

# SONATA

Sinfonia Orchestra News  
Fall 2014

PHILADELPHIA  
SINFONIA  
*Educating Musicians. Creating Artists.*

## Concert Opera to Inspired Teaching: Highlights of our 18th Season!



**O**n a recent Saturday afternoon, Maestro Gary White stopped rehearsal to ask the members of our advanced orchestra a question: “What does an audience come to a concert *for*?”

Think about it, what *does* an audience come for?

What followed was an opportunity for Maestro to first compliment his musicians

on the growing “shape” and musicality of Liszt’s *Les Preludes*, the piece that they were rehearsing, and then to explain and explore the even deeper performance level that he was ultimately aiming for in this piece.

His question was initially received by a bit of confused silence, broken eventually by an astute student who suggested that

an audience comes to a concert looking for “emotion.” This response opened the door perfectly to the point (above) that the conductor wanted to make. To illustrate the real, ultimate goal of a performance, Maestro White explained that although much hard work does go into the perfection of a complex piece, the desired result in its performance is not a demonstration of its degree of difficulty (i.e. it sounds hard!), but the *effortless* quality that a truly accomplished, moving, musical work conveys.

*This kind of moment is a highlight*, an unplanned, but precious, highlight in an orchestral training program. When a conductor sees and seizes an opportunity to develop and encourage real musical growth and understanding within his student ensemble, his teaching is as profound as the music we will ultimately make.

Of course the current season also includes multiple *planned* rehearsal highlights: on-going sectionals are woven throughout the Philadelphia Sinfonia Players’ (PSP)

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## VISION STATEMENT

*We embrace and advance a school of thought that celebrates the powerful, dynamic tension in classical orchestral music between personal artistry and universal human experience and expression.*

*We believe that the endeavor to be creative and make meaning in our lives is central to human experience and that it is our responsibility to empower young musicians with the tools to do that in the context of classical music as a fundamental human art form.*

*We aspire through our programs to transform music education, to foster the future of music, and to enrich society by nurturing students’ creative problem solving skills and their artistic and social development.*

In August 2014, the Philadelphia Sinfonia Board of Directors adopted this vision statement along with a new strategic plan. Our new plan will direct organizational development over the next few years, with a focus on increasing our sustainability, our visibility and the empowerment of our students — as excellent musicians, as leaders, as collaborative problem-solvers and as thoughtful human beings.

## Special Thanks from Maestro White

Last season I celebrated my 15th anniversary with the Philadelphia Sinfonia Association. It was a year filled with many exciting and wonderful events and performances. But one thing occurred to mark this milestone that really touched me deeply. That was the creation of a scholarship fund in my name to help any student who has auditioned and is accepted into our program but needs some kind of financial assistance. One of our most important goals has always been to ensure that no student who auditions successfully is ever turned away because he or she is unable to pay the tuition fee.

While we do our absolute best to keep tuition as affordable as possible (in fact it covers only 60% of total costs per student), we are vitally aware of the need for financial aid. To keep our great program accessible to everyone, it has always been a priority for me to have sufficient scholarship funds available, and I can think of no better way to celebrate 15 years with

this outstanding orchestral program than with a special fund set up in my name to do just that.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the many people who made generous contributions in my name — as well as those who have made recent contributions to general funds. This year so many students are benefiting from your kindness, and our three orchestras are as strong as ever! A special thanks is due to the many, many alumni who sent in donations; I was particularly moved by your kindness and feel grateful to know how much you valued your time here at Sinfonia.

As we are the recipients of so many different kinds of support, both financial and in-kind, I wanted to take this moment to express my great personal appreciation. We are the strong organization that we are because of your generosity!

Gary D. White  
*Music Director and Conductor*



Gary D. White, Music Director & Conductor

*We were all touched by the strong support generated by the creation of this fund. The Gary D. White Scholarship Fund is an ongoing concern, accepting gifts at any time. If you wish to earmark a contribution for this fund, please note that on your check or online PayPal donation. Thank you.*

—Editor

### ORCHESTRA NEWS

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## Alumni “Reception with the Conductor” Saturday, January 3, 2015

**Alumni, come celebrate the New Year by reuniting with Sinfonia friends!** You are invited to catch up with Gary and other alums at our annual Reception with the Conductor, which will be held at 5:30 PM on Saturday, January 3, 2015 at St. Stephen’s Church. You are welcome to attend rehearsals in the afternoon and stay for the reception. Plenty of refreshments will be served!

