

Philadelphia Sinfonia's Debut in Mann Center's 75th Anniversary Season



Members of the Philadelphia Sinfonia cello section performing at the Mann Center for the Performing Arts.

It was on the hottest day of the year that Philadelphia Sinfonia took its place on the stage of the Mann Center for the Performing Arts in front of a crowd of thousands. It was 103 degrees Fahrenheit, and we now know that the stage at the Mann Center is definitely not air-conditioned.

Undaunted, Philadelphia Sinfonia's musicians were led by Conductor Gary White in a rousing concert that had some young audience members dancing in the aisles.

Honored to be invited to open the 12th Annual Young People's Concert Series on the morning of July 7, 2010, we shared the stage with the Philadelphia Boys Choir and Chorale. Each group performed separately and then completed the concert together

in a grand finale. Following the theme of this season's young people's concert series, "A Global Kaleidoscope", celebrating the diverse cultures of Africa, Europe, Asia and North America, Philadelphia Sinfonia performed Borodin's *Polovetsian Dances*, John Philip Sousa's *Liberty Bell March* and a Medley of Duke Ellington's Greatest Hits. Despite the heat, our musicians played like pros.

The audience for this performance – and for the entire concert series – included thousands of children from all over the city and the surrounding region. From diverse summer programs, Mann Center funding brings busloads of children, many of whom have never experienced a live orchestra performance. Gary White emceed an

Continued on pg 4

From the Podium: A Thank You to our Many Music Teachers

This year is filled with many opportunities for Sinfonia musicians. From the Full Orchestra's much anticipated performance of Gustav Mahler's *Symphony No. 1, "Titan"*, to our Chamber Orchestra's discovery of the

little known but dazzling Victor Herbert *Serenade for Strings*, we offer students many musical challenges. However, it takes a great collaborative effort from the entire Philadelphia area music community to make a Sinfonia season truly successful. We could not do what we do without the help, support and encouragement of private lesson instructors and school teachers who trust us to guide their talented students into the world of advanced orchestral playing.

Throughout my tenure here at Sinfonia, we have elicited substantial and growing support from many of the area's fine instructors, and we could not be more grateful. This year we saw our largest audition pool ever, due to the overwhelming recommendations of teachers that their students audition for the Sinfonia program and "experience". In addition to this, several teachers (and top-notch musicians, I should add) have worked with



Continued on pg 4

President's Column

One Saturday last April, Conductor Gary White paused during the afternoon's rehearsal and asked the orchestra to suggest repertoire for the up-coming season. He did not rush through this, but let the ideas percolate, surface, and he wrote them all down. It was his intention to focus on "repertoire" this year – raising both the quantity and the *level* of works to be played. There was no dearth of "meat" in the suggestions from the orchestra, and much of this year's very substantial repertoire is drawn from the list he made in April.

Then a bass trombonist began talking with him about a new piece for bass trombone and string orchestra and signed onto a project with us to perform this piece (Eric Ewazen's *Ballade for Bass Trombone, Harp and String Orchestra*); Network for New Music was awarded a grant in which we agreed to collaborate in a composer-led student master-class and performance of a quartet by Chinese composer, Shih-Hui Chen; we had already planned to perform an

encore written for Sinfonia by alumna, Eliza Brown, that has *never* been played before.

The artistic shape of this year has been defined by openness – to the challenge in new levels of difficulty in the classical cannon; to very new music; to fascinating collaborations with composers, an unusual soloist and with other ensembles — and the adventures have begun, with rehearsals for the *Ballade*, Shih-Hui Chen's quartet, Mendelssohn's "*Reformation*" *Symphony* and Mahler's *Symphony No. 1* already underway. The musicians have been "prepped" to practice ahead for the first rehearsals of these works (and all rehearsals thereafter); they have done their jobs beautifully, and rehearsals have been strong, despite their challenges.

Challenge is good if it leads to growth and not so good if it merely leads to frustration. It is a trick to balance great ideas and lofty adventures against the realistic mastery of a youth orchestra. In addition to knowing how to achieve real growth, I feel that

Gary White is brilliant in his ability to discern this balance, to know when to push and when to not push, at knowing what is possible and what is not, and wise in believing that mastering a challenge is the strongest teacher and if a grand idea is not able to be mastered, it is not a good idea.

