

December, 2017 Column

Several years ago, my wife Marty and I had the opportunity to visit Belgium and attend the wedding of a business associate of mine. Other US visitors were in attendance as well, and as it turned out, business connections and a common language led us to be paired with a couple from Boston for much of our time there. They were nice, decent people, but they expressed a certain amount of condescension to us throughout our stay. It was all in good fun, but condescending nonetheless. You know - the sophisticated Bostonians versus the bumpkins from a small town in South Texas. But as you also know, we Texans usually give as good as we get – especially when it comes to our state. Let’s just say I did my best to rattle their Yankee sensibilities at every opportunity.

As the chiding went back and forth, my Bostonian friend snootily asked the question: “How far is your town from a symphony orchestra?”... Man, I had him - What a softball pitch! I looked him in the eye and said “Zero miles! We’ve got our own symphony orchestra!” Boom!- Out of the park! He started laughing, because he thought my concept of a symphony orchestra was a country western band with a fiddle and more than 2 guitars. He refused to believe that our little town here in Texas could support a world-class, professional symphony orchestra. After I repeated myself several times, he finally realized I wasn’t lying, and became completely dumbfounded.

Well, after that trip, we never saw our friends from Boston again, but my memories of them came rushing back to me last week as we were in Jackson Auditorium enjoying the annual Mid-Texas Symphony Christmas concert. The incredibly talented choirs of the Seguin ISD were also included in the performance. Before the concert, a brass group from the Seguin High School Band treated patrons to a spirited prelude of Christmas music in the lobby.

As I sat there, I started asking myself questions - How many towns our size can offer this kind of experience to their citizens? How rare is it for students from every economic level in the community to be able to perform in such a production? How rare are the possibilities of directly exposing these kids to classical music, performed by a first-class professional orchestra? I know my friend from Boston would not only think these things would be rare – he would think them to be impossible.

What the experience with my friend from Boston illustrates is that people around the world, especially educated and informed people, appreciate the value of fine arts in a community. Having the Mid-Texas Symphony Orchestra here illuminates that value like no other asset we possess. Add to that all the amazing talent that is on display right here in Seguin virtually every week in our schools and community.

How blessed and fortunate we are! Think about it – Think about all the other small towns in our state, or even in the rest of the country. Do they have anything that can compare with the fine arts we enjoy here in Seguin?

Yes, the Mid-Texas Symphony is the pinnacle of our cultural sophistication, but we have so much more. Our kids are consistently winning awards in Destination Imagination, Drama, Choir and Band. We have wonderful community theatre events at the Texas Theatre. TLU showcases high quality performances by their music and drama departments on a regular basis.

What a wonderful Christmas gift it is to Seguin to have all these fine artists and their productions right here in our midst. Merry Christmas everybody!

Gosh I love this town!