

For Immediate Release

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Sphinx Organization to Honor Roberta Flack at Carnegie Hall

Sphinx Laureates Perform at 5th Annual Concert, October 7, 2009

New York — The Sphinx Chamber Orchestra and Harlem Quartet make their triumphant return to Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium on the evening of October 7, 2009 in a concert highlighting works by composers of color. The event, chaired by Sheila C. Johnson, will also feature the presentation of the Sphinx Lifetime Achievement Award to Roberta Flack, the renowned songstress and music education advocate. This marks the fifth appearance of the Sphinx Chamber Orchestra, an ensemble comprised of Laureates of the Sphinx Competition for Black and Latino string players, and the Harlem Quartet, whose previous sold-out performances have earned rave reviews in *The New York Times*.

"In the past five years, Sphinx has given dozens of young musicians the opportunity to perform on one of the world's great stages, and we have shared their talent with thousands of young people from the New York area," said the Sphinx Organization's Founder and President Aaron P. Dworkin of the Sphinx Artist Series at Carnegie Hall. Dworkin founded the organization in 1996, and was awarded a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship in 2005 in recognition of his work in bringing diversity to classical music.

Ms. Johnson will present the Sphinx Lifetime Achievement Award to Roberta Flack in honor of her extensive music education career as well as her artistic excellence and accomplishments. Classically trained on the piano from an early age, Ms. Flack received a music scholarship at age 15 to attend Howard University. Discovered while singing at a Washington, DC nightclub by jazz musician Les McCann, she was signed to Atlantic Records and began her musical legacy. Very active as a humanitarian, Ms. Flack recently opened the Roberta Flack School of Music at the Hyde Leadership Charter School in the Bronx. The school provides an innovative and inspiring music education program to underprivileged students free of charge.

"Roberta Flack's remarkable career and tireless commitment to music education are an inspiration to all Sphinx artists as they chart their own course of musical excellence in performance and in their communities," said Dworkin. "We are honored to recognize her passion for music and her many contributions to the field of music education through our Lifetime Achievement Award."

As a prominent African American businesswoman, Ms. Johnson has long been a powerful influence in the entertainment industry as a founding partner of Black Entertainment Television (BET). An avid supporter of the arts and herself an accomplished violinist, Ms. Johnson is a supporter of VH1's Save the

Music Foundation and sits on the boards of Americans for the Arts and Parsons The New School for Design in New York.

“My love for music began when I was very young, and I have seen on the faces of young people around the world the power of music. I support the Sphinx Organization because they give so many children the opportunity to fall in love with music the way I did,” said Johnson. “I believe so strongly that music education should be a part of every child’s life, and I hope others will join me at Carnegie Hall to support this important work.”

The Sphinx Organization is the national nonprofit organization committed to building diversity in classical music and proudly presents the concert at Carnegie Hall as a part of the Sphinx Chamber Orchestra’s second national tour. The Orchestra is performing across the country on an expanded tour with 13 stops between California and New York City.

Tickets for the Carnegie Hall Concert on Wednesday, October 7, 2009 at 6p.m. are \$20, and available through the Carnegie Hall Box Office at (212) 247-7800 or www.carnegiehall.org.

Information regarding sponsorship opportunities and VIP arrangements are available through the Sphinx Organization by calling Marshay R. Williams at (646) 429-1987, ext. 713 or emailing marshay@sphinxmusic.org.

About The Sphinx Organization

The Sphinx Organization is the national non-profit arts and youth development organization dedicated to building diversity in classical music. The mission of the Sphinx Organization is to increase Black and Latino participation in music schools, as professional musicians, and as classical music audiences; to administer youth development initiatives in underserved communities through music education; and to promote the creation, performance, and preservation of works by Black and Latino composers. The organization’s programming reaches 85,000 young people across the country each year.

The Sphinx Laureates at Carnegie Hall is presented with generous support from Chase, Bloomberg, and Sheila C. Johnson.

The Sphinx Chamber Orchestra Tour is made possible by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Support for youth and community programs through Musical Encounters-The Tour! provided by Target.

Media Only: For more information and to schedule interviews, please contact Alison Piech of the Sphinx Organization at (646) 429-1987, ext. 709.

For additional information, call the Sphinx Organization at (646)429-1987 or visit www.sphinxmusic.org

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