

LIZ CASS

With pianist Karen White

WILL PERFORM

AT THE 2024 FALL LUNCHEON

Liz Cass is a dynamic producer, educator, arts leader, and operatic performer based in Austin, Texas. As the founder and Executive Producer of the award-winning opera company LOLA (Local Opera Local Artists) and the Executive Director of the Armstrong Community Music School, Liz is a passionate advocate for the arts. She serves as the president of the Seagle Festival Alumni Association Board, secretary of Austin Classical Guitar Board of Directors, and is a member of the Community Advisory Board of KMFA 89.5, Austin's classical music radio station.



Liz's versatility as a performer is evident in her wide range of roles, from Dinah LeFarge in the world premiere of *Lardo Weeping* by Peter Stopschinski and Terry Galloway, Mrs. Lowe and Dora, the Bartender in Kevin Puts' *The Manchurian Candidate* with Austin Opera, to solo performances in Brahms' *Alto Rhapsody* with Chorus Austin. Her artistic endeavors have led her to present French art songs for the University of Texas's Songs in the Skyspace series and to feature in Austin Chamber Music Center's Blue Bash annual gala. Internationally, she has appeared as a soloist in Handel's *Messiah* at prestigious venues in Guatemala City and Antigua.

A champion of contemporary works, Liz premiered the mezzo role in Graham Reynolds' opera *Pancho Villa From a Safe Distance*, earning the Best Singer award from the Austin Critics Table. She performed this role at renowned festivals, including the PuSh Festival in Vancouver and the PROTOTYPE Festival in New York City. Under her leadership, LOLA commissioned renowned composer Peter Stopschinski to write the opera *Lardo Weeping*, based on Terry Galloway's one-woman play. Liz's portrayal of Dinah LeFarge in the fully staged production in August 2022 was nominated for the 2021-22 B. Iden Payne Outstanding Lead Performance award, with the opera receiving twelve additional nominations. In the same year, she premiered Donald Grantham's song cycle *Love Songs Sweet and Sour* with pianist Carla McElhaney.

Upcoming performances include NGP Cabaret (August 25, 2024), Mrs. Lowe and Dora in *The Manchurian Candidate* by Kevin Puts with Austin Opera (November 9 and 10, 2024), workshop of *Stop Hitting Yourself* by Peter Stopschinski based on the play by the Rude Mechs (March 2025).

Liz began her vocal studies with Dr. Rebecca Folsom and is a graduate of the University of Missouri at Kansas City Conservatory of Music, where she earned her degree in Vocal Performance under the guidance of renowned professor Inci Bashar.

Also featured at the 2024 Fall Luncheon

By Mary Parse

Lerchen Zhong, a junior at Westwood High School, was awarded Second Place in the Wilcox Contest.

Lerchen has been studying piano with Professor Kiyoshi Tamagawa of Southwestern University for the last four years. Under Prof. Tamagawa, Lerchen has earned the following awards:

- placed in the top three at the Austin District Music Teachers Association Steinway Concerto Contest in 2020 and 2022,
- won first prize in the 2021 and 2022 ADMTA Scholarship Contests,
- won the Grand Prize in the 2023 Asian American Community Partnership Challenge Cup,
- chosen as a 2024 Texas Young Master by the Texas Commission on the Arts and Texas Cultural Trust. This designation is accompanied by a \$5000 grant to further the student's artistic studies, renewable for a second year. Lerchen was one of only two pianists selected in 2024 and the only Young Master from Austin.

Lerchen also plays violin. He won Honorable Mention in Music Club Austin's Wilcox Contest in 2023 and was principal second violinist in the 2023 Texas Music Educators Association All-State Symphony Orchestra.

In the future, he plans to continue his study with Dr. Tamagawa and participate in master classes and lessons with other distinguished musicians. A particular goal for the future is to perform Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini* with an orchestra.



Tenor **Jonathan Simon**, a senior at Westwood High School, was winner of Honorable Mention and the Rudd Supplemental Award.

