

Long Center Kicks Off ACOT's Theatre Month Speakers' Series

Shakespeare wrote, "All the world's a stage, and the men and women in it merely players." BookPeople (<http://www.bookpeople.com>) and the Austin Circle of Theaters (ACOT) (<http://www.acotonline.org/>) celebrated the Bard's mantra by designating August as Theatre Month, and reveling in the best theatre and performance that Austin has to offer.

Kicking off the festivities was David Fleming, president and CEO of Arts Center Stage, who gave the audience a sneak peek at the Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Center for the Performing Arts. A rousing time was had by all, as we took attendees on a "virtual" tour through the Long Center, and discussed how this state-of-the-art facility will affect our cultural lives and community.

If you missed the August 2 event, don't fret—the folks at BookPeople have been kind enough to let us keep a rendering and supporting materials on display in the "Arts" section of the store indefinitely! Stop by at 6th and Lamar and check it out.



Dave Fleming, president and CEO of Arts Center Stage, "walks" the audience at BookPeople through the Long Center for the Performing Arts.



Arts Center Stage Continues to Promote Public/Private Partnership

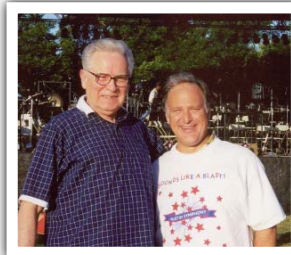
Every year, the Austin Symphony Orchestra (<http://www.austinsymphony.org/>) hosts a free concert and fireworks show celebrating our nation's birthday. This year was no exception, with one addition—Arts Center Stage was on hand to promote the public/private partnership with the City of Austin to build the Symphony's new home, the Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Center for the Performing Arts. With more than 110,000 Austinites in attendance, the gathering was a prime opportunity to highlight the historic agreement while continuing to educate the masses about the Long Center.

Mayor Kirk Watson was on hand, as was guest conductor Governor Rick Perry.



Arts Center Stage seizes the nation's birthday as an opportune moment to proudly promote their public/private partnership with the City of Austin.

Joe Long, lead donor, and Mayor Kirk Watson ready themselves for the Austin Symphony's free Fourth of July celebration in Zilker Park.



Have You Made it to an Arts Center Stage Brown Bag?

The Long Center for the Performing Arts is being built for *all* of Austin and Central Texas' performing arts groups, large and small. But do we know what they want in a performance facility?

What questions and concerns do they have? Arts Center Stage (<http://artscenterstage.org>) has come up with a simple way to find out the answers to these issues . . . ask! Every Wednesday, Arts Center Stage holds a brown bag luncheon at the Arts office to give our local groups some one-on-one face time with staff members. These lunches originated at the start of the summer, and due to the overwhelming positive response, will continue indefinitely!



Here's what one group had to say after attending a luncheon: "Austin Circle of Theaters would like to send everyone at Arts Center Stage a big hug for their brown bag lunch meetings this past month with the Austin theater community. We are particularly impressed with David Fleming's [president and CEO] keen attention to the needs of presenters and artists, big and small. We feel this promises good things for us all. Thank you!"

An e-mail invitation was sent to all local groups in June, but if you have not yet signed up for a lunch, we would love to have you! Please contact Dana Wood, marketing assistant, at (512) 482-0800, x105 or via e-mail at danawood@artscenterstage.org to reserve your spot today!

in this issue



Ballet Company Finds Ways to Reinvest in the Community

By: Robin Stanton Garrow

Rodolfo Mendez has always found a way to give back to his community—first with the Peace Corps and now with Ballet East (<http://www.balleteast.org/>). Ballet East Dance Theatre was founded in 1978 by Mendez to provide an arena for choreographers and dancers, but also to expose underserved youth to dance and theater. After a stint in the Peace Corp took him to Costa Rica and Chile—where he implemented dance and theater programs in the school systems—Mendez still felt the



Max Luna (left), teacher and former dancer with the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater in New York, helps free-lance dancer Benjamin Briones perfect his technique. Briones performed in two new ballets with Ballet East last year.

need to contribute to the Central Texas community.

“My family has been here since 1789,” he said. “My roots were here and I wanted to build something tangible within our community. What I was doing in the Peace Corps was using dance in the development of those communities, and I wanted to use the same concept to benefit children here.” Since establishing the company, Mendez worked with area choreographers, businesses, and funding agencies to build Ballet East into a nationally recognized organization.

“We are very unique in the city, because we are a platform for choreographers,” Mendez continued. “The money we receive essentially goes back into the community—back to the artists and choreographers.”

