

## It's Off to the Czech Republic and Poland!

Prague, Teplice, Krakow – these spectacular European cities evoke centuries of music history, phenomenal architecture, picturesque scenes, elegant performance halls, and famous, significant urban spaces. What better destination than the Czech Republic and Poland for Philadelphia Sinfonia's June 2007 concert tour!

We are building on a successful 2003 tour to Central Europe, when we visited Vienna, Budapest, and Prague. Prague was a much-loved city on that tour, with its maze of ancient streets, the majestic Moldau River, historic Prague Castle, and the still-lingering presence of Dvorak, Smetana, and Mozart.



Old Town Hall, Prague

While the complete itinerary has not yet been set, we will visit composers' homes and museums and perhaps hear a private chamber performance in the Betramka Mozart house and museum in Prague. We hope to perform in the beautiful old Czech spa town of Teplice, where Beethoven, Goethe, Chopin, Humboldt, and Schopenhauer also visited, and take the overnight train from Prague to Krakow, in Poland. Krakow is a truly beautiful, historic city, much restored since World War II. It is home to castles and ornate churches, an old market square, world-famous salt mines with miles of underground tunnels and caverns and rock salt carvings. It is also home to Kazimierz, a

center of Jewish tradition and culture – damaged by the Nazis, but now restored and vibrant.

We always hope that all members of the orchestra will travel with us. We encourage our members to use this summer to earn money for the tour if that is what it takes. We will fundraise together over the next year to help cover our overhead expenses,

*cont'd on pg 2*



Wawel Hill, Krakow

## Young Musicians Join Forces for Final Concert

How many musically talented young people can you fit into one space?

To find out, come to Philadelphia Sinfonia's season-ending Festival Concert on Sunday, May 7, at 3 p.m. in St. Stephen's Church, when the Sinfonia instrumentalists combine forces with the famed Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale.

Concert repertoire includes Verdi, Prokofiev, Handel, Bach, Vivaldi, and



Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale

Dvorak. Sinfonia will collaborate with the Philadelphia Boys Choir on "See the Conquering Hero Come!" from *Judas Maccabaeus*, and *Zadok the Priest* (*Coronation anthem No. 1*).

"It is a wonderful experience to watch and listen to these two outstanding youth groups come together to create their interpretations of this repertoire," says Conductor Gary White. "The energy on stage will be felt by all in the audience. I am quite sure of that!"

"The Philadelphia Boys Choir's musicality and dedication to keeping choral music alive and vibrant in our region and beyond make them an ideal match with Philadelphia Sinfonia, as we do the same with orchestral music," adds White.

*cont'd on pg 3*

## Spring 2006 Auditions

Know a boffo bassist? A fantastic flutist? A terrific trombonist? A powerful percussionist?

Philadelphia Sinfonia is looking for a few good musicians, and you, as current members, are integral to getting out the word to your music friends and teachers about the upcoming auditions on Saturday, May 13, and Saturday, May 20 at St. Stephen's, 12-5:30 p.m. Tell friends to contact Sinfonia President Carol Brown at 215-248-5814 or [info@philadelphiasinfonia.com](mailto:info@philadelphiasinfonia.com) to arrange an audition. Pass it on...

(Off to... cont'd)

such as rental of percussion and other large instruments. We will select and orient chaperones to join us on our tour. The orchestra will rehearse and perform repertoire throughout our 2006-07 concert season for the tour concert program. Each month we will be busy planning and preparing for the trip – and finally the day will come when we take off for Europe together, as musical ambassadors from Philadelphia.

We feel it is an enormous privilege and an honor to represent Philadelphia Sinfonia, our city, and our country in this way. It is a big responsibility to be a member of an international concert tour. But the rewards are enormous for individual members and for the orchestra as a whole. We stretch ourselves and grow, musically and socially, culturally and intellectually. And when the last notes of the last tour concert are played the thrill is amazing. It honors human accomplishment, human connection, and human genius. It elevates and inspires us.



Prague Castle

We really can't wait.

Carol Brown  
President

## Sonata

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Michele DiGirolamo  
Carol Brown  
Paul O'Neill

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## From the Podium

As we prepare to enter our exciting tenth year, I proudly look back over the eight years I have been with the orchestra and think about all we have accomplished and what has made us stand out as one of the Delaware Valley's great cultural treasures.

