

Philadelphia Sinfonia Tour

Benjamin Hyman, *violin, 2003 - 2007*

There is nothing in the world quite like a Philadelphia Sinfonia tour. The powerful mix of excitement, dedication, discovery – it is all there. And where else are you going to get on a tour bus in the middle of Europe and hear someone yell from deep in a tangle of suitcases and travel-weary teenagers, “Whose bassoon is this?”

Last summer’s tour to the Czech Republic and Poland was my second with Sinfonia (my first being the unforgettable 2005 Russia-Finland tour) and it surpassed my highest expectations. The demanding and varied program included von Suppé’s *Poet and Peasant Overture*, the Boccherini/Grützmacher Cello Concerto (with Sara Gabalawi as the charismatic soloist), and a bit of Americana from the musicals *Candide* and *The Sound of Music*. The program’s centerpiece, though, was Dvořák’s immortally beautiful *Eighth Symphony*.

It might seem an odd choice – don’t they have enough Dvořák in Prague? Might as well play Mozart in Salzburg or Sibelius in Helsinki. This attitude misses the point. At our second rehearsal, after two days of touring in Prague, Conductor Gary White asked us to “energize” our playing of the Dvořák symphony with our experiences in the composer’s hometown. The results, for me at least, were revelatory, and I realized that we, as American musicians enchanted by Prague’s magic, certainly had something new to say about Dvořák’s venerable work.

Prague has been described so often as “magical” that it risks becoming a truism, but with its endless array of spires, balconied Baroque façades, and winding, unexpected streets, Prague is like a fairy tale in urban form. What fascinated the art historian in me was the juxtaposition of modern and ancient throughout the

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See page 6 for more photos of the Philadelphia Sinfonia Tour!



Sinfonia Celebrates 10 Years in Style



Stephen J. Hovnanian (left) and Marvin Weinar (right) received Conductors Circle Awards from Conductor Gary White and Board President Carol Brown.

Philadelphia Sinfonia’s May 6 concert – the final performance of its spectacular tenth anniversary season – was perfect in every way.

Guest artists Bill Cunliffe on piano, Madison Rast on bass, and Tim Horner on drums, headlined Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*, the stunning centerpiece of the concert’s first half. The Philadelphia Boys Choir and Chorale

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President's Column

I had an occasion this summer to write a very succinct statement about Philadelphia Sinfonia, so I spent a while thinking about what particularly distinguishes Sinfonia as a youth orchestra. I hear often that Sinfonia's musicality is exceptional, and I agree that is true. However, I believe it is the exciting diversity of material the orchestra plays and the varied circumstances in which it performs that showcases the orchestra's musicality. Thus, I believe it is the orchestra's musicality and *versatility* that set it apart.

While Sinfonia generally performs classical repertoire from a range of historical periods and styles, Music Director and Conductor Gary White and the Sinfonia musicians are also adventurous and open to a broad range of genres, rarely played music, new music, and unusual collaborations.

Philadelphia Sinfonia's 10th anniversary concert in May was a prime example of the orchestra's versatility at work. "An Afternoon of Classical Pops" presented an eclectic range featuring Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, a medley from *The Sound of Music*, von Suppe's *Poet and Peasant Overture*, Bernstein's *Candide*, Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*, shifting from genre to genre and providing quite varied playing experiences. The orchestra performed with incredible instrumental and vocal soloists. The playing level was very high; the orchestra was up to the challenge – that is, truly versatile.

In Sinfonia's first 10 years the orchestra has strayed from standard repertoire a bit each year, performing with Broadway singers, opera singers, virtuoso jazz

violinist Christian Howes (who challenged Sinfonia's notation-dependent musicians with a master-class in improvisation), and jazz pianists Stanley Cowell and Bill Cunliffe. The orchestra has also worked with three contemporary composers, presenting premieres of their work.

Philadelphia Sinfonia's annual concerto competition has sometimes brought delightfully unexpected experiences such as violinist Kristin Young singing Puccini and Mozart arias (2004 competition winner), and cellist Jonathan Atkins performing a rarely-heard piece for cello and orchestra by Dvořák (2006 competition winner).