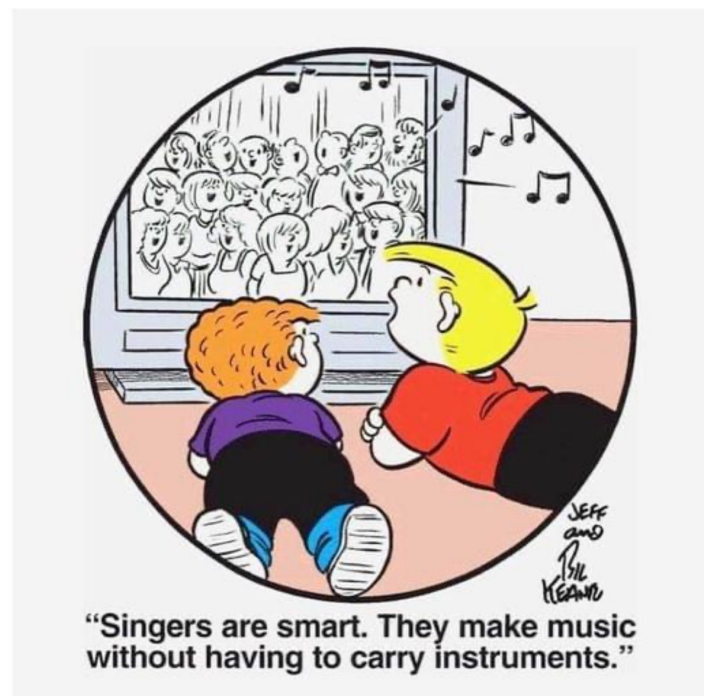
In 2023-2024 Jonathan won both second place and the Encouragement Award at the Schmidt Vocal Competition Regionals, for significant monetary rewards. He also received the

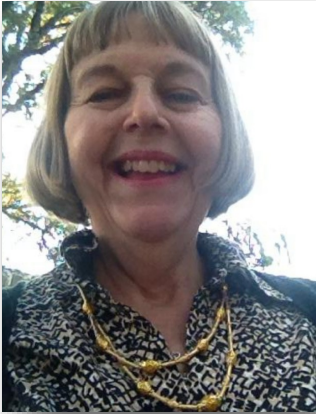
Outstanding Performer Award for voice at the Texas State Solo and Ensemble Contest, as well as Superior Rankings for his voice and piano solos. In addition, he was first chair tenor in the Texas Music Educators Association All-State mixed choir and has been in the TMEA region choir for three years. In 2023 he was a first place winner in the National Association for Teachers of Singing (NATS) High School Musical Theatre Division.

Jonathan has recently begun to study voice with Prof. Abigail Pena of Texas State University. For the previous five years he studied voice with Stephen Maus, who was his mentor for the above-named awards.

Jonathan is also a pianist. He has studied eight years with Dr. Gustavo Bianchi, winning numerous awards and contests. In addition, he is taking AP Music Theory.

Jonathan expects music to be a lifelong pursuit. He plans to study both vocal performance and biochemistry in college. He is founder and co-owner of Euphony, a non-profit organization with volunteers who provide a variety of musical styles in performances at nursing homes, assisted care living centers, and hospitals.





President's Musings

Elisabeth Moreno

It's not easy . . .

When the run of our freshly printed, bright green Music Club Austin yearbooks arrived at my house in late August, the first thought which popped into my mind, seriously, was Kermit the frog's lament, "it's not easy being green."

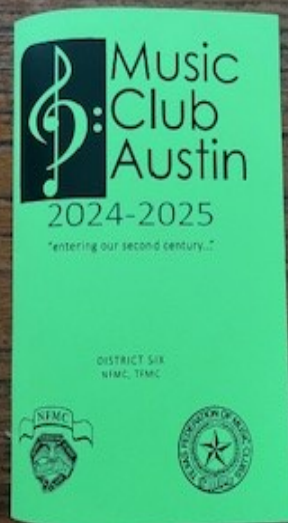
It's *not* easy . . . especially if you are a small, but historic, music organization featuring monthly live performances by club members adrift in a world of playlists, mixed media, live streaming and a thousand other competing electronic formats.

Getting the word out about our club's great traditions, including a robust scholarship program, will be Job #1 this year. And how are we going to do that?

Through PARTNERSHIPS! We've already made a good start in our alliance with

the Armstrong Community Music School. In fact Liz Cass, the school's director and a former MCA Fielder grant winner, will be entertaining us during the fall luncheon, October 2. And the programming committee (Brian Grothues and Janie Keys) were gratified to receive several submissions this summer from ACMS music faculty. You will be hearing more from them as the year progresses.