However, we set examples for our students in everything we do. If we shied away from new ideas, hard work, adventures, new music... the students would not learn to take risks, they would not know the joy of collaborating with others who are different from themselves; they would not experience the joy of *literally* creating a new work with a composer or of resurrecting a lost piece of music (which we did last spring).

So, we like to take on adventures – carefully – and we *all* grow: the organization as well as the musicians. Welcome to another new and adventurous Sinfonia season!

Carol Brown
President, Board of Directors



Sonata

Fall 2010 | Vol.7, No. 3

Published by: Philadelphia Sinfonia

Edited by: Carol Brown

Photos by: Tom Gralish, Ben Chou

Design by: Hanna Manninen

©Copyright Philadelphia Sinfonia Association 2010

Philadelphia Sinfonia's 2010-2011 Repertoire

(partial listing; repertoire subject to change)

FULL ORCHESTRA

Egmont Overture by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Fledermaus Overture by Johann Strauss, Jr. (1825-1899)

Colas Breugnon Overture, Op. 24 by Dmitri Kabalevsky (1904-1987)

Valse Triste from "Der Faule Hans" by Oscar Nedbal (1874- 1930)

Capriccio Italien, Op. 45 by Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Symphony No. 5 in D Major, Op. 107 "Reformation" by Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Symphony No. 1 in D Major (Titan) by Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Ballade for Bass Trombone, Harp, and String Orchestra by Eric Ewazen (b. 1954)

Presto Change-O! (World Premier) by Eliza Brown (b. 1985)

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Messiah, HWV 56 by G.F. Handel (1685-1759)

Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 1 in G Major HWV 319 by G.F. Handel

Divertimento in E-Flat Major, Hob.III:2 by F.J. Haydn (1732-1809)

Two Norwegian Airs, Op. 63 by Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

I Crisantemi by Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

Serenade for Strings, Op. 12 by Victor Herbert (1859-1924)

Andante Festivo by Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Alumni “Coffee with the Conductor”

Saturday, January 8, 2011

Alumni, come celebrate the New Year by reuniting with Sinfonia friends! You are invited to catch up with Gary and with the other alums at our annual “Coffee with the Conductor,” which will be held on Saturday, January 8, 2011 at St. Stephen’s Church. The gathering starts at 10:30 AM, and you are welcome to stay and listen to the rehearsals afterward. Light refreshments. RSVP to Naomi Atkins at nrsa@comcast.net or on our Facebook page: Philadelphia Sinfonia Alumni.

Gammuto Violin

This year’s recipient of the John Gammuto violin loan is Eunice China, Violin I. A violin maker and former Sinfonia parent, John Gammuto donated a superior violin from his collection to us four years ago. Each year the violin is loaned to a student in the orchestra; selected during seating auditions, the recipient is someone who the seating judges determine will grow significantly with the use of this instrument. We are pleased to award it to Eunice China for the 2010-2011 Sinfonia season.



Members of the Violin section in performance at the Mann Center, July 2010.

2010-2011 Concert Schedule

Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra *The Messiah* with the Germatown Oratorio Choir

Sunday, December 5, 2010, 3 PM
First Presbyterian Church
35 W. Chelton Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144

Philadelphia Sinfonia
Sunday, January 23, 2011, 3 PM
First Presbyterian Church
35 W. Chelton Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144

Philadelphia Sinfonia
Sunday, February 20, 2011, 3 PM
Trenton War Memorial
Trenton, NJ

Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra

Sunday, March 6, 2011, 12:30 PM
Klein JCC
10100 Jaimison Avenue
Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia
Sunday, April 3, 2011, 4 PM
St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church
19 S. Tenth Street
Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra

Sunday, April 10, 2011, 2 PM
Foulkeways at Gwynedd
1120 Meetinghouse Road
Gwynedd, PA

FESTIVAL CONCERT

Philadelphia Sinfonia
Tuesday, May 10, 2011, 8 PM
Perelman Theater, The Kimmel Center
Broad & Spruce Streets
Philadelphia, PA

From the Podium: A Thank You to our Many Music Teachers

Continued from page 1.

our students during Sinfonia-sponsored sectionals and workshops. I have also had many helpful and valuable dialogues, some on-going, with instructors, discussing everything from pedagogy to the responsibility of working with such gifted young players. The care that this area's music teachers take to insure their students are getting the absolute best education in every aspect of music is really quite inspiring to witness.

