

FALL AUDITIONS August 31 and
September 7 & 8; for details, see page 9.

“Weird”, Wired, and... Wonderful: Sinfonia Closes its 22nd Season!

Philadelphia Sinfonia’s press release announcing the PS Festival Concert on May 19, 2019, made an impact on the *Broad Street Review* – the local arts and culture website. Headlining our press release was the contemporary recorder concerto we were going to perform with renowned European recorder soloist, Tom Beets, which led the *Broad Street Review* to title our entry in its weekend listings: “Philadelphia Sinfonia gets Weird”!

It gave us a laugh. But the denouement of the story is that while the performance of the recorder concerto *was* unusual, it was also wonderful — virtuosic — nothing short of extraordinary, garnering praise from the Kimmel Center audience, Sinfonia members, the world-wide recorder establishment and others who have heard its performance on YouTube.

The afternoon concert showed Philadelphia Sinfonia at the top of its game. From the opening Rossini Overture (*La Cenerentola*) to the show-stopping

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Tom Beets, virtuoso recorder soloist, with PS: 2019 Festival Concert at the Kimmel Center.

“I was delighted. It’s not an easy piece and everyone did a fantastic job. Specifically, they achieved the atmosphere and pacing beautifully. I was really impressed.”

~ Graham Fitkin, composer

PSA: Diverse and Adventurous Programming

This spring, as Philadelphia Sinfonia — our advanced full orchestra — was preparing to perform Graham Fitkin’s recorder concerto, Conductor Danielle Garrett was preparing *her* orchestra, Philadelphia Sinfonia Players, to perform *their* Festival Concert with an exciting young vocal soloist, Kristin Young – a Sinfonia alum — who has become a professional opera singer (see PSP story on page 3).

Back in January, a PS concert featured one of two works by living composers that we had recently recorded for a professional recording company to be released on their label in Spring 2020. And in April, Gary White coached and prepared four of our students to join the professional musicians of Network for New Music for a concert performance of Terry Riley’s 1964 iconic minimalist work *In C*. A month later, our recorder

soloist, Tom Beets, in town for rehearsals of the recorder concerto, presented a master class with our students in Baroque Historically Informed Performance practice that completely changed many of our perceptions about Early Music – the way it should be played, understood, and the intellectual and social context from which it arose.

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From the Podium

To say that this was a season of “introductions” seems to me a good way to sum up this year at the Philadelphia Sinfonia Association. In this case, an “introduction” best describes a presentation of someone or something to a group of people – who were perhaps previously unaware of it. There was a lot of that kind of “introducing” going on in PSP, PSCO and PS with students . . . and with our audiences also this season!

As mentioned elsewhere in this edition of *Sonata*, PSP was introduced to the technique of accompanying an opera aria through a performance with Sinfonia alumna, soprano Kristen Renee Young. The challenge here was that almost every measure of music had some tempo change or subtle fluctuation as the conductor followed the singer and the orchestra followed the conductor – and all of this had to happen instantaneously and unnoticed by the audience. PSP and Maestra Garrett did a masterful job of this, and the whole experience greatly improved our younger musicians’ orchestral skills: they continued to master learning to follow a conductor effortlessly while simultaneously working together to create an excellent overall ensemble product!

In April, members of PSCO were introduced to musicians of the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia in an exciting afternoon of music making featuring Antonin Dvorak’s *Serenade for Strings*. This intro highlighted what it was like to

work with professional musicians while playing difficult repertoire. Our advanced musicians learned the most subtle nuances of chamber orchestra playing and, specifically, how to approach the *Serenade*. Through sectionals and then a combined rehearsal, our players discussed, in depth: bowing techniques, each section’s exact role and function in the Dvorak, the best ways to change color, articulations and sound in each movement and so much more. The afternoon ended with a lively discussion over lunch introducing our students to the ways of becoming a professional musician (Conservatory vs. University, taking auditions, etc.)