If you've been listening to KMFA's fall fund raising drive, I hope you've caught our name being announced as a new business sponsor. We can expect to hear our name mentioned once a day for three weeks during each of the station's two annual fund drives. Some of us have been attending KMFA trivia nights as another way of schmoozing and come next August, we'll be attending the station's annual fine arts mixer (sponsored by the LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce), armed with our newly designed publicity brochure, as a way of networking with other like-minded organizations in the



Austin area. We may even have the opportunity to sponsor a midday concert at KMFA sometime later in the year.

Next up is trying to revive some connections with the University of Texas Butler School of Music. Traditionally, the School's Dean has been an honorary member of the club, but it is time we inform Susan Thomas, their new director, of that distinction by inviting her to our Fall luncheon. The call is out . . .let's hope she can make it!

In the meantime, let's all try imagining new ways to CONNECT as we enter our second century of service to the Austin music community!

MEMBER NEWS

TFMC DISTRICT VI ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

The annual fall conference for District VI will be held Saturday morning, Nov. 16, at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 14311 Wells Port Dr., Austin 78728 (Wells Branch area). Opus 64 Music Club will be hosting. All District VI members—this includes all Music Club Austin members—are welcome and encouraged to attend. More information about the exact time and program will be available soon. Please bring a nonperishable food item for the church's food pantry.



DARN, YOU MISSED OUR LAST CLUB MEETING!

You:

were traveling,
had an appointment,
got caught in traffic,
had a cough and didn't want to share it,
or just got busy,

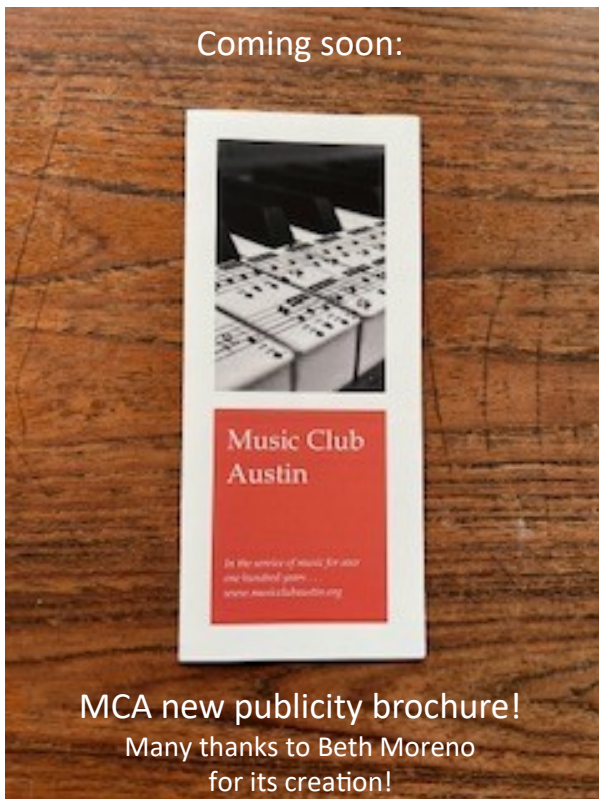
Did you know you can watch our meeting from home?

Or if you are a performer and just want to hear how wonderful you sounded to us.

You can take a look and share it with your family and friends.

Just visit the Music Club Austin's YouTube channel or follow this link and you can catch it either live or at your convenience.

[http://www.youtube.com/
@MusicClubAustin](http://www.youtube.com/@MusicClubAustin)





MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

President Elisabeth Moreno

I am originally from St. Louis, Missouri (home of the second oldest symphony in the US, after the New York Philharmonic).

I started piano lessons around the age of seven at a very old school conservatory, the St. Louis Institute of Music. In addition to the weekly private lesson we all had a genuine hour of theory instruction every week, theory exams, ear training and a schedule of required piano recitals all conducted in an icy cold air conditioned recital hall (which probably contributed to my lifelong performance anxiety!). The school was unusual in the sense that the Art Publication Society had resided in its basement since 1912. (I remember the sound and smell of the printing presses.) They cranked out the comprehensive teaching editions of classical repertoire featured in the The Progressive Music Series, much beloved by our founder, Minnie Sneed Wilcox. Those editions still comprise the bulk of my piano music collection and constitute an almost spooky foreshadowing of my association with the club. My first teacher, Ms. Hackbarth, went rogue though and tried to get me started on Bartok's *Mikrokosmos*. It was all a little bit beyond me and evidently Ms. Hackbarth as well, because she was dismissed eventually from the school for a conspicuous marijuana habit, really quite shocking in 1955.

