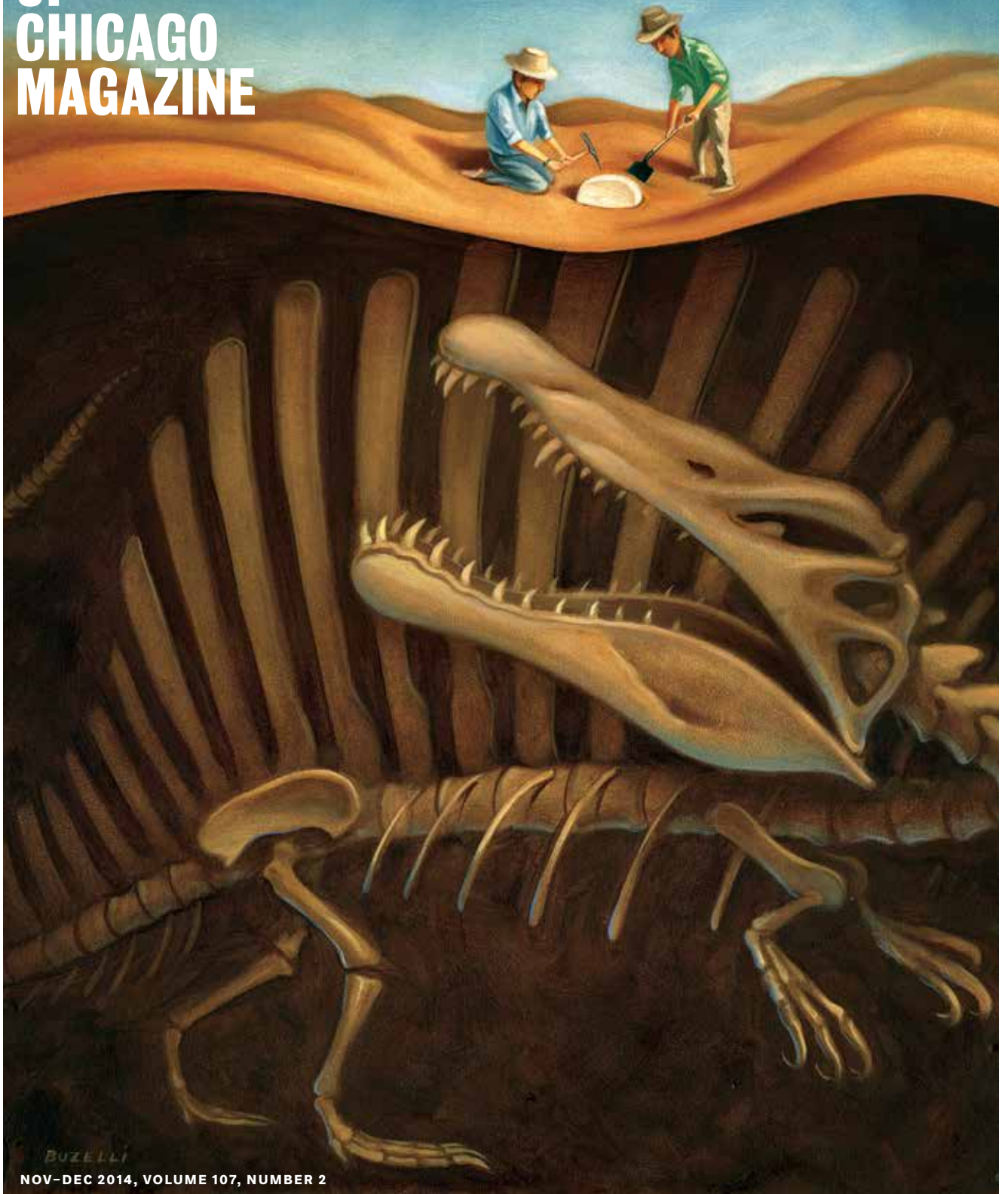


THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO MAGAZINE



BUZELLI

NOV-DEC 2014, VOLUME 107, NUMBER 2

Grace note

New to Rockefeller Chapel's staff, Matthew Dean, AB'00, has long inhabited its world of song.

On a windy afternoon in late August, **Matthew Dean**, AB'00, stood outside Rockefeller Chapel's west chancel doorway, looking up at a small stone pulpit built into the outer wall. Inside the chapel, the organ was being tuned for the summer convocation, and long, low notes wailed through the sanctuary.

