



A Musical Feast

The Gateways Music Festival, with an orchestra composed entirely of professional classical musicians of African descent, deepens its partnership with the Eastman School of Music.

By Kathleen McGarvey



IN PERFORMANCE: Anthony McGill, the principal clarinetist of the New York Philharmonic, took center stage at the 2015 Gateways Music Festival, playing a concerto with the festival's orchestra.

When Alexander Laing was 14, his teacher showed him a magazine article about Robert Lee Watt, the first African-American French horn player to be hired by a major US symphony. Watt joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1970.

"I remember being excited and inspired that there was someone who looked like me, who identified as I did," says Laing. He was then an aspiring musician, growing up in Silver Spring, Maryland. He'd begun

playing the clarinet at age 11, motivated in part by his grandmother's love of Benny Goodman.

And so he wrote Watt a letter. "I didn't really know what to say except, 'I'm trying to be you when I grow up,'" Laing says. Watt wrote back to him, a gesture that still moves him. "It was a big deal," he says.

Today, Laing is the principal clarinetist of the Phoenix Symphony. And this summer, as he has in summers past, he'll experience again the inspiration



he felt as a teen. Reaching out to fellow African-American musicians is at the heart of the Gateways Music Festival, a celebration of professional classical musicians of African descent.

For young musicians, Gateways “can play an important role in just demonstrating what’s possible,” Laing says. “And how powerful an image it is. In my case, I saw one guy. I can only imagine how even more inspiring it is to see a stage full.”

The festival and the Eastman School of Music have partnered since the third festival, in 1995, with Eastman providing Gateways with rehearsal and performance spaces, along with financial backing. “Eastman has been there, quietly supporting when asked and where we could,” says Jamal Rossi, the Joan and Martin Messinger Dean of the Eastman School of Music.

But last year, Gateways and Eastman formalized and deepened their alliance. Although the festival remains an independent non-profit organization, an intensified partnership allows the festival to raise its ambitions. Organizers are developing plans to expand the festival’s reach and increase its national and international profile, bolstering efforts to promote and increase diversity in classical music.

Paul Burgett ’68E, ’76E (PhD), the chair of Gateways’ board of directors, predicts that the effort “will have implications for American music for generations to come.”

American classical orchestras, like their audiences and administrative staffs, are still largely white. While gender disparities have narrowed among orchestral musicians over the last 40 years, for African-American and Latino players, the numbers are stagnant. Auditioning for orchestral positions is now a “blind” process—musicians, at least in the preliminary phases, perform behind a screen and even on carpeted floors, to mask the shoe sounds that distinguish a penny loafer from a high heel. But the number of musicians of African descent in orchestras, according to the League of American Orchestras, has barely budged in the last decade, and is now just 1.8 percent.

But every second summer, Gateways assembles a complete orchestra and nearly 40 chamber music ensembles from about 125 professional players of African descent. The musicians fill Eastman’s stages and fan out into the community, as soloists and chamber groups, taking their music to venues such as churches, synagogues, and mosques, private homes, community centers, youth clubs, and retirement communities. During the six-day festival, there are more than 50 performances, and the musicians play for a combined audience of about 10,000 people. And no event carries an admission fee.

With its focus wholly on professional musicians of African descent, the festival is unlike any other. “Gateways is really unique,” says Toni-Marie Montgomery, dean of the Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University and a new member of the festival’s increasingly national board.

The festival’s mission is threefold: to raise the visibility of classical musicians of African descent and heighten public awareness of their contributions to classical music; to bring musicians of African descent together, to perform together, exchange ideas, and revitalize their musical energy; and to establish role models for young musicians.

With the new alliance came the appointment of Lee Koonce ’96E

(MM) as the inaugural president and artistic director of the festival. “His energy and vision will, I suspect, really move people,” says President and CEO Joel Seligman, an enthusiastic supporter of the festival who played a key role in securing Koonce and the alliance.

Koonce is the first paid staff member in the festival’s almost quarter-century history. In all that time, it has been fueled entirely by the passion of volunteers.

“It’s an extraordinary phenomenon in the not-for-profit field. I’ve never seen anything like it, quite frankly,” says William Terry, a consultant for arts and culture organizations. He’s working with the festival on its plans for the next two decades.

Armenta Adams Hummings Dumisani, a Juilliard-trained, African-American classical pianist, created the festival in 1993 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where she then lived. When Eastman hired her in 1994, she brought the festival with her.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Dumisani as a child moved with her mother and brother to Boston, while her father stayed in Cleveland to support the family. The three lived near the New England Conservatory and Symphony Hall.

“Instead of trying to just give us lessons, they also transplanted us



ATTUNED: “Orchestras across the country should play this music,” says Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra trumpeter Herb Smith ’91E (opposite) of the pieces by composers of African descent that are part of the Gateways repertoire; classical pianist Armenta Adams Hummings Dumisani (above, left) developed the festival more than two decades ago. Paul Burgett ’68E, ’76E (PhD), chair of the festival’s board, calls her a “musical activist.”

into an atmosphere where, every time we walked out the door, we would see people going by with violins and cellos, and we were surrounded. They just changed our surroundings,” Dumisani explained to host George Shirley—the first African-American tenor to sing leading roles with the Metropolitan Opera—in a 1975 interview on Classical Music and the African American, a show on WQXR, New York City’s classical radio station. “But at the same time, my father had a burning desire to see the race in general bettered. He wanted to see us reach great heights.”

“And so, although we were trying to advance ourselves, it had a social connotation,” she said. “There was a use for it. And I guess I’ve been trying to put those things together.”