An invitation to the reception will be posted on our Facebook Alumni page. Questions can be directed to board member, Carol Brown, or to our executive director, Jon Hummel, at [info@philadelphiasinfonia.com](mailto:info@philadelphiasinfonia.com).

**If you plan to attend, please RSVP to the same email address:**  
[info@philadelphiasinfonia.com](mailto:info@philadelphiasinfonia.com). We hope to see you!

## Concert Opera to Inspired Teaching: Highlights of our 18th Season!

*Continued from page 1.*

rehearsals, and fall sectionals were a November highlight for the advanced orchestra (PS). Featuring members of the Philadelphia Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, each section of PS was magnificently coached last month through difficult passages of Liszt's *Les Preludes* and Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances*.... We are also looking forward to a special PS/PSP side-by-side rehearsal in February, when all 170 of our musicians will work together on pieces drawn from each orchestra's repertoire. This annual rehearsal experience gives our most advanced students an opportunity to become skilled mentors and our intermediate students, placed alongside the more advanced musicians, an opportunity to set new goals and ambitions for themselves.

*Repertoire* highlights this year for PSP range geographically from Russia (Tchaikovsky's *Marche Slave*) to Scandinavia (Grieg: *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1*) to 20th Century Cuba with the *Andalucia Suite* by Ernesto Lecuona. The chamber

orchestra plunged right into performance in September in collaboration with the Keystone State Boychoir for Peace Day Philly and is currently preparing for a December performance of *The Messiah* with the Germantown Oratorio Choir; come spring, PSCO will perform its own concerts with works spanning the centuries — from Bach's "Italian Concerto" to Gershwin's *Lullaby*.

Philadelphia Sinfonia, our most advanced orchestra, begins its concert season with Liszt's much-loved *Les Preludes* and Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances* (a work that was not immediately successful when first written but has become very popular since). Later this year, PS will present *Variations on a Hymn Tune*, by contemporary Philadelphia composer James Primosch, informed by rehearsals with the composer present, and PS will close the season with our biggest collaboration of the year: a concert version of the opera *Hansel und Gretel* by Engelbert Humperdinck.

Much more will be made of this opera and collaboration in the winter issue of *Sonata*; suffice it to say for now, this ambitious performance of *Hansel und Gretel* will draw on the combined strengths of our most advanced orchestra (PS), The Philadelphia Boys Choir and Chorale, remarkable soloists from the Academy of Vocal Arts and a skilled narrator. It will be presented in our first appearance at the new Temple Performing Arts Center (formerly known as The Baptist Temple), a gorgeous venue that is built to accommodate an audience on three sides of a thrust stage.

Finally, one of our season's most exciting highlights will be an appearance of our first Philadelphia Sinfonia String Octet! This is something you won't want to miss....

*(For further information about the Philadelphia Sinfonia Octet and its performance below.)*

### Philadelphia Sinfonia Octet

Selected by audition in September, the members of the inaugural Philadelphia Sinfonia string octet are preparing a movement from Mendelssohn's exuberant Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20 for our Sinfonia benefit recital in March. Music critic Conrad Wilson has summed up this favorite gem of chamber music lovers everywhere by saying: "Its youthful verve, brilliance and perfection make it one of the miracles of nineteenth-century music."

Members of the Philadelphia Sinfonia Octet are: Stephanie Bonk, Cheyenne King-Bails, Isabella Egawa, Hiroto Saito, violin; Jamie Ye and Isabella Dickstein, viola; Karl Eckert and Lucy Silbaugh, cello. They will perform the first movement of Mendelssohn's octet at our annual benefit recital on Sunday, March 22, 2015.

## Sinfonia Alumni: Your Lives, Views & News are Subjects for Survey

In the next issue of *Sonata*, we will feature a Sinfonia alum who is pursuing a life in viola performance. She will join a group of alumni we have previously featured in our newsletters all of whom are pursuing music: as students, as professionals, as an avocation. We have written about both undergraduate and graduate music students; professional instrumentalists; composers; music theorists; school music teachers; private music teachers; an opera singer; community orchestra members, a fascinating musicology research project; a Fulbright scholar interning with the Berlin Philharmonic. The list goes on....

We value highly the interactions we have with *all* former students, whether they pursue a career in music or not. We have been in touch with remarkable Sinfonia musicians who have now become engineers and scientists, lawyers, doctors, nurses, teachers at all levels of education. Some of our graduates have gone into other artistic arenas: visual arts, videography, acting, writing, journalism and arts administration. We have at least one former student currently in the Peace Corps and one in clinical social work; former students are pursuing international diplomacy, language studies and the humanities. We are proud of and awed by the varied paths forged by our Sinfonia graduates.

