

# NEWS from FESTIVAL HILL



## A SUMMER OF SMILES

Volume 3, Issue 2 - Summer, 2014

### Update for You, Supporters of the Institute

Enjoy the above montage of smiles we captured for you during this summer's Round Top Music Festival.

As you scan these photos, know that you helped make the smiles happen.

Your giving funds performance and learning in the unique Festival Hill environment. Here you see delightful results of your generosity—experiences of joy and pleasure that cause faces to light up....

We create this newsletter for you, so whether or not you are able to be here in person, you have a behind-the-scenes glimpse of some of the special moments that seem to happen on campus continuously!

### When Birds Make Noise at Festival Hill

Performing in the first faculty chamber music ensemble of the Round Top Music Festival season, Gretchen Pusch introduced *Le Merle Noir for Flute and Piano*. She had this to say to the full-house audience who gathered in Edythe Bates Old Chapel to listen:

"So the birds near the Log House where I am staying have been going bonkers this week and in a few moments you will hear why."

"The wonderful French organist and composer Olivier Messiaen travelled the world each spring for sixty years recording, then notating and riffing on bird song. *The Blackbird* is a result of one such venture."

"I've never played the popular video game *Angry Birds* but it's not hard to imagine that the final section of this short work might have provided inspiration for that game. It certainly has inspired the chorus of birds outside my practice room."

Gretchen Pusch is part of the flute faculty of The Juilliard School's Music Advancement program and of Round Top Festival Institute.

Her remarks underscore the important role the Festival Hill campus plays in context with the overall Round Top Music Festival experience.

Log House—where faculty members stay during the festival and where celebratory receptions are held for the conductors, guest artists and festival sponsors—is just one of many storied buildings on the grounds.

Being in nature creates its own synergy, as musicians walk to and from rehearsals in the midst of birds, butterflies, and many forms of flora and fauna.

### The Road to a Career in Music

Pursuit of a career in music starts early. Talent, practice, training, discipline, and a strong call to make music are

all part of the journey. Not only do the young artists who study and perform at Festival Hill understand this, so do the faculty members.

Piano faculty member John Owings debuted with the San Antonio Symphony at age 15. Gregory Fulkerson, who along with Gretchen Pusch and John Owings was part of the first faculty chamber music concert, in his youth took the First Prize in the International American Music Competition sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Kennedy Center, an honor that led to an active performing career including debuts in New York, London, Paris, Rome and Brussels. Educated at Oberlin College and at The Juilliard School, he has recorded the complete *Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin by J.S. Bach*. The biographies of all the faculty members provide details of richly lived music careers.

Did you miss this year's Music Festival? If so, would you like a concert program book which includes these biographies? Email us at [info@festivalhill.org](mailto:info@festivalhill.org) to request one while the supply lasts.

### Around the Table

Your newsletter editor had a good time at dinner sitting across from these two artists, percussionist



Jordan Carter (left) and violinist Pio Molina. Talk about smiles that light up a room – or an orchestra!

At the Fellows dinner which honors the outstanding support of donors who provide \$1,000+ annually (how would we bring the Festival forward without those of you who can do this!), Judson Wood delivered this memorable toast:

"In 1990 I came to Texas to retire and take it easy. Well, retirement lasted only a few months but I did find Heaven on Earth, Festival Hill. Having found it, I don't want to leave it."

This evening on April 26th featured a special surprise when James Dick performed *Clair de Lune* for the dinner guests gathered in the Menke Parlours.

Picnic groups were spotted all around campus during the Festival. On the west plaza by Festival Concert Hall, a

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food and beverage tent, along with tables decked with gaily checked cloths greeted concertgoers, making it easy to feast. Some picnickers chose to bring treats they had prepared. Many moments of good companionship around refreshments were shared during the six weeks of majestic Festival music.

## Mentors Matter

At Festival Hill, we, the audience, find ourselves at the epicenter of a transfer of talent, skill, discipline, and passion.



**Dalies Frantz**

to see names of faculty currently part of the Institute listed as mentors in their biographies.

In the close-knit world of international music, some mentors naturally rise to the top. As John Owings and Festival Hill founder and artistic director James Dick prepared for their professional careers, both studied with the highly respected teacher Dalies Frantz.

As new generations of musicians take their place upon the world stage, we can expect

## Staying Connected

Here's a fun example of connection overheard at lunch in Menke House. Festival faculty members Erin Hannigan—principal oboe of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and Kenneth Woods—artistic director and principal conductor of the English Symphony Orchestra, both studied at Festival Hill as young artists in 1994.

At the same lunch, Zura Kobakhidze dropped by the table for a bit of conversation. He is a young artist, studying piano. He is the subject of a Georgia-based PBS affiliate documentary that was filmed at Festival Hill this summer.

Place connects musicians. Instruments connect musicians, as well. Take, for example, the story of Mia Orosco's new fiddle. Mia, concertmaster for the festival's



opening symphony, not only plays the violin, she also enjoys fiddling. Dillon Welch, concertmaster for the June 14th performance knew this. When family friends Tony and Gordon Johnson began looking for an appropriate new

home for Gordon's grandfather's fiddle, Dillon and family helped link them with Mia, a music student at Baylor.

## Tune-up Time

The day of the Patriotic Concert, several persuasive voices spoke from stage to bring awareness to the need to broaden the base of support at Festival Hill.

What you do as a donor to help Festival Hill flourish is essential to our future. These voices spoke out from stage to applaud you and to encourage more people to join you in this endeavor.

Until all of the \$5,000 scholarships each young artist receives for the six weeks of study in residence are

funded, year to year, it is a challenge to raise the money that is needed to produce Round Top Music Festival. Faculty member Stefan Milenkovich says of Festival Hill, "No other festival does it all. No other festival does it so well." We are committed to continuing excellence and you make that possible.

Concertmaster Pio Molina, 2014 Intern Travis Cottle, and Conductor Charles Olivieri-Munroe joined founder and artistic director James Dick in describing to the audience what the opportunities provided by the Festival mean to musicians today. Their words were a gift to us all.

## Recent and Coming Events

The fall always brings new performances and forums to enjoy. In August, Split Second Piano Duo took the stage and performed a program of merged North



American and Latin American influences. In September the Library and Museum Collections Forum presented an alluring topic of *Home on the Range: The Texas Landscape in Art and Music*. In October, drama gets its turn during the Theatre Forum which features

*The Enchanted Years of the Stage: American Voices 1870-1930*. November and December bring four special holiday offerings. Visit [festivalhill.org](http://festivalhill.org) for details.

## To Know

Round Top Festival Institute will celebrate its 45th season in 2015. Mark your calendar with these dates: June 6 to July 11, 2015.

Located on the Festival Hill campus, just outside the town of Round Top, the Institute and its projects form the sole endeavor of educational non-profit The James Dick Foundation for the Performing Arts.

Your tax deductible gifts build and share the vision of Festival Hill. Your Festival Hill team is full of gratitude for all you do to help this project make music and serve the arts and humanities.



The enclosed envelope is for your convenience in case you have a message to send or would like to make an extra gift. Thank you for your interest in Festival Hill!

NEWS from FESTIVAL HILL produced by editor Molly Sharpe and staff

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