

SONATA

PHILADELPHIA
SINFONIA

Sinfonia Orchestra News
Summer 2023

FALL AUDITIONS: August 26 and September 2 & 3. For details, see page 9.

Sinfonia has a New Home!

Four blocks north of Reading Terminal Market, stands a newly renovated building that houses a new arts facility for the historic Roman Catholic High School a block away.

The Howard Center for the Arts covers the entire second floor of a former warehouse, that stretches along most of a city block. Clean and filled with light, it houses wide hallways and multiple spaces devoted to the visual and performing arts – from a piano lab and band room to substantial classrooms, small lesson and practice rooms, to a huge black box theater for very large rehearsals, performances, and events.

The school does not use this space on Saturdays. Eager to form relationships with area arts groups, the school has embraced our program as a resident organization. Thus, Philadelphia Sinfonia has contracted with Roman Catholic High School for us to occupy the entire space on Saturdays from late August through early June.

In August, we move in — well in time for fall auditions and our opening rehearsals for the 2023 – 24 season on September 9, 2023.



Roman Catholic High School's Howard Center for the Arts

This new home will provide many advantages for our program: additional spaces for sectionals, small master classes

or rehearsals, student and parent meetings whenever we want or need them.

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PSS violins in concert, May 7, 2023

Strong Inaugural Year for PSS!

"The 2023 inaugural season of Philadelphia Sinfonia Strings was one of challenges met with determination. The growth I have seen in our group as not only a unified musical voice, but as a community of friends has made me excited to continue our journey in September."
~ Ms. Beth

They met every weekend for rehearsal from September to May; they presented two concerts of their own, and performed on the PSP Festival concert as well; they were invited to and attended

Continued on page 9.

FROM THE PODIUM:

Change and Opportunity

It's been quite an exciting year here at Philadelphia Sinfonia. Each of our 4 orchestras ended on a high note with spectacular performances that demonstrated the Sinfonia technique is working for our talented students — and they are thriving, as the articles in this issue show.

Change is all around us and it is both exciting and welcomed. As you have read in this issue we will be leaving our long time beloved home at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and moving to the beautiful newly constructed Howard Center for the Arts on the campus of Roman Catholic High School. While we are sad to leave our home of 23 years, the new arts center affords our program, and ultimately our students, many more opportunities as we plan to increase sectionals with our partnering organizations - including the Philadelphia Orchestra, offer more master classes with renowned guest artists, prominent soloists, and so much more. We begin our residency in the new space in the fall, and I look forward to all the new opportunities that await our students as we begin our 27th season with this tremendous change.

The other big change is the addition of a fourth level orchestra, Philadelphia

Sinfonia Strings, and the conclusion of their tremendously successful first year. Under the direction of Beth Dzwil, the students of PSS played several beautiful concerts. As I did a bit of work with this group myself and attended their first year's concerts, I was stunned by the sophistication of the music they played and how they played it. Led by Ms. Dzwil, our newest Sinfonia members received the finest guidance as they began their studies in advanced orchestral training.

For our other three orchestras, PS, PSP and PSCO there were so many season highlights including side-by-side events, sectionals, masterclasses and of course first-rate concert performances that had audiences cheering, conductors proud, and students leaving each event with a feeling of deep accomplishment and pride in what they achieved.

We just finished a successful round of spring auditions and look forward to welcoming our newest members, as well as those returning. It will be a year of transition and change, but I believe it will be the best possible kind!

I'd like to close by thanking our graduating seniors. Their commitment to Sinfonia and classical music is a wonderful example



Gary D. White, *Music Director & Conductor*

for all our members, and I cannot thank them enough for all they contributed to our communal and musical success over their past many years with us.

Gary D. White
Music Director & Conductor

ORCHESTRA NEWS

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Gary White

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SINFONIA MUSICIANS AS PROGRAM NOTE WRITERS: Fascinating Feedback

A critical component of Philadelphia Sinfonia's approach to orchestral training is an expectation that students will be informed, intelligent, collaborative partners with their conductor in bringing a piece of music to life. To foster that goal, in rehearsals our conductors blend information about the historical context, the composer, and the background of each piece of repertoire as they also work technically and analytically on developing each piece.

