In summer 2003, the Texas State Historical Association, in collaboration with the Texas Music Office/Office of the Governor, the Center for Texas Music History at Southwest Texas State University, and the University of Texas at Austin, will publish the Handbook of Texas Music. The Handbook is an ancillary to the multi-volume New Handbook of Texas, published by the TSHA. As the first reference publication to include such a comprehensive survey of the people, places, and things involved in the development of the state’s rich and diverse musical heritage, the Handbook of Texas Music will be the definitive encyclopedia of Texas music history.
The idea for a new reference book about Texas music was first presented to the Texas State Historical Association by Casey Monahan, director of the Texas Music Office. In 1998, Monahan contacted the TSHA about the possibility of collaborating on a reference work that would provide a handy guide to the unique musical history of the Lone Star State. Monahan chose the Texas State Historical Association because of its record of publishing attractive books distinguished for their usefulness and scholarship.

In collaboration with Doug Barnett and Roy Barkley at the TSHA, Monahan recruited Gary Hartman of the Center for Texas Music History at Southwest Texas State University and Dave Oliphant of the University of Texas at Austin and author of standard works on Texas music, to help move the project forward. Eventually, the team was expanded to include Cathy Brigham, an ethnomusicologist at Concordia University of Austin, Donna Coates, TSHA illustrations editor, George Ward, head of the publication division of the TSHA, and David Timmons, TSHA design and layout specialist.

The subject matter of the Handbook of Texas Music is quite broad. It will include articles on a variety of ethnic groups and their music, including Native Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans, Anglo Americans, Czechs, Germans, French, and others. The book will cover such diverse musical genres as blues, jazz, gospel, conjunto, Tejano, classical, zydeco, country, swing, polka, and rock and roll. It also will include encyclopedic entries on numerous individuals, musical groups, and institutions, ranging from Chelo Silva to Joe Patek, the Houston Symphony Orchestra to the Texas Top Hands, and Panther Hall to the Texas Star Inn. The stories behind leading radio and television stations, as well as longstanding musical programs, such as Austin City Limits, also will be presented.

The Handbook will relate the history of Gilley's in Pasadena.
The Handbook of Texas Music: An Important New Reference Book on Texas Music History

The Handbook of Texas Music will be a one-volume, fully illustrated, general encyclopedia of Texas music and musicians. It is intended for anyone with an interest in this vital aspect of Texas history and culture, whether that interest is academic, avocational, or amateur. Furthermore, since the book will embrace all types of music, it will appeal to a broad audience comprising aficionados of classical, ethnic, folk, rock, country, and other genres.

The Handbook of Texas Music fills an important void in the historiography of Texas music. Most Texans are passionate about their unique musical heritage, and the Handbook will be a welcome resource for those who want to know more about this vital aspect of the state's history.

For updates and announcements about the Handbook of Texas Music, please see the TSHA web site at: www.tsha.utexas.edu.