



SPHINX

Aaron P. Dworkin • Founder

Year in Review

2023-2024



Transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts



Dear Sphinx Family,

Reflecting on this past year, I am filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude toward our community of supporters and stand in awe of our students, artists, faculty, and leaders. Our record-high participation in programming reflects that our collective voice continues to gain momentum. Our four professional touring ensembles performed to rave reviews and excited audiences nationwide, while one of the Sphinx-founded ensembles, The Harlem Quartet, as well as Sphinx Medal of Excellence alumna Jessie Montgomery, received a Grammy! Our premiere ensemble, Sphinx Virtuosi, made its triumphant debut in the UK. Our LEADers continued to take on senior roles at major institutions nationwide. SphinxConnect, our global convening, saw record-high participation, welcoming more than 1,200 guests, while our overall digital imprint reach 100 million people worldwide.

Now, in our 28th year of transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts, I am reminded that this ever-prescient work is as relevant today as it was at our inception. Our impact is only possible through collaboration with our nearly 300 partners as we work to fulfill our duty as an epicenter for artists and leaders in excellence.

We remain grateful for your steadfast support of our mission that empowers our work. As we look ahead, we are energized by your commitment and strive to deepen our impact through service to the field, service to the art form, and service to the community.



Afa S. Dworkin
President & Artistic Director



EDUCATION & ACCESS

The Sphinx pipeline of talent begins with access at the early and intermediate level. Sphinx provides full scholarships for two programs offering solo and chamber music performance, wellness, and citizenship.



Sphinx Overture provides free access to music education in elementary schools in Detroit and Flint, Michigan through beginning violin group classes and lessons.

A Sphinx Story

Yasmín Mendez Garcia, a student in the Overture Program at the César Chávez Academy, began her violin journey in the fall of 2021. Remaining an active member of the Overture Program, Yasmín has expanded her musical horizons by joining the Civic Youth Ensembles (CYE) of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Alongside her Overture peers, Yasmín is set to embark on a tour to showcase their talents at the combined ASTA and SAA conference in March 2024.



SPA is a full- scholarship intensive summer performance program with a focus on cultural diversity, for string musicians ages 11-17.

The 2023 Sphinx Performance Academy welcomed nearly 100 musicians for virtual sessions in partnership with the University of Colorado Boulder - College of Music, The Juilliard School, and the Cleveland Institute of Music. During each session, students participate in lessons, studio and guest artist masterclasses, collaborative digital projects, and a range of enrichment activities.



It's just so incredible to be able to make connections and develop as an artist and be surrounded by such an amazing group of people who can support you as both a person and a musician. A lot of us will stay involved in music, and we will be the example for the next generation of kids who will be just as incredible if not more than we are.

– Abigail Regua
2022 and 2023 SPA student



13

School/community sites in Detroit and Flint area served by Sphinx Overture programs

More than
50%

of Sphinx Competition Semi-Finalists were graduates of our preparatory educational programs

336+

Full scholarships to Sphinx education programs

800+

Students in attendance at the Sphinx Competition Honors Concert

ARTIST DEVELOPMENT \$300,000+ in p

Empowering emerging young artists by encouraging, developing, and recognizing classical music talent in the Black and Latinx communities.

Sphinx's flagship program, the Sphinx Competition brings young Black and Latinx string players to Detroit, MI to compete for more than \$100,000 in prizes and to receive guidance & mentorship from established musicians.

The 27th Annual Competition was held in Detroit, MI to sold-out audiences at Orchestra Hall.



Winning the 27th Sphinx competition has been an absolute turning point in my life. Not only on my performing career but as well as finding a place that I feel like I belong. My mission as an artists has never felt so defined and clear as right now seeing so many wonderful hearts working so hard to bring diversity and equity to classical music.

