

# NEWS *from* FESTIVAL HILL



PLANTING SEEDS

Volume 6, Issue 1 - Spring, 2017

## A GOOD VINTAGE YEAR!

Right now, we are preparing for one of the most exciting festivals yet. On many levels this year's production will yield festival fruitage like none other. Let's start from its inception when we opened the application process in October.

For the very first time in our history, we asked for video auditions from our applicants. We received applications from 23 foreign countries (Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Dominican Republic, South Korea, Italy, Hong Kong, Israel, Nigeria, Puerto Rico, Spain, Taiwan, Japan, Australia, Columbia, Germany, Macao, Malaysia, Mexico, Thailand, United Kingdom, Finland...) which include over 100 schools and universities.

Out of the many applicants, only 90 or so will be accepted for the intense six weeks that take place from June 4th to July 16th. Each week the Texas

Festival Orchestra will train with internationally respected guest conductors hailing from China, Brazil, the United States and Puerto Rico, Israel, Serbia, and Austria.

We are so fortunate to produce a truly world-renowned music festival in the Texan countryside. This year we welcome eight new faculty to our festival family including two alumni of the Institute.

Here are just a few bouquet notes to pique interests on this full-bodied year:

Our Founder and Artistic Director, James Dick will perform Beethoven's *Concerto for Violin, Cello and Piano* alongside violinist Stefan Milenkovich and cellist Emilio Colón during the opening evening, June 10, 2017. He closes the festival with Chopin's *Concerto No. 1* on the last evening of Saturday, July 15th.

After the success of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* in 2016, we are thrilled to present Verdi's legendary *Requiem* with four distinguished vocal soloists (soprano Tiffany Abban, mezzo-soprano Ellie Shattles, tenor

William Davenport and baritone Kelly Markgraf) and the Houston Masterworks Chorus on Saturday, June 17, 2017.

It's been 80 years since the death of Maurice Ravel so to celebrate the composer's life his music will be featured during the course of the festival. The Texas Festival Orchestra will perform for the first time at Round Top his most popular work: *Bolero* and also the *Piano Concerto for Left Hand* (François Dumont, pianist) plus the *Concerto for Piano in G, Alborada del Gracioso, La Valse* and the second suite from the ballet *Daphnis and Chloe*.

Other premieres at Round Top include Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, Joseph Schwantner's *Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra* featuring Thomas Burritt as the soloist and P.I. Tchaikovsky's rarely performed *Manfred Symphony*.

Tickets and day passes are now available online at [festivalhill.org/calendar](http://festivalhill.org/calendar).

### 2016 Giving Tuesday a Huge Success

On Giving Tuesday, November 29, 2016 we launched our second annual online donation campaign known as #Give2RTFInstitute! Our goal was to raise \$44,000 which is enough to fund 8 scholarships worth \$5,500 each for part of the string section of the Texas Festival Orchestra. Not only did we meet our goal, we raised a total of \$49,200 in 24 hours, thanks to our donors!!

Student scholarships are at the core of our educational mission and support the Institute through the six weeks

of orchestral studies, chamber music studies, and private lessons resulting in the public concerts that many of you experience and enjoy throughout the summer season. This kind of support gets us one step closer to fulfilling that mission! But the need to cover every student remains—which is why this April 20th we are holding another #Give2RTFInstitute donation campaign!

For the entire day, we are looking to raise \$33,000 to fund 6 more scholarships! Look for our prize announcements by subscribing to our email list at [festivalhill.org](http://festivalhill.org) and like or follow us on social media by searching Round Top Festival Institute. We hope, with the help of the internet, that we can raise enough funds to reach this goal!

### Love, Round Top Music Festival Style

Last fall we introduced you to Shannon and Thomas Steigerwald, the newlywed student couple who won our hearts by spending their honeymoon with us during the 2016 festival. In this newsletter edition, we're happy to share another Festival Hill romance, that of bassoon faculty member Kristin Wolfe Jensen and her husband Stig.

Picture it. Festival Hill, 1990. Stig had been a five-time festival alumnus as a student and at that time was just finishing his first season in the San Antonio Symphony's horn section. Kristin arrives for the first time as a grad student from Juilliard with "no idea what to expect." Here's what Kristin had to say in our interview about meeting her, then, future-husband:

"The festival was a month long back then, and Hei-chiro Ohyama conducted all the concerts. After our first rehearsal of Tchaikovsky's *Fifth Symphony* during the first week of the festival, Stig and I joined a group of students



Round Top Festival Institute now offers advertising opportunities in our 2017 Music Festival program book. Get all the details online at [festivalhill.org/advertising](http://festivalhill.org/advertising).

