

## Music Alumni Newsletter – Spring 2009

### A Message from the Editor

by Nico Schüller ([nico.schuler@txstate.edu](mailto:nico.schuler@txstate.edu))



It has been long over-due to create a platform for our Texas State Music Alumni: our *Music Alumni Newsletter*. We will produce the newsletter, but it really belongs to you, our alumni! Please let us know, preferably via e-mail, what you are doing, where you work, what your latest achievements are ... We will include all of that in future issues of this newsletter. We would also love to meet with you in person: We are preparing for a Texas State Music Alumni Reunion on October 30-31, 2009. You may read more about that under a separate header in this newsletter. Finally, please visit our School of Music website, where you can – at least ‘virtually’ meet our new faculty, find information on events, etc.

To stay connected, please consider becoming a member of the “Texas State University Music Alumni” groups on Facebook, MySpace, or LinkedIn. It’s free! Through these groups, we will announce alumni events, reunions, etc.

So, this newsletter issue really is only the beginning of what will hopefully be of interest to you in the future, and to which you would consider submitting updates and stories about you for your friends, study and performance buddies, colleagues, and former teachers.

### TxState Music Alumni Reunion October 30-31, 2009

Please mark your calendars! Texas State will host its first comprehensive Music Alumni Reunion on October 30-31, 2009. The reunion purposefully overlaps with Homecoming weekend as well as with “Discover Texas State”.

Highlights of the Reunion are: Friday morning: Two Sessions by our current students and faculty on their research and performance activi-



ties; Friday Lunch at Commons Hall; Friday Afternoon: a Music Alumni Reception and / or Attending a Marching Band Rehearsal; Friday Evening: Awards Ceremony and Dinner; Saturday Morning: Rehearsal for Homecoming Football Game, Homecoming Brunch, Van Tours; Saturday Afternoon: Sing and Perform the National Anthem as well as *America the Beautiful* together with our Marching Band at the Homecoming Pregame Show, Attend Football Game.

We understand “alumni” broadly: whether you received your degree from Texas State as a music major, whether you studied here for one semester, or whether you were a non-music major but participated in band – you are all invited to our Reunion! For updates on the Reunion, send an e-mail to [Alumni@TxStateAlumni.org](mailto:Alumni@TxStateAlumni.org).

### A Letter from the Director of Texas State’s School of Music

by Thomas Clark ([tc24@txstate.edu](mailto:tc24@txstate.edu))

Dear Music Alumni:

How can I sum up my first eight months at the Texas State School of Music? Since the exciting and extraordinary happens quite regularly here, I could pick a few days almost at random and use them as an example. Not randomly, I’ll choose to tell you about a particular weekend back in December; call it a long four-day weekend. It was near the end of my first semester at the Texas State School of Music. Even for a school at which special things happen regularly, this was extraordinary.

Friday, we had a choral ensembles concert featuring the music of guest composer Péter van Dijk. He and his wife, Junita, who conducted the concert, were visiting from Port Elizabeth, South Africa, where they both teach at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. The visit was part of an ongoing exchange recently established between that university and Texas State’s School of Music, involving several of our music professors performing there and helping with the extraordinary outreach the van Dijks are involved with in the poorest areas of South Africa. The concert here featured two choirs and faculty performers (including Ian Davidson, Chris Haritatos, Juli Wood, and Joey Martin). It was spectacular, and it revealed through Peter’s elegant and powerful music the poignant beauty and vitality of South African landscape and indigenous culture. ...to be continued on Page 2...

### Internet Links:

Texas State’s School of Music: <http://www.music.txstate.edu/> • Texas State’s Alumni Association: <http://www.TxStateAlumni.org>  
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/> • LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/> • MySpace: <http://www.myspace.com/>  
(On Facebook, LinkedIn, or MySpace become a member of the group “Texas State University Music Alumni”)

## Alumni News

The Civic Opera Theater of Kansas City has named singer **David Adams** as its General Producing Director. David produced a concert of Great Opera Scenes for the company in January. He has performed for the Metropolitan Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Orchestra of New York, Caramoor Festival, New York City Opera, and the opera companies of Fort Worth, Wolf Trap, Syracuse, Augusta, and Binghamton.