– Nathan Amaral, Violin

27th Annual Sphinx Competition

Senior Division



Nathan Amaral, Violin
1ST PLACE - Robert Frederick Smith Prize



Aaron Olguin, Bass
2ND PLACE
Audience Choice Award



Bethlehem Kelley, Violin
3RD PLACE

Junior Division



Ana Isabella España, Violin
1ST PLACE



Rebecca Beato, Violin
2ND PLACE



Sonya Moomaw, Cello
3RD PLACE

Prizes and scholarships

The National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS) and Sphinx Orchestral Partner Auditions (SOPA) programs actively work to advance the careers and placement of Black and Latinx orchestral musicians so that American orchestras reflect the cultural diversity that exists within our communities. NAAS provides artists with mentoring, audition preparation, financial support, and audition previews (SOPA program).



Receiving this NAAS grant helped eliminate the stress of coming up with the money to cover this trip, and enabled me to focus on what was important. Receiving these funds also encouraged me to work even harder in my preparation/practicing both before and after the audition, because being approved for this grant gave me even more of a sense that someone, besides myself and mentors, believed that I could be successful in this audition.

– Harper Randolph, Viola

118
NAAS musicians have won 170 auditions for permanent/tenure-track, one-year/contract, substitute, and/or fellowship positions with orchestras

121
NAAS partner orchestras

2024 Sphinx Orchestral Partners Audition (SOPA) Excerpt Competition

1ST PLACE



Leonardo De La Cruz
Oboe

2ND PLACE



Donovan Brown
Oboe

HONORABLE MENTION



Sophia Jean
Flute

Woodwinds



Joshua Williams
Tuba



Tiago Gomes Linck
Trumpet



Luciano Valdes
Percussion

Brass and Percussion



Eduardo Rios
Viola



Samuel Frois
Violin



Camila Berg
Viola

Strings and Harp

300+
weeks of work with NAAS Orchestras for artists participating in SOPA Excerpt Competition

641
NAAS artists

995+
Auditions

PERFORMING ARTISTS

Professional soloists and ensembles comprised of Black and Latinx artists of the highest caliber bringing dynamic programming to diverse audiences.



Photo: Scott Jackson

Sphinx Virtuosi
One of the nation's most dynamic professional chamber orchestras



Photo: Kevin Kennedy

EXIGENCE Vocal Ensemble
Professional vocal ensemble highlighting artistry within Black and Latinx communities

Sphinx Soloist Program
Showcases Sphinx Competition Laureates through featured performances with orchestras



Photo: Brian Hatton

Sphinx Symphony Orchestra
The unique all Black and Latinx orchestra comprised of top professionals from around the country

Catalyst Quartet
Grammy-nominated professional quartet committed to diversity and education



Photo: Kevin Kennedy



Harlem Quartet
Grammy award-winning professional quartet dedicated to engaging new audiences with diverse repertoire

The Sphinx Symphony Orchestra performs on the Orchestra Hall stage during the 27th Annual Sphinx Competition in Detroit, MI



Photo: Brian Hatton



Sphinx Virtuosi's debut album out digitally on Deutsche Grammophon



Photo: Brian Hatton

Sphinx Virtuosi at Carnegie Hall with Abel Selaocoe (above), and performing at the US Amabassador's residence in the UK (left)



Nathan Amaral, the Robert Frederick Smith Prize Winner of the 2024 Sphinx Competition, will perform as part of the Sphinx Soloist Program



Photo: Brian Hatton

40
communities
annually

60+
commissioned
works to date

1,200+
alumni

100
million
digital imprint

ARTS LEADERSHIP \$550,000 in grants

Mentoring and supporting musicians, leaders, and entrepreneurs through career development and professional empowerment.



SphinxConnect is the largest and longest standing convening dedicated to diversity in the arts, and serves as a pivotal gathering for both artists and leaders. SphinxConnect: AMPLIFY took place in Detroit and was broadcast live to a virtual audience. Drawing over 1,400 attendees, the event featured an extraordinary lineup of over 100 luminaries and trailblazers sharing research, observations, and best practices on topics related to DEI. Among them were esteemed Plenary keynote speakers Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson, Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, and Arturo O’Farrill, a Grammy-winning multi-genre performer, composer and leader.

Sphinx Founder Aaron Dworkin interviewed Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson, Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, during the SphinxConnect Opening Plenary.