I believe first and foremost that we are successful because of the tremendous group effort that goes into making the orchestra. The enthusiasm and tireless energy of our talented young musicians, their generous parents, and our hard-working Board have made us what we are and developed our truly unique sense of "community." The care, compassion, and commitment to each member begins the very moment a prospective musician auditions and continues until that player graduates and moves on.

We also work diligently to cultivate leadership opportunities for the musicians. Our section leaders handle many responsibilities with care and thoroughness. I am always pleased to see our members support and respect each other in truly remarkable ways.

We also strive to develop self-sufficient, independent, and thinking musicians. In fact, I hear this from many of the teachers who send us their students. We supplement the growth of our members through rehearsal discussions of the relevant music

history and theory required to play our repertoire. The players gain valuable insight into the music, which helps them mature into stronger individual musicians able to play at a very high level. I believe treating the orchestra as a professional ensemble nurtures such growth.

Our chamber orchestra is another jewel of the Sinfonia community. I look back over the years at the invaluable opportunities offered to our players through this fine performance ensemble. Ready to play at anytime, the chamber orchestra has had the privilege of performing with professional soloists and at special events. These musicians spend additional time each Saturday learning a different set of skills that allow them to play in the intimate small group setting.

As we plan our tenth anniversary concert season, the summer 2007 Central European tour, and the future of this excellent youth orchestra, I look at how much we have grown and all that we have accomplished and I can't wait to see what the next 10 years brings!

Gary D. White  
Music Director & Conductor

## Sinfonia on the Silver Screen!

So you grab a tub of popcorn, head into the theater, settle in one of those comfy Ritz seats, and wait for the flick to begin. You look up from the filmbill and staring back at you from the big screen is... Philadelphia Sinfonia Conductor Gary White?

You aren't imagining things; that really is Gary White up there, larger than life.

Right now a 26-image Sinfonia slide show is appearing on 18 screens in the Ritz's four area theaters during the seating time before the previews and feature films begin, exposing Sinfonia to a huge

audience in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The slides portray a fun and dedicated youth orchestra in action – rehearsals in St. Stephen's, musician close-ups, behind-the-scenes concert shots, performances, and tour photos, along with audition information and Sinfonia's web site.

Many thanks to Tom Gralish, father of concertmaster Madeline Gralish and a photographer for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, for taking most of the photos, putting the slide show together, and arranging for it be shown on Ritz screens.

## Sinfonia Wows at the Kimmel

A standing ovation. Three callbacks for Conductor Gary White. Wild applause for the Stanley Cowell Trio. It was a night to remember at the Kimmel Center.

Philadelphia Sinfonia played magnificently to a full house March 29 in the Perelman Theater at the Kimmel Center in a concert that featured Verdi, Vivaldi, Prokofiev, Beethoven – and jazz pianist, composer and Steinway artist Stanley Cowell.

“The Kimmel Center concert showed our audience the wide variety and musical riches this orchestra is capable of achieving,” White says. “The evening’s vast repertoire covered music from the 1600’s through the present. The orchestra gave a concert that showed its strengths and versatility in all genres and time periods.”

The concert was preceded by a lovely reception at Jacobs Music, where Cowell was feted by WHYY personality Ed Cunningham and WRTI’s legendary Bob Perkins, who also emceed the concert. Guests enjoyed trolley rides between the Kimmel and Jacobs Music, where they sipped champagne and nibbled on delicious



**Stanley Cowell (far left) accepts gift and applause from (l to r) WRTI’s Bob Perkins, WHYY’s Ed Cunningham and Mark Love of Jacobs Music/Steinway**

finger foods and sweets. Kudos to Sylvia Cowell, Stanley’s wife, for organizing such a delightful event.

Later, back at the Kimmel, Sinfonia accompanied the Stanley Cowell Trio in an original Cowell composition titled “Family Suite.”

“Working with Stanley Cowell both as a soloist and a living breathing composer was an exciting experience and a unique opportunity to explore the creative process from its beginnings to the final performance,” White says. “We are all musically richer for it.”

*(Young Musicians cont’d)*

The Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale, founded in 1968, performs more than 60 concerts a season and conducts an annual international tour as “America’s Ambassadors of Song.” The Choir has performed with The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Pennsylvania Ballet, and the Opera Company of Philadelphia; for presidents, princes, and popes; and at Carnegie Hall and television’s *Saturday Night Live*, with Luciano Pavarotti.

While there are about 200 members total within the various levels of the Choir, the performing Boys Choir consists of about 90 boys, ages 7-15. The Men’s Chorale has about 30 adult male singers.

