



PHILADELPHIA YOUTH ORCHESTRA
Ovation Award



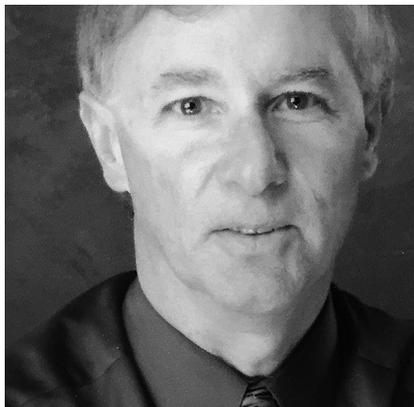
Presented and Endowed by H.E.L.P.[®] Foundation
Sponsored by Jacobs Music Company and J.W. Pepper
In Partnership with WRTI 90.1 FM

Sunday • June 4 • 2017 • 3:00 p.m.

The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts
Verizon Hall



Joe Akinskas • Cherry Hill, NJ



Joe Akinskas "treated me with a respect that, until him, no one had ever seemingly given me."

Joe Akinskas received his B.A. (1970) and M.A. (1973) in Music Education (Conducting specialization), and Principal's certificate, from Glassboro State College. Mr. Akinskas began his teaching career in the Westville Public Schools (K-6) and taught secondary instrumental music at Overbrook Regional Jr. High School, Millville Senior High School, Haddonfield Memorial High School, where he was also Supervisor of Fine and Performing Arts, and retired in 2010, after 40 years in public education, as an Assistant Principal for Fine, Performing, and Applied Arts, and District Music Program Coordinator, for the Cherry Hill Schools. Mr. Akinskas is in his thirty fourth year as founding Director of the Cumberland County College Jazz Band and Wind Symphony, and is also an Adjunct Professor of Music Education at Rutgers University-Camden and Rowan University. His duties at Rowan include Student Teacher Supervision and Clinical Practice Seminar, as well as coordinating music alumni activities and the Summer Music Camps. Mr. Akinskas is a Past President of the N.J. Music Educators and N.J. Music Administrators Associations, and a charter member of the Glassboro State College/ Rowan University chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia.

Nominator:**Sue Mark, Sewell, NJ**

Sue credits Mr. Akinskas with giving her the confidence to embrace her musical talents as a shy eighth grader. Sue has been playing the flute for the past 40 years, and she teaches music in the Cherry Hill Public School district. She is currently in her 30th year of teaching.

Barbara Benglian • Wynnewood, PA



"There were many classes where we didn't sing a note, but discussed responsibility, commitment, character, leadership, and moral obligations."

Barbara Mason Benglian, Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year for 2006 is a graduate of the West Chester University School of Music (M.M./B.S.). Mrs. Benglian received the West Chester University Distinguished Music Alumnus Award in 2006, and the West Chester University Distinguished Alumni Award in 2003. In addition to her role as Choral Director/Department Chair of Music at Upper Darby High School, Mrs. Benglian serves as District Music Coordinator for the Upper Darby Arts and Education Foundation for their annual Gala concert. Mrs. Benglian is the conductor of the auditioned Upper Darby High School Concert Choir; the highly select Encore Singers, and the Chorus. In 46 years of teaching, 33 at Upper Darby High School, Barbara Benglian's career has also spanned teaching at the elementary and middle school levels. Music is an integral part of the education of every student, and the life long learning skills that this art gives to each young person are immeasurable.

Nominator:**Meighan Long, Upper Darby, PA**

Meighan credits Mrs. Benglian with instilling a love of community advocacy in her during Mrs. Benglian's music classes. Meighan went to Pennsylvania State University and hopes to pursue a career in community advocacy.

Kimberly Fisher • Philadelphia, PA



"Kim has unselfishly mentored both of us as musicians, leaders, and citizens."