However, there are many, many graduates of Sinfonia whose lives are unknown to us, and of those we know, we have very little knowledge about how music in general and Sinfonia specifically may have influenced or shaped their lives. This kind of knowledge can help us better market our program, recruit musicians and network.

We have a new three-year strategic plan in place that aims to increase our sustainability, our visibility and the empowerment of our students. Many of the tasks in this plan will be helped by much greater understanding of the experiences of our alums – both during their time in Sinfonia and over the years following.

*Thus in the next couple of months we are launching a survey covering as many of our alumni as we can reach. If you are a former Sinfonia musician, we hope you will kindly respond to this survey. If your contact information needs to be updated, please help us to reach you by sending us your current email address, postal address, etc.*

The design and implementation of this survey is a generous donation of the marketing research firm, J. Reckner Associates, working in tandem with our new Sinfonia board member and alumna, Jenny Weiner. We could not be more grateful for their expertise, and we look forward to the results and outcome of their work.

## Sinfonia Soiree

**SAVE THE DATE:  
Sunday, March 22, 2015**

Plan to come to our sixth annual fundraising house concert featuring Sinfonia recitalists and a magnificent reception on Sunday, March 22, 2015, 3:00 PM. This year's benefit will be held on the Pennsylvania side of the river in a truly spectacular home in Northwest Philadelphia. Invitations will be mailed in January.

To request an invitation, please email [info@philadelphiasinfonia.com](mailto:info@philadelphiasinfonia.com)

## Trivia Quiz

For several years now our Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra has partnered with First Presbyterian Church in Germantown to present George Frederic Handel's *Messiah*, arguably one of the most famous oratorios ever written. There are three parts to this quiz question: 1) what is an oratorio and 2) why might Handel have chosen this form over a more theatrical opera setting? Finally, 3) why do people stand when the "Hallelujah Chorus" is sung?

*This is a three-part question with a three-part answer. The first musician to email Carol Brown ([info@philadelphiasinfonia.com](mailto:info@philadelphiasinfonia.com)) with all three answers correct will receive a small prize.*



# Repertoire for 2014 - 2015

(A partial listing for all three orchestras; repertoire subject to change)

## PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA:

*Egmont Overture* by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

*Les Preludes* by Franz Liszt (1811 – 1886)

*Hansel und Gretel (Concert Performance)* by Engelbert Humperdinck (1854 – 1921)

“Adagio” from *Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp minor* by Gustav Mahler (1860 – 1911)

*Symphonic Dances, Op. 45* by Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873 – 1943)

*Variations on a Hymn Tune* by James Primrosch (b. 1956)

## PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA PLAYERS

*Rosemunde Overture, D.644* by Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)

*Marche Slave, Op. 31* by P.I. Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)

*An der schonen baluen Donau (On the Beautiful Blue Danube), Op. 314* by Johann Strauss, Jr. (1825 – 1899)

*Peer Gynt Suite No. 1, Op. 46* by Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907)

*Andalucia Suite* by Ernesto Lecuona (1895 – 1963)

*Saturday Night Waltz* and *John Henry* by Aaron Copland (1900 – 1990)

## PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

*Serenade in G Major, K. 525 “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik”* by W.A. Mozart (1756 – 1791)

*Concerto in F Major, BWV 971 “Italian Concerto”* by J.S. Bach (1685 – 1750)

*Serenade in E minor for Strings, Op. 20* by Edward Elgar (1857 – 1934)

*Allegro in C Major* by Gaetano Donizetti (1797 -1848)

*Lullaby* by George Gershwin (1898 – 1937)

*Serenade in C Major for Strings, Op. 48* by P.I. Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)

## New Sinfonia Board Members

**T**wo new members have joined the Board of Directors this year. Among them is our first alumna appointment to the board!

**Jenny Weinar** played string bass in Philadelphia Sinfonia from 1998 to 2002. She continued to play bass throughout her four years of college, graduating with a degree in Art History in 2006. Since then, she has acquired graduate degrees in both Non-Profit Visual Arts Administration (NYU) and in Social Work (Hunter College).

Jenny worked at various arts and cultural institutions in New York City from 2006 to 2013, primarily in development and external affairs. By 2013 her career interests had changed, she quickly acquired an MSW degree, and returned to Philadelphia in the summer of 2014 to employment as a social

worker at the Cancer Treatment Centers of America hospital here in the city.

