



YOUNG TEXAS ARTISTS MUSIC COMPETITION | 1608 Pine Oak Drive | Conroe, Texas 77304 | youngtexasartists.org

Kilgore Rangerettes Kick Off Young Texas Artists' 35th Anniversary Gala

Steinway CEO, SPIRIO high-tech piano, special guests and world-class talent highlight unforgettable Texas evening

CONROE, Texas – Feb. 20, 2019 – From members of the world-famous Kilgore College Rangerettes to Ron Losby, worldwide CEO of Steinway & Sons, Young Texas Artists (YTA) is elevating the glamour, fun and excitement of its **Bach, Beethoven & Barbecue** benefit gala to even higher levels this year to celebrate YTA's 35th anniversary on Saturday, March 9.

"Part of the magic of our 'jeans to jewels' gala has always been the way it brings together the best of two very different worlds. During our gala, the unique flavor of Texas music and cuisine melds with the beauty and power of classical music," YTA President/CEO Susie Pokorski said.

"We're building upon that dynamic this year by bringing in members of the Kilgore Rangerettes—the world's best-known collegiate drill team—to kick off our anniversary, Texas style," Pokorski said. "In from New York will be the evening's Guest of Honor, Steinway CEO, Ron Losby, who is highly respected in the classical music world. And, of course, guests will be fascinated with Steinway & Sons' SPIRIO, the world's finest high-resolution player piano, at our gala reception. Valued at over \$100,000, this amazing amalgam of workmanship and technology pristinely re-creates performances by some of the greatest artists in history."

The evening's volunteer leaders are Gala Chair Terry Husbands Giles of Conroe, Co-Chair Allyson Ayton of Lake Conroe, Dinner Chair Mimi Sadler of Montgomery and YTA Young Professionals Chairs, Annie and Mike Bradbury of The Woodlands.

Bach, Beethoven & Barbecue will begin at 5 p.m. with the gala reception at the LoneStar Bar in Martin's Hall at 219 Simonton St. The Steinway & Sons SPIRIO will be playing, along with simultaneous videos of its artists' performances on the large-screen TV. Every musical work in the vast SPIRIO library, from the works of Bach and Beethoven, to Irving Berlin, The Beatles and Billy Joel hits—has been performed by one of the world's greatest artists, including Van Cliburn, Sergei Rachmaninov, Glen Gould, and many, many more. SPIRIO's proprietary technology captures every unique nuance of the recordings and live performances used to create its playlist. The resulting high-resolution performances are virtually indistinguishable from live ones.

At the gala auction, courtesy of Steinway Gallery of Houston, guests can bid on "**The Steinway & Sons SPIRIO Experience.**" This is a rare opportunity to have a remarkable SPIRIO in one's home for two weeks. Included is a SPIRIO specialist's help in maximizing the SPIRIO system and customizing a musical evening for the winner and guests.

Special Texas guests Gray Hawn of Austin and Joy Saxton of Houston, who each recently released a book, will join the fun at the reception. Hawn, a prolific and internationally known master photographer, will sign copies of *Cowboy Heaven*, her

stunning portfolio book of fine photographic art. The multitalented Joy Saxton, author, illustrator, actor, director, producer and educator, will be signing her newest children's book, *Joy and the Far Away Land*, which has been selected by the Barbara Bush Literacy Foundation for its outreach program.

At 5:45 p.m., the gala will move from Martin's Hall to the tented Grand Pavilion in the center of Simonton Street, where members of the legendary Kilgore Rangerettes will kick off the YTA anniversary. Guests will feast on a Texas barbecue dinner and dance to live Texas music by Bill Mock and the Highway 105 Band.

Next is the much-anticipated live auction with Lady Lyn Howard, auctioneer, and Emmett Kelly, master of ceremonies. In addition to "**The Steinway SPIRIO Experience**," YTA's 2019 auction list includes:

Santa Fe and Summer Opera—This three-night/four-day escape for two (July 28-31, 2019) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, includes hotel lodging, two performances at the Santa Fe Opera (*La Boheme* and *The Pearl Fishers*) with front row center seats and a pre-performance dinner and lecture at the scenic hillside pavilion.