Yet, some students *want to know more*, or are intrigued by or fall in love with one piece of repertoire. Maybe they like to write or to place music in the context of other contemporaneous art forms. Some are quiet and would like a visible way to contribute to the program. Musicians like these volunteer readily to research and write program notes, two or three of which are included in each concert program, helping our students and audience gain more insight. Quite intentionally, almost all our program notes are written by our students.

This year — in fact in the last two years — we have seen some strong writing and some particularly creative program notes. So, it seemed like a moment this spring to bring the program note writers together and explore their various inspirations — what compelled them to volunteer — their tips for research, their challenges, and the ways in which their work on a piece of music affected their understanding, their feelings, and their playing of it.

Eight musicians from PS and PSP wrote program notes covering the work of composers from the Romantic period of classical music (e.g. Beethoven and Tchaikovsky) to today, with one living composer, Søren Seig, among them. Six of them met together to discuss their projects and two weighed in, writing with comments about their experience. A good set of program notes includes biographical information about the composer, their historical time-period, and some musical

analysis of the piece.

While the reasons most musicians volunteer are cited above, one student, Anwar, said that it was “fun!” It seems that whether that was their inspiration or not, our students found, almost uniformly, that it *was* in fact fun.

Their sources included the online *Encyclopedia Britannica* for biographical material particularly; the Dvořák American Heritage Association; NRP films; Tchaikovsky-research.net (where some of the composers' personal letters were available). For informed and reliable analyses of pieces, their best sources were professional program notes written for major symphonies or university performances, also available online. Everyone found it useful to listen to their pieces of music and took in whatever their conductors imparted during rehearsal about the repertoire.

Ryannah was assigned *Celebration*, the piece by the contemporary composer, Søren Seig. *Her* source was the composer himself. He was completely open to communication with a student, so Ryannah sent him a long list of questions that spanned his life and training, his inspirations for his work, and the background as well as technical details involved in rewriting *Celebration* for a string chamber orchestra from its original composition for recorder ensemble. Seig was incredibly responsive, sending back detailed, thoughtful, and rather personal material that was incredibly useful, first-hand information. She was thrilled.

Some observations and/or unique experiences included Olivia's eagerness, always, to see pieces of music in the context of other art forms of the period, a sensibility that sends her from time to time to her own research, whether she is writing program notes or not. Micah asked to write program notes for Dvořák's fifth symphony well before we might have requested volunteers, because he

had listened to it multiple times and developed a strong affinity for the piece. Sam had similar leadings about Haydn's *The Creation*, which he wrote notes for last year, since he had a prior personal connection to that piece.

Chloe found Tchaikovsky's letters to his publisher regarding his *Serenade for Strings* that she was writing about and used excerpts to open and close her program notes to great effect! Very creative! And Meredith was simply one of our most eloquent writers ever, although one of the youngest.

And what were their challenges? Sam spoke for *everyone* when he cited keeping to our maximum word count. It is hard to write concisely and cover what seems like a ton of material. Determining the most important information is key, as Ryannah discovered.

All our writers found the experience incredibly valuable to their understanding of their piece of music; as McKayla said, “It helped me understand the composer's purpose and also how the piece impacted musical history.” Most thought that it made for more satisfying rehearsals and expanded our writers' appreciation for their piece of repertoire.

What was *truly* fascinating was the students' sense that their own understanding of the piece radiated to the rest of their sections. If this was true, they became *de facto* leaders — not only in a written context, but in a performance and musical context as well.

This last point is precisely *why* our conductors believe that knowledge is key to performance excellence and to the musicality that Philadelphia Sinfonia is known for.

Many thanks to this year's program note writers for their work, perceptiveness, and leadership as program note writers: Sam, Olivia, Anwar, Ryannah, Meredith, McKayla, Chloe, and Micah!

PS SHOWCASES DVOŘÁK 5: Festival Concert 2023

The final piece of the final concert of the 2023 season, Dvořák's *Symphony No. 5*, is a rarely heard work. It is also a difficult one. The accompanying program notes, written by PS cellist Micah Abraham, quoted a Czech proverb, "there are no cakes without labor and hardship, no success without patience," and it was apt for the learning process which Maestro White and the PS students undertook to bring this

piece to its incredible, strong performance on May 21, 2023.

