

Eastman hits the heights

MAY 28 MARKED THE FIRST MILESTONE IN the construction of the Eastman School's new addition: the topmost beam was placed on the structure, indicating that the project has reached its maximum height.

The great event was celebrated by Pike Construction with a longstanding tradition in high steel ironworking: a "topping off" ceremony, a popular practice in Europe and America in which the ironworkers and other dignitaries are invited to sign the girder (painted white), which is then hoisted into place with a small evergreen tree (symbolizing good luck and endurance) attached.

The festivities included words from University President Joel Seligman, Eastman Associate Dean Jamal Rossi, and Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra CEO Charles Owens—and this being Eastman, the celebration included music: a percussionists' jam session performed on the beam itself, and then a brass fanfare as the girder made



In May, Pike Construction workers were on top of the world—or at least on top of the Eastman School.

its way up to the top. Everyone present was invited to sign the beam, beginning with longtime supporter of the project Betty Strassenburgh (BM '52).

The addition at the corner of East Main and Swan Streets, which will include a new recital hall, a recording studio, and classrooms, is scheduled to open in the fall of 2010.



Besides its Eastman Theatre production of Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro* (see p. 8), Eastman Opera Theatre had a busy semester, with four different productions in the Opera Studio. One actually was at the tail end of the fall semester: a December double bill of Jake Heggie's *For a Look or a Touch* and Poulenc's *Mamelles de Tirésias* (shown here), directed by Master's student Jacob G. Allen. An adaptation of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* followed in January. After *Figaro*, there was a classic American musical in May: Kander and Ebb's *Cabaret*, directed by Master's student Leah Arington.



Eastman instrumental students brought hands-on chamber music to kids in Rochester schools.

Eastman gives back to Rochester

Between March 30 and April 17, Eastman student ensembles offered their annual Music for All presentations of chamber music to the Rochester community—in classrooms, libraries, stores, and other public places. Eastman is still the only music school in the country offering such an extensive musical outreach program, for which students and faculty members spend months preparing. Music for All was only one part of a spring semester marked by much "giving back" from Eastman to Rochester. The School (along with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra) took part in the Orchestras Feeding America promotion of donations to local food pantries, and Eastman students and staff also volunteered at the nearby St. Martin's soup kitchen for the homeless.