

Quartet brings 'Truck Stop' on tour

By DAVID STEINBERG
Journal Staff Writer

As with some musicians who tour, the members of the rock-infused string quartet ETHEL find that life on the road can be a mixed blessing.

"The performing, touring career is a wonderful one. You're lucky to travel and meet all kinds of people, visiting cities," ETHEL's cellist, Dorothy Lawson, said in a phone interview.

"But it's often a very superficial experience. You see and experience anything between the airport, the hotel and the concert venue, but not very often much more than that."

To enrich their experience as 21st-century troubadours, the quartet has created the Truck Stop tour.

That concept has ETHEL working on and off the stage with musicians and students in communities and even regions where they're performing.

While the quartet is in Albuquerque for its Friday, March 28, concert, it will



ETHEL performs Friday in Albuquerque along with Taos Pueblo musician Robert Mirabal.

apply the Truck Stop concert to get together with Taos Pueblo flutist Robert Mirabal.

"He will be performing with ETHEL in the concert," Lawson said. "And we'll be working with him for two days, exploring each other's material for a long-term collaboration."

Mirabal and ETHEL also may record together,

according to Joseph Franklin, executive director of Chamber Music Albuquerque.

Franklin connected ETHEL with Mirabal, whom he's known since inviting the flutist to do a residency at an Indian reservation in Montana.

Truck Stop originated several years ago when the quartet was at the Grand

If you go

WHAT: ETHEL with special guest Robert Mirabal

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 28. A free preconcert lecture will be held one hour before the concert.

WHERE: Simms Performing Arts Center, Albuquerque Academy, 6400 Wyoming NE

HOW MUCH: \$22 in advance at the Chamber Music Albuquerque office in the Symphony Center, 4407 Menaul NE or online at www.cma-abq.org or call 268-1990. \$24 at the door

Canyon Chamber Music Festival.

The ensemble returns there each year for a residency program with a Native American composer with traditional classical composition training.

Together they meet with Navajo and Hopi students who bring them their own music, Lawson said.

"The kids are experienced with music but most haven't tried to format it in a way

that musicians with our background could pick it up and read it," she said.

"So a professional composer comes in and introduces them to techniques of writing music and reading and understanding music. ...

When we come in we read it with them and they tell us what they're hearing."

The Truck Stop Tour is also awakening new directions. Lawson said that through the auspices of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the quartet will have ongoing collaborations with Mirabal and three other artists — conjunto musician Eva Ybarra from San Antonio, Texas, slack key guitarist Jeff Petersen of Honolulu and bluegrass banjo player Dean Osborne of Hayden, Ky.

"We're inviting each to join us several times this year," Lawson said.

"We creating an opportunity for these widely disparate voices to work together and find common ground and for something really different and new to find its way in."