Violinist Kimberly Fisher joined The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1992, and has served as Principal Second Violinist since 2002. In May 2017, Kimberly was selected by Music Director Yannick Nezet-Séguin to receive the prestigious C. Hartmann Kuhn Award recognizing excellence. Ms. Fisher has appeared as soloist with numerous orchestras including repeatedly with The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Vancouver and Victoria Symphonies in Canada. As recitalist and chamber musician she has performed across the United States and Canada, and in many countries in Europe, Asia and South America. Her teachers included her father, Lawrence Fisher, Yumi Ninomiya-Scott, Aaron Rosand, David Cerone and Jascha Brodsky. In 1997, Ms. Fisher co-founded "The Philadelphia International Music Festival," a highly successful summer music program in residence at Bryn Mawr College. Kimberly is an active pedagogue whose students have performed as soloist with major orchestras, attended distinguished music conservatories, perform as members of professional orchestras and have won many awards and competitions. Her energetic, communicative teaching style has led to invitations to present master classes, lessons and seminars around the world.

Nominator:

Stephanie van Duijn and Rachel Zimmerman, Philadelphia, PA

Rachel and Stephanie moved into Ms. Fisher's house in Philadelphia from their respective homes in Pennsylvania and Florida in order to fine tune their skills as young violinists. They say that Ms. Fisher's guidance has been a life-changing opportunity. They currently participate in many pre-college Philadelphia musical groups, such as Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, Philadelphia Sinfonia and many more.

 Leslie Hollander • Wall, NJ



Leslie Hollander "has been the constant advocate, champion, defender and evangelist of the music programs in our town."

Mr. Hollander has served as the Director of Instrumental Music at Wall High School for the past forty-seven years. He is currently the Department Chairperson of Fine Arts and Music, Orchestra Director, and Band Director at Wall High School. In addition, he also served as the Band Director and a Lecturer in Music and Music Education at Monmouth College from 1979-1992. He holds a B.A. and M.A. in Music Education from Jersey City State College and post-graduate studies at Teacher's College of Columbia University. Mr. Hollander previously served on the New Jersey Music Educator's Association State Board of Directors Executive Committee, President of the Central Jersey Music Educators Association, a member of the NJ State Department of Education Graduation Requirement Committee, President of the Monmouth Symphony Orchestra, President of the Region II International Association of Jazz Educators, President of the All Shore Band Directors Association, Conductor of the Central Jersey Region II Symphonic Band and Conductor of the Garden State Philharmonic Youth Orchestra for many years. He has conducted Orchestras, Wind Ensembles and Concert Bands at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, and the Kimmel Center. Mr. Hollander resides with his wife Ellen, in Wall, Jersey.

Nominator:

Tara Frederick, Wall, NJ

A current student at Wall High School, Tara has known Mr. Hollander since the third grade when he helped her to choose her preferred instruments. Tara currently plays the bassoon in the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra.

Dimitri Kauriga • Southampton, PA



Dimitri Kauriga was "more than a teacher, he was a mentor."

Dimitri Kauriga is a teacher and multi-talented musician. A native Philadelphian, he plays piano, flute, organ, saxophone, he sings and conducts. For over 30 years, Dimitri was Director of Music at Philadelphia High School for Girls. While there, he developed well-regarded marching bands, orchestras, concert bands and jazz ensembles. He was also conductor of the Philadelphia All-City Jazz Band, Orchestra and Concert Band and performed numerous works at the Academy of Music and Kimmel Center. From 1984 through 2003, Dimitri was Professor of Music and adjunct flute instructor at the Community College of Philadelphia. He is co-director of the Kovriga Balalaika Orchestra with his brothers, Greg and Paul. Dimitri is a co-music director of Bensalem Presbyterian Church with his wife Lenore. Dimitri completed graduate studies at Temple University, Eastern College, West Chester University and the University of New Hampshire. He studied flute with Murray Panitz and John Krell of the Philadelphia Orchestra as well as John Wummer, principal flutist with the New York Philharmonic and the Pablo Casals Orchestra. In addition, he studied flute and piccolo with Frank Vercacci, who was Lilly Ponn's personal flutist.

Nominator:

Elisabeth D'Alessandro, Philadelphia, PA

Elisabeth is currently an instrumental music teacher at The Philadelphia High School for Girls. She credits Mr. Kauriga with instilling a love of music in her during her own high school years at The Philadelphia High School for Girls. She currently performs music outside of her occupation as a trumpet player in the Old York Road Symphony Orchestra.

 Brian Kuszyk • Merion Station, PA



Brian Kuszyk has "technical expertise, patience, unvarnished honesty and genuine kindness."

