

# DCYO

Fall 2009

# NEWS

DELAWARE COUNTY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Est. 1973 – 38th Season

## **DCYO MOVES TO NEW REHEARSAL HOME**

As of September 2009, DCYO has moved to a new rehearsal site at the beautiful and spacious facilities at Proclamation Presbyterian Church in Bryn Mawr. According to conductor Brad Smith, Proclamation "is exactly the kind of facility that DCYO members will enjoy using each week." One of the main attractive features of this site is the spacious, high-ceilinged area provided by the church's Fellowship Hall, where the orchestra is rehearsing. This rehearsal area includes a grand piano, available for our use every week, sufficient storage space for our percussion instruments, and more than enough classrooms for our sectional rehearsals. Parking is ample. DCYO is delighted to be able to offer its members these roomier and more comfortable facilities.

The address for Proclamation Presbyterian Church is 278 South Bryn Mawr Avenue, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010. The church is a quarter mile south of Haverford Road, near the American College. For more detailed driving directions, please visit <http://www.proclamation.org/about/location/>.

## **YEAR IN REVIEW—2008-2009 SEASON**

The 37th season of the Delaware County Youth Orchestra was a highly successful year, marked by inspired performances of music that challenged and engaged the orchestra members. From Prokofiev's witty music for *Romeo and Juliet* in the fall to the magical colors of *blue cathedral* and *Scheherazade* in the spring, DCYO members responded to this challenging programming with outstanding musicianship. But perhaps the highlight of the season was the visit in the spring by award-winning composer Jennifer Higdon, who helped the students rehearse her composition *blue cathedral* and also talked about the career path that led to her success as a composer. The success of this visit has led music director Brad Smith and the DCYO Board of Directors to establish an annual guest program featuring distinguished musicians who would provide guidance to the students in terms of both musicianship and future career plans.

## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE ORCHESTRA**

The Delaware County Youth Orchestra is a highly selective, full-size symphony orchestra of talented students through senior year of high school. DCYO students come from a wider geographic area than the name implies: during the 2008-2009 season, 49% came from Delaware County, 25% from Chester County, 22% from Montgomery County, and 4% from other areas in the Greater Philadelphia area. In 2008-2009, approximately 90% of the members were high school students, the majority of whom were juniors and seniors. Exceptionally advanced middle school students made up about 10% of the orchestra's membership. Approximately 75% of the students attended public schools, 12% attended private schools, and 13% were schooled at home. During 2008-2009, 50% of the students were male and 50% were female.

DCYO members tend to be high achievers, both musically and academically. Over the past few years DCYO students have been accepted at such prestigious music schools as the Cleveland Institute, the Curtis Institute of Music, the Eastman School of Music, the Juilliard School, New England Conservatory, Northwestern University, Oberlin Conservatory, and Peabody Conservatory. In recent years, a third to a half of our graduating seniors have gone on to major in music. Other recent graduates are attending such highly selective schools as Columbia, Johns Hopkins, Princeton, and Penn.

## **CONDUCTOR**

The 2009-2010 season marks Brad Smith's fifth season as Music Director of the Delaware County Youth Orchestra. He is also Music Director and Conductor of the Symphony Orchestra, Wind Ensemble and Audio Nexus ensemble at the University of Pennsylvania. Originally trained as a trumpeter in the state of Texas, Smith holds degrees from The University of Texas at Austin and Stephen F. Austin State University. His primary teachers were Kevin Noe, Jerry Junkin, and Kevin Sedatole.



Photo courtesy of John Tobias

Dr. Smith recently served as guest clinician on the faculty of the American Festival for the Arts and is active as a clinician and adjudicator in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Texas. He has conducted a program featuring the music of Samuel Barber for the award-winning arts program "The Front Row" on Houston PBS affiliate KUHF. Smith has written on the topic of programming philosophies and has a strong interest in the promotion of living composers. Dr. Smith maintains professional memberships in the College Orchestra Directors Association, League of American Orchestras, College Music Society, and the Conductors Guild. He and his wife Becki have two daughters, Emily and Heather.

