

## *Pictures at an Exhibition* Brings Multi-Media Sinfonia Production to TPAC

Only two months into the season, Sinfonia's advanced full orchestra, PS, opened our 23rd concert season with a strong and compelling program at Temple's Performing Arts Center.

The riveting centerpiece of the afternoon's concert, a multi-media production of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, occupied the second half, but it was balanced by a lovely first half with *The Nutcracker Suite* to, as Conductor Gary White explained, "get us into the holiday season," and Sibelius' *Scènes Historique*, a deserving but rarely heard work.

But it was the second half that the musicians and audience alike were waiting for. Following intermission,

*Continued on page 6.*



High above the orchestra, an early screen image from the multi-media performance of *Pictures at an Exhibition*

## High Energy and Musicianship: ECCO Brings Master Class to PSCO



ECCO Master class: PSCO 2nd violin sectional

Over the past several years, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society has brought various educational opportunities to Philadelphia Sinfonia musicians. This fall, when the East Coast Chamber Orchestra (ECCO) was performing on a PCMS program, we were offered a master class with several of their musicians. Adah Kaplan, our PS and PSCO Principal Second Violin, took part in the master class and offered to give a first-hand account of the event from the perspective of a participant.

Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra (PSCO) musicians were freed from the confinements of reserved playing by the East Coast Chamber Orchestra (ECCO) this past

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## From the Podium: Working with Living Composers

**W**hen the first musicians to play Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in 1808 sat down to begin the first reading, did they have any idea they were playing one of the greatest symphonies ever written? What did it feel like to be able to ask the composer himself questions about phrasing, dynamics, musical intent? I suspect that all musicians secretly have a fantasy that they could sit down with some composer like Beethoven, Mozart, (mine is Prokofiev) and ask them all their questions about how they would like their works to be performed. Why is this so important you might ask? Well, playing the work of composers long deceased can bring up the question of what the composer's intent really was versus how we interpret the work? Is the composer's original intent still relevant and important or should we play it the way we "feel it" should be played using artistic freedom and today's standards as our excuse to create our own interpretation? These are some of the many questions musicians face when playing the works of any of the great long-gone masters. Of course, we can try to find out what a composer's intent was through reading their letters or perhaps a biography written by a close associate at the time, but it is never quite the same as getting to ask the composer, the primary source, himself or herself.

Throughout most of our performing careers we musicians, young and old, amateur and professional, will have to wrestle with these questions because most of what we play

will be works by the deceased. However, throughout our careers we may be fortunate enough to work with living composers and play or even get to give the world premiere of their works while receiving direct input from the composers themselves! This year Sinfonia is very pleased to give this invaluable opportunity to all three of our orchestras, PSP, PSCO and PS.

As part of a multi-orchestra commission Philadelphia Sinfonia Players (PSP) will give the Philadelphia premiere of Erica Ball's "A Thread Run Through." Erica is a local composer and violinist, and approached Sinfonia about participating in this exciting opportunity for our young musicians. She wrote the work with PSP's strengths in mind and will actually work with Maestra Garrett and the musicians as they prepare the piece for performance. Imagine asking Beethoven what he meant by a specific notation in the music and being able to get a first-hand explanation. That is exactly what the students in PSP will be able to do while working with Erica.

To celebrate the successful and incredibly productive career of our past president, Carol Brown, Philadelphia Sinfonia (PS) commissioned her up-and-coming composer daughter, Eliza Brown, a PS alumna, to create a work that celebrates her mother in meaningful and unique ways. Eliza rose to the challenge by writing a work called "A Toy Boat on the Serpentine" which begins by alluding to much loved opera melodies of Carol's (an avid opera lover). PS has begun rehearsing the work which can almost be described as melodic painting through sound as different instruments enter and add their own unique timbre to an ever-evolving tone painting. It is a work of extraordinary beauty, to be premiered by PS at our upcoming February concert. Eliza will also work with the advanced level musicians of PS as we prepare for its premiere performance.

