



# WHITE PINE MUSIC

## The Harlem Quartet



The Harlem Quartet, comprised of First Place Laureates of the Sphinx Competition, has a unique and challenging mission: to advance diversity in classical music while engaging young and new audiences through the discovery and presentation of varied repertoire, highlighting works by minority composers.

Dedicated to education, community engagement, as well as to superb classical performance, this innovative and daring all-Black and Latino string quartet serves as Principal Faculty at the Sphinx Performance Academy at Walnut Hill School in Massachusetts, one of the premier independent arts preparatory schools in the world, and as Visiting Faculty at the Sphinx Preparatory Music Institute at Wayne State University in Detroit.

The Harlem Quartet made their acclaimed debut in the fall of 2006 at the Sphinx Organization's Gala Concert at Carnegie Hall, earning rave reviews from *The New York Times*, as well as at the legendary Apollo Theatre in Harlem. In addition to being avid chamber musicians, each member of the Harlem Quartet is a seasoned solo artist, having appeared with the New York Philharmonic, the Atlanta, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Sinaloa de las Artes (Mexico) and Baltimore Symphonies and the Boston Pops, among others. They are co-managed by Sciolino Artist Management (SAM) of New York City. and the Sphinx Organization.

## WPM 207: TAKE THE 'A' TRAIN



The latest release from Central Michigan University's recording label recently made its debut at New York's famed Carnegie Hall.

As part of a partnership between CMU's Center for Public Service through Music and the Arts and Detroit's Sphinx Organization, the Harlem Quartet released "Take the 'A' Train" on the CMU School of Music's White Pine Music label. The compact disc's release was celebrated Sept. 25 as part of The Sphinx Laureates at Carnegie Hall concert.

Tracks for the disc, including pieces by Wynton Marsalis, Billy Strayhorn, Joaquín Turina and Guido López-Gavilán, were recorded in May in CMU's Staples Family Concert Hall.

The quartet's members have all been First Place Laureates in the annual Sphinx Competitions. First violinist Ilmar Gavilan, First Prize winner of the Sphinx Competition in 2001, is a native of Havana, Cuba, and currently is the concertmaster of the Philadelphia Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra; second violinist Melissa White, the First Place Junior Division Laureate of the fourth annual Sphinx Competition, is a recent graduate of The Curtis Institute of Music; violist Juan-Miguel Hernandez, the Gold Achievement winner of the ninth National Sphinx Competition in 2006, is a native of Montreal, Canada, and was one of the artists on the first Sphinx and White Pine Music release, "Moyugba Orisha," in February 2007; and cellist Desmond Neysmith, the First Prize winner of the 2000 Texaco Sphinx Competition, has appeared as a soloist with many leading U.S. orchestras and holds the co-principal chair in La Orquesta Sinaloa Sinfonica de las Artes in Culiacan, Mexico.

The Detroit-based Sphinx Organization is dedicated to increasing the participation of Black and Latino artists in classical music, both on stage and in audiences. Its Sphinx Competitions, held annually in Detroit, offers young Black and Latino classical string players a chance to compete under the guidance of an internationally renowned panel of judges and to perform with established professional musicians in an encouraging setting. The Harlem Quartet and other Sphinx artists will continue to record with White Pine Music in the future.



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## HARLEM QUARTET MEMBERS:

### **Ilmar Gavilan**, violin



Ilmar Gavilan, a native of Havana, Cuba has had a remarkable and fascinating career which has taken him all over the world.

His studies began at the Havana Conservatory of music in his native country. At the age of 14, Ilmar Gavilan was selected for advanced studies at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow. Later studies took him to the Reina Sofia School of Music in Spain, and the Manhattan School of Music in New York. Mr. Gavilan's mentors have included Glenn Dicterow, Zachar Bron, Maia Glizarova, and Abraham Stern; as well as having had private lessons with Yehudi Menuhin, Ruggiero Ricci and Isaac Stern. He is currently a Doctor in Music candidate from Rutgers University mentored by Arnold Steinhardt.

Mr. Gavilan's solo performances included the Detroit, Atlanta, Milwaukee, Baltimore, Denver, Phoenix and Saint Louis Symphonies, among others. Ilmar Gavilan has also made solo appearances in Mexico, Cuba, Venezuela, Spain, Portugal, and Moscow. Mr. Gavilan won First Prize at the Sphinx Competition, top honors at the

Lipinsky-Wieniaswsky International Violin Competition in Poland, and the International Henryk Szeryng Violin Competition. His U.S. recording debut Aires Y Leyendas was released in 2002 to respectable sales and a prominent positioning by the Tower Records chain store. His upcoming record titled Gavilan plays Gavilan is comprised of music composed by his father Guido Gavilan.

Ilmar Gavilan is currently the concertmaster of the Philadelphia Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, performs as a regular substitute musician for the New Jersey Symphony and is the first violinist of the Harlem Quartet. He also teaches violin at the Juilliard School, Music Advancement Program, Pre-College Division.

### **Melissa White**, violin



Melissa White is a recent graduate of The Curtis Institute of Music where she studied under the direction of Ida Kavafian. The First Place Junior Division Laureate of the 4th Annual Sphinx Competition, she has appeared as a soloist of many of the nation's leading orchestras, including the Cleveland, Atlanta, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Colorado, New Jersey, Cincinnati, San Antonio Symphonies and the Boston Pops. Her 2006-2007 season opened with an appearance with the Chicago Sinfonietta and a return to Carnegie Hall as a guest soloist at the Annual Sphinx Gala Concert. Melissa recently made a solo appearance with the New York Symphonic Ensemble at the legendary Apollo Theater and was named the 2006 Harmony Scholar by the Panasonic Corporation.

