



What's in a brass quintet? Second graders at Rochester's School #15 found out—and got to peer into the depths of the tuba. Hornist Juliann Welch and tuba player John Elliot are pictured. Note the good advice on the sign above the cupboards!



Eastman Community Music School's award-winning High School Jazz Band (directed by Howard Potter) visited the Boys & Girls Clubs of Rochester. Pianist Nefetari Pinnock and bassist Jim Munch play for a crowd in the bleachers.

MUSICIANS ON A MISSION

For the past ten years, Eastman students have given their music to all

By David Raymond

"We'll show you how high we can play—get ready to cover your ears!"

"Bassoon players use their thumbs a lot. So if you play video games all afternoon and your mom asks, 'Why aren't you practicing?', you can say, 'I am!'"

"While we're playing, imagine a pirate story—this part has lots of churning waves and seasickness."

THESE ARE NOT statements you usually hear musicians make during a concert. At an Eastman "Music for All" presentation, they're not unusual at all. The audience could be teenagers in a school gym, senior citizens in a hospital, or—in the case of the Destino Winds whose members made all the above remarks in a recent "Music for All" performance—toddlers and their parents at a Barnes & Noble store.

In March, Eastman's "Music for All" program celebrated ten years of bringing chamber music to—well, if not to *all*, at least to—people and places that seldom hear live classical music.

In 1985, Jon Engberg, then Associate Director, proposed that each Eastman student develop a project, "the intent of which would be to initiate or foster an interest in music in an audience ... which does not normally attend concerts." The presentation was to be held somewhere outside the confines of Eastman where concerts are not normally held, and would have "as a significant element discussion by the presenter about the music, the instrument(s), the performers, the composer, etc." The mission: to help build a new and receptive audience for classical music.

Ten years later, a pilot project was directed by Concert Manager Andy Green and Professor of Harp Kathleen Bride. "Music for All" (a name suggested by Professor of Viola John Graham), recruited eight student chamber music groups to perform locally at a school or community site.

The program grew steadily: last year, Music for All sent 42 chamber music groups out into the community, performing 84 concerts for 2,000 people, from preschoolers to senior citizens.

The program's tenth anniversary year kicked off with the Ying



Music among the books: after the Destino Winds' Barnes & Noble Storytime, preschoolers and parents got an up-close and personal look at the flute (played by Hilary Abigana). This was one of nearly 50 free Music for All concerts this spring.

Quartet in two “Music for All” concerts at Rochester’s Strong Museum. On Tuesday, March 22, “Music for All Day,” Eastman chamber groups presented interactive programs at elementary, middle, and high schools around Rochester, followed by nearly 50 more free performances from March 26 to April 10 at non-traditional concert sites: nursing homes, libraries, college campuses, and bookstores. It all added up to the most extensive and comprehensive music conservatory outreach program in the country.

“Eastman is currently the only conservatory that requires chamber music students to participate in community performances as part of their curriculum,” explains Elinor Freer, assistant professor of chamber music, who has coordinated the program since 2003. “Other music schools and conservatories around the U.S. see ‘Music For All’ as a model for training their students to play for new audiences, and for giving them opportunities to practice their skills by performing in the community.”

All brass, harp, piano, string, and wind chamber music groups are required to perform two concerts in the community during

the spring semester, one for a school-aged audience and one for an adult audience.

This training begins with a seminar in January, as a young professional chamber music group demonstrates the skills necessary to connect with audiences of all ages. In February, the student groups prepare their own school and community presentations under the guidance of Eastman faculty members. They finally take their shows “on the road” in the spring.

Barnes & Noble may not be Carnegie Hall, but “playing down” to a Music for All audience is no more an option than talking down to it. The students’ playing is top-notch (of course), the patter is engaging, and the music can be surprising; for example, the Destino Winds played very grown-up music by Paquito D’Rivera, Nielsen, and Villa-Lobos, and the toddlers loved it.

“Music for All’ is designed to help build audiences, while helping our young artists realize that there is more to a great performance than just mastering the music,” says Freer. “It is a program well worth celebrating.” And, as our photos prove, worth enjoying.