



DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
GATEWAYS MUSIC FESTIVAL
FLEXIBLE LOCATION



Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with Gateways Music Festival in the search for a Director of Development.

The Director of Development will plan, organize, and direct all fundraising activities of Gateways Music Festival, including individual and institutional giving and special events. The Director of Development will identify and plan for future opportunities for fundraising growth including major gifts, planned giving, endowed giving, and capital campaigns. The Director of Development will prepare annual fundraising goals and the budget for review and approval by the President & Artistic Director and the Development Committee of the Board of Directors.

Gateways Music Festival's mission is to connect and support professional classical musicians of African descent and enlighten and inspire communities through the power of performance. For 30 years, it has been a place for classical musicians of African descent to gather, exchange ideas, revitalize their musical energy, perform, and serve as role models for young musicians. Since the first Gateways Music Festival, this unique gathering has drawn broad multiracial, intergenerational audiences who are inspired and engaged by its music, culture, and palpable joy.

To meet the growing interest in Gateways, and to serve a vibrant, fast-growing community of Black classical musicians, the Festival is committed to realizing its future as an abundantly resourced, creative, and joyful home for Black classical artistry, participation, and collaboration. Gateways is proud to be the only organization in the United States devoted primarily to strengthening the community of professional classical musicians of African descent.

Gateways Music Festival was founded in 1993 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina by Juilliard-trained and noted African-American classical pianist, Armenta Adams (Humming) Dumisani. The Festival relocated to Rochester, New York in 1995 when Dumisani joined the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music faculty. Until 2016, the Festival's operations, marketing, and fundraising efforts were supported entirely by volunteers. In 2016, Gateways and the Eastman School of Music formalized and deepened their long-standing relationship and, while remaining an independent nonprofit organization, the new partnership allowed Gateways to expand its capacity and hire its first full time employee (President & Artistic Director).

The 2022 Gateways Music Festival marked a pivotal moment in its history as the Festival made its Carnegie Hall and New York City debut. The Gateways Festival Orchestra was the first all-Black classical symphony orchestra presented by Carnegie Hall in all its 130-years—it was history making for both Gateways and this storied venue. The sold-out concert was broadcast live, and a simulcast audience of thousands tuned in.

The groundbreaking 2023-24 season marked Gateways Music Festival's 30th anniversary, highlighted by two live, in-person festivals—a first for the organization. The fall festival celebrated the music of Joseph Boulogne, the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, and featured a chamber orchestra, soloists, the Gateways Brass Collective, and the launch of the Gateways Chamber Players. This new ensemble, with a dynamic lineup of musicians and projects, debuted performing Wynton Marsalis' "Fiddlers Tale," narrated by Phylicia Rashad, with sold-out debut performances in Rochester, NY (Kilbourn Hall at Eastman School of Music), New York City (Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall), Washington, DC (Terrace Theater at Kennedy Center), and Evanston, IL (Pick-Staiger Concert Hall at Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University).

In another first, the spring festival took Gateways on the road for a one-week residency in Chicago, the first of their planned nationwide residencies. The Chicago residency drew combined audiences of over 5,000, featured educational programs through the Young Musicians Institute, collaborations with 16 community partners, and involved over 150 artists. The Chicago residency culminated with the Gateways Festival Orchestra in concert at Chicago's Orchestra Hall, performing for an audience of nearly 2,000.

The Festival's Board, leadership, and musicians view these engagements as the first steps in the organization's long-range plan to meet the growing interest in Gateways by expanding the Festival's reach and developing ongoing relationships with communities and presenters in cities across the United States. In addition to providing opportunities for more people to experience Gateways, these national performances also provide opportunities to engage individuals and organizations across the nation in financially supporting the Festival's efforts and community of professional musicians.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Director of Development will report to the President & Artistic Director, Alexander Laing. The Director of Development will work in close partnership with the President & Artistic Director and the Board of Directors on all fundraising activities. Gateways Music Festival's current leadership, administrative, and artistic team consists of three full-time staff and six to eight part-time and contract staff. The organization has an annual budget of \$1.7M (FY24).

FROM THE PRESIDENT & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

In January 2024—after more than 20 years as a musician, volunteer leader, and Board member with Gateways—I stepped into the role of President & Artistic Director. Every day, I am inspired by our legacy and excited about our collective future: an abundantly resourced, creative, and joyful home for Black classical artistry that brings people together.

We are an organization proudly rooted in the collective experiences of our participants. Created and designed by Black artists, for Black artists, we embrace freedom as our foundation. Our mission is to connect and serve classical musicians of African descent while enlightening and inspiring communities through the power of performance. We celebrate and embody our core values: Professional Artistry, Community Ownership, Productive Collaboration, and Joyful Determination. All of this comes together to help us do what we uniquely do: bring people together with classical music and Black artistry.

Since 1993, Gateways Music Festival has opened the gates between artists and audiences, between emerging and established musicians, and among the past, present, and future. Over the last three decades, we have evolved from a volunteer-driven initiative to an organization with full-time employees, a Carnegie Hall debut, and a dedicated, diverse community of supporters from across the country. Today, we stand at an exciting inflection point.

