

DCYO News · September 2005

www.dcyo.org

34th Season

Box 143, Media, PA 19063

DCYO welcomes Brad Smith as music director

The Delaware County Youth Orchestra is proud to welcome Brad Smith as its new music director and conductor. Dr. Smith joined the Music Department at the University of Pennsylvania in 2003, where he serves as Music Director and Conductor of the Symphony Orchestra and Wind Ensemble. He also conducts the Penn Sinfonia, a chamber orchestra based at UPenn. Prior to his current appointment in 2003, Smith received the Doctor of Musical Arts in orchestral conducting and Master of Music in wind band conducting from the University of Texas at Austin, where he studied with Kevin Noe and Jerry Junkin. During this time, he served as Music Director of the University Orchestra and Assistant Conductor of the Symphony Orchestra, Wind Ensemble and Symphony Band. Before beginning graduate studies, he taught instrumental music for four years in the Texas public schools. Dr. Smith received his Bachelor of Music degree from Stephen F. Austin State University.

Recent professional activities include a presentation as keynote speaker for the first national conference of the College Orchestra Directors Association. Given in Cleveland, Ohio in June of 2004, Smith's presentation, "Selecting Repertoire for Collegiate and Professional Orchestras," was based on research conducted while writing his doctoral treatise. A year prior, he was invited to participate in the Donald Thulean Conducting Workshop held in San Francisco, featuring the San Francisco Youth Symphony and sponsored by the American Symphony Orchestra League. Dr. Smith and his wife Becki have been married for ten years. Becki works as an operations consultant with Teachers Curriculum Institute. They have two daughters: Emily and Heather.

Year in review—2004-2005 Season

The 33rd season of the Delaware County Youth Orchestra was a highly successful year, marked by exciting collaborations with guest performers in the fall and inspired performances of French masterpieces of orchestration in the spring. From the huge turnout for the holiday concert with the award-winning Upper Darby High School Concert Choir, to the exciting collaboration with Philadelphia Orchestra Principal Second Violinist Kimberly Fisher, to the lush orchestral colors of Debussy and Ravel in the spring, DCYO members responded to the challenges of the season with outstanding musicianship.

Membership of the orchestra

During the 2004-2005 season the orchestra had 94 members, 30 of whom were new students selected from the approximately 100 who auditioned the previous spring. The large number of talented students participating in auditions over the past decade has continued to permit a very high degree of selectivity and

maintained the high quality of the orchestra. DCYO members come from a wider geographic area than the name implies: for the 2004-2005 season, 46% came from Delaware County, 20% from Chester County, 24% from Montgomery County, and 10% from Philadelphia, New Jersey, and Delaware. Approximately 85% of the members were high school students, the majority of whom were juniors and seniors, and 15% were in middle school. 48% of the students were male and 52% female.

2004-2005 concerts

In his second year with DCYO Thomas Hong demonstrated meticulous preparation and abundance of energy as conductor and music director for the 2004-2005 concert season. Mr. Hong demanded hard work and dedication from a wonderfully talented student orchestra. The result was a season of exceptionally well-prepared performances.

DCYO played to an enthusiastic audience of over a thousand for the season's first concert on

December 3, at the Upper Darby Performing Arts Center. This concert featured Giuseppe Verdi's Overture to *La Forza del Destino* and Tchaikovsky's romantic *Symphony No. 5*. Also featured at this performance were two holiday choral works by Gustav Holst and Joseph Haydn performed with the Upper Darby Concert Choir. This award-winning chorus, directed by Barbara Benglian, not only enhanced this program but brought along its own loyal and welcome following. The fall concert program was repeated on December 12, at Lower Merion High School. At this concert the choral works were replaced by two virtuoso violin pieces by Camille Saint-Saëns, played with our orchestra by guest violinist Kimberly Fisher, Principal Second Violinist of The Philadelphia Orchestra. The concert was warmly received and a perfect close for the fall season.

The major works presented for the spring 2005 concerts included Weber's Overture to *Der Freischutz*, Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*, Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*, and the ever-popular *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest Moussorgsky, in Ravel's orchestration. This ambitious program was first presented on April 17, to a full house at Neumann College. The first half of the program featured the guest conducting talents of Philadelphia Orchestra Principal Timpanist Don Liuzzi, as well as DCYO Assistant Conductor Yoon Jae Lee. The spring concert program was repeated on May 1 at Conestoga High School. Both concerts showcased the many talents of our student orchestra and were met with great audience enthusiasm. Congratulations to all of the dedicated DCYO musicians under the direction of Thomas Hong.

Assisting Mr. Hong throughout the year was Mr. Yoon Jae Lee to whom we give special thanks. His collaboration enhanced the rehearsal experience for all of the students.

