CIGNA presents The Philadelphia Orchestra’s FREE Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert for 20th consecutive year

Held on January 18, Martin Luther King High School hosts this special tribute concert for fifth year

Thomas Wilkins returns to lead the Orchestra and the School District of Philadelphia’s All City Choir; Charlotte Blake Alston reads the words of Dr. King; and specially selected high school students reflect on Dr. King’s legacy

NOTE: Concert now begins at 3:00 PM

(Philadelphia, December 21, 2009)—In 1990 CIGNA approached The Philadelphia Orchestra with the concept of partnering to present a special concert for the people of the greater Philadelphia region that honored the legacy of the late civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr. Twenty years later this great tradition continues as CIGNA presents The Philadelphia Orchestra’s free Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert on Monday, January 18, 2010.

In order to accommodate more members of the community, the performance will now begin at 3:00 PM at Philadelphia’s Martin Luther King High School, which is hosting the concert for the fifth consecutive year.

Guest conductor Thomas Wilkins once again leads the Orchestra, joined by narrator Charlotte Blake Alston and the School District of Philadelphia’s All City Choir (Dorina Morrow, director), in a program that celebrates the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Combining the traditions of African-American culture and Western classical music, the concert pays tribute to Dr. King’s vision of a society free of prejudice and racial divisions, and his belief in the power of music to help create positive change. In addition to the musical portion of the program, specially selected students from local Philadelphia high schools will share their
personal reflections on the life and work of Dr. King.

“The 2010 Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert is a testament to The Philadelphia Orchestra’s commitment to building vibrant partnerships and engaging on a deeper level with the Philadelphia community,” said incoming Philadelphia Orchestra President and CEO Allison Vulgamore, who starts in her new position on January 18, the day of the Tribute Concert. “I had the great fortune to work with Mrs. King and the King family during my tenure at the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and to experience the powerful bond that she and Dr. King had with music, throughout their lives. That extraordinary connection is why we do this tribute concert, to honor the legacy of Dr. King and his inspiring message of hope and unity. We are grateful for the generosity and assistance of our outstanding partners, especially CIGNA, who conceived of this project 20 years ago and supported it every year since. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our partners at Foundations Inc. and MLK High School, and especially to State Representative Dwight Evans, who has made it possible for us to perform at the high school for each of the past five years.”

This year’s concert marks the 20th consecutive year that CIGNA has enabled The Philadelphia Orchestra to bring this unique tribute to Dr. King to the greater Philadelphia region. Reflecting on the special significance of this year’s partnership, CIGNA executive vice president of Human Resources John Murabito said, "At CIGNA, we believe that through our support of the National Memorial to Dr. King, now under construction in our nation’s capital, and our 20-year sponsorship of the Tribute concert series, we’re helping to make sure the principles for which Dr. King lived and died remain at the vital center of the life of our community and our country.”

“The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King taught us to bring our own individual talents to the causes of peace, justice, and unity for all citizens,” said state Rep. Dwight Evans. “The musicians of The Philadelphia Orchestra are among the best in the world and they use their musical gifts and talent to inspire the rest of us to dream big, not just for ourselves, but for our community and for our country. I applaud them.”

Martin Luther King High School is managed by Foundations, Inc., which is dedicated to transitioning the school into a high-performing, competitive school. Foundations, Inc., CEO Rhonda Lauer states “All of us at Martin Luther King High School and Foundations are so proud to be in partnership with The Philadelphia Orchestra and State Representative Dwight Evans as we host this wonderful concert for a fifth year now. The real honor is to be able to watch our students, their families, and the entire community embrace these events with such appreciation and sense of infectious pride touches everyone.”

For tickets and information, visit www.philorch.org/mlk

Tickets are available at the following locations after January 4, 2010:
Office of State Representative Dwight Evans, 7174 Ogontz Avenue, Philadelphia, 215.549.0220
(Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00 AM–5:00 PM)
Martin Luther King High School/Foundations, Inc. (NSN), 6100 Stenton Avenue (Room 352), Philadelphia, 215.276.3934 (Hours: Monday–Friday, noon–5:00 PM)

A limited number of tickets are available online at www.philorch.org/mlk

Seating is general admission and is available on a first-come, first-served basis. There is a four-ticket limit per person. Doors open at 2:15 PM.
The 2010 Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert opens with John Williams’s patriotic *Liberty Fanfare*, which was written for the Statue of Liberty’s centennial celebration in 1986. The program continues with excerpts from William Grant Still’s historic Symphony No. 1 (“Afro-American”), the first symphonic work by an African American to be performed by a major orchestra. Speaker Charlotte Blake Alston then returns for what has now become a tradition of the tribute concert—a reading from the writings of Martin Luther King Jr. over a performance of Barber’s elegiac *Adagio for Strings*.

