

# Stratford Tribune

NEWSLETTER OF THE TEXAS SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL GUILD

SUMMER 2022

## Company All Around!

### A Message from Guild President Karen Peters

As I am writing this message, it is the third week of May. The company members have all arrived in Kilgore and moved into their quarters for the summer. There will be a lot of activity, including the building of sets, working on sound and lighting, designing and sewing costumes, selling tickets, and rehearsing lines. This bevy of activity ends in the production of top-quality theater productions in East Texas. I am sure all of you are as eager for the season to begin as I am.

The Guild usually hosts a Welcome Dinner for the company. Due to Covid restrictions, the dinner was a pick-up-and-go. We are hopeful that we will be able to host a Strike Dinner on August 1st. The plan is to hold the Guild's annual membership meeting after the dinner. If that is not possible, we will conduct the meeting via email as has been the case the past two summers.

### Welcome Dinner for the Company

Due to the continuing caution regarding COVID, and the fact that 100+ people gathered from all over the country for the 2022 season, the Welcome Dinner was a grab-and-go meal restricted to the company. On Monday, May 23, Claudia Morgan-Gray, Weldon Gray and Eileen Kosnik descended on the Festival Center kitchen with prepared food and divided it into eco-friendly take-out containers. Weldon Gray orchestrated the distribution, and with each person assigned a specific role, it was done to perfection!

Three types of meals were prepared, with options for those with certain dietary requirements.

It is our hope that the Strike Dinner will follow our more usual arrangement. Look for updates as the summer unfolds!



We will keep you informed.

At the membership meeting, you will hear reports from each committee of their activities for the year; you will get a budget report, a membership report from the 2023 membership drive, and we will vote on the slate of officers for the 2022 – 2023 season. The nominees include the following: President – Karen Peters; President-Elect – Linda Crabtree; Membership Secretary – Lois Knouse; Recording Secretary – Ruth Anne Camp; and Treasurer – Louise Cochran.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the theater in July and hopefully at the Strike Dinner on August 1st. Be sure to stop by the Guild/Foundation table in the lobby to say “hello.”

Thank you for joining the Guild and supporting the Texas Shakespeare Company.



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### FOLLOW THE GUILD



The TSF Guild is now officially social—on two platforms. Follow the Guild on

**Facebook:** [TexasShakesGuild](#)  
or on  
**Twitter:** [@TxShakesGuild](#)

We'll be sharing news, photos, and interesting facts that inquiring Festival fans and Guild members might want to know. Follow your Guild today!

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## Hello from TSF Lunch Bunch Central

The Company has arrived, and we have begun our Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday weekly tradition of Lunch Bunch feedings. First Lunch Bunch happened on Wednesday, May 25th.

The response thus far from our Guild members and tried and true Lunch Bunch members has been wonderful as always. We do still have several dates available that we'd love help filling. To all of you that have signed up and to those of you that will, THANK YOU. Thank you for being an important and valuable part of helping make the TSF Guild Lunch Bunch a welcomed entity of hospitality, comfort, and food for the TSF Company while they are here.

Like a lucky penny, there we are every Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday with our arms and hearts extended offering the universal sign of comfort and welcome...food. You, your contributions, dedication, and energy help to make the TSF Company feel welcomed. For that, thank you always.

Like last year, we will continue to respect Covid safety protocols and lovingly accept your food dishes; the kitchen crew will portion them into individual servings for a "grab and go" pick up by the Company. If you're bringing cookies and you want to pre-portion them yourself into baggies, that would be great.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

As in the past, we ask that you provide a note that tells the content of your food offering. This is particularly important this year, as we have some in the Company who have food allergies that fall into a critical or severe category. That is why, along with including a list of ingredients, we are asking everyone to NOT include ANY NUTS (including nut-based oils or milks in any dish), NO SHELLFISH, NO SOY, and NO COCONUT.

