

# SONATA

Sinfonia Orchestra News  
Winter 2020

PHILADELPHIA  
SINFONIA  
*Educating Musicians. Creating Artists.*

## Beyond the Classical Cannon: PS Plays Pops and a World Premiere

### SPRING AUDITIONS

May 23 & 24 • May 30 & 31 • June 6 & 7

For details, see page 8.

With a brilliant opening — Rossini's Overture to *William Tell* — the Philadelphia Sinfonia advanced orchestra brought an afternoon of music that ranged from the most familiar to a never-before-heard world premiere to a packed audience in Germantown.

Titled "A Salute to John Williams," much of the concert on February 23, presented Williams' movie music, including the profound "Hymn to the Fallen" from *Saving Private Ryan*, to his epic *Star Wars Suite for Orchestra*. But it incorporated also Williams' orchestration of *Air and Simple Gifts*, a Mozart divertimento performed by our string chamber orchestra,

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Curtain call at the PS February concert

## PSP Swings in February Concert

From *Duke Ellington!* to *Carmen* to Copeland's *Hoe Down*, much of PSP's concert on February 9, 2020 was danceable. St. Stephen's Church was swinging with the musicians' accomplished performance, and the



PSP cellos in concert, February 9, 2020

audience loved it! We were brought back to earth as the orchestra played Copeland's poignant *Variations on a Shaker Melody* from "Appalachian Spring" during the second half. In fact, it was in the quiet melody of this hymn tune that the Philadelphia Sinfonia Players demonstrated the real gifts that this group can deliver.

The performance was rounded out by its opening numbers: Schubert's *Rosemunde Overture* and a movement from Jean Sibelius' *Karelia Suite*, each well-played.

Many of the musicians in PSP were new to our program this year, but by the moment of this concert in February, the players, under the

baton and instruction of Maestra Danielle Garrett, have coalesced into a strong, capable, lovely ensemble.

It is tradition for a few of our advanced orchestra students to join PSP in concerts. The idea is to give some students from PS the opportunity to mentor their less experienced counterparts, and it also provides extra strength to the smaller ensemble.

Two students from PS, Fiona Feng and Caroline Kratz, wrote a description of their experience as February concert mentors. They worked together not only with the PSP violas, but together they also wrote about the mentoring experience. Awesome!

*Continued on page 5.*

## From the Podium

As I talk to our alums, I am continuously impressed by the variety of musical activities they are pursuing. From playing in Broadway shows and jazz ensembles to historically informed performances and orchestral ensembles, past Sinfonia members are doing it all both professionally and non-professionally! Their success in a broad range of musical endeavors is a constant reminder that today's musician must have diverse skills in all genres of music. As Music Director of the Philadelphia Sinfonia Association, I believe it is our educational responsibility to give talented upcoming musicians these experiences as well!

As you read this newsletter you will see that we are in peak concert season, and I am pleased to note that our programs have been and will be very diverse programmatically, covering a wide range of classical music periods - Baroque, Classical and Romantic, as well contemporary 21st Century, jazz and pop. Our artistic staff believe that all music deserves to and should be played well and with great care, and in order for our musicians to do that, they must learn the subtle nuances of many genres and styles of orchestral music.

Philadelphia Sinfonia is not only playing several important works in the classical canon, but our recent concerts

have included original scores to several John Williams classic movies, as well as a world premiere of a 21st Century composition by Eliza Brown. In February Philadelphia Sinfonia Players performed selections by jazz great, Duke Ellington, and will perform an original work written especially for them in May. Coachings and sectional work have included in considerable detail how to play *not only* our classical repertoire, but also exciting — and perhaps new to many of our students — brand new work that has not been recorded or performed by anyone else. John Williams, one of America's great composers for the big screen, writes complex, intricate and challenging music that our advanced musicians tackled with great sensitivity and success. Just as with playing a Beethoven symphony well, this too takes special skills and practice.

Today's entrepreneurial musicians must be able to do it all — be comfortable in classical, pop, Broadway, jazz, etc., all different and demanding genres that need training to do well. We feel the importance of providing our talented players the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills required to do this. Maestra Garrett, I, and a whole host of extraordinary coaches from our great city and from around the globe work together to do just that, so that we are, indeed, "Educating Musicians. Creating



Gary D. White, Music Director & Conductor

Artists." Whether our students go on to pursue various careers in music or just play for the love of it, we take our motto very seriously. At Sinfonia, we hope our students benefit from their broad experience with us, and that you, our audience, enjoy the results of their efforts.