When Dumisani arrived in Rochester, she took her efforts directly to the city’s black community. “Her studio was Rochester,” says Burgett, University vice president and senior advisor to the president. “She’d put instruments in a little grocery cart and go over to



the YMCA across from Eastman—and to churches, and to schools—and say, ‘I want to give music lessons to any kids who want to take lessons.’”

“She created Gateways to bring together musicians of African descent because, in their training and in their professional careers, they frequently felt isolated,” says Koonce. At the same time, “her role at Eastman really was as a community advocate. So much of her work in building Gateways happened through her efforts in the community.”

Dumisani retired from Eastman in 2009 and returned to North Carolina. But the festival is deeply rooted in the Rochester community. “It’s important to me that Gateways continue to be what it is and who it is,” even as it moves to a new level of visibility, says Rossi. “It’s been built up by volunteers who, over 20 years, have been so committed to it.”

Burgett calls Dumisani a “musical activist.” Her goal, he says, was “to rely on the inner strength, motivation, and hard work of people to make this festival for themselves. If she said it to me once, she said it a thousand times: we have to do this for ourselves. The music is our music, too.”

That Gateways needed to be “something that we identify within ourselves, produce within ourselves, and support, not just musically but financially, ourselves—it took me more than a minute to get

that,” Burgett says, “because her point of view flew in the face of the accepted wisdom about this sort of thing.”

The operative model for community-based classical music education and appreciation was the settlement movement. It emerged in late 19th-century England and arrived in the United States with the help of social reformer and Nobel Peace Prize winner Jane Addams, the founder of Chicago’s Hull House. Settlement houses were a response to growing urban poverty in the wake of industrialization and immigration—they began as organizations intended to aid and acculturate the poor through social services and education. One of their activities was teaching music. New York City’s famed Third Street Music School Settlement, founded in 1894, was the country’s first settlement house wholly focused on music. Also a product of the movement is Rochester’s Hochstein School of Music & Dance, which received its New York State charter in 1920 as the David Hochstein Music School Settlement.

“There are settlement schools all over the United States,” Burgett says. “But Armenta was looking at making it happen in a different way. She wasn’t looking for those outside, looking in, but instead trying to get those inside to look out.”

Laing says community involvement is “part of the aesthetic of Gateways. Armenta Dumisani grew the festival by joining hands with the community from the start.”

Koonce—a classical pianist who has also been the executive director of Ballet Hispanico and Third Street Music School Settlement, the executive director of Sherwood Conservatory of Music in Chicago, and the director of community relations for the Chicago Symphony

STANDING OVATIONS: Concert master Kelly Hall-Tompkins ’93E (above, left), conductor Michael Morgan, and members of the Gateways Festival Orchestra rise to applause after the final performance of the 2015 festival in Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre.



Orchestra—calls his nearly 20-year involvement with Gateways “the most consistent association of my career, because, like Armenta, like the volunteers, and like the musicians who participate, Gateways resonates with me—because it was my experience, too, of being an isolated classical musician of African descent. Throughout my training and my professional life, I lived in a world where I was the only one, or one of the few.”

The festival is an antidote to that isolation. Trumpeter Herb Smith ’91E—the only African-American member of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra—says the gathering is “like a reunion, a family get-together,” while Laing likens the festival to a balm.

The musicians come mostly from the United States, but also from Europe, South America, Canada, and the Caribbean. They’re members of major symphony orchestras, faculty members at college and university schools of music, and freelance artists. And they’re selected according to their level of professional activity and achievement. “That has served us well,” says Koonce. “But it’s still challenging, and we’re working to find ways to accommodate more musicians.”

Interest in participating has been growing rapidly. In 2013, more musicians applied to take part than the orchestra could contain. The number of applicants outstripped orchestra seats by 70 for the 2015

festival. And this year, about 240 musicians applied for 120 spots.

Finding a way to satisfy that demand is one of the questions Koonce and fellow festival leaders are considering in their planning process. Not under discussion, however, is the bedrock purpose of the festival. Sometimes the spirit of Gateways is misperceived as a diversity initiative, says Koonce. “And it wasn’t founded for that purpose. While we surely want to see more people of African descent involved in classical music, Gateways is about classical musicians, who happen to be of African descent, loving and enjoying this music. The music is first.”

“The primary strength of Gateways is that it embodies the commitment of a group of musicians—in this case, musicians of African descent—to classical music, first and foremost. And their commitment to each other in their work as classical musicians,” says Terry. “The artistic quality is absolutely a strength. Gateways is always concerned about quality and will not compromise. Quality is first and foremost.”

But while the musicians in the Gateways orchestra have reached top levels of professional success, the festival exists in a world in which access to classical music isn’t equal. Children of color, as a group, don’t have the same opportunities for classical music instruction that their white counterparts do.

“I think it’s very common for black children in this country never to see a black classical player. Ever,” says Koonce. “And so we see Gateways as an institution that can offer role models and encourage children to pursue musical instruction.”

The professional classical music community is also looking for ways to intervene directly. “The field is recognizing that there’s a

MUSICAL HISTORY: Concert baritone William Warfield ’42E (above, center) performed at the festival in the 1990s. Other noted past performers include violinist Sanford Allen, harpist Ann Hobson Pilot, horn player Jerome Ashby, and pianists Paul Badura-Skoda and Awadagin Pratt.



need to address this issue on multiple levels—and that the results could take a while to come about,” Koonce says. “In urban environments—mostly black and Latino communities, and in public schools in particular—music programs have been in decline for several generations now.”

