

Commended Winner: Philadelphia Sinfonia in National Competition

“Superb playing and a very musical rendering of difficult repertoire.” These comments are from adjudicator and internationally renowned conductor, Maestro Larry Livingston after hearing Philadelphia Sinfonia’s entry recording in the 2008 Mark of Excellence “National Orchestra Honors Competition”. Maestro Livingston named Sinfonia “Commended Winner” for the group’s live performance of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov’s virtuosic *Scheherazade* and Anton Arensky’s *Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky*. This national competition is held every year and youth, high school and middle school orchestras from across the country compete for the chance to be named winners for their excellence in each of the three competition divisions. This is Sinfonia’s first competition and to place second among the top three

winners in the Youth Orchestra Division was quite an honor.

Adjudicator Livingston also named Sinfonia members Madeline Gralish, concertmaster, Hyun Sung Park, principal clarinet, and Andrea Colleen Chieffo, harp, outstanding soloists for their performance in *Scheherazade*. Each player received an award certificate and was given great praise for their musicality, warmth of tone and extremely high level of playing.

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Fund the Drums ... Revisited!

We are the proud owners of four beautiful, top-of-the-line, new Yamaha Symphonic Hammered Copper Timpani.



Shiny new timpani and the 07-08 percussion section. Left to right: Ben Edelman, Anthony Viscounte, David Tarantino, Kevin Walker.

PHOTO: GEMMA WAYLETT

They arrived in late April of this year just in time to be played at our Festival Concert on May 4th in Irvine Auditorium at the University of Pennsylvania. Don Liuzzi, Sinfonia parent and Philadelphia Orchestra timpanist, tuned them within a couple of hours of concert time, and they were ready to go!

Our 2007 – 2008 drive to raise money for the timpani was a huge success. Our deep appreciation goes to all those who contributed. Particular gratitude goes to the 2008 senior class whose

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Commended soloists: (left to right) Madeline Gralish, Sinfonia concertmaster; Hyun Sung Park, principal clarinet.

President's Column

Welcome to Sinfonia's 12th year!

We have opened the 2008-09 season with two awards in hand — one for the orchestra and one for the conductor. We are pleased, and, really, very grateful for these external recognitions of the strides we and our talented conductor have made in eleven years.

We did not become an award-winning orchestra by accident. Many, many people have put hard work and careful thought into growing Philadelphia Sinfonia and each deserves an unreserved thank you.

Above all, the hundreds of young musicians who have joined, rehearsed, and performed with us over the years have built our reputation and our program. These musicians, our alumni, are scattered across the globe. Some are practicing musicians, becoming musicians, or in music-related fields. Others continue to play in their spare time; all are surely sophisticated listeners. Regardless of what they currently do, each is a part, a significant part of the 2008 award-winning orchestra, Philadelphia Sinfonia.

It is a good moment for us to strengthen our connections to our alumni. Naomi Atkins, a former parent and a new board member, is spear-heading a dedicated effort this year. We are meticulously developing our alumni database, posting a Philadelphia Sinfonia alumni page on Facebook (look for further information in our next issue of *Sonata*), and planning reunions.

We are also profiling two alumni in each issue of *Sonata*. Interviewing our alumni is the most enjoyable research and leads to the most enjoyable writing imaginable! I hope their stories recreate connections for former members, provide inspiration for our current members, and give us all a sense of the remarkable people whose personalities, talents, and strengths have contributed to our success. If we did our job, as I hope we did, we are also a part of theirs.

Carol Brown

President, Board of Directors

Fund the Drums ... Revisited!

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members and parents collected funds on the sly and presented Conductor Gary White with a large check at the end of the Festival Concert. We miss this class, but we thank them for leaving us with such thoughtfulness and style.

We will feature the new timpani in a tribute to their donors at our opening concert.



Sonata

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Livingston went on to compliment Maestro Gary White's "exemplary teaching" while commenting on the orchestra's beauty of sound and the musicality demonstrated by both individual soloists and the orchestra as a whole. He described the group's playing thus, "... sensitive and caring", "... the sound between the notes and within is excellent", "... warm sound that is aged and seasoned." These comments are high praise indeed for Philadelphia Sinfonia's talented young musicians.