“Working with Sinfonia is a great opportunity for our boys to see other kids in a musical activity other than singing,” says Jeff Smith, Artistic Director of the Choir. “One of our goals is to build confidence in our boys, but it is always good for them to

see other kids who are musically phenomenal, but on instruments.”

For the Sinfonia musicians, working with the Boys Choir requires learning special accompaniment skills, such as playing with a greater accuracy and sensitivity, and that means the instrumentalists must have an in-depth knowledge of the pieces to perform at their best, White says. And, since the needs of choir vocalists are different than the needs of an orchestra, it requires different skills of the conductor as well.

“Instrumentalists tend to need clarity in a conductor’s beat and a sense of phrasing from the conductor’s left hand,” White says. “While choirs need these things too, they also need clear directions while conducting on things like diction and breathing. This kind of conducting does call into play some different skills for the conductor to employ and the challenge of that has always intrigued and excited me.”

This concert will be unique in another way – the second half will feature all baroque music.

“A youth orchestra does not typically do this kind of repertoire,” White says. “The stylistic challenges are great and we must work very carefully to learn the appropriate way to play each piece. I think it is important for our members to learn to play in all different styles and periods so they become well-rounded musicians.”

The Sinfonia musicians are well prepared to deliver a spectacular season finale.

“Our final concert features the orchestra at its strongest point, after a whole year spent rehearsing and performing together,” White says. “It is both a happy and a sad time for us – happy because it represents the culmination of a year’s worth of work and sad because for graduating seniors it is their last concert with us.”

## Food, Fun, & Relaxation

Strains of Vivaldi's *Concerto in A Major for Strings* drift up the steps to a tiny kitchen on the second floor of St. Stephen's Church where two women bustle about, stirring soup in a crockpot, sticking fries in the oven, warming a tray of homemade macaroni and cheese.

Sue Stinson and Robin AhPing start carrying food to an adjoining room where a row of tables is positioned like a buffet line. First comes the crockpot, steaming with homemade Italian wedding soup, followed by mac 'n' cheese, and then the fries. Down the tables they assemble soft drinks, fruit, bagged snacks, crackers, and candy. As Stinson and Ah Ping start putting the final touches – napkins, ketchup, utensils – on the tables, the music below stops, replaced by the clatter of feet on the stairs, and a mob of hungry musicians bursts into the room.

"You guys snuck up on us," Stinson says, as she hurries down the line placing the food labels in front of each item. "We're running late."

Every Saturday rehearsal this season, the mothers of cellists Kelly Stinson and

McKay AhPing prepare and serve lunch to the Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra musicians who arrive at noon and stay through the full orchestra rehearsal's completion at 5:30 p.m. That's a long time to go without sustenance, so a few years back Sinfonia started to provide a few



**Robin AhPing (l) and Sue Stinson (r) dish out food and smiles to Sinfonia musicians every rehearsal**

munchies to help the musicians make it until dinner time.

However, this year, for the first time, Stinson and AhPing began serving a full lunch between chamber and full orchestra, in addition to the pizza and sodas served during the full orchestra break. They make some of the offerings but rely on parent volunteers for food donations as well.

Hot, gooey grilled cheese sandwiches. Spicy burritos. Chicken parmesan sandwiches. Spring rolls. Pepperoni bread. And almost every week, homemade soup. And the prices – a heaping plate of mac 'n' cheese or a bowl of hot soup for 50 cents – well, what more could a famished, financially strapped teenager ask for?

"It's my husband's fault," laughs Stinson. "He said, 'If you're going to be setting up a snack bar every week, why don't you raise some more money for Sinfonia by making and selling the musicians real food.'"

And every month Stinson presents Sinfonia President Carol Brown with a modest pile of cash for the Sinfonia coffers. But the snack bar is more than the money, even more than the food, it's a place for the musicians to gather, chat, and relax away from responsibilities behind

their music stands.

"We come up here and they greet us by name and ask us what we want," says violinist Duncan Watts, who nonchalantly sparks a chorus of "eeeews!" from his tablemates as he douses his macaroni and cheese with ketchup. "It's nice to see friendly faces at break."

And that is what snack bar is all about.

## Congrats to Eliza Brown!

Eliza Brown was named a finalist in the 2006 ASCAP Foundation Morton Gould Young Composer Award Competition with her orchestral work *Teneo*, premiered by Philadelphia Sinfonia in January.