Speaking of premieres, PSCO will have the opportunity to give the premiere of Sören Sieg's "Celebration" in March,



Gary D. White, Music Director & Conductor

with the expectation of also working with the German-based composer. While this is not a commission, Sieg heard PSCO's rendition of his haunting "Ingxunguphalo (The Great Sorrow)" last year and contacted me about re-orchestrating another of his works specifically for the strings of PSCO. "Celebration" was originally written for a recorder ensemble and is made up of very difficult meters (time signatures) to accommodate non-western music notation from Africa. The work is joyous and very challenging and sure to be a crowd pleaser.

When I was a young horn player in college, I had the unique opportunity to work with the great American composer Vincent Persichetti. We played one of his symphonies and a movement of it ended with a horn solo that I was struggling to figure out how to play musically. I can't tell you the immense joy and satisfaction I felt when I was able to ask Persichetti himself what he wanted at this difficult spot. His answer was clear, but he asked me my opinion as well (imagine if Beethoven had asked you your humble opinion!!!). I gave him my thoughts, and he actually told

### ORCHESTRA NEWS

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me he liked my idea better, and I should play it the way I suggested. I was stunned and learned a valuable lesson. Working with a living composer on a new piece is an ever-evolving process. Sometimes they have very clear ideas about what they are after and other times they welcome the performer's input. Either scenario is rewarding when it comes from a composer him- or herself. We at Sinfonia are pleased to be able to give our musicians this exciting and highly important developmental opportunity.

PS will premiere Eliza Browns "A Toy Boat on the Serpentine" on February 23, 2020 at First Presbyterian Church in Germantown.

PSCO will perform Sören Sieg's "Celebration" on April 4, 2020 at the Woodmere Art Museum.

PSP will premiere Erica Ball's "A Thread Run Through" on May 10, 2020 at First Presbyterian Church in Germantown.

For more information and tickets: <https://www.philadelphiasinfonia.com/calendar>  
Look for more details about each piece in our upcoming Sonata newsletters.

*Gary D. White*  
Music Director & Conductor

"We wanted to thank you [Gary White], Danielle and Sinfonia for providing such a solid orchestral foundation for both kids in those formative years."

—*the parent of two recent graduates, both currently in conservatories*

## PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA: CONDENSED PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Philadelphia Sinfonia's orchestral training program is based upon the belief that a breadth of musical knowledge empowers young musicians and is essential for musical excellence. Through the study of musical history, theory and performance practice, students learn to make their own musical decisions so they can contribute fully within a collaborative rehearsal environment. The result is an intellectually engaging community that values and strives for high performance standards, fosters respectful interactions, personal responsibility and leadership skills, and contributes to a life-long appreciation for music, the artistic process, and to a deeper understanding of the human experience.

~ Philadelphia Sinfonia's Condensed Program Description 2016

## Sound Post

*Musicians in the Sinfonia program are accomplished people. Musically, they are eager to engage in opportunities that advance their skills, provide more or different performance experiences, and, yes, also compete with others. We invite our members to share their accomplishments beyond Sinfonia and will list them in this new newsletter feature called "Sound Post."*

**SARAH YOON:** Sarah attended NYO2, the sister program of the National Youth Orchestra of the USA, in the summer of 2018 and was an alternate in the summer of 2019.

Sarah is Principal Cellist for the Great Valley High School String/Symphony Orchestra; she auditioned into all three PMEA Orchestra Festivals — Districts, Regionals, and States — in 2019.

**HELEN HU:** Helen was selected to be a member of the 2019 NAFME All-National Symphony Orchestra.

**SOFIYA LYSENKO:** Sofiya was a 1st place winner, performing Rachmaninoff's *Humoresque Op. 10, No. 5*, at the Crescendo International Music Competitions in November 2019.

**HALEY CHUNG:** Hayley, first chair in the Arcola Intermediate School Orchestra, is a member of the Eridanus Trio, which recently won 2nd place in the Tri-Country Music Festival, Junior Ensemble Division.

