N E W S R E L E A S E

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CIGNA presents The Philadelphia Orchestra's FREE Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert at Martin Luther King High School

MLK High School hosts Orchestra's Tribute Concert for third year on January 21

Thomas Wilkins leads Orchestra and Philadelphia All City Choir, Charlotte Blake Alston reads the words of Dr. King, and specially selected high-school students reflect on Dr. King's legacy

(*Philadelphia*, December 21, 2007) – CIGNA presents The Philadelphia Orchestra's free **Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert** on Monday, January 21, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. The concert will be held at Philadelphia's **Martin Luther King High School** for the third year in a row. Guest conductor **Thomas Wilkins** will lead the Orchestra, as well as the **Philadelphia All City Choir** (Dorina Morrow, director). Specially selected students from local high schools will share their personal reflections on the life and work of Dr. King.

"We are so pleased to once again hold The Philadelphia Orchestra's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert at Martin Luther King High School," said Philadelphia Orchestra Association President and CEO James Undercofler. "We are deeply appreciative to our partners – CIGNA, Representative Dwight Evans, and Foundations, Inc. – who make it possible for us to bring the messages of Dr. King and the power of this Orchestra's great music out into the Philadelphia community."

"CIGNA has been a proud sponsor of the Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert for 17 years – and with good reason," said H. Edward Hanway, chairman and chief executive officer of CIGNA Corporation. "We embrace completely the principles of equality, service, respect, and strength of community implicit in Dr. King's legacy. And we take very seriously our responsibility as a corporate citizen to embody those principles in the marketplace. We also respect and admire the artistry of The

– *more* –

Philadelphia Orchestra – one of the world's truly great musical ensembles – in providing such an extraordinary musical backdrop to Dr. King's universal message of hope and achievement."

State Representative Dwight Evans's leadership and vision were instrumental in bringing the Orchestra to Martin Luther King High School for the Tribute Concert. "I am extremely proud that Martin Luther King High School will once again host a day of events honoring the life of Dr. King. Through the King Day of Service program, *Healthy, Healthy Mind, Healthy Community Fair,* and the Philadelphia Orchestra performance under the esteemed conductorship of Thomas Wilkins, Dr. King's dream comes alive. For this day we can all share in, be part of, and be transformed by the eloquence inspired by Dr. King," said Representative Evans.

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, "I think I speak for everyone at Martin Luther King High School and Foundations when I say that we are thrilled to host this wonderful concert for a third year. We are even more excited than we were the first year. The concert only gets better and better. At King, and within all of our Neighborhood School Network schools, our goals are to increase student performance and build the community. We see this event as an example of what can come from a great partnership. This event exemplifies a rich cultural experience that brings families and the entire community together."

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

Tickets are available online and at the following locations after January 2, 2008:
Office of State Representative Dwight Evans, 7174 Ogontz Avenue, Philadelphia, 215.549.0220
(Hours: Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)
Martin Luther King High School/Foundations, Inc. (NSN), 6100 Stenton Avenue, Philadelphia, 215.276.3934
(Hours: Monday – Thursday, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.)

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 6:15 p.m.

The **2008 Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert** opens with the lively "Danse nègre," from *African Suite* by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, a British-born composer of African heritage whose career spanned the 19th and 20th centuries. Next is the third movement of William Dawson's *Negro Folk Symphony*. The piece incorporates African-American spirituals and was first performed by Leopold Stokowski and The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1934. It is followed by the first movement of *Beyond Rivers of Vision* by a young African-American composer, James Lee III. In the words of the composer, the work, which was premiered in fall 2006 by the National Symphony, focuses on "on various rivers in the Bible, on men based near those rivers, and on visions connected with those men."

Following intermission, the Philadelphia All City Choir joins the Orchestra for performances of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and two spirituals, "Elijah Rock" and "Go Down Moses." Narrator **Charlotte Blake Alston** returns for a moving reading from the writings of Martin Luther King Jr. over a

performance of Barber's Adagio for Strings. The concert closes with "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

The Orchestra will honor outstanding high-school seniors who, through their superior academic and personal achievements, exemplify the ideals of Dr. King. Teachers and administrators from schools throughout 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 will be 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. All of the finalists will be recognized during the concert.

Guest conductor **Thomas Wilkins** is resident conductor of the Detroit Symphony and music director of the Omaha Symphony. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut conducting the Marian Anderson Award Concert in 2003 and has returned to conduct this concert annually since 2005. Mr. Wilkins has led the Orchestra's Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute concerts in 2004, 2006, and 2007.

The Philadelphia All City Choir under the direction of Dorina C. Morrow 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, which celebrates its 190th anniversary this year.

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. 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.

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 an unparalleled unity in artistic leadership with only six music directors piloting its first century: Fritz Scheel (1900-07), Carl Pohlig (1907-12), Leopold Stokowski (1912-41), Eugene Ormandy (1936-80), Riccardo Muti (1980-92), and Wolfgang Sawallisch (1993-2003).

This tradition is carried on by Christoph Eschenbach, who became music director in 2003. The 2007-08 season, Mr. Eschenbach's last, focuses on monumental works of the symphonic repertoire, including Mahler's Symphony No. 8 ("Symphony of a Thousand"), Orff's *Carmina burana*, and Richard Strauss's *An Alpine Symphony*. During his tenure, Mr. Eschenbach has conducted Beethoven's nine symphonies paired with music of our time; led a four-week Late Great Works Festival; launched the Orchestra's first-ever multi-year cycle of Mahler's complete symphonies; and led tours of Europe, Asia, Florida and Puerto Rico, and the United States.

Recent Philadelphia Orchestra highlights include the launch of a Global Concert Series, which involves multi-casting concerts to large-screen venues through the Internet2 network; the opening of the Orchestra's Online Music Store, www.thephiladelphiaorchestra.com, in September 2006; regular broadcasts on NPR beginning in April 2006; a series of critically acclaimed recordings led by Mr. Eschenbach and released in partnership with Ondine Records; and a $125 million endowment campaign launched in 2003.

The Philadelphia Orchestra annually touches the lives of more than one million music lovers worldwide through its performances, publications, recordings, and broadcasts. The Orchestra presents a subscription season in Philadelphia each year from September to May, in addition to education and community partnership programs, and appears annually at Carnegie Hall. Its summer schedule includes an outdoor series at Philadelphia's Mann Center for the Performing Arts, free Neighborhood Concerts, and residencies at Saratoga Performing Arts Center in upstate New York, and the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. TRIBUTE CONCERT
January 21 at 7:00 p.m. – Monday evening – Martin Luther King High School, 6100 Stenton Avenue, Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Orchestra
Thomas Wilkins, *conductor*
Charlotte Blake Alston, *speaker*
Artist(s) TBA
Philadelphia All City Choir

CIGNA is proud to sponsor A Tribute to Martin Luther King Jr.

Program includes:

Coleridge-Taylor	"Danse nègre," from *African Suite*
Dawson	Third movement from *Negro Folk Symphony*
Lee	First movement from *Beyond Rivers of Vision*
	FIRST PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA PERFORMANCE
Steffe	"The Battle Hymn of the Republic"
Spiritual	"Elijah Rock"
Spiritual	"Go Down Moses"
Barber	Adagio for Strings (with narration based on the words of Martin Luther King Jr.)
Johnson	"Lift Every Voice and Sing"

Media support provided by CBS–3

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The musicians of The Philadelphia Orchestra are graciously donating their services for this concert.

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