

Glorious Kimmel Festival Concert: Celebrating Our 25th

Described by Music Director, Gary White, as the concert with a cast of thousands, Philadelphia Sinfonia brought its 25th Anniversary Year to a glorious close in Verizon Hall on Friday evening, May 27. And what an outstanding and moving event it was!

Joined by PSP; musicians from the baroque orchestra, Tempeste di Mare; soloists from the Academy of Vocal Arts; and 160 members of the Philadelphia Boys and Girls Choirs, the performances showcased Philadelphia Sinfonia as impressively and dynamically as ever – high-quality music-making that stunned even the most knowledgeable and discerning of listeners.

Bouncing back in an anniversary year from months of pandemic online rehearsals and video “concerts” was no mean feat. Our conductors and musicians were challenged, but by working hard, attending to discipline, all backed by natural talents,



Ending PS 25th Anniversary Festival Concert: Haydn's *The Creation* (Part 1)

this concert was a rewarding, beautiful celebration of our 25 years!

Four Tempesta di Mare musicians joined PS for Telemann's amusing *Ouverture*:

Jointe d'une Suite Tragi-Comique, a piece deeply representative of baroque style and performance techniques. How

Continued on page 4.

Strength and Opportunity at 25

In retrospect, the programming of Haydn's *The Creation* (Part 1) as the final piece in Sinfonia's 25th Anniversary Festival Concert was profound: it was not only a stunning piece, beautifully rendered, but it spoke eloquently to the moment in which we find ourselves at the close of our 25th year.

The Creation (Part 1) is a story of generation — of the earth from a void — and culminates in a grand celebration (“The Heavens are Telling”) of the magnificent creation engendered. Thus,

it is a remarkable metaphor for the first 25 years of Sinfonia's history, and like Haydn's glorious masterpiece which goes on to parts 2 and 3, Sinfonia stands at the precipice of its *next* 25 years, with much to say for the accomplishments, strengths, and opportunities generated in our first.

Foremost, at the heart of our existence, is the unique orchestra training program we offer: refined over the years and thoroughly tested by time, our in-depth educational program is more and more cited by alumni who attend music schools

and conservatories, who claim it has prepared them as well as or — mostly — better than their peers.

Consistently practiced across all three of our ensembles, this same training process is about to be provided to a fourth group, Philadelphia Sinfonia Strings, which will bring students who are not quite ready for our intermediate group into the same kind of careful, thoughtful, but challenging ensemble experience we are known for.

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From the Podium

Drawn from our 25th Anniversary Concert programs, the following letter shares Maestro White's thoughts and appreciations upon concluding our 25th year:

Welcome to our celebration of a quarter century of "EDUCATING MUSICIANS. CREATING ARTISTS."

This milestone is all about our amazingly talented students and their many successes. The strength of these 25 years is a tribute to our current and past members and all their hard work and achievements — both in music and as good citizens of the larger world community.

From attending the finest conservatories and universities all over the country to performing professionally in our nation's top orchestras, Sinfonia program graduates are everywhere and making a difference in the diverse field of music and professions that extend beyond.

On behalf of all of us here at Sinfonia, I want to thank our private teachers, Philadelphia Orchestra members,

collaborative partners and the many professional musicians in the Philadelphia area that support our program and entrust us with their talented students. Also, a special thank you to the parents, current and past, for all you have done to ensure your children's participation in Sinfonia has been successful. We have always been a very tight-knit community, all working together to give our members the very best experience and training we can provide, and we could not do that without all the support and recognition we have received over the past 25 years. This has truly allowed us to become the celebrated organization we are.

We here at Sinfonia are humbled by all the members of the Philadelphia Sinfonia Association community and their creativity and love of music (all types and kinds). We hope you enjoy today's concert celebration. We look forward to continuing the music education process we have become so well known for into the next 25 years!

