



**Esteban LaRotta**

Brûlé, and LaRotta live in Montréal, while Tobie Miller is currently finishing a diploma in Medieval performance at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Switzerland.

“We started as a chamber music group at McGill,” says Miller, “when Esteban LaRotta, the lute player, arrived in 2002. Sarah Barnes was singing a lot of Medieval music, and we thought Émilie Brûlé would be a good *vielle* player.” Miller’s background is playing recorder, and Barnes got her start on the modern trumpet.

“When I was a child I listened to a lot of Baroque music, but I played trumpet in school band and went on to do a degree in trumpet. At McGill I realized that early music was something that I could do, something I could study and make a career of.” Feeling limited by the repertoire for trumpet (both the early and modern varieties), Barnes turned to singing early music.

“Tobie and I had talked about one day doing some Medieval music, but we really didn’t know each other all that well, and we were sort of thrown

together by one of the teachers who was interested in putting together a Medieval group. When Esteban arrived from Columbia,” notes Barnes, “he was, in fact, the only lute player at McGill; if we were going to do Medieval music, we wanted to make sure we got him involved.”

After coaching and university-based concerts, the group began to solidify into something more than a chamber music group that lasted one term. “We found our own sound,” says Barnes.

Miller adds, “we liked it so much that we started doing concerts outside of school.” She is proud of the variety in La Rota’s audiences: “Lots of different people come to hear us: a really big mixture,” she says. “Young peo-

ple, working people, and older people as well. We see lots of teenagers and young people too.”

### **A nice groove**

Young people have, in fact, become central to their audience base. The group recently performed in Joliette, a town of

**“A lot of our concerts are not for early music crowds, but more for the general public, who won’t know all the history but may say, ‘Hey, I like how that sounds; it has a nice groove.’”**

**– Sarah Barnes**