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**High Resolution Images Available**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 13, 2010

**FIRSTWORKS FESTIVAL FINALE  
SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK**

*The Grammy-Award Winning Ensemble Visits Providence for a  
Premiere Performance and Three-Day Community Residency*

**Providence, RI** – The FirstWorks Festival 2010 concludes with the internationally renowned a cappella ensemble Sweet Honey In The Rock® on November 13 at 7:30 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium. Inspiring audiences for more than 30 years with their soul-stirring blend of gospel, blues, jazz and hip-hop, the FirstWorks performance will feature the East Coast premiere of excerpts from *Indaba!* – the Zulu word meaning “to gather the right people together at the right time to discuss the right issues”.

Famous for their vocal virtuosity and vast repertoire of historically African American music, this Grammy-award winning a cappella ensemble has been called the “Gold Standard” by the Fort Worth Star Telegram. The newspaper also reported “They unite to create a sound so pure, smooth and homogenous that it does not seem humanly possible”. Blues, spirituals, traditional gospel hymns, rap, reggae, African chants, Hip Hop, ancient lullabies, and jazz improvisation. Sweet Honey’s collective voice, occasionally accompanied by hand percussion instruments, produces a sound filled with soulful harmonies and intricate rhythms.

Sweet Honey In The Rock is Ysaye Maria Barnwell, Nitanju Bolade Casel, Aisha Kahlil, Carol Maillard, Louise Robinson, and Shirley Childress Saxton. When they take the FirstWorks stage, on November 13, they will perform songs from their latest release, *Experience...101*, a 2008 Grammy® Award nominee. This FirstWorks performance will mark the first appearance of Sweet Honey in the Rock in Rhode Island in over twenty years.

The *Indaba* selections of the performance will feature a musical dialogue between the performers and young vocalists from Junior Providence Singers under the leadership of Michelle Holt, Junior Providence Singers music director.

The group will also be engaged in three days of – *indaba* – with in-depth workshops and community discussions involving public school students from across Rhode Island, as well as students from Brown University, Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and the Rhode Island School for the Deaf. Sweet Honey’s residency in Rhode Island is presented through the Veterans Memorial Auditorium Foundation/ FirstWorks Partnership.

In the best and in the hardest of times, Sweet Honey In The Rock has come in song to communities across the U.S., and around the world raising her voice in hope, love, justice, peace, and resistance. Sweet Honey invites the FirstWorks audience to open their minds and hearts and think about who we are and how we treat each other, our fellow creatures who share this planet, and of course, the planet itself.

SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK®

Saturday, November 13, 7:30pm, VMA Arts and Cultural Center

Tickets on sale now: \$18-\$42, [vmari.org](http://vmari.org), 401-421-ARTS (2787)

### **About FirstWorks**

FirstWorks connects art with audiences year-round through the exceptional vitality of artists' first appearances, children's first experiences with performance and the premiering of new works. FirstWorks was launched in 2004 as a vehicle to build community, reach underserved audiences, and present extraordinary arts programs that elevate Providence's national profile. In the six years since, FirstWorks has produced ten groundbreaking arts festivals, attracted over 74,000 participants, and engaged more than 100 nonprofit community organizations and schools.

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