

# Eastman musicians take show to schools

BY STAFF WRITER

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The chamber music quartet settled into their seats and launched into a piece by 19th-century composer Bedrich Smetana.

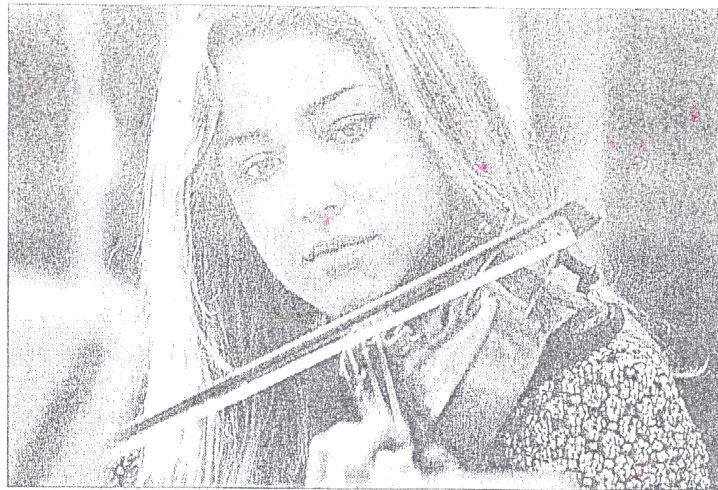
And the audience — not natively dressed grownups but eighth-graders in jeans and Timberland boots — watched and listened in rapt attention.

One day a year for the past four years, Eastman School of Music chamber musicians have played classical music for a decidedly nontraditional audience — local schoolchildren.

"It's nice," said 13-year-old Jefferson Middle School student Magdiel Matinas. "It relaxes you."

For Eastman students, the Music For All program is an exercise in dealing with the changing face of chamber music, said David Beauchesne, assistant director of Eastman's arts leadership program.

"The standard performance practices of chamber music — walking out on stage, performing, bowing and leaving — that's becoming more infrequent," he said. "Chamber groups are being asked more and more to perform in front of



JAMIE GERMANO staff photographer

Violinist Heather Badke, an Eastman School of Music student, plays for Jefferson Middle School students yesterday.

more diverse audiences."

The National Endowment of the Arts even has a rural residency program with the aim of bringing chamber music to rural America.

For some of the Jefferson eighth-graders, it was a dose of cultural broadening, said music teacher Deborah Wachspress. "Most of these students have not had the opportunity to see classical music live . . . or any live performance at all. Unless the new generation listens to it, there's not going to be — and I hate to use these terms — a market for it."

More than 140 Eastman students performed yesterday at area schools — from Irondequoit High School to City School 58 on University Avenue.

In between pieces at Jefferson, students peppered the musicians with questions about their instruments and the

music, about the cost of attending the Eastman School (tuition is slightly more than \$21,000 a year) and how much effort musicianship takes (four or so hours of practice a day, minimum).

"Music is so foreign for a lot of people," said Eastman master's student and violinist Sonya Williams, 22. "We really enjoy telling them about it . . . to sort of connect them to it."

The musicians also had the challenge of capturing the attention of the few students who gazed out the window or put their heads down on their desks.

Amiyra Muhammad doesn't play an instrument now. But the Eastman demonstration was so inspirational that she's ready to practice six hours a day, she said.

"I want to play some instrument," the 14-year-old said. "It looks fun." □