## On the Board

**T**wo new members joined the Philadelphia Sinfonia Board of Directors in September 2019: Melissa Smith and Philip Block.

Melissa is the Chief Operating Officer of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, a position she has held for 11 years. With extensive experience in both the non-profit and for-profit sectors, and fifteen years' financial management experience prior to her leadership positions at Penn, she has a deep understanding of the operational and financial characteristics of varying types of institutions.

Melissa holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from McGill University and an MBA in Finance from Temple University. She is the parent of a 19-year-old

son, a sophomore economics major at Northwestern University. Drawn to Philadelphia Sinfonia through a friend on the board, and as a classical music and opera lover, Melissa is impressed by the quality of performance, breadth of students involved, and the commitment to leadership she has found at PSA. Melissa is serving on our board's Finance Committee.

Philip is a chemical engineer, employed by PeroxyChem, a Philadelphia-based company, where he is technology director for water treatment: designing, developing, and marketing technologies to treat waste water, soil, groundwater and air pollution. He manages multi-functional and multi-national teams with large budgets and holds financial responsibility for newly developed business within his firm. Philip

also holds local civic and political positions as a councilman for the Borough of Chester Heights and vice-chair for the Mid-County Democratic Committee.

Philip earned a BS in chemical engineering from North Carolina State and a PhD in physical chemistry from the University of North Carolina. He and his wife, Kelly, have two children: Grant, a junior at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, who spent several years as a fine trumpet player in PS and PSP, and Lauren, a high school junior.

A few years ago, as a parent who was highly impressed by the Sinfonia program, Philip served as an ad hoc member of our board's Development Committee. Now, as a board member, he is serving on its Marketing Committee.

## 2019–2020 Concert Season

### PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA

**Sunday, November 17, 2019; 3 PM**

Temple Performing Arts Center  
1837 N. Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19122

**Sunday, February 23, 2020; 3 PM**

featuring a world premiere by Eliza Brown  
First Presbyterian Church in Germantown  
35 West Cheltenham Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19144

**Thursday, May 21, 2020; 7:30 PM**

featuring soloist Rachel Ku, viola  
Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center  
300 S. Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

### PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA PLAYERS

**Sunday, February 9, 2020; 3 PM**

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

**Sunday, May 10, 2020; 3 PM**

featuring soloist Booker Rowe, violin and a Philadelphia premiere by Erica Ball  
First Presbyterian Church in Germantown  
35 West Cheltenham Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19144

**Thursday, May 21, 2020; 7:30 PM**

Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center  
300 S. Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

### PHILADELPHIA SINFONIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

**Tuesday, March 10, 2020; 7 PM**

Foulkeways at Gwynedd  
1120 Meetinghouse Road  
Gwynedd, PA 19436

**Saturday, April 4, 2020; 5 PM**

featuring a world premiere by Sören Sieg  
Woodmere Art Museum  
9201 Germantown Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19118

**Wednesday, May 6, 2020; 7 PM**

Meadowood Retirement Community  
3205 W. Skippack Pike  
Worcester, PA 19490

## High Energy and Musicianship: ECCO Brings Master Class to PSCO

*Continued from page 1.*

October during a side-by-side event. The guest ensemble's defining trait is that they play without a conductor, resulting in impeccable individual leadership and listening abilities. The rehearsal ran without a conductor, meaning that Sinfonia musicians needed to develop these skills as well.

With a major piece in the PSCO repertoire, the Holst *St. Paul's Suite*, the joint rehearsal began with each section rehearsing separately in sectionals with ECCO coaches before all the sections came together to demonstrate what they had learned in a play-through of the entire suite.

Preceding the event, the Sinfonia chamber orchestra members were told about the energy levels of ECCO. Though the Sinfonia musicians did not take this lightheartedly, none of the second violins were expecting to put down their instruments and physically play "follow-the-leader" in their sectional!

