

Cassells continues to be a prolific poet. A 2019 Guggenheim Fellow, Cassells lives in Austin and teaches at Texas State University, where he recently received a Presidential Award for Scholarly/Creative Activities. Last year he was appointed Texas Poet Laureate, and just this year, he received an Academy of American Poets Laureate Fellowship. And now, *Guitarrero!* by Cyrus Cassells:

Guitarrero!

Cyrus, always I try to put my soul
 into building a guitar,
 here on Cuesta de Gomez,
 full of sovereign guitar-makers,
 street slanting up to an arch
 of the colossal Alhambra.
 What I worship is the feeling of the wood
 in my hardworking hands,
 wood selected and dried
 for a three-decade minimum,
 so I’m refining Mediterranean
 or Canadian cypress,
 Macassar ebony, and Lebanese cedar
 that my paternal grandfather chose,
Abuelo Leonel who perished
 the Satan-hot August
 right before I was born
 into a dynasty of on-fire
 flamenco musicians and dancers.
 Imagine, a top notch guitar
 means perhaps a hundred hours
 of dedicated labor, and, so help me,
 I don’t work by the clock—
 Sometimes it costs me

most of a day to adjust
 the nitty-gritty strings and frets,
 to insure the vigorous, brave sound
 we’re famous for in Granada:
 due to the *vega’s* dry air,
 instruments from the Andalusian school
 are (no doubt about it!) lighter,
 distinctive—like a palace starling
 or a peerless voice
 that gently breathes and sings
 in a stone basilica on Sunday morning—
 acoustic splendor and tone to rival
 the able makers in Madrid—

At the fabled Moorish citadel’s hem,
 I bring my busy-as-hell hands
 to the timeless task of planing
 and judge the thickness
 of my newly launched guitars
 with my tried-and-true fingers.
 The tradition, I tell you, is to present
 your very first guitar as a gift
 to the regal, lullaby-whispering woman
 who latched you to this bustling,
 wondrous world:

Oh what an exhilarating day
 when my never-fail mother, Primavera,
 carefully inspected my first ever piece,
 proclaiming (almost singing it!):

Guitarrero!

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Our final poet, Ada Limon, is the new U.S. Poet Laureate. She officially assumed her responsibilities just last month.

Born in 1976, she is originally from Sonoma, California. As a child, she was greatly influenced by the visual arts, especially under the watchful eye of her mother (who says parents aren’t the ultimate ‘influencers’?). In 2001, Limón received an M.F.A. from the creative writing program at New York University.

Ada Limón is the author of six books of poetry, including *The Carrying* which won the National Book Critics Circle Award. Her book *Bright Dead Things* was nominated for the National Book Award. Her work is supported by a Guggenheim Fellowship. She now splits her time between Sonoma and Lexington, Kentucky where she writes, teaches remotely, and hosts the critically acclaimed poetry podcast, *The Slowdown* (<https://www.slowdownshow.org/>), which critics have called a “literary once-a-day multivitamin.”

And finally:

*A New National Anthem*

By Ada Limón

The truth is, I've never cared for the National Anthem. If you think about it, it's not a good song. Too high for most of us with "the rockets red glare" and then there are the bombs. (Always, always, there is war and bombs.)

Once, I sang it at homecoming and threw even the tenacious high school band off key. But the song didn't mean anything, just a call to the field, something to get through before the pummeling of youth. And what of the stanzas we never sing, the third that mentions "no refuge could save the hireling and the slave"? Perhaps,

the truth is, every song of this country has an unsung third stanza, something brutal snaking underneath us as we blindly sing the high notes with a beer sloshing in the stands hoping our team wins. Don't get me wrong, I do like the flag, how it undulates in the wind like water, elemental, and best when it's humbled,

brought to its knees, clung to by someone who has lost everything, when it's not a weapon, when it flickers, when it folds up so perfectly you can keep it until it's needed, until you can love it again, until the song in your mouth feels like sustenance, a song where the notes are sung by even the ageless woods, the short-grass plains,

the Red River Gorge, the fistful of land left unpoisoned, that song that's our birthright, that's sung in silence when it's too hard to go on, that sounds like someone's rough fingers weaving into another's, that sounds like a match being lit in an endless cave, the song that says my bones are your bones, and your bones are my bones, and isn't that enough?