Performance hours

The DCYO Performance Hour is a semi-annual event that the orchestra members eagerly look forward to near the end of each semester. This program, featuring members of the orchestra as soloists and chamber musicians, gives the students a chance to perform in a friendly, intimate setting for their friends, family, and peers. The first Performance Hour was held in 1998, and interest in attending and participating has grown each year. The fall 2004 Performance Hour, held in Marshall Auditorium, Haverford College, showcased soloists on violin, marimba, and acoustical guitar. The

ensembles included a sister violin duo and a string quartet playing Dvorak.

The spring 2005 Performance Hour was held at the orchestra's rehearsal home, Newtown Square Presbyterian Church. The appreciative audience heard solo works for violin, harp, marimba, cello, and classical guitar. Chamber ensembles included a flute-violin-piano trio, two violin-piano duos, and a viola quartet. A reception followed the chamber concert, allowing the audience and performers to socialize.

Camp Tockwogh rehearsal weekend

Near the beginning of each season, DCYO schedules a weekend of intense rehearsals at Camp Tockwogh 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. Approximately 95% of DCYO new and returning students were able to make the trip for the weekend of September 17-18, 2004. The weekend consisted of several intensive rehearsals interspersed with ample time for some outdoor recreation. As always, this was an opportunity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of what promised to be another remarkably talented class of musicians, which included many newcomers. Breezy but clear skies, a warm afternoon and a cool late summer evening made for a pleasurable weekend of activities. Conductor Thomas Hong once again demonstrated ceaseless energy at the podium as well as on the basketball and beach volleyball courts. During rehearsals students were most enthusiastic while working on the romantic classic, Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 5*. During their free time there was no shortage of available activities, which ranged from archery and rock-wall climbing to water sports on the bay shore. As always, the weekend 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 2004-2005 season: in the fall on October 26 and in the spring on February 22. These special rehearsals provide each section with the opportunity to work on its unique technical issues and unique character.

During the 2004-2005 sectionals, our musicians had the opportunity to be coached by some outstanding musicians in our community. In the fall, Sidney Curtiss, retired assistant principal violist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, took on the viola section; and our percussion section had the opportunity to be coached by Alan Abel,

retired associate principal percussionist of the Philadelphia Orchestra and award-winning professor of percussion at Temple University. Violins I were led by Barbara Sonies, concertmaster of the Opera Company of Philadelphia, and Violins II were led by Yoon Jae Lee, DCYO assistant conductor and candidate for a master's degree in conducting at the Mannes College of Music. Cellos were led by Deborah Reeder, principal cellist with the Opera Company of Philadelphia. Double basses were coached by Lesa Bubak, active free-lance bassist and DCYO alumna. Hornist Adam Lesnick, frequent substitute with the Philadelphia Orchestra and horn teacher at Princeton University, coached the entire DCYO brass section. Active free-lance clarinetist Matthew Marsit led our woodwind sectional.

In the spring, Sidney Curtiss once again coached our viola section. Adeline Tomasone, a frequent substitute flutist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, worked with the woodwinds. Charles Parker, concertmaster of the Philadelphia Ballet Orchestra, coached our first violins.

These sectionals are beneficial because there is not sufficient time during regular 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 to 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. The entire piece sounds more together and the conductor and students can focus on the character of the piece and the balance in the ensemble. There is a noticeable difference in the quality of the rehearsals and the performances after these sectionals.

Distinguished members

During the 2004-2005 season, DCYO members achieved significant musical honors. Six members were selected to perform on NPR's "From The Top," taped at the Kimmel Center in May and airing in September. DCYO students also distinguished themselves in all-state music festivals. Although only about one-half of the orchestra members opt to take part in district, regional, and state orchestra and band festivals, eighteen members won seats in the 2005 in Pennsylvania and Delaware All-State Honors Orchestras, Bands, and Jazz Ensembles. In addition, four members were selected to

perform at the All-Eastern Honors Festival: two in the All-Eastern Orchestra, one in All-Eastern Band, and one as principal trumpet of the All-Eastern Jazz Ensemble.

This past season DCYO members were featured as soloists with ten area orchestras, primarily as winners of the preceding year's concerto competitions. These orchestras include the Ambler Symphony Orchestra, the Bucks County Symphony, the Hershey Symphony, the Lansdowne Symphony, The Newark (Delaware) Symphony, the Ocean City Pops, the Old York Road Symphony, the Olney Symphony, the Orchestra Society of Philadelphia, and the Warminster Symphony. For the 2004-2005 season, three orchestra members won concerto competitions, and another three were winners in solo divisions of the Tri-County Concerts Youth Festival. At least eight members received significant scholarships at area chamber music programs, including Darlington Arts Center, Settlement Music School, and Temple Music Prep. Two DCYO members were accepted into major pre-college music schools: Interlochen Arts Academy and Juilliard Pre-College Division.