Gary D. White
Music Director & Conductor



Gary D. White, Music Director & Conductor



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Behind the Blazer Podcast with Gary White –

Maestro Gary White was recently interviewed as the featured guest in an episode of The Philadelphia Boys and Girls Choirs' podcast *Behind the Blazer*, that will launch July 27. With clips from a 2015 Sinfonia performance in which the PBGC choir joined forces with us, Maestro White talks about the history of Philadelphia Sinfonia, his leadership of the program, and the long relationship between the choirs and PSA.

Our Festival Concert performance of Haydn's *Creation* was only the most recent performance featuring The Philadelphia Boys and Girls Choirs with Philadelphia Sinfonia. Perhaps the first time we performed on the same stage was in 2002, when Philadelphia's Constitution Center awarded the Liberty Medal to then Secretary of State, Colin Powell. Although

we were not performing together, each group was part of the ceremony. From there, perhaps, grew the idea of performing *together*.

Since then, there have been multiple "togethers." Highlights among them were our Tenth Anniversary Festival Concert in 2007, when together we performed "An Afternoon of Classical Pops" and our 2015 concert performance of Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, when, as in our recent Festival Concert, we performed with AVA singers as well as the Boys and Girls Choirs.

Check out the discussion on or after July 27, on the PBGC podcast *Behind the Blazer!* The QR code for the PBGC general Spotify site, where you can find the podcast once it has been launched.

Strength and Opportunity at 25

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The success of this educational approach, philosophy, and culture is demonstrated in two rather important ways: by the successes of our graduates and by “the company we keep” — the multiple performance groups and individuals, both professional and youth-directed, that engage and partner with us, creating many incredible opportunities for our students.

Next season brings us David Kim, Concertmaster of The Philadelphia Orchestra, and Erica Peel, POA piccolo player, to solo with Philadelphia Sinfonia and Philadelphia Sinfonia Players, respectively. We have plans with the premiere new-music ensemble, Network for New Music; with The Philly Pops; with top performers showcased by the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society;

and with one of our students, a budding composer, as we premiere a new piece of hers — all of which will expand our students’ experience with musical genres, styles, and history.

As for our alumni, with 25 years behind us, many are out around the world, making music. The alumni pages at the end of this issue list some very recent musical success stories of our former students, ranging from the newly-appointed Principal Bass of the Swedish National Symphony (Markus Lang), to an active composer and newly-tenured music professor (Eliza Brown), to the new Assistant Conductor of the Detroit Symphony (Na’zir McFadden). But they are augmented by a large network of alumni — performers we know about — who are soloing with

major performance groups (from Alana Youssefian in New York to Danny Koo in Korea), performing with smaller and larger professional ensembles (Elena Smith and Sarah Boxmeyer), and many others who are making careers across the musical spectrum.

We are proud of all of them, and grateful to them for carrying the gifts they brought to us years ago into the world and — grateful to *all* our alumni, those in music, and those who have grown into other valuable careers — for the investment they made while students in Sinfonia. It is their gifts, their energy, and their commitment to Philadelphia Sinfonia as much as anything that has brought us to a remarkable place after 25 years.

PSCO: Rehearsing and Playing a Piece of My Father’s



Caroline Kratz, center, flanked from left to right by: Maestro Gary White; Guy Grisham, Concertmaster; Adah Kaplan, Assistant Concertmaster; Maestra Danielle Garrett, following PSCO’s final concert of the year, May 4, 2022.

In late May of 2021, Maestro White heard me play my father’s piece for unaccompanied viola, *Upon the Path of the Infinite*. My father, Girard Kratz, is a composer, and not much later, Maestro White asked if my father had a piece for string orchestra. My father and I were ecstatic to hear that Mr. White wanted PSCO to perform a piece of his the following year. My father sent him *Absence*, which PSCO played during its solo concert this year, in February 2022.

Absence was dedicated to my aunt and uncle, who lost their premature baby. It was originally written for organ, and the string arrangement was premiered by Temple Music Prep’s Youth Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Luis Biava. Since then, my father had been reluctant to have this piece performed by strings, as its dark key signature and high range towards the climax make intonation extremely difficult, and the interpretation of the piece requires a lot of focus.

