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**SPHINX COMPETITION PRESENTED BY DTE ENERGY FOUNDATION TO HONOR TOP MUSICIANS**

Nation's top young Black and Latino string musicians compete for solo performances and other prizes

**(January 12, 2010 — Detroit, MI)** The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Sphinx Competition Presented by the DTE Energy Foundation will bring 18 of the country's top young Black and Latino string players to Detroit and Ann Arbor, Michigan. Selected from a national pool of applicants, 18 Semi-Finalists will compete for prizes including solo engagements with major orchestras and scholarships to leading institutions to further their music studies. The Sphinx Competition, to be held February 3-7, 2010, will feature performances in Ann Arbor and Detroit, an evening of chamber music, and professional development opportunities for all participants.

Junior Division Laureates will compete for first place at the Honors Concert on February 5 at 12:00PM at Ann Arbor's Rackham Auditorium in partnership with the University Musical Society. The Senior Division culminates in the Finals Concert February 7 at 2:00PM at the Max M. Fisher Music Center in Detroit.

Both the Honors and Finals Concerts will feature the Sphinx Symphony Orchestra conducted by Anthony Elliott, a prominent conductor and professor of cello at the University of Michigan. The all-Black-and-Latino Sphinx Symphony Orchestra brings together renowned professional musicians from around the country, including past and present members of the New York Philharmonic, Detroit, Atlanta, St. Louis, New Jersey and New Mexico symphonies and others.

Featured guest artists the Harlem Quartet also will perform at the Finals Concert in Detroit. The [Harlem Quartet](#), praised for its "panache" by *The New York Times*, is an ensemble comprising First-Place Laureates of the Sphinx Competition for young Black and Latino string players. The Harlem Quartet and Sphinx Symphony Orchestra will present the world premiere of Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra by acclaimed composer Michael Abels at the Finals Concert.

"The Sphinx Competition provides an important spotlight for gifted young Black and Latino musicians to share their talents with an audience of thousands who might not otherwise have the opportunity to hear and appreciate their artistry," said Fred Shell, DTE Energy vice president of corporate and government affairs and president of the DTE Energy Foundation. "Supporting programs like the Sphinx Competition that promote diversity and enhance awareness of the contributions of diverse cultures is a priority for the DTE Energy Foundation. We are very pleased to serve as its presenting sponsor."

This year the Sphinx Organization welcomes to the Jury former violist of the Cleveland Quartet, Atar Arad; renowned concert violist Nokothula Ngwenyama; the first Black member of the New York Philharmonic, Sanford Allen; Atlanta Symphony Bassist and Sphinx Competition alumnus Joseph Conyers; former cellist of the Cleveland Quartet and New England Conservatory of Music faculty member Paul Katz; violinist of the Juilliard Quartet and President of the Cleveland Institute of Music, Joel Smirnoff; and multi-year Grammy Award winning composer and conductor, Jose Serebrier.

Each year, young Black and Latino string players from around the country audition for the competition, which has awarded more than \$1 million in prizes and scholarships since 1998. General admission tickets are \$12 with discounts available for groups of ten or more. To purchase tickets, please visit [www.sphinxmusic.org](http://www.sphinxmusic.org) or call the Max M. Fisher Music Center box office at 313-576-5111.

The DTE Energy Foundation is the philanthropic arm of DTE Energy, continuing the legacy of community support and involvement of its principal operating subsidiaries, Detroit Edison and MichCon. The Foundation directs its contributions and involvement to support initiatives dedicated to developing the human and economic potential of the communities it serves. Grants are awarded under the foundation's "LEAD" guidelines: leadership, education, environment, achievement, development and diversity in the DTE Energy service territory, which includes southeast, western and northern Michigan. The DTE Energy Foundation is fully funded by the shareholders of DTE Energy.

The [Sphinx Organization](#) is the national non-profit organization committed to building diversity in classical music through year-round programming in arts education, awareness and presentation.

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