



**GLOBAL PERFORMER:** Nyaho travels the globe performing works by African and diaspora classical composers. In February, he performed in West Palm Beach, Fla.

## Cross-Cultural Classical

Pianist William Chapman Nyaho '84E (MM) showcases a rich array of music by African and African diaspora composers.

By Karen McCally '02 (PhD)

IN JANUARY, THE SEATTLE-BASED PIANIST **William Chapman Nyaho** '84E (MM) was invited to perform a solo recital, "African Voices," in Austin, Texas, as part of a series of concerts featuring music by African and African diaspora classical composers.

Nyaho, who's performed similar recitals

around the country and globe, says there are many more concerts devoted to the music of black classical composers than in years past. "They've gone over very well," he says of the performances.

If interest in African and African diaspora composers is on the rise, Nyaho can include himself as one to thank. He's been a pioneer in bringing to light works by black compos-





ers that have sat in manuscript form—never published, much less performed or recorded—in archives around the world.

He's spent several years seeking out unpublished and out-of-print works, and over 2007 and 2008, completed a five-volume sheet music anthology, *Piano Music of Africa and the African Diaspora*, published by Oxford University Press.

"Part of this project has been to create demand—to have people check this music out and go research, go look," says Nyaho.

Another goal of the anthology was to make the music accessible at colleges and universities where much of the classical music canon is instilled and taught over generations.

"I wasn't aware of all this music when

I was even at Eastman," says Nyaho, who studied with master pianists **Barry Snyder** '66E, '68E (MM) and **David Renner** '60E, '65E (MM).

The Eastman School has seen a few prominent black composers cross its path. **George Walker** '56E (DMA), whose works include *Piano Sonata No. 2*, which he completed as his doctoral dissertation, won a Pulitzer Prize in music in 1996 for his composition *Lilacs*, for voice and orchestra.

And Howard Hanson, director of the Eastman School from 1924 to 1964, took a strong interest in contemporary composers, including African-Americans **Ulysses Kay** '40E (MM), a student of Hanson's, and William Grant Still, whose *Afro-American Symphony* Hanson included in a Roches-

ter Philharmonic concert in 1931. It was the premiere of the symphony and the first time a major orchestra had performed the work of a black composer.

But Nyaho's volumes, arranged according to the level of difficulty of the music, include works by an exceptionally diverse group, geographically and musically, both living and dead, from Egypt to South Africa, to Cuba, Haiti, and the United States.

The anthology was widely praised in Europe. A reviewer for the British classical music magazine *Musical Opinion* declared, "Technically accomplished pianists seeking to develop their hands, ears, and imagination in new ways, and to take their audiences on voyages of discovery, are recommended to obtain these volumes at the earliest opportunity."

Born in the late 1950s in Washington, D.C., where his father was serving as the first ambassador to the United States of a newly independent Ghana, Nyaho grew up in a musical household in Accra, where he was surrounded by Western classical music as well as two quite distinct native "musics."


"My parents came from two different ethnic groups, and their music—the harmonies were different, the melodic content was different, everything was really quite different," says Nyaho.

Nyaho has performed some of his favorite piano works by African and African diaspora composers on two CDs—*Senku*, released in 2003, and *Asa*, released in 2008, both by MSR Classics. Both recordings include multiple premieres.

Nyaho points out that non-Western themes aren't new in classical music—or "art music," a term he also uses to signify the historical and geographical breadth of music rooted in the European classical tradition.

Béla Bartók and Antonín Dvořák, for example, incorporated non-Western influences into their compositions.

The key difference between them and black composers who have melded Western and non-Western traditions, says Nyaho, is that Bartók and Dvořák are part of the recognized musical canon, and composers such as the African American Margaret Bonds, or the Jamaican Oswald Russell, aren't.

His hope is that "people will be aware of this music that is out there, that is just as important—and as phenomenal—as the music we hear from Bach to Beethoven to Brahms." 

# Baffled Again

With his knack for searing cultural criticism and sharp business skills, John Summers '06 (PhD) resurrects an iconic journal.

By Karen McCally '02 (PhD)

THE RETURN OF *The Baffler* HAS SET the blogosphere abuzz.

For a magazine that appeared only occasionally, *The Baffler* made a big splash in its brief heyday in the 1990s.

From its founding by *Harper's* columnist Thomas Frank in 1988, until late 2010, it came out only 18 times—and just twice in the past decade.

