



Santa Rosa Symphony League, 50 Santa Rosa Avenue #410, Santa Rosa, CA 95409

Festival of Masks

for the benefit of music education for our youth

May 6-8, 2023

Presenter: Irene Sohm, irene@sohmplace.com

Event Description

Who would have thought that an inexpensive \$1 paper maché mask could yield up to \$200 when painted by an accomplished artist? We had our doubts when we embarked on the project in August 2022. But the results were spectacular: The Santa Rosa Symphony League partnered with local Sonoma County artists to create a silent auction that brought Symphony attendees together for a concert of music, colorful masks and profit.

We began by purchasing 100 blank masks from Amazon at the cost of about \$100. Masks are light-weight, easily transportable, colorful and fun. The concept offers additional possibilities: a masquerade ball, a Mardi Gras celebration.

The project was led by a committee of six: chair, artist liaison, logistics, publicity, sales and treasurer.

We appealed to an initial list of about 50 artists. The Symphony League's appeal to artists: "Let your imagination run wild. The themes are endless: elegant, whimsical, musical, animal, Venetian, etc."

The deadline for completing masks was April 1, 2023. We arranged to pick up the finished masks at a place convenient to the artist. To express our gratitude, we gifted each artist with two complimentary tickets to the performance where their mask was offered. We maintained regular contact with the artists, reminding them of the deadline, pickup procedures, info about picking up their complimentary tickets at the box office outside the entrance to Weill Hall. At the end of the event, we thanked each artist with personally written notes.

Completed masks were safely stored in a member's home. We numbered and photographed each, divided them into three groups, set an opening bid price as well as a "buy me now" price, recorded all information on a spreadsheet and bagged them in attractive bags, with the mask number on the outside. We used a committee member's home as headquarters for regular meeting, materials storage, etc.

We auctioned 75 painted masks during the final concert series of the season May 6, 7, 8, 2023 offering 25 of the masks at each of three performances: Saturday evening, Sunday afternoon, and Monday evening. The venue was the lobby outside Weill Hall at the Green Music Center, home of the Santa Rosa Symphony Orchestra.

We set up a U-shaped table, featuring the masks eye-catchingly displayed with bid sheets, artist information (they were welcome to include their business cards), and purchase information, i.e. "How it Works." The silent auction opened for bids an hour before the concert began and closed at the bell announcing the end of the 30-minute Intermission. A special portion of the table was reserved for checkout.

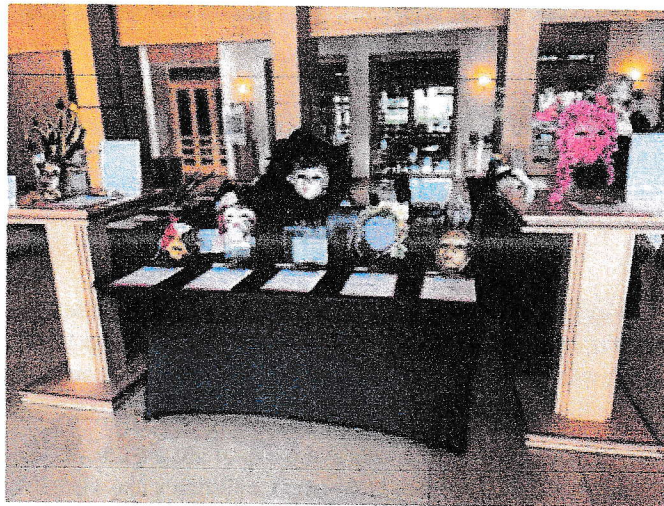
Publicity

We targeted publicity to an audience of 2,500 concert attendees that included 80 League members. The League partnered with the Symphony in promoting the event on the Symphony's website, srsymphony.org and through a series of e-blasts directed to ticket holders. We promoted the event on the Symphony League's website, srsymphonyleague.org, in our newsletter, *The Baton*, through e-blasts to our members. For community awareness, we displayed 10 of our masks in the window of Corrick's, a popular gift store in Santa Rosa.

Expenses

There was no charge for the venue. As at all our concerts, wine and refreshments were available for sale during Intermission. The weekend we chose was a celebratory weekend at the Symphony: the last concert of the season, "Two Piano World Premiere" featuring Christina and Michelle Naughton; a farewell to Alan Silow, President and CEO of the Symphony after retiring after 21 years. Thus, complimentary champagne and cheesecake rounds were served to everyone at the close of each of performance, also at no expense to the League. Our total expenses were less than \$200 which included the cost of masks and miscellaneous items.

Net Revenue: \$5,346.



About the Santa Rosa Symphony:

Few cities in America of comparable size support a regional symphony so vital, dynamic, and innovative. As the Santa Rosa Symphony gains a national reputation for stellar sound, bold excellence and community engagement, Sonoma County forges an identity as a place in love with classical music. Our orchestra strives for greater depth and breadth of artistry and accomplishment by maintaining the highest standard in artistic achievement, engaging a broader audience with both traditional and innovative programming, establishing Sonoma County's identity as a premier cultural destination, and inspiring our youth to appreciate and participate in the musical arts. An ambitious commitment to education defines the Santa Rosa Symphony with its five amazing programs for young and aspiring musicians. Orchestra Size: Group 3.

About the Santa Rosa Symphony League

Founded in 1958, the Santa Rosa Symphony League is a group of dedicated volunteers who support the Santa Rosa Symphony Institute for Music Education. All funds raised by the Symphony League are dedicated to music education. As volunteers, we strive to make a difference in the lives of young people in Sonoma County by introducing them to the beauty and power of music.