Fundraising

Houston Symphony League
Centennial Ball

Houston Symphony Orchestra
Group 1
The Centennial Ball was the culminating event of the Houston Symphony’s 2013-14 Centennial Season.
With a goal of raising $2.5 million, it was important for this event be the most spectacular and innovative special event in the organization’s history.
Timeline – Two Years of Planning

• **May 2012:** Ball co-chairs appointed and location finalized.

• **December 2012:** Date finalized and event services contracted.

• **July 2013:** Underwriting and Auction Committees in place.

• **September 2013:** Honorees finalized and entertainment contracted.
Timeline – Two Years of Planning

- **October 2013:** Save the Date, Honorary Committee letters and first Underwriter Solicitation sent
- **November 2013:** Ball Kick-off Event and second Underwriter Solicitation mailed
- **December 2013:** Third Underwriter Solicitation sent
- **January 2014:** Event timeline finalized
Timeline – Two Years of Planning

- **February 2014**: Auction Committee meeting
- **April 2014**: Ball invitation mailed
- **May 2014**: Ball Underwriter Dinner; information and tickets mailed to attendees prior to event
Coming Home for a Spectacular Event

The Jones Hall auditorium was converted into an 8,000 square foot “ballroom” with five tiers of dinner seating built over the auditorium’s orchestra level seats.
A Planning and Engineering Marvel
Jones Hall Transformed!
Preparing for Financial Success

- To meet the $2.5 million goal, it was vital to establish a basis for financial success early.
- Contributors of $12,500 or more by December 31 were invited to an Early Underwriter Event in January 2014.
# Maximizing Fundraising Potential

*Don’t be afraid of the big numbers!*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tiered Pricing</th>
<th>No. Sold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 Centennial Table</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 Platinum Table</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 Gold Table</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 Centennial Couple</td>
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<tr>
<td>$12,500 Platinum Couple</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6,000 Gold Couple/$3,000 Gold Individual</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Financial Summary

Gross Revenue: $2,601,996

Tables/Underwriting $2,299,996
Auction $302,000

Expenses: $759,668

Catering/Beverages $163,577
Décor $100,407
Entertainment $90,088
Hall Rental/Build-out $151,929
Other $253,667

Net Revenue: $1,842,328
Centennial Ball Materials

(Clockwise from upper left) Save the Date card and outer cover of the Ball invitation
Printed materials for the Centennial Ball included photos and artwork from the Symphony’s history
Volunteer and Staff Involvement

• 78 volunteers for planning
  – 34-person Underwriter Committee
  – 44-person Auction Committee

• 50 staff members

• 27 volunteers
  – greeters
  – guest check-in
  – auction docents

Centennial Ball Co-Chairs Steven and Joella Mach, Honoree Margaret Alkek Williams, and Centennial Ball Co-Chairs Cora Sue and Harry Mach.
Six Keys to Event Growth

• Create and Harness a Sense of Occasion
• Be Unique
• Challenge the Organization
• Build on the Momentum in Subsequent Years
• Entertainment
• Understand the Need to Invest
Recommendations and Suggestions

Growing the support of Special Events

• Focus on raising the quality of special events by creating unique experiences that go beyond the traditional gala format

• Develop a core group of event donors

• Special events allow donors not interested in the institution’s core activities to support us through underwriting and/or table and ticket purchases

• Provide year-round availability of tables and tickets for all Houston Symphony events
Recommendations and Suggestions

The Silent Auction is an important component of the event success

• A solid check-out system that ensures the security and safety of all auction items is important
• *iPad* technology helps streamline the bidding and check-out process

Recognize and encourage collaboration throughout the organization

• Staff and volunteer supporters such as the Houston Symphony League need to work together to ensure the event’s success