Jenny is passionate about the visual and performing arts, health and wellness, yoga and fitness. She brings to our board a strong interest in alumni development, experience in non-profit fundraising and administration, a caring presence and appreciation for her four years in Philadelphia Sinfonia.

**Dawn Evans** is a classically trained oboe player and the parent of former Sinfonia cellist, Violet Brown. While she spent many years teaching and performing professionally in California, where she grew up and went to school, she made a significant career change upon moving to Philadelphia in 1994.

For the past twenty years, Dawn has been Director of Risk Management for

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Fox & Roach. She is responsible for regulatory compliance, oversees litigation in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware and designs and implements procedures with the company’s sales force.

With dual careers in classical music and business, the diversity of Dawn’s background is of great value to the Sinfonia board. She brings a strong commitment to the culture of music education that is fostered at Philadelphia Sinfonia, citing her appreciation for the “demanding and nurturing” environment she found here for her daughter. Dawn is married to Swarthmore College physics professor, Michael Brown. Her daughter Violet is currently a sophomore at Carlton College and her younger daughter is a student at Strath Haven High School.



In and  
Around  
Rehearsals:  
Fall 2014



# From China to Philadelphia Sinfonia: Miller Yuan

**A**t the end of the summer of 2014, Miller Yuan flew from China into Philadelphia for the first time, and within two weeks he was in a Philadelphia Sinfonia rehearsal, filling our bass trombone position. We were (and still are) honored to welcome him!

Miller is a tenth grade international exchange student attending Abington Friends School. He comes from Guangzhou, a modern, prosperous city in southern China. He has long dreamed of attending an American university, but following a trip last May to Iowa State University, he decided not to wait for college to gain academic experience in the U.S. The agency IEO (International Education Opportunity) helped him to locate a school in the States, and Miller soon joined several international students at Abington Friends School and is living with a generous host family in Elkins Park. He feels that both the academic and social environments here are a good fit for him.

In China, Miller has been studying the bass trombone for the past seven years, and he has been in youth orchestras

almost as long as he has studied the instrument. Most recently he was a member of the Guangzhou Youth Symphony Orchestra (GYO). Created by and trained under the professional musicians of the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra, the GYO is one of the best youth orchestras in southern China.

Asked to compare his Chinese musical training with the training he has observed so far in the U.S., Miller cites a greater emphasis upon sound and musicality in the U.S. and a more exclusive focus upon technique in China. He seems impressed by the talent of the Philadelphia Sinfonia musicians, and he has concluded that young American players are better sight-readers than their counterparts in China!

Miller has a terrific sense of humor, but he is also ambitious and dedicated... to his academic studies as well as his trombone. We would be delighted if he extends his studies in the U.S. beyond this year; for the moment, we are simply appreciating his presence and his tremendous contribution to the Philadelphia Sinfonia orchestra.



Bass trombonist: Miller Yuan

## 2014-15 Concert Season

**PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA**  
**Sunday, February 1, 2015, 3:00 PM**  
**First Presbyterian Church in**  
**Germantown**  
 35 West Cheltenham Avenue  
 Philadelphia, PA 19144

**Sunday, March 8, 2015, 4:30 PM**  
**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**  
 19 South Tenth Street  
 Philadelphia, PA 19107

**Sunday, May 17, 2015, 4:00 PM**  
**Temple Performing Arts Center**  
 1837 N. Broad Street  
 Philadelphia, PA 19122

**PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA**  
**PLAYERS**  
**Sunday, February 22, 2015, 4:00 PM**  
**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**  
 19 South Tenth Street  
 Philadelphia, PA 19107

**Sunday, May 10, 2015, 3:00 PM**  
**First Presbyterian Church in**  
**Germantown**  
 35 West Cheltenham Avenue  
 Philadelphia, PA 19144

**PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA**  
**CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**  
**Sunday, December 7, 2014, 3:00 PM**  
*The Messiah* with The Germantown  
**Oratorio Choir**  
**First Presbyterian Church in**  
**Germantown**  
 35 West Cheltenham Avenue  
 Philadelphia, PA 19144

**Sunday, April 12, 2015, 2:00 PM**  
**Foulkeways at Gwynedd**  
 1120 Meetinghouse Road  
 Gwynedd, PA 19436

**Thursday, April 23, 2015, 7:45 PM**  
**Keneseth Israel**  
 8339 Old York Road  
 Elkins Park, PA 19027

# PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA

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

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



*'14 - '15 Concert Season Inside!*