

President's Column

Ten years! In this anniversary newsletter edition we look at Philadelphia Sinfonia's past, future, and present, specifically the milestone tenth season we have just begun.

The 2006-07 schedule is replete with the usual four full orchestra concerts, two chamber orchestra performances, our annual concerto competition, preparation for a European concert tour in June, a gala anniversary celebration, and an extraordinary partnership with The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Administratively, we are at an exciting developmental juncture.

This summer we began implementing a three-year strategic plan developed last spring by the board and conductor. One of the first initiatives launched was to build a relationship with The Philadelphia Orchestra, which resulted in this season's incredible schedule of interactions with the "Fabulous Philadelphians" (read about it on pg. X). We were also successful in acquiring financial support to hire a grant writer to expand our funding base. Many thanks to The Philadelphia Foundation for recognizing Sinfonia's value as well as our need for support.

With many fine new musicians drawn from a large audition turnout and our talented returning players, the rehearsal season opened to the strains of Dvorak (*Symphony No. 8*), Shostakovich (*Festive Overture*), and Moussorgsky (*Night on Bald Mountain*).

This appealing repertoire reflects Sinfonia's travels, past and future, to Russia and Central Europe, played skillfully and beautifully by our musicians and conductor as they rehearse every week here at home in St. Stephen's Church in Philadelphia.

This is the heart of our mission.

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Highlights

Ten Years of Sinfonia Memories

In 1997, Scottish scientists cloned Dolly the sheep, Comet Hale-Bopp was visible to the naked eye, Tiger Woods won his first Masters Tournament, and an upstart youth orchestra named Philadelphia Sinfonia arrived on the Philadelphia classical music scene.

Almost 10 years later, the cloning debate continues; Hale-Bopp is in a galaxy far, far away; Woods has become golf's greatest player since Jack Nicklaus, and Philadelphia Sinfonia has matured from the new kid on the block to a dynamic and respected orchestra that has performed around the world, for major dignitaries, and with star soloists.

Colin Powell, Independence Hall, 2003

- Chamber orchestra world premiere performance, Composers Competition, Lewis & Clark 200th Anniversary Conference, Philadelphia, 2003
- Private concert for Kosovo refugees
- Two benefit concerts for victims of the earthquake in Kobe, Japan
- Performances with famed soprano Julianne Baird, acclaimed jazz violinist Christian Howes, renowned jazz composer and pianist Stanley Cowell, and the celebrated Philadelphia Boys Choir



Liberty Medal Ceremony

The highlights of the past decade are numerous and memorable:

- Concert tours to England, Belgium, the Netherlands, Central Europe, Italy, Russia and Finland
- Performance at "PoliticalFest," Republican National Convention, Philadelphia Convention Center, 2000
- Performance at Liberty Medal Ceremony for then-Secretary of State

"There are some really extraordinary things that have happened over the years," says Gary White, Sinfonia's Music Director and Conductor since 1999.

For instance, playing in 100-degree weather, unprotected from the relentless sun, on baking black asphalt at the Liberty Medal Ceremony.

"All the circumstances were wrong," White says. "These musicians should have

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(Off to... cont'd)

Each moment between conductor and musicians holds the potential for learning and growth, for ensemble advance, for magnificence. Our history, our season, each piece of music, is a continuum, a study of initiatives, events, and dynamic sounds evolving over time. However, it is the individual, unassuming, moment-to-moment processes of rehearsal that define Sinfonia as much as the larger picture.

Our tenth anniversary logo boasts "10 Spectacular Years" – and they have been exactly that. I am very proud that these spectacular years have been built on many grounded moments, with remarkable intention and thought behind them. There are multiple facets shining in our jewel of an orchestra. It is my belief that they reflect more the depth than the surface of that jewel.

Welcome to our tenth anniversary season.

Carol Brown
President



Christian Howes Slices

Sonata

Fall 2006
Vol. 4, No. 1

Published by:

Philadelphia Sinfonia
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Philadelphia, PA 19105-0996

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Photos by:

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Learning from the Masters

A Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity with the Fabulous Philadelphians

In the category of "It Doesn't Get Any Better Than This," Philadelphia Sinfonia this season will have the extraordinary privilege of playing Dvorak's *Symphony No. 8* with The Philadelphia Orchestra at the Kimmel Center.

Sinfonia musicians will sit side-by-side on stage in Verizon Hall with Philadelphia Orchestra musicians on February 24, 2007, under the baton of Philadelphia Orchestra Associate Conductor Rossen Milanov, as part of a package of interactions with the famed orchestra scheduled for the 2006-07 Sinfonia season.