Called “the journal that blunts the cutting edge,” *The Baffler's* fan base included some of the most prolific and well-known figures in contemporary American letters.

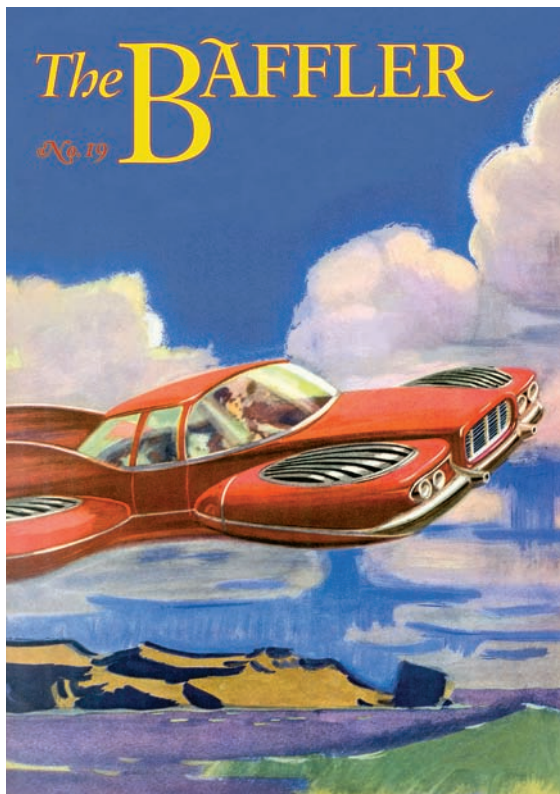
In late 2010, Frank, the Kansas native who penned the 2004 bestseller *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, conceded he'd be unable to sustain the journal. He called his friend and loyal *Baffler* contributor **Chris Lehmann** '89 (MA) to seek advice.

“Tom called me in a dejected state,” says Lehmann, a veteran journalist who's editor of *Bookforum* and formerly a managing editor at Yahoo News. “He said, ‘I can't run this magazine anymore. Do you know anyone who might want to take over a political and literary journal, and is in a position to?’ That was probably the only time in my life when I was able to answer ‘yes’ to a question like that.”

**John Summers** '06 (PhD) had paid Lehmann a visit in 2010. The two had known one another since the late 1990s when Summers, then a graduate student in history at Rochester, had invited history alumnus Lehmann to campus to deliver a talk. Summers had been planning to spearhead a new literary journal and sought Lehmann's support.

Lehmann gave it. But after Frank called, he had new advice for Summers. “I said, ‘You can launch a brand new literary journal in a climate that's not exactly ideal for publication launches, or you could take over this well-recognized brand within the same space you want to occupy.’”

When Summers received a phone call



**BAFFLING & BELIEVING:** “The nice thing about *The Baffler* is that you could read it, and you didn't have to believe in any one kind of program,” says Summers.

from Frank, “about five minutes into the phone call I said yes,” Summers says.

This March, *The Baffler* returns under Summers's leadership as editor-in-chief and with a \$500,000 publication contract with MIT Press to ensure the journal's continuation and publication on a regular schedule for the next five years.

“It's the largest deal in the history of MIT Press's arts and humanities publishing,” says Summers, who adds that the journal, which boasts a Web, Facebook, and Twitter presence, will be available “on every digital platform.”

Lehmann, who's senior editor of the revived *Baffler*, admits he's amazed.

“They were constantly trying to find some reliable funding stream,” Lehmann says of Frank and the other *Baffler* stakeholders. “He's been amazing,” Lehmann says of Summers's negotiation of the MIT Press contract. “For *The Baffler*, this is a huge breakthrough.”

*The Baffler* specializes in long-form journalism, each issue anchored by an essay of as many as 10,000 words. While it's decidedly left-wing in its orientation, it's not aimed at promoting any particular political program. Its defining characteristic is a relentless commitment to upending the ingrained—and in the view of *Baffler* editors, misguided—assumptions of political and economic elites of both major political parties, the media, and corporate boardrooms.

“The nice thing about *The Baffler* is that you could read it, and you didn't have to believe in any one kind of program,” says Summers. “They weren't socialists, or they weren't anarchists, or they weren't New Deal liberals, or 19th-century populists. They were a little bit of all of those things,” he says of past *Baffler* writers.