Commended soloist, Andrea Chieffo.



Conductor Gary White Receives Temple University Honor

Philadelphia Sinfonia conductor, Gary White, received Temple University's "Gallery of Success" Award on September 26, 2008, in a large and distinguished ceremony in the Great Court of Temple University's Mitten Hall.

The Gallery's mission is two-fold: "to provide current [Temple] students an opportunity to recognize and be inspired by the success of Temple graduates who have gone before them and achieved success in their chosen fields, and to honor alumni who have distinguished themselves in their careers, serving as an inspiration to others in the attainment of their Temple degrees."

Maestro White received his Master of Music degree from Temple's Boyer College of Music and Dance and his Bachelor of Music degree from The New School of Music, which merged with Temple in the mid 1980's. It is significant to Temple University that Gary is the first graduate of both The New School *and* the Boyer College of Music and Dance to receive this award.

It is significant to *Philadelphia Sinfonia* that Temple conferred this honor on our conductor and music director largely for his exceptional musical leadership of Philadelphia Sinfonia. In presenting the award, KYW's Harry Donahue, began:

Gary D. White has rendered his musical education into a learning experience for some of the Delaware Valley's finest young musicians. He currently serves as music director and conductor of the Philadelphia Sinfonia, a full symphonic orchestra and chamber orchestra comprising some of the most gifted young musicians in the Delaware Valley. Under White's baton, both orchestras have performed at the Republican National Convention, the Liberty Medal ceremony for former Secretary of State Colin Powell and the Lewis and Clark 200th Anniversary Conference. Since taking the podium, the Philadelphia Sinfonia has grown to more than 90 members, competitively selected each year from an increasingly gifted pool of musicians, and has performed in countries including Italy, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, Russia and Finland.

The lunchtime ceremony drew deans and other administrators from all 17 of Temple's various schools. There, in recognition of our conductor were Robert Stroker, Dean, and David Brown, Assistant Dean, of the Boyer College of Music and Dance; Tara Webb-Duey, Associate Director, Institutional Advancement, of the Boyer College of Music and Dance; and Richard Brodhead, Director of The New School Institute, Temple University

Also attending were Maestro Luis Biava, Retired Conductor in Residence of the Philadelphia Orchestra and conductor of the Temple University Symphony Orchestra, Mr. White's former conducting teacher, and his wife Clara; Marsha and Steven Goldblatt, Gary White's mother and stepfather; and Carol Brown from Philadelphia Sinfonia.

Gallery Awards were presented to alumni from each of the 17 schools, and each recipient is showcased for the remainder of the year with a photo and the text of their presentation in glass cases in the gallery of the lower level of Mitten Hall. Sinfonia alumni who are at Temple University should check it out.

Congratulations, Gary!



Attending the award ceremony (left to right): Robert T. Stroker, Carol Brown, Steven and Marcha Goldblatt, Maestro Gary White, David P. Brown, Tara Webb-Duey, Richard C. Brodhead. Not Pictured: Maestro Luis Biava and his wife, Clara.

From the Podium

As we enter our 12th season, I think about how much we have achieved as we take our place among the Philadelphia area's important music institutions. Our goal has always been to provide a high quality musical experience while teaching our musicians to work together in a supportive and cooperative environment. Our reputation is well established as an organization that places a high priority on the well being of our individual members.

Equally important to me is how we are perceived musically. It is well known by our members, audiences, Philadelphia area music teachers and musicians that we always strive to give the most musical performances possible. To that end, I decided to approach Philadelphia Sinfonia's Board and suggest we enter our first national juried competition. The Board and I agreed that competing would provide us with valuable feedback and possible affirmation as we continue to grow and move forward. In the summer we sent a CD recording of a live Sinfonia concert to the Mark of Excellence "National Orchestra Honors Competition." Of course, our headline to this issue of *Sonata* has already told you the successful results of this endeavor. I couldn't be happier and prouder of our fine orchestra. To have

verification of the orchestra's excellence from an outside independent source helps us to understand just what we are doing right and where we need to grow.

