

Darby Hinshaw

Assistant Principal & Utility

Darby Hinshaw joined the San Diego Symphony Orchestra in 2011. He was born into a casually musical family in San Francisco: His mother is a former organist who holds a Master of Music degree from SDSU, and his father is a great enthusiast of traditional Irish music. During his childhood he experimented with the Irish tin-whistle, the piano and the great highland bagpipes, and he frequently attended organ recitals, highland games and Irish sessions with his parents. He began playing the horn at the age of 12 and attended the "School of the Arts" high school in San Francisco. He joined the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra in 1996, where he played principal horn on several critically acclaimed European tours. While still in the youth orchestra, Mr. Hinshaw attended the San Francisco Conservatory of Music where he studied with SF Symphony hornists Bruce Roberts, Jonathan Ring and Robert Ward. He earned his Bachelor of Music degree in 2005 and pursued his professional options instead of attending graduate school.



Prior to his arrival in San Diego, Darby Hinshaw made a place for himself in the many regional symphony orchestras in Northern California, playing principal horn in the Marin Symphony, Santa Rosa Symphony and Stockton Symphony. Over a period of six years as a freelancer, he would appear with the horn sections of 16 different orchestras, traveling all over the Bay Area and parts of the San Joaquin Valley. He also performed frequently with the San Francisco Symphony and appears on their recent recordings of Mahler's 2nd and 8th Symphonies on SFS Media, as well as the Mahler episode of the *Keeping Score* series on PBS.

GETTING TO KNOW DARBY HINSHAW...

Q: What are three of your favorite tunes or pieces in your iPod or mp3 or CD collection?

A: Only three? Wiener Philharmoniker playing Bruckner 7th with Nicholas Harnocourt. I subscribe to the Berlin Philharmonic's Digital Concerthall, and my single favorite thing in their performance archive is Bruckner 8 with Christian Thielemann conducting. My iTunes library also contains a spattering (or in some cases a plethora) of fan-created video game remixes, heavy metal (Sabbath during the Ronnie James Dio years), and traditional music from Ireland and the UK.

Q: What are three of your favorite movies?

A: Again, only three? *Kagemusha*, *Hot Fuzz* and *Bull Durham*. There's also an in-progress fan re-make/edit of the original *Star Wars* Trilogy ("*Star Wars Revisited*") that I really like, and I'm a big Kurosawa fan.

Q: What are your favorite travel destinations?

A: I was born and raised in San Francisco and I travel there frequently. I've travelled in Europe on several orchestra tours, and I'm especially fond of the German speaking countries (though having some *Deutsche-sprechen* and affinity for lagered beers certainly helps that along). My wife and I are currently planning our second trip to Japan, which is a place I find fascinating and comfortable despite it being so vastly different from the western world.

Q: Can you name some favorite composers and/or musical periods?

A: As a horn player, I'm dutifully faithful to the late 19th and early 20th century German composers: Brahms, Wagner, Bruckner and Mahler. These composers helped to shape the voice of the modern horn (in part through their understanding of the older natural horn and its music) and gave us some of the most beautiful and emotionally powerful music I know of.

Q: What good book have you read most recently?

A: *Kitchen Confidential* by Anthony Bourdain.

Q: The non-musical accomplishment you are most proud of is...?

A: Marrying my wife. I've also become a sufficiently competent backyard mechanic that I've avoided ever having to pay someone else to work on my car.

Q: Where might you be found on a Saturday night if the Symphony is not performing?

A: If we're not working, I could very well be at home, cooking, baking (I don't buy bread...) or glued to the TV working on a video game (I'm partial to the *Legend of Zelda* series and *Final Fantasy*).

Q: The San Diego Symphony Orchestra is essential to San Diego because...?

A: Symphonic classical music is the highest form of artistic expression in all of our western culture. In the United States, if we're going to claim that we're the greatest country in the world, and that we're at the pinnacle of western society, then we must preserve cultural institutions such as the symphony orchestra. In turn, it's also the Symphony's job to educate our audience about classical music, and to train current and future generations of concert-goers to appreciate and be excited about the greatest works in the orchestral repertoire. A symphony orchestra might not exactly be the life-blood of a great city, but its importance cannot be overlooked or underestimated.