Gary D. White  
Music Director & Conductor

### ORCHESTRA NEWS

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*"Thank you very much for your committed and sensitive performance of A Toy Boat on the Serpentine. Perhaps even more than I wish to thank you for the concert, I'd like to thank you for your openness, flexibility, and astute questions in rehearsal. I was impressed by how quickly you were able to adapt to changes in playing style, tempo, balance, and even literal notes. By the time of the performance, I felt you had taken ownership of the piece individually and collectively and were really creating Sinfonia's interpretation rather than just playing it accurately.*

Composer Eliza Brown, in a message to the PS musicians

## “Talk to me About Sound”

While I am not much of a musician beyond having played the piano and recorder for several years of my childhood, I know and love classical music of all kinds. I grew up in a house filled with music, and hearing it has been one of my passions as an adult.

My love of music has also been reinforced and embellished by almost 20 years on the Philadelphia Sinfonia Board of Directors, much of that time as Board President, and in the early days, also as acting Executive Director. I came to Sinfonia through my daughter, Eliza Brown, who played in its cello section from 2000 to 2003. She graduated in 2003 – but I did not! And my life has been enriched in countless ways as a result.

Nothing prepared me, however, for the gift that came my way as I stepped down from the board presidency almost two years ago. Maestro Gary White and Sinfonia’s board and staff presented me with a surprise commission of a piece of music “in my honor” to be written by my daughter, no less, who since Sinfonia has become a serious, successful composer.

While Eliza approaches composition in a variety of ways, she has an instinct for collaboration. So, it was not a surprise, I suppose, that as she thought about writing this piece, she phoned me, and said, “I want you to talk to me about sound.” She wanted to know what sounds (and music) particularly moved me.

This was an amazing exercise! Try it: what sounds deeply move you?

I thought about ambient sounds in the universe, in nature; I thought about what instrumental sounds were most appealing to me; I thought about familiar musical sounds – large, majestic phrases and small, delicate, sounds of anguish. I thought about the human voice – spoken and sung. I thought about tension and release in dramatic works both sung and instrumental. And finally, I focused on some works in the musical repertoire that I love, ranging from chamber music to opera to orchestral works, and some of Eliza’s music too. I listened

to them intently for the moments within them that for me inspire tremendous feeling.

Finally, I sent Eliza my generic thoughts about sound along with a selection of pieces, marked where the deeply moving sections appeared. Some were marked with only 15 or 20 second clips, the exact few seconds that something incredible was happening. Other sections were a bit longer — 2 or 3 minutes – and a few were longer yet. The pieces included vocal duets from two operas; the slow movement from Sinfonia’s performance of Bruch’s violin concerto with soloist David Kim; a piece of Eliza’s with some very delicate, ethereal sounds, and quite a few others.

When Eliza mentioned to me that there was some consistency between several of my marked sections, I was curious and asked her to give me a music theory lesson sometime so I could understand what she found.

So, last Thanksgiving, she and I sat down with recordings and scores, including her score of the commission she had by now written and delivered to Maestro White: *A Toy Boat on the Serpentine*.

She was a good teacher, showing me first in the most-simple of the examples (a few seconds of the Aria from Stravinsky’s *Suite Italienne*) and then in examples with more complexity, that what I was hearing was a sustained voice (instrumental or vocal) in one part juxtaposed against a voice that moved majestically by step. In a duet from Bizet’s *The Pearl Fishers*, this motion occurred over a particular harmonic progression whose chord roots moved by thirds and in some cases by a third, a third, and then a fifth.

In her program notes for the premiere of *A Toy Boat*, performed on February 23rd, 2020, Eliza mentioned that many of the selections I chose were guideposts for her as she wrote the piece.



Composer Eliza Brown, introducing *A Toy Boat on the Serpentine* in concert, February 23, 2020.

