

# Note Worthy

A publication of the Wednesday Morning Music Club (Austin)

March 18, 2015

## Bonnie Cummins Fielder and the Career Advancement Endowment Winners

Growing up on a ranch near Uvalde, Texas, Bonnie loved classical music from her earliest years. She was in elementary school when she first heard opera on the radio and continued this love of opera and classical music throughout her life. While teaching high school English in Midland, Texas, Bonnie developed her own travel company, Cummins World Tours, leading her students from the back streets of European towns to the shores of the Amazon. An avid reader, Bonnie loved a good story and appreciated art.

Bonnie joined WMMC in 1988, becoming president in 1997, and Distinguished Service member in 2011. She was a generous supporter of many promising vocal students, providing them scholarships, travel and coaching expenses, living quarters, and practical advice about careers and life in general. She loved showcasing their talent at her legendary living room soirees. Bonnie became a maternal surrogate to many of her students with relationships enduring far beyond their college years, and she took great pride in their professional accomplishments.

The Bonnie Cummins Fielder Grant for Career Advancement was established in 2005 with young singers from ages 22 to 32 in Texas competing for the grant. Through 2013, 25 singers received awards from the endowment grant. Several of the winners continue in their careers with various opera companies across the United States. It might be interesting to follow the careers of the winners (as gleaned from the internet).

2006 winner Lauren Zoghby is listed in the University of Houston's Moores *Classical Singer* magazine as one of several well-known performer graduates.

2007 winner Liz Cass and her quintet Margot performed for the WMMC President's Luncheon Oct. 2014. A frequent soloist with Austin Opera, Chorus Austin, Austin Symphony and many other arts organizations in and outside of Austin, Liz keeps a busy performance schedule and maintains a large and diverse vocal studio at Armstrong Community Music School.

2008 winner, Betsy Uschkrat, a former Miss Indiana, is now an Adjunct Professor of Voice at Loyola University's College of Music. Her lyric soprano voice is described as a "vocal powerhouse." She has received

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## President's Message

Carolyn McColloch



Your president and Wednesday Morning Music Club delegate Carlie Burdett, along with other WMMC members, will be attending the centennial celebration of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs in Brownwood, March 19 -21. Natalie Morgan's article "Historical Tidbits" in the Winter 2014 *The Musical Messenger* informs us that the Texas Federation of Music Clubs originated within the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs. Miss Louise Pace saw the need for a separate organization to set goals specific to music, exchange ideas, and meet together to strengthen each other. Music clubs throughout Texas that were affiliated with Women's Clubs met in Brownwood, Texas in October 1915 and organized as Music Clubs.....the Texas Federation of Music Clubs was born! WMMC member Carlie Burdett has composed music for this celebration,"Happy Birthday, TFMC."

## Apologies and correction to New Active Member

Craig Casper, cello  
4202 Cat Mountain (Address correction)  
Austin, TX 78731 [traviscasper@att.net](mailto:traviscasper@att.net)

## Thank You

Our sincere thanks go to all who participated in the March 4th program.

many honors; two YouTube videos demonstrate her talent.

2009 winner Michael Sumuel, an IMG opera management artist bass-baritone, is performing with many opera companies across the United States. His vocals are hailed as “smooth,” and he has “luminous tone and theatrical presence.” See his YouTube video “Some Enchanted Evening.”

2010 winner tenor Casey Finnigan, son of former WMMC member Susan Finnigan, has garnered many awards. WMMC has been blessed to have Casey perform for us over the years as his voice developed. Casey won the Student/Collegiate Men’s Voice in the Federation of Music Clubs National competition. He was also a winner on the national level at Opera in the Ozarks, where he attended 2 years. Casey has sung with the Kansas City Lyric Opera and the Florida Grand Opera in Miami. He will sing leading roles in May 2015 in the Naples and St. Petersburg Operas. He resides in Houston.

2011 winner, Katie Bolding, started as a blues singer, but was encouraged to try opera and her life as an opera singer began in earnest. She has sung many roles in operas around the country and now lives in Berlin, Germany.