Out here, though, the air fell quiet. The outdoor pulpit—tucked into a corner, easily missed—is a minor fascination for Dean, who has spent much of the past 20 years in and around Rockefeller, as a student and a singer and now as a staff member.

The pulpit is a bit of an artifact. "The chapel had all sorts of additional spaces and buildings planned in the architectural drawings," Dean says, including a cloistered area for outdoor ceremonies and services. "And then they ran into the Great Depression." The pulpit was the only part that got built. It looks out now on a parking lot and a grassy expanse leading to the Oriental Institute. It would be nice, Dean says, to find a way to make regular use of it. Landscape this corner and hold meditations or small services. Something.

It doesn't take much of a nudge to get a guided tour of Rockefeller's nooks and crannies from Dean, who became director of chapel operations in April, a job that for him seems more like coming home than going to work. He does everything from overseeing building projects, like repairs at Bond Chapel and the spiritual life center's relocation to Ida Noyes, to helping organize the chapel's busy roster of programs and events. Occasionally he takes visitors up the tower's 271 winding steps to see the carillon keyboard, jangling keys as he leads them through doorway after tiny doorway, across the wooden catwalk above the sanctuary's false ceiling, through the clock room where a mechanism (currently disconnected) can sound the quarter and hour chimes, and then past the largest of the carillon bells, weighing more than 18 tons.

He tells them that the chapel is a place of application as much as theory: organ scholars learning to play, aspiring carillonners training on a practice keyboard in the basement, artwork and sculptures constantly being maintained, prayer services, yoga, meditation. Students who honed their voices at Rockefeller sometimes go on to professional singing careers. "So, there's a figural ivory tower in the rest of campus, and this is the actual tower, but it's a very applied place."

Dean's first attachment to Rockefeller was singing: as a kid from the suburbs whose high school choir occasionally performed on campus and, later, a College student drawn to what he calls a "musical lifeway," which he found at Rockefeller. A sixth-grade field trip to the Oriental Institute convinced Dean he wanted to be an archaeologist, and that interest stuck through an anthropology major and a couple years of graduate work in art history, but the chapel was where his calling was really rooted.

A tenor, he sang in multiple chapel choirs in the College, as both a soloist

and a member of the chorus. He met his wife, **Katherine Steffes Dean**, AB'01, in Rockefeller's choir stands. And while still an undergraduate he helped found a Russian folk choir on campus, Golosa, with whom he has toured Siberia (and for which he learned to speak passable Russian and write in Cyrillic). "I love singing and singing people, and UChicago is alive with it," he says.

Rockefeller dean **Elizabeth Davenport** explains what he means: singing in a choral group, she says, can shape a whole life. "There is something about using your own body, your voice, which is inside you, to produce this incredible purity of sound, with however many other people, 20 other people, 30 other people. And together you do something that none of you can do apart." She taps the desk with her hand as if it were a tuning fork and hums a high note. "When you sing an A, there's something inside your larynx that vibrates 440 times a second," she says. "To know that, and to do that with 30 other people who also know how to do this, and to create music that could be a thousand years old—I mean,



Dean (center, with beard) rehearses with his choir mates on a Sunday morning.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANTHONY BARLICH

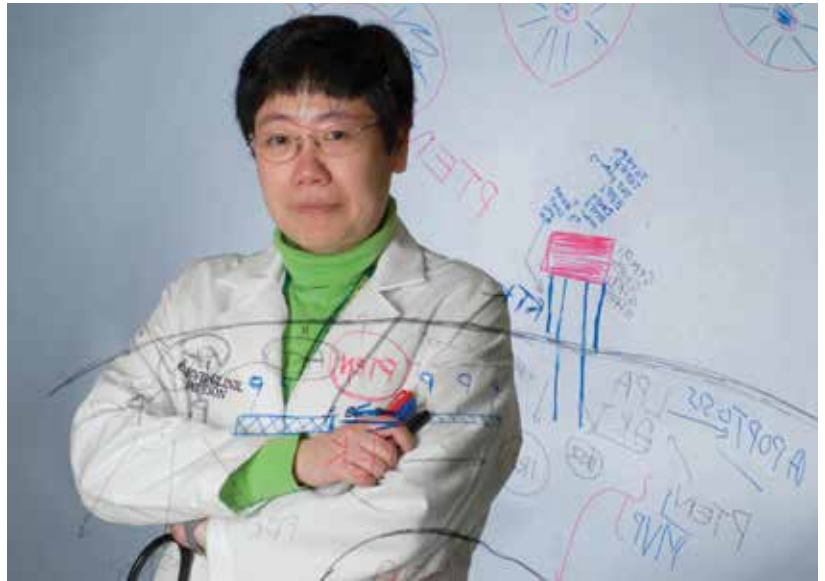
we sing *Hildegard of Bingen*—it exposes students to an extraordinary joy.”