Brian Kuszyk is principal trumpet of Opera Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Ballet and the Delaware Symphony Orchestra, a member of the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, the Bethlehem Bach Festival Orchestra, and has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra. He also serves as principal trumpet with the Princeton Festival. He has been a featured soloist with the Delaware Symphony, the Pennsylvania Ballet and the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia. As a member of Philadelphia Brass, he has traveled the East Coast, Midwest and Southern parts of the United States as well as to England and Bolivia. The quintet have also released six recordings. Philadelphia Brass has been acclaimed "One of the gems of Philadelphia's cultural life." —Martin Goldsmith, NPR's Performance Today. After completing his musical education at Temple University as a student of Seymour Rosenfeld, he served for sixteen years as principal trumpet with the Opera Festival of New Jersey. Brian lives in Merion Station, PA with his wife Laure, a high school French teacher, and his children Matthieu and Isabelle. He has a passion for reading history, riding motorcycles and a love of French culture.

Nominator:

Erik Larson, Ocean City, NJ

Erik credits Mr. Kuszyk with changing his life. After a personal issue that caused Erik to relearn his primary instrument, the trumpet, Mr. Kuszyk helped Erik to not only regain his pre-injury playing level, but also to surpass it. Erik is currently a trumpet player for the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra.

Dorinna Morrow • Philadelphia, PA



"Sometimes teaching is just a job. For some, it can become a lifetime of dedicated work. For Dorina Morrow, it seems to be the meaning of life."

Dorina Morrow is a summa cum laude graduate of Temple University and recipient of numerous awards including the Rockefeller Brothers Award for Excellence in Arts Education and the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching. She was chosen to teach in South Africa as a member of the Kimberly Project. She is the Director of the Philadelphia All City Choir and is a guest conductor at the annual Messiah Concert at Tindley Temple. She has taught in the Philadelphia Public School System for forty-two years. Presently, she serves as Choir Director, Advanced Placement Theory Instructor, and Arts Coordinator at the Philadelphia High School for Creative and Performing Arts. Mrs. Morrow has been a professional church and synagogue musician since her youth. She has been married to the love of her life, William Ziemer, also a professional singer and Music Educator, since 1976. They have two incredible daughters, Elizabeth and Sarah, two fantastic sons, Thomas and Paul, and three glorious grandsons, Alexander William, Aiden Thomas, and Baby An, (due to make his grand entrance at any moment!) They live in the East Falls section of Philadelphia.

Nominator:

Dotan Yarden, Philadelphia, PA

Dotan joined Mrs. Morrow's choir class with the intention that learning to sing would improve his bassoon skills. However, Mrs. Morrow not only taught Dotan how to sing, but she also became one of his most important musical and educational influences. Dotan is currently a high school senior and is a bassoonist in the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra.

Robin Muse • Philadelphia, PA



Robin Muse's "passion, dedication, and talent will continue to change our lives forever."

Creating learning environments where students can both grow and experience the joy of music has been Robin's passion for many years. Currently, a music teacher at Penn Alexander Elementary School in Philadelphia, Robin teaches students from kindergarten to grade eight in the fundamentals of music literacy, music listening and music making. She also directs the vocal and handbell choirs and is music director of the annual musical. Robin has watched with joy her students grow as they have become members of other organizations such as the Philadelphia Boys Choir and the Philadelphia Girls Choir. Robin was also a curriculum writer for the Philadelphia Orchestra/School Concert Collaborative Learning Group. A highlight of Robin's teaching career was writing and receiving a three year \$150,000.00 Presser grant for Penn Alexander. For several years, Robin has had the privilege of being a Cooperating Teacher for the music education program at Temple University. In her spare time, Robin uses essential oils to practice aromatherapy for health, relaxation and well-being.

Nominator:

**Anna Rekalak
and Celine Luo, Philadelphia, PA**

Anna and Celine are currently students at Penn Alexander School. Ms. Muse has been their music teacher since kindergarten, and they have known her for five years. Anna and Celine play flute and piano, respectively.

Roy Nelson • Richboro, PA



“Everyone who has had the privilege of working with him, either in school, church, or the community, has felt his impact.”

