

***Community Orchestra enlists musical partners from nine states to perform in SSO's Bridge to Beijing departing December 26!***

South Shore Orchestra has been deeply immersed in preparing for their fourth China New Year's adventure--Bridge to Beijing. The only thing that is a bit tricky about that is, the 53 member orchestra that is to leave on their 10 day concert tour on December 26, is that they are from nine different states! From Seattle, Washington to Washington DC, Michigan, Florida, Texas, Arizona, Illinois, Ohio and of course Indiana, many managed to get here for three different December rehearsals to become familiar with some challenging standard compositions, but also newly composed intriguing pieces like Sun Wukong--SSO's newly commissioned piece.

There were only a few that did not get here to these rehearsals. "This has been an unusual challenge", said Conductor Troy Webdell. "Thank goodness for email, because that is how much of the music and rehearsal information has been distributed this time. Overall, the rehearsals have gone extremely well and I think this potentially could be our best tour yet! We will not actually see the entire orchestra together until we get to China and finally have a complete full orchestra rehearsal before beginning the concert series in Shanghai."

"We will once again include both North and South American music, Chinese music, Strauss New Year's favorites and iconic operatic favorites. The Asian premiere of SUN WUKONG will honor our Chinese hosts and the Confucius Institute who have been our generous sponsors of this unique musical exchange between Valparaiso's community orchestra and the Chinese people enabling three concert tours and one musical over the past 6 years.

Soloists Sarah MacIntyre, a teaching artist with Chicago Lyric Opera and Sean Kroll, a celebrated opera singer from New York who travelled with SSO before, will add the operatic favorites while Josh DeVries, from Chesterton will add a home grown element to our community orchestra. Beginning in 8th grade Josh graduated to SSO intern from South Shore Youth Symphony becoming our youngest orchestra member. This will be his third China Adventure with SSO. Mom Jane DeVries, oboe, and sister Courtney Lambert with her fiance Rob Hassing, who both play percussion, will make it a party of four for the DeVries household! Josh has become a phenomenal cellist playing with NWI Youth Symphony, then Chicago Youth Symphony, and the fine music programs of Duneland and Chesterton High School Orchestra.

Conductor Troy Webdell was pleased as the last rehearsal ended after a two day rehearsal stint on Sunday, December 15. He shared that the musicians embraced the music, are all well trained, professionally poised and equally anxious to be able to take their talent on the road. For some it will be the trip of a lifetime to cross the dateline and experience the cultural immersion of this huge Asian populace. For others it is to share their music as a cultural universal language and experience working with a new orchestra!

Check [www.southshoreorchestra.net](http://www.southshoreorchestra.net) for postings from China via our new fledgling website coming to you in the next few weeks. We wish you Happy New Year!...from somewhere in China!

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