

Extraordinary Achievement Award Tuesday Musical Association

This special recognition was added this year to honor the 120th Anniversary of Tuesday Musical Association. Tuesday Musical, which presents a yearly series of performances by prestigious national and international artists at E.J. Thomas Hall, is one of the few classical music organizations to survive since the 19th century. There is only one group in the United States that has a longer history.

In 1887 thirteen young women, who had strong talents and a passion for classical music, met to organize the Tuesday Musical Club. Membership was offered to women with proven musical ability, which was determined by auditions. The club rehearsed weekly and was soon performing in churches, hospitals, Akron's music hall as well as for each other on Tuesday afternoons. Many musical events were held at Stan Hywet, the home of member Gertrude Seiberling.

Today Tuesday Musical continues afternoon programs for members as well as the presenting the Tuesday Musical Concert Series. Over the years the roster of performers has been truly dazzling, including Itzak Perlman, Beverly Sills, Isaac Stern, Midori, Yehudi Menuhin, Jascha Heifetz, Van Cliburn, Luciano Pavarotti, Leontyne Price, Yo Yo Ma and each year the celebrated Cleveland Orchestra.

Education is also a primary focus. They founded the Brahms Allegro Junior Music Club for elementary through high school students, along with a significant scholarship program for college music students. Students of all ages can enjoy concerts for free through the Complimentary Ticket Program. Concert Series subscribers can attend free pre-concert lectures to deepen their understanding and appreciation of music. This venerable institution is one of our Northeast Ohio's finest treasures.

Lifetime Achievement Award Francia Holliday Albrecht

Surrounded by the arts while growing up, Francia Albrecht has made sure our community enjoys the same benefits. The daughter of ballet instructor Aubrey Watters Holliday, Albrecht was raised in her mother's dance and dramatic arts school. After graduating from Buchtel High School, she attended King Smith Studio School in Washington, D.C. She then pursued a career in the dramatic arts earning many good reviews for her roles in performances across the country.

Albrecht ended her stage career to marry and raise a family of six children, but she stayed true to her passion for the arts by becoming a tireless supporter. A founding member of the Ohio Ballet, Albrecht has also served on the boards of trustees for Weathervane Playhouse, Akron Arts Museum and Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet. She established two scholarships at the Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet to help talented young dancers. She also served on the Advisory Committee for the College of Fine and Applied Arts at The University of Akron.

In 2006 Albrecht endowed a scholarship in dance at the university and made a significant contribution toward a dance performance studio in the new, world-class Center for Dance and Theatre at Guzzetta Hall. The studio is named in her honor.

Through her active involvement and steadfast patronage, Albrecht has made noteworthy contributions to Akron's cultural life that will continue to benefit generations to come.

Outstanding Visual Artist Judith Carducci

In ten years since retiring as a psychiatric social worker, Judith Carducci has achieved an envious professional standing in the art world. She is recognized internationally as one of today's best portraitists. Carducci, who works in pastels, is the first (and only) woman artist to be appointed to the executive board of the Portrait Society of America. Her work has been shown in such venues as the National Arts Club and Salmagundi Club in New York City, Bennington Center for the Arts, Cahoon Museum of American Art and Butler Institute of American Art. A member of the Akron Society of Artists, it has been featured in several shows at Summit Artspace. It is in collections throughout the U.S., Canada, Israel and Europe.

Her artwork has also been reproduced in many national and international art magazines and books. Her painting *Xanadu* was selected among the "best of the best" by the former curator of the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery for the art book *Beautiful Things*.

A sought-after instructor, Carducci teaches in her hometown Hudson and the Cuyahoga Valley Art Center. She has recently given workshops in New Mexico, South Carolina, Italy and France. A DVD of Carducci demonstrating how to paint a portrait will be released this year.

Outstanding Artist in Music Akron Symphony Chorus

This year celebrates the 50th anniversary of this outstanding choral group dedicated to performing quality vocal literature with the highest quality of singing. Led by director James Mismas, the chorus is comprised of 152 talented volunteers from all walks of life, including teachers, office workers, lawyers, doctors, retirees plus high school and university students.

