

Delaware County Youth Orchestra

Est. 1973

Year in Review • 2005-2006 Season

www.dcyo.org

34th Season

P.O. Box 143, Media, PA 19063

The 34th season of the Delaware County Youth Orchestra was notable for the debut of new music director Brad Smith. Dr. Smith has proved to relate exceptionally well to DCYO's talented young players. The students have responded enthusiastically to his leadership and he has led them to a season of inspired performances.

Membership of the orchestra

During the 2005-2006 season the orchestra had 90 members, 37 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 high degree of selectivity and has maintained the high quality of the orchestra. DCYO members come from a wider geographic area than the name implies: for the 2005-2006 season, 42% came from Delaware County, 29% from Montgomery County, 27% from Chester County, and 2% from Philadelphia. Approximately 96% of the members were high school students, the majority of whom were juniors and seniors, and 4% were in middle school.

Conductor

Brad Smith was named Conductor and Music Director of the Delaware County Youth Orchestra at the beginning of the 2005-2006 season. Dr. Smith is also on the faculty of the Music Department at the University of Pennsylvania, where he conducts the Penn Symphony Orchestra, the Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra, and the Wind Ensemble. Prior to his appointment at Penn in 2003, he received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in orchestral conducting and Master of Music degree in wind band conducting from the University of Texas at Austin. During that 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, Dr. Smith taught for four years in the Texas public schools.

Dr. Smith is a founding member of the College Orchestra Directors Association, having given a keynote presentation at the first national conference of this organization in the summer of 2004 in Cleveland, Ohio. He has participated in master classes with leading conductors such as Larry Rachleff, Otto Werner-Mueller, and Christoph Eschenbach. In May of 2006, Dr. Smith was a conducting participant in a workshop focusing on large choral/orchestral masterworks and featuring the Mannes College of Music Orchestra, the Philadelphia Singers, and distinguished conductors David Hayes, Duain Wolfe, Vance George, Alan Harler, and Amy Kaiser.

2005-2006 concerts

In his first year with DCYO Brad Smith demonstrated his ample abilities as both an educator and a conductor. Dr. Smith 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 for the season's first concert on November 20 at Garnet Valley High School. This concert featured Dvorak's *New World Symphony* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Russian Easter Overture*. Also featured at this performance was Copland's *Billy the Kid Suite*. This particular piece featured an opening narration by students in Western attire and appeared to be a favorite of both audience and students alike.

The fall concert program was repeated on December 4 at Upper Darby Performing Arts Center. To allow a wider participation, students exchanged roles for the *Billy the Kid* narration. This concert was also warmly received and a perfect close for the fall season.

The major works presented for the spring 2006 concerts included Tchaikovsky's romantic *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*, Prokofiev's *Lieutenant Kije Suite*, Samuel Barber's *Second Essay for Orchestra*, and Brahms' *Tragic Overture*. This ambitious program was first presented on April 30 at Strath Haven High School. The spring concert program was repeated on May 7 at Fugett Middle 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 Dr. Brad Smith.

Performance hours

The DCYO Performance Hour is a semi-annual event eagerly anticipated by the orchestra members. 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, and to socialize during the receptions that follow the performance. The fall 2005 Performance Hour was held on December 6 at Swarthmore Presbyterian Church's Fellowship Hall, a venue that offers pleasant surroundings, favorable acoustics, and an excellent Steinway grand piano. The program showcased soloists on violin, viola, cello, and piano, and ended with an expert ensemble performance of Mozart's *Piano Quartet in G Minor*. A social followed the performance.