Fine Western Art by Gray Hawn—*Storm Coming* is a large-scale fine art photograph, signed and numbered (limited edition of 50) from the *Cowboy Heaven* collection by internationally renowned Master Photographer, Gray Hawn. Her work has won numerous awards and can be seen at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., and the Shakespeare Globe Theater in London among other galleries, exhibitions and prominent collections.

Luxury Lincoln Weekend & Wine Tasting—Take off in style for a long weekend in a 2019 luxury vehicle provided by Planet Lincoln. This package includes a private wine-tasting and tour for up to 20 people at the award-winning Bernhardt Winery. This popular "Houston Hill Country" winery and vineyard is located on 12 rolling acres a short drive west of Conroe.

Golf Package for Four at Eight Courses—Courtesy of April Sound Country Club, this outstanding opportunity for four golfing friends offers eight 18-hole rounds at eight different area clubs, including April Sound Country Club on Lake Conroe, Kingwood Country Club, Willow Creek Golf Club and more.

The highlight of the night will be the **YTA Finalists' Concert and Awards**, with a 7:30 p.m. curtain at the Crighton Theatre at 234 N. Main St., around the corner from the Grand Pavilion. Guest of Honor Ron Losby will address the audience and present the Piano Division awards. An accomplished pianist, Losby began his tenure with Steinway & Sons as a district manager in 1987 and has led Steinway's European retail operations from Steinway Hall London. Credited with keeping Steinway & Sons financially viable during The Great Recession as the company's President of the Americas, Losby has been worldwide CEO of Steinway since 2016.

Back by popular demand will be mistress of ceremonies, Jade Simmons. The concert pianist, professional speaker, media personality and emerging artist specialist, also will conduct the finalists' interviews onstage.

During the concert, after three days of preliminaries, finalists in YTA's four divisions—Piano; Voice; Strings; and Orchestral Instruments—will perform. Audience members also will have an opportunity to participate in the judging by casting their votes for the Audience Choice Award. A total of \$20,000 in prize money and coveted performance opportunities will be awarded.

After the winners are announced, the concert will conclude with a surprise grand finale.

Gala guests are invited to return to the Grand Pavilion for more live Texas music, dancing, drinks, a dessert buffet provided by the Conroe Service League, the YTA 35th anniversary cake and champagne toasts to the winners and special guests.

Gala proceeds help support the **Young Texas Artists Music Competition**, an Official Music Contest of the State of Texas, which provides performance, growth and career development opportunities for exceptionally talented artists from around the world. The competition is open to classical artists ages 18-30 (ages 20-32 for Voice) who are Texas residents or affiliated with a Texas music school. http://us.vocuspr.com/Publish/3572916/vcsPRAAsset_3572916_123728_a11432b6-538e-420c-abe8-f15209a279d3_0.jpg

Bach, Beethoven & Barbecue is the first event of the **Third Annual Rising Stars & Legends of Texas**, a week-long celebration of the arts presented by the Greater Conroe Arts Alliance.

Gala tickets for **Bach, Beethoven & Barbecue** (or theater-only tickets for the **Finalists' Concert & Awards**) are available at ytamc.com/bach-beethoven-barbecue. Reservations are required.

Young Texas Artists' sponsors this year include Dr. Douglas and Carol Aycock, Lynda and Dan Kain, Amy and George Sowers, April Sound Country Club (aprilssound.com), Planet Lincoln (planetlincolnspring.com) and the Conroe Convention & Visitors Bureau (visitconroe.com).

For sponsorship information, contact Susie Pokorski at 936-756-7017 or e-mail susiepokorski@gmail.com.

About the Young Texas Artists Music Competition

An official music competition of the State of Texas, Young Texas Artists, Inc. has, since its founding in 1983, encouraged excellence in young musicians, inspired their audiences and helped further the careers of thousands of young classical musicians. It is one of the few competitions in the country that features four divisions: Voice; Piano; Strings; and Orchestral Instruments. This Texas competition for Texas artists has helped produce many distinguished professionals who have gone on to join orchestras, opera companies, universities and music schools around the world. The Young Texas Artists Music Competition

(youngtexasartists.org) is a member of the Greater Conroe Arts Alliance.



Attached photo courtesy of Young Texas Artists Music Competition
Members of the Kilgore Rangerettes will help Young Texas Artists kick off its 35th anniversary gala on March 9.

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