ECCO felt that we needed more cohesiveness as a section and needed to learn how to follow one another. By learning how to follow one another without instruments, we learned how to follow each



ECCO Master class: cello/bass sectional

other while playing. There is a common misconception that everyone in the section follows the leader of the section, which is only partially true. In reality, for a section to be truly together with phrasing and timing, everyone must contribute equally.

In rehearsal the following week, the PSCO

musicians debriefed the event, commenting on what they had learned from ECCO. Players mentioned ECCO's immense energy, consistency in phrasing, and their movement while playing.

Being a musician in the Sinfonia chamber orchestra myself, I found that ECCO had unique ideas for the suite's phrasing that I look forward to toying with. What surprised me was how confident the players were with their interpretations — every time they played a passage the phrasing was done in the exact same way, proving how much experience they had. ECCO pushed our loud playing past our current boundaries, creating a surge of powerful sound.

ECCO is a group founded by colleagues searching for an ensemble devoted primarily to the joy of playing music. Though the path of music as a career is a treacherous one, the joy of playing was clearly evident in the musicians from ECCO, and the Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra and Maestro White thank them greatly for their instruction at this side-by-side event.

*Adah Kaplan, violin*



ECCO Master class: Side-by-Side rehearsal



## *Pictures at an Exhibition* Brings Multi-Media Sinfonia Production to TPAC

*Continued from page 1.*

the conductor ascended the podium as the lights dimmed, lifted his baton, and, as the first notes from a solo trumpet called the work into play, an original piano score of the piece was projected on a giant screen high above the stage.

Text about the composer, the origin of the piece, and the work of artist/architect Victor Hartman that inspired each movement followed the first image on the screen, interspersed with archival photos of Mussorgsky himself, the artistic work of Hartman, and shots of our student musicians in rehearsal, all beautifully aligned with the music rendered from the stage. Informative and thoughtful, the choreography between the visuals and the audio was truly stunning!

**Kudos to the production crew:** Maestro Gary White; Maestra Danielle Garrett; photographer Steven Goldblatt; cello alum, Addie Olsen; copy writer, Anna Winters, a current senior cellist, and the entire orchestra for a spectacular beginning to our 23rd concert season.



TPAC concert, November 17, 2019: PS winds



TPAC concert, November 17, 2019: PS Concertmaster, Annie Cheng, and 1st violins



TPAC concert, November 17, 2019: PS horns and 2nd violins



## Repertoire Highlights for 2019–2020

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

### PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA:

*Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest Mussorgsky (1839 – 1881)  
Arranged by Maurice Ravel  
Performed in a multi-media presentation

*Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op 55*  
“Eroica” by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)  
Celebrating the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth

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

*Concerto for Viola and Orchestra* by Béla Bartók (1881 – 1945)  
Featuring Rachel Ku, viola, The Philadelphia Orchestra

*Salute to John Williams!*  
Featuring several of Williams’ beloved movie music scores

*The Nutcracker Suite No. 1, Op. 71A* by P.I. Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)

*William Tell Overture* by Gioachino Rossini (1792 – 1868)

*A Toy Boat on the Serpentine* by Eliza Brown (b. 1985)  
World Premiere

### PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA PLAYERS:

*Rosamunde Overture, D. 797* by Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)

*Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K551* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)

*Romance in F Major, Op. 50* by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)  
Featuring Booker Rowe, violin, of The Philadelphia Orchestra  
Celebrating the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth

*Carmen Suite No. 1* by Georges Bizet (1838 – 1875)

*Marche Slave, Op. 31* by P.I. Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1875)

*Variations on a Shaker Melody* by Aaron Copeland (1900 – 1990)

*Duke Ellington! A Medley for Orchestra* by Duke Ellington (1899 – 1974)

*Light Cavalry Overture* by Franz von Suppé (1819 – 1895)

*A Thread Run Through* by Erica Ball  
Special consortium commission of a new orchestral work by Erica Ball

### PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA:

*Concerto Grosso in D, Major, No. 4, Op. 2* by Francesco Geminiani (1706 – 1792)