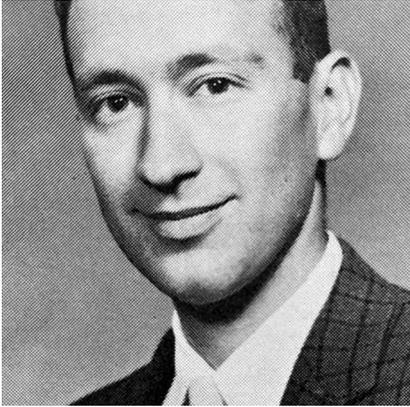
Roy Nelson holds the Bachelor of Science and Master of Music Degrees in Music Education from West Chester University. Mr. Nelson taught vocal and instrumental music in the Neshaminy School District for 33 years, and Villa Joseph Marie High School for 5 years. Throughout his career at Neshaminy, he was responsible for Middle School Choir, Band, Orchestra and Jazz Band; Elementary School Choir and Handbells; High School Choir, Ensembles and served as School Musical Director/Conductor. In addition, he was the recipient of the 2002 PMEA “Citation of Excellence” for District 11 (Bucks and Montgomery Counties). Mr. Nelson has served for 47 years as music director for several local churches, the Tri-County Community Band, and the Abington and Bucks County chapters of SPEBSQSA (Barbershop Quartet Society). He currently directs Vocal and Handbell Choirs and the Praise Band at St. John’s United Methodist Church in Ivyland, PA (31 years). Mr. Nelson lives in Richboro with his wife, Sue. The Nelsons have four grown children; Laura, Peter, Karen and David who currently serves as timpanist for the Philly Pops, and is on the percussion faculty at West Chester University. David was a member of Philadelphia Youth Orchestra.

Nominator:

David Nelson, Media, PA

David takes immense pride in observing his father, Roy Nelson, touch the lives of others by educating them and creating music. David has played percussion for the past 39 years, is member of The Philly POPS orchestra and many others and is currently a part of the percussion faculty at West Chester University.

Jay Trackman (posthumously) • Bordentown, NJ



Jay Trackman knew "the good he did. It lives on in the lives of his former students."

Jay Trackman was a respected music teacher in both the Bordentown and Burlington, NJ city school districts for nearly 35 years. He was also a prominent member of Temple B'nai Abraham in Bordentown, where he served as congregation president, teacher and a member of other various committees.

Nominator:

Linda Holy, Bordentown, NJ

Linda first developed a love of music at the age of 12 when she heard parts of Mozart and Beethoven pieces. However, since her family could not afford to hire a music teacher or buy any instruments, Mr. Trackman taught Linda how to play violin with his own violin and bought her a music book. In college, Linda continued to study music and later pursued a writing career with a focus on music.

Philadelphia Youth Orchestra Ovation Award • 2017



The Philadelphia Youth Orchestra **Ovation Award For Inspiration and Outstanding Leadership in Music Education** honors an outstanding music teacher in the Delaware Valley Region who, while imparting musical knowledge, builds character, self-confidence and capabilities that position students for success in every aspect of their lives. The OVATION AWARD highlights the significance of music education and applauds the positive impact of music teachers on the greater community. It is presented and endowed by H.E.L.P.® Foundation and sponsored by Jacobs Music Company, J.W. Pepper and WRTI-90.1 FM.

Nominators were asked to submit a brief application and statement of no more than 250 words, answering the question: "How Has Your Music Teacher Changed Your Life?"

The Top Ten Finalists and one Grand Prize Winner have been selected by a Blue Ribbon Panel, consisting of representatives from regional universities, colleges, conservatories, and institutions.

The Top Ten Finalists have been invited, with their nominators, to attend the award ceremony and PYO Annual Festival Concert on Sunday, June 4, 2017 at 3:00 p.m. in The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts.

The Grand Prize Winner will be announced and presented with an award tribute, cash prize, and other recognition from our sponsors. All finalists will each receive a recognition award from our sponsors. Additionally, the Winning Nominator will be recognized.

2016 Finalists

Shelley Beard – Lansdowne, PA
Matthew Ceresini – Malvern, PA
Tanya Ivanova – Penn Wynne, PA
Mary Javian – Philadelphia, PA
Jie Jin – Berwyn, PA
Meichen Liao-Barnes – Merion Station, PA
Dr. Ovidiu Marinescu – West Chester, PA
Susan Nowicki – Glenside, PA
Charles Salinger – Ambler, PA
Coco Symer – Cherry Hill, NJ

2016 Grand Prize Winner

Jie Jin – Berwyn, PA

2016 Winning Nominator

Jessica Zhang