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Logophile that I am, the written word--be it poetry, novels, plays, or short stories--always holds a strong attraction: I find the connection between music and poetry enchanting. The cadenza of the written word along with a hearty musical imagination allow us to walk through life with a broader smile, a lighter step, and, yes, a cheekier expression. If like me, you enjoy a good read, preferably a great poem, along with your concertos, partitas, waltzes, symphonies, and fugues (don't want to forget the fugues), links to all the poems we considered for this presentation will appear in the January 2023 *Noteworthy*.

Member News

TFMC District VI Launches Brand New Website!

(By District VI President Marcia Edwards)

Take a few minutes to explore the new District VI website at tfmcdistrict6.org for information about WMMC and other music clubs in Central Texas. The Home page includes an important announcement about plans for the new District-wide Competition scheduled tentatively for April 29, 2023. You may also enjoy snapshots taken by District VI Historian Cookie Nattinger at the District VI fall conference held on Oct. 8 at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church. These appear on the Photos page.

The Met: Live in HD

The Met: Live in HD series of cinema transmissions brings live opera performances from the Metropolitan Opera stage to movie theaters worldwide. The next performance on Saturday, December 10 will be the Met premiere of the new production *The Hours*, composer Kevin Puts, libretto by Greg Pierce. The opera's trio of heroines includes Renée Fleming, Kelli O'Hara and Joyce DiDonato.

From the Metropolitan Opera website: "Inspired by Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and made a household name by the Oscar-winning 2002 film version starring Meryl Streep, Julianne Moore, and Nicole Kidman, the powerful story concerns three women from different eras who each grapple with their inner demons and their roles in society."

FYI: we have it on good authority that former WMMC member Carol Dewar and her husband David--now living in Topeka, Kansas--will be in New York City to attend *The Hours* premiere on December 10.

Upcoming Events

Austin Chamber Music Center <https://austinchambermusic.org/concert-season/> If I Can Make It There...music by Hayden, Maz-zoli, and Uzoigwe. January 20th & 21st.

Austin Classical Guitar <https://www.austinclassicalguitar.org/events/> Live at The Rosette: Andrea Gonzales Caballero. January 21st & 22nd. The show on the 21st will also available to livestream.

Austin Opera <https://my.austinopera.org/events> Sweeney Todd January 28th and February 2nd & 5th.

Austin Civic Orchestra <http://austincivicorchestra.org/> Happy Holidays! Concert on December 17th and Texas Rising Stars (A concert featuring winners from the UT Butler School of Music string concerto competition) January 28th.

Austin Shakespeare <https://www.austinshakespeare.org/our-season> Master Harold And The Boys January 13th - 15th at the Draylen Mason Studio at KMFA.

Austin Symphony <https://my.austinsymphony.org/events?view=list> Sounds of the Season...various dates in December in the Austin area. Handel's Messiah...December 6th. Elf In Concert...music played live to the movie...December 15th. The Colors of FRANCE (Faure's Requiem)...January 13th & 14th.

Ballet Austin <https://balletaustin.org/performances/seasontickets/> The Nutcracker December 3rd - 23th.

Beethoven Concert Series <https://www.beethoven.com/upcomingshows> Hoppy Holidays with The Tinsel Singers! December 11th, 18th, & 23rd.

Candlelight Concerts in Austin <https://feverup.com/austin> Various concerts in Austin in December.

Chorus Austin <https://www.chorusaustin.org/events-calendar.html> Sing-It-Yourself Messiah...December 11th. On A Winter's Eve (Holiday Concert)...December 17th.

Conspirare <https://www.conspirare.org/tickets/> Conspirare Christmas...December 1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 5th. Holiday Big Sing...December 15th.

ensemble viii <https://ensembleviii.org/tickets/> Simple Gifts- Sounds of the Season December 16th.

KMFA 89.5 <https://www.kmfa.org/events> Lots of events in Austin for the Holidays!

La Follia <https://www.lafollia.org/upcoming-concerts> End the Year with Bach! December 30th & 31st

Texas Early Music Project <https://www.early-music.org/temp-2022-2023-season> An EARLY Christmas December 10th & 11th.

UT Butler School of Music <https://music.utexas.edu/events> Lots of wonderful concerts and recitals in December.

Williamson County Symphony Orchestra <https://wilcosymphony.org/> Next concerts December 10th, 16th, & 17th.