It was especially helpful to receive verbal and written critical comments about the group's performance. After listening to all the comments it is clear to me that our members play with a passion that provides an outstanding musical concert experience for the listener. Personally, I have adjudicated several competitions and while it is important to critic in a positive way when possible, it is equally important that your comments be true and not over done. This is the mark of a good adjudicator. Maestro Larry Livingston, Mark of Excellence's adjudicator, has a national reputation for the high level of criticism he provides. His description of the group's playing as "sensitive and caring . . . the sound between the notes and within is excellent . . . warm sound that is aged and seasoned" tells me that the work we are doing is being heard and appreciated by others at the highest levels.

Two years into our second decade, I believe we move forward confident that we are on the right path to provide our musicians with a socially responsible environment within which they can flourish, while providing



the finest music education and performance opportunities.

Bravo and truly deserved congratulations to our fine young musicians!

Gary D. White
Music Director & Conductor

2009 Concert Schedule

Philadelphia Sinfonia
Sunday, January 25, 2009, 3 pm
First Presbyterian Church
35 W. Cheltenham Ave.
Germantown, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia
Sunday, February 15, 2009, 3 pm
Trenton War Memorial
1 Memorial Drive
Trenton, NJ

Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra
Sunday, March 1, 2009, 12:30 pm
Klein Branch, Jewish Community Center
10100 Jamison Ave.
Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia
Sunday, March 29, 2009, 4 pm
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
19 S. 10th St.
Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra
Sunday, April 19, 2009, 2 pm
Foulkeways at Gwynedd
1120 Meetinghouse Road
Gwynedd, PA

Festival Concert
Philadelphia Sinfonia
featuring Jeffrey Solow, cello
Tuesday, May 5, 2009, 8 pm
Perelman Theater, The Kimmel Center
Broad & Spruce Streets
Philadelphia, PA

Sinfonia Welcomes Assistant

Our first year with an administrative assistant set a perfect footprint for the job. Judith Mendelsohn did that and more in the last year, but she has gone back to school and moved on from Philadelphia Sinfonia. I want to thank her for a fine introduction to office assistance. She was a joy to work with.

However, we are fortunate to find an excellent successor. I would like to introduce and welcome Hannah Albrecht, who joined us September 2nd as the new administrative assistant in our office on the third floor of St. Stephen's Church.

Hannah is a recent graduate of Bryn Mawr College with a major in music. Her performance field is organ; she also plays piano and percussion. She is working as a part-time church organist in Gwynedd, Pennsylvania and part-time for Philadelphia Sinfonia. She has easily navigated our computer files, compiled mailings and countless forms, assisted with auditions and rehearsals. She likes knowing the faces connected to the names in our database, so we will increase her responsibilities on rehearsal and concert days.

Welcome to Philadelphia Sinfonia, Hannah.

Tour 2009 ... Argentina!

Extracts from a letter from our tour company:

Next year, June 23 – July 3, 2009, Philadelphia Sinfonia will embark upon a unique concert tour, highlighted by 4 major performances in concert halls and theaters in 4 of the most important cultural cities in Argentina: Buenos Aires; Mendoza; Rosario; and Cordoba.

Musically, Argentina's orchestras, youth orchestra programs and music schools are well-known: the Teatro Colón Orchestra, the Argentine National Youth Orchestra, and the Beethoven Music School, to name a few.

In addition, Argentina has given the world some famous native-born musicians and composers: Alberto Ginastera, Daniel Barenboim, Mario Davidovsky, Martha Agerich and many modern composers that are not American "household names" but names you may wish to discover: Astor Piazzolla, Osvaldo Golijov, and Alicia Terzian.

The Sinfonia has an esteemed and lustrous history of concert tours to many countries around the world. I know you will carry on that tradition in your Argentina tour, and perform beautifully as young musicians. You have a wonderful conductor, supportive parents, and a dedicated board of directors and chaperones.

Finally, remember that as young Americans, you represent the image of the United States. Immerse yourself in learning about Argentina and its people and its culture – be knowledgeable and understanding!