And perhaps the most obvious “introduction” was our May PS concert at the Kimmel Center where the orchestra and audience were introduced to the world of the recorder (in this case 6 different kinds!) while PS gave the North American premiere of the newly written Recorder Concerto by Graham Fitkin, with world class soloist, Tom Beets. Audiences cheered, and the orchestra’s ability to play this difficult new work greatly expanded their 21st Century performance technique and won great praise from the composer himself.

Introducing something new often leads to many new and valuable experiences for all. Our audience experienced the wonders of opera performed by a Sinfonia alumna, and what a recorder, a seemingly simple child’s instrument, is capable of when played in the hands of a virtuoso. What our



Gary D. White, Music Director & Conductor

members learned from each of the unique and musically enriching introductions that Philadelphia Sinfonia Association provided for our talented and dedicated students is so important to us. We feel it is essential to keep expanding their musical education as we help them grow into the best possible well-rounded and musically knowledgeable musicians they can be.

Gary D. White
Music Director & Conductor

ORCHESTRA NEWS

Summer 2019 | Vol.17, No. 2

Published by: Philadelphia Sinfonia

Edited by: Carol Brown

Photos by: Steven Goldblatt,
Tom Gralish, Danielle
Garrett and Judith
Mendelsohn

Design by: Hanna Manninen

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PSP Soars. And Scores with Soprano Kristin Young.

Notable musicality and strong, mature interpretations of repertoire characterized PSP's season-closing Festival Concert on May 12, 2019. Conductor Danielle Garrett's program ranged from the compelling, dramatic 8th (Unfinished) symphony of Schubert to Camille Saint-Saëns' popular *Danse Macabre*, a piece haunted by ghosts, skeletons, and other scary creatures, lightened by the rhythm and sense of dance.

PSP could have stood easily on its own for this concert, but Ms. Garrett brought a wonderful dimension to the afternoon (and to those of us who have been around Sinfonia for some time), by inviting lyric coloratura soprano, Kristin Young, a Sinfonia alum, to perform with PSP.

Kristin was a violinist in Philadelphia Sinfonia from 2000 to 2004. At the time, she studied violin and voice, and in the fall of 2003 she entered our internal concerto competition to perform a solo with the orchestra – in voice – and won! Lovely in a gorgeous yellow dress for that performance, she was absolutely thrilling in her rendition of Puccini (*La Bohème*) and Mozart (*Marriage of Figaro*). And now, here she was back again, singing as a professional performer with PSP. PSP held its own and accompanied her beautifully. Bravo to all!



Vocal soloist, Kristin Young, performs with PSP



PSP winds in concert



PSP violas in a light moment



PSP brass in concert



PSP Concertmaster, Adah Kaplan, and Assistant Concertmaster, Ravi Balasubramanian

PS/PSP Side-by-Side Rehearsal - March 16, 2019

Our annual PS/PSP side-by-side rehearsal was, as usual, a ravishingly beautiful show of sound; 170 performers, two conductors, two pieces of music — Bizet's *L'Arlesienne Suite No. 1* and Strauss' *Die Fledermaus Overture* —

set in the exquisite acoustics of St. Stephen's Church. The students of PS seated side-by-side as mentors with students in PSP, share their experience while those in PSP hone their orchestral skills. It is fun, exciting, and a valuable learning moment for everyone.



PS/PSP basses and cellos



PS/PSP violas



PS/PSP winds



PS/PSP violins

“Weird”, Wired, and... Wonderful: Sinfonia Closes its 22nd Season!

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finale, *Pines of Rome* (Respighi), and including a strong performance of the *Die Fledermaus Overture* from PSP, our Philadelphia Sinfonia musicians performed flawlessly and professionally.

“Augmentation” played a significant role in this concert – and in the *Pines of Rome* particularly. A dazzling, powerful piece, the PS rendition of *Pini di Roma* was performed as Respighi intended – with greatly expanded instrumentation including celeste, the Kimmel Center’s organ, piano, an off-stage brass choir and more. Several Sinfonia alums were happy to return to participate in this grand 22nd season finale that brought the audience cheering to its feet. What a finale!