After many years of such an out-pouring of support, I really wanted to write a special note of gratitude. To the music instructors and school teachers of the tri-state area: your hard work has shaped so many lives and we here at Sinfonia could not do what we do without you. The great teacher, Nadia Boulanger once said, "The art of music is so deep and profound that to approach it very seriously only, is not enough. One must approach music with a serious vigor and, at the same time, with a great affectionate joy." This is what I see from the students of so many of you. We here at Sinfonia thank you for your expertise and for the joy you instill in your talented musicians.

Gary D. White
Music Director & Conductor

Philadelphia Sinfonia's Debut in Mann Center's 75th Anniversary Season

Continued from page 1.

engaging conversation with this audience from the stage and after the concert mingled with the children, encouraging them to study music in some way (and some already are).

Two days later, four of our musicians, Gary and I, returned with instruments to the Mann Center for a morning of workshops with some of the same schoolchildren. Bused again, from North Philadelphia and Camden, for the Mann's "Greenfield Performance Treasures Series", attentive elementary school children shared their experiences with and enthusiasm for guitar, piano, drums and violin with us, while our musicians, Colin, Ben, Eli and Sam, demonstrated *their* instruments and performed

short solos (see *Greenfield Treasures Series*).

The Mann Center hosted us throughout in a most gracious way – providing the musicians with sandwiches, fruit, pastries and drinks before the July 7th concert and introducing us to their audience as if we were celebrities. For a day, we really were, or seemed like we were. It is an extraordinary feeling to perform from that stage to an audience of outsized proportion and outsized response. If we brought a new experience or a new perspective or a new dream to the children for whom we played, we gave something in return for the remarkable joy we felt ourselves.

Carol Brown



Conductor Gary White shares a humorous moment with the audience at the Mann.

Trivia Quiz

Mahler wrote both symphonies and songs with orchestral accompaniment. There is an important relationship between the two and many of his songs are clearly quoted in his symphonies. One example of this occurs in the *Symphony No. 1, "Titan"* which quotes many melodic lines from his *Songs of a Wayfarer (Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen)*. In the symphony, a quotation appears from his 4th song from the *Wayfarer* cycle, "The Two Blue Eyes of My Sweetheart" (Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz) and in the song a Linden Tree is mentioned. In which movement of the symphony does this quote appear and what is the symbolic significance of this tree?

This is a two-part question with a two-part answer.

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

Sinfonia Presents: “Greenfield Treasures Series” at the Mann

This summer, the Friday after the exhilarating concert at the Mann Center, a small number of Sinfonia members went back to the Mann Center and held a master-class for summer camp students, some of whom had attended the concert. The purpose of the class, offered by the educational “Greenfield Treasures Series”, was to interact on a more personal, in-depth basis with the kids, and to let them see the inner-workings of an orchestra.

Maestro White started the class by talking about different ways to produce sound, pulling out his violin, a recorder, and even a conch shell that he used to show how wind instruments make sound. He then ran quickly through the sections of the orchestra, strings to winds to brass to

percussion, explaining sound as he went along. Then, Maestro White called on each Sinfonia member to play a short piece in front of the class, and demonstrate some of the techniques of the instrument; I played double stops for cello, Sam Raper showed how vibrato helps an oboe’s sound, and Eli Pollock demonstrated the importance of hand position in the horn.

The xylophone was the instrument that most excited the kids, though. All of them had made percussive sounds and seen drums before, but what a sophisticated percussion instrument this was! The class had to end after an hour, but not all of the camps had to leave right away, and many students stayed and listened to Ben Edelman, our percussion section leader, further explain

and perform; sensing their interest, Ben encouraged some of the students to play the xylophone for themselves.

It was incredibly rewarding to see how the students’ eyes lit up as they saw how sound was made from each instrument, and their pertinent questions for each of us after we played showed that we piqued their interest. One student completely stumped me for an answer: I had never really thought of “how it feels” to hold a cello. Overall, we left the Mann Center feeling like we had really helped a number of students better understand music, and we had fun in the process!