And if you heard *A Toy Boat* in concert or if you were a musician who was playing the piece, the ethereal opening was surely recalling the opening Prelude to Wagner’s *Lohengrin* and perhaps also recalling Eliza’s own chamber work *Figure to Ground*. If you noticed an occasional horn chorus, it would recall my favorite horn solo in all opera repertoire, the opening to a significant duet in Donizetti’s *Anna Bolena*. The juxtapositions of voice lines, referred to above, are apparent throughout the piece. And the pacing of *A Toy Boat* pays tribute to my sense that slow movements and legato sections are generally more moving to me than faster, staccato sections, although without contrasts, the slow sections would have less impact.

Maestro White notes over and over in rehearsals that a depth of knowledge about a piece, especially knowledge of a composer’s intention and/or ideas, gives performers valuable clues about how to play. Thus, our conductors incorporate historic context, information about composers, and theory into rehearsals of a piece. I shared my theory lesson with the orchestra at one point, at White’s suggestion, and best of all, Eliza had time during the dress rehearsal to “workshop” *A Toy Boat* with the orchestra.

All of which surely played a part in Philadelphia Sinfonia’s extraordinary premiere of *A Toy Boat on the Serpentine*. It was by turns ethereal, majestic, and glorious. Bravo to Maestro White, the musicians, and the composer!

Carol Brown

# Donors

Philadelphia Sinfonia is truly grateful to its generous donors, supporters and friends, whose gifts nurture the growth of many young musicians, further develop our organization, and contribute to a vital artistic community in the Philadelphia region. Gifts can be made online through our website or by contacting us at [info@philadelphiasinfonia.com](mailto:info@philadelphiasinfonia.com) for donor materials. Donors and supporters are listed annually in our winter newsletter. The current list includes donations received between May 14, 2019 and February 22, 2020.

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## PSP Swings in February Concert

*Continued from page 1.*

But at the end of the day, kudos go to *all* the musicians who performed on February 9. PSP has set the bar for the year, and it is substantial. Congratulations PSP!



PSP violins



PSP flute

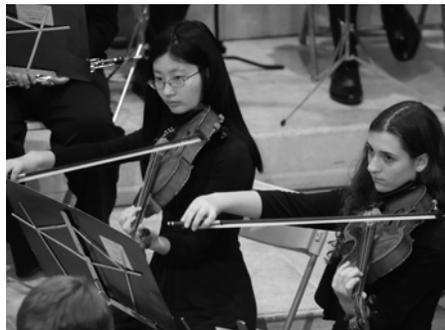


PSP horns

*For many concerts, our ensemble, PS, has guest musicians join the performance to cover the extra parts in especially large repertoire and to mentor their individual sections. This February, we were able to do something similar with the intermediate orchestra, PSP, where, as PS musicians, we had the wonderful opportunity to join PSP in concert. It was a great way for us to contribute to the orchestra. As fellow viola players, we were able to add more depth and balance to the talented viola section in PSP and give them a boost in numbers. We were also able to provide a bit of guidance for the members of the section and let them know what it's like to play with PS. What's so vital about this experience is that we befriended the future members of the orchestra we play in now, which will add another level of coherence to our ensemble.*

*However, playing in the concert was not the first step. In order to prepare, we had to spend extra time practicing individually, listen to recordings to familiarize ourselves with the repertoire, and attend a few of PSP's rehearsals. This experience taught us how to collaborate effectively with others in a short amount of time as we had to integrate ourselves into the orchestra as quickly as possible. Rehearsing with the somewhat younger orchestra brought back memories of when we used to sit in their spots in PSP and made us realize just how far we've come as musicians. Through this small collaboration, we hope we've inspired the PSP musicians to keep giving it their all to continue to create beautiful music!*

Fiona Feng and Caroline Kratz, PS violas



PS Mentors, Fiona and Caroline, viola



PS Mentor John with Jazmyn, percussion

## PMAY Artists Initiative: Auditions

The Philadelphia Music Alliance for Youth (PMAY) Artists' Initiative is now accepting applications from students from 5th to 11th grade who are interested in pursuing careers in classical music.

The Artists' Initiative is a collaborative of Philadelphia music institutions, including Philadelphia Sinfonia, who are committed to supporting students from backgrounds that are underrepresented within the professional orchestra field, including

African-American, Latinx, Native American, Alaskan Native, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and/or Pacific Islander. The Initiative also supports students who will be the first in their family to attend college, as well as students who face societal and economic disadvantages.