The March issue features “Of Flying Cars and the Declining Rate of Profit,” an essay in which anthropologist David Graeber (a key planner of the Occupy Wall Street protests) argues that by many measures, we are living in a time of markedly slow progress in technological innovation.

Frank contributes “Too Smart to Fail: Notes on an Age of Folly,” in which he argues that “a résumé filled with grievous errors in the period 1996–2006” is not only

forgiven, but a virtual prerequisite to being taken seriously in Washington today.


Additional essays by bestselling authors Barbara Ehrenreich and Rick Perlstein, as well as a section of fiction, poetry, and satirical art, round out the journal.

Summers is optimistic he can maintain, and even broaden *The Baffler's* appeal. "Free market dogma is our sweet spot, wherever it is," he says. Since the economic collapse of 2008, it's hard to say there isn't a market for criticisms of the free market.

It's not just *The Baffler* that's experiencing a big break, but Summers himself. Like many younger humanities scholars, he's been without a full-time job, in his case despite stints as a part-time instructor at Harvard, Columbia, and Boston College, and multiple publications. He wrote an essay, "Gettysburg Regress," which the late Christopher Hitchens included in *The Best American Essays of 2010* (Mariner Books). He's edited two collections of essays—one by the critic Dwight MacDonal, and another by the radical sociologist C. Wright Mills, both of which earned him attention in outlets such as the *New York Times* and the *New York Review of Books*. He's published a collection of his own essays, *Every Fury on Earth* (Davies Group,) and won a coveted publishing contract from Oxford University Press for his forthcoming biography of Mills, based on his dissertation in history at Rochester.

But, he says, "I didn't write a dissertation that was calculated to try to favorably impress a hiring committee. I ended up writing a dissertation about a dead, white, male anarchist, in the form of a biography, which is just about the worst set of calculations you can make."

He credits his mentors at Rochester for permitting him "the intellectual freedom to explore lots of different traditions. I'm very grateful for that. I'm grateful that I wasn't told that I wasn't allowed to write for the newspapers or for magazines," he says, referring to members of the academy who discourage students from writing for nonacademic audiences. Going from writer to editor means, of course, that he'll be responsible for maintaining the journal's voice. To keep it as brash and uncompromising as its readers have come to expect, he'll need editorial independence.

As he continues to seek backers, he promises he'll have it. From MIT Press, he's got it. Says Summers: "It's written in my own blood in the contract." 

## In the News

### EASTMAN ALUMNI SHINE AT GRAMMYS

**Christopher Lamb** '81E and **Bob Ludwig** '66E, '01E (MM) both took home trophies from the 54th annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles in February.

Lamb, principal percussionist of the New York Philharmonic, was honored for Best Classical Instrumental Solo for his performance in Joseph Schwantner's *Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra* on *Schwantner: Chasing Light* (Naxos), recorded with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra.

Ludwig, a recording engineer, shared the award for Best Surround Sound Album. He was surround mastering engineer on the Super Deluxe Edition of *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs* (Polydor) by Derek & the Dominos. A previous Grammy award winner, Ludwig has worked on the projects of artists from Jimi Hendrix to Barbra Streisand.

In addition, arranger and conductor Gordon Goodwin won Best Instrumental Composition and Best Instrumental Arrangement for *That's How We Roll*, recorded with his Big Phat Band, including **Rick Shaw** '81E (MM) (bass), **Bernie Dresel** '83E (drums), and **Brian Scanlon** '81E, '83E (MM) (saxophone).



### STUART BAUER '68M (MD) HONORED FOR PEDIATRIC RESEARCH

**Stuart Bauer** '68M (MD) has been twice honored in the past six months for groundbreaking research in pediatrics. At the annual meeting of the American Academy of Pediatrics last October, he received the academy's Pediatric Urology Medal for his work on bladder function in children with neurological, anatomical, and functional disorders. In March, he'll be presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Spina Bifida Association for his research and work with children with the birth defect.

### JOSHUA POLLARD '05 MAKES FORBES'S '30 UNDER 30' LIST

*Forbes* Magazine named Goldman Sachs housing analyst **Joshua Pollard** '05 to its "30 Under 30" list last December. A native of Braddock, Pa., and an economics and statistics double major at Rochester, Pollard started working at the investment company as an intern. He was hired, promoted to lead housing analyst in 2009, and vice president in 2010.