Ballet East has been able to secure funding through city, state, and national arts programs, as well as corporate and private patrons such as the Dell Foundation and H-E-B Food Stores. The company performs publicly at least 16 times each year including free performances during the Cinco De Mayo celebration at the Pan-American Hillside.

A close partnership with the Austin Independent School District (AISD) has allowed Ballet East to develop several unique programs with opportunities for choreographers and children to interact. The Artist in Residency Program provides workshops and classes for students and teachers in junior high and senior high schools while Dare To Dance works with elementary schools in underserved and first generation immigrant communities in Austin.

Another program, the Teen Technical Internship, gives students the chance to work on the technical aspects of a production,

learning lighting, sound, and stage management. Children’s Folkloric Dance Program was the first outreach program developed by Ballet East, and has worked with more than 1,600

children. One of the newer programs works with preschool children from predominately Spanish-language homes to expose them to English through social interactions and a structured environment provided by a certified teacher.

“The arts are a great vehicle to teach children self-esteem and awareness on an international level,” Mendez said. “These programs bring a sensitivity to the arts for many kids, especially those on the east side of town who may not have the opportunity to attend events such as the ballet and opera.

“This has been a major goal of Ballet East,” he continued. “We need to develop children’s interests because they are the performers, and patrons, of tomorrow.”

Mendez has been able to use his own experience as a dancer in New York to provide opportunities

East dancers, L–R: Alton Sample, Gabriela Cardenas, Gina Lopez, Melissa Villarreal, Susan Linville, Marlo Wanielista, and Dixon Mena.



for students by bringing works and artists from well-known troupes such as the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre, Joyce Trisler Danscompany, and Philadanco from Philadelphia. “I try to use my connections to expose students to a broader range of dance and also to help them when they try to expand their own experiences by moving to New York and other larger cities,” he said. “We were recently able to send a student to an Alvin Ailey workshop on a scholarship. It’s great to have the connections to help open doors like that for our really good dancers here.”

Having the support of other arts organizations has been vital to the success of Ballet East. Mendez pointed out that it is a mutually beneficial arrangement and encourages the relationships. “Because many performers come from smaller regional and local companies, the large performing arts groups really need to be supportive and sensitive to their needs.”

Ballet East, like many other performing arts groups in Austin, has been faced with the challenge of finding an appropriate venue. Mendez sees the Long Center as a potential answer to this long-standing problem.

“We don’t have many venues conducive to dance or other kinds of theater performances,” he said. “We may be able to find the space, but we have to create our own ambiance because those spaces don’t have the resources you need to create an illusion on stage. Hopefully, the Long Center will be that entire professional package that serves needs at every level. Right now we pay for each resource individually—lighting, sound, stage development, etc.—because there is no venue that delivers everything. With the Long Center, we will have the opportunity to take the revenue we would have been spending on resources and impact the arts community by investing in our artists and programs.”

Once again, for Mendez, it all comes down to giving something back to the community.

Arts Center Stage

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Officers

Chairman
Ben Bentzin, Director, Dell’s Americas Online Division

Vice Chairman
Rusty Tally, Senior Vice President, Investments, Morgan Stanley

Treasurer
Martha Harrington, Retired IBM Executive

Secretary
Terry Irion, Attorney at Law

Finance Committee Chair
Joe R. Long, Joe R. Long Investments

Community Chairs

Ada C. Anderson, Founder/Chairwoman, LEAP
Leo Dunn, Retired 3M Executive
Jorge A. Sedeño, Area Manager—External Affairs, Southwestern Bell

Trustees

Wayne Bell, FAIA, Professor Emeritus, School of Architecture, The University of Texas School of Architecture at Austin

David K.G. Chan, President, Austin Lyric Opera

Jo Anne Christian, Founder, Immediate Past President, Melissa J. Eddy Pro Arts Management

Steve Davis, Retired Executive
Melissa Eddy, Owner and Principal, Melissa J. Eddy Pro Arts Management

Hector Galán, Principal, Galán Productions, Inc.

Machree Garrett Gibson, Attorney, Jenkins and Gilchrist

Ana M. “Cha” Guzman, Ed.D., Executive Vice President of Administration, Austin Community College

Allen E. Green, Vice President, Bank of America, N.A.