I muddled on with piano through high school, eventually foundering on Schumann's *Phantasiestucke*. Once in college (St. Louis University) I switched to voice lessons and chorus activities. I carried that interest on through a year in Germany (on a Fulbright Scholarship) and out to Stanford University where I got a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. We seemed to sing a lot of requiems, sometimes with the San Francisco Symphony, but that's when I was grateful for all that Catholic school Latin instruction.

Fast forward through marriage and five years living in Mexico City. My husband was head of a large physics department, and we travelled a lot. My musical palette was expanded there, and I became very fond of Mexican baroque music which combines European and indigenous rhythmic influences.

Back in the States we lived in California and then migrated to Austin in 1985. (Remember the now defunct high tech MCC initiative on Braker Lane?) One of the first things I did here was seek out a piano instructor for my daughter, Katie. Happily, we were referred to Angelica Lopez and that began a long relationship culminating in my son, Hector, collaborating with Angelica in cello performances for the Wednesday Morning Music Club.

Professionally I worked over twenty years at the University of Texas Sanger Learning Center, providing academic support services to undergraduates and training teaching assistants to work more effectively with their students. That is where I met Natalie Morgan and was introduced formally to the WMMC.

During retirement I have been kept busy with two grandchildren (out in California), volunteering at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and the Inside Books Project (which provides reading material to prisoners incarcerated in Texas.) I have enjoyed being our club historian in the past, in particular handling a lot of historical photographs. I have concluded that the membership of this club is not only musically talented but incredibly PHOTOGENIC. Yet another benefit of a life in music!



Sweet September Days

By George W. Doneghy (1856 - 1937)

There's a something in the atmosphere, in sweet September days,
That mantles all the landscape with its languid, dreamy haze;
And you see the leaves a-dropping, in a lazy kind of way,
Where the maple trees are standing in their Summer-time array.

There's a yellowish tinge a-creeping over Nature's emerald sheen,
And the cattle stand, half-sleeping, in the middle of the stream
Where the glassy pool is shaded by the overhanging limb,
And the pebbly bottom's glinting where the silvery minnows swim.

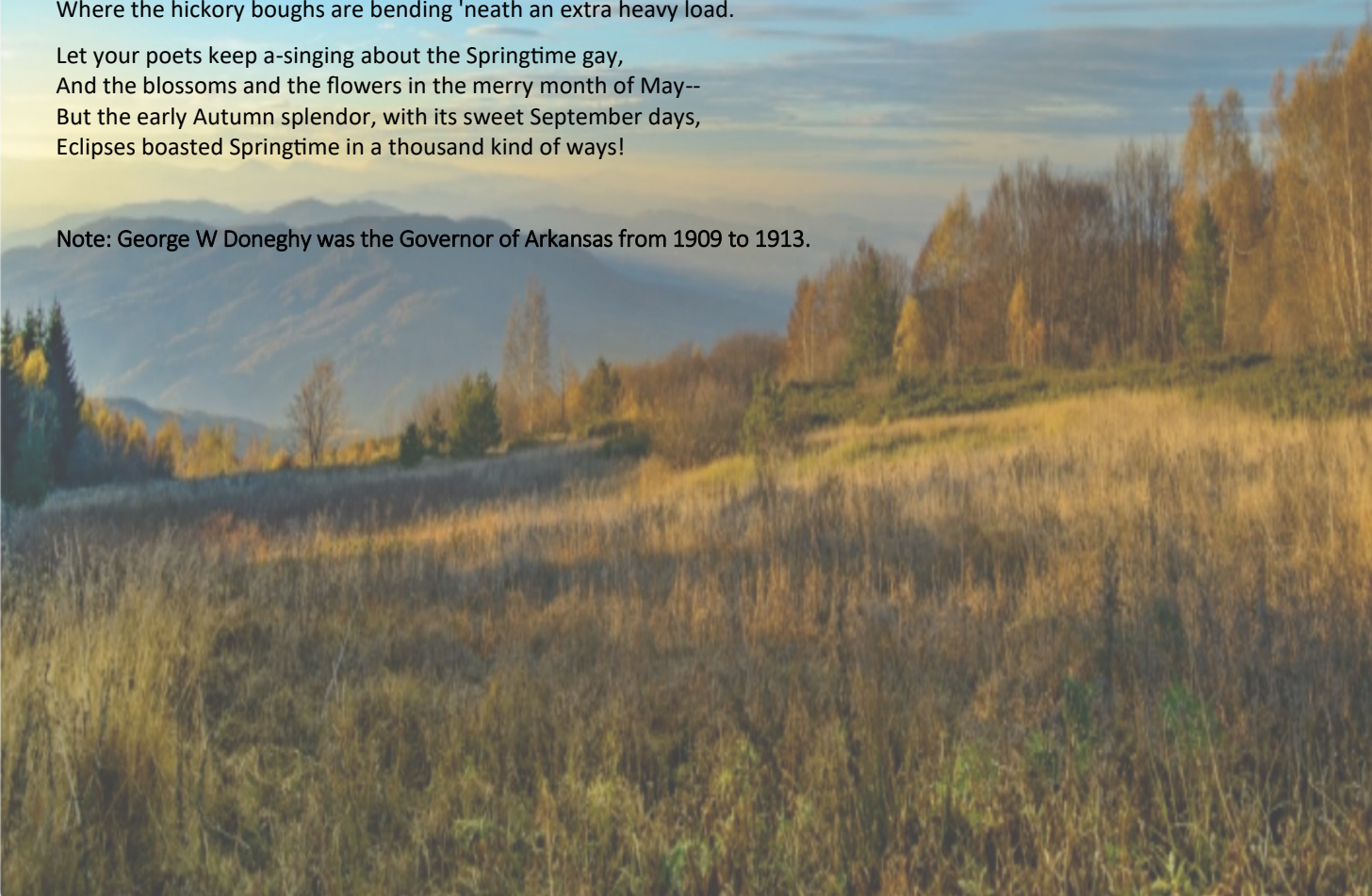
The tasseled corn is nodding, and the crow on drowsy wing
Is sailing o'er the orchard where the ripening apples swing,
And the fleecy clouds are floating in the azure of the sky,
And the gentle breeze is sighing as it's idly wafted by.

