Detroit, MI – The launch of EXIGENCE vocal ensemble will take place on Feb 2nd and Feb 4th in conjunction with two major Sphinx Organization events. Sphinx, the national arts and social justice nonprofit with the mission of transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts, collaborated with University of Michigan’s Associate Director of Choirs and Associate Professor of Conducting Eugene Rogers to launch a professional vocal ensemble dedicated to promoting excellence and diversity through choral music within Black and Latino communities.

The first professional vocal ensemble of its kind, EXIGENCE will make its historic debut on Friday, Feb 2nd at 8pm at Hartford Memorial Baptist Church in Detroit. The performance, *A Vision Unfolding*, takes place simultaneously with SphinxConnect, the epicenter for artists and leaders in diversity. Attendees of the convening from around the country will come together with members of the Detroit community to experience this unique premiere. $10 tickets are available online and at the door.

EXIGENCE will also take the stage at the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center on Sun, Feb 4th at 2pm for the Finals Concert of the 21st Annual Sphinx Competition for young Black and Latino String Players presented by DTE Energy Foundation and hosted by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. The Finals Concert is the culmination of the competition, in which the three finalists compete for the $50,000 Robert Frederick Smith Prize and the $5,000 Audience Choice Award, presented by Mercedes-Benz Financial Services. The finalists will be accompanied by the Sphinx Symphony Orchestra, the all-Black and Latino orchestra comprised of top professionals from around the country and sponsored by Mercedes-Benz Financial Services, under the baton of guest conductor Carlos Prieto. After the award presentation, EXIGENCE will join the Sphinx Symphony Orchestra to close the concert as the featured guest artist.

“We are thrilled to present the groundbreaking inaugural performances of EXIGENCE in our hometown of Detroit. Launching EXIGENCE at the Sphinx Competition is a meaningful way for us to intertwine our flagship program with our newest program, showing our communities how we are ever evolving in our efforts to best serve them,” shared Sphinx President and Artistic Director Afa S. Dworkin.

The Sphinx Competition is presented by the DTE Energy Foundation, the philanthropic arm of DTE Energy, continuing a long-standing partnership with Sphinx and a dedication to supporting nonprofits throughout the company’s 450 service communities.

“The DTE Energy Foundation has been a proud supporter of Sphinx for more than a decade,” said DTE Energy Foundation President Lynette Dowler. “We are proud to play a part in making these remarkable musicians’ dreams come true.”

Tickets to the Sphinx Competition Finals Concert on Sunday, Feb 4th at 2pm are available at [https://goo.gl/7bjbeR](https://goo.gl/7bjbeR). Optional $5 donation; all are welcome.

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The Sphinx Organization is the Detroit-based national organization dedicated to transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts. Sphinx programs reach over 100,000 students, as well as live and broadcast audiences of over two million annually. Sphinx works to create positive change in the arts field and in communities across the country through a variety of programs organized into four main principles: Education and Access, Artist Development, Performing Artists, and Arts Leadership.

Learn more about the Sphinx Organization at SphinxMusic.org. Register for SphinxConnect at SphinxConnect.org. Learn more about EXIGENCE at http://www.sphinxmusic.org/exigence-vocal-ensemble/.

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