Rodolfo Mendez, Artistic Director, Ballet East Dance Theatre

Emily Moreland, Owner, Moreland Properties, Chairman, Ballet Austin

Ray G. Perry, Vice President, Dell Home and Small Business Manufacturing Operations

Kevin Rollins, Vice Chairman, Dell Computer Corporation

William S. Romney, Director, Global Corporate Finance, Arthur Andersen LLP

Raén Salinas, General Director, Academia AZTLAN

Rick Salwen, General Director, Seriff Capital Partners

Jane Sibley, Chairman, Austin Symphony Orchestra

Jare Smith, Past Chair, Ballet Austin

The Honorable Bruce Todd, Compass Public Affairs

Anthony “Lucky” Tomblin, Founder/Owner, Silverstar Entertainment

Angela Topfer, President, Morton and Angela Topfer Family Foundation

Barbara W. White, Ph.D., ACSW, Dean and Centennial Professor in Leadership, School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin

Pete Winstead, Founding Shareholder, Winstead, Sechrest & Minick PC.

STAFF

David Fleming, President and CEO

Donald Rurtledge, Project Manager

Katie O’Connell, Director of Development

M.E. Peters, Deputy Director of Development

Michelle Wallace, Director of Marketing and Public Relations

Dwayne Cooper, Director of Finance and Administration

Dana Wood, Office Manager/Marketing Assistant

Jody Cole, Volunteer

Have an idea for an upcoming story? Want to have your group profiled?

It’s simple—contact Michelle Wallace, director of marketing and public relations at (512) 482-0800, ext. 101 or via e-mail at michellewallace@artscenterstage.org.

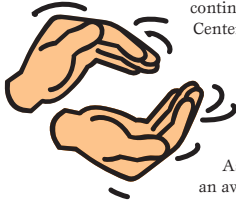
Deadline for the next issue of *Curtain Up!* is October 1, 2001 with publication on or about November 9, 2001.

Note: We reserve the right to edit and/or refuse all submissions and/or suggestions.

Layout and creative direction for *Curtain Up!* provided by Fain Fine Design.

A Round of Applause!

Blowing out candles this summer was the Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum (<http://www.umlaufsculpture.org/>) who celebrated their 10th birthday! Thanks to everyone at Umlauf for their gracious and continued support of the Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Center for the Performing Arts.



■ Congratulations to Michael Barnes, senior arts writer for the *Austin American-Statesman* (<http://www.statesman.com>), who was recently recognized by the Texas Associated Press Managing Editors with an award for Comment and Criticism.

■ Two huge Texas-sized "Welcomes!" are in order: the first goes out to Pamela Mayo Clarke, the new director of development for Austin Musical Theater (AMT) (<http://www.amtpresents.org/>). The second is to David Burger, the new director of marketing for Austin Lyric Opera (<http://www.austinlyricopera.org/index.html>). We look forward to working with Pamela, David, and their respective staffs on building a performance facility that will meet the needs of *all* of Austin and Central Texas' arts groups.

■ Congratulations to Robert Faires, senior arts editor at the *Austin Chronicle* (<http://www.auschron.com/>), for his award for Arts Criticism from the National Association of Alternative Newsweeklies.

■ That sigh of relief you hear comes from the news that Peter Bay, music director and conductor for the Austin Symphony Orchestra (<http://www.austinsymphony.org/>), recently signed a new three-year contract to continue in his current position. Peter has been a leader in Austin's transformation from a small community to a world-class metropolitan city, and his continued passion and enthusiasm for bringing music to the masses is something we are looking forward to having at the Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Center for the Performing Arts. Thanks, Peter, for your continued commitment to Austin's cultural evolution.

The Austin Chord Rangers was established in 1961 and is one of over 800 chapters of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America. They provide quartet and chorus performances around Austin and sponsor music education programs for area youth. For more information about performances or to ask about joining, call (512) 477-SONG or visit their web site at www.chordrangers.org.

What Will the Long Center Mean to Me?

Lon Badgett, 2001 President, Austin Chord Rangers



SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF BARBERSHOP QUARTET SINGING IN AMERICA
INCORPORATED

Austin Chord Rangers
PO Box 181075
Austin, Texas 78716-1075
(512) 477-SONG

David Fleming
President, CEO
Arts Center Stage
1301 West 25th Street, Suite 404
Austin, TX 78705

David:

There are many endearing things about volunteer nonprofit groups. I am always impressed with the dedication and camaraderie of our little band of singers, The Austin Chord Rangers. We not only have a great time singing, we provide important community services such as music education and free concerts for the sick and elderly. Above all, we prize our independence from oversight and our ability to do things the way we see fit without having to wait for permission.

