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GATEWAYS MUSIC FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FALL VIRTUAL FESTIVAL PLANS
Five-Day Program Planned for November 9 – 13, 2020

Rochester, New York (August 21, 2020) – Gateways Music Festival, in association with Eastman School of Music, announces NEW DATES for its fall 2020 chamber music festival. The Festival will take place virtually November 9th through 13th.

The Rochester City School District (RCSD) and Eastman School of Music response to the COVID-19 pandemic played a large role in Gateways’ move to a virtual platform. “A key reason for moving the Festival to the fall was to increase interaction between our Gateways musicians and students from the RCSD and Eastman, and since that is no longer possible, the virtual platform provides a good way for Gateways musicians to connect with students in a safe and effective way,” said Lee Koonce, Gateways’ President & Artistic Director.

According to Koonce, “Like everyone, we are saddened to be unable to gather in person but, along with the rest of the planet, we are learning how to gather online in real time and that can meet some of our human need for contact and connection. At the same time, working in the virtual space also opens new and exciting opportunities for our audiences to engage with us at times and in spaces that work best for them.”

The 2020 Festival will include virtual solo and ensemble performances; the Paul J. Burgett Memorial Lecture Series, which among other components, includes a panel discussion on the intersections of Black Lives Matter and classical music; a week-long Residency with ROCmusic and several RCSD schools with instrumental music programs; new and re-broadcasts of recent radio programs on Rochester’s public classical music station, WXXI-FM; two film screenings; and a daily segment featuring some of Gateways’ colleague organizations from around the world.

The opening event of this year’s Festival will be Rochester’s Own, a virtual concert featuring Rochester-area professional classical musicians of African descent in venues throughout the City. “Rochester is home to more than a few Black world-class classical musicians, and this is an opportunity to showcase as many of them as we can.” said James H. Norman, Gateways board chair.

Gateways got a taste of virtual programming in June of this year when the full Gateways Orchestra released a video performance of Lift Every Voice and Sing with more than 70 Gateways musicians from around the world. The project was a collaboration with WQXR, New York City’s classical music station, and has been viewed more than 6,000 times. “The video is exciting, and it showed us how powerful these remote collaborative performances can be,” said Koonce. (Click on this link to view the 6-minute video.)
The 2019 festival, which was held over seven days in August, was the largest in Gateways’ history. It involved 17 public programs, more than 30 community performances and 125 musicians. “We look forward to the time when we can again bring one hundred or more musicians to Rochester and resume our extensive programming in the community,” said Alexander Laing, Gateways’ clarinetist and chair of the Festival’s Artistic Programs Committee.

A detailed schedule with information about the program, musicians, guest artists and repertoire will be available in late September. All virtual events will be accessed through a specially-designed page on the Festival’s website and Facebook page.

About Gateways Music Festival
The mission of Gateways Music Festival is to connect and support professional classical musicians of African descent and enlighten and inspire communities through the power of performance. Founded in 1993 by concert pianist and now-retired Eastman School of Music associate professor Armenta Hummings Dumisani, Gateways brings 125 select musicians to Rochester, New York, from across the United States and abroad for more than 50 performances at concert halls and community venues throughout the region. In May 2016, Gateways Music Festival formally associated with the Eastman School of Music, a Festival partner since 1995.

About the Eastman School of Music
The Eastman School of Music was founded in 1921 by industrialist and philanthropist George Eastman (1854-1932), founder of Eastman Kodak Company. It was the first professional school of the University of Rochester. Mr. Eastman’s dream was that his school would provide a broad education in the liberal arts as well as superb musical training. The current dean is Jamal Rossi, appointed in 2014.

More than 900 students are enrolled in the Collegiate Division of the Eastman School of Music—about 500 undergraduates and 400 graduate students. They come from almost every state, and approximately 23 percent are from other countries. They are taught by a faculty comprised of more than 130 highly regarded performers, composers, conductors, scholars, and educators. They are Pulitzer Prize winners, Grammy winners, Emmy Winners, Guggenheim Fellows, ASCAP Award recipients, published authors, recording artists, and acclaimed musicians who have performed in the world’s greatest concert halls. Each year, Eastman’s students, faculty members, and guest artists present more than 900 concerts to the Rochester community.

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