

Angels

with a major orchestra," adds Steve Shipps, professor of violin at the University of Michigan. "Now it's becoming routine."

For artists, Sphinx has been a transforming experience. "I'd never have imagined I'd play with the Boston Pops

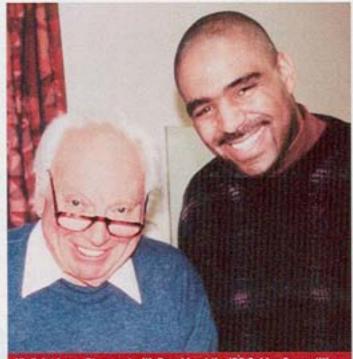
or the National Symphony in D.C.," says violinist Gareth Johnson, 19, a 2002 winner, now at the Lynn Conservatory in Boca Raton, Fla. Cellist Patrice Jackson, 22, a 2002 winner, earned a scholarship to Juilliard through Sphinx and gigs with 20 major orchestras. "Without Sphinx," she says, "I'd never have had these chances."

As a child, Dworkin didn't want for opportunities. Born in Monticello, N.Y., he was adopted at two weeks by white neuroscience professors from Manhattan, Barry Dworkin, 60, now at Penn State Medical School, and his wife, Susan, a violinist, who died last year. Dwor-

kin excelled early at the violin but found practice tedious. Once, his father recalls, "the kid was standing there, playing the violin, with Charlie and the Chocolate Factory on the floor, reading and turning the pages with his toes."

At 10. Dworkin moved to Hershey, Pa. "There was only one black family," he says. "I got Racial Issues 101, with a heavy dose of ostracism. I used music to escape." Dworkin was concertmaster of the Harrisburg Youth Symphony and attended Michigan's Interlochen Arts Academy, where he met his future wife, Carrie. After a brief stint as a Penn State business major he dropped out and moved to Michigan with her, working on and off for environmental groups and as a lobbyist. "We spent years with pretty rough times," Dworkin says. "Poverty, getting evicted. But I also got experience with nonprofits."

I didn't want others to feel as alone as I did as a kid"



Violinist Isaac Stern met with Dworkin at the '98 Sphinx Competition.

He missed the violin, however, and with financial aid, enrolled at Michigan to major in music. There he started Sphinx, named for what he calls the "pinnacle of achievement." After a \$10,000 donation from World Bank president James Wolfensohn, corporate bucks flowed in. (Sphinx's \$1.5 million budget comes from a long list of sponsors, including the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, American Express and the big three automakers.) In 1997 he and Carrie wed, and two years later their son Noah was born. Last year, after a long separation, they divorced. Mitigating the loss, perhaps, Dworkin realized a lifelong dream. In 2001, through a Web site, he located and met his birth parents: Vaughn Moore, an African-American hospital worker, and his wife, Audeen, who is white. "I've been pray-



ing my whole life for that moment," says Audeen, an emergency management administrator. (Not yet wed to Vaughn, she had been forced by her parents to give Aaron up.) Says Dworkin: "It was the kind of

experience music was created for. I couldn't express it in words."

He sees the Moores several times a year, and they hope to be at Carnegie Hall Dec. 8, when 25 Sphinx alumni give a concert. Dworkin longs for a time when such an event is mundane. "My hope is that one day nobody makes a big deal about hiring a minority classical musician," Dworkin says. "I hope there's no need for a Sphinx Organization and I can go off to write poetry and play my violin."

By Richard Jerome, Barbara Sandler in Detroit.

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