





#### SHOWSTOPPER

### Bat Out of Rochester

ALL REVVED UP: Andrew Polec '12 is earning rave reviews as the lead of *Bat Out of Hell*, a musical production based on the songs from Meat Loaf's late-1970s album. The only American in the British production, Polec plays Strat, the leader of a gang trying to survive in a post-apocalyptic world. (Christina Bennington plays Raven, his motorcycle-driving love interest.) The *Times of London* said Polec "plays Strat with such energy that he is like a bat out of hell," going on to note that "he is sensational, exuding confidence." Polec made a similar impression on faculty and classmates at Rochester, where he had regular starring roles in campus productions as a student in the Department of Music and the Department of English. After opening in Great Britain, *Bat Out of Hell* moves to Toronto this fall with sights on Broadway next spring. PHOTOGRAPH: REX FEATURES/AP IMAGES







## An Auspicious Pairing

Alexandria Le '05E offers her native Las Vegas some unusual concert experiences.

By Karen McCally '02 (PhD)

From the time she was a high school student at the Las Vegas Academy of the Arts, **Alexandria Le '05E** was steeped in the idea that classical music had too much to offer to be confined to concert halls.

She arrived at the Eastman School of Music to study piano performance in the early years of a new curriculum—one that would train musicians not only as artists but also as entrepreneurs in a fast-changing arts industry. Her goal was to return to her native Las Vegas and offer something unique to the city's budding arts scene.

"I wanted to do something, but I didn't know what," she says.

A small ensemble performance—and a taste of sauvignon blanc—would lead her to an answer.

She was at a chamber music festival, where she'd heard a performance of Antonín Dvořák's *"American" Quartet*—written while the Czech composer was on a summer holiday in Iowa, as an ode to his cultural and natural surroundings.

During intermission, she purchased a glass of white wine. Le was not then, by her own estimation, a connoisseur. But this



**FESTIVAL SETTING:** Aiming to create a "multidimensional concert experience," Le (above) founded the Las Vegas Music and Wine Festival, a multiday event that pairs music with wine chosen specifically to match each work in the festival's performances.



## “I can taste notes, and then I can taste colors that I associate with the music and movements within the music.”

—*Jaime Smith, sommelier*

particular wine, she recalls, “tasted grassy.” “Intuitively,” she says, “I knew it worked.”

The pairing wasn’t intentional. But what if it had been? Says Le: “I felt, why doesn’t this happen more often? Maybe I should look and see if people do this.”

She pursued the idea cautiously. “I wanted to respect the art on both sides,” she says, recalling the first time she approached a sommelier with her idea. But that sommelier was intrigued and introduced her to a friend in the business, Las Vegas sommelier Jaime Smith.

Together Le and Smith would prove an auspicious pairing.

In 2015, Le created the Las Vegas Wine and Music Festival (since renamed the Las Vegas Music and Wine Festival), with Smith as sommelier-in-residence. The inaugural festival was a three-evening affair that took place at the Nevada State Museum. This past spring, the festival took place at Gaudin Porsche of Las Vegas, North America’s largest Porsche showroom. Another festival is in the works for spring 2018.

The festival has fulfilled Le’s mission of creating a “multidimensional concert experience.” Le selects music around a theme. Smith immerses himself in the recordings she gives him and then selects a wine to pair with each piece.

Smith is unusually well suited to a project that would pair two sensory experiences. Twice named the nation’s best sommelier by *Food & Wine* magazine, he has synesthesia, a rare condition in which one form of sensory stimulus generates a response in another. He smells in colors and shapes. He can taste music. “I can taste notes, and then I can taste colors that I associate with the music and movements within the music,” he says.

The musicians who perform at the festival are ones Le recruits locally as well as from around North America. They’re not only fine musicians—members of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the New York City Ballet, and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra among them—but also artists who are ready and willing to rub elbows with guests. Le introduces each piece and why she chose it. Smith follows, discussing how and why he selected each pairing. The guests listen and sip and after each performance, enjoy hors-d’oeuvres with Le, Smith, and the musicians, asking questions and talking about their reactions.

