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Northeastern a cappella group performs for Obamas at White House

Posted by Matt Rocheleau December 20, 2013 03:28 PM

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(Courtesy photo via Northeastern)

The Nor'easters student a cappella group pose for a photo at the White House, where they performed for President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama.

By Matt Rocheleau, Boston.com Staff

President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama surprised a Northeastern University a cappella group this week when the two unexpectedly showed up to a White House holiday party to watch the students sing.


All 15 members of [The Nor'easters](#) traveled to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. to perform for guests at a holiday party, but the group was never told, nor did any of them expect, to sing for the Obamas.

"We were all in shock," Jessie Litwin, the a cappella group's business manager, said, according to a [press release](#) from the university.

The group had been asked to prepare a special 60-second performance in addition to their main 20-minute set, which included holiday songs and a few contemporary pieces, the release said.

David Corzier, a senior and president of the group, had figured White House officials requested the shorter performance so they could film it for future use.

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When the group finished their main set, they were told the Obamas would be stopping by to watch the next performance.

“We were speechless,” Crozier said.

But fortunately, they found their voices.

“I think everyone was too honored to be there to feel nervous,” Litwin said. The group sang an arrangement of “Joy to the World,” which Litwin said the Obamas seemed to enjoy.

“They were dancing to the music,” she said.

“[The president and first lady] were awesome and so friendly. When we were done singing, they talked to us and asked how finals went,” added Litwin. “They shook all of our hands. It was so cool.”

The group also said [via Facebook](#) that they got to play with the First Family’s dogs, Sunny and Bo.

Since winning the [International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella](#) earlier this year, the a cappella group has traveled more for performances, the university release said.

“That win has led to some amazing opportunities,” Crozier said.

Students in the group learned about the opportunity to perform at the White House earlier this semester from fellow Northeastern student Klevis Xharda, who was working on co-op in the White House Social Office, according to university officials.

The Nor’easters practiced every day for a month to prepare to sing at the White House. “We treated the White House performance as the final for our group,” said Crozier. “It was just an incredible end to the semester for us.”

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com. Looking for more coverage of area colleges and universities? Go to our [Your Campus pages](#).

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