What a magnificent way to end the season! It was not, however, the only magnificent number on this final concert: the whole program showcased several of our ensembles in fine form. PSP brought a polished performance of Edward Elgar's *Three Bavarian Dances* to the stage in

the first half of the program, as did PSCO with Søren Sieg's *Celebration*, which the ensemble had premiered earlier in the spring. Each and every piece delighted the audience at the Temple Performing Arts Center — as large and enthusiastic as any we have entertained.... What a fantastic way to wrap up the year, and may it bode well for our next one, our 27th — in a new home with lots of exciting features on tap.



Maestro Gary White introducing Antonin Dvořák's *Symphony No. 5*; Temple Performing Arts Center, May 21, 2023.



PS first violinists, Leihui (Tony) Tong and Emily Fischbach, PS Festival Concert, May 2023.



PS cellos and basses, PS Festival Concert, May 2023.



PS winds and brass, PS Festival Concert, May 2023

A Tribute to Remarkable Ms. Garrett

While Philadelphia Sinfonia seems to attract and retain especially loyal staff members, there is no-one who exceeds the definition of loyalty beyond Ms. Garrett, who has been present, as a student or on staff, in one capacity or another for all 26 of Sinfonia's years!

Danielle Garrett began her journey with Sinfonia as a student violinist in our inaugural year of 1997–98. She became Sinfonia's Concertmaster the year before she graduated, when she went on to study music education, violin performance, string pedagogy, and ultimately conducting. But along the way she returned to Philadelphia Sinfonia first as an intern, then was hired as Orchestra Manager, adding in Orchestra Librarian over time, and eventually stood in for Maestro White when he was occasionally absent.

She became the full-time Conductor of PSP in 2016 and in the past year took on the new position of Program Manager, all while working full-time as Temple's Music Librarian. Over the last six years, Ms. Garrett has *also* been a mentor to our student PMAY artists. How and why does she do it? She truly loves Sinfonia, and her sense of loyalty is finely tuned!

Truly grateful for her invaluable support, expertise, her loyalty and long service, the Board and Staff planned a surprise tribute to Maestra Garrett at the end of her PSP



Maestro Gary White presents a gift and tribute to Danielle Garrett, May 14, 2023.

Festival Concert on May 14, 2023.

Maestro White stepped to the front of the room when the concert's final applause had died down to pay tribute and present Ms. Garrett with a framed antique postcard of mixed-race British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, whose work she brought to Gary White's attention a few years ago. On the back was inscribed the following citation:

"With much gratitude and appreciation for your leadership and guidance in

PSP, PSCO, PS, and PSS, and for all you provide our entire program. We are inspired by your musical leadership and dedication."

It was an emotional moment for the two conductors who have worked closely together since Gary White became Sinfonia's Music Director 24 years ago — a moment that was shared and appreciated by the audience who gave Maestra Garrett a well-deserved, standing ovation. Thank you, Ms. Garrett!

Sinfonia has a New Home!

Continued from page 1.

We can hold our PSS rehearsals simultaneously with our other rehearsals on Saturdays, and our equipment (percussion, music library, music stands and other operational equipment) will be stored in safe, private, climate controlled conditions.

Substantial information about parking, SEPTA transit, and area amenities will be sent to families later this summer. In the meantime, our artistic staff is super-excited about the prospects of this new home, while the administrative staff is preparing for a busy summer of moving.

We leave St. Stephen's with many wonderful memories and huge appreciation for its beauty, its acoustics, its generous staff, and for its magnanimous shelter for the last twenty-three years, while we embrace the new with a sense of adventure, opportunity, and excitement.

No End of Opportunities... & PSCO

Sometimes it really does seem that there is no end of opportunities for Sinfonia musicians and audiences!

Our advanced orchestra, PS, welcomed soloist David Kim, Concertmaster of The Philadelphia Orchestra to its January concert, and Terrell Stafford, famous trumpeter *par excellence*, to its multimedia Pops (Past and Present) concert in February. Philadelphia Sinfonia Players performed an unusual piece in May, Concertino for Flute and Orchestra by Cécile Chaminade (1857 – 1944), with Erica Peel of The Philadelphia Orchestra as its soloist (see page 8).

Not only are our students performing with esteemed soloists, but they are also performing unusual, diverse, outside-the-box repertoire alongside traditional classical favorites.