All four 2012 singers shared the grant money. Lyric soprano Abigail Corbett is now in Maryland; Will Hearn received his Masters at Indiana University, lives in Houston and is auditioning nationally; Ashley Sigmon is teaching voice at Catawba Community College in Hickory, NC; and Christina J. Taylor is a light-lyric soprano residing in the Houston area. Her most recent role was Pamina in the second act of *Magic Flute* at the Yunan Opera Festival in China.

2013 Winner Rice University graduate bass-baritone Calvin Griffin is singing in Phoenix and Tucson this spring and will be with the Santa Fe Opera in summer 2015.

Many more were the recipients of Bonnie’s generosity. She left us in December 2012, but her legacy lives on because of her love of music and people.



**“Arkansas Gives” Offers Texans a Chance to Support Opera in the Ozarks**

Thursday, April 2, will offer opera lovers a unique opportunity to support Opera in the Ozarks (OIO) at Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony, our South Central Region summer music center. “Arkansas Gives” is a one-day effort to raise money for numerous worthy causes, including Opera in the Ozarks. You may log on to [www.ArkansasGives.org](http://www.ArkansasGives.org) between 8 am and 8 pm on Thursday, April 2 and pledge any amount you choose. Giving at least \$25 qualifies your donation to be doubled, and it also puts OIO in the running for additional bonus money being awarded. Depending on participation, this could result in a gold mine of funds for OIO. In November, the Texas Association of Museums participated in just such a project in north Texas. It raised over \$7,000. Donating was easy and safe. If this opportunity to support Opera in the Ozarks appeals to you, mark your calendar for April 2.

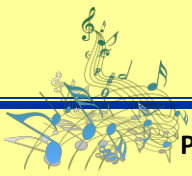
***Our Condolences***

Linnea Bergquist Smith, former District 6 President and WMMC member, passed away January 12, 2015 in Eugene, Oregon. A funeral has been set for 1:00 PM on March 28 at All Saints Episcopal Church.

Linnea Bergquist Smith was a long time beloved piano teacher in Austin with many students who went on to professional careers, Andrew Hallock being one.

Linnea was a very warm person, concerned for those less fortunate. She worked with Meals on Wheels and enjoyed getting to know the people she delivered meals to as friends. She was active in the Episcopal Church and sang in the choir for many years. She had a son and a daughter, and she moved to Oregon in later life to be near her daughter.

She accompanied many chamber musicians and vocalists when they performed for the Wednesday Morning Music Club. She was humble in spirit but a first class musician who could be depended upon for a solid foundation in performance.



## About the Performers for March 18, 2015

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### **Phyllis Noonan, piano**

Phyllis received her bachelor's degree from the University of Texas. Phyllis has been performing here in Austin for almost 30 years. She has accompanied singers and instrumentalists in secular and religious programs and weddings for many years. Organ is the second instrument she has experience in, having played at 5 different churches over the years. She also taught private piano lessons for 30 years. Now Phyllis is performing with Craig Casper, cellist and Melissa Ruof, violin. She is enjoying this new experience and repertoire.

### **Melissa Ruof, violin**

Melissa Ruof was born and raised in Austin, Minnesota where she learned to play the violin in its fine public school music program. She received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and worked as a free-lance musician and violin/viola teacher in the Washington DC/Baltimore area until 2010 when she moved to Austin, Texas. She was drawn to Austin, Texas by her daughter and her two adorable granddaughters and the adventure of living in a new place. Before moving here she started a community art center, Jubilee Arts, in a poor Baltimore neighborhood, which continues to thrive. Here in Austin she plays in the Balcones Community Orchestra, is concertmaster of the Central Texas Medical Orchestra and plays in several chamber groups, including the Cat Mountain String Quartet with fellow WMMCers, Catherine Van Zanten, Judy Trejo and Craig Casper.

### **Craig Casper, cello**

Craig Casper studied with Robert Sylvester while attending the University of Texas and the Philadelphia Music Academy. He continued studies with Lev Aronson in Dallas, TX. He has performed as a member of the Austin Symphony, Dallas Chamber Orchestra, Houston Grand Opera, and Texas Chamber Orchestra. He currently enjoys performing chamber music and solos. He also does a variety of free-lance playing in the Austin area.

