



RHYTHMS

June 15, 2009

marks the end of this academic school year. School will resume on August 24, for the 2009-2010 school year.

Summer at Ellington: This summer, Ellington is serving as a host site for Mayor Fenty's Summer Youth Employment Program. We will also be hosting a summer youth music camp June 24th through August 7th, 9:00a.m. to 1:00 p.m. daily. The camp is for instrumental students, 12-18 years old, who have some experience in playing either a brass, woodwind, string or percussion instrument. The program is designed to provide master classes, private lessons as time permits, and group performance experience in either the Wind Ensemble or Full Orchestra, all at no cost to the students.

All interested parents and students please contact either Mr. Eric McMillan at e14mill@aol.com or Mr. Isaac Daniel at ikedaniel@aol.com, or by phone at 240-461-8040.

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On June 4, 2009, our very own Aaron Clay '08, performed at a private reception held by Vice President Joe Biden, his wife Dr. Jill Biden, and their guests. It was truly an honor!

**ROBERTA FLACK HITS A HIGH NOTE AS THE 34TH
COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS SPEAKER**



Iconic songstress and educator, Roberta Flack, was the 34th Commencement Address speaker at the Ellington School of the Arts June 4th graduation ceremony. Ms. Flack, who attended Howard University and taught English in the District, sung and produced several top ten love ballad hits in the seventies and eighties. During this period, she sold several million albums and in 1999, received a Star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame for the impact she made in the music industry.

During her delivery at the Commencement, Ms. Flack reminded the 106 graduating seniors not to give up on their dreams. "Finish your aria, Finish your score, Get that Pulitzer!" were the assuring charges to a captive audience. Ms. Flack also engaged her message with the audience when she showed up her hip-hop skills, and rapped in cadence about the importance of education and the value of the arts in our society.

The seniors, their families, and the school staff were uplifted by Ms. Flack's words of wisdom. Her delivery set the tone for the remaining diploma ceremony and performances. For every named accomplishment and achievement Mr. Pullens shared with the audience, we noted how Ms. Flack took in his every word onstage with an endearing nod and a glowing smile, especially after his peppering several of her song titles in his speech. As Mr. Pullen noted with pride, most of the 2009 graduating seniors were accepted into some of the nation's top four year colleges and received an aggregate \$ 2.8 million dollars in awarded scholarships.

Although she still sings before live audiences, Ms. Flack now spends most of her time at the Roberta Flack School of Music at the Hyde Charter Center in the Bronx, a program she founded a few years ago.

Photo: Head of School- Rory Pullens, Roberta Flack, and Ellen Copley, Executive Director of the Ellington Fund

**STUDENTS PERFORM AT THE WHITE HOUSE
JUNE 15TH AND JUNE 29TH**

For over 10 years, the New Washingtonians have been performing in the District. Each year at Ellington, up to 30 students are chosen as New Washingtonians and receive intensive training every morning before the regular school day to augment their regular instrumental classes, and for public performances. Their performances have enabled the New Washingtonians to earn a solid reputation and high praise, now even in the highest places in the District.



Davey Yarborough's New Washingtonians have been invited to perform at the White House June 15th. This invitation comes at the end of the school year following several hundred morning clinics and public performances in the District during the 2009-'10 school year. At the White House, the New Washingtonians will combine dialogue and music to educate the audience about jazz history and its evolution in the United States. At the invitation of Michelle Obama, the New Washingtonians will perform again at the White House on June 29th.

Photo: The White House

GW PRESIDENT JAMS WITH ELLINGTON STUDENTS



Ellington is fortunate to have some pretty significant partners - the Washington National Opera, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and The George Washington University. GW president, Steven Knapp, recently stopped by for a tour of Ellington and much to our surprise, ended up jamming with Ellington students on the drums. We learned that Dr. Knapp is a percussionist in his own right and when he came to the drum class, he couldn't resist the temptation to play! GW helps Ellington in many ways -- from tuition discounts for Ellington faculty and staff, to

tutoring for Ellington students, to public relations and publicity assistance for Ellington performances, to master classes and a whole host of other services. We appreciate the time that many of our donors and friends take to come tour the school and see the kids in action. That kind of support is what keeps us all going here at Ellington!

If you're interested in taking a tour or would like to discuss partnership and contribution

possibilities, please contact Ellen Copley at ecopley@ellingtonarts.org.

Photo: Steven Knapp, President of The George Washington University

LITERARY MEDIA ENDS THE YEAR WITH A BANG

Ellington's Literary Media Department has lots to brag about as it comes to the end of the school year. Mark Williams, chair of the department, recently received a Surdna Arts Teachers Fellowship which will allow him to travel to Oviedo, Spain this summer to work with Arturo Castro of Teatro Margen.



Literary Media students claimed the winning spots for Poetry and Fiction, Second Place in Essay Writing, and an honorable mention in the Fiction writing category at the Larry Neale writing contest, one of the top writing competitions in the DC metropolitan area.

Ellington is deeply proud of Ramona Santana, Maya Upshur Williams (Ellington's 2009 Valedictorian), Evan Odoms, Demicia Clark and Caroline Hall.

Also from Literary Media are seniors Diamante Dorsey, Allantra Lewis and Michael Wood—the newly selected members of the DC Slam team, which performs both locally and nationally. We shouldn't forget to mention former students and mentors Liana Castro and Tierra Rich. And yet another award went to freshman Cara Racin in an essay contest sponsored by the DC Chapter of the Women's Federation for World Peace.

Photo: Mark Williams, Chair of the Literary Media Department

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