Thank you in advance for your time, energy, and talent. and more specifically, for your continued support and participation in the TSF Lunch Bunch. If you'd like to check dates or if you have any questions or need additional information, please contact one of us:

**Claudia Morgan-Gray**  
903-646-0506  
[claudiam@weldonrgray.com](mailto:claudiam@weldonrgray.com)

**Eileen Kosnik**  
903-535-7864  
[ekosnik@mac.com](mailto:ekosnik@mac.com)

## Festival Greeters

Martha Rutherford and Melinda Johnson send their sincere thanks to all of those who signed up to greet before all the performances. If you are one of those loyal volunteers, you will get a letter about the time(s) you are working. If for some reason you are not able to work at the time that you originally chose, please contact Martha R. (903) 576-0105 or Melinda J. (903) 235-3762.

Thanks again for being one of those helpful, friendly faces meeting audience members as they arrive before each production, providing a warm welcome and any other information and directions as needed.

## 2023 Guild Membership Drive

from Linda Crabtree, President-Elect

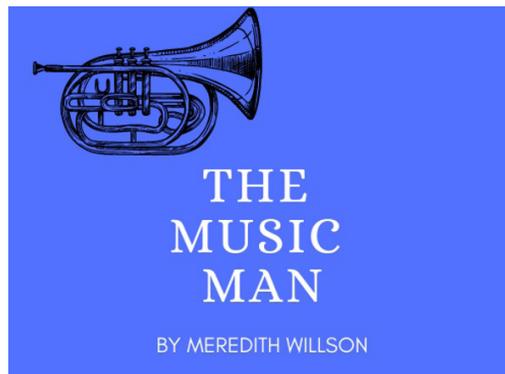
To all who renewed your Guild Membership for 2022 – THANK YOU! The company – 109 strong this year – receives breakfast and lunch because of you. And there are additional opportunities through the season - so much of the wonderful East Texas hospitality our company has come to appreciate is provided by the faithful participation of our Guild members and our shared love of all things TSF.

In the next few weeks, you will receive a membership letter for 2023. Please complete the form with all of the required information. Return it in the enclosed envelope with your check, or you can join online at <https://www.texasshakespeare.com/join-the-guild>. There will be a

reminder letter in the fall, but your renewal now truly helps us when making plans for next year.

Membership Secretary Lois Knouse reports this season's membership in the Guild at 758; 78 of those are new to the Guild, and 57 have already renewed for 2023. We are always looking for "a few (or many!) good members," so please consider renewing now. If you are interested in becoming more involved with Guild activities, please call, text, or email Linda Crabtree, 903-918-1365, [lcrabtree795@gmail.com](mailto:lcrabtree795@gmail.com). We'll be thrilled to have you!

## TSF Welcomes Local East Texans to the Cast of *The Music Man*



As is sometimes the case, the Festival provides opportunities for some of our own East Texas talents to be a part of the Company in special roles. This year is one of those years.

Four local gentlemen will be performing as the barbershop quartet in *The Music Man*. They are members of East Texas Men in Harmony, and their specific quartet is called "Class Reunion." Their names are Irv Engelbrecht, Ed Woolever, Danny Dorsey, and Bob Arbuckle.

As a quartet, they have been performing together for many years and are thrilled to bring their talents to the TSF stage. Look and listen for these talented East Texans!

## Here's a bit of spotlight on this year's directors of the productions--

### **Matthew Simpson, *The Taming of the Shrew***

Matthew is an Associate Artistic Director with TSF where his directing credits include *As You Like It*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Mirth & Merriment*, *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, *A Christmas Carol Radio Play*, and assistant director to the unforgettable Stephen Terrell on 2016's *Carousel*. For the TSF Roadshow, he has directed productions of *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *As You Like It*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and three adaptations of *Shakespeare's Greatest Hits*. Other directing credits include the following: Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's Next Stage Ensemble, The Black Box Theater in Minnesota, Theatre Longview, ArtsView Children's Theatre, and Kilgore College. As an actor, Matthew has been in 16 TSF productions and worked regionally with the Guthrie Theater, Denver Center Theatre Company, Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Chamber Theater Productions of Boston, the Resident Ensemble Players, and the Richmond Shepard Theater in NYC. Matthew holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Acting from the University of Delaware.

