

The Quarter Note

A quarterly newsletter of the Sphinx Organization, encouraging, developing and recognizing classical music talent in the Black and Latino communities and among all youths



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Sphinx Laureates Debut at Carnegie Hall!

Isaac Stern once said, "Why is the Sphinx Competition important? Because it exists...because it is a noble idea and should be encouraged." Surely Mr. Stern would be pleased to know of the Inaugural Sphinx Gala Concert that will take place at 8:00 PM, on December 8, in Stern Auditorium at his beloved Carnegie Hall.

This historic event, sponsored by JPMorgan Chase, with additional support from the Frank & Lydia Bergen Foundation, will present the top young minority musicians in the country on the legendary Carnegie stage. The event will serve as a momentous culmination of an ongoing showcase of Sphinx Laureates' talents nationwide, including performances with the Boston Pops and the Baltimore, Atlanta, St. Louis and Detroit Symphonies, along with many other top orchestras. The Concert will feature Sphinx Junior Laureates Gareth Johnson, Trevor Ochieng', Elena Urioste and Melissa White as well as the Sphinx Chamber Orchestra,



comprised of Sphinx alumni, performing pieces by Mozart, Ysaye, Prokofiev, Vivaldi and George Walker. A highlight of the Concert will be the Orchestra's performance of "Alla Burletta" of *Generation Suite* in honor of African-American composer Coleridge Taylor-Perkinson, who passed away in March of this year.

The Concert will also serve as a celebration of Sphinx Laureates' successes. As Elena Urioste shared, "Because of Sphinx, I have received the honor of playing with some of the best orchestras across the country. Even more special, however, has been acting as a Latina ambassador in the classical music world and speaking with and playing for people who may have not been exposed to that genre of music were it not for Sphinx. I have had so many young children approach me after an

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Breaking the Sound Barrier

This past year, the reach of the Sphinx Organization was further extended by the airing of the documentary *The Sphinx Competition: Breaking the Sound Barrier* on PBS stations around the country. The Emmy-award winning documentary, produced by Detroit Public Television in collaboration with Victor/Harder Productions through the support of MASCO Corporation Foundation, features the 2003 Sphinx Competition. In addition to interviews with and performances by Sphinx Laureates, including an "up close and personal" with Laureate Melissa White, the documentary examines the historical roots of African-American and Latino involvement in classical music.

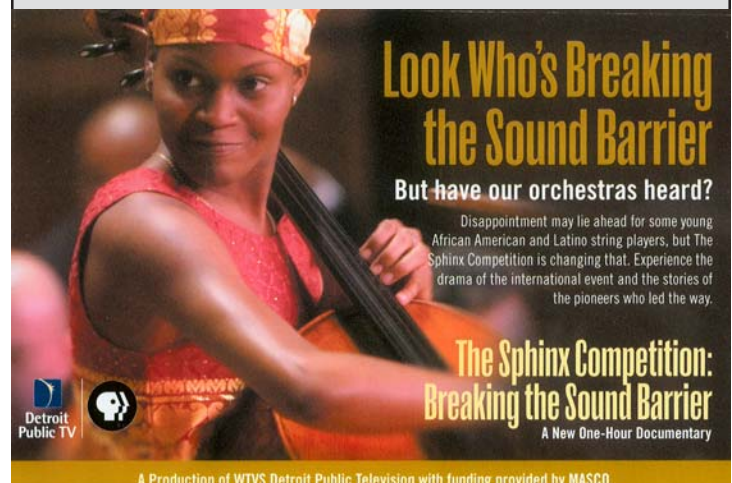
The story unfolds through in-depth interviews with Sanford Allen, the first Black musician to become a regular member of the New York Philharmonic, as well as conductor and cellist Anthony Elliott, prominent conductor Kay George Roberts, and violinist Rosalyn Story. Together, the four unveil the challenges as African-American musicians involved in classical music in years prior to the arrival of the Sphinx Competition and discuss its impact on the classical music world. An interview with Melissa White continues that story with an in-depth look at her beginnings in classical music and involvement with Sphinx. In the end, the documentary takes the viewer on a roller coaster ride of emotions – from the disappointment and sadness of past injustices to the celebration of present successes.