PSCO’s main challenges with *Absence* had to do with pacing and phrasing. When my father came to oversee a rehearsal of his piece, he told me he was so happy to see Maestro White putting in the effort to teach us about how to phrase the piece, and that it was evident he had taken the time to carefully analyze and interpret it. A lot of what Maestro White had taught us to emphasize throughout the piece aligned with what my father wanted.

Absence is a very slow piece that starts off with a duet in the low strings’ lower registers. This duet has a rolling effect,

as the violas are meant to phrase to the downbeat of each measure while the celli and bass are meant to emphasize beats 1 and 3. This section is supposed to go on for an uncomfortable amount of time, representing the heavy pain and sluggishness that comes with depression and grief. The sections then start to echo the main motif of the piece, adding to this rolling effect. The parts come together often to form octaves, highlighting the emptiness of the parents’ lives after they lost their child, and woven into the piece are snippets of lullabies.

Having PSCO play *Absence* meant a lot to my father and me, as well as to my aunt and uncle. We were happy to have my cousin honored through such a beautiful performance, and working through the piece with Maestro White and my father taught the orchestra a lot about playing new music and putting meaning behind each-and-every note.

Caroline Kratz
Principal Viola, PS & PSCO

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well the Tempesta musicians had imparted their understanding of their period ahead of time to our students!

PSP followed with a beautifully measured rendition of Strauss' *Künstlerleben*.

And then, Maurice Ravel.... His Mother Goose Suite, perhaps the hardest piece of repertoire this season, with various possibilities for unravelling.... PS, nonetheless rose to the challenge that night, and this is where the most knowledgeable audience members were especially vocal in their praise — and generous with comparisons to professional ensembles. Congratulations Maestro and PS!

"... but I want to single out the Ravel for special mention. The dynamic balances you and the players achieved were just perfect and created a sumptuous sound that showed off Ravel's genius for orchestration. I don't know how you all did it.... If I closed my eyes I would think I was listening to a professional orchestra." ~ an unsolicited note from an audience member

But emotionally, Haydn's beloved masterpiece, *The Creation (Part 1)*, was the stunning high point of the night, closing the concert and our 25th Anniversary Year with a performance that will long be remembered. The Boys and Girls Choirs complemented the orchestra beautifully, the soloists were perfect in voice and presence, and at the close of the finale ("The Heavens are Telling"), the audience was quickly on its feet with applause – touched and moved by what was heard and celebrated on the stage of Verizon Hall that evening.



PS winds: Kimmel Center Anniversary Concert



PS percussion: Kimmel Center Anniversary Concert



PS cellos: Kimmel Center Anniversary Concert



PSP at the Kimmel Center Anniversary Concert

New! Launching Philadelphia Sinfonia Strings!

Due to high demand from teachers and students, Philadelphia Sinfonia is launching a new ensemble, Philadelphia Sinfonia Strings, that will serve students age 10 – 16 who are not quite ready for our intermediate orchestra, but who *are* ready to build orchestral skills that will take them to

the next level of playing in an advanced ensemble.

This group will rehearse for an hour and a half on Sundays from 12:30 and will be team taught by Music Director, Gary White, and Beth Dzwil, a professional viola player and string specialist. Rehearsals will

begin in late September or early October and go through mid-May, and over the course of the season, PSS will present two performances or open rehearsals. Tuition: \$700 for the season; need-based financial aid is available.

For an audition, please visit our website's auditions page: www.philadelphiasinfonia.com.

PSP Holds its Own: Winning Festival Concert with CY and Cellist Glenn Fischbach

The audience filled just about every seat in the Episcopal Cathedral for PSP's Festival Concert on Sunday afternoon, May 22, and with good reason: this was the first in-person performance the orchestra had given since pandemic interruptions, and the program was truly exciting.

From Beethoven to Johann Strauss, Jr.; Sir Arthur Sullivan to William Grant Still, the smaller pieces in the program were performed with accomplishment and panache. Particularly notable was Beethoven's *Military March in C Major*, that featured PSP's winds and percussion. The percussion section this year has been a tight group, and each time they have been featured, they have shone. Bravo winds and percussion!