Since 2005 Dean has held the title artist in residence at Rockefeller. He sings there every Sunday—he’s one of the skeleton crew when the choir thins in the summer—and at ceremonies like the August convocation for which the organ was being tuned. Before putting on his robe and heading up to the sanctuary for the procession, he and several others sat around a table in the chapel basement, rehearsing for a CD recording of **James Kallembach’s** *St. John Passion*. UChicago director of choral activities, Kallembach has conducted the Bach oratorio a few times; he composed the new version for Rockefeller’s 2014 Palm Sunday service.

Dean also performs with a half dozen other choral groups throughout the city, including early music groups *Bella Voce* and *Schola Antiqua*, and the *Rookery*, a professional men’s choir he cofounded in 2011. On November 16 he’ll be in Rockefeller, singing as part of the Sounds of Faith concert, an annual interfaith event started in 2009 by anesthesiologist **Shakeela Hassan**, a UChicago associate professor emerita. As program director of Hassan’s foundation, *Harran Productions*, Dean helps put together the concert.

When he has a few minutes free, Dean sometimes heads to Rockefeller’s choral library, another hidden corner. It’s upstairs, behind the balcony, a narrow slant-roofed room with a rolling wooden ladder and shelves packed floor to ceiling with binders containing the chapel’s musical history. The archives go back to the building’s construction in 1928. “These are all the choral and instrumental scores for major works that have been done here over time,” Dean says: for Messiahs and Bach oratorios ordered from European publishing houses in the 1920s, octavos used by the Rockefeller Chapel Choir, the Motet Choir, and the University Chorus. “We have copies of all the programming that’s happened here going back forever,” he says, opening up a convocation program from 1948. “And then weekly Sunday services, who was at the pulpit, what pieces were performed that day, translations, organ recitals.”

“I’ve lost a lot of time in here,” Dean says. And yet, as in much of Rockefeller, time not only vanishes in this room but also abides.—*Lydia Lyle Gibson*



Charis Eng was practicing translational medicine before it was a term.

GENETICS

Permutate

Charis Eng, AB’82, PhD’86, MD’88, discovers key genetic markers linking cancer and autism.

Some people have trophies; geneticist **Charis Eng**, AB’82, PhD’86, MD’88, has empty wine bottles arranged on a high shelf in her office at Cleveland Clinic’s Lerner Research Institute.

The budget-minded Seaview Brut and Roeder Estate hark back to the late 1990s, when Eng and her colleagues at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute toasted her discoveries around *PTEN*, a gene linked to a tumor-causing disease called Cowden syndrome. “We were poor then,” says Eng, the chair and founding director of the Cleveland Clinic’s Genomic Medicine Institute, with a twinkle behind her silver-rimmed glasses.

Rouge Homme 1985, an elusive claret, was poured in honor of findings on *RET*, another tumor-related gene. Eventually, confesses Eng, “we published so many papers that I stopped this. I said, ‘If we drank a bottle every time we published a paper, we’d be drunk all the time.’”

Postdoc work at the University of Cambridge, where Eng was the lone

woman in a sea of men, spawned her interest in the grape. In England the drinking culture was huge, she says. “The old boys wouldn’t even collaborate with me if I didn’t know my wine.” So she began reading *Wine Spectator* and going to free wine tastings at local shops on Saturdays. “So, I’d read and taste. After one year, they said, ‘Boy, you’re so good we want to invite you to the wine committee.’ That’s the committee that picks wines for the college. It’s a huge deal. Unfortunately, they tasted on Mondays at 10 a.m. But I’m like, I’m in the middle of my work!”

An effervescent presence in the church-like halls of Lerner Research Institute, Eng has made a name for herself with her discoveries of several key genetic links to Cowden syndrome, a disease characterized by the spread of benign tumors.

Cowden patients with the *PTEN* mutation have much higher incidences of colon, thyroid, and breast cancers. In the 1990s Eng discovered the first *PTEN* gene mutation associated with Cowden. Later she and her research team found that patients with the *PTEN* mutation and an epigenetic alteration called *KILLIN* have even higher cancer risks.

Eng’s findings have led to early screening for Cowden patients who carry the *PTEN* or *KILLIN* mutations. For instance, thyroid cancer tends to show up in *PTEN* patients at