The Director of Development will spearhead efforts to build a robust fundraising infrastructure, laying the foundation for effective and strategic engagement across all sectors of Gateways’ growing donor base. An experienced fundraiser and self-starter with a willingness to build, creative ideas, and the ability to develop and execute thoughtful strategies will thrive in this role. As a senior member of our growing team, the Director of Development will help shape Gateways’ future—working closely with me, the Director of Programs, and the Board of Directors—to develop an actionable pathway to achieving our broader goals and realizing our bold vision for the future. I am inspired and excited by the endless possibilities that lie ahead. I eagerly await the opportunity to welcome this new member to our team.

—Alex Laing, President & Artistic Director

GATEWAYS MUSIC FESTIVAL'S COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION

Since its founding, Gateways Music Festival has been unwavering in its commitment to equity for Black people, recognizing that this work is far from complete. The Festival challenges and disrupts the historical use of art to perpetuate racial hierarchies by celebrating and amplifying the contributions of Black classical musicians and sustaining this rich community of artists. By providing a platform for these artists, Gateways not only showcases their talent but also redefines cultural and aesthetic narratives, using art to foster a more just and inclusive world.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Individual Donors

The Director of Development will

- develop and execute a strategy to maintain and strengthen relationships with a large base of current individual donors, particularly through the annual fund;
- develop and execute strategies to identify and retain new individual donors, especially new major donors (above \$10,000); and
- support the President & Artistic Director’s activities with all individual donors, in particular major donors (above \$10,000).

Institutional Donors

The Director of Development will

- maintain and strengthen relationships with current institutional donors;
- develop new institutional donor prospects that will expand the Festival’s resources and capacity;
- write proposals for foundation, corporate, and government grants and ensure timely and accurate reporting;
- develop and track proposals and reports for all foundation and corporate fundraising; and
- work with Gateways staff and supervise the work of Gateways’ grant writers and others to support Gateways’ development activities.

Marketing and Communications

The Director of Development will

- lead the development and creation of communications for fundraising and campaigns; and
- oversee and shape the overall messaging for external communications, ensuring consistency and alignment with organizational goals and strategy.

Operations

The Director of Development will

- manage Gateways' fundraising database and oversee staff responsible for data entry and gift processing; and
- oversee the recording and acknowledgment of all gifts.

Board of Directors

The Director of Development will

- maintain close working relationships with members of the Gateways Board of Directors; and
- support the work of the Development Committee of the Board of Directors.

Special Events

The Director of Development will

- oversee and direct the organization of special events; and
- serve as a representative of Gateways Music Festival at various functions.

LEADERSHIP

Alexander Laing

President & Artistic Director

Alex Laing became the President and Artistic Director of Gateways Music Festival in January of 2024.

A leader in the field of American classical music, Alex has been invited to address the annual conferences of both the Association of British Orchestras and the League of American Orchestras, where he was a keynote speaker. He has been a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and made contributions to significant projects such as the League of American Orchestras *Essentials of Orchestra Management Seminar*, the Juilliard School's Evening Division, and the LA Phil's YOLA program (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles). His work has been recognized with a Sphinx Medal of Excellence and named one of Musical America's Professionals of the Year. An accomplished performer, Alex spent 22 years as the principal clarinetist of the Phoenix Symphony.

Alex is a graduate of Northwestern University, received his master's degree in Orchestral Performance from the Manhattan School of Music, an artist's diploma from the Sweelinck Conservatorium Amsterdam, and a certificate in nonprofit management from Arizona State University's Lodestar Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Innovation.

Board of Directors

Gateways Music Festival boasts a distinguished and expanding Board of Directors, reflecting their roots with leaders from the Rochester community, Eastman School of Music, the University of Rochester, and national leaders and performers from classical music and philanthropy. Click [here](#) to learn more about Gateways' Board members.

Artistic Leadership at Gateways Music Festival

Over the years, Gateways Music Festival has welcomed an incredible lineup of classical luminaries and leaders. First and foremost among them was Michael Morgan, Gateways' first and only Music Director. Following Michael's untimely and sad passing just months before their Carnegie debut, Gateways was fortunate to have Maestro Anthony Parnter step in. His growing relationship with the Gateways Festival Orchestra will be on full display when he leads the orchestra in their return to Carnegie Hall in April 2025.

The Festival has featured soloists like international opera star Denyce Graves, violinists Kelly Hall-Tompkins, Melissa White, Tai Murray, pianists Awadagin Pratt and Stewart Goodyear, clarinetist Anthony McGill, as well as dramatic artists like the great Phylicia Rashad. Legends such as Take 6 and stars of today like Jon Batiste and have also joined them for exciting collaborations. These artists perform alongside elite players from prestigious institutions including The Cleveland Orchestra, MET Opera, LA Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, and faculty from Juilliard and HBCUs. Their participation underscores the Festival's remarkable stature and is part of what makes Gateways a vibrant home for Black classical artistry.

