

# STRATHMORE NEWS

FALL 2022

## SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK

Artist in Residence alumnae  
join the legendary vocal  
ensemble.

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# STRATHMORE

# A SWEET CELEBRATION

*Artist in Residence alumnae Christie Dashiell and Rochelle Rice perform with Sweet Honey in the Rock.*

*by Maya Lee*



Christie Dashiell



Rochelle Rice

Sweet Honey in the Rock is an a cappella ensemble with music rooted in African American history and culture. Their work fuses world music, folk, gospel, hip-hop, jazz, and R&B with a loving, socially conscious message. The vocal group was founded in 1973 and has featured many members, including founder Bernice Johnson Reagon. When they perform this September in the Music Center, audiences will experience a fantastic lineup of seven singers, a bassist, and a sign

language interpreter. Two of Sweet Honey's current members are particularly familiar to Strathmore audiences—Christie Dashiell (2014) and Rochelle Rice (2015) are alumnae of Strathmore's Artist in Residence (AIR) program, which exists to support artists as they transition to professional careers.

We interviewed Dashiell and Rice about their experience performing as part of this legendary ensemble.

**What does it mean to you to be performing at the Music Center at Strathmore with Sweet Honey in the Rock for their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary?**

**Dashiell:** To be able to present music with this amazing ensemble that is a fixture in the history of our music at Strathmore is huge. It's so huge. It's a dream come true.

**Rice:** The Concert Hall is such a beautiful space. It just feels so grand and yet it is designed in such a way that also feels very intimate. So I am really looking forward to being on that stage with this group for this special moment.

**How does performing with Sweet Honey in the Rock feel similar or different from your own artistic work?**

**Rice:** Black American music is kind of my home center. I consider singing with Sweet Honey in the Rock an additional, deeper level of education in the style and in the institution of Black American music.

**How do you use your artistic platform and experience with Sweet Honey in the Rock as part of your social activism?**

**Dashiell:** I'm telling stories about my life, people around me and their lives, and then just the truth. The truth about where we are today, the truth about things that are unfair and unjust today, and what I can do to change that. And Sweet Honey I think encouraged me to do that.

**Rice:** What I have come to realize and embody in myself is that it is in the music and in our collective singing that

we are nourished and we nourish other people. Being able to sing, being able to uplift people, being able to hold people, being able to give voice to the things people are experiencing, that provides a level of joy and sustenance that is tangibly transferable and that uplifts the people who are on the front lines.

**How did being a part of Strathmore's AIR program impact who you are today as a musician and artist?**

**Dashiell:** I think being given the opportunity to lead my band, to rehearse my band, to present music after having rehearsed with them, to present educational workshops, prepared me for so much of the work that I'm doing now.

**Rice:** My time with Strathmore helped me to view my artistic work as more than just the songs that I sing and perform, to view it as an all-encompassing brand.

**Any other exciting opportunities you have coming up?**

**Dashiell:** In May, [the Christie Dashiell Quartet] went to the studio and recorded songs. I'm super excited

“Strathmore is one of those communities where once you're in, you're family and you're always taken care of.”  
Christie Dashiell





## A SWEET CELEBRATION

about releasing this music in these coming months, and I'm super excited for people to hear it. I feel really good about the music and the message.

**Rice:** My brand offerings now include a podcast that comes out later this year called *Tell Her This*. It's a podcast, live music experience, and a visual art exhibition. Even something like that, that is kind of in direct lineage from the kind of work that I was doing at Strathmore.

Both Rice and Dashiell maintain close connections with Strathmore through performances and supporting their fellow AIR. "Strathmore is one of those communities where once you're in, you're family and you're always taken care of," remarks Dashiell. Rice is even currently working with Strathmore to help imagine the future of the AIR program. "As the current AIR program continues to age, it is inevitable that we will have artists who will have a greater need for artistic and business guidance," Rice says. "I'm thrilled to be working and helping to shape that. I consider it a small way to give back to my artist community."



Rochelle Rice

Erik Shurur

You can see Dashiell and Rice perform with Sweet Honey in the Rock at Strathmore Music Center on Friday, September 16 at 8pm. For extended interviews expanding on their personal work and how Strathmore's AIR has positively impacted their careers, visit [strathmore.org/sweet](http://strathmore.org/sweet).

### SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK

*Fri, Sept 16, 8pm*  
MUSIC CENTER



Sweet Honey in The Rock

Christopher Robinson