## 2008-2009 CONCERTS

Returning for his fourth concert season with DCYO, conductor Brad Smith demonstrated his ample talents as music director and educator. Each year our orchestra welcomes a large number of new students to many of its sections. These students, though exceptionally talented, start relatively young and untested. Hard work and dedication from these student musicians resulted in impressively strong fall concert performances. DCYO played to an enthusiastic audience for the season's opening concert on November 23 at Radnor High school. This concert featured Dvorak's *Symphony No. 8* as well as Brahms' popular *Academic Festival Overture* and Prokofiev's witty and challenging music for the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. (Dr. Smith chose Prokofiev's lesser known Third Suite from the ballet for the fall program – a choice that turned out to delight students and audiences alike.) The fall concert program was repeated two weeks later on December 7 at Neumann College. This concert was also warmly received and a perfect close for the fall season. The stage was now set for more spectacular performances in the coming spring season.



Photo courtesy of John Tobias

The major works presented for the spring 2009 concerts included the highly acclaimed *blue cathedral* by internationally renowned contemporary composer Jennifer Higdon. The students' polished performance of this piece was due, in great part, to Ms. Higdon's visit to a rehearsal on March 17, where she coached the students and provided them with invaluable insight. (See article at right on Jennifer Higdon's visit.) The second half of the program was represented by Rimsky-Korsakov's lushly melodic and magical *Scheherazade*. This ambitious program was first presented on May 3 in an evening concert at Upper Darby Performing Arts Center. The concert program was repeated on May 17 in the evening at the beautiful Madeleine Wing Adler Theatre at West Chester University's Swope Performing Arts Center. Both concerts, showcasing the talents of our student orchestra as well as many individual soloists, were met with great audience enthusiasm. Congratulations once again to all of the dedicated DCYO musicians under the direction of Dr. Brad Smith.



Photo courtesy of John Tobias

## PERFORMANCE HOUR

The DCYO Performance Hour is a program that features members of the orchestra as soloists and chamber musicians. This evening performance gives the students a chance to play in a friendly, intimate setting for their friends, family, and peers, and to socialize during the reception that follows the performance. The program allows students to perform pieces that they have prepared outside of the orchestra rehearsal time. At times students perform on instruments other than the ones they play in DCYO; occasionally students present original works that they have written.

On May 5, 2009, the orchestra held its Performance Hour at Newtown Square Presbyterian Church. Many of the orchestra's talented musicians participated. Co-principal cellist Yuki Koyama performed a movement from Dvorak's cello concerto, and then joined co-principal cellist Peter Volpert in a guitar-cello duo composed by Peter himself – with Peter on the guitar. The clarinet section performed a quartet arranged by DCYO clarinetist Eddie Sundra. Flutist Carolyn Brown performed original works by composers from West Chester University. Co-concertmaster Jennifer Campbell performed her own composition, a piano trio, with fellow co-concertmaster Justin Ying on violin, Yuki Koyama on cello, and Jennifer on piano. Other performers included violinists Carolyn Semes, Amy Semes, and Sophie Fortunato; clarinetist Rebecca Selin; an oboe-harp duo consisting of oboist Alexa McCall and harpist Caitlin Mehrtens; and tubist Seth Rawleigh playing a movement from Vaughan Williams' tuba concerto. Pianist Nozomi Takashima was accompanist. A social followed the performance.

## JENNIFER HIGDON VISITS DCYO

On March 17, 2009, at the invitation of music director Brad Smith, award-winning composer Jennifer Higdon visited a DCYO rehearsal to help the students rehearse her composition *blue cathedral*, which the orchestra had programmed for its May concerts. This magical work, one of the most frequently programmed pieces by a contemporary composer, is famous for its transparent orchestration, melodiousness, and concision. During this session Ms. Higdon provided invaluable feedback about the piece – its compositional history and the specific techniques required to perform it successfully. She also talked at some length about the career path that led to her success as a composer and fielded many questions in general about life as a musician. Her insights proved to be invaluable to the students in terms of interpretation and perspective. A highly engaging and energetic talent, Ms. Higdon left a lasting impression on DCYO's young musicians.

Inspired by this very successful visit and at the suggestion of Dr. Smith, the DCYO Board of Directors agreed to establish an annual guest program, which would consist of an evening where a noted performer, composer, or music educator – or a panel of several of these distinguished musicians – would discuss specific works the students were performing that semester and also discuss music as a career. The program would be funded in its initial years by a grant received at the end of the 2008-2009 season from an anonymous donor. Dr. Smith suggested that this visiting artists program be called "Beyond the Notes" – an exploration of the implications that extend beyond simply mastering the notes on the page.