Highpoints, however, were two larger, rather challenging works: *Four Spiritual Settings* arranged by Dr. Robert Harris and orchestrated by Maestro Gary White, in which the orchestra was joined by members of the Commonwealth Youthchoirs; and Saint-Saëns' famous *Cello Concerto No. 1*, with cello soloist, Glenn Fischbach.

PSP began working with Dr. Harris' spiritual settings a year earlier. In fact, one of the four spirituals performed on this concert was previously produced jointly by PSP and the Youthchoirs as a video "concert" in May 2021. Each of these two years, Dr. Harris, a composer, choir conductor, and former professor of music, has joined CY and PSP musicians and conductors on Zoom to discuss the history, meaning, and social value of "spirituals,"

giving the students and conductors useful background material with which to work and a fascinating introduction to a segment of American music that was likely new to most of the students. His support and information certainly led to a set of lovely Festival Concert performances.

Glenn Fischbach shone as the consummate cellist he is in the Saint-Saëns concerto. Polished, eloquent, profound as its soloist, Mr. Fischbach was accompanied beautifully by the PSP musicians and conductor. Totally generous, Fischbach came to several PSP rehearsals ahead of time, but it should also be noted that our PS Principal Cellist, Jason Chang, came to PSP rehearsals several times earlier, stepping in for the soloist until the last few weeks before the performance. Thank you, Jason – and kudos and thank you, Glenn Fischbach. This was a performance to remember.

This Festival Concert was a beautiful, winning way to end the year, and our PSP musicians can be very proud of their growth and accomplishment since September.



Brass, winds, and choir perform; PSP's Festival Concert



PSP violins; PSP Festival Concert



PSP cellos; PSP Festival Concert



Glenn Fischbach, soloist; in Saint-Saëns cello concerto

CALL FOR AUDITIONS!

Going into its 26th season, the Philadelphia Sinfonia program includes several performance opportunities for each orchestra, varied and challenging repertoire, master classes and sectionals with the area's top music professionals. We have three 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. More information below.
Rehearsals: Sundays, 12:30 – 2:00 PM

Auditions via Zoom are available throughout the summer. If you would like a summer audition and are unable to audition with Zoom, an in-person audition may be arranged. Please note your request on the audition request form on our website.

In-person auditions take place at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 19 S. 10th Street, Philadelphia.

FALL DATES FOR IN-PERSON AUDITIONS:

- **Saturday, August 27:**
noon – 6:00 PM
- **Saturday, September 3:**
9:30 AM – 6:00 PM
- **Sunday, September 4:**
9:30 AM – 2 PM

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.

While all instruments are encouraged to audition, we especially encourage double reeds (Oboe and Bassoon) and brass (Trumpets, Horn, Trombones and Tuba) to audition!

REGISTRATION IS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE: www.philadelphiasinfonia.com/auditions

For more information contact us at info@philadelphiasinfonia.com or 215-351-0363

Tempesta di Mare and Sinfonia's Year of Baroque

Joining Philadelphia Sinfonia in Telemann's *Overture* on stage at the Kimmel Center on May 27, four Tempesta musicians on violin, viola, cello, and flute closed out the year of their residency with our ensembles that ranged from masterclasses in Baroque Performance Practice Techniques in the fall to multiple discussions of Telemann's curious *Overture* and the picturesque story behind it, to rehearsals and this final performance this spring.

Over the year, our musicians have had an incredible introduction to a musical time-period rarely covered in a youth orchestra context, including an in-depth look at a very representative piece of baroque music. We could not be more grateful for the dedicated, thoughtful teaching by the musicians of Tempesta di Mare.

Here, the words of our musicians express both gratitude and the value of what they gleaned

from but one rehearsal/master class with Tempesta musicians on April 2, 2022:

"I enjoyed how the musicians from Tempesta demonstrated baroque playing for us, especially the bowing for a loure. I also liked how they described the piccolo entrances as "ow" and personified other gestures in the music."* Karis, violin

*a loure is a slow gigue

"I thoroughly enjoyed the rehearsal/masterclass with Tempesta! I not only learned from, but also enjoyed the stories each section depicted. Having an image in my mind helped me interpret the music the way Telemann intended. I like the idea of a mail cart ride being the remedy to gout. Adding accents to depict bumps is a crucial component of the movement we would not know to incorporate if not for Tempesta!" Ian, timpani

What a valuable, successful residency this was. Our many thanks to Tempesta di Mare.