"We have been privileged to be involved with Sphinx from its inaugural year and it has been exciting and gratifying to watch this important competition grow and flourish and to help bring the issue of the lack of minorities in classical music to national attention," stated Fran Victor, Executive Producer of the documentary. "We feel that it is vital that the rest of the

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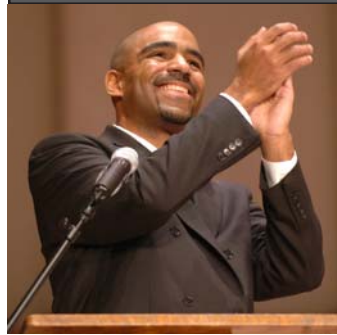
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PRESIDENT'S NOTE



Dear Friends and Family of Sphinx,

I hope and trust that you are having an enjoyable summer! With all of the exciting news here at Sphinx, from the upcoming Carnegie Gala to the documentary broadcast spotlighted in this newsletter, I will be brief here in my quarterly message that I share with you.

The one important update that I wanted to highlight is that we are now concluding a comprehensive strategic planning process (made possible by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation) that will guide the Sphinx Organization over the next three years. It has been an incredibly inspiring journey on which this planning process

has taken us over this past year, and I am excited about the focus and direction that we will be taking as we continue to tackle the daunting challenges of our mission!

Speaking of mission, this process has helped us to better define the guiding mission of Sphinx, the core values that we share on staff as we execute this work, and the overall vision to which we aspire in the end. We have included these on our website, and I encourage you to take a look at them to gain a greater insight into not only the present of Sphinx but also where we are headed into the future. Enjoy the lovely summer weather, and I'll see you in the fall!

Aaron Dworkin
Founder/President

Concert at Carnegie Hall, cont.

outreach session, give me an enormous hug, and announce that they were going to ask their parents for a violin. There is nothing that makes me appreciate what I do and how incredible Sphinx is more than a reaction like that!"

Sphinx alumnus Gareth Johnson echoed Elena's sentiments. "I became involved with Sphinx simply because it seemed to offer me what I needed most to expand as a wholesome, complete musician. I have been honored and proud to be able to represent African-Americans in general in concerts and performances throughout the nation as well as represent this well thought-out, first-class organization in the field of classical music. I have found growth, opportunity, and a sense of pride in myself and in what I represent as an African-American male violinist. Sphinx has offered me a grooming process that I have been fortunate enough to be a part of in this particular time in history."

At the head of the orchestral performances will be notable African-American conductors Anthony Elliott and Kay George Roberts, both of whom audiences may remember appearing with the Sphinx Symphony at past Finals Concerts. When asked about the importance of Sphinx's

efforts, Dr. Roberts responded, "There is a lot of talent out there - a new generation of minority musicians will benefit from Sphinx. I was struck by the atmosphere of support and inspiration between the orchestra and the young soloists. The performances are exhilarating, the talent and the drive of the young laureates, stunning. The Sphinx Competition is significant because it breaks with the traditional Euro-centric image of classical music and performers and shows that new diverse audiences can be found."

Mr. Elliott was no less enthusiastic with his expressions of support when he took a moment to share. "The Sphinx Organization is the only organization of its kind, oriented towards bridging the traditional barriers which have existed preventing African-American and Latino string players from successfully entering the music profession. As a product of the 'pre-Sphinx Age,' I have devoted much of my life to the removal of such barriers and feel honored to be a Sphinx Board member, juror, teacher, conductor, guest artist, and supporter. The mandate of the Sphinx *must* continue!"

Of course, the Inaugural Sphinx Gala Concert would not be possible without the support of Sphinx's corporate partner,

JPMorgan Chase. When asked why JPMorgan Chase became involved with Sphinx, Janet Rodriguez, Vice President, Corporate Sponsorships & Philanthropy, responded, "This is an opportunity for JPMorgan Chase to take a leadership role in supporting a national organization committed to increasing the level of diversity in classical music and supporting our commitment to emerging artists at one of the premiere arts institutions in the world."

Sphinx thanks JPMorgan Chase and the Frank & Lydia Bergen Foundation for their generous support and looks forward to seeing all of you at the Sphinx Gala Concert in December!



Kay George Roberts & Anthony Elliott will conduct the Sphinx Chamber Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, Dec. 8, 2004

Documentary, cont.

country, and the world, have the opportunity to witness the dedication and triumph of the remarkable young performers involved with the Sphinx Organization. They are an inspiration to us all. We are honored to continue to tell the Sphinx story.”

