WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR SPHINX COMPETITION JUNIOR AND SENIOR DIVISIONS

Senior Division First Place Laureate is Samuel Abraham Vargas Teixeira; Junior Division First Place Laureate is Amaryn Olmeda

Annual Sphinx Competition Honors Talented Young Black and Latinx Classical String Players
February 1, 2021, Detroit, MI — The Sphinx Organization announces the winners of its annual Sphinx Competition in both its Junior (17 and under) and Senior (ages 18 to 30) Divisions. Violinist Samuel Abraham Vargas Teixeira (Araure, Portuguesa - Venezuela), the First Place Senior Division Laureate, received the $50,000 Robert Frederick Smith Prize, and will additionally make forthcoming solo appearances with major orchestras. Violinist Amaryn Olmeda (Loomis, CA), the First Place Junior Division Laureate, received a $10,000 cash prize, and will also make solo appearances with major orchestras.

Bassist Christian Gray (Winston-Salem, NC) received Second Place in the Senior Division and a $20,000 cash prize with cellist Luiz Fernando Venturelli (Praia Grande – São Paulo, Brazil) receiving Third Place and a $10,000 cash prize. In the Junior Division, violinist Jonathan Okseniuk (Mesa, Arizona) received Second Place and a $5,000 cash prize; violist Dillon P. Scott (Lansdale, PA) received Third Place and a $3,000 cash prize.

Bassist Christian Gray won the Senior Division Audience Choice Award with a $4,000 cash prize, and Violinist Amaryn Olmeda won the Junior Division Audience Choice Award. Sponsored by Mercedes-Benz Financial Services, these Awards were determined by audience members texting in their votes.

The prestigious Sphinx Competition recognizes the outstanding achievements of young Black and Latinx classical string players, offering them the opportunity to compete under the guidance of an internationally renowned panel of judges, and receive mentorship from established professional musicians. The organization’s founding program is now in its 24th year.

The Sphinx Competition Junior and Senior Division Finals featured the three Finalists from both the Senior and Junior Divisions. Presented by DTE Foundation, the Finals Concert was streamed on Saturday, January 30 at 7pm ET. In partnership with Detroit Public Television (DPTV), the Finals Concert is now available to replay on-demand on Sphinx’s website and will air again on DPTV on February 22, 2021.

"I want to congratulate all of our artists who participated in our first ever virtual Sphinx Competition!" said President and Artistic Director Afa S. Dworkin. “I continue to be deeply moved by the astounding talent and admirable citizenship among our artists. You inspire us with your artistic excellence and resilience! We greatly look forward to helping to empower your careers as you transform lives through the power of your artistry!"

About Sphinx Organization
The Sphinx Organization is the social justice organization dedicated to transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts. Sphinx’s four program areas—Education & Access, Artist Development, Performing Artists, and Arts Leadership—form a pipeline that develops and supports diversity and inclusion in classical music at every level: music education, artists performing on stage, the repertoire and programing being performed, the communities represented in audiences, and the artistic and administrative leadership within the field.

Sphinx was founded in 1997 by Aaron P. Dworkin with the goal of addressing the underrepresentation of people of color in classical music. The name Sphinx, inspired by the mythical creature and legendary statue, reflects the power, wisdom and persistence that characterize Sphinx’s participants, as well as the enigmatic and interpretive nature of music and art.
Now led by President and Artistic Director Afa S. Dworkin, Sphinx programs reach more than 100,000 students and artists as well as live and broadcast audiences of more than two million annually. Read more about Sphinx’s programs at www.SphinxMusic.org.

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