Each student's program of study is created based on the student's unique interests and talents with the help of a mentor from the collaborative. PMAY Artists receive financial aid to make lessons, music

classes, youth orchestra participation, and summer music camps affordable. Students are able to attend free college and career preparation workshops, and PMAY teachers and staff work with students' families to make sure each musician has a strong plan to be accepted into a music conservatory, college, or university music school majoring in music.

**Apply by March 31!**  
[pmayartists.org/application](https://pmayartists.org/application)

## Beyond the Classical Cannon: PS Plays Pops and a World Premiere

*Continued from page 1.*

and the world premiere of a Sinfonia-commissioned work by composer and Sinfonia alum, Eliza Brown, of *A Toy Boat on the Serpentine*.

This was a rich and balanced program, with surprisingly varied tempos, styles and emotional content — from profound and ethereal to majestic and iconic. In a very special partnership, the Germantown Oratorio Choir joined forces with us in the “Hymn to the Fallen,” lending an incredibly strong element to this sobering piece.

The musicians held their own throughout. Williams is tough to play, a work-out for instrumentalists; and *A Toy Boat* demanded they play delicate, complicated, previously-unheard music, but the PS musicians handled it all masterfully. And what an ending, as the afternoon concert closed with the final movement of the *Star Wars Suite*, when the audience leapt to its feet in joyful tribute to the musicians of PS!



PS cellos and basses with the Germantown Oratorio Choir in “Hymn to the Fallen.”



PS bassoons



PS violas



PS trumpets



PS horns

## Future Events:

### MARCH 7, 14, 21, 28: PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA FOOD DRIVE TO SUPPORT PHILABUNDANCE

Joining the national food drive, “Orchestras Feeding America,” for the twelfth consecutive year, the Philadelphia Sinfonia Association orchestras will collect and donate non-perishable food items over the month of March. Cans of food can be brought to St. Stephen’s during rehearsal on any of the four Saturdays in March 2020.

Over the last eleven years, our organization has contributed over *five tons(!)* of food to Philabundance. Our impact on hunger in the Philadelphia region has been truly significant. Please help us bring that number even higher!

### MARCH 14, 2020: SECTIONAL WORK FOR PS PERCUSSION AND BRASS 3:00 PM

Coaching for PS percussion with Sam Ruttenberg and with Eric Schweingruber for brass.

### MARCH 21, 2020: PS/PSP SIDE-BY-SIDE REHEARSAL AT 3:15 PM

This is a glorious annual event! All 170 of our students will gather in a single ensemble to rehearse a piece from each orchestra’s repertoire: John Williams’ *Star Wars Suite*, movements 3 and 4 and the *Light Cavalry Overture* by Franz von Suppé. Each PSP student will be seated with his or her counterpart in the PS orchestra, and the sound in the beautiful acoustic St. Stephen’s Church will be, as always, rich and rewarding.

Please note altered rehearsal schedule for all groups: PSCO at noon; PSP at 1:30; Side-by-Side at 3:15; PS at 4:15.

### MARCH 22, 2019: PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA’S BENEFIT RECITAL AT 3:30 PM

A stunning Chestnut Hill home, an extravagant reception assembled by Sinfonia board member chefs and vintners, and a handful of stellar musicians, will present a lovely afternoon affair on Sunday, March 22 to raise money for Philadelphia Sinfonia. Current parents, parents of recent graduates, and our donors have received invitations. Please let us know if you are not on that list and would like an invitation. We would love for you to join us!

### SUNDAY MAY 10, 2020: PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA PLAYERS TO PERFORM COMMISSIONED WORK BY COMPOSER ERICA BALL

Described more fully below, this work is the result of a joint commission between several youth orchestra groups, and is a rare opportunity for students at an intermediate level to work with a contemporary composer and play newly-written material.

### JUNE 13, 2020: PS SIDE-BY-SIDE REHEARSAL WITH THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA AT 10:00 AM

In our fourth side-by-side rehearsal with The Philadelphia Orchestra, PS musicians will meet with their POA counterparts on the stage of Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center to enjoy three hours of work together on Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 3*. An extraordinary opportunity for young musicians, this offer from the Orchestra has come within three years of their last invitation, and we are delighted to join them again so quickly. Thank you, POA!