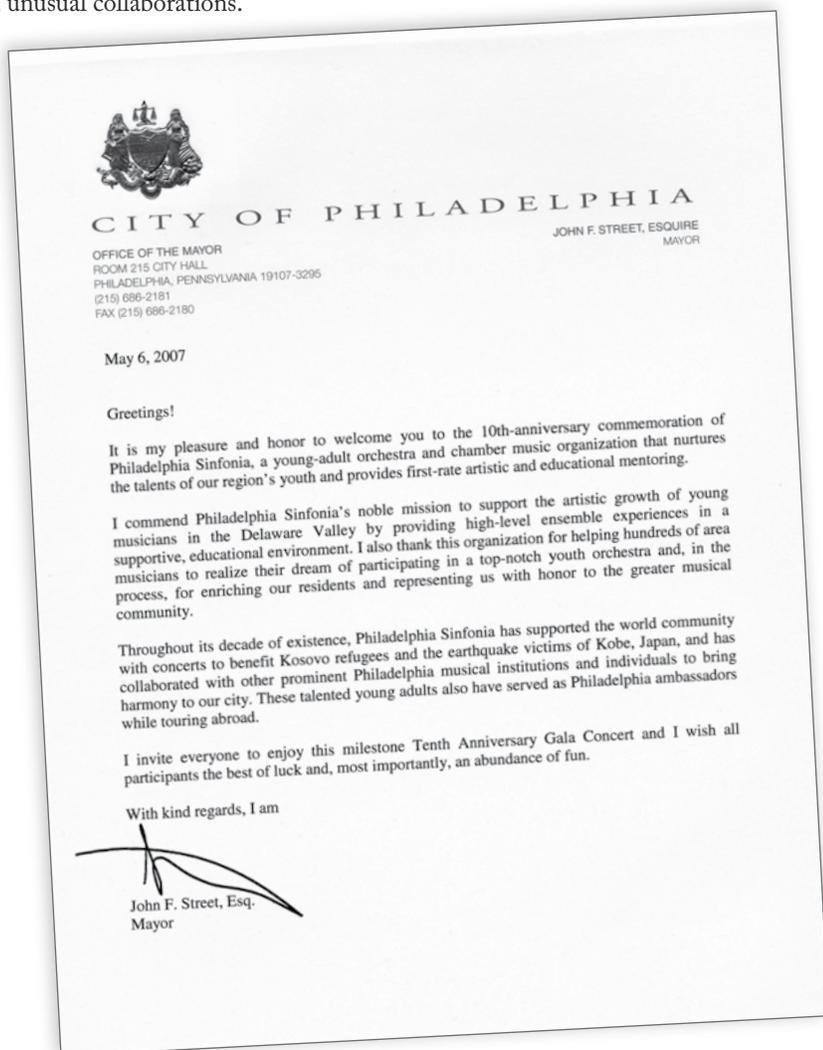
The versatility required for a youth orchestra to try new things and perform them well depends, I suspect, upon the relationship between the conductor and the musicians. They must know and "read" each other well, be trusting, attuned, and collaborative. This is an environment Philadelphia Sinfonia aims to foster.

We are starting a new season and a new decade, and once again we are presenting or discussing collaborations that are "outside the box." The Conductor's column mentions two extraordinary opportunities. We believe our young musicians are well served by new experiences and we enjoy the challenges ourselves.

Welcome to Sinfonia's new decade and the 2007-08 season.

Carol Brown

President, Board of Directors



Sonata

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From the Podium

After the excitement and success of Philadelphia Sinfonia's tenth anniversary season, I knew we would have to follow up with an impressive eleventh – but how? Even before we left for our summer tour of Central Europe, the ideas started flying about how to make the 2007-08 season a special one for all of our members.