In addition to frequent solo appearances, Melissa is also an active chamber musician. She is a member of the Ritz Chamber Players in Jacksonville, Florida; Jupiter Symphony Chamber Musicians in New York; and the Harlem String Quartet.

As a member of the Ritz Chamber Players, Melissa performed live at the 2006 NAACP Image Awards, which was televised nationally. In May 2004 and 2005 she was a featured performer at the Hilton Head International Young Musician's Festival; a chamber music series hosted by noted pianist Chris O'Riley.

Melissa has also already begun her recording career. At the age of 14, she made her debut with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra and internationally-acclaimed conductor Paul Freeman. Her CD recording of "An American Concerto" by Gwenyth Walker on Albany Records is now in record stores worldwide.

Along with Melissa White's concert activity, in the summer she serves as a member of senior faculty of the Sphinx Performance Academy on the campus of Walnut Hill School. An important part of her career is sharing her music with young audiences and inner city students. She conducts outreach activities around the country when she travels to perform with major symphonies. During this school year she will do extensive work with the Reading, PA public school system and community music programs and finish the year by appearing as a soloist with the Reading Youth Symphony.



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## Juan-Miguel Hernandez, viola



Juan- Miguel Hernandez, is the Gold Achievement Award Winner of the 9th National Sphinx Competition 2006 presented by JPMorgan Chase. In addition to winning the Sphinx Competition, Mr. Hernandez was a first and second prize winner in the National Canadian Music Competitions, as well as a winner in the Silery Music Competition and Clermont-Pepin Music Competition.

As a Sphinx artist, Mr. Hernandez gave stellar performances with the Atlanta and Colorado Symphonies, and Rochester Philharmonic, among others. His performance was characterized by the Atlanta Journal Constitution as "...tender, lyrical, loaded with personality". Among numerous solo recitals and as soloist with orchestras, he was invited to play in two Gala concerts at the Pollak hall in Montreal. He was selected as a showcased artist in the I Palpiti Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Eduard Schmieder. He has played with several orchestras including Westmount Youth Orchestra & Colburn Orchestra. In 2004, Mr. Hernandez gave his first recital for national broadcast by Radio-Canada. He also appeared on local network television for the viola show hosted by Paul Coletti in Canada. During his summers, he serves as a member of senior faculty at the Sphinx Performance Academy at Walnut Hill School.

Juan-Miguel Hernandez was born in Canada in 1985. He began to study violin at the age of seven and changed to viola at twelve. In the past he has studied at the music high school Pierre-Laporte and at the College Vincent-D'Indy in Montreal with Ms. Madeleine Mercy and Ms. Jean MacRae. Currently continuing his studies with M. Paul Coletti at the Colburn Conservatory, he has been invited to play in masterclass for Pinchas Zukermann, Roberto Diaz, Paul Neubauer, Steven Dann, James Dunham, Andre Roy, Elmar Oliveira, and Sydney Humphreys. Mr. Hernandez has participated in prestigious summer music festivals in Canada such as the Banff music festival (Alberta) and Domaine Forget (Quebec) and in the United States he has participated in the Colorado Springs music festival followed by the International Laureates music Festival touring New Mexico and Los Angeles giving that last concert in the new Disney Hall.

An avid chamber musician, he studied with Lorand Fenyves and Laurence Lesser and is a member of the trio Lamoureux-Hernandez-Pelletier. In the summer of 2005 he toured again with the prestigious I Palpiti under the direction of Doctor Eduard Shmieder in Slovenia, Salzburg, New Mexico, Los Angeles and in February 2006, Israel.

## Desmond Neysmith, cello



Desmond Neysmith received his Bachelors at the Royal College of Music with Proff Steven Doane and went on to further his studies at the Royal Northern College of Music under the tutelage of Karine Georgian. During his training he was the recipient of numerous awards and prizes including, The Countess of Munster Trust, Musicians Benovelent Fund, Myra Hess Fund, The Emmanuel Hurwitz Chamber Music Charitable Trust, the Dorothy Grinstead Fund, and the KPMG Martin Musical Scholarship Fund. This culminated in his being awarded First prize at the 2000 Texaco Sphinx Competition.

He has appeared as a soloist with many Leading US orchestras including New York Philharmonic, as well as the Atlanta, Baltimore, Hartford, Louisiana and Florida's New World Symphony. He has also made concerto appearances with La Orquesta Sinaloa Sinfonica de las Artes in Culiacan, Mexico where he currently holds the co principal chair.

Further afield, Desmond has always been interested in other genres of performance and with his Music Theatre company, "The Gogmagogs", has toured Asia, Europe and the United States. The music theatre was taken a step further with his involvement in London's West End production of "Bent" by Martin Sherman where he played a straight acting role, in addition to narrating, co-writing and performing the score for solo cello.

Forthcoming engagements include a performance of Elgar's cello concerto with his orchestra, various Chamber music and recital dates and his annual attendance at the Northern Lights Music Festival in Ajijic Mexico, of which he is a founding member.