Tempesta rehearsal with PS; Gwyn Roberts, flute, standing to share the story and techniques involved in the Telemann *Overture*.



Min-Young Kim, violin, standing to demonstrate techniques for Telemann's work.

Alum Profile: Andrea Horbinski

Over the years, you've likely read many a Sinfonia profile of our wonderful alumni — musicians, teachers, doctors, actors, and others.

And now, please meet Andrea Horbinski — anime and manga expert!

An alum with warm memories of her years as a violinist, Andrea joined Sinfonia midway through her freshman year of high school and remained until graduation. She returned after two years of college to tour Russia and Finland as well.

She lovingly remembers traveling with the orchestra to Italy, eastern Europe, and Russia and Finland. She remembers “getting up early to watch the sun rise from a park on our last day in Prague, the multiple rounds of applause after our concert in Budapest, and the many travails of our Russia/Finland tour, from lost passports, to wrong bag tags, lost luggage and music stands, and customs agents hand-inspecting every single instrument despite our customs paperwork — and that was all before we even left the airport [for our hotel in St. Petersburg]!”

“I also remember when we played with the Philadelphia Boys' Choir in their Christmas concert and the conductor forgot to cue us to come in — [but] we didn't! Gary White was so proud of us afterwards, and I felt we'd earned it!”

So *how* did Andrea wind us working with manga and anime? At St. Olaf College, Andrea double-majored in classics and Asian Studies, which included Latin, Greek, Japanese and Chinese. In graduate

school, Andrea switched to history — and added a “new media” emphasis, with the goal of applying fan and media studies perspectives, which fascinated her, to her University of California Berkley PhD dissertation topic — the history of manga (Japanese comics).

For the last few years, Andrea's main creative outlet has been making “fanvids,” which are sometimes also called “edits,” as well as writing the occasional fan fiction. At present, she is finalizing her PhD dissertation on the history of manga for publication. She also serves as the submissions editor and webmaster for the scholarly journal, *Mechademia*, including setting up *mechademia.net* completely from scratch.

Although Andrea's career has taken her in a different direction than musical performance, she has found that her Sinfonia experience still influences her life. Most importantly, she recommends that Sinfonians practice in a consistent, dedicated manner, and enjoy every aspect of their Sinfonia experience.

She has some very realistic advice: “working really hard in Sinfonia but still not being the best...served me well in that it prepared me for the reality... that there's always going to be someone doing better than you in your chosen endeavor, and you can't really do anything about that — you can only focus on yourself... [This] stood me in good stead in graduate school, which involved intense daily concentration while I was preparing for my qualifying exams and writing my dissertation.”



Andrea (on the right) with her brother, Wade, in Otaru, Japan, in 2019.

And Andrea is still a huge music fan — she especially enjoys concert-going and listening to music — with her parrot, Joey! Joining the Bay Area's pick-up orchestra outfit, the Awesome Orchestra — is on her to-do list.

Andrea, we admire your incredible array of talents, and wish you well. Everyone will enjoy learning even more about you at www.ahorbinski.com.

Please feel free to contact Andrea at horbinski@berkeley.edu. She is on Twitter@horbinski.

Diane Penneys Edelman

Recent Milestones Among our Alumni Musicians

Markus Lang appointed Principal Bass of the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, the National Orchestra of Sweden.

Nash Tomey appointed Assistant Principal Bass, Milwaukee Symphony.

Eliza Brown, composer and music professor, DePauw University School of Music, awarded tenure.

Na'zir McFadden appointed Assistant Conductor, Detroit Symphony.

PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA

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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.



Celebrating our 25th... and much more!

OUR
25th
SEASON

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Educating Musicians. Creating Artists.

PO Box 996
Philadelphia, PA 19105-0996