Gateways Music Festival, founded in 1993 by award-winning, Juilliard-trained concert pianist Armenta Hummings Dumisani, is a classical music event featuring performances by professional classical musicians of African descent from throughout the United States. In May 2016, Gateways Music Festival formally associated with the University of Rochester’s Eastman School of Music, a Festival partner since 1995. During 2018-2019, Gateways Music Festival is presenting a year-long celebration of its 25th Anniversary.

**Gateways Community Residency Program**

This milestone celebration was kicked off on Oct. 30 - Nov. 4, 2018, with a fun and exciting week-long community residency featuring two chamber music groups—the Gateways Brass Collective and String Quintet—that performed in venues throughout the Rochester area, and at the 25th Anniversary Luncheon on the stage of the magnificent Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre.

“A 25th anniversary is an occasion to celebrate for any organization,” said Lee Koonce, President and Artistic Director of Gateways Music Festival. “We’re celebrating great music, world-class musicians and the extraordinary community support that has sustained Gateways over these past many years. And Gateways musicians connecting with...
our community through music seems an especially fitting way to celebrate.”

Highlights of the Community Residency Program yielded exciting results. It featured a series of 20 chamber music performances by the two groups of Gateways musicians that were presented in community music programs, Rochester City School District public schools, recreation centers, libraries and other community venues.

The newly formed Gateways Brass Collective also will tour during 2019 and perform at venues throughout the United States and abroad, including visits to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other institutions affiliated with the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). The Brass Collective members included: Herb Smith and Courtney Jones (trumpet), Amanda Collins (French horn), Isrea Butler (trombone) and Richard A. White (tuba).

The String Quintet Ensemble included Daniel Constant and David Burnett (violin), Jennifer Arnold and Eugene Dyson (viola) and Mel Greenwich (cello). Information about each member of the ensembles is available at the Gateways Music Festival website (www.gatewaysmusicfestival.org), in videos on YouTube, and on the musicians’ personal website.

Since the Festival is usually held in August when public schools are not in session, the Residency offered a great opportunity for the musicians to connect with more students. The performances in these venues provided the musicians with an opportunity to reconnect with students from the inaugural Young Musicians Institute held during the 2017 Festival, where 43 students from the Rochester City School District and Buffalo’s Muhammad School of Music performed orchestral pieces side-by-side on stage with professional Gateways musicians.

The musicians were well received during the residency by everyone—teachers and students. In fact, Herb Smith remarked that “students mouths just dropped to see black musicians who looked like them playing instruments with such a high professional quality.”

Students with the Strings for Success program at School #19 also were excited to have time to brainstorm with the musicians after their performances. A fourth grade boy even changed his ring tone to Mozart’s *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*.

Eastman Community Music School students performed with the chamber String Quintet group, and the Gateways Brass Ensemble performed for the East High School Marching Band.

Faculty advisors at the School of the Arts witnessed the power of music when it is personalized with mentors with whom students can personally identify. The faculty advisors could sense this exposure to classical music having a life-changing and very powerful combination. They noted that some students became hooked by the music without even knowing or expecting it.

**25th Anniversary Gala Luncheon**

The 25th Anniversary Gala Luncheon Celebration was held on Sunday afternoon, November 4th, on the stage of Kodak Hall in the beautiful Eastman Theatre, where the Brass Collective and String Quintet gave performances for the guests, as well as included a guest solo performance by violinist Kelly Hall-Tompkins of a piece from her Broadway
Three special awards were presented during the luncheon. The awards and their recipients were:

• **Rising Star Award: Violinist Caitlin Edwards**, who participated in her first Gateways in 2017, and is a graduate student at DePaul University’s School of Music in Chicago, IL. Caitlin was the unanimous choice by the members of the Artistic Programs Committee because of her superb musicianship and musicality. “We have high hopes for Caitlin,” said Kelly Hall-Tompkins, who also is the Gateways Orchestra concertmaster and a member of the Artistic Programs Committee.

• **Inspiration Award: Dr. Paul J. Burgett**, a member of the Gateways board of directors since 1995 and chairman from 2015 until his passing in August 2018, was posthumously presented the award for his indefatigable spirit and passion for the mission of Gateways. His leadership was transformative and his deep love for Gateways’ mission was infectious. In addition to nearly doubling the size of the board of directors, Burgett oversaw the extraordinary artistic and audience growth experienced in recent years; orchestrated the partnership with the Eastman School of Music; and played a pivotal role in securing the largest donation in the Festival’s history—a $300,000 grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support capacity building.

• **Trail Blazer Award: Armenta Hummings Dumisani**, founder of the Gateways Music Festival in 1993 in Winston-Salem, N.C. A Juilliard-trained concert pianist, the now-retired Ms. Dumisani brought the festival to Rochester when she joined the faculty of the Eastman School of Music in 1994. Her professional career includes critically acclaimed performances in New York City at Avery Fisher Hall, Alice Tully Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Town Hall. In addition to recitals and concerts in the United States, her international performances spanned 27 countries on five continents.

The next Gateways Music Festival will be held August 6-11, 2019 and will feature 125 musicians. Each Festival has represented a growth year. The 2017 Gateways Music Festival presented, by the numbers: 115 professional musicians; 6,300 total in-person audience; 44,200 estimated radio