## **CAMP TOCKWOUGH REHEARSAL WEEKEND**

At the beginning of each season, DCYO schedules a weekend of intense rehearsals at Camp Tockwogh, a YMCA camp on the Chesapeake Bay. This annual mid-September retreat encourages camaraderie between new and returning members and provides a jump-start towards mastering the fall repertoire. For the 2008-2009 concert season, this special program was sponsored in large part by a generous grant from the Ethel Sergeant Clark Smith Memorial Fund.

Approximately 95% of our students were able to attend this program on the weekend of September 13-14, 2008. The weekend consisted of several intensive rehearsals interspersed with ample time for lively camaraderie. This was an opportunity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a remarkable group of talented young musicians, which included many newcomers. Conductor Brad Smith again demonstrated his superb abilities as educator and mentor as well as conductor, and the students responded enthusiastically. During these rehearsals visitors and passersby were treated to strains of Dvorak's lushly melodic *Symphony No. 8* and Brahms' *Academic Festival Overture*, as well as the lesser known third suite from Prokofiev's music for the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. During their free time students found no shortage of activities, including swimming, archery, rock-wall climbing, and basketball. The bay was calm and many of the adventurous tried their skill at canoeing or kayaking. Other students found the beach to be a great location to simply relax or to play beach volleyball. Nearly perfect, mild late summer weather made for a most pleasurable weekend. The evening beachfront bonfire under starry skies was one of many highlights. As always, the retreat was a great success, stimulating the orchestra to develop as an ensemble both musically and socially.

## **SECTIONAL REHEARSALS**

As has been the tradition, DCYO held sectionals twice during the 2008-2009 season: fall sectionals on October 14, 2008, and spring sectionals on February 24, 2009. This is the time in the semester's work that each section has the opportunity to work on its unique technical issues and character. Our musicians had the opportunity to be coached by some outstanding musicians in our community. Richard Amoroso of the Philadelphia Orchestra coached our violins. Returning alumna Lesa Bubak taught our basses. Bill Wozniak worked with our percussionists both semesters. Other prominent musicians from Greater Philadelphia who worked with the students included Barbara Sonies, Deborah Reeder, Adeline Tomasone, Jesus Morales, Janet Rawleigh, and Carol Briselli.

These sectionals are beneficial because there is not sufficient time during our normal rehearsals to concentrate on the many technical details of each instrument. At the sectionals, the experts on each instrument know the nuances of the instruments and the difficult passages in the pieces the students are studying. Any technical parts can be taken apart, rehearsed separately, and really mastered. These professionals also know the traditions of the music, what the students should listen for as they play, and sometimes the tricks necessary to achieve a particular effect or sound in the music. When the orchestra comes together again, there is more precision from the individual sections. There is a noticeable difference in the quality of the rehearsals and the performances after these sectionals.

## **DELAWARE VALLEY YOUNG MUSICIANS' ORCHESTRA**

The Delaware Valley Young Musicians' Orchestra (YMO) was established in 1989 under the corporate umbrella of the Delaware County Youth Orchestra as a less advanced version of the senior orchestra. The YMO performs a mixture of classical arrangements, contemporary music and popular music for full orchestra at a high-school level. It rehearses on Thursday evenings during the school year at Springton Lake Middle School.

Each year a number of players advance to the Delaware County Youth Orchestra. In May 2009 over 21 players were accepted into the more advanced youth orchestra. This full symphonic group consists of strings, harp, winds, percussion, and brass instruments. In 2008-2009 the YMO had over 80 young players in grades 5-12. The majority were in 8th grade. They came from 18 different school districts and 35 schools. Over 55 private teachers were responsible for training these talented young people.

Two free concerts are prepared each year. In 2008-2009, both concerts were held at Neumann College's Life Center in Aston, Pa. On Sunday evening, November 23, 2008, the YMO played works by Rimsky-Korsakoff, Wagner, John Williams, Dvorak, Dukas, and Strauss. On Saturday afternoon, April 26, 2009, the orchestra played music by Mendelssohn, Brahms, Gliere, Stravinsky, J.S. Bach, John Williams, and John Ottman.

