

CARNEGIE PERFORMER: Music fills the world of Edwardsville High School's Kathleen McFarland

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville High School senior **Kathleen McFarland** has an ambitious goal to spread her love of music to every country across the world.

As a concert violist/violinist/bass player, she has performed all over the United States. Kathleen has also performed in Ireland, Switzerland, Austria and Austria and hopes to soon tour through many other countries.

Kathleen is the daughter of **Kerry** and **Kamilla McFarland**.

This past weekend at **Carnegie Hall**, the famed music house in New York City, she performed as principal viola of the **Honors Performance Series**. The series brings

together talented high school students from around the world to perform at Carnegie. Students are chosen through a selective audition process and over the course of five days they rehearse and perform under the direction of world-renowned conductors.



Edwardsville High School orchestra director **Victoria Voumard** traveled with Kathleen to New York City and said she couldn't be more proud of her student for the national recognition she received.

"Kathleen represented the **Edwardsville School District** and **Edwardsville High School** well," Voumard said. "I am grateful for the outstanding support of the district and Edwardsville Orchestra boosters. We have a premier performing arts program in District 7 because of highly dedicated directors and students that strive to achieve remarkable goals."

Kathleen said music has been an extensive part of her life since she was 5 years old.

"I have taken music lessons and before that, I grew up curiously listening to my brother play his violin," she said. "Whether I am playing violin, viola, or bass, there is nothing I would rather do with my time. I have met many unforgettable people who have helped me grow not only as a musician, but as a person, too."



Kathleen said her trip to play at Carnegie and visit New York City is one of the highlights of her young life.

“In New York, I lived through experiences I had once thought I would only dream of,” she said. “I got to see **Phantom of the Opera** on Broadway, which was a thrill to me because I have never seen the play, though I played in the pit for it. Also, I got to cruise New York City on a private yacht while watching the Chinese New Year fireworks exploded above the beautiful city. It was breathtaking. I have never seen fireworks so bright and enormous in my life.”

Performing at Carnegie Hall is something most professional musicians dream of and it didn’t disappoint Kathleen.

“Walking into the same building where Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikowsky and Gustav Mahler once stepped foot in is an incomparable experience,” she said. “The actual final performance in Carnegie was breathtaking. I had never felt so alive in my life. At one point, the whole orchestra put their bow on the string then forcefully pulled in unison, and the vibrant chord hit the back of the room then bounced once again to our ears and vanished into the still air.”



Kathleen said it was difficult to put her emotions that she felt during that performance into words, but she smiles wishing she could relive that moment over and over again.

“I will never get enough of it,” she said of performing at Carnegie. “I honestly love what I do, performing, and I wouldn’t change that for the world.” The Edwardsville musician said she started playing viola when teacher **Linda Bristol** needed another violist so it would even the sound out in a two-part duet.

“I finally decided to pursue viola in high school so I could be part of both orchestras,” she said. “As I was learning more about the viola and the different techniques between the violin and viola, I fell in love with it. It has such a deep, vibrant and warm sound and is too often overlooked.”

Kathleen said there have been many who have inspired her to bigger and better things with music.

“Linda Bristol has supported me and every musical decision I have ever made in my life,” Kathleen said. “She is family and I would never have never followed the musical passion without her. **Laura Reycraft** was my first viola teacher and she is phenomenal

and a breathtaking musician. Without her, I would not be a member in the **St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra** and definitely would have never made it this far



on viola without her. I started lessons with **Chris Tantillo** when Laura was on leave and he drives me to the best of my ability, expecting nothing less.”

Kathleen said as a child, everyone has someone they look up to in a band or group. For her, her biggest inspiration was the instrumental group “**Fiddleback**.”

“I was Fiddleback’s biggest fan,” she said. “If I knew I would playing on Victoria Voumard’s viola with her as my high school teacher, I would have cried tears of joy.”

The young musician said being a part of the Edwardsville High School orchestra program has been an amazing experience.

“We have an incredible teacher in Victoria Voumard,” she said. “The program is supported by the fabulous Edwardsville Orchestra Boosters as well as the Edwardsville High School faculty.”

For Kathleen, much of her passions in life gravitate toward music.

“It is my language of choice,” she said. “The sound of music filling a room is a lifestyle I have come to know well. For the most part, I am talkative and have my opinions, but when words fail, music speaks.”