On May 7, 2006, The Delaware County Youth Orchestra held its second and final Performance Hour of the year at its rehearsal home, Newtown Square Presbyterian Church. The appreciative audience heard soloists on violin and marimba; ensembles included an excellent piano quartet and an award-winning string ensemble playing the Mendelssohn *Octet for Strings*. A reception followed, providing the final opportunity of the year for the students 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, 2005. The weekend consisted of several intensive rehearsals interspersed with ample time for lively camaraderie. 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. This was the first such retreat for incoming conductor Brad Smith, to whom the students responded enthusiastically. During rehearsals passersby were treated to the lush strains of Dvorak's *New World Symphony* as well as snippets from Copland's *Billy the Kid Suite*. During their free time students found no shortage of available activities, which ranged from archery and rock-wall climbing to water sports on the bay shore. Breezy but clear skies, a warm afternoon, and a mild late summer evening made for a most pleasurable weekend. The evening beachfront bonfire under remarkably starry skies was one of many highlights. 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, the Delaware County Youth Orchestra held sectionals twice during the 2005-2006 season, once in the fall and once in the spring, for violins, violas, cellos, double basses, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. During these specialized rehearsals, each section was coached by a prominent Philadelphia-area musician for a two-hour session focusing on the repertoire for each semester's concerts. This is the time in the semester when each section has the opportunity to work on its unique technical issues and unique character. The master musicians leading these sections include current and retired members of the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Opera Company of Philadelphia Orchestra, the Pennsylvania Ballet Orchestra, and Orchestra 2001, as well as music faculty members at area colleges and universities. Some of the Philadelphia Orchestra members who led sectionals during 2005-2006 included Paul Arnold, violinist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Sidney Curtiss, retired assistant principal violist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Lorne Munroe, retired principal cellist of the New York Philharmonic and former principal cello of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and David Wetherill, co-principal hornist of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

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 and 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 2005-2006 season, DCYO members achieved significant musical honors. Our students were a strong presence in the 2006 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association district, regional, and state orchestra and band festivals. Members of our orchestra won seats as concertmaster and as principal cello of PMEA District 12 Orchestra, and for PMEA Region VI Orchestra, DCYO members held seats as associate principal concertmaster, principal cello, principal bassoon, and principal tuba. In April 2006, twelve DCYO members won seats in PMEA All-State Orchestra and Band, and our principal tuba sat as principal tuba of the All-State Wind Ensemble.

DCYO members were winners in several concerto competitions during 2005-2006, including competitions sponsored by the Delaware Symphony, the Pottstown Symphony, the North Penn Symphony, and the Strings International Music Festival. In addition, two members were winners in the solo division of the Tri-County Youth Festival, and one member was a winner in the National Trumpet Competition. For further information, please see the attached list of "DCYO Distinguished Members, 2005-2006."

Over half the June 2006 graduates are majoring in music: they will be attending such highly selective music schools as Boston University's School of Music, the Cleveland Institute, Oberlin Conservatory, Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, and Temple University's Esther Boyer College of Music. For further information, please see the attached list of "DCYO June 2006 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 performs a mixture of classical

arrangements and popular music 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 5-13. 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.

Two concerts are prepared each year. On November 20, 2005 the Delaware Valley Young Musicians' Orchestra played at Neumann College, performing works by Grofé, Rossini, Saint-Saëns, Tchaikovsky and Themes from 007. On April 30, 2006 the orchestra played at Strath Haven High School, performing works by Rossini, Ippolitov-Ivanov, Meyer, Ford, Dvorak, and music from the *Lord of the Rings- the Fellowship of the Ring*.

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 YMO 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 2006-2007 season

In his second season, conductor and music director Brad Smith is continuing to guide the orchestra with a steady hand and inspire his talented young players to achieve even higher levels of performance. Dr. Smith has programmed exciting and challenging works for the 2006-2007 season. The fall repertoire includes Wagner's grandiose *Prelude to Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg*, Debussy's impressionistic *Nocturnes*, and Beethoven's exciting *Symphony No. 5*. These concerts will take place on Sunday, November 19, 7:30 p.m., at Neumann College, and on Sunday, December 3, at Upper Darby Performing Arts Center. Spring concerts will feature Russian orchestral classics from the nineteenth century, including Tchaikovsky's intensely romantic *Symphony No. 4* and Rimsky-Korsakov's colorful *Capriccio Espagnol*. For the latest information on concert times and dates, check the orchestra's web site at www.dcyo.org or phone 610-853-1041.