FOUNDER ARMENTA ADAMS DUMISANI

Acclaimed award-winning concert pianist, educator, and community activist, Armenta Adams (Humblings) Dumisani, is the visionary founder of the Gateways Music Festival. She is a former Associate Professor of Music at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York and served as the School's Distinguished Community Mentor from 1994 until 2009. Dumisani launched Gateways in Winston-Salem, North Carolina in 1993 to bring classical music to a wider audience, inspire young musicians, and build an artistic community for Black professional classical musicians. She brought the Festival to Rochester shortly after her appointment to the Eastman School of Music faculty and served as its President & Artistic Director until her retirement in 2009. From the start, Dumisani maintained a core belief in the Black community and its ability to support the Festival. For nearly 25 years, it was staffed and funded primarily by community volunteers. Gateways has since grown into a professionally staffed artistic home for countless Black classical musicians, approximately 125 of whom provide dozens of chamber, solo, and full orchestra concerts during the multi-day festival. Inspired by their experiences at Gateways, many have gone on to create their own organizations and concert series or emerge as leaders within the broader classical music field.

While a professor at Eastman, Dumisani could often be seen pushing a cart full of musical instruments through the streets of Rochester. In collaboration with local churches, schools, senior centers, and libraries, she brought classical music directly to the community. She organized chamber music performances in the homes of Black community members, Sunday morning concerts at Black churches, music instruction for children in homeless shelters, and opportunities for young Black musicians to rehearse and perform alongside professionals.

Armenta Adams was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on June 27, 1936, to Albert and Estella Adams, who were passionate about music. At a young age, she and her brother Elwyn took piano and violin lessons at the New England Conservatory of Music. Elwyn (1933-1995) became a renowned concert violinist and professor of music. Dumisani attended The Juilliard School on a full scholarship, earning both Bachelor of Science and Master of Music degrees under Sascha Gorodnitzki. She won Juilliard's piano competition in her second year, performing Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor with the Juilliard Orchestra. In 2005, she was named one of the "Juilliard 100," honoring distinguished alumni during the school's centennial.

Dumisani made her debut at New York City's Town Hall in 1960 and later performed at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She toured Europe under a Martha Baird Rockefeller Aid to Music award and performed in Africa, Latin America, and South Asia through U.S. State Department sponsorship. After a State Department tour, she was honored at a reception by then-Secretary of State Dean Rusk for her contributions to international relations. She also won several prestigious competitions, including the John Hay Whitney Competition and the New York Musicians Club Piano Competition. She appeared at festivals such as Spoleto, the Beethoven Festival, and the International Piano Festival at the University of Maryland.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Gateways Music Festival seeks a Director of Development with

- an ability to identify, cultivate, solicit, and steward individual and institutional donors including a record of major gift solicitations;
- broad knowledge of various fundraising revenue streams and functions, including major giving, annual fund, capital campaign, institutional and government grantmaking, and planned giving;
- an ability to work as part of a team, as a specialist, and in a dynamic performing arts environment where collaboration is essential;
- financial acumen and an ability to develop and monitor budgets;
- excellent organizational skills including an ability to plan and prioritize with consistent attention to detail;
- exceptional communication skills across platforms (oral, written, presentation, etc.);
- an ability to network and make meaningful connections;
- fluency with MS Office software suite and knowledge of common fundraising software applications;
- a passion for and knowledge of classical music (orchestra or chamber music) preferred, but not required; and
- a commitment to the mission of Gateways Music Festival—to connect and support professional classical musicians of African descent and enlighten and inspire communities through the power of performance.

A bachelor's degree or an equivalent combination of education and experience is preferred for this position as is at least four years of fundraising experience. Gateways Music Festival will consider candidates with a broad range of backgrounds. If you are excited about this role and feel that you can contribute to the Festival, but your experience does not exactly align with every qualification listed above, we encourage you to apply.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is \$110,000 to \$135,000 annually. In keeping with the University of Rochester and Eastman School of Music's sponsorship of Gateways Music Festival, the Director of Development will be an employee of the University of Rochester. However, the Director's work, reporting relationships, and evaluation will be solely and exclusively dedicated to Gateways Music Festival. [Comprehensive benefits](#) are offered through the University of Rochester.

LOCATION

The offices of the Gateways Music Festival are in Rochester, New York. Gateways Music Festival is open to a flexible work environment and will consider a remote arrangement with approval from the University of Rochester.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and resume. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Gateways Music Festival as well as the responsibilities and qualifications stated in the position prospectus.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

Gateways Music Festival and the University of Rochester are equal opportunity employers. All candidates are considered without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, ancestry, physical or mental disability, veteran status, or any other legally protected characteristics.

To apply for this position, visit:

[*Director of Development, Gateways Music Festival.*](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Eric Rosario:

[*ericrosario@aspenleadershipgroup.com.*](mailto:ericrosario@aspenleadershipgroup.com)

All inquiries will be held in confidence.