2024 Sphinx Medal of Excellence Recipients



David Portillo
Tenor

Kalena Bovell
Conductor

Sterling Elliott
Cello

The Sphinx Medal of Excellence is the highest honor bestowed by the Sphinx Organization, recognizing extraordinary Black and Latinx classical musicians with a \$50,000 career grant.



Sphinx LEAD empowers Black and Latinx arts leaders through a year-round curriculum including mentorship, networking, and leadership retreats at top institutions nationwide.

Sphinx LEAD Cohorts 5 and 6 in Detroit at SphinxConnect 2024.



Sphinx LEAD has had a tremendous impact on my life, both personally and professionally. The LEAD program opened doors that allowed me to find new career opportunities, namely my recent appointment at Manhattan School of Music. In addition, it has given me a cohort of other Black and Brown arts leaders who I can lean on for support for life.

– Nicolas Gonzalez, Sphinx LEAD Cohort 4



MPOWER Artist Grants are competitive scholarships designed to empower Sphinx alumni to achieve their career objectives in classical music.

Because of this grant, I now have a show that can exist in different forms, which opens up possibilities for it to be performed at a variety of venues and with different organizations and schools that have different budget capabilities. This makes my show accessible for wider audiences, which is incredibly exciting!

– Caitlin Edwards, 2023 MPOWER Grant Recipient



Sphinx Impact

The Sphinx Organization is the Detroit-based, nationally-focused social justice organization dedicated to transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts.

Founded in 1997 by violinist Aaron P. Dworkin, and now led by President and Artistic Director Afa S. Dworkin, Sphinx is a movement that catalyzes excellence in the landscape of classical music, with \$11M+ invested in artist grants and scholarships, a digital imprint of nearly 100 million, and an alumni roster of more than 1,200 artists and leaders.

EDUCATION & ACCESS

Making classical music and creative youth development accessible to historically excluded neighborhoods through education initiatives and community engagement

Reaching students in Detroit and Flint communities through Sphinx Overture music and creative youth development programs

Partnerings with top music conservatories via Sphinx Performance Academy to provide high-quality intensive training for emerging classical musicians ages 11-17

Serving 150,000 young people through tuition-free musical training and community engagement



ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

The National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS), serving early-career Black and Latinx artists in partnership with the New World Symphony and League of American Orchestras; 170 auditions or placements with orchestras across the country, awarding 1,721 grants and over \$1.2M awarded to artists

One of the most prestigious classical music competitions in the country

A growing applicant pool for Sphinx programs —up 60% last year alone— with demand for places in professional development programs extremely high, proving that the pipeline is robust



Sphinx's importance translates and resonates beyond the realm of classical music, because this organization has impacted and shifted the course of many young creative people's lives by connecting and supporting us, not only as artists, but as complete human beings.

– Julia Bullock, Sphinx Medal of Excellence Recipient



Features on Sphinx:

NYTimes



PBS News Hour



The Strad



PERFORMING ARTISTS



4 performing and touring ensembles, including the nationally acclaimed Sphinx Virtuosi, EXIGENCE Vocal Ensemble, and Grammy award-winning Harlem and Catalyst Quartets

The Sphinx Symphony Orchestra, the only professional ensemble with the singular mission of fostering diversity and artistic excellence, as well as developing new audiences



Photos: Brian Hatton

ARTS LEADERSHIP

SphinxConnect, the largest and longest-standing global convening dedicated to diversity and inclusion in performing arts

Sphinx LEAD, the only professional leadership program dedicated to inclusion and empowering the C-suite arts leaders of tomorrow

Mpower Artist Grants, the largest awards program empowering Black and Latinx classical music artists

Sphinx Alumni News



Carla Canales appointed as the United States' first Senior Advisor and Envoy for Cultural Exchange at the National Endowment for the Arts



Aisha Syed-D'Oleo Castro made her international debuts in Geneva at the Victoria Hall and with the Central Ohio Symphony Orchestra



Tommy Mesa signed with Dinin Arts Management and Consulting



Sandy Feliciano appointed Manager at Coxe Curry & Associates



Gabriel Cabezas, Xavier Foley, and Adam Sadberry were included in The Washington Post's 23 for '23: Composers and performers to watch