The second half of the program begins with two orchestral pieces, “Giggling Rapids” from Duke Ellington’s *The River* and excerpts from Morton Gould’s *Spirituals for Orchestra*. Ms. Blake Alston and the School District of Philadelphia’s All City Choir, directed by Dorina Morrow, join the Orchestra to perform Andrea Clearfield’s *Kabo omowale* (Welcome Home Child), for narrator, chorus, and orchestra. The work—commissioned by The Philadelphia Orchestra and premiered at its 2008 Neighborhood Concert in Camden, NJ—is a collaboration between Ms. Clearfield, Ms. Alston, and participants in the Camden Respond Music Workshop Group. The Workshop—a partnership between the Orchestra and the social services organization Respond, Inc.—engaged an inter-generational group of Camden community members in creative, artistic work, including music composition, performance, and storytelling. The concert closes with John Rosamond Johnson’s “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”

The Orchestra continues to honor outstanding high school seniors who, through their superior academic and personal achievements, exemplify the ideals of Dr. King. Teachers and administrators from selected schools in the Philadelphia region nominate students based on their academic and personal achievements, and their commitment to the betterment of their community through volunteer service and related activities. Finalists are invited to interview with a panel assembled by The Philadelphia Orchestra Association and made up of Orchestra musicians, staff members, and members of the Orchestra’s community partners. Two of the finalists will be invited to participate in the Orchestra’s Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert, while the remaining finalists will be recognized during the concert.


The School District of Philadelphia’s All City Choir, under the direction of Dorina C. Morrow of The Philadelphia High School for Creative and Performing Arts, represents students from 12 high schools in the School District of Philadelphia. The All City Choir performs annually in the All Philadelphia High School Music Festival.

The Philadelphia Orchestra’s Martin Luther King Jr. Concert, first presented in 1991, reflects the beliefs and convictions of the famed civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., combining the traditions of African-American culture and Western classical music. The concert pays tribute to Dr. King’s religious beliefs, his vision of a society free of prejudice and racial divisions, and his belief in the power of music to effect change.
CIGNA has sponsored this event since its inception. Taking the Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert into the community reflects the Orchestra’s commitment to reaching new and diverse audiences. Since its Centennial in 2000, the Orchestra has performed free Neighborhood Concerts throughout the Philadelphia region, bringing the gift of music into the communities where people live in an attempt to break down the barriers that may separate it from many people in the community.

Foundations, Inc., is nationally recognized for the services it offers to afterschool programs, schools, districts, and other educational and community organizations. Foundations provides technical expertise to clients dedicated to improving educational achievement during school and afterschool hours. Foundations’ Neighborhood School Network is comprised of four School District of Philadelphia schools: Fulton Elementary, Kinsey Elementary, Pastorius Elementary, and Martin Luther King High School, all located in Northwest Philadelphia.

CIGNA (NYSE: CI) provides employers with benefits, expertise, and services that improve the health, well-being, and productivity of their employees. With approximately 47 million covered lives in the United States and around the world, CIGNA’s operating subsidiaries offer a full portfolio of medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, and vision care benefits and group life, accident, and disability insurance.

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Founded in 1900, The Philadelphia Orchestra has distinguished itself as one of the leading orchestras in the world through a century of acclaimed performances, historic international tours, best-selling recordings, and its unprecedented record of innovation in recording technologies and outreach. The Orchestra has maintained unity in artistic leadership with only seven music directors throughout its history: Fritz Scheel (1900-07), Carl Pohlig (1907-12), Leopold Stokowski (1912-41), Eugene Ormandy (1936-80), Riccardo Muti (1980-92), Wolfgang Sawallisch (1993-2003), and Christoph Eschenbach (2003-08).

This rich tradition is carried on by Chief Conductor Charles Dutoit. Mr. Dutoit has a long-standing relationship with the Orchestra, having made his debut with the ensemble in 1980. Highlights of his second season include performances of Berlioz’s Te Deum and Symphonie fantastique, part of Mr. Dutoit’s four-year focus on the works of that composer, and a celebration of the 100th anniversary of Samuel Barber’s birthday. During his tenure, Mr. Dutoit will also showcase the music of the Ballets Russes, continuing in the 2009-10 season with performances of Stravinsky’s Petrushka and The Rite of Spring.

Recent Philadelphia Orchestra highlights include the opening of the Orchestra’s Online Music Store, www.thephiladelphiaorchestra.com; regular broadcasts on NPR; a series of critically acclaimed recordings on the Ondine label; and a $125 million endowment campaign.

The Philadelphia Orchestra annually touches the lives of more than one million music lovers worldwide through its performances, publications, recordings, and broadcasts. Each year the Orchestra presents a subscription season in Philadelphia, education and community partnership programs, regular appearances at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, and a three-week tour. Its summer schedule includes performances at Philadelphia’s Mann Center for the Performing Arts, free Neighborhood Concerts, and residencies at the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival and the Saratoga Performing Arts Center.

For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit www.philorch.org.
CIGNA PRESENTS
THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA’S 20TH ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. TRIBUTE CONCERT
January 18 at 3:00 PM – Monday afternoon – Martin Luther King High School, 6100 Stenton Avenue, Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Orchestra
Thomas Wilkins Conductor
Charlotte Blake Alston Narrator
School District of Philadelphia’s All City Choir (Dorina Morrow, director)

Williams
Still
Barber
Ellington
Gould
Clearfield
Johnson

Liberty Fanfare
Excerpts from Symphony No. 1 (“Afro-American”)
Adagio for Strings
“Giggling Rapids,” from The River
Excerpts from Spirituals for Orchestra
Kabo omowale (Welcome Home Child), for narrator, chorus, and orchestra
“Lift Every Voice and Sing”

CIGNA and The Philadelphia Orchestra would like to thank the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development for providing additional funding for this tribute to Dr. King.

Media support provided by CBS3 and The CW Philly 57.

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