*Divertimento in F Major, K. 138* by W.A. Mozart (1756 – 1791)

*St Paul’s Suite for String Orchestra* by Gustave Holst (1874 – 1934)

*Little Suite for Strings, Op 1* by Carl Nielson (1865 – 1931)

*Rumanian Folk Dances* by Béla Bartók (1881 – 1945)  
Arr. for strings by Arthur Willner

*Lullaby* by George Gershwin (1898 – 1937)

*Celebration of Strings* by Sören Seig (b. 1966)  
Philadelphia Premiere



ECCO Master class: Side-by-Side rehearsal



## Philadelphia Sinfonia Publication! Our American Premiere of Graham Fitkin's Recorder Concerto

Our Verizon Hall performance of *Concerto for Recorder* that brought the house thundering to its feet last May, was months in the making, quite a feat to perform, and proved an impressive subject for publication.

Co-written by Maestro Gary White, along with eminent recorder soloist, Tom Beets, and board member, Carol Brown, a substantial article featuring that North American premiere was published in the Fall 2019 issue of "American Recorder" magazine.

It begins:

*"How does one introduce the recorder and its possibilities to a symphonic orchestra and its audience — both of which were unfamiliar with this instrument? This was the main question posed by Gary White, an amateur recorder player himself as well as music director and conductor of Philadelphia (PA) Sinfonia and Tom Beets of the former Flanders Recorder Quartet."*



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

To access the full article, go to [www.philadelphiasinfonia.com/news](http://www.philadelphiasinfonia.com/news) and click on the November 26 link for "Tom Beets performs...." It is a fascinating dissection of the challenges and the incredible satisfactions of performing this impressive and highly unusual piece.

## Alumni Reunion and (New!) Play-In: January 4, 2020

The doors are always open to alumni during our rehearsals, but on the first Saturday of the New Year 2020 we will hold our traditional, annual, official welcome back for alums. Join us any time of the day during rehearsals on January 4. Snacks and drinks will be available during the PS rehearsal (3–5:30 pm), and once rehearsal is over, Gary can also join everyone over food.

**NEW THIS YEAR:** we invite all alums to bring instruments and join the last half hour of the PS rehearsal, when the orchestra will read and rehearse John Williams' *Star Wars Suite*, but please let us know that you plan to join us so we can set up chairs and stands to accommodate everyone.

RSVP to the play-in at [info@philadelphiasinfonia.com](mailto:info@philadelphiasinfonia.com) by Thursday, January 2.

Come see your friends, hear our current musicians, join the rehearsal at 5:00 pm, if you like, and say hi to your Maestro after 5:30 pm. We'll be around until 6:30 pm or 7:00 pm.



ECCO Master class: viola sectional





## Alumni Updates



Shona Goldberg-Leopold

### SHONA GOLDBERG-LEOPOLD (Horn)

*We featured Shona, then a student at Vanderbilt's Blair School of Music, in an alumni profile in 2008. In addition to the updates she includes below, Shona has auditioned for and been a semifinalist and finalist for multiple orchestra jobs, including The Philadelphia Orchestra!*

After graduating from Vanderbilt with a degree in Music Education, I took a leap of faith and changed course to pursue Horn Performance in graduate school. I moved to Baltimore to study at the Peabody Conservatory with Denise Tryon, the former 4th Horn in the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Since Peabody, I [have] built up a full-time career in the Baltimore area as a freelance horn player and teacher. I perform regularly with the Baltimore Symphony, Kennedy Center Opera Orchestra,

Harrisburg Symphony, and many other orchestras in the northeast and across the country. I get to travel frequently for performances and auditions, so that's a fun perk of the job!

Freelancing is hard work and keeps me busy, but I love the variety. Just this week I'm playing one of the Harry Potter movies with the Memphis Symphony, then I head back to Baltimore for the International Women's Brass Conference holiday concert, then a Christmas show with the band Mannheim

Steamroller, and a pops concert with the Harrisburg Symphony. In addition to performing, I teach lessons to horn and trumpet students and I manage a free music program for inner-city students in Baltimore.