A Philadelphia Sinfonia recording of the work was submitted along with the score to the major national competition, open to composers age 30 and under.

Congratulations to Brown and to the Sinfonia musicians for helping bring *Teneo* to life.

## President's Column

The 2005-06 orchestra season is rapidly coming to a close. At the same time, the board of directors and conductor are in the midst of planning for an exciting season next year, when Philadelphia Sinfonia will celebrate its tenth anniversary and go on tour.

Anniversaries are moments to take stock of who or what we are, where we have come from, and where we are going. Almost coincidentally, we have been doing that in a thoughtful, deliberate way over the past several months, when the board and the conductor have been engaged in a strategic planning process.

That process is coming to an end, with the development of a plan to guide the growth of the orchestra for the next three years.

We are pleased that Philadelphia Sinfonia has become a strong performance opportunity and educational program for young musicians in the Delaware Valley and that it has evolved in a short time into a well-organized, well-governed entity. At the same time, we recognize that we want to continue to grow, and we have identified where that growth needs to occur and determined how we want to accomplish it.

Our current strengths are largely a product of the people who have participated in our program and the vision and abilities they have brought to their participation. A conductor and music director whose educational approach is broad and process-based, a hard-working and thoughtful board of directors, countless parent and former parent

volunteers and sponsors, committed and capable musicians – this is the human capital that has built Philadelphia Sinfonia year by year. We have extraordinary resources within ourselves and have achieved many successes after working together for several years.

Our new goals involve further enhancing the musical and educational experience for our musicians, raising the profile of the orchestra in the region, and increasing our organizational capacity to fulfill our mission. “Increasing organizational capacity” is a fancy way of saying we need to hire administrative support to grow further, so we will do what most non-profit organizations do, write grants and broaden our funding base to accomplish that. We must add increased financial capital to the human capital.

The trick, and we are mindful of this, is to grow without losing the essential “spirit” of Sinfonia. We believe our program is value-based and process-based, and it may be easier to maintain those qualities as a small and self-contained organization. However, we also believe the future requires growth and change, and we are eager and excited by the challenge to accomplish new things while retaining what we love about what we have.

A three-year plan, an international tour, a tenth anniversary – join us for a celebratory year!

*Carol Brown*  
President

## Trivia Quiz

What significance did *Nabucco* play in Verdi's career as a composer?

The first musician to email Carol Brown ([info@philadelphiasinfonia.com](mailto:info@philadelphiasinfonia.com)) with the correct answer will receive a small prize.

Congratulations to trombone player Joe Duffy, winner of last issue's question: “The *Lt. Kije Suite*, the subject of our last trivia quiz, was originally written as a film score. What other composer whose work the orchestra is playing this year wrote a film score – only one?” The answer? St. Saens, who wrote one score for a silent film in 1908, *L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise*.



“Let the Music Begin”



Gary D. White,  
Music Director and Conductor  
Danielle Garrett, Orchestra Manager

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**Philadelphia Sinfonia**

PO Box 996  
Philadelphia, PA 19105-0996  
Tel. 215-351-0363  
Sinfonia website:  
[www.philadelphiasinfonia.com](http://www.philadelphiasinfonia.com)  
e-mail via website:  
[info@philadelphiasinfonia.com](mailto:info@philadelphiasinfonia.com)

## Our Mission

Philadelphia Sinfonia supports the artistic growth of young musicians in the Delaware Valley by providing high-level ensemble experience in a supportive educational environment.

We believe that the pursuit of excellence requires performers with integrity, working together toward a common goal. Thus, our mission is three-fold: to provide ensemble performance opportunities for young musicians, to achieve the highest level of artistic advancement, and to educate young people broadly to be strong citizens as well as responsible musicians.

We recruit from a demographically diverse student population to provide an opportunity to anyone who musically qualifies and to enrich the experience of all members of the organization.

## Spring 2006 Sonata

### What's Inside

We're Off .....	Front
Young Musicians .....	Front
Auditions .....	Front
From the Podium .....	pg. 2
Silver Screen .....	pg. 2
Wows at Kimmel .....	pg. 3
Food, Fun .....	pg. 4
Teneo in Competition .....	pg. 4
Trivia Quiz .....	pg. 5
President's Column .....	pg. 5
Our Mission .....	Back



Philadelphia Sinfonia  
PO Box 996  
Philadelphia, PA 19105-0996