FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC ANNOUNCES

TAKE A BREATH
New Mental Health and Wellness Initiative
In the Kenneth C. Griffin Sidewalk Studio

Activities To Include Workshops Led by Guest Facilitators
Sara Auster, Kendall Johnson-Smith, and Oneika Mays
Featuring Performances by NY Phil Musicians and Guests

Free Series Launches February 26, 2023

The New York Philharmonic announces the launch of Take a Breath, the new initiative supporting mental health and wellness and featuring musical performance. This season’s 90-minute workshops (February 26, March 4 and 19, April 16 and 22, May 6, and June 10, 2023) are facilitated by Sara Auster, Kendall Johnson-Smith, and Oneika Mays, and often feature NY Phil musicians and guest artists, such as saxophonist Steven Banks. The free series takes place in the Kenneth C. Griffin Sidewalk Studio, David Geffen Hall; events begin at 11:00 a.m.

The workshops — which are inspired by mindfulness, stress relief, and therapeutic arts — are designed to deepen the connection between wellness practices and music. The schedule of winter and spring 2023 events is as follows:

- **February 26:** Wellness Workshop, with Kendall Johnson-Smith, facilitator; musicians to be announced
- **March 4:** Music and Meditation Project, with Oneika Mays, facilitator; Steven Banks, saxophone; and students from Interlochen Arts Academy (part of LIBERATION)
- **March 19:** Authentic Healing, with Kendall Johnson-Smith, facilitator; musicians to be announced (part of SPIRIT)
- **April 16:** Wellness Workshop, with Kendall Johnson-Smith, facilitator; musicians to be announced
- **April 22 and May 6:** Sound Bath, with Sara Auster, facilitator; and NY Phil musicians
- **June 10:** Music and Meditation Project, with Oneika Mays, facilitator; Steven Banks, saxophone; and NY Phil musicians

Other participants will be announced at a later date.
Facilitators

Sara Auster, sound therapist, meditation teacher, and author, explores how sound and listening transform space — both physically and psychologically — for the purpose of creating connection and healing. She has spent the past decade introducing sound baths to audiences and unique environments across the globe. Her immersive workshop introduces audiences to the transformative power of sound and resonance through the practice of deep listening.

Kendall Johnson-Smith, a.k.a. Iya Fasewa, is a wellness coach and licensed therapist based in New York City who facilitates wellness for individuals and organizations seeking a non-traditional, indigenous, and spiritually informed path toward harmony, peace, and well-being. Johnson-Smith’s workshops explore how cycles of stress impact our mental health, offering resources that affirm and infuse wellness practices in a thoughtful, relatable, and culturally sensitive manner.

Oneika Mays (LMT, E-RYT, CMT) transitioned to yoga and meditation after a 20-year career in corporate retail leadership. She supports social justice nonprofit organizations; teaches meditation and yoga inside jails; and is the first Mindfulness Coach at Rikers Island Correctional Facility. She believes that our justice system needs to focus on transformation and restoration rather than punishment. The notions of liberation and compassion are woven into her work, whether in a jail, speaking to audiences, or teaching meditation. She also facilitates workshops and trainings centered around resilience, liberation, and compassion, and believes that meditation, movement, and mindfulness practices can forge a path to freedom.

ALL PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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Tickets
Tickets to New York Philharmonic performances and presentations may be reserved online at nyphil.org or by calling (212) 875-5656, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday; and noon to 5:00 p.m. Sunday. Tickets may also be reserved at the Welcome Center at David Geffen Hall. The Welcome Center opens at 10:00 a.m. Monday through Saturday, and at noon on Sunday. On performance evenings, the Welcome Center closes one-half hour after performance time; other evenings it closes at 6:00 p.m.

For press tickets, contact Lanore Carr at (212) 875-5714 or carrl@nyphil.org.

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LIBERATION is presented by Judith and Stewart Colton.

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SPIRIT is presented by an anonymous donor.
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