It started with Philadelphia's Enchantment Theatre Company contacting us about collaborating to create a new piece combining Sinfonia's orchestral talents with Enchantment's stage skills in puppetry, dance and magic. Partially based on this potential partnership, we decided to include *Scheherazade*, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov's dazzling symphonic suite based on *The Arabian Nights*, in our season repertoire. While Sinfonia musicians will perform *Scheherazade* in our regular season concerts, discussions are continuing with Enchantment about fashioning a new theatrical interpretation of this beloved classic combining the talents and strengths of both organizations.

The notion of incorporating this Russian masterpiece into our repertoire lead to crafting a season primarily drawn from music inspired by Sinfonia's 2005 tour to St. Petersburg. Thus the season will feature other Russian favorites including Dmitri Shostakovich's *Festive Overture* and Igor Stravinsky's *Berceuse and Finale* from "The Firebird Suite" for the full orchestra and the beautiful *Variation on a Theme by Tchaikovsky* by Anton Arensky for the string chamber orchestra.

A balanced season requires many different types of music and the last concert of the 2008 season was designed with that very goal in mind. Another collab-



orative effort, this time with Intercultural Journeys founded by Sinfonia parent and Philadelphia Orchestra cellist Udi Bar David, will give the young Sinfonia musicians the incredible opportunity to work with the world's premier performer of the Native American flute, R. Carlos Nakai, New York Klezmer clarinetist Margot Leverett, drummer Rolando Morales-Matos, and Philadelphia Orchestra cellist Udi Bar David. Together, we will join forces to present a concert representing several different cultural journeys. The repertoire will be varied and of great interest to both the audience and musicians alike!

I look forward to another exciting season filled with great music, talented young musicians, and extraordinary collaborations!

Gary D. White
Music Director & Conductor

Philadelphia Sinfonia's 2007-08 Repertoire

(Partial listing only)

Full Orchestra

Festive Overture, Op. 96 by Dmitri Shostakovich

Rienzi Overture by Richard Wagner

Scheherazade, Op. 35 by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Berceuse and Finale from "The Firebird Suite" by Igor Stravinsky

Scherzo Alla Marcia by R. Vaughan Williams

Chamber Orchestra

Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky by Anton Arensky

Sarabande, Op. 93, No. 1 by Camille Saint-Saëns

Nocturne in B Major, Op. 40 by Antonin Dvořák

Concerto Grosso No. 4, Op. 2 by Francesco Geminiani

Lyric for Strings by George Walker

See *From the Podium* to learn how the repertoire was chosen and the exciting ways it will be used.

Trivia Quiz

What are the connections between Rimsky-Korsakov and Stravinsky and his Firebird Suite?

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

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



Alumnus: Arab Hip-Hop Lures Former Sinfonia Bassist



Richard Cozzens, Sinfonia bass 2000 - 2003

Richard Cozzens, a Philadelphia Sinfonia bass player 2000-03, this fall entered his senior year at Harvard University, majoring in music and Near Eastern (Arabic) languages and civilization.

Unusually adventurous, Cozzens took a year off from college in 2005-06 to live in Syria and acquire language fluency, and during that time he developed an interest in Arab hip-hop as a musical entity and as an expression of youth culture in the Arab world.

This summer he was in Amman, Jordan, (with side-trips elsewhere in the region) on a Harvard-funded grant to explore how rap music has taken root in the local culture and what this musical practice has to say about Jordanian and, more broadly, Arab society. Arab-language hip-hop has never before been researched.

While Cozzens analyzed the lyrical and musical content of songs and attended concerts, he primarily spent a lot of time talking with rap artists and their families, their audiences, music-shop owners, and the public about this musical phenomenon. Arab rap is conducted “underground,” so his near-fluency in Arabic was a necessary part of the project.

Cozzens’ questions for rap artists focused mainly on their music, why they are doing it, and other dimensions of their lives. Certain themes emerged.

The artists spoke about how their families and society respond to what they do and at length about the relationship between their music and rap music in the United States. They generally view theirs as “cleaner” and less aggressive. They also discussed the relationship between their music and other Arab music, both pop and traditional. The Arab rap artists are looking for meaning and see themselves as distinct from “valueless” pop music, while they respect and sometimes use traditional melodies, Cozzens says.