Rossi agrees that there’s a problem in the pipeline. And to attain professional levels of success requires aspiring musicians to begin study at a very young age. “If you look at major music schools across the country, the participation rate of young people of color is very low—it’s in the single digits, 4 percent, 5 percent. And there are even fewer at the graduate level,” he says. “And if we’re not educating students of color at top programs, who do we expect to hire as faculty members?”

Part of the answer lies in casting a net wide enough to capture everyone, says Koonce. “In order to significantly increase the number of musicians of African descent in classical music, we have to have vast numbers of children of African descent learning to play musical instruments. Millions, in fact.” That kind of broad-based musical education is already happening in countries like China and Japan, and the participation of musicians of Asian descent in classical music has risen exponentially. “It’s become a part of the culture and what the culture says is important,” he says.

Years ago, music education in the United States was different. When Koonce was growing up on the South Side of Chicago in the


1960s, “every child in the third grade got an instrument,” he says. And Rochester’s public city schools were once among the finest in the nation for music, thanks to efforts by George Eastman, Eastman School director Howard Hanson, and violinist and conductor Karl van Hoesen, who taught both at Eastman and in the Rochester public schools.

Opportunity is key—on the stage and in the hall. “If we don’t provide opportunities for black and Latino kids to learn to play at a young age, we can’t expect vast numbers to go to conservatories or become professional musicians—or even become audience members. The most important factor in what influences someone to attend a classical music concert is experience playing a musical instrument as a child,” Koonce says.

Eastman is intervening locally, through a project called the ROCmusic Collaborative. Created in 2012, it provides tuition-free classical music instruction to city residents in grades 1 to 12. The program is offered in community centers in two quadrants of the city, and Rossi hopes to expand it to all four. Each student receives instruction in singing and reading music, lessons on instruments, classes, rehearsals, concert participation, needed materials, snacks and meals, and field trips.

ROCmusic was inspired by Venezuela’s El Sistema program, which harnesses music as a social force for children who have great desire and few resources. Rochester’s program was jointly developed by an array of the city’s civic and cultural institutions: Eastman, the Eastman Community Music School, the Hochstein School of Music & Dance, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the Rochester City School District, and the City of Rochester. Gateways has signed on as

LOOKING AHEAD: Pianist Lee Koonce ’96E (MM) is the first president and artistic director of Gateways. He says his experience as a classical musician of African descent was one of isolation. “There’s such an intense conversation right now about diversity in classical music,” he says.



a seventh partner, and ROCmusic is aligning its summer session with the festival's schedule, to take advantage of the partnership. More than 100 students participate in ROCmusic, and the retention rate has held at 85 percent since its founding. Twelve participants are now students at Rochester's School of the Arts, and others are enrolled in Eastman's Pathways program, which provides scholarships for more advanced study.

"We're starting to feed the pipeline," says Rossi. "But this is a 30-year commitment."

James Norman is the vice chairman of the Gateways board and the president and CEO of Action for a Better Community, a Rochester-based community action agency, one of a network of such agencies established by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to fight poverty. He's also the brother of renowned opera singer Jessye Norman.

When traveling with her for performances in the United States and abroad, he'd look at the orchestras that accompanied her. "You may spot one or two people obviously of African descent. And it raises the question, why?"

The Gateways stage, he says, offers a different vision. "In order for people to aspire to things, it's good if they can see themselves in that thing. And Gateways is a way for African-American youth, and youth of color, to see themselves. To see the possibility."

"You have to know there is a route for you," says Rossi.

In past years, Gateways gave young musicians an opportunity to participate, with their own concert at Rochester's City Hall. This year, the festival is offering a pilot program called Young Musicians Institute. Young people from music programs in Rochester will spend a day and a half with Gateways musicians, attending an open rehearsal and then joining them onstage at Kodak Hall to play along with them. Later, groups of Gateways musicians will "adopt" Rochester community-based music organizations to establish year-round relationships.

The musicians are meeting the plan with enthusiasm. "We all know how important it was for us to see someone who looked like us playing this music and these instruments," Koonce says. "That's why our activities with young musicians are so essential to us."

In its performances, Gateways blends standard repertoire for orchestral and chamber group performance with pieces by composers of African descent: composers like Florence Beatrice Price, who became the first African-American woman to have a composition performed by a major symphony orchestra when her *Symphony in E Minor* was performed in 1933 by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. And Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, whose work brings together classical music and jazz. He was the cofounder, in 1964, of the *Symphony of the New World*, the country's first racially integrated orchestra, and a Gateways participant before his death in 2004.

Audiences clearly value the inspirational nature of the festival, according to surveys and other feedback. Barbara Jones, cochair of the festival planning committee and a retired vice president at JPMorgan Chase, says that while the Rochester community is strong in arts and culture, it hasn't always been very welcoming to people of African descent, particularly in classical music. "Gateways has changed the face of classical music in Rochester—our audiences see that, and they understand and appreciate that people of African descent have been involved in classical music for centuries," she says. "It's just something that hasn't been celebrated or noted."

For the musicians, taking to the stage with other musicians of

African descent can be deeply moving. "I've been the only African American in the Rochester Philharmonic for so long, it doesn't even faze me," says trumpeter Smith. "I'm used to it. But when you're in the Gateways orchestra with all people who look like you, it's an amazing thing. It really is."

The experience, says Laing, "strengthens, it enlivens, it prompts inquiry."

Ultimately, the inclusivity of professional classical music turns on choices that lie beyond the reach of any single performer. And the field of music can do more to change things than wait for young children to reach the age of professionalism, says Laing. He draws a contrast between the music world and that of athletics.