This year, however, PSCO, our string chamber orchestra, really took the cake! Its first solo concert, at Shannondell in March, featured not only a bassoon concerto of Vivaldi's, performed admirably with Rick Barrantes Agüero, soloist, but also the premiere of *Celebration*, contemporary composer Søren Seig's glorious reworking of a piece originally written for recorder ensemble.

And in April, PSCO closed its concert at Foulkeways with, again, *Celebration*, but it began the concert with a history-making event: one of a few "Baroque masterpieces, restored after narrowly surviving firebombing in WWII, heard for only the [second] time in 275 years"

To explain: Johann Friedrich Fasch was a contemporary of Bach and Vivaldi, and greatly admired for his music in his day, but his work only survived in manuscript form and was scattered widely upon his death. What remained was held in a vault in Dresden, and during WWII firebombing, flooding severely damaged much of what was in that vault.

However, Richard Stone, co-artistic director of Philadelphia's renowned Baroque orchestra, Tempesta di Mare, found Fasch's damaged Sinfonia in B-flat Major, in a library in Europe and recently restored it by creating a new edition. It was this piece, performed only once before by Tempesta di Mare, that was shared with Philadelphia Sinfonia, allowing PSCO to perform it at Foulkeways for only the second time in 274 years!

Our musicians were fortunate to not only be given access to the piece but also a coaching by members of Tempesta di Mare, providing expert tips for knowledgeably

playing period work with proper historic performance technique.

Celebration made for an equally adventurous opportunity. It was Maestro White who initiated its reworking for string chamber orchestra from its origin for recorder ensemble. The composer responded to the suggestion enthusiastically, sending the new edition within days of the request! We so value the opportunity to play newly-composed work, that we want to know as much as possible from the composer about a piece and the way it is intended to be performed.

While Maestro White had communicated with Søren Seig about the piece, a set of program notes about it for the audience seemed like a good idea. One of this year's writers, violinist Ryannah Blackman, took on the project, writing a long list of questions to Seig, to which he responded with copious material about his life, his work, this piece, and the way it reflects his sense of joy in the human enterprise. All his thoughts and ideas were reflected admirably in Ryannah's program notes, and what a joyful piece it is, heard now in concert three times since its premiere in March.

No end of opportunities at Philadelphia Sinfonia...!



PSCO and Rick Barrantes Agüero, bassoon in Vivaldi's *Bassoon Concerto in B-flat Major*, at Shannondell, March 26, 2023.



PSCO performing Fasch's *Sinfonia in B-flat Major*, at Foulkeways, April 25, 2023.

PSP/PSS Side-by-Side Rehearsal

What an opportunity for the PSS musicians to try their hands at the pace and with the repertoire of their more senior ensemble, our advanced intermediate orchestra, Philadelphia Sinfonia Players! On two consecutive Saturdays toward the end of the year, the PSS students were

invited to attend and play in the last half hour of the PSP rehearsal. The repertoire was substantial: Edward Elgar's *Three Bavarian Dances* and the *Hungarian March* of Hector Berlioz.

While the PSS students claimed that this exercise was hard, they did hold their own!

And this opportunity was a great segue to the one other end-of-season challenge for our inaugural ensemble: a spot on the Festival Concert of PSP. Again, they did well! Bravo to this wonderful first group of PSS musicians!



PSS/PSP Side-by-side rehearsal, April 15, 2023 with students, Henry Hein, PSS cello (left) and Samuel Milone, PSS cello (right).



PSS/PSP Side-by-side rehearsal, April 22, 2023 with students Vincent Chen and Mora-Lee Moore, PSS violins in front, and PSS musicians Eleanor Hurst and Lucia Nasrallah behind.

Beloved Sinfonia Salon Returns!

On a lovely, sunny spring day, Sinfonia's fundraising event returned to its usual beautiful site after a four-year hiatus due to the pandemic.

Hosted by dear Sinfonia friends in their spectacular Chestnut Hill home, seven advanced PS musicians — five string-players and two winds — performed spectacularly before a full and receptive audience.

The repertoire they played ranged from Handel and Albinoni to Bartók and Machavariani (1913 – 1995). Interspersed with exquisite duets for clarinet and cello by Beethoven, and ending with four violins performing Movement 1 of Vivaldi's *Concerto No. 10*, their performances showcased the talent and musicality of our dedicated students.