Le, who surveys her guests, is delighted that the majority of respondents say they don’t have much familiarity with classical music. “They were the ones to come up to me,” she adds, recalling the inaugural festival. “A man approached me and said, ‘I didn’t expect that first piece to happen the way that it did. That was so moving.’”

Smith believes the festival is “the only experience like this.”

“There are people out there trying to pair everything that you can with wine,” says the plainspoken sommelier, who delights in puncturing preconceptions about wine connoisseurs. “I don’t know how to say this without sounding like a jerk. I think that they’re trying to provide a nice experience, but most of the time it isn’t done well. Most of the time it’s a lot of personal preferences more than great pairings.”

When it comes to his partner, “Alex is the best in the world,” says Smith, referring broadly to her stature not only as a musician and performer, but also as someone driven by the value of service. The festival is just one of Le’s projects. In fact, its core mission is

to serve as a fundraiser for the larger, umbrella organization she’s founded, Notes with a Purpose.

It’s an outgrowth of a national movement among classical musicians to reach a broader public than in the past. With Le as executive artistic director, the organization targets school children in high-poverty areas and adults without the mobility or the means to attend concert hall performances.


As with the festival, she and other musicians she’s recruited to perform in shelters, hospices, and schools don’t set themselves apart from their listeners. They’re there to interact, something that’s especially valuable to the student musicians at her alma



**PARTNERS IN WINE:** In Smith (standing), a sommelier who has a condition in which his sensory stimuli intermingle, Le found a partner who understood her goal of expanding the sensory palette of music.

mater, whom she’s recruited to play regularly at the Las Vegas Rescue Mission’s homeless shelter, food pantry, and addiction recovery program. While the music contributes to the lives of mission clients, it also aids young musicians in honing their public speaking as well as musical performance skills.

“It’s not enough, I think, for a musician to be comfortable with the routine of walking on the stage, bowing, playing, leaving,” Le says.

“It’s actually a little bit odd when I have to do that now.” 

## Eastman Graduate Leads New York College

**Donald Boomgaarden** '85E (PhD) took office July 1 as president of St. Joseph's College in New York. The 101-year-old liberal arts college has campuses in Brooklyn and in Patchogue, Long Island. He'll divide his time between both campuses.

A historian of 18th-century opera, music aesthetics, and harmonic theory, he received his doctorate from Eastman in musicology.

The author of a book, *Musical Thought in Britain and Germany during the Early 18th Century* (Peter Lang, 1989), as well as other scholarly writings, he also studied as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Vienna in Austria.

Boomgaarden most recently served as provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at the University of Scranton in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Boomgaarden has also held academic and leadership positions at Loyola University New Orleans, Loyola University Maryland, and other institutions over the course of a 30-year career.

He is a graduate of Harvard's Institute for Management and Leadership in Education program.



**NEW PRESIDENT:** Boomgaarden leads St. Joseph's College.



**STAR IN ISRAEL:** DiBartolomeo, a 2017 Israeli pro basketball MVP, has signed with a storied Tel Aviv team.

## Former Yellowjacket Scores Honors as Basketball MVP

During his first season in Israeli pro basketball, guard **John DiBartolomeo** '13 led his team, Maccabi Haifa, to a league championship, where they fell just short of the title. Along the way, Maccabi Haifa eliminated the most successful team in the history of Israeli pro basketball, Maccabi Tel Aviv.

In June, Maccabi Tel Aviv signed the former Yellowjacket men's basketball star to a three-year contract.

There is no Israeli team whose

record approaches that of Maccabi Tel Aviv; the team has won the Israel Basketball Super League title 51 times, whereas the most any other team has won it is five.