## PSP To Perform Commissioned Work by Erica Ball

This is a strong year for Sinfonia commissions. . . . One of three youth groups to commission an orchestral piece by local composer, Erica Ball, Philadelphia Sinfonia Players will be rehearsing and performing Erica’s *A Thread Run Through* this spring.

According to the composer, this work explores a wide range of emotions associated with grief or loss, and the title, if not the work itself, is derived from a short poem “Separation” by W.S. Merwin:

Your absence has gone through me  
Like thread through a needle  
Everything I do is stitched with its color.

Ms. Garrett, PSP’s Conductor, has said of this work and its educational value to PSP:

“I was drawn to the new challenges that will be presented to PSP. This work [will] expose [the musicians] to more obscure rhythms and rhythmic techniques; expand their palette of various tone colors; and will bring out the wide range of emotions presented. My goal is to expose my musicians to many genres from a variety of musical periods. I am excited to embark on this journey of new music with PSP!”

“My goal is to expose my musicians to many genres from a variety of musical periods. I am excited to embark on this journey of new music with PSP”

— Danielle Garrett, PSP Conductor

# Call for Spring Auditions!

Please pass along our spring audition dates and times to any interested musicians you know. We are offering auditions for all three of our orchestras on all instruments. Many of our sections are filled or nearly filled in May, with the remaining spaces filled in September. Spring is the primary audition period for our orchestra. Spring auditions are offered this year on:

**May 23, 2020: 9 AM to 5:00 PM**      **May 31, 2020: 9 AM to 5:00 PM**  
**May 24, 2020: 9 AM to 5:00 PM**      **June 6, 2020: 9 AM to 5:00 PM**  
**May 30, 2020: 9 AM to 5:00 PM**      **June 7, 2020: 9 AM to 5:00 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; sight read.

Auditions take place at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 19 S. 10th Street, Philadelphia.

For more information contact us at [info@philadelphiasinfonia.com](mailto:info@philadelphiasinfonia.com) or 215-351-0363

Going into its 24th season, the Philadelphia Sinfonia program includes several performance opportunities for each orchestra, varied and challenging repertoire, master classes and sectionals, and a season CD. 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

**REGISTRATION IS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE: [www.philadelphiasinfonia.com/auditions](http://www.philadelphiasinfonia.com/auditions)**

## Upcoming Concerts

### **PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA FESTIVAL CONCERT**

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

Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center  
 300 S. Broad Street  
 Philadelphia, PA 19102  
 with Philadelphia Sinfonia Players and  
 Featuring guest soloist, Rachel Ku, viola

### **PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA PLAYERS FESTIVAL CONCERT**

**Sunday, May 12, 2020; 3 PM**

First Presbyterian Church in Germantown  
 35 W. Chelton Avenue  
 Philadelphia, PA 19144  
 Featuring guest soloist, Booker Rowe,  
 violin, and a Philadelphia Premiere by  
 composer Erica Ball

### **PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**

**March 10, 2020; 7 PM**

Foulkeways at Gwynedd  
 1120 Meetinghouse Road  
 Gwynedd, PA 19436

**April 4, 2020; 5:00 PM**

Woodmere Art Museum  
 9201 Germantown Avenue  
 Philadelphia, PA 19118  
 Featuring a world premiere by Sören Seig

**Wednesday, May 6, 2020; 7:00 PM**

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

## 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 call "Sound Post."

**ADAH KAPLAN:** Adah was the 2019 — 20 Pennsylvania MTNA Competition winner in the "Junior Performance — String" category. Adah is our PS Principal Second Violin.

**MATTEO JOHNSON:** Matteo was accepted to the Olympic Conference (New Jersey) Honors Band for Junior High School for all four percussion categories. Matteo is a member of the PS Percussion Section.