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**Kristen Wolfe Jensen, Round Top Music Festival Bassoon faculty member, in 1990, with her future spouse, Stig.**

relaxing by the pool and got to talking and hit it off. We continued to 'happen to run into each other' that whole week at meals, and in our rehearsals for orchestra and the Schubert *Octet*. On that Friday, we found out that we had both won the concerto competition and would get to perform with the orchestra that summer, so he asked me to dinner to celebrate. When he came to my dorm room to pick me up, he felt awkward not inviting my three roommates who were also there, so we had company on our first date! The five of us went to the Chinese restaurant in Giddings and had a great time. Stig and I soon became inseparable at the festival, and had a very hard time saying goodbye after the four weeks when he returned to his life in San Antonio and I to mine in New York. We returned to the festival in 1991 and 1992, and racked-up our frequent flyer miles visiting each other for the next 5 years before I got the bassoon job at UT Austin, and we got married in 1995."

Every season brings its own experiences and what may come from a summer of intense music-making can leave a lasting impression on every one of our students. We're so happy for Kristin and Stig as this year will mark the 27th anniversary of the day they first met.

### Arts Commission Holds Roundtable at Festival Hill

In December, the Texas Commission on the Arts chose Festival Hill as the location to hold its first Rural Arts Roundtable. The

TCA convened representatives of rural arts organizations to discuss the challenges, resources and opportunities that come up in counties with populations under 50,000 people.



Twenty representatives from 15 arts organizations attended, as well as TCA Commissioner Mila Gibson and Paco Valentin, USDA Rural Development Texas State Director (photo). Other special guests included Directors of the Texas Cultural Trust. Participants were able to glean new insights from each other and forge new relationships. The roundtable was funded by a National Endowment for the Arts grant.

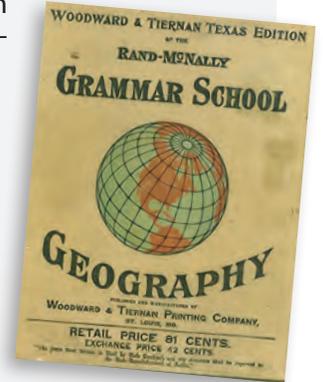
Round Top Festival Institute receives funding through the Texas Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts—assistance that is greatly needed and appreciated. RTFI supports Texas artists by including performing arts companies and artists on the TCA Texas Touring Roster in its programming, including Carranza Puppets and the Texas Guitar Quartet. James Dick is also a Texas Touring Artist.

### Historical Treasures in Round Top Festival Library

There are always treasures coming into the Round Top Festival Institute Library as gifts and donations. An example of what can be discovered is what was found in the recent acquisition of books and papers from the Estate of Dennis and Delia Sacks, given to the Institute Library by Round Top native Maxine Weinert.

Forty-one books in the collection have been catalogued by Pat Johnson, Associate Curator and Assistant Librarian. They are wonderful examples of what was being used in early rural life in Fayette County. Johnson took notice of the signatures inside the books and added descriptions to her catalogue.

A significant find was the 1898 copy of the *Woodward & Tiernan's Texas Edition of The Rand-McNally Grammar School Geography, Illustrated with Diagrams, Colored Maps and Engravings, Prepared Expressly For This Work*. The textbook was purchased for Nassau School, which was located northeast of Round Top. Inside, in beautifully scripted handwriting, is the signature of "Laura Seibert, Nassau School, Texas, Oct 4, 1898."



Laura Seibert was the grandmother of Maxine Weinert, the donor of the collection, and mother to Delia Weber Sacks. Delia had the foresight to keep these wonderful books, and the Institute is pleased to add them to its library collection. See full article on the Festival Institute website at [festivalhill.org](http://festivalhill.org).

### UT Wind Ensemble Leaves Positive Impression

The University of Texas Wind Ensemble gave a stunning performance at Festival Hill on Saturday, November 19. The Festival Concert Hall was filled with new and seasoned concertgoers, with many Texas Exes showing off their school colors.

Among the concert attendees were seven cadets from the Texas Challenge Academy near Eagle Lake, Texas. Their superior shared this positive sentiment, "I want to send my heartfelt gratitude to everyone at Festival Hill. The Cadets from Texas Challenge Academy



**Cadets from the Texas Challenge Academy attended the UT Wind Ensemble concert.**

were highly impressed with the UT Wind Ensemble and the Festival Hill facility. It was an exposure to music and culture that most had never had a chance to experience. One Cadet said, 'All I can say, Ma'am, is Wow!' His eyes were just shining with a huge smile. I'm quite sure he could hear the music as he went to sleep that night."

As an educational institution, it is our mission to promote the appreciation of music and the arts, especially by introducing classical music to the youth of today.

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Editor: Sergio Lozano



**ROUND TOP FESTIVAL INSTITUTE**

PO Box 89 • 248 Jaster Road • Round Top, TX 78954

**(979) 249-3129 • [FestivalHill.org](http://FestivalHill.org)**

[Facebook.com/RoundTopFestivalInstitute](https://www.facebook.com/RoundTopFestivalInstitute)

Twitter and Instagram @RTFIInstitute

Contact: [info@festivalhill.org](mailto:info@festivalhill.org)