

Dear Theatre Forum Family,

Poetry is an artful manifestation of the most fundamental form of humanity: rhythm. Our heartbeat is the primal rhythm and the source of an inspiration that has become culture in dance, music and rhythmic language. When we experience rhythm, we connect to our primal selves. Creative artists have experimented with this powerful tool since the beginning of humanity, so let us take this opportunity to investigate how playwrights, actors and other theatre artists process rhythmic language, and why language artists are drawn to theatre.

As always, we offer talks, lectures and performances of renowned Theatre professionals and poets, as well as a workshop for students on Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup>.

I am very excited to welcome you back to Round Top. After the past two years, our world is finally back in sinus rhythm, so let us enjoy this together!

See you in November!

—Sonja Bruzauskas

Poet Laureate Emeritus of the State of Louisiana, **AVA LEAVELL HAYMON** is poet, playwright, prose writer, teacher, editor, life-long amateur musician and beginner mandolin player. She’s published four poetry collections with LSU Press: *The Strict Economy of Fire*, *Why the House Is Made of Gingerbread*, *Kitchen Heat*, and, most recently, *Eldest Daughter*. Her poems appear in journals nationwide, and she has performed her poems all over the US as well as in Europe and in Canada. As playwright, she has written numerous plays for children, including *The Quest of Jodie Nothing*. Seven of these plays were performed by a professional troupe and enjoyed satisfying runs. A committed teacher, she has taught poetry writing to students from four years old to past eighty, has lead workshops from Florida to Alberta, and for twenty years directed a retreat center for poets as well as artists in other genres. During Covid, she and composer Emma Wine taught songwriting on-line, for Partnerschools. Among many recognitions, her favorites are the selection of *Why the House Is Made of Gingerbread* as one of the best 10 poetry books of the year, by Women’s Voices for Change, and the inclusion of one of her poems in a special publication from the journal Poetry, selected by David Handler, better known as Lemony Snicket. These days, she is working on a mixed-genre work, with the working title *Being Old*.

**DEBORAH D.E.E.P. MOUTON** an internationally-known Poet, Singer, Actress, Photographer, Wife, Mother, and the first Black, Poet Laureate for the City of Houston. Heralded as a “Literary Genius” by Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, this California native was formerly ranked the #2 Best female Poet in the World. D.E.E.P. has established herself as a notable force in the Performance and Literary World. Currently, she is a Resident Artist at the American Lyric Theater’s Composer and Librettist Development Program and Rice University through the Center for Engaged Research and Collaborative Learning. She self-published her first collection of poetry, *Heartstrings and Lamentations*, at the tender age of 19 while studying English at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. Her University years helped foster a love for writing that was noticed early on by her High School English teacher. After being introduced to poetry slam in high school, she knew she wanted to focus on refining her voice as a poet. In the midst of earning a dual Bachelor’s degree in English and African-American Studies, she competed at CUPSI (The National College and University Poetry Slam Invitational) as a member of the 2004 University of Michigan Slam Team while simultaneously touring with the WordWorks Poetry Troupe across the Midwest.

**CHANCELIER “XERO” SKIDMORE** is a poet, actor, musician, and educator from Plaquemine, LA. Xero has served as Program Director and this led to many years of non-profit work in the realms of education, programming, and administration. He taught with Big Buddy Programs, served as Executive Director of Forward Arts, Inc., grant-writer for Of Moving Colors, and wore several hats at the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge. These were all day jobs. At night, Xero performs poetry and started working as a percussionist with a local brass band, The Michael Foster Project. After over 15 years of working as a professional poet (2013 Individual Poetry Slam World Champion), musician, and teaching artist, he met Ann Omoike and started a new family. During the pandemic he got serious about his voice-over work. While in the process of maximizing those opportunities he won the 2019 National Golden ADDY award for his writing and performance, then started getting more work for television and web commercials that included being in front of a camera. The world is, once again, a clean slate. It needs artists to fill it up with poetry, dialogue, lesson plans, and lyrics. Chancellor is ready to contribute more than his fair share of vandalism to that clean slate. If our civilization is to survive, it needs art... probably more now than it ever did. Chancellor is overjoyed to be back to work, giving back to the world what has sustained him for so long.

**CHRISTA FORSTER**’s poetry appears in anthologies and in print and online journals; her feature-length work, in national and regional publications; her performance work, onstage in Houston, New York City, Austin, and New Orleans. While earning her MFA in poetry from the University of Houston, she served as poetry editor of *Culf Coast: A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts*. Also an educator, Christa has taught writing workshops to adults, teens, and children through Writers in the Schools, Inprint Houston, and The Hines Center for Spirituality and Prayer. She teaches high school English at The Kinkaid School in Houston, TX.