There are, however, a few frustrations associated with singing in a nonprofit group. We don't have a staff or a physical office for people to contact. We are always engaged in fund raising. We hunt and scratch continually for new ideas about how to structure our public performances. The idea of spending more of our time performing and less time raising funds to buy a venue may be the best idea we heard, but we were also excited by the possibility of linking with other groups in a "Concert Series", and each of us who attended was excited by the sheer number of new performances that we will be able to attend as audience members.

I was most impressed by the proactive positions of the staff and the attempts to collect our ideas and inventory our needs well before the Long Center is even built. If there was ever a good reason for us to cooperate in an arts project, this is it. I believe firmly in the bounty this project without sacrificing their individuality or identity.

I intend our organization to participate fully in creating the final product that this Long Center will become for Austin. We are already hatching plans for 2004 and beyond because we feel confident that our ideas and needs will become part of the finished project. Will there be problems and surprises before this project is completed? Probably. But I am confident that if they are handled with the same attitude we saw displayed already in the Arts Center Stage office that the eventual solutions will be fair, thoughtful, and positive.

We've been operating independently for 40 years now and we have no intention of abandoning that policy. But we are certainly excited about this cooperative venture and the many ways it will allow us to preserve and encourage Barbershop singing for future generations of Austinians.

Sincerely,

Lon Badgett
2001 President
Austin Chord Rangers

AN INCORPORATED, NON-PROFIT, FRATERNAL AND EDUCATIONAL SINGING SOCIETY
"KEEP THE WHOLE WORLD SINGING"



Stage Left • Sept. 2001

A Park for All

You may have recently read or heard about the City of Austin's struggle over how to manage events at Auditorium Shores over the next several years. We are entering a period of intense activity at Town Lake Park as the City of Austin completes construction of the new Lester E. Palmer Community Events Center, develops new park land, and Arts Center Stage transforms Palmer Auditorium into the Long Center for the Performing Arts. With all of this activity, it is important that we not lose sight of our goal, creating a beautiful urban park on the shores of Town Lake. This park will not only host the arts and community events, but also outdoor charitable events such as last month's salute to Lance Armstrong, the Capitol 10K, and the Austin Symphony Orchestra's Fourth of July Concert.

I am happy to report good news on this subject. In a recent letter to Arts Center Stage, Austin City Manager Jesus Garza informed the community that, "... during this period of building and construction, access to Auditorium Shores and the surrounding areas will be greatly restricted." However, he went on to offer reassurance that, "... once construction along Auditorium Shores and Riverside Drive has been completed in 2004, Auditorium Shores will be reopened for future events."

City Manager Garza continues, saying, "The ultimate goal is to promote a sense of pride among the citizens of Austin in a public asset that provides enjoyment to all. I thank you for your partnership in this endeavor as we anticipate the opening of this premiere center for the performing arts."

Arts Center Stage applauds City Manager Garza for his leadership and we echo his sentiments about the pride we also take in our public/private partnership with the City of Austin. With the investments the community will make in the next several years in the Long Center, the Lester E. Palmer Community Events Center, and urban green space, Town Lake Park will become a popular destination for Austinites, Central Texas citizens, and Austin visitors.

We are pleased that the City of Austin is working closely with impacted groups to identify acceptable alternative venues that will meet their needs during this construction period. Once the construction phase for Town Lake Park has ended, we look forward to an expanded schedule of events at Auditorium Shores.

Community groups raise millions of dollars each year with activities on Town Lake, and events such as the Austin Symphony Orchestra's Fourth of July Concert are extremely popular. The community expects a return on the investments we are all making in Town Lake Park and the ultimate measure of success is ensuring that the park serves many more people in the future.

Numerous community volunteers, concerned citizens, and City employees are working together to build Town Lake Park. It will truly be a one-of-a-kind amenity that will enhance the quality of life in Austin and Central Texas. We extend our thanks to City Manager Garza and those who are helping to make the vision a reality.

Sincerely,

Ben Bentzin, Chairman

benbentzin@artscenterstage.org

Symphony Square Sizzles on 25th Birthday

As scheduled for July 25th, Symphony Square (<http://www.austinsymphony.org/about/square/>) celebrated its 25th birthday party as the Austin Symphony Orchestra (ASO) (<http://www.austinsymphony.org/>) presented a night of salsa, country, folk, and rock. The historic amphitheater sparkled when guest artists Beto y los Fairlanes, Rick Trevino, W.C. Clark, Steve Fromholz, and Eric Johnson took the stage. Friends of Symphony Square—including Arts Center Stage's own Board of Trustees member Jane Sibley—were honored.

