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2011 GATEWAYS MUSIC FESTIVAL RETURNS TO ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

18-year-old Festival Celebrates Contributions of Classical Musicians of African Descent

Rochester, New York – February 21, 2011 - More than 60 classically-trained musicians of African descent from throughout the United States will gather in Rochester, New York, August 10-14, 2011, for the Gateways Music Festival.

Festival participants include musicians from major orchestras and leading educational institutions to current conservatory students. Performing works from the traditional orchestra and chamber music literature, including works by prominent composers of African descent, Festival activities include chamber music, orchestral and choral concerts in venues ranging from churches, schools and private homes to Kodak Hall at the Eastman Theatre. All of the programs are free and open to the public. (A complete schedule of events is attached.)

Michael Morgan, music director of the Oakland East Bay Symphony in California, will be the conductor and music director of the 2011 festival. Morgan, who has appeared at the Festival in the past, is also artistic director of the Oakland Youth Orchestra, music director of the Sacramento Philharmonic, and artistic director of Festival Opera in Walnut Creek.

The mission of the Gateways Music Festival, Inc., an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization, is to increase the visibility and viability of classical musicians of African descent; to heighten public awareness of the contributions to classical music by musicians of African descent; to provide an opportunity for musicians of African descent from all over the country to meet, exchange ideas and revitalize their musical energy, and; to establish role models for young musicians of all ethnic origins.

Founded in 1993 by Juilliard-trained pianist Armenta Hummings, the Festival enters a new era this year. Hummings who was president of Gateways and the Festival's artistic director, retired at the end of the 2009 festival. She now serves as advisor to the Festival.

Lee Koonce, executive director of Third Street Music School Settlement in New York City, the oldest community music school in the nation, heads the Artistic Programs Committee, a new group established within the Gateways Music Festival organization. The Committee is comprised of past Festival participants and they are all graduates of the Eastman School of Music. The Committee's primary role is to plan, develop and evaluate the music programming for each Festival. It also will take an active role in communications with musicians.

The other groups within the festival organization are the Board of Directors and the festival Planning Committee.

For more information about the festival, check the web site at www.gatewaysmusicfestival.com.

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