"In professional sports, they'll scour the Earth to find the players that they need. Is there more that the music field could be doing? Absolutely, if it wanted to. Sports will find the athletes they want and recruit them to their sport because they see in them the potential for what they could be. They see the potential for that person or persons to help them succeed toward their goals. They don't necessarily just wait for them to come to tryouts. The question is, what are our goals?"

Smith sees changing the demographics of orchestras in similar terms. "It's not just a quick thing," he says. "It's more a commentary on society and what people deem important."

With consultant Terry's help, the directors and volunteers of Gateways are looking ahead 20 years, giving careful thought to how the festival can contribute to answering those questions.


"Gateways has a very focused founding purpose, but Gateways is embracing of large communities," Terry says. The organizers want people "to hear this music, to engage with these musicians. Gateways started with a narrow focus that in time will be able to expand wider and wider."

Central to that aspiration is making the festival an annual event. As a biennial festival, says Terry, "it's as though the organization is reborn every two years." The process will be gradual because of the challenges of raising the needed funds, but all agree that a yearly festival will give Gateways greater visibility and momentum. And it will help organizers to meet the demand from musicians who want to participate.

The hunger for community isn't exclusive to musicians of African descent, says Burgett. Professional classical musicians devote their lives to an endlessly demanding program of training and practice. It's common to feel some isolation.

But for classical musicians of African descent, "there is the added burden of race, so even when you go out into the performing world, especially if you're an orchestral player, that isolation and loneliness persist," he says. "When these musicians come to Rochester, there's a deep sigh of relief."

Dumisani pushed her cart full of instruments through Rochester streets in response to that loneliness—to draw more performers of African descent to classical music, to help them discover what the music could add to their lives and how they could contribute to changing the musical world.

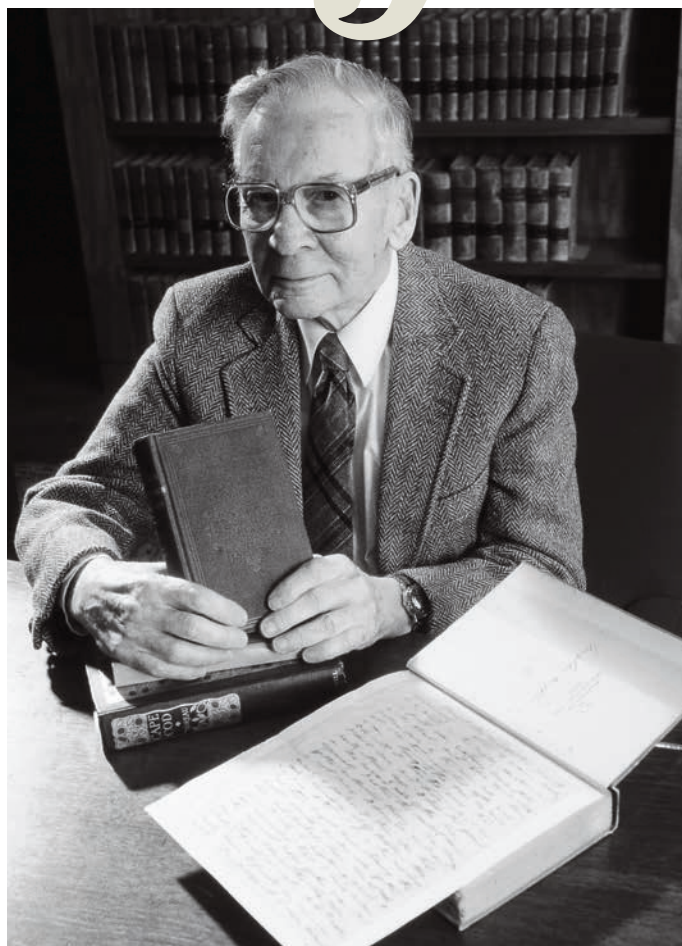
"When we wish upon a star, someday this won't be necessary," says Burgett. "We will have perfected our efforts at creating a better world for all people, and the hunger—and that's what it is, it's a hunger—that the musicians bring to the festival will be satisfied." 

The 2017 Gateways Festival will be held August 8 to 13, with a final concert under conductor Michael Morgan. The program includes Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto, performed by Canadian pianist Stewart Goodyear, and a performance of Rochester native Adolphus Hailstork's An American Port of Call. For details, visit Gatewaysmusicfestival.org.



EARTHY INTERESTS: Henry David Thoreau, born 200 years ago this July, may be most closely associated now with ideas of wilderness, but he was deeply absorbed in the agricultural practices of his community, too.

A TREASURE TROVE of THOREAU



Amateur scholar Raymond Borst '33 helped shape the understanding of Concord's famous son. 'Seeing a job to do,' he amassed one of the world's most extensive collections of Thoreau's work, now housed at Rochester.

By Kathleen McGarvey



When Henry David Thoreau was born, 200 years ago this July 12, he arrived in the wake of a calamity.

In 1816, known around the world as the “year with no summer,” ash, dust, and sulfur dioxide choked the atmosphere, spewed there by the 1815 eruption of Indonesia’s volcanic Mount Tambora.

Crops failed in New England as frost conditions persisted through that summer. Farm families, including the Thoreaus soon after Henry’s birth, were driven from their land.

Thoreau’s father, John, tried to make a living as a storekeeper a few miles away. Ultimately, the family found its way back to Concord, Massachusetts, with a pencil-making business that transformed American pencil manufacturing. They never returned to the land as farmers.

But there is no American writer more closely identified with the natural world than Thoreau. Although only two of his books—*A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849) and *Walden: or, Life in the Woods* (1854)—were published in his lifetime, his work grew steadily in popularity after his death from tuberculosis in 1862.