### MEREDITH GOLDSTEIN LEVANDE '95 MONKEYS AROUND ON PBS



Children's entertainer **Meredith Goldstein LeVande** '95, who released the CD *Monkey Monkey Music with Meredith LeVande* in 2004, has created a series of *Monkey Monkey Music* videos now airing between children's shows on more than 100 public television stations nationwide. The singer and guitarist has been performing for children since 2000. She studied English and women's studies at Rochester and graduated from Brooklyn Law School before beginning her entertainment career.

# Confronting Our Differences— Collaboratively

As a scholar and administrator at the University of Maryland, Bonnie Thornton Dill '65 leads from the bottom up.

By Karen McCally '02 (PhD)

**BONNIE THORNTON DILL '65** HAS MADE her mark as a scholar by studying marginalized groups and social inequality. The aim of her scholarship, she says, is to suggest ways to transform institutions—schools, service agencies, universities—to make them more just.

Last summer, she was tapped to become dean of the University of Maryland's 320-plus-faculty, 5,500-student, 14-department College of Arts and Humanities. The first African-American woman, as well as the first woman, ever to hold the dean's title in the college, Dill takes on a role that

**“Intersectionality is really the idea that dimensions of inequality”—such as gender, race, and class—“do not exist in isolation from one another. They shape and influence each other.”**

calls for, among other things, forging common purpose among notoriously disparate and competing interest groups.

“So much of my career has been about building collaborations and networks,” she says.

A member of the women's studies department at Maryland since 1991 and a longtime department chair, she was the founding director of the university's Consortium on Race, Gender, and Ethnicity. With faculty affiliates across disciplines, the consortium promotes research, but what makes it distinctive is the role its affiliates play in mentoring other faculty members and fostering interdisciplinary collaborations on campus.

“She's done a lot of institution building with teams,” says Ruth Enid Zambrana, a professor of women's studies at Maryland who has known Dill for more than three decades and now leads the consortium.

In her convocation remarks last September, Dill made it clear she won't be making

many dictates, characterizing her talk as “the beginning of an ongoing conversation, not just between me and you, but among us all.” Over the past two years, the college had put forth a “collective vision,” she noted, referring to the college's new vision statement. “This collective vision requires collective work.”

Pointing to the financial strain faced by the college since the 2008 global financial collapse, she thanked staff, graduate students, and faculty—in that order—for their contributions and sacrifices, indicating as well that she would be an “ardent advocate” for the college, which is one of 13 colleges at Maryland.

A pioneering scholar in women's studies, Dill was among the first to demonstrate what is widely accepted today: that women don't comprise a monolithic category, and that instead, the experiences of women vary in ways that correlate closely with race and social class. As a graduate student in sociology at New York University in the 1970s, Dill focused her research on black domestic workers.

“It wasn't something that people in the department knew a lot about,” she recalls. Her mentor, Richard Sennett, who had co-authored the now-classic work *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, encouraged her. But also important was another scholar, sociologist and civil rights activist Joyce Ladner, who taught at nearby Hunter College, as well as a small network of graduate students across the country who also focused on black women.

In the 1980s, Dill helped develop a nuanced approach to the study of social in-

equality coined “intersectionality.”

“Intersectionality is really the idea that dimensions of inequality”—such as gender, race, and class—“do not exist in isolation from one another,” says Dill. “They shape and influence each other. And each one is shaped by the nature and the structure of the other at any particular historical moment and in any particular geographic location.”

Intersectionality, for example, helps explain the ways in which racism is experienced differently by black women than by black men; or how the path to educational attainment is often different for a white youth in Appalachia than for a white youth in Washington, D.C., for example.

The point of intersectional research, Dill adds, is not merely to point out social inequalities, but to suggest ways they might be eradicated.

Dill's early life was an ongoing experience of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion. As a youth in Chicago in the 1950s, she attended the storied University of Chicago Laboratory School. Founded more than a century ago by the progressive scholar and reformer John Dewey and his wife, Alice, who served as the school's first principal, it was a social as well as an educational experiment in collaboration. The experiment was to test the proposition that learning—and in fact, any human activity—isn't something people do as individuals, but rather, in a social context, through interaction with others. Thus, the school fostered “learning by doing” among a “cooperative community” of learners.

To this day, Dill credits the school for her bottom-up approach to leadership and scholarship. “It all goes back to the Lab School,” she says.

