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Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Announces Phil & Diana Brandon As Opus Ball XLI Co-Chairs

Gala Fundraiser to Support ASO's Statewide Music Education Programs

LITTLE ROCK, AR. (April 30, 2025) — The [Arkansas Symphony Orchestra](#) (ASO) announced Wednesday that Phil and Diana Brandon of Little Rock will serve as co-chairs for Opus Ball XLI, the orchestra's premier fundraising gala supporting statewide music education initiatives.

Scheduled for 6 p.m. Nov. 8, 2025, at the historic Capital Hotel in Little Rock, this year's Opus Ball will unite musicians, music enthusiasts, community leaders and philanthropists in celebration of ASO's commitment to providing transformative musical experiences for Arkansas youth.

"We are honored and excited to chair this year's Opus Ball in support of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra," Phil Brandon said. "Music has been a central part of both our lives, and we believe strongly in the importance of nurturing the next generation of musicians. Supporting music education means investing in creativity, discipline and the cultural vitality of our community — values we are proud to champion alongside ASO."

A fifth-generation Arkansan, Phil Brandon is the founder, CEO and head distiller at Rock Town Distillery of Little Rock, Arkansas' first legal distillery since Prohibition. His wife, Diana, works at Rock Town and is also director of music at Asbury United Methodist Church in Little Rock.

Both are longtime Arkansas Symphony Orchestra supporters and passionate advocates for music education. Phil, who grew up playing the flute, has maintained a lifelong love of classical music. Diana holds a degree in organ performance from the University of North Texas. Together, they share a deep belief in the power of music to inspire, connect and uplift.

Since its inception over four decades ago, the Opus Ball has been the ASO's signature fundraising event, providing essential funding for programs such as:

- **ASO String Academy:** Serving more than 400 elementary students with foundational music instruction.
- **ASO Youth Ensembles:** Bringing together more than 150 young musicians from 37 communities statewide.

- **The Bucket Band:** Teaching musical basics through everyday objects at after-school sites in Arkansas.
- **Children's Concerts:** Reaching more than 11,000 students annually through live and virtual performances.

"Each year, proceeds from Opus Ball allow us to provide opportunities for children across Arkansas to experience, hear and make music with their friends," ASO CEO Christina Littlejohn said. "We are thrilled to have Phil and Diana Brandon's leadership and energy guiding this year's event, ensuring its continued success and impact."

The community is invited to join an unforgettable evening of fine dining, exceptional music, lively auctions and dancing — all in support of Arkansas youth and the transformative power of music education. Tickets are on sale now at www.arkansassymphony.org/give-support/opus-ball.

About the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra

The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra is the leading employer of professional performing artists in Arkansas and is celebrating its 60th season in 2025-2026. The ASO recently opened its first permanent home, the ASO Stella Boyle Smith Music Center, in the East Village between Heifer International and the Clinton Presidential Library. The state's first music center is a radically welcoming hub of musical activity for all Arkansans, housing programs of the E. Lee Ronnel Music Academy, a broadcast studio, and the River Rhapsodies Chamber Music Series. ASO is the resident orchestra at Robinson Center and performs over 60 concerts yearly for more than 165,000 people through its Stella Boyle Smith Masterworks Series, First Orion Pops Series, River Rhapsodies Chamber Music Series, and numerous concerts throughout Arkansas. The E. Lee Ronnel Music Academy reaches over 30,000 Arkansans in over 200 schools from ages 4 to 104 through the string academy, youth ensembles, bucket band, community orchestra, the annual Children's Concert, and more. In 2020, over 1 million people in over 30 countries viewed the ASO musician-led Bedtime with Bach series. The ASO employs 13 full-time musicians, over 70 part-time musicians, and 18 administrative staff members with an annual operating budget of \$4 million. The ASO is a member of the League of American Orchestras and a partner orchestra of the National Alliance for Audition Support, an unprecedented national initiative to increase diversity in American orchestras. For more information about the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra call 501-666-1761 or visit www.arkansassymphony.org.

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