Bassoonist **Heather Ainsworth** (B.M. '04) plays regularly with Orquesta Sinfonica de U.A.N.L in Monterrey, Mexico, and recently received an M.M. in bassoon performance from the University of Utah. She is a winner of the concerto competition for the Murray Symphony in Salt Lake City and is an established studio teacher and judge.

**Crystal Alexander** (B.M. '06) was selected to perform (sax.) with the National College Wind Ensemble at Carnegie Hall.

**Dennis Cole** (B.M. '00, M.M. '03) received a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology at Kent State University. He is also an instructor at Ashland University in Ohio.

**Francisco Dean** (B.M. '96) is completing a Master's degree in Jazz Arranging at Indiana University (IU) in Bloomington. He is also the Director of the Musical Arts Youth Orchestra Jazz Program in Bloomington and an Associate Instructor for the IU Soul Revue at the African American Arts Institute.

**Gilbert Elorreaga** (B.M. '03) is touring internationally (on

trumpet) with the Latin band *Grupo Fantasma*. Gilbert and the Grupo Fantasma Horn Section also performed with Rock'n' Roll legend Prince on the Jay Leno show as well as in Wembley Stadium in London.

**Michele Hobizal** (B.M. '86) is completing her two-year term as Vice President of the Elementary Division of TMEA.

Bassoonist **Sara McCallum** (B.M. '06) received a Master's degree from the University of North Texas and is currently working on her doctorate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Wayne Oquin** (B.M. '99) completed his D.M.A. in composition from the Juilliard School and is now on its faculty. Wayne brings Juilliard students to Texas State University every Spring to host the *Juilliard Rejoins Texas State for a Common Experience in the Arts* concerts.

**Melanie Wilkinson** (M.M. '99) died in a car accident on February 23, 2009. As a singer, she had performed for Ann Richards, Lady Bird Johnson, and Barbara Jordan, and she was scheduled to sing in Washington with a choral group at the National Cathedral in late February.

**Lee Weimer** (M.M. '82) currently holds a faculty position at Lambuth University and is principal trumpet in the Jackson Symphony and performs with several early music ensembles on Baroque trumpet and cornetto.

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## A Letter from the Director ...

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*It turns out, at those same moments, our top Texas State Mariachi Ensemble, directed by John Lopez, was competing in the prestigious Vargas competition for collegiate mariachis in San Antonio. And winning first place – the third straight year our ensemble has claimed that championship! I heard the news the next day, Saturday. Some of the mariachi students were also in our top Salsa Band at Texas State, the popular group slated to give the final featured performance at the local San Marcos outdoor festival extravaganza, the Sights and Sounds of Christmas. My wife Beth and I bundled up for the unseasonably wintry chill and listened to our students heat up the evening with their high-power playing, singing, and dancing.*

*But I'm getting ahead. Earlier that Saturday evening, as we headed downtown, I was thinking about the students in the new Texas State Chamber Orchestra. We knew they had just finished an "off-campus" performance that same evening. Where? At The White House in Washington D.C., opening entertainment for the White House season of holiday recep-*

*tions. Our players, under the baton of Howard Hudiburg, executed their command performance with lots of holiday spirit, after getting a private tour of The White House.*

*Sunday was almost back to normal, but not a day of rest. There were several student recitals and plenty of practicing going on. But the weekend didn't feel like it had ended yet when I went Monday evening back to Evans Auditorium to hear the Texas State Jazz Ensemble, directed by Freddie Mendoza. I always look forward to hearing good jazz, but this program was special: The Nutcracker Suite, complete with dancers in very cool modern costumes. Wait a minute! You didn't know The Nutcracker was jazz? Well it is, in the version composed by the legendary Duke Ellington. With all respect to Maestro Tchaikovsky, this nutcracker was cool, man, and the mice were swingin'. I went home tired but joyful, with visions of all these sugar-plum musical moments dancing in my brain. And thinking what a lucky guy I am to be a part of this special school!*

*I hope my story prompts you to reminisce about some of your most memorable experiences with music at Texas State. With the upcoming Music Alumni Reunion we're planning for the fall, I look forward to meeting many of you and hearing your stories!*

*Wherever you are and whatever else you're doing, keep making music!*