

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CELLIST KHARI JOYNER
NAMED FIRST PLACE JUNIOR DIVISION LAUREATE
AT 12th ANNUAL SPHINX COMPETITION**

**Mr. Joyner Becomes First TDP Student To Win
Prestigious Competition**

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Talent Development Program student **Khari Joyner** has been named the **First Place Junior Division Laureate** in the **12th Annual Sphinx Competition**. Mr. Joyner, a 17-year old cellist from Atlanta, GA, was awarded prizes and scholarships including opportunities for solo appearances with major orchestras and a performance on NPR's *From the Top*. The Junior Division Honors Concert was held at Ann Arbor, Michigan's Rackham Auditorium on Friday, January 30, 2009. Mr. Joyner is the first ASO Talent Development Program student to win at the prestigious competition.

The annual Sphinx Competition, presented by Chase, has identified, rewarded, and promoted young Black and Latino string players for over eleven years, and has awarded over \$1,000,000 in prizes and scholarships. Alumni of the competition have performed as soloists with many of the nation's top orchestras including the Atlanta Symphony, Detroit Symphony, New York Philharmonic, National Symphony, and many others.

All 19 Sphinx Competition semi-finalists receive Sphinx Music Assistance Fund scholarships to help support their musical development, and are eligible for full scholarships to summer and higher education programs.

Unlike many other competitions, the Sphinx Organization strives to provide a nurturing, educational environment for its competitors. During the competition, participants are offered educational and professional development activities with renowned musicians and music professionals, and benefit from mentoring by Sphinx's prestigious jury and Sphinx Symphony Orchestra members. The jury panel for the 12th Annual Sphinx Competition Presented by Chase was comprised of professional musicians from around the country including Andres Diaz, Pamela Frank, Kim Kashkashian, Patinka Kopec and Awadagin Pratt.

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About Khari Joyner

Khari Joyner has been a member of the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra for four years, and a member of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Talent Development Program for seven years. He began playing cello at the age of eight, and studied with Suzuki teacher Bonnie Bull for four years as well as with renowned cellist Martha Gerschefski, his current teacher. He has also been a member of the Metropolitan Youth Concert Orchestra and the Georgia All-State Orchestra for several years where he served as Principal Cellist.

Among his many accomplishments, Mr. Joyner was named the First Place Junior Division Laureate in the 12th Annual Sphinx Competition in 2009, and a semi finalist in 2007. He was also a winner of the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition performing the Dvorak Concerto and a featured performer in the Emory Upcoming Young Artist Series. His recent performances included The 2008 National Black Arts Festival performance with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra where he performed the Haydn Concerto, the 2008 Casual Classics Concert series in Jasper, Georgia and the Maya Angelou birthday celebration. Mr. Joyner has also been awarded numerous scholarships from the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra, Heifetz International Music Institute, Surdna Foundation, National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, Indiana String Academy, and The International Music Festival. He also was the recipient of the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation Grant and the Hank Aaron Chasing the Dream Foundation Scholarship, and was also selected to perform at the 2005 Annual Trumpet Awards Breakfast.

A 12th grader at Atlanta's Lakeside High School, Mr. Joyner has also performed along side his two violinist-brothers in the KAJ Trio, where they opened for Bruce Hornsby during a benefit concert in November 2002. The KAJ Trio also performed for Coretta Scott King in the kickoff reception for the Martin Luther King, Jr. week in January 2003. Khari was also a featured soloist for National Public Radio performing the Elgar Cello Concerto.

About the ASO's Talent Development Program

Established in 1993, the **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Talent Development Program** was the first intense training program established by a major America orchestra to support talented, young African-American and Latino students, of every orchestral instrument, who desire to pursue classical music. 100 percent of students completing the Talent Development Program graduated from high school and continued to college, many attending leading conservatories, or college or university music departments, including: Oberlin Conservatory of Music, The Juilliard School, Cleveland Institute of Music, New England Conservatory of Music, and the Curtis Institute of Music, among others.

The excellence of the program has been achieved through lessons and chamber instruction — from master teachers — combined with the benefits of the summer music program experiences. TDP students are guided by ASO musicians (or equally qualified instructors) who serve as their private teachers and mentors, and the excellence of the Program is reflected through TDP students becoming finalists in the national Sphinx Competition, featured guests on the NPR's "From the Top," as well as solo performers with the ASO in National Black Arts Festival concerts, donor appreciation concerts, and the ASO's King Celebration concerts. TDP students

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comprise a significant segment of the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra and regularly place in the top All-State ensembles (many in principal positions). In addition, through the Azira G. Hill Scholarship Fund, the Program provides financial assistance to these students to attend leading summer music study programs.

Cellist and TDP graduate Ismail Akbar recently secured a one-year appointment in the Augusta Symphony Orchestra, the second TDP graduate to secure a position with a professional orchestra. In 2007, bassist and TDP graduate Eric Thompson was appointed to a one-year position at the Charlotte Symphony — he now holds a permanent position there.

About the Sphinx Organization

The Sphinx Organization was established in 1996 by Aaron Dworkin with a mission to increase Black and Latino participation in music schools, as professional musicians, 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 & Latino composers. In addition to the Competition, the Sphinx Organization's educational programs reach over 35,000 students around the country. Chase has been a longtime supporter of the Sphinx Organization and annual competition. Sphinx has been featured on *NPR*, *PBS*, *NBC's Today*, *CNN*, and in *The New York Times*, *Strings*, and *Ebony*.

For the past eight years, Chase has supported the Sphinx Organization in programs that expand opportunities for Black and Latino youth musicians. Chase, with a national network of more than 5,400 branches and 14,000 ATMs under the Chase and WaMu brands, is a strong community partner investing in education, arts and culture, and economic development programs that allow people and communities to thrive.

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