The recorder concerto, equally dazzling though very different, was the pièce de résistance on the first half of the program. A 2017 work by British composer, Graham Fitkin, *Concerto for Recorder*, had been performed only once before – in Europe. Employing six different size recorders, from the standard Soprano to the Contra Bass (that stands over six feet tall!), and requiring the soloist to make 15 instrument changes throughout the piece, it is a demanding, challenging work for soloist and orchestra alike.

Over a year ago, Maestro Gary White, an amateur recorder player himself, invited renowned Belgian recorder player, Tom Beets, to come to Philadelphia to present a master class to our students in Baroque Historically Informed Performance practice, leading the two, White and Beets, to consider what else Beets might do with Philadelphia Sinfonia once here. The Fitkin recorder concerto (suggested by Beets) intrigued Gary White, the plan gelled, and – in short — the rest is history.



Verizon Hall, May 19: PS performs *Pines of Rome* with all the forces this amazing work requires.

And yes, it was “wired” – any recorder would be drowned by the forces of a full orchestra, so in this performance the six recorders had to be amplified, a rather complex process to figure out – but just one of the many challenges this piece initially presented but were, in the end, overcome.

As for the composer, who sadly was unable to be here for this, the North American

premiere of his concerto, seeing the YouTube video clearly fulfilled his hopes. As he wrote to Gary White: “I was delighted. It’s not an easy piece and everyone did a fantastic job. Specifically, they achieved the atmosphere and pacing beautifully. I was really impressed.”

The live performance can be heard on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/CMUcrcQBjU>

“Is this the best youth symphony in the country?”

Overheard at the Kimmel Center from an impressed audience member after the PS Festival Concert

Spring 2019 Special Events

The spring of 2019 was an incredibly busy one for all three of our ensembles. Besides end-of-year concerts, every ensemble and part of our program was augmented by master classes, collaborations with outside groups or individuals. The annual PS/PSP Side-by-Side, PSP/PMAY Play In, and our March benefit recital rounded out the special events calendar. Photos (pages 4, 6, 6, 8) tell the stories.



The group of recital performers included horn, flute, strings and recorder.

Benefit recital in Chestnut Hill

MARCH 17, 2019

Ten students from PS and PSP – and Gary White – performed solos, trios, and duets to a full house at our annual benefit recital in Chestnut Hill, followed by the splendid reception our board of directors has become known for!



Here Courtney Sabanas, Gary White, and Naomi Aires are performing C.P. E. Bach's *Trio Sonata in F Major*.



Ethan Frankel and Spencer Stover performing J.S. Bach's *Concerto in D Major for Two Violins*.

Network for New Music and Sinfonia Musicians Perform "In C"

APRIL 7, 2019

Invited by Network for New Music, five Sinfonia students, Ethan Frankel, Justin Williams, Anna Winters, Emily Corson and Sara Corson, performed on a Network for New Music concert with three of Network's professional musicians: Hirono Oka, violin; Angela Zator Nelson, percussion; and their Artistic Director, Thomas Schuttenhelm (on electronics). The piece: iconic minimalist work "In C" by Terry Riley.



PSCO with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia

MARCH 23, 2019

The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia (COP) came to a PSCO rehearsal to coach sectionals, rehearse together side-by-side, and share conversation over lunch.



The cello sectional with coach Glenn Fischbach.



Side-by-side rehearsal: left to right, Ethan Frankel, PSCO; Meichen Barnes, COP; Spencer Stover, PSCO; Elizabeth Kaderabek, COP.



Side-by-side rehearsal: left to right, front row, Anna Winters PSCO; Naomi Aires, PSCO; 2nd row, Yoshi Nakano, COP; Justin Williams, PSCO; Glenn Fischbach, COP.



