Kristina Hornberger Somerville loves sharing in Houston’s fine and performing arts. “They heal the soul and make the heart soar,” says Somerville, who joined the Society for the Performing Arts board last May, not long after Meg Booth was appointed CEO. “SPA artists allow you to escape reality, celebrate humanity and dream big.” The San Antonio native comes by her love honestly. While she was in elementary school, her mother performed in a local theater group, and Somerville remembers nights spent doing homework in the audience. Growing up, the “math nerd” studied violin, piano and ballet, jazz and tap dancing, and she was on the dance team while majoring in industrial engineering at Texas A&M.

She earned her MBA from Columbia University and worked on Wall Street in investment banking and equity research.

Yet performing is not as far removed from her math skills as one might think. “Underlying music and dance is rhythm and counting. Painting, sculpture, architecture and fashion are all about numbers and proportions.” After seven years in New York, she moved to Houston, where she met Paul Somerville, a pipeline exec and now her husband of seven years.

Her good fortune drives her to help others, especially children. “God has not granted me children of my own, and because of that I have time,” she says. That time is also spent as a Houston Grand Opera trustee and as a board member of Memorial Hermann Foundation and Houston Children’s Charities. She’s also active with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, of which her husband was board chairman. “Movement, whether it’s dancing or horse riding, keeps me sane,” she says. spahouston.org
MEG BOOTH

Meg Booth has loved the arts since childhood. According to her mother, she says, when she was watching the Boston Pops Orchestra on TV, she "always bowed with the conductor at the end." She eventually worked at IMG Artists, a huge Manhattan talent management agency, where Houston's Society for the Performing Arts was a client. "I was impressed by their focus on quality," Booth says of her first encounters with SPA. But life took her elsewhere—to Baryshnikov Productions in New York and D.C.'s John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where she helmed the dance program for 15 years. When a headhunter called about SPA's CEO opening, her husband, Brandon, told her she'd be "a fool not to consider it." Once she met with the staff and board of directors, she agreed. "Our ideas aligned," Booth says. "My philosophy is that the arts celebrate the heights humanity is capable of. It was exciting to bring my new energy and be met with such energy." Her first full season, 2019-20, is diverse and unexpected, including a star chef (Salt Fat Acid Heat star Samin Nosrat), a stage show based on kids' TV animation (Wild Kratts) and a concert collaboration, Come Through, between indie band Bon Iver and TU Dance. Also this season, SPA has commissioned a rare world premiere, on black love and unity, by MacArthur genius grant winner and Abraham in Motion choreographer Kyle Abraham. Though the Boston Pops doesn't air often, Booth says, thanks to her two daughters under 10, "we have performances in our living room almost every other night." spahouston.org