Katherine Weider, Co-Producer, helped to capture the importance of the documentary. “One of the reasons I love documentary work is because it’s a window into another world. Doing the story about the Sphinx was great because I got to really *feel* what this organization was all about and witness not just the exciting performances but the behind the scenes stuff that the audience doesn’t see. There’s such a great atmosphere during that week—warm, friendly, and supportive. You can see how inspiring it is for the kids to have that kind of mentorship and support behind them. And it was quite amazing to study the historical backdrop that created this situation. Talking to people like Sanford Allen, Kay George Roberts, Rosalyn Story, and Anthony Elliott about their stories – I got a real sense of the courage and strength of character it took to persevere in music, despite the barriers of segregation, racism and isolation.”

“Classical music finds itself in a precarious situation today and I think this story about the lack of diversity in orchestral life is deeply connected to this. Orchestras have ostensibly opened up their doors to women and minority players but only to play on their terms and maintain the status quo. And it’s not working! What I discovered doing this documentary is that Aaron Dworkin is actually trying to save orchestras from themselves. Through the vehicle of Sphinx, he’s found a way to apply real, steady pressure on orchestras to open up their halls and allow classical music to become a living, breathing art form that reflects our culture and our world. I hope that this message comes out in the film.”

The documentary is airing on stations throughout the state of Michigan as well as nationally in markets that include Austin TX, Boston MA, Charlotte NC, Cleveland OH, Jackson MS, Los Angeles CA, Miami FL, Minneapolis MN, Nashville TN, Portland OR, San Antonio TX, San Francisco CA – even as far as Honolulu HI and Juneau AK! In fact, over two dozen PBS stations reaching 26% of all U.S. households already scheduled the documentary for broadcast during evening or afternoon hours in

June. In addition, many more stations are carrying a late-night play of the program as part of the PBS overnight broadcast service. More telecasts are expected on other PBS stations in coming months as they schedule the ‘PBS Plus’ special at local times and in conjunction with other programming.

This widespread coverage is primarily a result of the collaborative efforts of Detroit Public Television. Matthew Zacharias of Detroit Public Television, Editor of the documentary and Emmy Award Winner for his efforts, explained why he became involved with the project. “I realized that this was no ordinary project. Mentoring young talent for the arts was all I needed to hear, and I was sold on the story and Sphinx’s mission. The second part of the documentary explored the history of minority people in the world of professional orchestras – more specifically the lack of minorities in the field. Sphinx’s dedication to this cause and bringing opportunity to young talent is remarkable. As the editor of the project, I was honored to help tell these stories, and I am extremely proud of the result. PBS is known for exploring topics that dramatically change the lives of children, people and organizations, and the Sphinx doc was no exception.”

The production of the documentary was made possible through the support of long-time corporate supporter of Sphinx, MASCO Corporation Foundation. Lillian Bauder, Masco’s Vice President for Corporate Affairs and President of MASCO Corporation Foundation, shared a few words about Masco’s involvement. “MASCO Corporation Foundation has been proud to support the Sphinx Organization each year since its initial founding in 1997. Through collaborative efforts with Detroit Public Television, MASCO funded the *Breaking the Sound Barrier* documentary for the purpose of showcasing Sphinx’s extraordinary young talent to the broadest possible audience. We believe that national exposure will attract others interested in furthering Sphinx’s mission, thereby increasing participation by, and opportunities for, talented Black and Latino musicians. More importantly, MASCO is hopeful that the documentary will help to break the stereotypes confronting minority, classical musicians with the greater goal of diversifying the world’s symphony orchestras.”

Look for *The Sphinx Competition: Breaking the Sound Barrier* as it comes to a PBS station near you in the coming months!

Sphinx News

The **2005 Applicant Repertoire Requirements** are now available on our web site at www.sphinxmusic.org/applicants/repertoire.html

Sphinx would like to introduce and welcome a new member of the Board of Directors, **Ruben Acosta**.

The **2003 Documentary *Sphinx Competition: Breaking the Sound Barrier*** received an Emmy Award! We thank our talented partners at WTVS and Victor/Harder Productions as well as Katherine Weider for their dedicated work!



Sphinx Staff help DPTV celebrate the Emmy Award-winning documentary at the 26th Annual Michigan Chapter Emmy Awards

2004 1st Place Senior Laureate **Kaila Potts** will give solo debuts with the New Jersey, Atlanta and Cincinnati Symphonies this summer.

Also this summer, 2004 1st Place Junior Laureate **Trevor Ochieng’** will give solo debuts with the Pittsburgh Symphony and Boston Pops in addition to joining Kaila in a performance with the Atlanta Symphony in August!

The **Sphinx Academy Quartet**, with guest cellist **Tahirah Whittington**, gave its international debut in a series of successful performances in Bermuda through our partnership with the Bermuda Suzuki Association.