This orchestra has two conductors that share the concert program, rehearsal time, music selection, and auditions. Mr. Scott Kiehner is an instrumental and general music teacher in Wallingford-Swarthmore School District. His primary instrument is horn. Mrs. Elizabeth Klinger is a retired string teacher who previously taught in the Springfield School District. Barbara Ostroff, manager and founder of this group, is a private string teacher in Springfield and is principal violist and past president of the board of the Delaware County Symphony.

## **MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

During the 2008-2009 season, DCYO members achieved significant musical honors. Although less than half the orchestra members take part in district, regional, and state orchestra and band festivals, three of our members won seats in the All-Eastern Honors Orchestra and Band (sponsored by the Music Educators National Conference), and another six won seats in the Music Educators Association All-State ensembles. In addition, many DCYO members won seats in district and regional orchestras and bands, some as principals in their sections.

DCYO members distinguished themselves in several young musicians competitions during the 2008-2009 season. A DCYO member won first place in the Marian Garcia Piano Competition at Penn State University and was a semi-finalist in the Julia Crane International Piano Competition. More locally, DCYO members were winners in several area concerto competitions during 2008-2009, including those sponsored by the Ambler Symphony, the Kennett Symphony, the Lansdowne Symphony, and the Rose Tree Pops. During the summer of 2009, DCYO members participated in such highly selective summer music programs as the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Boston University Tanglewood Institute, and the Interlochen Summer Arts Camp. For further information, please see the appended list of "DCYO Distinguished Members, 2008-2009."

## A LOOK AHEAD TO THE 2009- 2010 SEASON

Music Director Brad Smith has programmed exciting and challenging works for the 2009-2010 season. The fall repertoire includes Romantic and late-Romantic favorites, most notably Tchaikovsky's lushly melodic *Symphony No. 5*. The fall concerts will take place on Sunday, November 22, 2009, at 7:30 p.m., at Neumann University's Meagher Theatre in Aston, PA, and Sunday, December 6, 2009, at 7:30 p.m., at Strath Haven High School in Wallingford, PA. Spring 2010 will provide a special treat for the orchestra members and their audiences. Dr. Smith has programmed Gershwin's ever-popular *Rhapsody in Blue* and selected DCYO co-concertmaster Jennifer Campbell as piano soloist in the work. In addition to being an excellent violinist, Jenn is recognized locally as a highly gifted pianist, having won several concerto competitions on piano and as a result soloed with several area orchestras. The spring concerts will also include works by Verdi, Ravel, and Schumann. These concerts will take place on Sunday, May 2, 2010, at 7:30 p.m., at Garnet Valley High School in Glen Mills, PA., and on Sunday, May 16, at 2:30 p.m., in the Madeleine Wing Adler Theatre of West Chester University's Swope Performing Arts Center.

For the most up-to-date information on the concert season, visit the orchestra's web site at [www.dcyo.org](http://www.dcyo.org) or phone 610-853-1041.

## DCYO DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS, 2008-2009: AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

**Austin Berman**, violin – Winner, 2009 Ambler Symphony Concerto Competition; performed as soloist with the Lansdowne Symphony Orchestra, winter 2009.

**Bradley Berman**, cello – First-place winner, 2009 Kennett Symphony Orchestra concerto competition; first-place winner, senior division, 2009 Lansdowne Symphony Orchestra concerto competition; winner, 2009 Ambler Symphony Youth Soloist competition; first-place winner, Senior Strings Division, 2009 Tri-County Concerts Youth Festival; performed in masterclass with Peter Stumpf, principal cellist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic; performed as soloist with the Kennett Symphony Orchestra in August 2009.

**Carolyn Brown**, flute – 2009 Music Educators National Conference All-Eastern Honors Orchestra.

**Jennifer Campbell**, co-concertmaster – First-place winner, the Marian Garcia Piano Competition at Penn State University; winner, Senior Piano Performance Division, Delaware chapter of Music Teachers National Association; honorable mention, Music Teachers National Association Eastern Division Senior Piano Performance Competition; semi-finalist, 2008 Julia Crane International Piano Competition; merit scholarship recipient, Music School of Delaware and Darlington Fine Arts Center; performed as piano soloist with the Delaware County Symphony and the Lansdowne Symphony Orchestra; performed in masterclasses with Jonathan Bass, Michael Luen, and Anthony DiBonaventura.

