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Photo of Stuart and Scott Gentling caption: Stuart and Scott Gentling, outstanding figurative artists and twin brothers, are helping to create and coordinate all of the art for the Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Performance Hall including murals designed for the Great Dome, the proscenium arch, and the sidewalls of the Founders Concert Theater. They are pictured here with a maquette for the Great Dome mural.

Additional artwork: Drawing of Scott's wreath of wings and writing from his workbook - "The resemblance of the dome's double winged motif to a wreath of victory is an intentional metaphor and is my tribute to the sensibilities of both the audiences and the performers who will enter this place. In its significance as a triumph of the spirit, or rather, as a part of that triumph, the winged idea was chosen for other associations as well. Symbolically, wings *have always represented* also represent imagination, creative thought and *spiritual* ascendancy in general."

Master Artists At Work

"Wombmates" is what artists Stuart and Scott Gentling's mother would offer as matter-of-fact explanation for the 53-year-old twin boys uncanny sense of collaboration on *many things* just about everything in both their personal and professional lives. Highly regarded as figurative painters, the two brothers have lived in Fort Worth since childhood, and have been creative partners for as long as they or anyone else can remember. With subject matters ranging from the ancient Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan to Native American Indians, they are perhaps most widely recognized for their masterful book, Of Birds and Texas, a boxed portfolio of 50 paintings of birds and landscapes, published in 1986 to universal acclaim. They are also self-

Too cute

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motivated scholars, amateur archaeologists and avid collectors of art with interests ranging from antique costumes to American Abstract Expressionist paintings and pre-Columbian Mexican and Peruvian artifacts.

Simple for different
"It almost mystifies me in a way how we work together," said Stuart Gentling. *can* "An idea could spring forth very quickly from one of us and then very quickly be augmented by the other until suddenly - maybe an hour goes by and we're working with the basic concept - and I'm convinced I thought of it and Scott is convinced he thought of it - and then we start laughing at each other. This happens all the time."

"In a way," Stuart continues, "we're very lucky because we know each other so well, we can completely rely on each other's resources. *We also are very independent in our parenting* He brings a *but when we work together he brings a whole* whole set of disciplines to our art that I don't bring and I bring a whole other set. I might make the drawing and he might paint it in, or he might design the work and I might get the commission. It's quite symbiotic; it really enriches us both."

The ~~constant~~ collaboration also obviously enriches the twin's work as seen in the final product. Critics declared Of Birds and Texas "a colossal artistic achievement...a breathtaking tour de force...and the most stunning and prodigious book in Texas history." Edward P. Bass, Chairman of Performing Arts Fort Worth, said when it came to deciding upon artwork for Bass Hall, the Gentlings were the first artists considered.

"Stuart and Scott have world-class talent that is entirely fitting for our world-class hall," he said. "We had to look no further for the level of sophistication, expertise, creativity and skill needed to provide integral artistic elements to an extraordinary architectural design. The whole will be a rare and beautiful building."

For the past several years, the Gentlings have worked closely with Ed

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Bass, architect David Schwarz, and Project Manager Vicki Dickerson in coordinating the creation of the artwork that will grace Bass Hall. They have addressed where pieces might be appropriate both inside and outside the building, and what the theme, style and content of these works might be. To date, the Gentlings have been commissioned to create the design for four murals in the Founders Concert Theater - on the Great Dome, above the proscenium arch and on each of the 70-foot sidewalls. Other murals and sculptural elements, both interior and exterior, are under study for future integration as schedules and budget might allow.

The Great Dome

Construction work on the Great Dome of the Founders Concert Theater is already complete, and painting has begun. When finished, the dome will be magnificent and breathtaking - ~~white~~ clouds floating above an intense cobalt blue sky encircled by an 80-foot diameter wreath of white wings. The wing design took inspiration from the concept of intellectual and spiritual development found in ancient Greek philosophy, and in particular from a line from Plato's ^{WORK} play "Ion": "A poet is a winged thing and holy." It also makes reference, according to master artist Scott Gentling, to a laurel wreath of victory in tribute to both performers and audience who enter the concert theater. ^{and so the strength of the hall itself} Other observers have interpreted the design as the wings of an angel embracing the hall.

The composition is designed in such a way that wherever one sits in the audience chamber, ^{he senses} there is a constant dynamic spiraling towards the center, ^{double both and away from} reinforcing the ^{spiritual equilibrium} meaning that Gentling had in mind.

"The theme of the dome is what art can do spiritually; the swirling from the periphery to the center is an attempt to create a feeling of

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transcendence," he said.

"My aim is to show a progression upward in the dome through the wings to the sky and toward the center light where all the clouds vanish and there's just sky. To me, that's a metaphoric way of saying ^{that in a moment of a spiritual experience} all forms dissolve eventually and all means used to achieve that state are ^{left behind or transcended.} no longer necessary.

In other words, great art provides an escape of the very form used to create it."