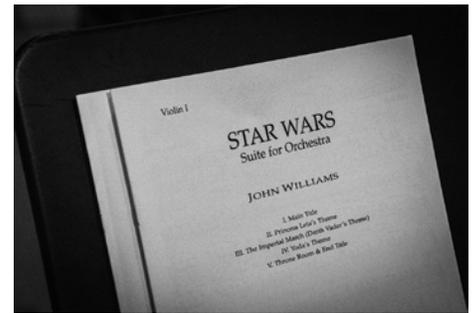
# Alumni Reunion 2020; Spectacular Play-In with PS

Our alumni are always welcome to come, hear, and visit with us on Saturdays when we are in rehearsals at St. Stephen’s Church. However, in a long tradition, Sinfonia specifically invites its former students to return on the first Saturday afternoon in January – following New Year’s Day. Rehearsal is open and reception food and drink are available throughout the afternoon. Maestro White, Ms. Garrett, and other staff join at 5:30 when rehearsals are over.

This year, on January 4, at least 35 alumni arrived to see each other, hear our PS rehearsal, and join the rehearsal in its last

half hour. The repertoire: John Williams *Star Wars Suite!* Announced ahead of time, this new feature of our alumni reunion was a smashing success. We saw alumni from as far back as the class of 2008, some with performance careers, some with music education careers, some lawyers, a doctor, and college students in various fields from music to economics, all eager to join an orchestra they loved. The sound was magnificent; the alumni, our students, Maestro White, and *Star Wars* did us proud.

Most alumni stayed for the opportunity to eat and chat with each other, their Maestro, Ms. Mendelsohn, and a few board members



until at least 7 PM, when the staff called it a long, but successful day. This new feature is a “keeper.”



The 2020 assembled group of alums



Alumni Maya and Grace with PS students



Alumna Sarah with PS students



Alumni Linsy, Jake, Faustina, and Ethan

## Sinfonia Profile: Ilana Rose Mercer

The path to a musical career can be filled with challenges; Ilana Mercer is proof that hard work and perseverance are crucial skills to develop.

Ilana began studying viola in third grade through her elementary school's program. In fact, she is "really happy that I began my musical journey through my school, rather than alone in private lessons, because I was able to play with my friends and peers from the start."

Sinfonia was challenging at first. Ilana joined Sinfonia during her sophomore year of high school ... and was last chair in the viola section that year. She was "surrounded by truly talented, hardworking students that were passionate about the music they played. Those qualities quickly became infectious, and I worked really hard that year on my performance skills." It's no surprise that Ilana moved to second chair the following year – and to principal chair during her senior year. Ilana warmly remembers the great friendships that she made at Sinfonia, as well as a terrific tour to Prague and Krakow.

Ultimately, "Sinfonia is the reason why I wanted to be a musician. I never had more fun than when I was in rehearsal with my friends.... I knew by the end of my first year that I wanted to continue playing music in college and beyond. Along with the help my private teacher and family gave to me,

Sinfonia helped me develop essential skills that allowed me to confidently head into one of the top music schools." Ilana earned Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Viola Performance, the first at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music (in Houston), and the second at Boston University. "Rice has the best orchestra program in the country, and Sinfonia helped me learn how to play well in a section [and] as a principal before going into a more intense learning environment."

Ilana learned from her challenging time at Rice that conservatory can provide "an intensely competitive environment" for a growing musician. Success at Rice meant constant practice, but also work with a fantastic private teacher, with whose family she remains close today. Following graduation from BU, Ilana moved back to Houston, where she gave private lessons, performed in a professional symphony orchestra – and founded a string quartet with close friends. She recently moved to New York City where she is playing with a variety of ensembles and developing skills in Baroque performance.

What's Ilana's advice to young musicians who want to play professionally? "[Be] strong enough to ... face rejection, and ... passionate enough to dedicate yourself to your craft every day. ... Talent and luck are both essential ... [as well as] a consistent



Ilana Mercer

work ethic, the ability to work with other musicians, [and creativity in carving] out a career."

Despite its challenges, Ilana finds her career as a professional musician incredibly rewarding. And "To this day, I am still friends and colleagues with many of those Sinfonia friends. Sinfonia friends can last a lifetime!"

Please feel free to contact Ilana at [ilana.rose.mercer@gmail.com](mailto:ilana.rose.mercer@gmail.com)

*Diane Penneys Edelman*

## Conductor Danielle Garrett Invited to Top Conducting Workshop

In early January, Danielle Garrett was one of nine young conductors selected from around the world, to participate in the New York Winter Concerts and Conducting Workshop presented by the prestigious Pierre Monteux School and Festival.