Congratulations to **Tai Murray**, 1998 1st Place Laureate, on being selected as one of the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant recipients!

Gareth Johnson, 2002 1st Place Junior Laureate, will perform with the National Symphony Orchestra in July. He was also recently featured at the University Musical Society Ford Honors Concert honoring *Sweet Honey In the Rock*.

Bryan Hernandez-Luch, 2003 1st Place Senior Laureate, will perform with the Chautauqua Symphony in July.

Congratulations to our 2003 Alumni **Marie-Elise McNeely** and **Stephanie Matthews**, who will attend the University of Michigan and Juilliard School, respectively, through our MAF scholarship program. This program is made possible through a partnership with the American Symphony Orchestra League.

Sphinx Symphony member **Billy Hunter**, trumpet, recently won a position with the Baltimore Symphony. Congratulations on a great achievement!

Sphinx would like to officially welcome aboard our Development Coordinator **Warren Williams** and Program Assistant **Teresa Clark**!

Congratulations and best wishes to our Laureates **Lena Fankhauser** and **Mariana Green** on their recent marriages.

Trevor Ochieng'



Humble in manner but bold in presentation, violinist Trevor Ochieng' swept the hearts of young and old at the 2004 Sphinx Competition. His elegant performance of the first movement of Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major particularly impressed the Sphinx jury, who awarded Trevor first place in the junior division of this year's Competition. Trevor later went on to perform the piece at the Finals Concert in Detroit, where his brilliant delivery of Ysaye's cadenza to the concerto brought the audience to its feet prior to the "official" end of the piece.

Trevor, a tenth-grade student at Friends Academy in Locust

Valley, New York, currently studies under the direction of Louise Behrend at the Juilliard School, Pre-College Division. He is a grant recipient of the Children's Foundation for the Arts and an alumnus of the New York School for Strings. In addition to his accomplishments at Sphinx, Trevor is a winner of the Long Island Philharmonic 2003 Young Artist Competition and the New York School for Strings Concerto Competition.

At only fifteen years of age, Trevor has been afforded some unique performance opportunities. In May 2003, he made his debut on PRI's *From the Top*, a national radio program that features talented young performers of classical music. In addition, he served as principal and featured violinist in a national commercial for Texaco. Finally, Trevor had the rare opportunity to show off his musical talent in a motion picture, *Music of the Heart*, which spotlighted the work of dedicated music teacher Roberta Guaspari in East Harlem, New York.

In addition to his media debuts, Trevor has also had the unique privilege of performing with renowned soprano Dawn Upshaw. In addition, he has appeared as a Guest Artist at the 2004 New

York State Martin Luther King Memorial Observation and the 2003 Frederick Douglas Observance in Rochester, New York. Moreover, he has performed both orchestral and chamber music works with the New York School for Strings, Elizabeth Morrow School String Festival, Strings 1999 Music Festival, Gemini Youth Orchestras, Greenwood Music Camp (junior and senior divisions), Juilliard School Pre-College Chamber Orchestra and Pre-College Symphony, and California Summer Music in Pebble Beach.

Trevor's long list of performances also includes appearances at Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall as well as at the 2002 International Suzuki Association of the Americas Conference in Minneapolis. As a soloist, he has appeared with the Sphinx Symphony, Long Island Philharmonic Orchestra and the New York School for Strings Orchestra in addition to giving successful debuts with the Pittsburgh Symphony and Boston Pops in June. Trevor will share the stage with Sphinx Laureate Kaila Potts in upcoming performances with the Atlanta Symphony on August 11 & 12 and also give performances with the New World Symphony on October 26 & 27. Trevor performs on a Stradivarius violin generously

loaned to him by the Juilliard School.

We applaud Trevor's achievements and wish him tremendous success on his musical journey.

Q & A

Q. What month of the year has recently been named as Black Music Month?

A. On May 31, 2002, President George W. Bush proclaimed June to be Black Music Month, encouraging Americans of all backgrounds to recognize the importance of the immeasurable contributions made by Black people to the world of music. Throughout our nation's history and before, Black instrumentalists, singers and composers have shaped music of all genres in profound ways. Today, these influences can be particularly recognized, exposed, studied and appreciated each year during the month of June!

Information courtesy of <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional>

--- Jessye Norman
New York Times, 1987

Something to Ponder:
If you send up a weather vane or put your thumb up in the air every time you want to do something different, to find out what people are going to think about it, you're going to limit yourself. That's a very strange way to live.

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