In his book, *Iberia*, James Michener talks about cross-cultural travel: "If you reject the food, ignore the customs, fear the religion and avoid the people, you might better stay home. You are like a pebble thrown into water; you become wet on the surface, but you are never part of the water".

I urge you not to be like the pebble that only gets wet on the surface, but more like sponges, absorbing at least a bit of the vast ocean of what Argentina offers. If you reach out to the people of Argentina, through your music and example, they will extend a hand in return, and I am certain that each of you will return to the USA with a bit of Argentina forever in your hearts!

George Plasko, President
Arts Development International
(ADI Tours)

Sinfonia Notes

CONCERT BLACK

Need to freshen up your concert attire? Here are some suggestions on where to find the perfect tux or black dress before the first curtain call — for a good price, too! Philadelphia Sinfonia's famous "Tux Redux" is returning November 22, 12:00-3 p.m., with an assortment of gently worn tuxedos from orchestra members and Formal Expressions Tuxedos. Call Ellen Youssefian (856-547-7140) to schedule an appointment and to let her know if you're looking for a specific size (Formal Expressions brings average sizes and specially requested sizes) or if you have a tux to sell or donate. Formal Expressions tuxedos are \$109; from fellow Sinfonians, about \$50. For black dresses, skirts, pants, and tops, check out www.concertblack.com, or head to The Village Thrift in Pennsauken, NJ, where you can find racks and racks of black clothing at ridiculously low prices, even with the cost of the bridge toll!



TRIVIA QUIZ

The Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture is arguably one of Tchaikovsky's first great masterpieces. When was it premiered, who was the conductor, how was it received and why? (This is a four-part question with a four-part answer.)

The first musician to email Carol Brown (info@philadelphiasinfonia.com) with the correct answer will receive a small prize.

Alumna Profile: Karinné Hovnanian

Music and psychology – what do they have in common? For Karinné Hovnanian, the answer seems to be “everything.”

Karinné played viola with Sinfonia from 2000 to 2004. She is now pursuing a Master’s Degree in Creative Arts in Therapy, with a concentration in music therapy, in a unique program offered by Drexel University’s College of Nursing and Health Professions. Her passion for her studies grew from her experience as a Music and Psychology double major at George Washington University — and before that, from her experience in Sinfonia.

GW was fertile ground for Karinné to explore her varied interests in music. Skilled in piano, guitar, and voice as well as in viola, Karinné played in the GW Symphony Orchestra and directed two a cappella singing groups. She taught piano to homeless women, ran a music program in a day care center, experimented with improvisation, and sang in a church choir.

Karinné also participated in an internship in Armenia in which she worked with mentally ill adults. Although Karinné, who is nearly fluent in Armenian, found it somewhat difficult to communicate with the adults, who spoke a different dialect,

she found that music was key to communication. Indeed, her experience in Armenia and her other musical experiences throughout college “helped [her] to articulate the role of music” in her own life. Says Karinné, “I learned that music was in me in a way that I could not ignore

There is no doubt that Sinfonia played a significant role in influencing Karinné to pursue the career that she has chosen. She shared: “Gary had a unique ability when he conducted. He was able to pull out [of us] an expression of artistic emotion in a way that no other [musical] leader has ever done. By showing me what I could feel through music, he taught me how to channel those feelings and pass them on to others. . . . I learned how powerful music could be, and I want others to feel it, too.” Karinné has many fond memories of a sunrise in Prague and singing on a boat on the Moldau during Sinfonia’s 2003 tour to Central Europe.

Karinné will be very busy the next few years. As part of her program, Karinné will spend two years taking coursework and working directly with adult and child patients of

mental health, and then will complete a one-year internship in a medical facility. A doctorate in music therapy may also be in her future. She is thrilled to be studying at Drexel, whose music therapy faculty contributes substantially to the scholarship in this burgeoning field.

As a music therapist, Karinné expects to become and help others become familiar with many instruments, styles, and especially rhythms. “Life as a music therapist means pushing a big cart around,” says Karinné. We’re sure that she’ll be pushing that cart far, and bringing joy and growth to those for whom she cares.

Please feel free to contact Karinné at karinne.hov@gmail.com.