Followed by a lavish reception assembled by our Board, this was a perfect afternoon to enjoy the camaraderie, the musicianship, and the creativity of the Philadelphia Sinfonia community.



Sinfonia musicians at the afternoon's curtain call (left to right): Micah Abraham with accompanist Hannah Albrecht behind him, Adah Kaplan, Karis Dharmawirya, Leihui (Tony) Tong, Emily Fischbach, Celia Wojcik, and Sam Brown, April 2, 2023.

PSP Festival Concert; May 14, 2023

PSP completed the season with both its own Festival Concert *and* with a number on the PS Festival Concert a week later. Its own Festival Concert, held at the exquisite Trinity Center for Urban Life, featured a mature and extraordinary-sounding ensemble in the capable hands of its

conductor, Maestra Danielle Garrett. While the featured soloist, Philadelphia Orchestra piccolo player, Erica Peel, was a high point of the program, she was supported by a very strong and capable accompaniment from PSP. Music Director Gary White was so impressed, that in congratulating

the orchestra at the concert's close, he personally invited any of its members to immediately audition for the advanced orchestra, PS. It was quite an amazing show. Bravi PSP!



Philadelphia Orchestra piccolo player, Erica Peel, performing Cécile Chaminade's *Concertino for Flute and Orchestra*, with PSP, May 14, 2023.



PSP warms up before its Festival Concert, May 14, 2023.



...Curtain call, PSP Festival Concert; May 14, 2023.

Strong Inaugural Year for PSS!

Continued from page 1.

a side-by-side rehearsal with PSP. Who were these intrepid musicians?

They were the first students to form Philadelphia Sinfonia Strings, the newest ensemble in the Philadelphia Sinfonia constellation, which is providing the earliest training in ensemble performance for students with little or no prior orchestral experience.

They played Bach, Mozart, Mussorgsky, and Brahms, and outside-the-proverbial-box, “Ai Hai Yo” – a Chinese folk song arranged by Tyler Arcari. Guided by their experienced teacher and violist, Beth Dzwil, they mastered their pieces with polish and musicality. They have done us proud, and we can’t wait to see what September will bring as this fledgling ensemble evolves. Stay tuned....



PSS viola and cellos in concert, May 7, 2023.

Call for Fall Auditions!

Going into its 27th season, the Philadelphia Sinfonia program includes several performance opportunities for each orchestra, varied and challenging repertoire, master classes and sectionals. We have four orchestras:

Philadelphia Sinfonia (PS): advanced full symphonic orchestra for ages 14–23
Rehearsals: Saturdays, 2:50–5:30 PM

Philadelphia Sinfonia Players (PSP): intermediate-advanced full symphonic orchestra for ages 11–18 • Rehearsals: Saturdays, 9:50 AM - 12:00 noon

Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra (PSCO): advanced string orchestra
Open to any PS string player • Rehearsals: Saturdays, 12:20–2:00 PM

Philadelphia Sinfonia Strings (PSS): new string ensemble to build orchestral skills for musicians age 10–16 • Rehearsals: Saturdays, 9:20 – 11:00 AM

FOR PS AND PSP: Auditioning musicians are expected to perform two different movements from a concerto or sonata – one technical movement and one slower, more melodic movement –without accompaniment; perform major scales up to four flats and four sharps (3 octaves); sight read.

PERCUSSION AND HARP: please check our website for specific requirements.

FOR PSS — PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA STRINGS’ AUDITIONS: Perform 2-octave major scales up to 4 flats and 4 sharps; play a piece that demonstrates your technical ability; and sight-read music provided in the audition.

FALL DATES FOR IN-PERSON AUDITIONS:

Saturday, August 26:

9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Saturday, September 2:

9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Sunday, September 3:

9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Openings available for all instruments!

Auditions will take place at our new rehearsal location: the Howard Center for the Arts, 1212 Wood Street, Center City, Philadelphia.

Registration and further information is available on our website:

www.philadelphiasinfonia.com/auditions

Alum Profile(s): Simon and Faustina Housner – Sinfonia Siblings!

After profiling alumni for about 15 years, this is a first – a profile of *sibling* alumni who performed *together* for most of their time in Sinfonia! Given that their mother played piano and that their father is an opera coach, it is no surprise that both Faustina and Simon Housner found their way into music. Their story is fascinating, and although they are not twins, this pair has shared much of their musical journey.

