

[Sweet Honey In The Rock Will Bid Farewell to Long Time Band Member Dr. Ysaye M. Barnwell in 2013](#)

*SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK, the venerable and Grammy Award-nominated a cappella ensemble that is currently celebrating its 39th performance season will bid farewell to one of its most tenured and revered members Dr. Ysaye M. Barnwell*

Online PR News â€œ 06-February-2013â€œ SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK, the venerable and Grammy Award-nominated a cappella ensemble that is currently celebrating its 39th performance season will bid farewell to one of its most tenured and revered members Dr. Ysaye M. Barnwell, when she officially exits the group the at end of May this year to pursue several of her own career endeavors.

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Barnwells inimitable and distinctive bass tones were added to the DC based a cappella quartet in 1979 after being scouted and invited by the ensembles founder/ creator Dr. Bernice Reagon. Reagon (who retired in 2004) formed the group in 1973 along with Louise Robinson, Carol Maillard and Mie, while teaching a vocal workshop at the legendary D.C. Black Repertory Theatre Company. Both Maillard and Robinson took a sabbatical from the group in 1976, returning in 1992 and 2004, respectively. The current line-up comprises Maillard, Barnwell, Robinson, Aisha Kahlil (who joined in 1981), Nitanju Bolade Casel (who joined in 1985) and Shirley Childress Saxton, an American Sign Language interpreter who has been performing ASL with the group since 1981.

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SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCKS sterling legacy as songwriters, activists, inspirational performers, and musical innovators has endured and weathered twenty-three personnel changes since its inception. In the light of the various configurations, their patented and unique five-part harmonized fusion of African chants, blues, jazz, soul, gospel, and rhythm & blues has built a worldwide following and generated 23 original and revered recordings.

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"We are very sad to see Ysaye go," says Carol Maillard, "but we know she's embarking on a wonderful world of projects and accomplishments that she'll undoubtedly achieve. She will always be a part of us and who knows when we might see her on the Sweet Honey stage again!"

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I have loved and deeply appreciated being a part of and contributing to the ensemble and legacy of Sweet Honey over the past 34 years, stated Barnwell.

The women of Sweet Honey will be my sisters forever, but Ive felt a sense of calling to devote more of my personal and professional time to other projects that Im very passionate about and have been nurturing for some time.

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SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK has revealed plans to eventually add a new member, and will be holding

auditions over the next several months in preparation for their,

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SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK 40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION: FORTY AND FIERCE, which will be launched and presented from late October 2013 to October 2014. The group is currently developing an entirely new theatrical production and show to commemorate their four decades of history-making music.

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Barnwell will continue to be an integral part of all the ensembles live performances thru mid-May, 2013, including a series of international performances in Gent, Belgium, London, England, Muscat, Oman, and several cities in Australia in late March and early April.

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Barnwell's last recording with SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK will be released by Appleseed Recordings on February 26, 2012. The album entitled, SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK: A TRIBUTE, LIVE! JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER pays homage to the songs of several legendary jazz icons including Abbey Lincoln, Miriam Makeba, Odetta and Nina Simone. The double-CD is a live recording of their sold out performances at JALCs Rose Theatre in April 2011 which also featured a contemporary jazz trio. They will perform several of songs from their new CD in all their forthcoming dates, and will reprise the full live Tribute show at the Kimmel Theater in Philadelphia, February 28; the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, March 1; NJPAC in Newark, March 2; BB Kings in New York, March 5; and the Howard Theater in Washington, DC, March 7.

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Upon her departure from Sweet Honey, Dr. Barnwell plans to devote more of her time to her other career interests which include presenting vocal community workshops, conducting, composing, and further developing several major projects. Among them, THE FORTUNES BONES project that was commissioned and presented by the University of Maryland at the Clarice Smith Center in February 2012.

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Artist Official Website: [www.sweethoneyintherock.org](http://www.sweethoneyintherock.org)

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For further information about SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK contact Chip Schutzman at Miles High Productions: [chip@mileshighproductions.com](mailto:chip@mileshighproductions.com) or 323-806-0400.

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