Alexa Smith named the new Senior Director of Anti-Racism, Equity, and Belonging at The Public Theater



Will Liverman gave the world premiere of his Factotum at Lyric Opera of Chicago on February 3 to 12, 2023



Vanessa Kestner named the new Project Manager at Arts Consulting Group



Enrique Márquez appointed Chief Executive Officer at Orquesta Filarmónica de Boca del Río



Sterling Elliott named Classic FM's 2023 Rising Stars



Randall Goosby featured in the May 2023 issue of Gramophone Magazine



Joseph Conyers announced as the new principal double bass of the Philadelphia Orchestra



Melissa White signed with artist management agency Dinin Arts



Lani Kelly appointed as a Visiting Oboe with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra



Jordan Bak had his recital debut at Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam alongside Richard Uttley



Diana Lopez joined the Carmel Symphony Orchestra as Principal Trumpet



Devin Hinz appointed Artistic Administrator at Cal Performances



Njioma Chinyere Grevious and Nathan Amara named two of Classic FM's Rising Stars 2024: 30 young musicians reshaping classical music



Esther Seitz serving as Section Cello with the Dallas Opera Orchestra



Amaryn Olmeda recognized as the New Gen Violin Channel Artist



James Zabawa-Martinez appointed as a One Year Section Violin with the Kansas City Orchestra



Olivia Hamilton appointed as the Second/Eb Clarinet of the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra



Anthony McGill named "Instrumentalist of the Year" by Musical America



Terrell Johnson among Crain's Chicago Business "40 Under 40"



Cesar Palacio appointed as the Third/Bass Clarinet of the Phoenix Symphony for the 2023-2024 season



Grammy award-winning **Harlem Quartet** signed to the Epstein Fox Performances (EFP) roster



Grammy-nominated **Catalyst Quartet** joined the Arts Management Group (AMG) roster



Michael Walker II became Senior Development Officer at the ACLU of the District of Columbia



Emory Freeman appointed as clarinetist with The United States Army Band "Pershing's Own"



Adam Mandela Walden featured in From the Top's National Performance Special airing on NPR from March 27 to April 2, 2023



Juan Esteban Martinez appointed as the Principal Clarinet of New Jersey Symphony Orchestra



Njioma Chinyere Grevious received a 2024 Avery Fisher Career Grant



Karen Cueva appointed Head of Operations at The Lewis Prize for Music



Dr. Byron Johnson became Director, Office of Global Programs, at Alcorn State University



Luis Parra joined the cello section of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra



Carlos Simon unveiled 'brea(d)th,' a poignant classical album paying tribute to George Floyd



Nicolas Gonzalez became Associate Vice President for Strategic Innovation & Special Initiatives at Manhattan School of Music



Camila Berg appointed section viola at The Florida Orchestra



Alex Laing appointed as Gateways Music Festival Executive Director



Nicholas Mariscal joined the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra as a Section Cellist in the 2023-24 season



Dr. Ivan Valbuena appointed as Assistant Principal and E-flat Clarinet with the San Antonio Philharmonic Orchestra



Gilbert Guajardo appointed section double-bass of the Valley Symphony Orchestra



Julian Gonzalez joined the New York Philharmonic as Associate Principal Bassoon



Emelinda Escobar appointed as per service violin with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic



Eder Rivera secured the LA Orchestra Fellowship with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra

GRAMMY AWARDS 2023



JESSIE MONTGOMERY
Best Contemporary Classical Composition



HARLEM QUARTET
Best Classical Compendium



JULIA BULLOCK
Best Classical Solo Vocal Album

Sphinx: A Look Ahead

As we look ahead to our mission and evolving our leadership role in advancing excellence in classical music field, we focus our programs on three basic pillars:

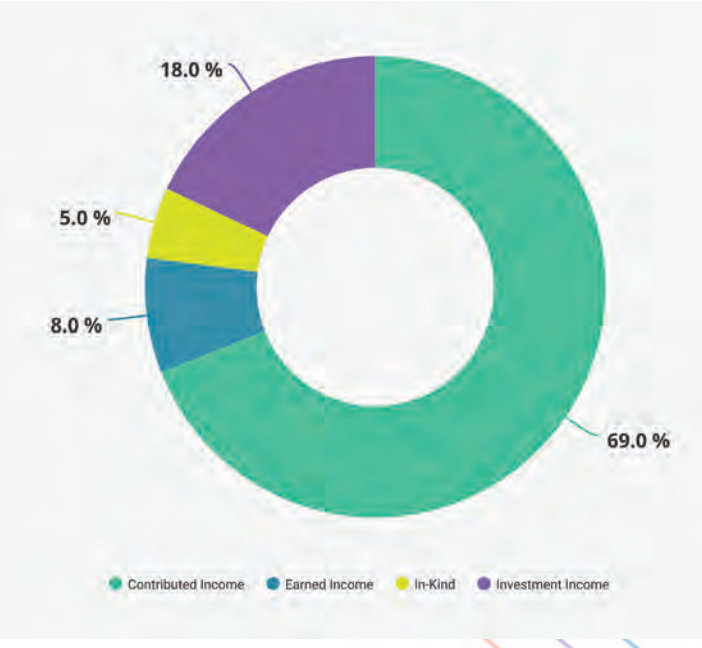
Service to the Field
Service to the Art Form
Service to the Community

Through Arts Leadership & Artist Development programming, Sphinx connects to a robust network of Black & Latinx artists & arts leaders, culturally diverse & resonant programming, best practices to support the artists on stage, and administrative leadership working within organizations and institutions. Over the next 5 years, Sphinx will work with more than 250 organizations to ensure that classical music serves all our communities. Sphinx will continue to evolve its deeply artist-centric approach as we believe that our artists will ultimately lead the field toward a more just and excellent future through performance, pedagogy, presentation, innovation and thought leadership.



Financial Health and Sustainability

2023 Income
\$8,717,171



TOTAL NET ASSETS
\$24,167,222

TOTAL NET ASSETS & LIABILITIES
\$24,283,952

2023 Expenses
\$7,313,912



Staff and Boards

Sphinx Organization Staff

President & Artistic Director.....	Afa S. Dworkin
Chief Programming Officer	Andre Dowell
Director of Leadership Programs	Jake Lane
Director of Education.....	Ana Abrantes
Director of Ensemble Advancement.....	Bill Neri
Manager of Leadership Programs	Cheyenne King-Bails
Director of Design & Administration.....	Julie Renfro
Director of Major Gifts.....	Olivia Custodio
Director of Foundation Relations & Community	Achia Floyd
Manager of Communications & Individual Giving.....	Sheena Gutierrez
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Program Faculty & Staff

2023-2024 OVERTURE

Detroit Faculty

Davin Adams
Maria Pia Bucco
Leslie DeShazer
Joseph Gray
Jessica Lipon
Wendy Kao
Yuri Popowycz
Christian Sands
Elena Serna
Erin Zuchniewicz

Flint Faculty

Saraf Aboites-Nuñez
Madison Hilborn
Wendy Kao
Alirna Korieva
Natasha Kubit
Carlie Tate

2023 SPHINX PERFORMANCE ACADEMY

University of Colorado Boulder - College of

Music Faculty

Ingrid Gerling, violin
Alex Gonzalez, violin
Rinel Joubert, violin
Dana Kelley, viola
Khari Joyner, cello
Patricia Weitzel, double bass

Juilliard Faculty

Thierry de Lucas Neves, violin
Alex Gonzalez, violin
Jannina Norpoth, violin
Jason Amos, viola
Sterling Elliott, cello
Khari Joyner, cello
Patricia Weitzel, double bass

Cleveland Institute of Music Faculty

Thierry de Lucas Neves, violin
Caitlin Edwards, violin
Ingrid Gerling, violin
Alex Gonzalez, violin
Jennifer Arnold, viola
Herper Randolph, viola
Khari Joyner, cello
Mary Ann Ramos, cello

Staff

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Maeve Lemus, Student Life Manager
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Fiscal Year 2023
January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

\$1,000,000+

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The Bauder Conducting Fellowship
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 Holsey Kevin Gillis
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 Maris Kingfisher
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 Nikolette LaBonte
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