DCYO June 2005 graduates include at least one National Merit Scholar, two National Merit Finalists, and one National Merit Commended Student. June graduates are going on to such highly selective schools as Columbia, Dartmouth, and Princeton. Over half the graduating seniors are majoring in music: they will be attending such schools as Boston University School of Music, Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, the Hartt School of Music, Peabody Conservatory, Temple University's Esther Boyer College of Music, and West Chester University's School of Performing Arts. For further information, please see the attached lists of "DCYO Distinguished Members, 2004-2005," and "DCYO June 2005 Graduates."

Delaware Valley Young Musicians' Orchestra

The Delaware Valley Young Musicians' Orchestra (YMO) was established in 1989 as a less advanced version of the Delaware County Youth Orchestra. It provides an orchestra experience for talented young musicians who do not have a school orchestra or who need to be challenged at a high school level. Each year a number of players advance to the Delaware County Youth Orchestra. The YMO currently has over 80 young players in grades 5-12. This full symphonic group consists of strings, harp, winds, percussion, and brass instruments. The average grade is 8.7. They come from 19 different school districts and more than 30 schools. Over 58 private teachers are responsible for training these talented young people.

Since the fall of 2000, David Reif has shared the conducting position with A. Scott Kiehner. Each conductor conducts half of the rehearsals and half of each program. Mr. Reif teaches music and piano in the Radnor Middle School and conducts the Chester County Concert Band. Mr. Kiehner is an instrumental and general music teacher in Wallingford-Swarthmore School District. The operating board of this orchestra consists of teachers, parents, and volunteers from the community. The DVYMO is sponsored under the corporate umbrella of DCYO. Barbara Ostroff, manager and founder of this group, is a string teacher and president of the board of the Delaware County Symphony.

A look ahead to the 2005-2006 season

This September, new DCYO music director Brad Smith has imparted a refreshing new character to rehearsals and has begun to guide the orchestra to an even higher level of performance. Dr. Smith's colleague at Penn, Cristle Collins Judd, associate professor of music and chair of musical performance, has been quoted in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as saying, "He's been a wonderful addition to musical performance at Penn. The students love him and respond very well to his musicality. He gets them to the very highest standards of performance. He relates very well to talented but young players." Dr. Smith has been creating the same positive environment at DCYO.

The fall repertoire will feature an "American" theme, with Copland's *Billy the Kid Suite* and Dvorak's *New World Symphony*. These concerts will take place

on Sunday afternoon, November 20, at Garnet Valley High School Performing Arts Center, and on Sunday evening, December 4, at Upper Darby Performing Arts Center. Spring concerts will feature Russian orchestral classics from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including Prokofiev's *Lieutenant Kije Suite* and Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*. This program will be presented on Sunday evening, April 30, at Strath Haven High School, and again on Sunday afternoon, May 7, at Fugett Middle School. Admission to all concerts is free. For the latest information on concert times and dates, check the orchestra's web site at www.dcyo.org or phone 610-853-1041.

DCYO wish list

Delaware County Youth Orchestra is looking for a benefactor who will donate an upright piano (spinet, console, or studio-upright) capable of being tuned to A440 throughout its range, and holding its tune, with good action. We plan to keep this piano locked at our rehearsal facility and use it for rehearsals and performance hours. (We will also provide Newtown Square Presbyterian Church's music program with access to the piano.) Do you have such a piano that you would like to donate, or do you know of one? Please phone board member Bonnie Brebach at 610-853-1041 or email her at brebach@dca.net.

Delaware County Youth Orchestra is a non-profit, tax exempt organization. You may be able to use the blue book value of this gift as a tax deductible contribution.

Delaware County Youth Orchestra • 2005-2006 Season

Sunday, November 20, 2005
3 p.m.
Garnet Valley High School Performing Arts Center
Glen Mills, PA
Rimsky-Korsakov. *Russian Easter Overture*
Copland. *Billy the Kid Suite*.
Dvorak. *Symphony No. 9, "From the New World."*
Free Admission.

Sunday, December 4, 2005
7:30 p.m.
Upper Darby Performing Arts Center
Drexel Hill, PA
(Repeat of program above.)
Free Admission.

Sunday, April 30, 2006
7:30 p.m.
Strath Haven High School
Wallingford, PA
Prokofiev. *Lieutenant Kije Suite*.
Tchaikovsky. *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*.
Barber. *Second Essay*.
Free admission.

Sunday, May 7, 2006
2 p.m.
Fugett Middle School
West Chester, PA
(Repeat of program above.)
Free admission.