



The Skillman Foundation Presents

YAKTIVITIES FOR HELPING KIDS

The Sphinx Organization

Promoting Classical Music That Reflects Cultural Diversity

The vision of the Sphinx Organization is both broad and tightly focused.

Its goal is to help create a world in which classical music reflects cultural diversity while also playing a role in the everyday lives of young people in the neighborhoods and cities where they live.

On top of that, its mission is to increase the participation of African Americans and Latinos in music schools, as professional musicians and as classical music audiences, and to assist and develop youth in underserved communities through music education.

The Sphinx Organization is a national non-profit founded in 1996 by Aaron P. Dworkin, who was a graduate student at the University of Michigan.

A violinist himself, he started the organization to help overcome the cultural stereotype of classical music, and to encourage the participation of African Americans and Latinos in the field.

“The name Sphinx was given to the organization to represent some of the founding principles that guided its conception,” the organization says. “The Sphinx represents the historical and geographical source of identity for many minorities and exemplifies the power, wisdom and persistence that we hope to instill in our participants.”

In the 12-year history of the Sphinx Organization, more than 65,000 students have been reached and engaged in 175 schools nationwide and more than two million individuals a year are reached through national broadcasts on PBS television and National Public Radio.

In addition, more than \$190,000 in quality instruments have been provided to young minority musicians and more than \$1.6 million in prizes and scholarships have been



distributed to semi-finalists in the yearly Sphinx Competition.

Sphinx Programs

The Sphinx Organization has five specific programs areas, with each having several initiatives:

Artist Development (with nine different initiatives) – One of the top initiatives in this program is the Sphinx Competition. This event sponsored by Chase is held every year in Ann Arbor and Detroit. The competition is open to all junior high, high school and college-age black and Latino string players who live in the United States.

Sphinx Prep – The Sphinx Preparatory Music Institute at Wayne State University is a tuition-free program offering classes to Detroit students in music history, music theory/ear

training and instrumental performance for 10 Saturdays during both fall and winter semesters. The program is designed to address the needs of students who are pursuing music studies at beginning and intermediate levels but who lack access to steady, balanced musical training.

Sphinx Performance Academy – The SPA at Walnut Hill School is an intensive two-week chamber music/solo performance designed for young African American and Latino string players, ages 12-17, who are in pursuit of consistent music education and advancement. This is a full-scholarship music camp offering lessons/coaching twice a week with a faculty comprised of professional minority musicians from around the country.

Classical Connections – Classical Connections helps teachers implement music education in schools nationwide. This program is centered on its interactive educational CD-ROM, as well as its accompanying curriculum guide. These tools were designed to enable teachers to integrate classical music education into their classroom setting.



For more information on the programs and classes, contact:

The Sphinx Organization

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www.sphinxmusic.org

THINK ABOUT MUSIC

Classical music like that supported by the Sphinx Organization includes many different styles and has influenced many other kinds of music. It also provides many opportunities for trained musicians. With family or friends, talk about ways that music training could open doors to careers for students. Then talk about why it is important that ethnic minorities like African Americans or Latinos have access to this kind of musical training.