His words in *Walden* are familiar even to people who have never opened its cover:

“Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!”

“The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.”

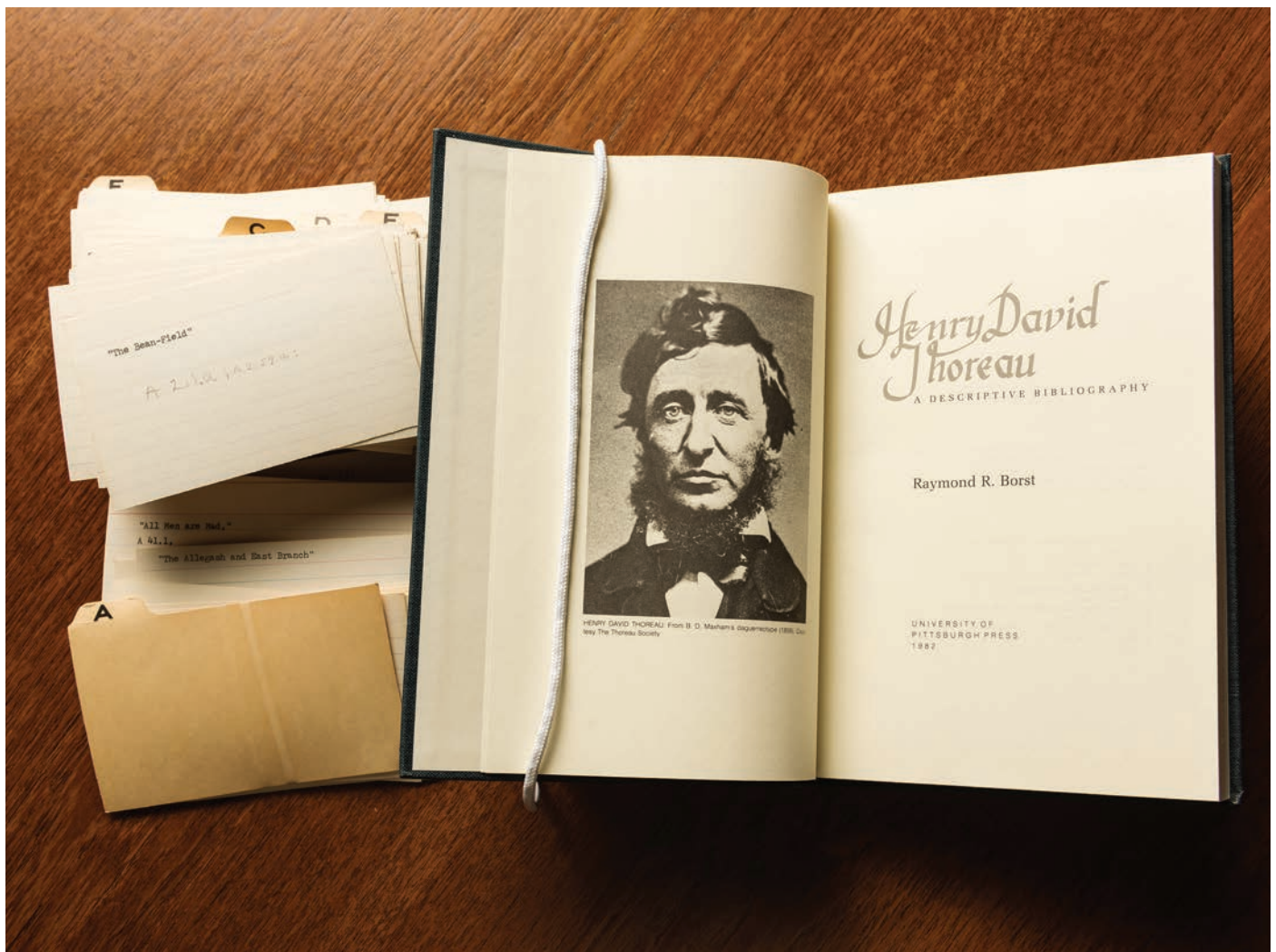
“I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.”

Among the many who have thrilled to his words was the late Raymond Borst ’33.

He came by his enthusiasm incidentally. On a business trip to Chicago in the 1940s, he picked up a copy of *Walden* at a hotel bookshop. His wife, Anne, wanted it for her book club. Traveling home by train to Auburn, New York, Borst began to read Thoreau’s account of living a simple life near Walden Pond.

That train trip was the start of a lifelong project. Beginning modestly, the Borsts took to rare-book hunting as a pleasant way to make day trips. They contacted book dealers to say they were interested in knowing when the dealers received an unusual edition. And as time passed, Borst amassed one of the world’s most extensive Thoreau collections, which grew so large that the couple added a wing to their house to contain it.

DOCUMENTED LIFE: Raymond Borst ’33 compiled *The Thoreau Log: A Documentary Life of Henry David Thoreau, 1817-1862* (G. K. Hall, 1992), an exacting work that pulls together journal entries, correspondence, newspaper articles, and even library records to give account of Thoreau’s life, day by day. Here, the edited typescript appears alongside the first edition of the published work.



In 1996, five years before his death at age 91, Borst donated his collection of roughly 800 items to the University, prompted in part by his long friendship with the then head of the library's rare books department, Peter Dzwonkoski. There is a strong connection between collectors and curators, says Jessica Lacher-Feldman, the Joseph N. Lambert and Harold B. Schleifer Director of Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation. "Our work in special collections is as much about relationships as it is with preserving and making accessible rare and unique materials."