### **Sasha Hildebrand, *Nell Gwynn***

Sasha Hildebrand received her MFA in Theatre from the University of Iowa and a Post-graduate Degree in Acting from the Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts. After earning her degrees, Sasha lived and worked in Chicago for several years as an actor, costume designer and theatre teacher for the Chicago Academy for the Arts. However, her last five years have been spent as the Artistic Director and Assistant Professor of Theatre at Sterling College in Sterling, Kansas. She currently teaches acting, as well as costume design; she also directs the main stage shows. This will mark Sasha's 4th season at TSF- where some of her favorite acting roles have been Dotty in *Noises Off*, Mistress Quickly in *Henry V & The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and her personal favorite: Madame Arcati in *Blithe Spirit*.

### **Rebekah Scallet, *The Tempest***

Rebekah is a director and educator who believes that theatre should be imaginative, interactive, and accessible for all, and that it plays a vital role in creating and strengthening communities. Currently Rebekah lives and works in St. Louis, where she recently directed Molière's *The Learned Ladies* for the Sargent Conservatory at Webster University. Rebekah served for nine years as the Producing Artistic Director of the Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre where she directed several productions, including *Macbeth*, *My Fair Lady*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Two Gentleman of Verona*, *King Lear*, and *Twelfth Night*. She also oversaw the creation of AST's educational touring program that brought Shakespeare to schools and communities across the state of Arkansas. During the pandemic, she helped create "Revisiting Shakespeare," an online and at-home festival featuring performances and panels discussing Shakespeare's relevance today. In the summer of 2021, she directed *The Winter's Tale* for the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, where she had spent five previous summers. Rebekah also lived and worked in Chicago for ten years, where she was a member of the Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, and worked with Northlight Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Theatre Seven, LiveWire Chicago Theatre, Raven Theatre, and greasy joan & co. Rebekah is a recipient of the Arkansas Arts Council's Individual Artist Fellowship in Directing, received her Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and English from Brandeis University, and is a graduate of Illinois State University with her Master of Fine Arts in Directing.

### **Whitney Branran, *The Music Man***

Whitney has worked across the country (Bally's Casino in Las Vegas) and across the ocean (three "Pick of the Fringe" award-winning trips to the International Fringe Festival). She was the resident tap-coach for the Broadway show *Billy Elliot* and two of its national tours. Whitney was the world-premiere choreographer of *Changing Minds* for Theatrical Rights Worldwide and choreographed *The Irish and How They Got That Way* Off-Off Broadway at Queens Theatre in the Park. A favorite director/choreographer credit is crafting four musical productions aboard the American Queen, the largest luxury paddle boat in the world. She directed/choreographed four music videos for songwriter Amy Barkley. She is the founder/owner of Dramatic Movement and teaches dance at Rhodes College. Selected regional director/choreographer credits: *Camelot*, *Newsies*, *Oklahoma*, *The Taming*, *Head Over Heels*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Mamma Mia*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Schoolhouse Rock Live*, *Hairspray*, and *Shockheaded Peter*. She is a proud Member of SAG-AFTRA, AEA, and SDC unions. Lots of love to Danny, her fiancé.

### **DJ Canaday, *The Hog Princess***

Born and raised in California, DJ first took to the stage at the age of seven in a pantomime of *Hansel & Gretel*. This triumph was shortly followed by a featured role in a local production of *The Sound of Music*, as a dancing goat. 'Twas love at first bleat. In subsequent years, he has portrayed a cat, a dog, a pig, a crow, an ox, and a bumblebee, though he considers human beings to be his particular specialty. His furniture resides in New York City.

## Join the Green Group—for Three Reasons

If you have not yet joined the “Green Group” by signing up to receive *The Stratford Tribune* newsletter via email rather than through regular postal service, please consider doing it today for three reasons:

- (1) it saves the Guild substantial cost in printing and postage;
- (2) it allows you to receive a greatly enhanced version of the newsletter, including full-color pictures; and
- (3) it includes you on the Festival’s email list, which lets you receive more timely notifications of many TSF activities.