The group holds yearly auditions where candidates must sing a vocal selection that demonstrates their sight-reading ability, tonal memory and vocal range. Those who make it commit to two and a half hours of practice on Monday evenings to prepare for their performance schedule that includes an annual concert at St. Bernard's Catholic Church and appearances with the Akron Symphony Orchestra. Last fall the group successfully met the challenge of performing a semi-staged Verdi opera, *La Traviata*, with the symphony. It will perform with the symphony several times throughout the 2007-2008 season, including performances of Mahler's *Resurrection* and Haydn's *The Creation* and *Faure's Requiem*.

Outstanding Artist in Dance Christine Meneer

Christine Meneer's passion for dance shows in her commitment, enthusiasm, creativity and willingness to take a giant (but graceful) leap to keep professional ballet alive in Akron. Faced with the demise of the Cleveland Ballet and Ohio Ballet, Christine Meneer took on the challenge to fill the void. This former dancer with Ohio Ballet and Pennsylvania Ballet, who studied under Nan Klinger and Heinz Poll, hired other professional dancers and founded the Ballet Theatre of Ohio. With Meneer as its artistic director, the new professional company made its debut in February 2007 at the Civic Theatre. The performance was dedicated to her mentor Poll, who founded the Ohio Ballet and whose legacy she plans to keep alive by including his acclaimed repertory in future performances.

After retiring from the stage, Meneer started a dance school in Monroe Falls, where she continues to offer training for children ages 3 to 18. In 1993 she founded Children's Ballet Theatre, which presented professional quality, full-length classical ballet productions at the Civic Theatre. A recent *Beacon Journal* poll voted its *Nutcracker* the number one holiday show in our area. It will again be presented November 24-December 2 under the new company's name.

Outstanding Artist in Theatre Terry Burgler

After teaching at Kent State University and serving as artistic director of its Porthouse Theatre, where he garnered record-breaking audiences and outstanding critical acclaim, Terry Burgler resigned this position in 2000 to become co-founder with his wife Nancy Cates of the Ohio Shakespeare Festival. The group performs every summer under the stars and in the gardens of Stan Hywet Hall. These performances bring thousands of new visitors to the beautiful Tudor mansion plus the unique staging attracts new audiences to classical theater. From the days of the Seiberlings, Stan Hywet has long hosted Shakespearean performances. Burgler has restored this tradition. Besides directing, he designs sets and performs.

A Princeton honors graduate, Terry also holds an MFA from the University of Virginia, where he taught and served as the most successful artistic director in Theatre Virginia's history. His passion for Shakespeare led to performing on the Globe Theatre stage in London. As a member of the Actor's Equity Association, he continues to act professionally around the country. He still teaches part-time at Kent.

Rising Young Star/Artist
John Boggs

At the age of 20, John Boggs is an award-winning composer and pianist as well as a vocalist, actor and director. This 2005 graduate of Revere High School is currently in his second year at Bard College, where his original musical compositions have been performed and recorded by two professional groups. John has won numerous local, state and regional awards including the 2004 Akron Youth Symphony Concerto Competition and the Akron Scholastic Composer's Contest. For two seasons he was principal keyboard of the Akron Youth Symphony. He has performed for the Ohio Music Teachers Association, National Federation of Music Clubs plus on radio and television. His piano recitals include a difficult repertoire with works by Barber, Debussy and Slonimsky, as well as the standard Chopin and Mozart. In 2006, Boggs was musical director of *Godspell* at the North Royalton Theatre and *Pippin* at Bard. He played the lead role in *Reefer Madness*, *The Last 5 Years*, and *42nd Street*. From 1995-2004, Boggs sang in the St. Paul's Men and Boys Choir and was Head Chorister for three of those years. He was also a leading member of the prestigious St. Paul's Madrigal Singers. A professor at Bard describes this young man from Bath, Ohio as an "enormous talent."