^{and directly} Gentling's expansive wings on the domed ceiling are meant to ^{ultimately be felt simply} have a simple effect: for the audience to look into the dome and feel uplifted. But to get to that simplicity, Gentling has followed a very complicated and historically important mathematical pattern of composition ^{based on} called the golden section, which divides a line into segments in a ratio that reflects perfect proportion. The Greeks used it to build the Pantheon ^{Pantheon}. The Mogul emperor Shah Jahan used it to build the Taj Mahal. Gentling used it as a discipline to dictate the composition and proportions of the dynamic spirals swirling in the wings.

^{wings} "I chose to use the golden section for the geometric composition of the winged domes, because few other schemes ^{its} have been so venerated or have shown the ability to relate to so many other diverse expressions of aesthetic, spiritual and scientific thought," said Scott Gentling. "It is taken from nature, where it is seen in the distribution of seeds in a sunflower and in the veining ^{and in many other natural forms including human proportions} of a leaf. Early Christians called it the divine proportion, because its three indivisible related terms were seen as a perfect expression of the Holy Trinity. In music, our diatonic scale is based upon its harmonic proportions. Thus, the music performed in the hall and the geometry of the dome's composition derive from the same mathematics. The two art forms will in fact be integral."

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The Proscenium Arch and Sidewalls

When patrons look up at the proscenium arch over the stage, they will see a stunning 52-foot long by 13-foot high ^{Sanguine Cloud} ~~terra-cotta~~ painting of two partially visible, flowing figures with perfectly-formed hands poised within a hair's breadth of the touch of each other. One hand represents Apollo, the Greek ^{poetry & music} god of light and reason; and the other, Daphne, an exquisite ^{wood} water nymph and daughter of the river god, ^{Dionysus} with whom Apollo is in love. In the Greek myth, Apollo, who has been shot with Cupid's arrow, runs along the riverbank trying to catch Daphne, who does not want to be ravished by the god. Daphne calls to her father for rescue, and he turns her into a laurel tree as a means of escape.

"This painting depicts the moment just after Apollo grasps ^{has grasped} for Daphne's hand, ^S and she is pulling away and begins to turn into a laurel tree," said Stuart Gentling, principal designer of the scene. "It is a well-known motif in many works of sculpture, and the theme of many ballets. To me, it both symbolizes the eternal struggle between heaven and earth, and honors the theater, dance and music. Apollo, in going after Daphne, is really striving for the unattainable, which in essence, is what the artistic experience is all about.

"Later in the story, Apollo decides since he can't have Daphne, he will make her his emblem, and thus, her laurel leaves are made into crowns given to all who achieve immortality in arts, music, literature, dance, athletics and warfare."

Flanking the proscenium arch, on the sidewalls of the hall, just below ceiling level, will be two 70-foot long by 11-foot high murals. Depicting deer in a natural Texas landscape of oaks, sunflowers, sumac and mustang grapes, these murals reinforce the reference to theater as an eternal quest. On

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the right side of the stage is a lone stag trumpeting; on the left are four does, one of whom is looking back in answer to the stag. Also designed by Stuart Gentling, this is a continuation of the male/female motif portrayed by the hands of Apollo and Daphne at the proscenium. The sidewall paintings are designed in a subtle monochromatic green pallet to emphasize the conceptual and provide a sense of spiritual effervescence.

Sacred Grove

"[?]Irrespective of knowing an esoteric Greek myth about the laurel tree, I want Bass Hall audiences to look up and feel something personal in these works. I want them to feel the pursuit, to feel the sense of dance and the sense of the theater," said Stuart Gentling.

"To some extent, all our work is meant as a decorative touch, but there is also an interconnection among the pieces. The culmination is at the highest point; Scott's wings embracing the sky in the center dome are the absolute resolution of the ^{Resolved}pursuit brought together into one spiritual wholeness. The conflict is over in the dome."

"The Gentlings have produced some very exciting art work for the hall, including drawings for the dome, the painting over the proscenium arch and several ideas for exterior mosaic work," said Ted Pillsbury, Director of the Kimbell Art Museum. "We are so enthusiastic about the fabulous work they are creating that, in mid-April, 1998, the Kimbell will mount an exhibition in the East Gallery showcasing their various paintings, drawings, sketches and models to coincide with the Grand Opening of Bass Hall.

"They are remarkable and outstanding figurative artists," Pillsbury continued. "Scott's drawings for the dome are extraordinarily sophisticated in the way they achieve both a harmony with the architecture and convey the symbolism of what a performing arts hall really means."

Both Gentlings find tremendous personal meaning in their artwork for
the Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Performance Hall. Fort Worth has been their
beloved home for almost fifty years, ^{and the Bass family have been patrons since 1962} so for them, this is both an opportunity
to be part of a magnificent cultural undertaking and to give back to a place
very dear to them.

"We both want to personally honor our mother, Barbara Gentling
Smith, with this work," said Scott Gentling. "She literally introduced us to
the arts; she took us to hear our first symphony at the Will Rogers
Auditorium, and she bought us our first art history book. She has fostered
our talent throughout our lives, and to her, we owe a great deal of gratitude."