DiBartolomeo launched his professional career in Spain, where he played for two seasons before moving to Israel to join Maccabi Haifa for the 2015-16 season.

At Rochester, the guard from Westport, Connecticut, was one of the most decorated athletes in the history of Yellowjacket

men's basketball. A three-time All-American, he finished his career third in school history in scoring (1,779), second in assists (533), second in steals (201), and second in free throws made (520). The financial economics graduate was named the NCAA Division III National Player of the Year by *D3hoops.com* and *DIII News*.

Before signing with Maccabi Tel Aviv, DiBartolomeo was named Israel Basketball Super League Most Valuable Player.

## Simon Graduate Recognized as Leader in Digital Banking

**Michelle Calarco Moore** '99S (MBA), head of digital banking at Bank of America, has been named 2017 Digital Banker of the Year by *American Banker* magazine.

Digital (or online) banking is a complex and fast growing technology that's been called a "do-or-die challenge" to banks. *American Banker* cited Moore's overarching focus on customer experience; development of an

industry-leading mobile app, available in English and Spanish editions, that enables customers to carry out a full range of banking functions securely on mobile devices; and planned rollout of a new digital assistant, "erica," as elements transforming Bank of America from an "also-ran" to a leader in digital banking.

Moore joined Bank of America as a senior vice president in commercial banking in 2003.



**FINANCIAL FUTURE:** *American Banker* magazine honored Moore.





Paul Singer



Mark Ain



Carol Nadelson



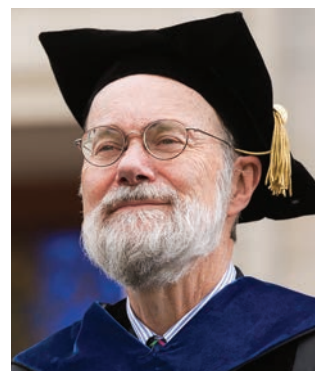
Jimmie Reyna



Tansukh, Sarla, and Rajesh Ganatra



Kara Bren



Thomas Eickbush



Seth Monahan



Douglas Kelley



Jayne Lammers



Thomas Hahn

## HONORS &amp; AWARDS

## Alumni, Faculty, and Guests Honored at Commencement

Several alumni, faculty, and guests were recognized for their achievements, service, and teaching during this spring's commencement ceremonies.

## HONORARY DOCTOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE

**Paul Singer '66**, founder and president of Elliott Management Corporation, a New York-based trading firm

## THE CHARLES FORCE HUTCHISON AND MARJORIE SMITH HUTCHISON MEDAL

**Mark Ain '675 (MBA)**, University trustee and the founder and former chairman and CEO of Kronos Incorporated, a Massachusetts-based global provider of workforce management solutions

**Carol Nadelson '61M (MD)**, founding director of the Partners and Brigham and Women's Hospital Office for Women's Careers and a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School

**Jimmie Reyna '75**, judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit

## THE EASTMAN MEDAL

**The Ganatra family:** Tansukh, Sarla, and Rajesh Ganatra. Tansukh Ganatra is former vice chairman and CEO of North Carolina-based US LEC, which he cofounded with University Trustee Richard Aab

## EDWARD PECK CURTIS AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

**Kara Bren**, professor of chemistry

**Thomas Eickbush**, professor of biology

**Seth Monahan**, associate professor of music theory

## G. GRAYDON CURTIS '58 AND JANE W. CURTIS AWARD FOR NONTENURED FACULTY TEACHING

**Douglas Kelley**, assistant professor of mechanical engineering

**Jayne Lammers**, assistant professor in teaching and curriculum

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

**Thomas Hahn**, professor of English

## WILLIAM H. RIKER UNIVERSITY AWARD FOR GRADUATE TEACHING

**Robert Westbrook**, the Joseph F. Cunningham Professor of History



Robert Westbrook

For more about this spring's commencement ceremonies, visit [Rochester.edu/commencement/2017](http://Rochester.edu/commencement/2017).