**TOM FORAL** returns from New York for his 21st annual Theatre Forum. Tom’s undergraduate degree is from Northwestern and he holds an MFA in Theatre from Penn State. His performing experience includes shows on Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theatre, plus film and television. As a painter and designer, Tom specializes in portraiture and figurative work. He has painted, among others, H.S.H. Princess Grace, Bill Blass, Audrey Hepburn, Eudora Welty, Gwen Verdon and Roberto Bolle. He’s been showing his work in New York and Bucks County, and was recently shown at the Metropolitan Opera House. To see his work, visit [thomasforal.com](http://thomasforal.com) and [tomforal.com](http://tomforal.com)

**B.J. DODGE** is a semi-retired teaching artist working in Orange and Los Angeles counties. She worked at California Institute of the Arts for many years, primarily as a facilitator and director for CalArts’ Community Arts Partnership Youth Theatre program, in Lincoln Heights, at Plaza de la Raza. She has trained in Suzuki and the Viewpoints in L.A., and with the S.I.T.I. Company, and now offers survey courses in movement and theatre for social justice, at OCSA. She also chairs the theatre discipline at California State Summer School for the Arts.



**ANN THOMPSON**, born in Indonesia of Dutch descent, has lived in many different places in the world before landing in Houston in 1960. Having received the benefits of a classical European education she decided that opera was the perfect subject for deploying the results thereof, advocating, in the process, for the humanities in general and the performing arts in particular. Once she spoke four and a half languages but is now reduced, alas, to two: Dutch and English. Privileged to have experienced a many faceted background during her four score plus lifetime, and driven by fiercely intellectual curiosity, she delights in finding connections between disparate subjects and elaborating upon them to her many and varied audiences.

**FELICIA HARDISON LONDRÉ** recently retired as Curators’ Distinguished Professor of Theatre at the University of Missouri-Kansas City where she taught theatre history for 43 years. She earned her B.A. in French at the University of Montana, then, following a Fulbright year at the Université de Caen in Normandy, France, she earned her M.A. in Romance Languages at the University of Washington and her Ph.D. in Speech/Theatre at the University of Wisconsin. She received the ATHE Outstanding Teacher of Theatre in Higher Education Award in 2001. She is the author of 18 books. Her 12th book, *The Enchanted Years of the Stage: Kansas City at the Crossroads of American Theatre, 1870-1930*, won the prestigious George Freedley Memorial Award for 2008. Felicia was inducted into The College of Fellows of the American Theatre in 1999 and served as Dean of the College 2012-14.



Born and raised in Germany, **SONJA BRUZAUSKAS** was trained on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Besides her expansive stage career in musical theatre, opera and operetta, Sonja is a well-established concert singer and recitalist, focusing on German Art Song and contemporary music. Sonja has sung and lectured at institutions such as CalArts, Vanderbilt, LSU, Rice University, the University of Houston, Philosophical Society of Houston as well as numerous health institutions. Sonja is the founder and director of Partnerschools, a project that connects students through the Arts to empower diversity and strengthen communities.

Founder and producer of the long-running Round Top Theatre Forums, **KATE POGUE** is a playwright, librettist and theatre director. She received an undergraduate degree in theatre from

Northwestern and an M.A. from the University of Minnesota. For 10 years she was Artistic Director of Opera to Go, now the school outreach program for Houston Grand Opera. A student of Carlisle Floyd and member of the Houston Opera Studio she has written a dozen opera librettos for children and five librettos for adult productions. During this time she was also artistic director of The Shakespeare by the Book Festival. Her book *Shakespeare’s Friends* was published in January 2006 and a companion volume, *Shakespeare’s Family*, came out in June 2008. Her recent books involve Shakespeare’s training and include *Shakespeare’s Figures of Speech* (2010) and *Shakespeare’s Education* (2012). A recent project involved directing Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar in the original pronunciation. She is retired from the University of Houston Downtown.



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18

4:00 P.M. – SERVICE BUILDING  
**Registration**

6:00 P.M. – MENKE HOUSE DINING ROOM  
**Dinner**

7:30 P.M. – EDYTHE BATES OLD CHAPEL  
**Ava Leavell Haymon**  
**Theatre and Poetry: A Reading**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19

8:00 A.M. – MENKE HOUSE DINING ROOM  
**Breakfast for overnight guests**

8:30 A.M. – MENKE HOUSE PORCH  
**Poems, puns and other surprises led by Ann Thompson**

9:00 A.M. – SERVICE BUILDING  
**Registration for Saturday-only Attendees**

9:00 A.M. – NOON – FESTIVAL CONCERT HALL STAGE  
**Theatre/Poetry Workshop**

9:30 A.M. – EDYTHE BATES OLD CHAPEL  
**Felicia Londré – “Poetry IN the Theatre/ Poetry OF the Theatre.”**  
**The interplay of words and music with a visual poetry of scenery, lighting and costumes constitutes what Jacques Copeau called a “poetry of the theatre.”**

