

## The riches of Detroit

Editor:

There have been a number of articles recently defending Detroit against the onslaught of negative publicity. Rather than join that chorus and list all Detroit's virtues (of which there are too many to enumerate and because of which I would live nowhere else), allow me to recount my last two Sundays as a snapshot of what makes me love this area.

On Jan. 25, I had the honor of meeting youth from the Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit. They will be doing a show in May called "Crossing Eight Mile," and executive director Rick Sperling asked that I provide the historical population patterns that have resulted in our city-suburb split. The two hours that I spent were a gift, as each of the youths (living in both Detroit and a variety of suburbs)

provided his-her view of our region. Each showed passion in his-her comments, and I was struck by the fact that these important voices are not part of the dialogue.

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These are our future leaders, but they will be leaders in Chicago, Atlanta, Boston, etc., unless we begin to listen and learn from them. Several of us have come together with Rick, his staff and youth, to begin planning for community dialogues in April — prior to the show. We hope that youth and adults across the region will join us in this endeavor.

This past Sunday I attended the 12th Annual Sphinx Competition for young black and Latino string players. The Sphinx Organization, developed and led by Aaron Dworkin, has as its vision "a world in which classical music reflects cultural diversity and plays a role in the everyday lives of youth." Its

goal is to increase the participation of black and Latino youth in classical music endeavors.

The inspiration I felt as I sat in the audience listening to the Sphinx Orchestra and the finalists in both the junior and senior divisions is indescribable. If everyone could have the opportunity to see the film that described the five major programs within Sphinx and see the faces of the children holding their first violin, or "learning the ropes" from the Harlem Quartet, funding would be a nonissue.

We are truly fortunate to have these two organizations call Detroit home. They represent our ambassadors to the wider world, and they represent the future of our region and our nation. Whenever you have the opportunity to experience either, please take it.

**Kurt Metzger**  
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