PSP/PMAY Student Play In

APRIL 13, 2019

Philadelphia Sinfonia is a member of PMAY – Philadelphia Music Alliance for Youth – a consortium of organizations throughout Philadelphia that serves student musicians. Many of the groups represent entry-level students, and we thought it would be nice to offer some of them them a chance to see and experience our program. Thus, an invitation went to all PMAY students to attend a PSP rehearsal – to observe for the first half and in the second half be seated in their sections with PSP students. The photos here capture some of the violins, horns, cellos and winds as they rehearsed altogether.



Master Class with Tom Beets: Baroque Historic Performance Practice

MAY 11, 2019

Tom Beets, the recorder soloist who performed in the *Concerto for Recorder* on the PS Festival Concert program, arrived a week ahead of the Kimmel Center performance to rehearse with the orchestra and to deliver an extraordinary master class in Baroque Historic Performance practice.



Kenny Dilks, oboe, right, and Tom Beets.

Working with three members of Philadelphia Sinfonia and a young recorder player, Mr. Beets introduced all of us to a new understanding of Baroque music and the context in which it was written.



Ethan Frankel and Spencer Stover, violins, with Tom Beets.

PSA: Diverse and Adventurous Programming

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Quite a handful of recent adventures, these engagements stand next to substantial repertoire from the standard classical cannon that both orchestras performed in 2019: work of Mahler, Respighi, Bizet, Saint-Saëns, Beethoven, and more. Yet they represent valuable additional opportunities to stretch, challenge, and widen the world of musicianship for our talented students.

We have increasingly engaged in many such opportunities: we have presented a concert opera with soloists from AVA, and partnered three times with actor/dancers of Enchantment Theatre Company to present symphonic works while the music's drama was acted out on stage. We've resurrected a lost 20th Century ballet, projecting visuals from its original performance overhead; we have frequently partnered with Network for New Music for master classes with living composers – some established and some up-and-coming – who are present to explain and critique as our students perform their work. The Philadelphia Chamber Music Society recently brought a side-by-side rehearsal to our chamber orchestra (PSCO) with ECCO, a conductor-less

string chamber orchestra composed of musicians from top U.S. orchestras in town for a concert. There have been a variety of choral works in our repertoire, presented with both adult and student groups, ranging from a contemporary Concert Mass with the Commonwealth Youth Choirs to Beethoven's ninth symphony with Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia.

We have performed outstanding concertos with well-known professional instrumentalists (David Kim's glorious 2017 performance of Bruch's violin concerto comes to mind) as well as our own student concerto competition winners. We have also engaged with soloists beyond the classical cannon – some time ago we performed Broadway show tunes with professional singers; we have performed with jazz pianist and composer, Stanley Cowell, and with virtuoso jazz violinist, Christian Howes. The list goes on and on....

All ensemble work is a collaborative process; our conductors are skilled at imparting the tools and skills that lead to good collaborative work and contribute to

the strong musicality of our performances. Engagement with other performers or media beyond the orchestra itself or with contemporary works and living composers add new and different dimensions to that process, all occasions for high-level teaching and learning.

While Graham Fitkin's *Concerto for Recorder*, might qualify for the most outside-the-box musical experience we have undertaken, it is in plenty of good company, all in the interest of broadening our musicians' experience and bringing both insight and joy – yes, joy – to all of us.

Most importantly, 21st Century musicians will need breadth and versatility in their tool boxes. We are here to nurture those musicians, to encourage artistic and intellectual collaborative processes, and to make an impact on and insure the viability of the future of music. Under the direction of an inspired music director and engaging conductors working with eager and talented musicians, Sinfonia is an exciting place to be.

Repertoire Highlights for 2019 – 2020

Look for a larger listing on our website over the summer and in our fall newsletter. Here are early highlights:

PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA:

Modeste Mussorgsky: *Pictures at an Exhibition* (a multi-media presentation)

Salute to Jon Williams (our first movie music event)

And in honor of his 250th birthday, Ludwig van Beethoven's *Symphony No. 3 'Eroica'*

Bela Bartok, *Viola Concerto*, with viola soloist, Rachel Ku, of The Philadelphia Orchestra.

PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA PLAYERS:

Franz Von Suppe: *Light Calvary Overture*

Duke Ellington: *Medley for Orchestra*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *Symphony No. 41 'Jupiter'*

New Orchestral Work by composer, Erica Ball, commissioned by a consortium of advanced youth orchestras.

2019 Fall Auditions

To fill the remaining seats in both of our full orchestras, musicians are invited to audition in late August/early September 2019. Limited openings available; all instruments are invited to audition.

Auditions for the 2019 – 2020 season are by audition only. Please visit our website: www.philadelphiasinfonia.com to download an information packet about our program, to review our audition requirements, request an audition, and complete a registration form.

AUDITION DATES:

Saturday, August 31, 2019

Saturday, September 7, 2019

Sunday, September 8, 2019

Auditions are held at:

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
19 S. Tenth Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Parking is available directly across the street, and SEPTA regional rail is nearby.

WE OFFER:

- full symphonic orchestra concerts (advanced and intermediate level)
- chamber orchestra concerts
- performances with professional soloists
- artistic and community partnership opportunities
- sectionals and master classes with Philadelphia Orchestra musicians and other top professionals
- internal concerto competition in alternate years
- varied and challenging musical repertoire
- exceptional orchestral training process

Registration is available on our website: www.philadelphiasinfonia.com/auditions
For more information contact us at info@philadelphiasinfonia.com or 215-351-0363

Alum Profile – Karen Bustard

Karen Bustard, a Sinfonia cello alumna, has found her home in non-profit community development. What was her path?

A pianist as a young child, Karen started to play the cello in fifth grade. She knew Maestro Gary White from the Germantown Friends School orchestra, her brother Todd and other friends had been members of Sinfonia, and all that familiarity led her to join the orchestra.

A “people person,” Karen especially enjoyed getting to know student musicians from all over Philly, as well as the incredible opportunities that she had to perform in the Czech Republic and in Argentina with Sinfonia. “Sinfonia felt like a cool way to broaden [my] horizons,” shares Karen. And Karen has some fun recollections from her trips in addition to performing — like watching Maestro White and Orchestra Manager Danielle Garrett dance the polka in Poland!

But one of Karen’s favorite Sinfonia memories took place in Philadelphia, during her first season, when the orchestra performed *Scheherazade*. After one rehearsal, Karen and some fellow musicians bought student rush tickets to hear The Philadelphia Orchestra perform this famous

piece, and one friend brought the score to follow during the performance. Never having seen that happen before, Karen delighted in experiencing a new way to enjoy musical performance.

Just how did Karen wind up in non-profit work? In high school, Karen enjoyed engaging in experiences as diverse as ballet and canoeing, and spent a month interning during her junior project at Habitat for Humanity in Philadelphia. Realizing that many of her favorite experiences were the results of privilege and opportunity, Karen majored in International Relations at Tufts University, then worked for two years in Uganda at non-governmental organizations. Upon her return to Philadelphia, Karen became a Grants and Client Manager at Partners for Sacred Spaces, a non-profit that “helps congregations and others with a stake in older religious properties make the most of them as civic assets that benefit people of all faiths or no faith at all.” She now works at the Reinvestment Fund, a community development financial institution in Philadelphia, where she is focusing on funding childcare-related programs. And she surprised herself by deciding to earn an M.B.A. at the Fox School of Business at Temple University to further develop business skills to use in



Karen Bustard

non-profit work.

What words of advice does Karen have for current Sinfonia members? Have fun – and enjoy this opportunity to perform with peers who are talented, committed, hardworking, and passionate about music. “A lot of skills you learn playing in an orchestra translate to working in non-profit organizations – coordination, teamwork, balance, adaptability.”

Thank you, Karen, for these words of wisdom. We wish you the best with in your valuable non-profit work.