The cantaloupes are ripening in their yellow golden rinds;
And the melons, round and juicy, are a-clinging to the vines;
And the merry, laughing children, in their happy hour of play,
Are a-romping in the meadow and a-sliding down the hay.

The busy bees are buzzing where the grapes with purple blush,
And the hanging bunches tempting with their weight the arbor crush,
And the blue jays are a-wrangling in the wood across the road,
Where the hickory boughs are bending 'neath an extra heavy load.

Let your poets keep a-singing about the Springtime gay,
And the blossoms and the flowers in the merry month of May--
But the early Autumn splendor, with its sweet September days,
Eclipses boasted Springtime in a thousand kind of ways!

Note: George W Doneghy was the Governor of Arkansas from 1909 to 1913.



Upcoming Events

Balcones Community Orchestra <https://www.bcorchestra.org/> First Concert of the Season: Sunday, September 22nd.

Ballet Austin <https://balletaustin.org/performances/seasontickets/> BELLE - A Tale of Beauty & the Beast: Friday, September 27th, Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th.

KMFA <https://www.kmfa.org/events> They always have many events on their Classical Live events page.

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center <https://www.wildflower.org/> Tuesday Twilights - Happy Hours with live music, food trucks, art and more: begins again on September 24th thru November 12th.

The Metropolitan Opera On stage: <https://www.metopera.org/season/2023-24-season/> On Demand: <https://www.metopera.org/season/on-demand/>

Texas Early Music Project <https://www.early-music.org/2023-2024-season> Paris City Limits, circa 1550 (hosted by Arts on Alexander <https://www.artsonalexander.org/events>) Saturday, September 28th and Sunday 29th.

Women In Jazz <https://womeninjazz.org/events/> Austin Women in Jazz Festival: Saturday, September 21st and Sunday, 22nd.

Zach Scott Theatre <https://zachtheatre.org/shows-events/> Beautiful - The Carole King Musical (I loved it!) : playing thru Sunday, September 22nd.

The Met: Live in HD

The Met's 2024–25 season of live movie theater transmissions features eight extraordinary operas.
Check your local cinema for times.

Les Contes d'Hoffmann (JACQUES OFFENBACH)
Saturday, October 5

Grounded (JEANINE TESORI / LIBRETTO BY GEORGE BRANT)
Saturday, October 19

Tosca (GIACOMO PUCCINI)
Saturday, November 23

Aida (GIUSEPPE VERDI)
Saturday, January 25

Fidelio (LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN)
Saturday, March 15

Le Nozze di Figaro (WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART)
Saturday, April 26

Salome (RICHARD STRAUSS)
Saturday, May 17

Il Barbiere di Siviglia (GIOACHINO ROSSINI)
Saturday, May 31