Colin Hartwick
Principal Cello

Mann Alums

When we agreed that Sinfonia would perform at the Mann Music Center this past July, we knew that some of our members would have other summer commitments and be unable to participate. So we put out a call for alumni musicians to join us; eighteen came back for rehearsals and the concert. The alumni group ranged from as far back as the graduating class of 2002 to some who graduated only a year ago. We relished our reunion with all of them, thank them for their stellar support and were touched by Laura Beth Jewell’s recounting of her return, below:

I first met Gary White while performing with a festival orchestra that he guest-conducted my sophomore year of high school. With his encouragement, I joined Sinfonia immediately and was on a plane that very summer to Italy with individuals who are close friends to this day. When I first joined Sinfonia, I sat in the back of the second violin section, learning, listening, and watching. Three years later, I was ending my time with Sinfonia in the front of the first violins and on a plane to Prague. Even I had to admit how much I had grown as a musician and a young lady entering adulthood. Playing the violin as a member of this orchestra directed the course that my life took. It inspired me to enter into a performance career as an undergraduate

and later into the field of music therapy/performance as a graduate student. I learned so much about life and music throughout my time in this orchestra. Even after I graduated from Sinfonia, Gary White remained supportive... always welcoming when I decided to stop into St. Stephen’s on a rainy Saturday afternoon when I was home from college.

When I received word that Sinfonia was looking for alumni to play in the Mann concert, I didn’t hesitate with my answer. It was just what I needed at that moment in my life. I must admit when I entered St. Stephen’s on that first day of rehearsal, I was overcome by nostalgia as I looked around for my friends, listened for familiar voices, and searched for my stand partner to make

sure she had remembered a pencil (I never did!). However, Sinfonia had changed, it was different. New and talented musicians were now sitting and performing where my peers and I once did. It was both moving and meaningful as I watched those around me prepare for the lengthy but productive rehearsals that lay ahead. I sat down next to a current member and as Gary lifted his arms to conduct the first piece, I felt home again. Musicians were different, and it was certainly hot, but as soon as the music began, I was home.

My time in Sinfonia continues to shape me as an individual to this day and I will remember it fondly throughout my life.

Laura Beth Jewell
Violin, Sinfonia 2003

“Fantasia” Project

Join us for the “Fantasia” Project, a very special collaboration with Network for New Music.

This project involves a composer-led master-class, a concert *aperitif*, four Sinfonia string players and their conductor.

The quartet, drawn from the Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra – Matthew Slesinski, Patricia Jancova, Alexandra LaMonaca and Cameron Clarke — and Maestro Gary White have begun weekly rehearsals of the first movement – *Fantasia* – of *Mei-Hua for String Quartet* by Chinese composer, Shih-Hui Chen. They are preparing for a master-class with the composer at St. Stephen’s Church between

Sinfonia rehearsals on February 12, 2011 and for a 7:00 PM pre-concert presentation of the piece at a Network for New Music concert the following evening: February 13, 2011.

This is a rare opportunity for the four selected students to work with a composer, to tackle new material with Chinese influences, and for all Sinfonia students, parents, and the public to participate in the experience.

“Fantasia” will be performed immediately before the Network for New Music’s concert, “Tradewinds from China”, held at the Settlement Music School, 416 Queen Street, Philadelphia.

Sinfonia Soiree

**Save the date:
Sunday, February 27, 2011**

Plan to come to our second annual fund-raising house concert featuring Sinfonia soloists and a magnificent reception on Sunday, February 27, 2011, 3:00 PM, at the home of former Sinfonia parents, Jerry and Libby Pontillo in Moorestown, NJ.

To request an invitation, please email info@philadelphiasinfonia.com



Music Director of the Philadelphia Boys Choir and Chorale, Jeffrey Smith conducts the the combined groups in the grand finale at the Mann Center, July 2010.

Alumna Profile: Sarah Boxmeyer

When Sarah Boxmeyer, Sinfonia alum and a horn student at Philadelphia's prestigious Curtis Institute of Music, initially became interested in music, her first instrument might have been something like the piano, but . . . the accordion?