Jordanian rap artists were especially concerned about values and meaning and the image of Arabs in the U.S. and elsewhere, he says, adding they are interested in social change and to some extent see themselves as agents of change.

Cozzens brings an impressive array of tools to his research – his background in composition, piano, and bass; an appreciation for Arabic language and literature (particularly poetry); experience living in Syria and Jordan. In talking with him, one senses the richness he brings to his subject. There also seems to be no end to the depths to be plumbed in his understanding of culture through a musical genre.

Cozzens’ work is contributing to scholarship on hip-hop and Arab music and he will ultimately transcribe his field notes into a thesis. In the meantime, he continues to ponder and explore culture in the contemporary Middle East specifically and more generally the development of culture and identity in today’s world.



Sinfonia Notes

Concert Black

Time to freshen up your concert attire? Here are some suggestions on where to find the perfect tux or black dress before the first curtain call – for a good price, too! Philadelphia Sinfonia's famous "Tux Redux" returns November 17, 12:30-2:30 p.m., with 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 (Formal Expressions brings average sizes and specially requested sizes) or have a tux to sell or donate. Formal Expressions tuxedos are about \$99; from fellow Sinfonians, about \$50. For black dresses, skirts, pants, and tops, check out www.concertblack.com, or head to The Village Thrift in Pennsauken, NJ, which has racks and racks of black at ridiculously low prices, even with the cost of the bridge toll!

Competition Winner

Philadelphia Sinfonia cellist, Daniel Christensen, is a winner of the Bucks County Symphony Orchestra Youth Competition. He will be featured in a performance on October 21, 2007, playing Vivaldi's *Concerto in G minor for two cellos*.

Sinfonia Welcomes Administrative Assistant



Judith Mendelsohn, Administrative Assistant

One of our long-time wish-list dreams came true this summer when Judith Mendelsohn joined the Philadelphia Sinfonia staff as its first-ever administrative assistant.

Mendelsohn grew up in Batavia, IL, and attended Brandeis University through Spring 2004. She has worked and volunteered for various non-profit organizations, including museums, social service agencies, a music school, and currently works at The Academy of Natural Sciences and Network for New Music in Philadelphia.

She plays the French Horn and piano, has a long-term interest in arts administration, and multitasks her way through our office projects with efficiency and grace.

She is in our third-floor office at St. Stephen's Church a couple of days each week and occasionally at Saturday rehearsals and concerts.

Please join me in extending a warm welcome to Judith; we are thrilled to have her help.

Carol Brown
President, Board of Directors

2008 Concert Schedule

Philadelphia Sinfonia

Sunday, January 20, 2008, 3 pm
First Presbyterian Church
35 W. Cheltenham Ave.
Germantown, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia

Sunday, February 17, 2008, 3 pm
Trenton War Memorial
1 Memorial Drive
Trenton, NJ

Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra

Sunday, March 2, 2008, 12:30 pm
Klein Branch, Jewish Community Center
10100 Jamison Ave.
Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia

Sunday, April 13, 2008, 4 pm
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
19 S. 10th St.
Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra

Sunday, April 27, 2008, 2 pm
Foulkeways at Gwynedd
1120 Meetinghouse Road
Gwynedd, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia & Intercultural Journeys

Sunday, May 4, 2008, 3 pm
Irvine Auditorium
University of Pennsylvania
34th & Spruce Streets
Philadelphia, PA



Philadelphia Sinfonia Tour

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city. I have one snapshot of two unlikely neighbors, a Gothic cathedral and a piece of classic Functionalist Soviet architecture. Thus, it was uniquely appropriate that our Prague concert (one of the highlights of my career as a musician) took place in a Baroque church *cum* concert hall that bathed our orchestral sound in the reverberation of centuries. Listening to the recording of the Dvořák symphony made at that concert is like receiving an auditory postcard from Prague: I *hear* the Charles Bridge, the Palace Hill, the Jewish Quarter.

