

# The Eatonton Messenger

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## String quartet ready to take up Plaza residency

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The Eatonton Messenger

EATONTON – The first of two performances to grace Eatonton and the Plaza Arts Center this fall featuring the Kazanetti String Quartet will be Saturday, Sept. 6.

The Atlanta-based group recently began its residency at the arts center, and is committed to bringing its love of music not only to the community but to Putnam County Schools as well.

Through a partnership with the school district, students at all three schools will meet the musicians and hear them perform prior to their scheduled concerts.

"This is the beginning of a long-term relationship between the school system and the quartet," said PCS Superintendent Jim Willis.

Willis, along with the board of education, are strategizing ways to strengthen students involvement in art and music.

Students need to learn reading, writing and arithmetic, but they also need to be exposed to art and music if



The Kazanetti String Quartet – from left, violinist Elizabeth Alvarez, violinist Michele Mariage-Volz, cellist George Butler and violist Julie Rosseter-Sweeney – will host its first brown bag concert at the Plaza on Friday, Sept. 5 at noon.

they are to become creative, innovative thinkers, Willis explained.

*"We're thrilled at the opportunity to be here, and we want to be involved in the growth of this community."*

ELIZABETH ALVAREZ  
KAZANETTI STRING QUARTET VIOLINIST

But continuing cuts to school systems' budgets are making it difficult for some districts to fund these programs, resulting in a loss of art or music in the classroom.

Through its partnership with the quartet, Willis hopes that each student in grades kindergarten - 12<sup>th</sup> will have a chance to learn how to play a violin or violoncello.

"Kids in Putnam County deserve the same exposure to the arts that kids in Atlanta and Athens are getting," he said.

On Friday, Sept. 5 Kazanetti will perform for Putnam County Elementary School students, followed by a brown bag concert at the Plaza. Later that day, students from Putnam County Middle and High schools will attend the group's dress rehearsal at 1 p.m. at the arts center. The dress rehearsal is open to the public.

"We will be playing a variety of music, a little something for everyone," said violist Julie Rosseter-Sweeney.

Then on Saturday, Sept. 6 the group will host its first "musical petting zoo" in the lobby of the arts center at 6:30 p.m. According to Sweeney, the musical petting zoo allows children not only a chance to see the instruments up close, but also try out their musical talents by playing the violin, viola and violoncello.

"We thought this would be a good way for Putnam County students to see, touch and play the instruments. We will do them before each concert this year," Sweeney said.

The musical petting zoo is open to children of all ages.

Following the petting zoo, the group will perform in the auditorium at 7:30 p.m.

The Kazanetti String

Prior to its local residency, the quartet did a two year residency in Kansas.

"We decided to come here because it's closer to Atlanta, and the area has already shown its support of the arts by building this great center," Sweeney said.

Tom Rosseter, who spearheaded the Putnam Arts Foundation in its 10-year renovation project of the old grammar school, is Sweeney's father.

"We're thrilled at the opportunity to be here, and we want to be involved in the growth of this community," said violinist Elizabeth Alvarez. "We're not planning to play here for a short time then leave, we're give us a home where we can grow and work at reaching higher levels."

One of the group's long term goals while in Eatonton is to establish a summer chamber music festival. The festival will bring performers from across the nation to Eatonton to study and perform with the quartet, Alvarez said.

Quartet has played together for almost 10 years.



Julie Rosseter-Sweeney, violist for the Kazanetti String Quartet, practices in the auditorium of the Plaza Arts Center. The quartet's first performance is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 6 at the arts center.



Violinist Michele Mariage-Volz rehearses with the Kazanetti String Quartet at the arts center during one of the quartet's visits to Eatonton. The Atlanta-based group recently began its residency at the arts center.