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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ROCHESTER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS JOIN FORCES TO PROVIDE FREE  
EASTMAN PRESENTS TICKETS AND TRANSPORTATION TO 220 ROCHESTER CITY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**

*EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC ANNOUNCES COLLABORATION WITH ROCHESTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, AVANGRID FOUNDATION/RG&E, ROCHESTER AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, AND ROCHESTER EDUCATION FOUNDATION*

**Rochester, N.Y. – January 19, 2016** – The Eastman School of Music announced a collaboration with the Rochester City School District, the AVANGRID Foundation on behalf of Rochester Gas & Electric, the Rochester Area Community Foundation and the Rochester Education Foundation to provide free concert tickets and transportation to the three remaining concerts in the 2015-2016 season of Eastman Presents.

“As an educational institution, we’re always thinking of new ways to make the arts more accessible to our community,” said Jamal Rossi, Joan and Martin Messinger Dean, Eastman School of Music. “This collaboration is an exciting initiative to help break down barriers and to provide increased access to the artistic events in our city.”

More than 220 students and their families are expected to attend the January 30th Eastman Presents concert, *Underground Railroad: A Spiritual Journey*, performed by five-time Grammy Award-winning soprano Kathleen Battle and pianist Joel A. Martin. The concert will feature traditional slave spirituals, with narration based on selected writings of abolitionists Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass interspersed between songs. Actors Nora Cole and David Shakes of the Geva Theatre’s upcoming production of *To Kill A Mockingbird* will narrate. The Rochester Festival Chorus will join Ms. Battle and Mr. Martin in its debut performance under the direction of Eastman alumnus Jason Holmes.

“This is an amazing opportunity and experience for our students,” said Elizabeth Hanan, Director of Arts, Rochester City School District. “Having our students experience these world-class artists is inspirational and is an incredible enhancement to their classroom education.”

“Through this collaboration, we’re impacting hundreds of students and their families,” said Keith C. Elder, Director of Concert Activities, Eastman School of Music. “We are so excited to be able to offer this important educational opportunity.”

The collaboration addresses the barriers of cost and transportation that prevent students and their families from attending art-related events.

AVANGRID Foundation and the Rochester Area Community Foundation are providing the funding to cover the ticket costs and transportation for students and their families. “We are pleased to make this contribution on behalf of our employees at RG&E”, said Robert Kump, President of the AVANGRID

Foundation. “For more than 150 years we have been proud to support cultural and educational events in our community.”

“Arts and music are so important to a holistic education and exposing Rochester students to these artist is an extension of their education” said Jennifer Leonard, President and CEO, Rochester Area Community Foundation. “We are very happy to be part of this collaboration.”

The Rochester Education Foundation is providing funding to cover the costs of transportation. “This is just one of the many ways we support the arts and the Rochester City School District,” said Patricia Braus, Executive Director, Rochester Education Foundation. “We’re thrilled to be part of this incredible collaboration with such distinguished community organizations who support education and the arts.”

This collaboration is one of the many ways the Eastman School of Music is making the arts and music more accessible to city students and other programs include [ROCmusic](#) which is funded by Eastman School of Music, giving classical music instruction through lessons, classes, and ensembles, and free instruments to students in grades 1-12 who live in the City of Rochester. The Eastman Community Music School also home to [Pathways](#), a unique program providing outstanding Rochester City School District students with a scholarship to pursue music at the Eastman School of Music.

### **About Eastman Presents**

Eastman Presents first launched in the 2014-2015 season at the Eastman School of Music. The series of monthly concerts features international artists from a variety of musical genres at Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre in Rochester, New York. In its second year, the 2015-2016 season offers another exciting lineup of world-renowned performers. The season kicked off with the delightful wit and musical virtuosity of the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain followed by another Broadway great, Kristin Chenoweth; a holiday concert with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra; and a moving tribute to the Underground Railroad by soprano Kathleen Battle and pianist Joel A. Martin. The season closes with concerts from two outstanding ensembles: the Eastman Wind Ensemble under conductor Mark Davis Scatterday with guest soloist and remarkable banjo player and multi-Grammy Award winner Béla Fleck; and the venerable Toronto Symphony Orchestra under conductor Peter Oundjian who will be joined by pianist Angela Hewitt to perform music of Bach and Shostakovich. For more information on the Eastman Presents concert series and other performances at Eastman Theatre, visit [www.EastmanTheatre.org](http://www.EastmanTheatre.org).

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### **Eastman Theatre Press Contact:**

Traci Legonelli, Tipping Point Communications

[traci@tippingpointcomm.com](mailto:traci@tippingpointcomm.com)

(585) 441-5369