And there is a fourth reason, too: it saves trees!

• **Green Group** — You will receive the TSF newsletters via email and occasional correspondence about Festival activities. Examples of these might be information about the Lunch Bunch, TSF Foundation, raffles, and special TSF events. These emails might be informative or request help with events, etc. and will not be excessive. *We do not share your email address with other entities.*

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To join the Green Group, send an email to [LEKhouse2020@outlook.com](mailto:LEKhouse2020@outlook.com). Please be sure to include your name. Sometimes it is difficult to identify you by your email address.



## 2021—2022 Executive Board

<b>President</b>	<i>Karen Peters</i>
<b>President—Elect</b>	<i>Linda Crabtree</i>
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	<i>Sharon Noblit</i>
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	<i>Lois Knouse</i>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<i>Louise Cochran</i>
<b>Past President</b>	<i>Gem Meacham</i>
<b>VP—Guild Events</b>	<i>Kimberly Macedo</i>
<b>Co-VPs—Company Events</b>	<i>Eileen Kosnik</i> <i>Claudia Morgan-Gray</i>
<b>Co-VPs—House Events</b>	<i>Melinda Johnson</i> <i>Martha Rutherford</i>
<b>Co-VPs—Communications</b>	<i>Martha Dalby</i> <i>Kate Wells</i> <i>Lynn Wells, Graphic Design</i>
<b>TSF Artistic Director</b>	<i>Meaghan Simpson</i>
<b>TSF Managing Director</b>	<i>John Dodd</i>
<b>TSF Associate Artistic Director/ Director of Development</b>	<i>Matthew Simpson</i>

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## Anonymous Donor Provides Microwaves for Each TSF Dorm Room



# TSF Guild Lunch Bunch Swings Into Action



# TSF 2022 SEASON DIRECTORS



**Matthew Simpson**  
ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
DIRECTOR, THE TAMING OF THE SHREW



**Sasha Hildebrand**  
DIRECTOR, NELL GWYNN  
ACTING COMPANY



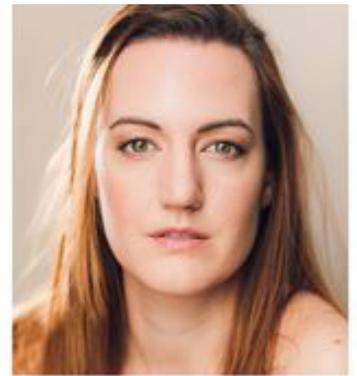
**Whitney Branam**  
DIRECTOR, THE MUSIC MAN  
FESTIVAL CHOREOGRAPHER



**Rebekah Scallet**  
DIRECTOR, THE TEMPEST



**DJ Canaday**  
PLAYWRIGHT & DIRECTOR, THE HOG PRINCESS  
ACTING COMPANY



**Grace Abele**  
PLAYWRIGHT, CHARLOTTE COLLINS

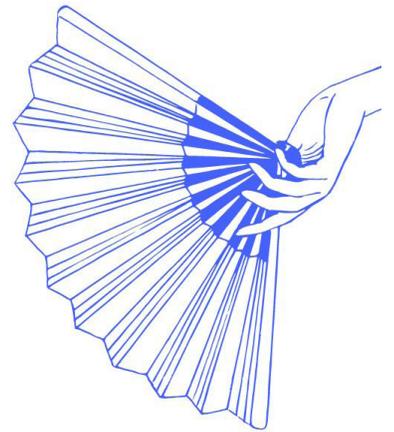
# Charlotte Collins

A WORLD PREMIERE STAGED READING

By:



GRACE ABELE



Featuring:



MEAGHAN SIMPSON



MICAH GOODING



MATTHEW SIMPSON

ONE NIGHT ONLY  
JULY 20TH AT 7:30 PM



TRAVIS ASCIONE



LAURA BRENNAN



EMILY S. CHANG



ISA CONDO-OLVERA



SEAN M. DALE



RICK HIGGINBOTHAM



SASHA HILDEBRAND



KEVIN THIEL