11:00 A.M. – EDYTHE BATES OLD CHAPEL  
**Ann Thompson – “Prima la musica poi le parole???? – not so fast!!!!”**  
**As reforms come and go, the 422 year old battle for supremacy between poetry and music in opera still rages...**

12 NOON – MENKE HOUSE BACKYARD GARDENS  
**Open-air Lunch**

1:30 P.M. – EDYTHE BATES OLD CHAPEL  
**Kate Pogue – “Shakespeare’s Poetic Languages”**  
**Drawing from her book “Shakespeare’s Figures of Speech, Kate will enlighten the audience members with examples of Shakespeare’s extraordinary poetic constructions.”**

3:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. – EDYTHE BATES OLD CHAPEL  
**Tom Foral: “The Musical Wit of Broadway’s Lorenz Hart”**  
**Lorenz Hart: Broadway’s First Genius. Hilarious or Heartbreaking, Consistently Brilliant.**

3:30 P.M. – FESTIVAL CONCERT HALL STAGE  
**Theatre/Poetry Workshop**

4:00 – 5:30 P.M. – STORE OPEN AT REAR OF CONCERT HALL

6:30 P.M. – MENKE HOUSE MAIN FLOOR PARLOURS  
**Reception**

7:00 P.M. – MENKE HOUSE DINING ROOM  
**Dinner – Formal dress encouraged**

8:30 P.M. – FESTIVAL CONCERT HALL STAGE  
**The Theater of Language**  
**Introduction: Deborah Mouton**  
**Performance: Xero Skidmore**

9:30 P.M. – EDYTHE BATES LOWER CHAPEL ON THE HERZSTEIN PLAZA  
**Informal get-together in the Lower Chapel**

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20

8:00 A.M. – MENKE HOUSE DINING ROOM  
**Breakfast for overnight guests**

8:30 A.M. – MENKE HOUSE PORCH  
**Poems, pleasures and puns on a walk with Ann Thompson**

10:00 A.M. – FESTIVAL CONCERT HALL STAGE  
**The Power of Words – Ava Leavell Haymon**

10:30 A.M. – FESTIVAL CONCERT HALL STAGE  
**Presentation by Theater and Poetry Students**  
**guided by Christa Forster and BJ Dodge**



# THESPIAN RHYMES - THRILLING RHYTHMS

Friday to Sunday, November 18 - 20, 2022  
THE 24<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL ROUND TOP THEATRE FORUM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
(PLEASE PRINT)

STREET: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

DAYTIME TELEPHONE: (       ) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

## I Wish to Reserve the Following:

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registration (Friday thru Sunday)   | _____ @ \$120 per person   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registration (Saturday Events only) | _____ @ \$75 per person    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friday Dinner                       | _____ @ \$42.70 per person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Picnic Lunch               | _____ @ \$32.03 per person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Reception/Dinner           | _____ @ \$64.05 per person |

Optional tax-deductible contribution: \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL (tax included on meals)** \_\_\_\_\_

For pricing and availability of overnight accommodations, please contact the Institute for information and reservations. There will be a 20% cancellation fee until October 16, 2022. After October 16, 2022, there will be no refunds.

Reservations may be made online at [www.festivalhill.org](http://www.festivalhill.org), by phone at (979) 249-3129 or by faxing this registration form to (979) 249-5078. Payment by Visa/MasterCard/AMEX/Discover, or check payable to: The James Dick Foundation for the Performing Arts.

All events are held on Round Top Festival Institute's campus, located 1/2 mile north of Round Top on State Highway 237 at Jaster Rd. The street address is 248 Jaster Rd., Round Top, TX 78954.

Proceeds from the Theatre Forum benefit the Institute's Arts and Humanities programs. Enrollment is limited. Reservations are required for all Theatre Forum events.

## ROUND TOP FESTIVAL INSTITUTE

PO Box 89, Round Top, Texas 78954

Register online at [festivalhill.org](http://festivalhill.org) or call:

**(979) 249-3129**

Fax: (979) 249-5078 • Email: [reservations@festivalhill.org](mailto:reservations@festivalhill.org)



THE JAMES DICK FOUNDATION for the PERFORMING ARTS  
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The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Round Top Theatre Forum

**THESPIAN RHYMES**

DISCOVERING INTERSECTIONS OF THEATRE AND POETRY

**November 18 - 20, 2022**

## 2022 ROUND TOP THEATRE FORUM

Friday, November 18 to Sunday, November 20, 2022

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DISCOVERING INTERSECTIONS  
OF THEATRE AND POETRY