

Afa S. Dworkin

President and Artistic Director

Afa Sadykhly Dworkin is a music industry thought leader and cross-sector strategist driving national programming that promotes diversity in classical music. Since 2015 she has served as President and Artistic Director of the Sphinx Organization, the nation's leading organization transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts. She has been named one of *Musical America's* "Top 30 Influencers", has received The Kennedy Center's Human Spirit Award, is a member of the Grammys Recording Academy and has been featured in *Crain's Detroit Business* magazine's "40 Under 40." In 2021 she was appointed to the League of American Orchestra Board of Directors. The strength of Ms. Dworkin's leadership across sectors and national divides is informed by her musical training as a violinist, more than 30 years of experience in the classical music field, and her international corporate experience as a trilingual interpreter and Executive Assistant to the President of ARCO, The International Oil and Gas Company in Baku, Azerbaijan. Her writing has been featured in New York Times, Strings Magazine and beyond.

In her Sphinx role, Ms. Dworkin oversees all fundraising, strategic, and artistic initiatives through which the organization expands access to classical music education and supports a national roster of distinguished musicians of color. Sphinx's education and access programs and its artist development and arts leadership initiatives reach 10,000 people annually. Its live and broadcast performances reach audiences of more than 2 million people, with an overall imprint of 60 million+. As the Sphinx Organization's first employee and formerly its Executive and Artistic Director, Ms. Dworkin has been responsible for creating and developing Sphinx's programming since its inception. Under her leadership, the organization's partner network has expanded to more than 375 organizations across the globe.

In addition to her role at Sphinx, Ms. Dworkin has helped to shape the national classical music landscape as a multi-year orchestra grant review panelist for the Association of Performing Arts Professionals, 3Arts Awards, Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, and the MetLife Awards administered by The League of American Orchestras. Beyond the orchestral community, she has aided grant review for the Surdna Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Charlotte Arts and Sciences Council, Independent

Sector's American Express NGen Awards, and numerous state councils across the country.

Ms. Dworkin has delivered ongoing thought leadership through an extensive roster of speaking engagements including those at the International Arts & Ideas Festival, Independent Sector, Grantmakers in the Arts, Young Audiences Norway, Esmeraldas Festival in Ecuador, Chamber Music America, National Association for Schools of Music, League of American Orchestras, ICSOM, and Association of Canadian Orchestras. Former faculty at Clarkston Conservatory in Michigan, she serves as an instructor at Cleveland Institute of Music, lecturer at the University of Michigan's School of Music, Theatre & Dance and as adjunct faculty at Roosevelt University's Master's in Arts Administration program, with past lectures at Bowling Green State University, Penn State, University of Northern Texas, and Central Michigan University, among many others. Ms. Dworkin also plays an active role in the wider midwestern arts community as a trustee for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Global Music Society, and CultureSource.

Born in Moscow and raised in Azerbaijan, Ms. Dworkin's music training began at the prestigious Azerbaijan National Conservatory where she honed her craft under the tutelage of the region's leading artists. She subsequently joined the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra as an entering freshman at the University of Michigan School of Music, also earning her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Violin Performance with High Honors. Her career as a performer has taken her to Russia, Switzerland, Austria, and throughout the United States. Ms. Dworkin lives in Ann Arbor, MI, with her husband Aaron Dworkin (founder of the Sphinx Organization and an internationally renowned leader in cultural entrepreneurship), their two sons, Amani and Noah, their two Savannah-breed cats, Mocha and Pekoe & Rondo, their English cream retriever. A multilingual individual, she is passionate about her family, culinary arts and travel.