

# FUNDRAISING

## *Conversation With An Icon*



Houston Symphony League Orchestra Size: Group 1 Metro Houston: 6.4 million  
615 Louisiana St., Ste. 102  
Houston, Texas 77002

Presenter: April Lykos  
[aprillykos@aol.com](mailto:aprillykos@aol.com)  
(713) 516-2270



### Project Description:

The Houston Symphony League was determined to continue its fundraising for the Symphony Orchestra while engaging League members safely during a time of pandemic reopening. Additionally, the League sought to introduce potential new members and Symphony supporters to the organization by having an invitation event. We created the concept, “Conversation With An Icon,” an invitation event which highlights a well-known Houston woman in a small group setting allowing guests to learn about the individual’s life and ask questions.

To assist in meeting our fundraising goal of \$5,000, which we far exceeded, a local fashion designer donated door prizes, which raised additional funds.

### Purpose and Goals:

(i) Raise money for the Symphony; (ii) delightfully engage potential new members at an informal Champagne reception; (iii) garner publicity for Symphony and League; (iv) develop potential new patrons; (v) connect with the community by highlighting Houston leaders.

### Motivation and Need:

The League is always assessing how they can raise more net revenues and open opportunities to increase their membership base. The Icon event achieved that and more. Its targeted, smaller scale event made it a perfect base to raise money and highlight the attributes of the League and the Symphony – thus, becoming attractive to donors and new members alike.

### Financial Information:

Total Revenue:       **\$8,925.00** (vs. GOAL \$5,000.00)  
Ticket sales:         \$7600.00 (50 tickets - \$150 each)  
Raffle:                \$925.00  
Donation:             \$400.00

Total Expenses:     **\$6007.68**  
Venue/Food/Bev:     \$4652.68  
Flowers:             \$500.00  
Gifts:                \$205.00  
Photographer:        \$650.00

Total Net Revenue:   **\$8925.00**     **NOTE: ALL EXPENSES UNDERWRITTEN BY THE CHAIRS & DONORS**

### Volunteer Requirements:

The two Chairs spearheaded, financed, and coordinated the event details. A league volunteer webmaster worked to resolve pay-portal problems. A volunteer helped with RSVPs and payment issues.

Five onsite volunteers acted as hostesses, welcoming and encouraging new faces to join the League. Two staff members were on hand to help with check-in, payment and help with guests.

### Timeline:

- Planning for the May 4, 2021 event kicked-off with the invitation to the Icon (Dominique Sachse) in the spring of 2020.
- In the fall of 2020, the Chairs coordinated the venue, floor plan and menu selection (small bites & Champagne).
- In early spring of 2021, details such as A/V set-up and décor were handled. Additionally, the Chairs asked David Peck, a Houston fashion designer, to provide door prizes for which tickets were sold raising \$925.00. The door prizes were large French-inspired picnic table cloths and napkins.
- League members had been informed well in advance via our newsletter, *eCounterpoint*, of the date so that invitations could go to their prospective new members in early April.

### Impact on the Community:

Houston Symphony leadership was first to figure out how to safely keep the music alive by working with Rice University's aerosolization study and Houston Methodist Hospital and thus were able to hold live online concerts, which gained a worldwide audience. The League's Icon event complimented that by touching Icon Dominique Sachse's 1.5 million online followers. We feel this greatly enlarged our community.

### Suggested Improvements:

The Houston Symphony League's online payment portal was clunky and ineffective. That issue has been addressed. For the event, a League member stepped in and helped resolve payment and RSVP issues.