Featuring first editions of all of Thoreau's published books, plus a wide range of rare 19th-century magazines and pamphlets containing articles unavailable in any other form, the Raymond R. Borst Collection of Henry David Thoreau became the University's best printed collection in American literature. It complements the libraries' other 19th-century American holdings, such as collections for Frederick Douglass, abolitionists Isaac and Amy Post, and Secretary of State William Henry Seward.

In a fundamental way, Borst—sunny, friendly, and devoted to his family—and the famously odd, seemingly solitary Thoreau make an unlikely pair. But they shared a love of nature and a deep-rooted interest in the agricultural world. After Borst graduated from

Rochester, he went to work for the Civilian Conservation Corps. But before long, his father asked him to return with his brother to their hometown of Auburn to take over the family's farm-equipment business. There, Borst bought a house built in 1813 with no plumbing and little electrical wiring—a place where the Thoreau of *Walden* might have felt at home. He did some farming on its 160 acres and interacted daily with farmers at his business. In Thoreau, he had found a writer who had occupied a similar world.

For scholars, there have been many Thoreaus: the political Thoreau of "Civil Disobedience," important for issues of social justice and individual rights of protest; the ecological Thoreau, one of the first great advocates of an environmental understanding of nature, the world, and the human place in it; the scientific Thoreau, whose work contributed to the formulation of scientific methodologies and intersecting natural systems of the type described by 19th-century scientists Louis Agassiz and Alexander von Humboldt.

And increasingly, an agrarian Thoreau has emerged—one who was not just invested in wilderness, but also appreciated the human manipulation of nature and its use for human productivity. He was acutely knowledgeable about the practices of local farmers in eastern Massachusetts.

RECORD BOOK: Borst's first foray into scholarly work was *Henry David Thoreau: A Descriptive Bibliography* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1982). Borst traveled to libraries in Europe and around the United States to produce this detailed catalog of all of Thoreau's publications, a resource still relied on by scholars and book dealers.



Laura Dassow Walls, the William P. and Hazel B. White Professor of English at the University of Notre Dame, is the author of *Henry David Thoreau: A Life* (University of Chicago Press, 2017). Released in conjunction with the bicentennial of Thoreau's birth, the book is the first full-scale biography to be published in almost 30 years. Walls's research makes clear that Thoreau was in constant conversation with farmers. He wasn't a member of the Concord Farmers' Club, but its membership lists correspond to his circle of friends, and his name comes up regularly in the records of the club's meetings. "They're talking to him, and he's talking to them," she says.

"In a lot of ways, the agrarian aspect of his work and thinking is at the core of all those other understandings of Thoreau—social justice, environmental justice, scientific, ecological," says Walls. He wants to know why farms are failing. Friends are losing their land, and he approaches the question as a matter of social justice. He investigates how farmers could better grow their crops, and that's a question of harnessing science. He tries to understand how land could reach a condition where nothing would grow, and that's a question of environmental justice.

New England farmers were mortgaging their farms to afford technologies they hoped would help them prosper as the railroad forced

them to compete with farmers working more fertile lands to the west, in places like New York and Ohio. When they couldn't make their payments, they lost their farms. "This, to him, is tragic," says Walls. "And a lot of this comes home to him because these are his neighbors."

Although people don't typically think of Thoreau as a man of his community, Borst was well known for his ability to connect with others. He cocreated a local fire department, directed the Auburn Chamber of Commerce, and was president of both a regional art and history museum and an art center.

Whatever he did, he ended up being chosen to lead the group, says his daughter Cynthia Sherwood '83 (MA). "He just thoroughly enjoyed people," she says.

In 1977, Anne Borst died, and the always busy Ray found himself at a loss. And just at that time, the University of Pittsburgh asked him to create a descriptive bibliography for Thoreau.

The work became an exhaustive catalog of Thoreau's publications as physical objects, noting the paper on which they were printed, their ink and binding, and the circumstances of their publication. With his daughter, Borst traveled to libraries in Europe and at Harvard and to small institutions with Thoreau holdings. He did much of his writing at his cabin in the Adirondacks.

WORLDWIDE WALDEN: *Walden: or, Life in the Woods* is Thoreau's best-known work, popular with readers around the world. Editions in the Borst collection include volumes published in (clockwise from top left) Sweden, Denmark, Israel, Brazil, Italy, France, and Switzerland.



“He needed a project, and this just dropped from the sky right into his lap,” says Sherwood. The University of Pittsburgh Press published *Henry David Thoreau: A Descriptive Bibliography* in 1982. Almost all rare-book dealers refer to Borst’s work when identifying a volume for sale. Andrea Reithmayr, Rochester’s special collections librarian for rare books and conservation, calls it an “incredible legacy.”

A decade later, Borst published *The Thoreau Log: A Documentary Life of Henry David Thoreau, 1817–1862* (G. K. Hall, 1992), a description—culled from Thoreau’s own *Journal*, newspaper articles, library lending records, correspondence, and other materials—of Thoreau’s activities for as many days of his life as could be accounted for. The *Log* represents the very rare instance of an amateur’s work becoming a touchstone for scholars. Walls says she began her biography of Thoreau by working with the *Log*. “It’s a treasure trove for researchers, no matter what you’re interested in,” she says.

Different from critical scholarship, the *Log* is a compilation of coincidences and events in Thoreau’s life, curated from a vast array of sources and set in chronological order. In it, Borst creates a tactile and local Thoreau, allowing readers to follow, in minute detail, the activities of his daily life—the people he talked to, the places he went on his walks, the commentary he had on local agricultural practices.