Diane Edelman



Karinné Hovnanian, Sinfonia viola, 2000 - 2004



Alumna Profile: Shona Goldberg-Leopold

Even if she tried, Shona Goldberg-Leopold would not be able to get music out of her system.

Shona is a junior at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music — and loves every minute of it. A French horn player, Shona is busy learning how to play every musical instrument as part of her five-year combined Bachelor's and Master's degree programs in Musical Arts and Music Education. She plans to pursue a career in music education, but is considering a career in performance as well.

A trumpet and horn player, Shona joined Sinfonia during eleventh grade and became horn section leader the following year. Shona toured with Sinfonia to Russia and Finland, and as an alum, she toured the Czech Republic and Poland in 2007. Today, Shona notes that her best friends from home are still those whom she met in Sinfonia. Shona also studies horn with Gary White when she's home.

But was Shona always sure that she would be a music major? In fact, Shona chose Vanderbilt because there, she could double-major and not necessarily be immersed in music from dawn 'til dusk ... but that is exactly what has happened. Shona's college experience is "all music, all the time." In addition to studying music, Shona plays in the wind ensemble, orchestra, marching band, and steel drum ensemble, and is President of Sigma Alpha Iota, an organization dedicated to promoting the role of women in music. The Blair School has far exceeded Shona's expectations; she reports, "I fell in love with the music school and fell in love with being a music major more than I ever expected." She finds that Vanderbilt is great both for performance majors and for students who want to be involved with music — but don't want to go to a conservatory. Classes are small; "everyone knows everyone else, and the faculty really cares

about you," she reports. In addition, because the School of Music only offers undergraduate degrees, performers don't lose out to graduate students for performance opportunities.

Sinfonia was a major influence in Shona's choice of a musical education and career, and gave her an incredible opportunity to learn, perform, and travel. She was impressed by the commitment of the Sinfonia parents and staff: "They were passionate and dedicated, and really cared about the students and the experience that the students were getting."

That doesn't mean that all of Shona's Sinfonia experiences were serious ones. She fondly recalls that during a rehearsal of Swan Lake, when the horn section was rehearsing its chords, Gary announced, "I love chocolate pudding more than anything else ... and those chords are like chocolate pudding." And guess what the horn section brought Gary at one rehearsal? That's right — chocolate pudding.

And so, Shona cannot get music out of her system — but then again, she doesn't want to.

Please feel free to contact Shona at S.Goldberg-Leopold@vanderbilt.edu.

Diane Edelman



Shona Goldberg-Leopold, Sinfonia horn, 2004 - 2006

Repertoire

PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA'S 2008-09 REPERTOIRE

(partial listing; repertoire subject to change)

Full Orchestra

Coronation March from "Le Prophète"
by Giacomo Meyerbeer

*The Abduction from the Seraglio
Overture, K384* by W.A. Mozart

Fidelio Overture, Op. 72b by Ludwig
van Beethoven

Symphony No. 1 in C Major, Op 21 by
Ludwig van Beethoven

Romeo and Juliet Overture by P. I
Tchaikovsky

*Excerpts from Romeo and Juliet: Suites
1 & 2, Op. 64a & Op. 64b* by Sergei
Prokofiev

Scènes Historiques, Op. 25 by Jean
Sebelius

West Side Story: Selections for Orchestra
by Leonard Bernstein

*Concerto in d minor for Cello and
Orchestra* by Edouard Lalo
Jeffrey Solow, cello

Chamber Orchestra

Don Quixote Suite by G.P. Telemann

"*La Primavera*" from *The Four Seasons*,
Op. 8, No. 1 by Antonio Vivaldi
Madeline Gralish, violin

Five Dances for Strings by Luigi
Boccherini

Sinfonia No. XII in g minor by Felix
Mendelssohn

Lullaby by George Gershwin

Suite for Strings by Astor Piazzolla

Vibrate by Robert Maggio



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

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Philadelphia Sinfonia
PO Box 996
Philadelphia, PA 19105-0996
Tel: 215-351-0363
Website: www.philadelphiasinfonia.com
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.



Philadelphia Sinfonia
PO Box 996
Philadelphia, PA 19105-0996

Sinfonia Receives National Honors!