Led by legendary teacher, Michael Jinbo, participants attended workshops,

rehearsals, conducted concerts and received individual mentoring. In concert with top instrumentalists, Ms. Garrett conducted a movement from Brahms' *Symphony No. 2* and a movement from Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 3*. She was lauded for her technique.

Many years ago, Music Director Gary White attended the Pierre Monteux

six-week summer festival that is the centerpiece of this famous conducting program. It is fitting that Ms. Garrett, supported and mentored as a conductor by White, also has had an opportunity to study with Michael Jinbo, an important mentor of his. Congratulations Ms. Garrett!

## Sinfonia Profile: Jenny Weinar

Jenny Weinar, a Sinfonia alum who has taken on a successful career path other than music — namely, in the field of psychotherapy, has kept up her connection with Sinfonia, even with her busy counselling career. In fact, by serving on Sinfonia’s board, raising funds, and helping it to develop a long-term vision, Jenny has demonstrated her passion for giving back to others.

Jenny played several instruments before joining Sinfonia in 1997 — piano, cello, and finally, double bass, which she played in Sinfonia when she joined in *seventh grade*. Jenny was one of the youngest members of Sinfonia, and joining at such an early age enabled her to go on not one but three international tours, all of which were “incredible experiences.” But, like other alumni, Jenny found that besides performing, just being with fellow musicians had great value. She shares: “Just as important... were the carpools to rehearsals with other students from my town and the camaraderie with my fellow bass players, all of which provided me with a sense of community and belonging that I didn’t always feel strongly elsewhere in my life at that time.”

Jenny majored in art history at Wesleyan University, studied abroad in Paris, was a French T.A. during her senior year, and then

went to NYU for a Master’s in Visual Arts Administration. She worked in development at various museums before going back to school for a Master’s in Social Work at Hunter College.

Since then, Jenny has been back in Philly, where she founded a private group practice specializing in the treatment of disordered eating and body image concerns. Jenny’s experience with Sinfonia played a role in overcoming her own health challenges, and she says, “Sinfonia was always one place where I felt accepted and like I was good at something. I also believe that ensemble playing sharpens the skills of listening and attuning to others, which are certainly a big part of my work.”

Jenny’s continued involvement with Sinfonia “lets me stay connected to the creative side of me . . . . But it’s also important to me to give back to an organization that was such a safe space for me at a time that I needed it, and to ensure [that] this resource is available to other students who need it as much as I did. Alumni engagement is so critical, as alums are uniquely positioned to make sure Sinfonia’s future is driven by its values, having lived and breathed those during their time spent playing in the orchestra.”

With her expanding practice and Sinfonia



Jenny Weinar

board membership, she keeps in mind that both of her parents “have always been active in causes that mattered to them, which definitely set an example early on.”

Thank you, Jenny, for setting such an example as well. We wish you well in your endeavors!

Please feel free to contact Jenny at [jenny@homebodytherapy.com](mailto:jenny@homebodytherapy.com).

*Diane Penneys Edelman*

## Alumni Update

### ALANA YOUSSEFIAN (VIOLIN)

*We featured Alana, then a master’s degree student in The Juilliard School’s Historical Performance Program, in the fall of 2016.*

Before graduating from Juilliard in 2018, Alana had won The Juilliard School’s Historic Performance Competition. Since graduation, she has performed internationally both as soloist and concertmaster of various ensembles,

including Bach Collegium, Voices of Music, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, New York Baroque Incorporated. In March 2020, Alana will join the Bay Area’s Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra as soloist in Mendelssohn’s exuberant violin concerto – Alana’s third time to solo with this orchestra. Her upcoming album, *Brilliance Undeniable: The Virtuoso Violin in the Court of Louis XV*, is currently in production and will be released in April 2020.



Alana Youssefian

# PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA

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*Music Director and Conductor*  
Judith Mendelsohn  
*Executive Director*  
Danielle Garrett  
*PSP Conductor and Orchestra Manager*  
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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.



*Winter Concerts, Spring News, Audition Info. and More*

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