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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Mellassenah Morris Named Peabody's Next
Conservatory Dean /Deputy Director**

April 1, 2008, Baltimore, MD: Mellassenah Morris, a Peabody alumna and former assistant dean for academic affairs at Peabody, has been appointed dean of the Conservatory/deputy director of the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University.

Morris, a professor of piano and director of the School of Music at The Ohio State University, will succeed Dean Wolfgang Justen on July 1. Justen retires this year after serving as the dean of the Conservatory since 2002. He will continue teaching at the Conservatory on a part-time basis.

"I am confident that Dr. Morris has the experience – both musical and administrative – and the wisdom to work with all of us in leading the Conservatory through its challenges and to embrace the exciting opportunities in our future," said Peabody Director Jeffrey Sharkey. "I believe her love for Peabody combined with extensive experience outside of it will make her uniquely suited to the role of dean and deputy director."

Morris holds a bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctorate from Peabody where she was a student of Julio Esteban; had master classes with Leon Fleisher, Irvin Freundlich, Fernando Laires, and David Burge; and coaching with Ann Schein. Morris is an active recitalist, solo artist, chamber music performer, lecturer, and adjudicator.

"I am thrilled to have an opportunity to return to the institution in which I was privileged to study and grow musically, intellectually, and personally," said Morris. "Peabody prepared me for the career that I have enjoyed thus far as a performer, educator, and music executive. It is amazing for my life to come full circle as I embark upon new, exciting experiences at this great place."

Morris made her New York debut recital in Carnegie Recital Hall and is a former faculty member at Baltimore City College, Villa Julie College, and the Peabody Conservatory. Her previous administrative positions include dean of the School of Music at Alabama State University and director of the School of Music and professor of piano at James Madison University. Morris is a member of Pi Kappa Lambda, and she serves on the Executive Committee and Executive Board of the National Association of Schools of Music in the position of treasurer of the Association.

To receive Peabody Institute digital photos via e-mail, please contact Margaret Bell at m.bell@jhu.edu. For updated information about this and other Peabody announcements, visit www.peabody.jhu.edu/releases.

About the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University

Located in the heart of Baltimore's Mount Vernon Cultural District, the Peabody Institute was founded in 1857 as America's first academy of music by philanthropist George Peabody. Today, Peabody boasts a preeminent faculty, a nurturing, collaborative learning environment, and the academic resources of one of the nation's leading universities, Johns Hopkins. Through its degree granting Conservatory and its community-based Preparatory music and dance school, Peabody trains musicians and dancers of every age and at every level, from small children to seasoned professionals, from dedicated amateurs to winners of international competitions. Each year, Peabody stages more than 150 major concerts and performances, ranging from classical to contemporary to jazz, many of them free — a testament to the vision of George Peabody. This season, Peabody celebrates its 150th Anniversary, solidifying its role as one of the nation's leading sources of professionally trained musicians.