Please feel free to contact Karen at karenabustard@gmail.com.

Diane Penneys Edelman

“Thank you [PSA musicians] for being such amazing hunger heroes!”

We closed our annual food drive at the end of the day on April 6, 2019 having collected a **record-breaking total of 1,787 lbs. of food to donate to Philabundance, our foodbank partner**, since the beginning of March.

Over the last ten years, our students have collected and donated well over 12,000

pounds of food, and last year, even before this year’s incredible collection, the folks at Philabundance gave a shout-out for our students over Twitter.

We, at Sinfonia, are especially proud of this record and tradition. We appreciate that the generosity of our musicians is self-motivated and that the drive is run every year by student committees formed

from members of PS and PSP. Not only does their leadership and philanthropy inspire us all, but also the creative ways they encourage their peers to support the drive bring enormous fun and festivity to rehearsals... We could not agree more with the words of Samantha, at Philabundance, who announced over Twitter: “Thank you [PSA musicians] for being such amazing hunger heroes!”

Alum Profile: Elena (Nellie) Smith

Elena (Nellie) Smith is a former Sinfonia member whose passion for music runs deep.

Nellie began her musical studies with piano, organ, and choir, but now plays modern and baroque cello and *viola da gamba* professionally. Encouraged by her musician parents and private teacher, Nellie joined Sinfonia as a high school freshman. “Playing music together was a way of life for us as a family, and I always wanted to be a part of that. My parents were extremely encouraging in all of our musical endeavors, but they never pushed us into music,” says Nellie.

What made Sinfonia so special for her? “Being a member of Sinfonia was one of the most significant and formative experiences of my adolescence.” Among Nellie’s treasured memories are her first rehearsal. “It was intimidating... [but Maestro White] greeted me by my name. It made such a huge impression on me that the conductor was so welcoming to every member of the orchestra, and I immediately felt like I belonged.”

Nellie’s “absolute favorite experience” was performing Brahms’ 2nd symphony side-by-side with The Philadelphia Orchestra in 2012. “To witness how [the] cello section played together and communicated with the rest of the orchestra and conductor showed me how important it is to have good chamber music skills, even in an orchestral setting.”

Following high school, Nellie majored in cello performance at Temple, where she had a “fantastic experience.” She developed close relationships with excellent, supportive Temple faculty, which continue to guide her development as a musician.

Nellie also greatly values having had a private teacher who both challenged and supported her throughout her undergraduate degree. To the Sinfonia member considering conservatory study, she recommends trial lessons with the teachers at every school where you’re auditioning and talking with current and former students about their experiences to ensure the “right fit.” She also recommends that you take costs into consideration, take classes in other fields, and maintain connections made during high school and college. “Everything is an audition, so always show up early, be prepared, be respectful, and have a positive attitude. Your career has already begun.”

What’s next for Nellie? She has a busy schedule performing and teaching. While preparing for

this profile, Nellie toured with a chamber ensemble that she co-founded which performs 17th and 18th century music on period instruments. She freelances, is the cellist and manager of a wedding quartet, teaches private students, and is a teaching artist in a new string orchestra program for underprivileged children in southwest Philadelphia. A hectic schedule, but Nellie loves the variety of her work!



Elena Smith
Photo by: Kristina Ruth Photography.

Nellie’s words for Sinfonia players? “[Maestro White’s] musicianship, leadership, and his dedication as an educator had a big influence on my career as both a performer and a teacher. I can’t speak highly enough of Sinfonia, and I’m so grateful for my experience there. Always approach music with love... for your instrument... the composer... the legacy of past musicians... your teachers... your audience... and the community. Art is one of the few things that unifies our world, and it must be created with selflessness and love.”

Nellie, best wishes as you work toward these wonderful goals!

Please feel free to contact Nellie at elena.kile.smith@gmail.com

Diane Penneys Edelman

PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA

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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 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.



Inside: The Stunning 2019 Highlights and Reviews of 2020!

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PHILADELPHIA
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