

Gateways Music Festival Receives \$800,000 Award from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation



Gateways Music Festival has received a substantial award of **\$800,000** from **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**. Announced by Gateways Music Festival in association with Eastman School of Music, the news is very welcome to the 28-year-old organization, which works to connect and support professional classical musicians of African descent. As well as assisting Gateways' ongoing growth and development, the grant will help support its historic **Carnegie Hall debut on April 24, 2022**, when the Gateways Orchestra will become the first **all-Black classical symphony orchestra** to be presented by Carnegie Hall in the venue's 130-year history.

Expressing gratitude on behalf of the festival, Gateways' Board Chair **Kearstin Piper Brown** says:

"This award is a powerful confirmation of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's belief in Gateways' unique mission, and it acknowledges our importance in today's classical music ecosystem. The lack of Black classical musicians on American concert stages is concerning for all of us and Gateways is proud to provide a supportive and affirming artistic home for our musicians, enabling them to continue to thrive in their careers."

The Gateways Music Festival will dedicate its Carnegie Hall debut to its long-time music director and conductor **Michael Morgan**, who died on August 20, 2021. Gateways' President & Artistic Director **Lee Koonce** explains:

“Michael Morgan’s influence on the Gateways organization and the musicians is profound. We are a stronger and better organization because of his efforts and are committed to bringing our special brand of classical music-making to New York City just as he envisioned.”

In addition to the Gateways Orchestra making its Carnegie Hall debut in the Stern Auditorium, Gateways will offer several additional concerts and events in **Rochester, NY (April 18–20, 2022)** and **New York City (April 21–24, 2022)**.

Susan Feder, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s Program Officer for Arts & Culture, says:

“We are delighted not only to have renewed but also increased support of the Gateways Music Festival in order to help ensure the success of its April 2022 tour to New York City, where Gateways will perform at events across the city culminating in its Carnegie Hall debut. We hope that this increased exposure will draw deserved attention to this remarkable organization and its talented artists, as well as honoring the memory of Michael Morgan, whose unparalleled dedication to Gateways brought it to this transformational moment.”

More information about the 2022 Gateways Music Festival season is available [here](#).

About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation’s largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence and freedom that can be found there. Through its grants, the foundation seeks to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive.

About the 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 retired Eastman School of Music associate professor Armenta Hummings Dumisani, Gateways comprises 125 musicians – players in major symphony orchestras, faculty from renowned music schools and conservatories, and active freelancers – who perform at concert halls and community venues throughout their host city. In May 2016, Gateways Music Festival formally affiliated with the Eastman School of Music, a festival partner since 1995, but remains an independent non-profit organization.

gatewaysmusicfestival.org

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