The children of Oberlin music alumni, the Housner sibs joined Sinfonia when Simon was in 7th grade and Faustina was in 6th grade. They were in PSP their first year, moving into the advanced orchestra soon thereafter, where Simon was the principal cello for three of his four years after serving as principal in PSP, and Faustina played the violin. Among Simon's fondest memories are delving into Rachmaninov's *Symphonic Dances*, playing *Different Lanes* (for string quartet & electronics), Handel's *Messiah*, meeting with Carol Brown to prepare program notes, and . . . visiting the snack bar! For Faustina, performing Beethoven's 9th Symphony in Verizon Hall and Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* were highlights.

Beyond Sinfonia, the two have continued to take overlapping paths — Simon earned his undergraduate degree at Oberlin and has nearly completed his Master's degree at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, and Faustina has completed her undergrad degree at Shepherd and will soon begin her Master's degree there as well!

The two have travelled extensively, both touring internationally with the National Youth Orchestra – USA under Maestro Michael Tilson Thomas and have received many awards and accolades. Faustina received an award from NPR's "From the Top" radio program when she was in high school, and in addition to Sinfonia, Simon

has served as principal cellist for Temple Music Prep YCO, Oberlin Orchestra, Sarasota Music Festival Orchestra, Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra, and was associate principal cellist for three summers in NYO-USA and at the Aspen Music Festival.

Like Simon, Faustina has also held leadership positions in NYO-USA (Concertmaster), Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival, and Shepherd School's Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra. During the pandemic, she was able to virtually participate in the Sarasota Music Festival, Detroit Symphony Orchestra Summer Institute, and Gil Shaham's Masterclass Series.

Both Housners have performed regularly outside of their studies. Simon plays with the Houston Grand Opera and Houston Ballet. Similarly, Faustina is a substitute violinist with the Houston Symphony where, over the past two years, she has performed in more than thirteen subscription programs. "Being an undergrad student while getting a taste of the professional world is definitely an eye-opener!"

The siblings' most memorable moments since their years in Sinfonia are as diverse and exciting as their years in Philly. Both applaud their incredible teachers. Faustina notes Rice's close-knit community of staff and faculty, and Simon cites: "As a unique campus with plenty of resources, Oberlin provided a platform to expand on opportunities. I was able to launch a concert series project because of the local community, a gem not every educational institution can offer." He also praises his current graduate studies with being "life-changing!"

Of course, this talented pair of Sinfonia siblings have advice for current and future Sinfonians. Faustina shares: "Making music is supposed to be fun! Playing in orchestra is not about what chair you're



Simon Housner, cello



Faustina Housner, violin

in - it's about everyone giving their all. No one is a passenger. This is what makes major orchestras sound incredible." And Simon says(!): "Do not be afraid of making mistakes! I try to constantly remind myself of the WHY — why we do what we do. While there are many splendid recordings easily accessible online, it is the live concert element that gives us direct energy, goosebumps, expression, and raw emotion. In the midst of it all, remember to be a sweet person. A genuine character will bring you very far as your beloved colleagues will reappear throughout your life."

Please feel free to contact Faustina at fh14@rice.edu and Simon at simoncellist@gmail.com.

Diane Penneys Edelman

You can read more about Faustina at <https://fromthetop.org/musician/faustina-housner>; <https://youngartspost.org/connect/75c939b79e4ada20e030805b92bfb628>, and more about Simon at <https://youngartspost.org/connect/345fd6b4a0-simonhousner>.

Alum Profile: Courtney Sabanas

Sinfonia alum Courtney Sabanas has explored music from many perspectives – and has a special place in her heart for Sinfonia — even as she begins a career in the business world!

Courtney began to study the viola in third grade and has played it ever since. Starting with Sinfonia Players during ninth grade, Courtney was invited into the Chamber Orchestra, auditioned into PS during her sophomore year — and graduated in 2019 after serving as its principal violist.