Playing in Philadelphia Sinfonia was a formative experience for me and definitely ignited my passion to pursue a career in music performance and education. I think of Gary and Sinfonia every time I play *Swan Lake*, Schubert's "Unfinished," and many other great pieces!



Sarah Boxmeyer

### SARAH BOXMEYER (Horn)

*We featured Sarah, then a student at Curtis, in one of our alumni profiles in 2010; since then, her life as a professional musician has taken her to many places. She says,*

After graduating from Curtis in 2014, I went to Yale for grad school and then moved to New York City to freelance.

My first jobs in the city were in various orchestra and opera productions, in addition to playing in a brass quintet. One thing led to another, and I was hired to play principal horn with an orchestra in Miami... which I do one weekend every month or two.

[And] in February 2018, I took an audition for the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra and won the position of Associate Principal/3rd horn.

[In the meantime], after playing for numerous horn players in town, I started subbing at *Phantom of the Opera* and was hired for *King Kong* on Broadway as one of the two horn players on the show. The show was a theatrical wonder, and I feel so lucky I got to be a part of it. There

were 19 musicians in the pit. With 8 shows a week, it was my most grueling performance schedule yet, but the great people I worked with made it possible. I enjoyed frequently making brownies for my fellow musicians!

I am currently playing in a production of *Cinderella* at Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, NJ and am still based in New York City.

“The challenges you gave to the orchestra in music selection, leadership, professionalism, artistry opened up many doors for [our daughter] and we are eternally grateful. In our experience, Sinfonia lived up to your motto: Education Musicians, Creating Artists!”

— the parent of a 2019 graduate, placed well in her university orchestra

## Alum Profile: Anna Lynn-Palevsky

**F**rom melodies to medical science... Sinfonia alumna Anna Lynn-Palevsky has found the best of these two worlds, and her three years with Sinfonia were an important part of that process.

Anna's early years were immersed in music. At age 5, Anna played the piano and soon took up the violin. Her mother "sat and practiced with me, helped me learn how to read music, . . . learn good practice habits, and always exuded a love of music that helped me want to keep going through the frustrating moments." And Anna's maternal grandfather, George Lynn, was a composer and Musical Director at Westminster Choir College. One of Anna's fondest memories is performing his *Idyl* for violin and piano.

Anna joined Sinfonia "almost by accident" when her teacher, Kimberly Fisher, suggested that she audition for the experience. Surprised to be admitted, Anna joined and loved Sinfonia, especially the year that she was Assistant Concertmaster. This position "was a great way for me to [see] myself as someone who could hold leadership roles." She overcame shyness and stage fright – and had many favorite moments. Playing Mahler, for example, Anna thought: "Wow, that's not kid music anymore. It was one of the first times that I really felt like a musician, not just a student."

In college, Anna expected to study medicine. With physician parents, she had always wanted to become a geriatrician – but during her first semester, she "absolutely fell in love with mathematics," majored in math and continued to play violin extensively.

Anna is now pursuing a Master of Science in Epidemiology at Harvard University, with a focus on the epidemiology of aging. She explains: "Epidemiology is the study of health and disease trends in the population... a field closely related to medicine, but with research methods that are very rooted in mathematics – perfect for my interests!" She hopes to enter academia and conduct studies "to improve our understanding of how medical and social factors interact to shape experiences in late life."

Music is still an important part of Anna's life. She loves exploring Boston's new music community as an audience member and occasionally gets to "play the homework" along with her long-term boyfriend, a graduate student in composition and theory at the New England Conservatory.

Anna's advice to Sinfonia members? Just "love it, and try to be really present during rehearsals and performances. . . . I feel like [doing this] changed the way I listen to the world around me. I think that made me a better student, but I also think those things impact me outside the classroom and outside my academic career in crucial ways, too. And the memories I made in Sinfonia are . . . such an important part of who I am, no matter how much I'm playing at any point in my life."