Yes, that's how Sarah got her start. At the tender age of five, when Sarah attended an air show with her parents in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, a one-man band was playing – you guessed it – the accordion. Inspired by his performance, Sarah took up the accordion, but eventually lost interest. Her parents did not push her to continue, so she took a break and did not turn to music again until she entered the Philadelphia High School for Girls. Perhaps knowing about her daughter's inner talents, Sarah's mother encouraged her to ask the music teacher at her new school what instruments she needed for the school orchestra. The answer: the horn.

Thus, Sarah's love of the horn began. "My high school music teacher was also a horn player. I am forever grateful to her for suggesting I play horn. Without that first conversation with her, I wouldn't be where I am today."

So how did Sarah, who started horn only in ninth grade, wind up at Curtis by the age of 20? Sarah credits her development as a serious musician to many musical opportunities and to the inspiring teachers and conductors who helped her see her own progress and appreciate the importance of practice. Sarah studied with several teachers, including Bill Bonnell of Settlement Music School and Jeffrey Lang of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and participated in the All-City Orchestra, the youth orchestra of the Philadelphia School District, the PMEA District, Regional and State festivals.

By her senior year, Sarah was ready to audition for eight different music schools but chose to attend Temple University in order to continue studying with Jeffrey



Sarah Boxmeyer and Sinfonia brass 2008; Sarah is the fourth musician from the left

Lang. Sarah had another goal in mind as well: "Going to Curtis was still my dream, so I decided that whenever there was a horn opening, I was going to audition. Mr. Lang was very supportive of my dream, which I can't be thankful enough for." During her sophomore year as a performance major at Temple, Sarah auditioned for and was admitted to Curtis, where she studies with Jennifer Montone, Principal Horn of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Sinfonia was also a big part of Sarah's development as a serious musician. According to Sarah, her audition for Sinfonia was not as strong as she would have liked, "but Maestro Gary White had faith . . . that I could rise to the challenge of playing with such a talented group. The Philadelphia Sinfonia [has] had a major influence in my success." She fondly remembers her first Sinfonia rehearsal: "We were playing Dvorak's 8th, and it was quite demanding for me at the time. Playing that level of repertoire really made me rise to the challenge. I always enjoyed the repertoire [Maestro White] selected." Sarah joined Sinfonia in time to tour the Czech Republic

and Poland in summer 2007 – her first trip outside of the U.S.

Life has been busy for Sarah. She has spent summers at the Luzerne Music Center, where she played in several music groups, the Kendall Betts Horn Camp in New Hampshire, and summer 2010 at the Pierre Monteux School in Maine, where she and her fellow musicians played through *sixty* orchestral pieces in a month. Curtis has kept Sarah very busy as well; she has learned how to better prioritize her time, and her performance, listening and general musical knowledge have grown substantially. She acknowledges, "The Curtis Orchestra really pushes me to raise my standards of what I accept from myself." She has performed with the Curtis Symphony Orchestra and the Curtis Brass Ensemble.

For those interested in conservatory study, Sarah has simple, direct advice: "Stay inspired, stay motivated, and keep your eye on your goals. Work hard for what you want. Work really hard."

Please feel free to contact Sarah at sarah.boxmeyer@curtis.edu

Diane Edelman



Gary D. White
Music Director and Conductor
Danielle Garrett
Orchestra Manager
Hannah Albrecht
Administrative Assistant

Board of Directors:

Carol Brown, *President*
Naomi Atkins, *Vice President*
Susannah Chang, *Secretary*
Lisa Miller, *Treasurer*
Charles Horton
Matthew Kremer
Jerome Pontillo
Marvin Weinar, MD, *Past President*

Philadelphia Sinfonia
PO Box 996
Philadelphia, PA 19105-0996
Tel: 215-351-0363
Website: www.philadelphiasinfonia.com
E-mail: info@philadelphiasinfonia.com

Mission Statement

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 opportunities for young musicians, to achieve the highest level of artistic advancement, and to educate young people broadly to be strong citizens and leaders 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.



Philadelphia Sinfonia
PO Box 996
Philadelphia, PA 19105-0996

Stunning Season's Repertoire and Concert Listing Enclosed!