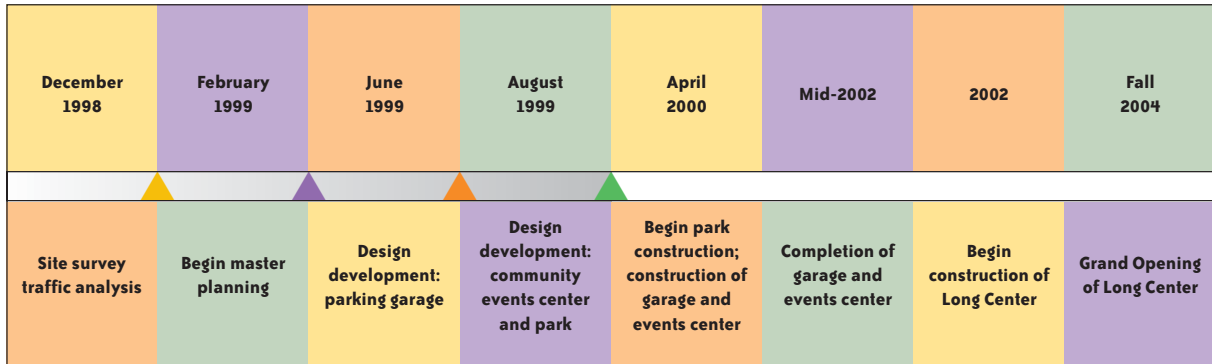
Austin's historic Symphony Square at 11th and Red River is home to the ASO's offices as well as the popular restaurant Cafe Serranos, the Women's Symphony League, and the Symphony Square Amphitheatre. Symphony Square was opened on April 8, 1978 under the leadership of ASO Board President Jane Sibley and board member Peggy Brown. The Austin Symphony Orchestra Society and the Urban Renewal Agency combined private donations, federal grants, and countless hours of volunteer work and enthusiasm to construct this gift to the State of Texas. Symphony Square is a permanent structure and a lasting contribution to the people of Austin and to the Austin Symphony Orchestra.

A celebration would not be complete without cake! History in the "Baking" was made by Central Market as they provided the party cakes that were decorated to reflect the historic property and the musical instruments of the symphony.



A trip down memory lane — on April 8, 1978, Austin Symphony President Jane Sibley, Mayor Carol Rylander, and Lady Bird Johnson announce the opening of the historic Symphony Square.

TOWN LAKE PARK TIMELINE



Austin Lyric Opera to Celebrate 15th Anniversary Season

Austin Lyric Opera celebrates its 15th anniversary with the 2001–2002 season. This year's stirring productions offer an unforgettable journey into the deepest reaches of the heart—from the darkest to the most ethereal. The season opens with Gounod's Faust, the famous tale of a disillusioned philosopher who bargains with the Devil for eternal youth. Performances are November 9–12, 2001 at Bass Concert Hall.

The new year brings a much anticipated Texas premiere, André Previn's A Streetcar Named Desire, January 18–21. Tennessee Williams' brilliant play, whose images and dialogue are indelibly etched in the American cultural consciousness, soars to new heights with the scintillating stage music of Previn. The production will also mark the debut of Peter Bay, music director of the Austin Symphony at the podium directing the Opera's Orchestra.

Puccini's La Fanciulla del West (The Girl of the Golden West) is a love story, but this time with characters from the harsh days of the California gold rush, a cliff-hanger ending, and as one might expect, glorious music. The production is March 8–11 at Bass Concert Hall.

Applauded last year for staging a "historic performance" and making opera "immediate" and "potent"—General Director Joseph McClain returns to the City Coliseum to direct the season finale, Verdi's Rigoletto, May 10–14, 16–20. This compelling and tragic story of a father's obsessive love for his daughter contains some of the most brilliant ensemble music in all of opera.

Season tickets are currently on sale for as little as \$42 for all four performances. Call 472-5992 or order on-line at www.austinlyricopera.org.

Greater Austin Performing Arts Center
Arts Center Stage
1301 W. 25th St., Suite 204
Austin, Texas 78705

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 2704

Change Service Requested

Armstrong Community Music School Offers Diverse Classes

The Armstrong Community Music School of Austin Lyric Opera is currently accepting registrations for kids and adults for its fall semester of daytime and evening classes. The School includes private and group instruction in voice and all instruments taught by world-class musicians, engaging infant and early childhood classes, state-of-the-art computer music classes on music technology, and music and musical cultures from around the world.

For a complete listing of classes and prices visit www.austinlyricopera.org/armstrong.html or call 474-2331.