"This is a phenomenal opportunity," says Sinfonia Conductor and Music Director Gary White. "The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the finest orchestras in the world. Any opportunity to work closely with them is of benefit to our musicians. To actually sit next to these incredible musicians in a rehearsal will be a life-changing experience for them."

The collaboration with The Philadelphia Orchestra began October 21 with a "Career Day" panel conversation at St. Stephen's Church. Philadelphia Orchestra musicians and administrative staff spent an hour talking with Sinfonia musicians and parents about college choices and professional opportunities in the music world.

On February 10 and 17, 2007, Philadelphia Orchestra musicians will return to St. Stephen's to conduct sectional rehearsals with Sinfonia musicians, the first week with strings and the following week with woodwinds and percussion.

Then comes the side-by-side rehearsal at the Kimmel, which will include a post-rehearsal question-and-answer session. Sinfonia parents are invited to attend the rehearsal.

"Rossen will take the hybrid orchestra through a standard Philadelphia Orchestra rehearsal so our musicians will learn firsthand what that experience is like," White says. "Then there is also very much a process of osmosis. When you are sitting next to a player of the caliber of The Philadelphia Orchestra, your level of playing rises. This will be a marvelous encounter for our musicians."

The collaboration came about at the suggestion of some Philadelphia Orchestra musicians. After receiving a CD of Sinfonia performances along with a Sinfonia newsletter announcing the orchestra's 10th anniversary season, Sarah Johnson, Director of Education and Community Partnerships at The Philadelphia Orchestra, says it seemed "like the right year" to plan some activities between the two orchestras.

"It is a wonderful experience for students who participate to sit side by side with members of The Philadelphia Orchestra," Johnson says. "Our musicians very much enjoy working with young musicians – it's a priority and joy for many of them."

White is thrilled Sinfonia was chosen for this honor.

"Our musicians are without a doubt up for it," he says. "You just can't do this with anybody, so this partnership is really saying something about Philadelphia Sinfonia."

Sinfonia Performs at Politicalfest



(Highlights cont'd)

been passing out. Instead, they just played like pros.”

One of the most moving memories for Marv Weinar, one-time Sinfonia parent, former board president, and supporter who has been with Sinfonia since Day One, stemmed from the concert Sinfonia performed for Kosovo refugees at Fort Dix, NJ.

Because it was a military base, security was tight, ID's had to be checked, and the musicians were under strict orders not to hand anything over the fence that separated them from the refugees. But, after the performance, as the musicians shook hands over the fence with the refugees, one musician asked permission to hand over the Philadelphia Sinfonia baseball cap all the musicians were wearing; soon all Sinfonia heads were bare.



Kosovo Refugees Meet America

“Here were these people, evacuated from their homeland, who had nothing,” Weinar says. “Then this group of American teenagers comes and plays music for them. They were so appreciative, they cried. They were shaking and shaking our hands and didn’t want to let go.”

Of course, each and every overseas concert tour is ensconced in a lofty position in the Sinfonia highlights list.

“For me, personally, my first tour with the orchestra to Italy where we played at the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence was very,

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From the Podium

Every September for the past eight years I anxiously await the arrival of Philadelphia Sinfonia’s first rehearsal of the season. I lay awake the night before wondering, “What will this year’s orchestra be like?”

The day finally arrives and I walk down the ornate green metal stairs at St. Stephen’s to give the opening downbeat of a new season. Without fail, as the first notes ring out, I am exhilarated and grateful that I work with such an accomplished orchestra. The thrill of this moment has not diminished in my eight years as Music Director and Conductor.

As we embark on our 10th anniversary season, I look back on so many rich experiences. I am most proud of the times we gave the gift of music to others or to help others. There were the two benefit concerts for victims of the earthquake in Kobe, Japan; a performance at the 2002 Liberty Medal Celebration on a steamy July 4th and another at the 2000 Republican National Convention’s “PoliticalFest,” and serving as U.S. musical ambassadors on our overseas tours. Each of these memorable occasions enriched us as musicians and human beings. This year members of Sinfonia will play in a Philadelphia Corporation for Aging benefit concert to aid senior citizens with utility and medical costs.

And so the tradition continues.

Through the years Sinfonia has had the good fortune to work with world-class so-

loists in musical genres from classical to jazz. Who could forget our impressive concerts with famed soprano Julianne Baird or jazz greats Christian Howes and Stanley Cowell? Collaborations with soloists of this caliber are invaluable learning experiences for the young Sinfonia musicians. I am pleased to announce that this tradition also continues this year, when Sinfonia performs George Gershwin’s classic, *Rhapsody in Blue*, with Bill Cunliffe, a Grammy-nominated arranger, composer, and jazz pianist, and faculty member at Temple University’s Esther Boyer College of Music.