Rising Young Star/Leadership
Margaret Lazzerini

Margaret Lazzerini, 29, has shown impressive commitment, enthusiasm and innovation volunteering her talents to promote the arts. She joined with other young professionals in 2002 to found Artcetera, an arts and culture appreciation and networking group for ages 25 to 40. She served as the group's vice president and president. Currently she is the program chairman planning this year's series of six unique arts-related events, such as behind-the-scenes tours and hands-on arts experiences. Artcetera, a project of the Akron Area Arts Alliance, was created to help combat the national trend of an aging arts audience. Lazzerini's efforts help attract and educate future leaders and support for our arts community.

Also instrumental in coordinating after work events at Summit Artspace, she helped introduce new audiences to its art gallery and resident avant-garde theatre. A recent law school graduate, Lazzerini has worked tirelessly on fundraisers for the Arts Alliance and Children's Concert Society.

Civic Leadership Award
Mary Schiller Myers

Bringing artworks outside the traditional context of museums and galleries and into public spaces enhances a community. Public art creates an attractive and exciting environment in which residents can live and work. Mary Myers has long had a passion for public art, and she has generously shared it with our community by making many projects possible.

Most recently through her leadership, The University of Akron was able to install a stunning, 40-foot polymer tower created by world-renowned glass artist Dale Chihuly in front of its Polymer Center. Not only did Myers make the initial contact with the artist, but she pledged \$100,000 as a challenge gift toward the project. Myers has also been instrumental in public arts installations in the Ocasek Federal Building and Knight Convention Center in downtown Akron and Buchtel Common and Polsky Building on campus.

In 1979 Myers and her late husband Lois established a lecture series at the university that brings nationally and internationally recognized artistic leaders to Akron for public lectures, performances and classes. Lecturers have included such prominent figures as theater director Hal Prince, jazz trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, Boston Pops conductor Keith Lockhart and singer-songwriter Randy Newman. Myers has also supported the Ohio Ballet, Akron Symphony, Akron Art Museum and Blossom Music Center.

Her artistic vision has made Myers a lifelong catalyst and civic leader for the arts.

Outstanding Arts Volunteer
Mary Helen Bowers

Mary Helen Bowers began her professional career in 1944 as an elementary school music teacher in Akron Public Schools. When she retired in 1984, she quickly became involved as a volunteer for Children's Concert Society, Tuesday Musical Association, Akron Arts Expo, WKSU-FM, PBS 45/49 and Akron Symphony Guild. Bowers was a volunteer soprano with the Akron Symphony Chorus for 50 years. She has also served as volunteer director of the Akron Woman's City Club Chorus and the Cherub Choir and hand bell choirs at First United Methodist Church.

Bowers has served three years as president of the Ohio Federation of Music Clubs and four as president of Tuesday Musical. Through Children's Concert Society, she has been involved in all 54 Scholastic Composer Contests, including chairing the committee for many years. She has served on their board since 1983. Now at age ??, Bowers is a resident at Rockynol Retirement Community. She still supports the arts community by attending concerts as often as possible.

Outstanding Patron Award Renee & Guy Pipitone

Executive Director of the Akron Symphony Orchestra Margo Snider describes Renee and Guy Pipitone as “perfect patrons.” They are kind, fun-loving and never demanding. They are generous with their financial contributions, but even more importantly they are generous with their time and talents. They recognize the importance the arts play in the community and are willing to work to make them accessible to all.

The couple’s love of music began when their son participated in the Akron Youth Symphony. They became involved with the Greater Akron Musical Association board of trustees in 1997 with Guy serving as vice president 2002-2004 and president 2004-2006. Renee served on various committees, including serving as chair for two fundraisers and vice president of the Education Committee. Financially they have been top level contributors plus co-sponsoring a 2005/06 Classic Series Concert and the 2006/07 Choral Concert.

They have also supported and served on boards for other arts and culture organizations such as Children’s Concert Society, PBS 45/49, Summit County Historical Society, Stan Hywet, Ohio Ballet and The University of Akron Fine and Applied Arts.

Guy Pipitone is senior vice president of Operations Strategy and Development for FirstEnergy Corp. He and his wife live in Copley.