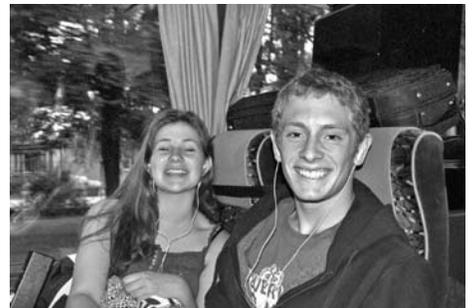
Our travels in the Czech Republic also took us to the spa town of Teplice and to majestic Karlstejn Castle before our overnight train to Poland. Leaving the station the next morning in Krakow, I saw the turrets of the beautiful St. Mary's Cathedral peeking over the roofs of the town. This was my second time encountering this graceful city and it felt just as exciting as the first. Krakow was mercifully spared the bombings that razed other major cities in Poland during World War II, so its historical treasures (unlike Warsaw's "Old Town," a "medieval" city built in the last 50 years) are intact and authentic; the two major cathedrals are marvelous, and

the cobblestone streets and worn brick buildings exude charm.

When I traveled to Poland in March with my school choir, I came to cherish not just the places we visited, but also the warmth of the audiences we performed to, and this trip with Sinfonia was no different. Our concert at the Nowa Huta, a cultural center in a suburban neighborhood, was my last with Sinfonia (I am leaving for college this fall), and I can't imagine a better way to go. I've learned as a musician that when you sense a level of engagement and enthusiasm from your audience, it becomes easy to play your best. I'll miss the opportunities Sinfonia has given me to experience the unexpected and the unique, especially those one-of-a-kind tours.

But really, what makes a Sinfonia tour different than some other youth orchestra zipping off to Eastern Europe for concerts and sightseeing? That's easy. A Sinfonia tour means Sinfonia people. Being able to share these experiences – everything from the wonderful (breakfast in a secluded Prague square) to the strange (descending what felt like a million stairs to get to an unbelievably cool Polish salt mine) to the

ridiculous (a hilariously officious train conductor searching desperately for missing sheets) – with my amazing and talented Sinfonia friends. That's not a chance you get every day, now is it?



Sinfonia Celebrates 10 Years in Style

Continued from cover.

and vocal soloists Monica Duffy and Carla Smith joined the Sinfonia musicians on stage at the University of Pennsylvania's glorious and resonant Irvine Auditorium to close the second half with pizzazz.

The orchestra was at its finest, and the crowd loved it. After the concert, the festivities spilled over into the Hall of Flags where a reception featured a silent auction for fun and fund-raising and the presentation of awards honoring three people integral to the success of Sinfonia's first decade.

Conductor's Circle Awards were presented to Stephen Hovnanian, who developed our Major Sponsor Program seven years ago, and Marvin Weinar, for outstanding guidance as board president at a critical juncture in our history. Conductor and Music Director Gary White was thanked for his eight years of incomparable musical and educational leadership and direction and the orchestra surprised him with gifts of an Al Hirshfeld print, "Great Conductors of the Philadelphia Orchestra," and a hand-quilted pillow signed by all the musicians.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank the concert soloists and The Philadelphia Boys Choir and Chorale, who so remarkably shared the stage with us for this occasion. I thank also everyone who donated items for the silent auction, the many parents and board members who helped make the day run smoothly, event co-chair Emily Blumberg for some of the inspiration behind the reception, and particularly co-chair Sharon Javie, who was the driving force behind the reception and silent auction.

Finally, to the Philadelphia Sinfonia musicians and conductor, you out-did yourselves. It was a spectacular celebration of ten spectacular years!

Carol Brown

President, Board of Directors



Philadelphia Sinfonia in Irvine Auditorium.



A gift for Conductor Gary White signed by Philadelphia Sinfonia musicians.



Sharon Javie, Gala Chair.



Gary D. White
Music Director and Conductor
Danielle Garrett
Orchestra Manager
Judith Mendelsohn
Administrative Assistant

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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 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
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