While the Lab School served primarily the children of Chicago faculty, it also drew unaffiliated students from the surrounding community—students such as Dill, whose father, a pharmacist, and mother, an English teacher, lived and raised their family in the nearby neighborhood of Englewood,



**'STATESWOMAN':** Dill has been praised for her research in women's studies and as a campus 'stateswoman' at the University of Maryland, where she serves as a dean.

## Dill's time at Rochester coincided with the civil rights movement. She took part, organizing a University of Rochester chapter of Friends of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, an organization helping extend voting rights in the South.

then a working- and middle-class stronghold on the city's South Side. Thus, says Dill, "I lived in two worlds—a white intellectual world and a black social world."

At Rochester, where she enrolled in the fall of 1961, she was among the first African Americans ever to live in River Campus residence halls.

"She's been first at a lot of things," says **Tina Scott** '65, Dill's freshman roommate and lifelong friend. A native of Long Island, Scott, who is white, recalls a letter she received from the University along with her roommate assignment.

"They sent me a letter asking my permission" to room with a black student, says Scott, a psychologist at a counseling and mental health center in Texarkana, Ark., marveling at the sweeping social change that's taken place in her and Dill's lifetimes.

"She was amazingly resilient," says Scott of Dill. "She made friends so easily."

Dill's time at Rochester coincided with the civil rights movement. She took part, organizing a University of Rochester chapter of Friends of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, an organization helping extend voting rights in the South.


Although she came to Rochester as a pre-med major, she decided to major in English, studied abroad in England, and by her senior year, was mulling over future plans that were always changing. "Every week I'd have a new plan," she says, chuckling.

After graduation, she moved to New York City to work for the Office of Economic Opportunity, the federal agency in charge of the programs that encompassed President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. It was here, she says, where she first started think-

ing about the role that social class played in the relative fortunes of Americans.

Her research on domestic workers, completed in 1979 and published in 1994 as the book *Across the Boundaries of Race and Class: An Exploration of Work and Family Among Black Female Domestic Servants*, is considered groundbreaking. It was among the earliest academic studies of black female household labor to be based on interviews with workers themselves—a pattern followed by many scholars since.

In leadership as well as scholarship, Dill takes an inclusive approach, bringing in voices that aren't always heard.

"She has these wonderful interpersonal skills to make people feel that they're cared for, and that they're listened to," says Zambrana. "It stands out. Few administrators really have it." 

## Dill on *The Help*

Given her scholarship on black women domestic workers, Dill says she's often asked about *The Help*—both the novel, a 2009 bestseller by Kathryn Stockett, and the film, an adaptation of the book that came out last summer, and earned blockbuster status.

In her novel, Stockett, who is white and grew up in Jackson, Miss., with the help and companionship of a black maid, took on the voice of three fictional black maids in Jackson in 1962, during the high tide of the civil rights movement.

Admirers were moved by the book, while critics found Stockett's portrayal of black household workers presumptuous and demeaning. Similar reactions accompanied the release of the film, and while they often followed racial lines, they didn't always, with white as well as African-American entertainers, journalists, and academics on both sides of the debate.

Following the release of the film, the Association of Black Women Historians took the unusual step of issuing a formal state-

ment. Both the book and the film ignored or downplayed much of what historians know about the actual lives of black women domestic workers, the scholars charged, including widespread participation in civil rights activism without prompting from white civil rights heroes.

Nonetheless, the film earned a number of accolades, including Best Picture, at the 2012 NAACP Image Awards. Actresses Viola Davis and Octavia Spencer (who won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her portrayal of a maid in the film) have dismissed critics. In February, Spencer told commentator Tavis Smiley that Stockett "had the insight to write about women whom we've not heard from."

That's exactly the kind of assertion that concerns Dill.

"It isn't as if the story of black domestic workers, from their perspective, has not

been told. It has been told multiple times and in multiple ways," she says.

Dill, who read the book but did not see the film, added: "I thought the book a good

read. But from my perspective, its most important revelations are about the white women who lived in Jackson, and about the ways propriety, form, appearances, and denial helped them ignore the real experiences of the people they lived with—white and black—on a daily basis."

"That the lives, speech, manners, and experiences of the black women are not fully understood or well represented; that they are not placed in his-

torical context; that they exist as if this is the first and only effort to understand the experience of black women private household workers in the South, is inexcusable."

—Karen McCally