Outreach Award Yvette Davidson – Akron Recreation Bureau

In the early 1980s, Yvette Davidson convinced City of Akron leadership to create the position of community events coordinator, which she has held ever since. She has gone from coordinating 13 events the first year to over 350 today, among them free summer concerts and ballet performances in parks throughout the city, the Fourth of July Akron Symphony performances on the expressway and the prestigious, ever-growing Akron Arts Expo at Hardesty Park. These free events expose new and diverse audiences to the arts. These are often people, who because of financial constraints, couldn’t afford such opportunities.

Planning and organizing employees and volunteers can be a thankless job. Davidson must coordinate everything from the performers to publicity to equipment to parking to trash bins. For her tireless efforts, Davidson received honorable mention recognition in Northern Ohio Live Magazine’s Awards of Achievement. Davidson and the Akron Recreation Bureau bring creativity to our summers and increase the accessibility to the arts to our citizens.

Business Support Award
TRIAD Communications, Inc.

Rick Krochka, president of TRIAD Communications, has been an advocate for the arts since establishing his business in 1989. TRIAD is a full-service advertising, design and marketing firm, which donates over ten thousand dollars of creative talent to the arts and other not-for-profit groups each year.

Arts organizations that have benefited from this generosity include the Akron Art Museum, Akron Area Arts Alliance, Akron Symphony Orchestra, Artcetera, First Night Akron, Weathervane Playhouse, Tuesday Musical Association and the University Park Development Association's Grace Park Art Fair. The company has designed pro bono logos, brochures, programs and fundraiser invitations. It has designed the outstanding Arts Alive! Award invitations since the first event in 2001. Yet another example of TRIAD's commitment to supporting the arts is that it helps publicize performances and fundraising events in its company e-newsletter.

Outstanding Arts Educator
Donna Webb

Professor Donna Webb has taught ceramics at The University of Akron since 1981. Over 1,000 students have taken her classes, many of whom have gone on to successful careers as professional artists and art teachers. When describing their professor, her students say she is strong, tough, inspiring and "a goddess of the ceramic technique." They say she cares about their progress and pushes them to be better than they ever imagined possible. She challenges them to exhibit their work and takes them to national and international ceramic exhibitions. One former student said of Webb, "She has an abundance of energy and creativity that she gives away. Nothing asked in return. It's really quite amazing."

Webb and her artist husband Joseph Blue Sky maintain a successful studio in Akron, creating numerous opportunities for her students to participate in the design and creation of important public art projects such as the Ohio Central Psychiatric Hospital in Columbus, Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Metro Health Medical Center in Cleveland and in Akron at Children's Hospital, Robinson Academy and the university's new Student Union. Webb's work has been exhibited around the U.S and in China.

Collaborative Project Award
***Caribbean Cruise* – Akron Symphony Orchestra**

Building collaboration is the reason the Akron Area Arts Alliance was founded in 1991, so we are delighted to recognize groups that come together in creative ways to present outstanding arts projects. The Akron Symphony Orchestra and its enthusiastic, new Music Director Christopher Wilkins brought together exciting collaborators to enhance the October 2006 family concert titled *Caribbean Cruise*. Working with the Miller South Steel Drum Band, Juneteenth Cultural Club and Pointe West Performances, they presented a multi-sensory program involving storytelling, dance, theater and ethnic music. They are continuing this spirit in 2007 by collaborating on performances with the Akron Art Museum (*Rockwell Reflections* November 17) and Hale Farm and Village (American Quilt November 18).

For *Caribbean Cruise*, the symphony and its collaborators explored the development of the New Orleans culture and connections between African, Caribbean island and American jazz music. Designed to capture the interest of pre-schoolers to grandparents, the program included New Orleans jazz, Cuban danzon, Trinidadian calypso and Haitian drumming. Weaved throughout was a special appearance by African American author Roland Carter. The audience was actively involved by learning mambo and danzon dance steps. Pre-concert activities included hands-on experiences with steel drums, tamboo bamboo and orchestra instruments. Attendees dressed as pirates and sailors.