I have also had the immense pleasure of conducting Sinfonia in accompanying several of our young musicians as concerto soloists through our annual concerto competition. Sinfonia is brimming with talented instrumentalists and it is a joy to showcase them.

I am privileged to work with remarkable musicians, a dedicated board, a committed orchestra manager, and supportive parents. All these entities working together over the last decade have helped Sinfonia evolve into a vital and valued Philadelphia institution.

Congratulations to everyone and here’s to the next 10 years!

Gary D. White

Music Director & Conductor

How Did Those Chairs Get There?

The answer to that question is the same way the music stands did – by the hands of hard-working Orchestra Manager Danielle Garrett and a crew of Philadelphia Sinfonia musicians. Sometimes the size of the crew isn’t quite what it should be. Setting up and breaking down at weekly rehearsals is everybody’s responsibility. If you live in the week’s designated area code, please lend a hand. As the saying goes, “Many hands make light work.”

What Are They Doing Now?

Nine years of Sinfonia orchestras means there are scores of Sinfonia musicians who have been unleashed into the world in the past decade. This momentous 10th anniversary year seems like a good time to ask the question “Is there life after Sinfonia?”

The answer, according to an unscientific survey of several Sinfonia alums, is “Yes,” and they all credit their Sinfonia experience with helping to prepare them for it.

Adam Greenstein (trumpet, 2002-04) is a junior at Washington University in St. Louis studying civil engineering with a minor in music. He plays in the jazz and pep bands, wind ensemble, and the University’s official mariachi band called Mariachi Cuicacalli, and is auditioning for the University Symphony this fall.

“Being a member of Sinfonia was a great way to connect with young musicians that have a true passion for music,” Greenstein says. “It gave me more musical discipline, but also made me a more relaxed person overall because every week I would look forward to heading downtown for a few hours to play music I love with people who love it just as much as I do. I had a wonderful experience with Sinfonia and loved every minute of it.”

Juliana Beckel (harp, 2002-05) is a sophomore at Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Oberlin, OH.

“I love it here,” Beckel says. “It is the perfect school for me. I’m provided with a wealth of orchestral opportunities and I’ve been fully prepared for each one due to my experience with Sinfonia.”

Beckel credits Sinfonia Conductor Gary White with her decision to major in music.

“Gary’s ways of conducting grew to be my favorite thing about Sinfonia,” Beckel says. “Listening to him dissect music and break it down to the littlest parts so that we could fully understand it made me fall in love with music in a whole different way, changing it from something I participated in simply because I’d played the instrument since I was four into something that I wanted to breathe eat and sleep.”

Stephanie Benedict (oboe 2004-05) is a sophomore at Messiah College in

Grantham, PA., majoring in music education with a concentration in oboe. She plays in Messiah’s Wind Ensemble and Orchestra.

“At the first Sinfonia rehearsal I was a bit intimidated by the talent of the orchestra,” Benedict recalls. “However, this just made me work harder and practice more. By the end of the season, I stopped comparing myself to the other musicians, and realized I had what it takes to be an orchestral musician. Playing in Sinfonia made me a better all-around musician.”

Eliza Brown (cello 2000-03) is a senior composition major at the University of Michigan School of Music in Ann Arbor. She spent the summer studying composition at the Ecole d’Arts Americaine in Fontainebleau, France. Last season Sinfonia premiered *Teneo*, an orchestral composition by Brown, to much acclaim.

“I felt well prepared to participate in orchestra at University of Michigan after my Sinfonia experiences,” Brown says. “In particular, I sensed that Sinfonia’s level of professionalism and work ethic was much higher than what some of my peers had experienced in their high school ensembles. That kind of preparation is just as important for conservatory-bound students as musical preparation.”

Elizabeth Maxfield (violin, 2003-05) is a music major at The Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford in West Hartford, CT, where she studies violin with Emlyn Ngai. She is considering going to graduate school for music theory.

“My favorite memories of Sinfonia are from the tour to Russia and Finland,” Maxfield says. “I loved learning about the cultural differences and experiencing the white nights. I also made many friends on the trip.”

Andrea Horbinski (violin 2000-03) is a senior at St. Olaf College, in Northfield, MN, finishing up a degree in Classics and Japan Studies with linguistics concentrations. She played with the St. Olaf Philharmonia for two years, and still takes violin lessons.