Thoreau’s writing has been studied and commented on by people as varied as Mahatma Gandhi and Hannah Arendt. But Borst gives readers Thoreau in Concord, with his feet on the ground. He tells them not just when Thoreau and his brother built the boat they rowed down the Concord and Merrimack (in the spring of 1839), but what they named it (the “Musketaquid”), how they celebrated the upcoming journey (with a “melon spree” party), and to whom Thoreau later sold the boat (novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne).

Naturalist Louis Agassiz once wrote to Thoreau, asking him to collect specimens for his museum. Thoreau did. Borst gave himself a similar task—with the same dedication and focus that he brought to creating his collection of Thoreau’s works, he gathered little bits of information and created in the *Log* a museum of Thoreau’s life.

“He was the kind of person that, if he saw a job to do, he did it,” says Sherwood.

At *Walden*’s conclusion, Thoreau writes of taking a hammer in hand: “Drive a nail home and clinch it so faithfully that you can wake up in the night and think of your work with satisfaction . . . Every nail driven should be as another rivet in the machine of the universe, you are carrying on the work.”

Borst listened, and so he did. ®

POP-CULTURE THOREAU: Borst’s collection includes (from top) a United States postage stamp and envelope commemorating the sesquicentennial of Thoreau’s birth, hand-canceled on July 12, 1967, in Concord; an example of “Thoreau Money,” produced by the Committee for Nonviolent Action in the 1960s and distributed during antiwar protests; and an edition of *Walden* created for the Armed Services during World War II.

A Different Kind of College TOUR

Transition Opportunities at the University of Rochester—or TOUR—joins young adults with disabilities with traditional undergraduates in a common experience of college.

By Jim Mandelaro

The course is *Godzilla: Atomic Creatures*. Spenser McGuckin sits with 15 undergraduates as Joanne Bernardi, an associate professor of Japanese and of film and media studies, discusses cult movies featuring the mythical Japanese sea monster.

Wearing a blue Rochester hoodie, orange shorts, and neon Nike Hyperdunk sneakers, McGuckin fits right in. The 19-year-old is auditing the class as a second-year participant in the University's TOUR program.

TOUR stands for Transition Opportunities at the University of Rochester. It's a program for young adults of ages 18 to 21 with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In addition to participating in college courses, the students are immersed in vocational training, internships, transition and independent living education, and social activities on and off campus.

The program's long-term goals are competitive employment, an increased sense of community, and improved life skills.

"When I first came here, I was scared and nervous," says McGuckin, who is on the autism spectrum. "But I got over it quickly."

The 2015 graduate of Pittsford Mendon High School, about 10 miles southeast of the University, has enjoyed the full college experience at Rochester. While on the River Campus, he eats lunch in the dining halls and studies at Rush Rhees Library. During the 2015–16 academic year, he took an introductory geology course and an art history class. By spring, the once-shy teenager was giving campus tours to other prospective TOUR members. He also was playing lacrosse, a sport he had never tried before, as a way to make friends.

CELEBRATING SCHOOL: Zachary Arnold '17 (second from right) joined TOUR students Aaron Hewitt, Anthony Rutigliano, and Tyler Julien at an event honoring this spring's TOUR class.





It's long been recognized that college is a developmental experience, in addition to an academic and preprofessional one. "When people come to college, their main objective is to engage in academic and cocurricular experiences that help them develop the skills and knowledge to get a better job, succeed in life, and develop a career path," says Catherine Lewis, associate director of School and Community Relations in the Office of Admissions. "That's the same for TOUR students."

TOUR is a partnership that joins three separate entities, each with distinct roles. The Rochester Center for Community Leadership—located on the River Campus and part of Arts, Sciences & Engineering—coordinates academic access and peer mentorship support for TOUR students and serves as liaison between TOUR and University faculty members. Monroe One BOCES—part of the Board of Cooperative Educational Services, a state program created in 1948—collaborates with the University to help meet some of the unique needs of TOUR participants. And the Institute for Innovative Transition—created in 2008 through a partnership between the University and the B. Thomas Golisano Foundation—plays a lead role in developing inclusive educational experiences that meet the needs of teens and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities as they transition out of high school.

"Our goal is to raise awareness about the issues related to students with disabilities who are moving from school into college, employment, and life," says Martha Mock, director of the institute and an associate professor at the Warner School of Education, where the institute is located.

The institute serves a statewide population and has received more than \$2 million from the Golisano Foundation and \$7.5 million in federal and state grants since its inception. In 2010, a five-year, \$2.5 million Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities grant from the US Department of Education helped fund TOUR as well as similar programs at other colleges and



CLASS TIME: "I've gained independence and manage my time better," says TOUR student Kayla Hawkins, who worked with Monroe County special education teacher Christine Walker (above) during a class at Meliora Hall (opposite) this spring.







universities, including Keuka College, Roberts Wesleyan College, and Monroe Community College.

The grant was “a game changer for us,” says JoAnn Genthner, executive principal of Monroe One BOCES. “In the fall of 2013, we had no TOUR students taking courses. By the fall of 2015, we had over 20.”

Meg Grigal is a national expert on inclusive higher education and transition for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She’s also principal investigator for multiple research grants at Think College!, a national organization based at the University of Massachusetts–Boston.

Grigal says Rochester’s TOUR program sets the standard for other colleges to follow. “It demonstrates what can happen when you pair high expectations with opportunity,” she says. “It provides a chance for students who are typically excluded from higher learning the opportunity to access courses related to their career or personal interest, engage in campus activities with other college students, and establish foundational employment experiences.”

And, she adds, “it reflects that the University of Rochester recog-

nizes that being responsive to a diverse group of learners is a part of the mission of higher education.”