Courtney treasures her friendships with fellow Sinfonia members – they shared meals on rehearsal Saturdays, attended Philadelphia Orchestra concerts, and “constantly showed up for each other” at recitals and concerts. One of her favorite Sinfonia pieces was Respighi’s *Pines of Rome*, which was “thrilling” to perform in Verizon Hall. She later visited all of the locations in Rome referred to in the movements of *Pines*!¹

Along her musical path, Courtney studied with private teachers, attended ArCoNet summer music camps, played with her high school’s orchestra and chamber orchestras, and community groups. She also received an award and scholarship from the North Penn music department recognizing her involvement with its music programs over the years. At college, Courtney served as

President and an active member of Temple University’s OWLchestra (with Conductor Danielle Garrett), a student-run community string orchestra housed on Temple’s campus. The OWLchestra grew from about 20 to 50 members since Courtney joined, and she is “thrilled to have recruited so many new musicians during my leadership.”

Courtney remains linked with Sinfonia as well. She tries to attend at least one Sinfonia concert each year, stays connected with alums, volunteers and donates to Sinfonia as well. She shares: “I’m always proud to return and see how the group has changed for the better since my time. Sinfonia is full of good people who love music and I’m so gratified that I was (and still am) a part of the organization.”

Alongside Courtney’s love of music and performance is her passion for business. She moved into the world of corporate taxation after earning her degree from Temple’s Fox School of Business in Accounting and Management Information Systems and a minor in legal studies, graduating with University Honors and Business Honors.² She has passed both parts of the Certified Managerial Accountant examinations, is pursuing a CPA license, exploring the field of tax consulting with Ernst & Young — and considering the field of law as well.



Courtney Sabanas with her viola at an OWLchestra performance.

And what is Courtney’s advice for Sinfonia members (other than to pay taxes!)?

“Enjoy the togetherness of Sinfonia! . . . This is a really special group, so take a second to appreciate the friends who surround you during rehearsals. . . . It’s okay to major in music, and it’s equally okay not to. . . . While I loved business school, I think I thrived as much as I did because of my background in music. Having hobbies outside of school or your career is so important to feeling fulfilled. The world needs more music, so don’t stop playing!” Great advice, indeed!

Please feel free to contact Courtney at courtneysabanas@gmail.com.

Diane Penneys Edelman

¹ See *Pines of Rome*- Wikipedia).

² See Student spotlight: undergraduate student Courtney Sabanas | Fox School of Business (temple.edu).

Alumni Update

We featured Dave Tarantino (Sinfonia ’08) in one of our alumni profiles several years ago when he was in graduate school for percussion performance. Since then he has pursued multiple musical paths as a performer, educator, and administrator. **Most recently, however, he has joined the hosting staff at Temple’s classical music station WRTI and is currently a regular fill-in host on air several afternoons each week!**

Describing his musical life as 1/3 performance, 1/3 teaching, and 1/3 orchestra administration, Dave has most recently played with the Israeli Philharmonic, Philadelphia Ballet, Opera Delaware, and the Hawaii, Princeton, Delaware and Allentown Symphonies; taught privately and at Settlement Music School and Play on, Philly! and been Personnel Manager for the Allentown Symphony and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra.

Dave’s busy life also includes a 2-year-old daughter!

Listen often to WRTI, and you might catch Dave on air providing fascinating facts and concepts about the music being played! Or Follow Dave on Instagram to find out when he will be on air. Dave can also be reached at: davetarantino@gmail.com.

PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA

Gary D. White, *Music Director and Conductor*

Jon Hummel, *Executive Director*

Danielle Garrett, *PSP Conductor and Program Manager*

Hannah Albrecht, *Administrative Coordinator*

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Melissa Smith

Jenny Weiner

Philadelphia Sinfonia

PO Box 996

Philadelphia, PA 19105-0996

Tel: 215-351-0363

Website: www.philadelphiasinfonia.com

E-mail: info@philadelphiasinfonia.com

Mission Statement

Philadelphia Sinfonia supports the artistic growth of young musicians in the Delaware Valley by providing high-level ensemble experience in a supportive educational environment.

We believe that the pursuit of excellence requires performers with integrity, working together toward a common goal. Thus our mission is three-fold: to provide ensemble opportunities for young musicians, to achieve the highest level of artistic advancement, and to educate young people broadly to be strong citizens and leaders as well as responsible musicians.

We recruit from a demographically diverse student population to provide an opportunity to anyone who musically qualifies and to enrich the experience of all members of the organization.



Season-closing highlights: big news for 2023 – 24, and much more!