**Julian Clement**, bassoon – Boston University Tanglewood Institute Bassoon Workshop, summer 2009.

**Jim Doyle**, horn – PMEA Region VI Band.

**Barbara Eisele**, trumpet – PMEA All-State Band.

**Allison Hume**, oboe – Performed in three woodwind ensemble masterclasses at Settlement Music School, including one run by Richard Woodhams, principal oboe of the Philadelphia Orchestra; engaged in an internship in the astrophysics department of the University of Pennsylvania and published a demonstration on gravitational lensing as a result of the internship.

**Seth Kelley**, horn – PMEA All-State Band.

**Alex Martinez**, double bass (June 2008 grad) – 2009 Music Educators National Conference All-Eastern Honors Band.

**Brian McAnally**, double bass – PMEA All-State Orchestra.

**Caitlin Mehrtens**, harp – Principal harp, PMEA Region VI Band.

**Blandine Mooser**, viola – PMEA District Orchestra and Region IV Orchestra.

**Seth Rawleigh**, tuba – Principal tuba of the Lancaster Youth Symphony, Lancaster Youth Wind Ensemble, Lancaster Community Orchestra, and Lampeter-Strasburg Community Band; member, New Holland Band; PMEA Region V Band; masterclasses with Carol Jantsch (principal tuba of Philadelphia Orchestra) and trumpeter Wynton Marsalis; Rodney Mack Philadelphia Big Brass Quintet Seminar at Curtis Institute, summer 2009; Csehy Summer School of Music, 2009; scholarship recipient, Lancaster Musical Arts Society.

**Amy Semes**, co-concertmaster – Recipient, Starling Scholarship, Temple Music Prep Center for Gifted Young Musicians; Aspen Music Festival and School, summer 2009.

**Carolyn Semes**, violin – Aspen Music Festival and School, summer 2009.

**Eddie Sundra**, clarinet – Principal clarinet, PMEA District 12 Band; assistant principal clarinet, PMEA Region VI Band; assistant principal clarinet, PMEA All-State Band; 2nd prize, Rose Tree Pops Youth Auditions competition; 2009 Interlochen Summer Arts Camp.

**Jim Tobias**, trombone – Schuylkill Valley Area Band and Orchestra; 2009 New York Summer Music Festival.

**Peter Volpert**, co-principal cello – 2009 Music Educators National Conference All-Eastern Honors Orchestra (4th chair).

**Kerith Wang**, violin – Assistant concertmaster, Delaware Music Educators Association All-State Orchestra.

**Justin Ying**, co-concertmaster – Gold Medal Award winner (as member of Darlington Piano Trio), 2008 Golden Key Music Festival; first-place winner, String Division, 2009 Pennsylvania Association of Christian Schools International Festival; 2009 Boston University Tanglewood Institute Chamber Music Program.

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## DELAWARE COUNTY YOUTH ORCHESTRA JUNE 2009 GRADUATES

*(partial list, alphabetical order)*

**Carolyn Brown**, flute – West Chester University School of Music, flute performance and music education, studying with Kimberly Reighley.

**Jim Doyle**, horn – West Chester University School of Music, horn performance, studying with Elizabeth Pfassle.

**Barbara Eisele**, trumpet – University of Delaware; hotel, restaurant and institutional management.

**Allison Hume**, oboe – A National Merit Scholarship finalist, Princeton University, physics.

**Ashley Kaminsky**, viola – Lafayette College, chemical engineering.

**Caroline Kane**, principal viola – Westminster College of the Arts, music theater.

**Jenna Kim**, cello – Penn State University main campus, major undecided.

**Yuki Koyama**, co-principal cello – Northwestern University, major undecided.

**Paul Schwartz**, trumpet – Ithaca College School of Music, trumpet performance and music education, studying with Frank Campos.

**Julia Sippel**, horn – Bennington College, major undecided.

**Amy Thomas**, violin – Wheaton College, business, with a minor in music.

**Peter Volpert**, co-principal cello – A National Merit Scholar, Ithaca College School of Music, sound recording technology.

