



## 2014 Houston Symphony Centennial Ball

### PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

On May 17, 2014, the Houston Symphony held the 2014 Centennial Ball in its performance home, the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts. The culmination of a yearlong celebration of the Symphony's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Centennial Ball was the most spectacular, innovative and logistically demanding fundraising event in the organization's history. Its goals were to raise \$2.5 million and to celebrate the Houston Symphony's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in grand style.

### HOW THE PROJECT WAS DEVELOPED

This Ball was conceived as the culmination of the Symphony's 2013-14 Centennial Season. As such, we felt a need to make it the most ambitious event in our history. Although the Symphony has called Jones Hall home since 1966, the extraordinary challenges of a large fundraising event in the Hall had made it impractical as a venue for the annual Symphony Ball. For this event, the auditorium was converted into an 8,000 square foot "ballroom" for the occasion. A dining area of five tiers with dinner seating for many of the guests was built over the auditorium's orchestra-level seats.

### FINANCIAL INFORMATION

#### Revenue:

Contributions	2,299,996
Auction	302,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 2,601,996</b>

#### Expenses:

Advertising	2,800
Catering/Beverages	163,577
Courier	2,330
Décor	100,407
Employee Exp	2,989
Entertainment	90,088
Graphic Design	18,813
Hall Rental	151,929
Miscellaneous	40,436
Photography	5,393
Postage	2,081
Printing	36,018
Silent Auction	8,830
Sponsor Gifts	53,636
Technical	36,600
UWEvent	29,668
Valet	14,074
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 759,668</b>

**NET PROFIT \$1,842,328**

## PROJECT TIMELINE

**May 2012:** Ball Chairs appointed.

**December 2012:** Date, location and budget finalized; designer, caterer, graphic designer contracted.

**July 2013:** Underwriting Committee, Auction Committee and Advisor determined.

**August 2013:** After Party Chairs appointed, Early Underwriter Event hosts identified.

**September 2013:** Honorees finalized; entertainment contracted.

**October 2013:** Save-the-Date, Honorary Committee Letters, and first Underwriter Solicitation mailed; Underwriter Committee Meeting; event timeline determined.

**November 2013:** Ball Kick-off Event; Underwriter Committee Meeting; second Underwriter Solicitation mailed.

**December 2013:** Underwriter Committee Meeting; third Underwriter Solicitation mailed; event management firm contracted. 50% of fundraising goal met.

**January 2014:** Early Underwriters Event; general solicitation mailing; Auction Committee Meeting.

**February 2014:** Auction Committee Meeting.

**March 2014:** Menu set; Ladies Luncheon Event to support the Ball Auction.

**April 2014:** Invitation mailed; After Party Kick-off Event and Auction Event at Valobra Jeweler; Run of Show and event timeline finalized and volunteers recruited for the day of the Ball.

**May 2014:** Ball Underwriter Dinner; information and tickets mailed; Symphony Centennial Ball (May 17).

## VOLUNTEERS

- 78 volunteers were involved in planning the Centennial Ball, including a 34-person Underwriter Committee to plan the event and a 44-person Auction Committee to plan the silent auction.
- 27 volunteers staffed the Ball on the evening of May 17.
- Approximately 50 staff members had responsibilities leading up to and during the Ball.

## IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

The Centennial Ball was the most financially successful fundraising event in the Houston Symphony's history, generating \$2.6 million in contributed income, exceeding its goal and doubling the previous year's total of \$1.3 million. Proceeds from the Ball support *Music Matters!*, the Symphony's education and community engagement programs. *Music Matters!* serves more than 160,000 Houstonians every year, including 82,000 children and 111,000 people who experience the orchestra's music free of charge.

## SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

- The Centennial Ball established a new standard for innovation and successful fundraising by the Houston Symphony. We must continue close collaborations between the Houston Symphony staff and the Houston Symphony League to maintain this standard.