During the 2016–17 academic year, 25 participants—18 men and 7 women—were enrolled in TOUR. The students are referred to the program by their local school districts, which also pick up costs associated with the students’ participation.

For many TOUR students, weekdays start at 8 a.m. in Meliora 221, where BOCES special education teachers Amy McCarthy and Christine Walker teach them independent living, social, and life skills. On a cold morning last winter, the subject was choosing a safe smartphone app to manage personal budgets.

Walker invited Kayla Hawkins, a 20-year-old student in her second year in the TOUR program, to the front of the room before two large Smart Boards that detailed a specific phone app’s functions.

“Would you use this app?” Walker asked Hawkins.

“Yes,” Hawkins replied. “It helps take the stress out of managing your money and tracks your money if you want to go on vacation.”

Hawkins, a native of Tampa, Florida, moved with her family to Rochester a few years ago and took American Sign Language courses this past academic year.

“I want to interact with people who are deaf,” she says. “My cousin is deaf.”

TAKING THE TOUR: As part of his participation in the program, Spenser McGuckin, a 19-year-old from Pittsford, New York, audited classes—above, with his academic coach, Khusbu Modi ’19, a biomedical engineering major—and joined the club lacrosse team (opposite).

Hawkins worked in a Warner School office as part of the program and says TOUR has allowed her to feel more confident on the job. “I’ve gained independence and manage my time better,” she says.

Each student in the program partners with a traditional undergraduate student who serves as an academic coach. The coaches audit a University class chosen by the TOUR student, sit through each class, and discuss it afterward. It’s a paid job, but the money isn’t the real reward.

“If you want this job, you have to be dedicated to what you are doing,” says Khusbu Modi ’19, McGuckin’s coach and a biomedical engineering major from Jersey City, New Jersey. “I feel like Spenser is my peer rather than my mentee.”

All new academic coaches must take the class *Creating Inclusive Campus Communities: Disability, Mentorship, and Inclusive Higher Education*.

Taught by Lewis and offered through the College, the course familiarizes students with the history of disability, its shifting meanings, and how people with disabilities experience their lives.

The emphasis is on demonstrating the ways in which so-called disabilities might be more appropriately considered forms of diversity rather than as deficits measured against an elusive norm.

MaryAnna Krewson ’16 worked with five TOUR students in three years as an academic coach. The Schenectady, New York, native, who graduated with degrees in psychology and American Sign Language, made a point of introducing TOUR students to her friends.

“I wanted to get them chatting with peers outside their usual circle,” she says.

Krewson’s interactions with TOUR students weren’t limited to the courses taught.

“One of the TOUR students

loved cars and had plans to own a muscle car,” she says. “The problem was, he vastly underestimated the cost of owning a vehicle. I had him connect with one of my friends who was also a car enthusiast and owner. The three of us talked car-related expenses such as gas, insurance, and repairs.”

As for McGuckin, when he reflects on his experience in TOUR, he sounds like many students as they reflect on their growth in college. “Some things bother me more than they do other people,” he says, “but I really don’t think about it much. TOUR helped me learn how to work around my differences.”

And it helped him develop confidence and a greater sense of himself as well. “The thing I like best is becoming friends with people I’ve met,” he says. “It makes me feel like I’ve matured a lot.”

His mother, Meg Mackey, agrees that his social skills—an area of difficulty for many people on the autism spectrum—have improved dramatically.

“When Spenser entered TOUR in the fall of 2015, he was reserved and not comfortable meeting new people or encountering new situations,” she says. “That’s part of the magic of TOUR. His self-confidence wasn’t developed just in the TOUR classroom but in Rochester classrooms, through his jobs at St. John’s—a nearby nursing home—and Highland Hospital, in Rush Rhees Library hanging

out with his friends, and on the field at Fauver Stadium with his lacrosse teammates.”

This fall will mark a milestone for McGuckin. Having completed two years in the TOUR program, he’ll enroll in an internship at Wegmans Food Markets, a Rochester-based supermarket giant with more than 90 stores in six states on the East Coast.

Wegmans runs the internship program through Project SEARCH, a national organization founded by Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center that facilitates on-the-job training for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Funding from the Golisano Foundation has helped launch Project SEARCH partnerships not only with Wegmans, but also with other private companies, the Medical Center, and the City of Rochester.

Since its implementation in Rochester in 2010, more than 50 students have graduated from Project SEARCH and more than 70 percent have successfully transitioned into competitive employment.

McGuckin will have the opportunity to work with employees in a variety of roles at Wegmans, from cashier, prepared foods, the bakery, health and beauty, and stocking.

“We want to do our part to ensure people of all abilities have an opportunity for meaningful employment,” says Duane Hutt, Wegmans Rochester Division human resources manager. “We’ve hired some amazing employees through the program who have become hard-working and dedicated members of the Wegmans family.”

For now, McGuckin works part time in the cafeteria at Highland Hospital and serves as an usher and soup kitchen volunteer at his



church. His dream is to become an emergency medical technician.

“I like helping others,” he says. “I feel good after I do it.”

Reflecting on McGuckin’s TOUR experience, Lewis says he exemplified TOUR’s mission.

“He took courses, immersed himself on campus, and was just genuinely interested in all the University has to offer,” she says.

Mock points to strong evidence that the TOUR program is making a big difference. She cites a national study conducted by researchers at the University of Massachusetts–Boston.

It found that the employment rate for students with intellectual disabilities and autism who were exiting high school was, on average, 18 percent. But for those who take part in an initiative like TOUR, it’s 40 percent.

“That’s more than double,” she says.

Good, but not good enough.

“Ideally, we want it to be 100 percent,” Mock says, “because everyone deserves to work in their community.” **R**