We wish Anna well, and look forward to the many contributions she will make!

Please feel free to contact Anna at [annaclairelynn@gmail.com](mailto:annaclairelynn@gmail.com).

*Diane Penneys Edelman*



Anna performing "At Ghost Ranch," a new work by composer Declan Siefkas

"You really have created something special with Sinfonia. While a lot of other groups are about competition . . . , you have never failed to bring us together as one. The community you have fostered in Sinfonia is unlike anything that I could have imagined and is something that is truly unique and remarkable. It is something that I looked forward to every Saturday. It got me through all the good times, the bad ones, and everything in between."

— 2019 Sinfonia graduate

## Alum Profile: Mia Venezia

**M**ia Venezia's Philadelphia Sinfonia experience featured her proficiency on an instrument that few learn to master — the harp.

Mia joined Sinfonia after watching her sister joyfully rehearse and perform for several years. Once involved, she loved not only performing, but also loved that Sinfonia provided her with the opportunity to make new friends with a common passion for making music. Mia's favorite experience was performing the *Swan Lake Suite* by Tchaikovsky — including its harp solo. She shares: "As harpists, we don't always have a chance to shine in orchestra but getting to play the cadenza that is such a staple in harp literature, was absolutely incredible. I ended up naming my new harp at the time "Odette" because of it!" Mia also treasures performing duets with fellow harpist Olivia Castor, as well as Sinfonia's "positive and supportive environment," which gave her both confidence and wonderful audition material.

Following her five years in Sinfonia, Mia studied harp performance at Carnegie Mellon's conservatory, where she took master classes with world-renowned harpists like Sasha Boldachev and took business courses as well. Her most memorable experiences at CMU include playing Berlioz's very challenging *Symphonie Fantastique* with four harps during her first semester: "The second movement is on almost every audition for harpists and is extremely difficult in technique and projection that the most ideal setting is for the two harp parts to be doubled. ... [T]his almost never gets to be done in the professional world so I feel very lucky to be able to say I had

this opportunity!" Mia's other favorite experience was premiering the piece *Surround for 6 Harps* by Federico Garcia-De Castro. As the title implies, *Surround* calls for 6 harps to surround the audience, "making a very immersive experience. It was such a learning experience being part of the finalization and first performance of this piece!"

What's next for Mia?

This fall, she began graduate studies at Northwestern, which includes studying harp ensemble and studying with well-known, prize-winning Professor Marguerite Lynn Williams — and exploring Chicago. She enjoys the innovative and entrepreneurial allure of performance ... and her interest all started with Sinfonia! Outside of school, Mia also performs in a nascent flute, viola and harp trio called Sappho Trio and plans to teach and grow a studio in Chicago.

So, Sinfonians, what does Mia recommend for you?

"Take advantage of each opportunity that arises. ... Sinfonia will teach you so much and who knows what might happen! Maybe you will [be] asked to play in a community orchestra concert. ... You may end up starting a group [that] ends up touring together giving performances someday. There are so many opportunities to grow as musicians, so I encourage you to take advantage of as many of them as you can!

We wish Mia well as she continues to seize upon many opportunities as well!

Please feel free to contact Mia at [miarvenezia@gmail.com](mailto:miarvenezia@gmail.com).

*Diane Penneys Edelman*



Mia and Harp

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"I am truly grateful that I was able to learn so much about orchestral playing through my time here... Sinfonia has taught me so much about character and orchestral etiquette that I will carry with me forever forward."

— 2019 Sinfonia graduate

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# PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA

Gary D. White  
*Music Director and Conductor*  
Judith Mendelsohn  
*Executive Director*  
Danielle Garrett  
*PSP Conductor and Orchestra Manager*  
Hannah Albrecht  
*Administrative Coordinator*

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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.



*2019 - 20 Season Highlights, Reviews, Repertoire, Concert Schedule, and much more!*

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