



BillieAnne Raddcliffe, left, and Abbey Presson, played alongside the Boston String Quartet on the last day of its national tour, May 27. The group also worked with Cox musicians in classes for two days.

STACI DENNIS

Students get to make music with Boston Strings Quartet

By Staci Dennis
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For Abbey Presson, playing alongside the Boston String Quartet was a perfect way to cap off her freshman year at Cox High School.

"It was awesome," the 15-year-old said. "It's such an honor and privilege."

Cox High School hosted the Boston String Quartet on May 26 and 27. Orchestra students worked with quartet members during classes and workshops during the day.

The culminating event was a performance in a packed auditorium complete with Cox High School chorus members.

"We have been preparing for this for a month," said BillieAnne Raddcliffe, 17, a junior at Cox. "We got to learn different types of music and perform with a famous quartet."

Cox High School is one of 16 schools across the nation that hosted the Boston String Quartet. It was the last school on the tour, which was an interactive

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Abbey Presson, Cox High freshman

learning experience called the Xibus Tour.

The tour is no cost to students, thanks to two national organizations – the School of Groove and the Music Maker Foundation, which support live music and music education in local communities.

"The students bring a whole new energy to the music," said Ashley Summy, tour manager with the Boston String Quartet. "It's rewarding seeing the collaboration between the students and the members of the quartet."

Abbey said she learned how to use more control when playing her instruments, which include the cello and bass.

"I want to be a musician like them," Abbey said. "It was good to play with them so I can see what my life

will be like when I get older and I am doing the same thing."

The Boston String Quartet was formed in 2004 and performs its own arrangements of jazz, classical chamber music as well as rock and other genres.

The quartet has performed for former president George H.W. Bush, the Boston Ballet, made appearances on PBS and at the Los Angeles Music Awards.

The group has four albums, including one showcasing the talents of students from the Xibus tour.

"In just two days, you can really see growth of the students and that shows just how much they want to learn," Summy said. "We can't wait to kick off our next tour."

The Xibus tour will start again in November. Summy hopes to try and schedule a stop in the Hampton Roads area.

"We always love coming to this area," she said. "If we don't make it back on the next tour, we will in the future."

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