### **Grace Huang, piano**

I started learning piano when I was 7 years old. I grew up in Taiwan and moved to Texas for college. I have a degree in Molecular Biology from UT Austin and I work as clinical research assistant. Since 2011 I have participated in piano festivals, master classes and competitions for amateur pianists in Fort Worth, Hawaii, Houston, Colorado Springs and Washington DC. I am planning on going to a couple of piano festivals this year.

### **Janie Keys, piano**

I have two degrees, both from the University of Texas: a BA in French and a MM in Piano Pedagogy (studying with Nancy Garrett.) Even though my degree in music was decades ago, I'm still studying the piano. My current teacher is Sheila Paige (see [pianowellnessseminar.com](http://pianowellnessseminar.com).) I love all my Suzuki trained students, especially my two 4 year olds.

### **Lisa Shirah-Hiers, piano**

Lisa Shirah-Hiers holds a Master's Degree in Music Composition from the University of Texas at Austin (1992) and a Bachelor's in Theory/Composition from Lawrence University, Appleton, WI (*summa cum laude* 1988). She teaches piano, theory and composition privately and publishes two blogs: *My Restless Muse*, (<http://myrestlessmuse.blogspot.com/>) with articles, interviews and essays about music, writing and the creative life, and *Worthy of Note*, (<http://shirahpianostudio.com/worthy-of-note.html>) with pieces particular to teaching and learning music. Her students consistently receive high scores and prizes in piano, composition and theory on various exams and competitions through ADMTA, TMTA, MTNA, TFMC and the Austin Symphony Orchestra.

### **Kathryn Govier, piano**

I started music lessons at age 4 and "cut my eye-teeth on Bach." I was lucky to have a piano teacher who stressed the classics. I earned a Bachelor of Music, piano major (1971), and I've used my skills as accompanist and collaborator, as well as soloist. I work with Charles Palmer through the Butler School of Music Outreach Program giving retirement home programs. My professional job was teacher of the handicapped. I spent 3 years in Marrakesh, Morocco, working with handicapped children as Peace Corps Volunteer (1987 – 1990). I love living in Austin with many wonderful cultural events to attend and participate in.

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### **Marcia Edwards, piano**

A farm girl from central Illinois, I began piano lessons in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and have enjoyed music in my life ever since. My education includes a B.A. in French from the University of Illinois, an M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language from UCLA, and a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Texas, Austin. My husband (a pediatrician) and I moved to Austin in 1983, and our 2 children were born and raised here. I have been a member of WMMC since 2008, and I'm looking forward to my new role as president beginning in the fall.

### **Bonnie Cummins Fielder Career Advancement Finals 1 PM**

## **Calendar of Events**

### WMMC

**March 18 10 AM TX Federation of Women's Club bldg., 2312 San Gabriel**  
**1 PM Bonnie Cummins Fielder Career Advancement Finals**

### Metropolitan Opera (Live in HD)

Rossini's "La Donna del lago" Met premiere. Visit <http://www.metopera.org/metopera/liveinhd/live-in-hd-2014-15-season> to purchase your ticket and for further information.

**March 18 6:30 PM**

### Balcones Orchestra

Tschaikovsky Violin Concerto in D Major, Jessica Mathaes

**March 22<sup>nd</sup> 4 PM First Presbyterian Church, 8001 Mesa Drive.**

### Salon Concerts, Inc.

Ticket sales at <http://salonconcerts.org>

**March 29 4 PM private residence**

**March 30 7 PM private residence**

Elisabeth Kufferath, violin, Stephen Perry, piano, Douglas Harvey, cello  
performing the music of Mozart, Grieg, Scriabin and Schumann

**March 31 Free Noon hour concert at Central Presbyterian Church, 200 E. 8th at Brazos St.**

### Austin Symphony and Long Center for the Performing Arts

#### **5th Annual Austin Symphony Sarah and Ernest Butler Texas Young Composers Concert.**

This concert will present the world premiere of new orchestral works composed by Texas students age 18 and under and performed by your Austin Symphony Orchestra! Tickets for the Texas Young Composers Concert are available now at the Austin Symphony Box Office, (512) 476-6064. Prices are \$20 per adult and \$8 per child.

**April 1 7:30 PM Dell Hall**