“What I liked about Sinfonia was the camaraderie, the travel, and probably most

of all the opportunity to play challenging, exciting orchestral music under Gary, who is still one of the best conductors I’ve known,” Horbinski says. “Being in Sinfonia definitely improved me musically and cemented my love for playing in an orchestra, and it also enabled me to make some very good friends.”

Kristin Young (violin 2000-04) is a junior at Barnard College, Columbia University, New York, NY, majoring in classical vocal performance. She won the 2004 Sinfonia concerto competition and performed two operatic arias with Sinfonia.

“It was a valuable experience,” says Young. “Very few people have the opportunity to sing in front of an orchestra. Performing with my peers was an unforgettable experience.”

Violinist Danielle Garrett joined Sinfonia in its inaugural year, eventually became concertmistress, and is now orchestra manager for Sinfonia. She earned an undergraduate degree in music education from Chestnut Hill College and will soon complete requirements for a master’s degree in music performance from Temple University’s Boyer College of Music and Dance.

Garrett is also a music teacher at Germantown Friends School, where she conducts the middle school orchestra, and teaches private lessons.

“I am so glad that I am still involved with Philadelphia Sinfonia,” Garrett says. “I love seeing the growth of the orchestra from year to year. I really do love my job.”

An endnote from Beckel to current Sinfonia members: “Enjoy the youth orchestra experience while you can. In college you’ll be rotated among orchestras, have more concerts to prepare for, and no breaks to get to know fellow players, so the bonding will not be as fun. And when you are older and possibly trying to be a part of a professional orchestra, the music making is not as pure. Unfortunately, when you have to worry about money and getting paid in professional experiences, a bit of the raw purity of music making is lost. So enjoy it while you can. You will never be in a situation quite like Sinfonia again.”

2006-07 Concert Schedule

Philadelphia Sinfonia
Sunday, Jan. 21, 3 p.m.
First Presbyterian Church
Germantown, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia
Sunday, Feb. 18, 4 p.m.
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Wayne, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber
Orchestra
Sunday, March 4, 12:30 p.m.
Klein Branch, JCC
Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia
Sunday, April 15, 4 p.m.
St. Stephen's Church
Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber
Orchestra
Sunday, April 29, 2 p.m.
Foulkeways at Gwynedd
Gwynedd, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia Gala
Anniversary Concert
Sunday, May 6, 3 p.m.
Irvine Auditorium, University of
Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA

Trivia Quiz

What was "festive" about the Shostakovich overture in our current repertoire?

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

Clothing of the Night

Well, the color of the night anyway, as in black, as in concert clothes, not as in clothing for creatures of the night as in say, vampire capes. We're talking tuxes and dresses.

Gentlemen, if you've outgrown your concert tux or are new to the orchestra and don't have one hanging in your closet, "Tux Redux" will return November 18, 1:30-3 p.m. Shop from an assortment of gently worn tuxedos from orchestra members and Formal Expressions Tuxedos. Call Ellen Youssefian (856-547-7140) if you're looking for a specific size or have a tux to sell or donate. Formal Expressions tuxedos are about \$99; from fellow Sinfonians, about \$50.

Ladies, check out www.concertblack.com for some stylish concert wear, or, if you're a bargain hunter, cross the Ben Franklin Bridge to shop at The Village Thrift in Pennsauken, NJ, which has racks and racks of black skirts, pants, and tops.



Palazzo Vecchio in Florence

(Highlights cont'd)

very special," White says. "It was extraordinary. The kids played beautifully. Any of these tours are life-changing experiences.

"There have been many magical moments on tours," White continues. "One of my favorites was the impromptu baseball game in Novogrod in Russia."

The musicians, elated from just completing a stellar concert, milled around the parking lot waiting for the bus to return to the hotel. Someone wadded a piece of paper into a "ball," someone else grabbed the bottom of a portable music stand and assumed a batter's stance, and in a twinkling a boisterous game of baseball was in full swing.

"It was just so nuts," White says. "Here were a bunch of American kids in tuxedos and concert dresses playing baseball in a parking lot in a small town in Russia."

Danielle Garrett has been with Sinfonia from the beginning, eventually earned the concertmistress' seat, and today is the orchestra manager. The young musicians that stream through the door at St. Stephen's every September are the highlight of Garrett's Sinfonia tenure.

"It's a special group," Garrett says. "They all have special characteristics. They just make it so fun and so worthwhile to show up every Saturday. They are so enthusiastic about being there, they love it – and when you have that, you can't go wrong."



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

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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.

Fall 2006 Sonata

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