

# PIONEERLOCAL

## String quartet, drumline join forces

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The words "Juilliard" and "string quartet" do not normally conjure up images of truck stops or waitresses at a roadside diner. But with ETHEL, comprised of four Juilliard-trained musicians who have chosen to go beyond classical music to an eclectic repertoire, a "truck stop" is their name for an interesting collaborative session.

And it doesn't get any more interesting than combining world-renowned ETHEL with the likes of popular Chicago group, Kaotic Drumline, comprised of Englewood youth who have achieved a good deal of fame from their performances at NBA and Chicago Sky games.

### Meeting of the music

"It's a classical urban mash-up," said Leslie Rodriguez, managing director for Dominican University's Lund Auditorium.

Rodriguez coordinated the collaboration of ETHEL with Kaotic Drumline in a first-ever residency project at Dominican University, which will culminate in a unique concert on Jan. 27 at Dominican's Lund Auditorium in River Forest.

"They will be making completely new music," said Rodriguez, "and with only really working together the week before the concert. But they are listening to each other's music, and there has been some preliminary work with the drumline. This opens up musical doors and brings communities together. It's an inter-cultural dialogue."

ETHEL, whose members have individually collaborated with artists such as Sheryl Crow, Gorillaz, Queensryche, Yo-Yo Ma and Lenny Kravitz, began their "truck stop

project" this year as a way to celebrate their 10th anniversary.

"We travel so much, and don't get to meet anybody," said violinist Mary Rowell. "With the truck stops, we find out about the music in other communities. We bridge gaps, open minds, and create new, wonderful music."

Ralph Ferris, ETHEL violist, added: "We're jumping into their world and they're jumping into ours. The truck stop project is about finding common links between people and music."

Jamie Poindexter, founder of Kaotic, and Temeka Walton, of Chicago, both part of Kaotic's "elite team" of seven, visited with ETHEL's members in New York City recently, to get acquainted and to explore musical connections.

### Tour guides

"It was great," said Poindexter. "Ralph showed us all around New York City, Times Square, and how to get to the Harlem and Brooklyn, it was real educational. He took us to a hockey game in Jersey. I just can't wait for the collaboration and concert -- it's gonna be a blast. Chicago and New York have different musical flavors."

Asked if the Dominican concert will have a "battle of the bands" element, Farris said: "Yes, but in the spirit of community, and showing our unique threads."

Added Rowell, who once played snare drum in her school band: "The common ground (between ETHEL and Kaotic) is in rhythm," she said. "We're definitely a groovy group. With Kaotic, movement is added to their rhythm."