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"If Music Be the Food..."

SATISFYING A NEED

by Paloma Capanna

Carol Rodland's biography as a classical musician is sufficiently impressive to be its own article. She earned bachelor of music and masters of music degrees from The Juilliard School. She won a Fulbright Scholarship. She has traveled to study, teach, and perform in Europe. She is an associate professor of viola at the Eastman School of Music and acted as co-host of 2012's 40th International Viola Congress. And, she plays on a viola created by Vincenzo Panormo dating back to 1791.

But what sets Rodland apart from other classical musicians is her chamber-music series "If Music Be the Food...", which brings together professional and student musicians to raise funds and food for Foodlink, a regional food bank based in Rochester. Last season, "If Music Be the Food..." collected 2,000 pounds of food and raised close to \$3,000 for Foodlink. Foodlink, in turn, distributes more than 16 million pounds of food annually through a network of 450 member agencies in a 10-county service area, including Monroe, Wayne, and Ontario counties.

Now in its fifth year, "If Music Be the Food" will present concerts October 13, January 26, and May 9, including performances by the Ying Quartet and special guest artist Robyn Schulkowsky, percussion (Berlin, Germany).

"It's scandalous to watch society overeat while our neighbors down the street don't have enough to eat," says Rodland. "More than 50 percent of children in Rochester live in poverty. We need to reallocate our resources." According to Monroe County's "Children's Agenda" website, the city of Rochester has the seventh-highest rate of child poverty in the nation with more than half of the children living in poverty.

Rodland grew up in Ridgewood, New Jersey, in a family of organists. Her parents were from Pennsylvania, which Rodland says meant, "Our work was never done and it was never good enough." Although her parents didn't have money, there was always support in the community, doors were always open, and Rodland grew up with gratitude.

As Rodland pursued her education and career, moving through New York City, Germany, and Boston, she was always seeking out the community food banks to which she could make donations.

When Rodland moved to Rochester in 2008 to teach at Eastman, she saw a medium-sized city, where it would be relatively easy to get her two passions — chamber music and feeding the hungry — to connect and get off the ground. Rodland ended up designing an education-service model that also connected her students.

"One person can't solve this problem," says Rodland. "We can do better as a group."

This year's three-concert "If Music Be the Food..." series begins on Sunday, October 13. The program includes works of Mozart, Beethoven, Verdi, and Joseph Bodin de Boismortier. Performing will be Rodland in a string quartet with violinists Renée Jolles and Markiyana Melnychenko and violist Wendy Richmann, and Mimi Hwang, cello, the Eastman Oboes, the Eastman Women's Chorus, along with a number of vocal soloists.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Eastman School of Music professor Carol Rodland heads up the "If Music Be the Food..." concert series, which raises awareness and donations for area food banks.

Sunday, October 13St.
Paul's Episcopal Church,
25 Westminster
Road7:30 p.m. |
Suggested donation |
ifmusicbethefood.com

Rodland, who says that the issue of unmet need to feed the hungry "brings out [her] mother-bear instincts," points out that there are "huge societal implications associated with hunger:"

"Children can't think if they are hungry. They can't function at their best. They can't begin to reach their potential," says Rodland.

Rodland's efforts are resulting not only in more concert-goers donating more and more food for the cupboards of Rochester's Foodlink (nonperishable food items are requested as concert donations); the initiative extends to Boston and Tampa, and is spreading to New Haven. In Boston, Grammy Award-winning violinist Kim Kashkashian organizes "Music for Food" concerts, most recently benefiting Food For Free. In Tampa, cellist Scott Kluksdahl serves as the artistic director for its version of "If Music Be the Food..." in collaboration with the University of South Florida School of Music, the Carrollwood Cultural Center, and Tampa Bay Harvest. (Kluksdahl will perform in Rochester in the concert on January 26.) Rodland says that the model is now also extending into New Haven, Connecticut.

Molly Goldman entered Eastman to double major in viola and in education the year that "If Music Be the Food..." was launched. At first, she didn't know much about the series except that it was a concert with faculty members to which she took canned goods. Seeing so many people come together for a concert, many bringing canned goods, was a "win-win" that hooked her right away.

"Poverty and hunger are problems. To be able to help in any way is good for everyone," says Goldman. "Sometimes, people are so focused in their own little world, and so this becomes a great outlet to be connected."

Goldman has done everything for the series, from donations to ushering to performing, and she will lead the charge for this season's final concert, which includes The Ying Quartet.

As more and more people find out about the concert series and attend, the donation bins overflow. "There's a reason music is one of the healing arts," says Rodland. "Not only for those who receive, but also for those who give."

Additional 2013-14 "If Music Be the Food..." Concerts

Sunday, January 26, 7:30 p.m. Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs St. Jan Opalach, bass-baritone; Peter DuBois, organ; James Thompson, trumpet; Jeremy Hill, violin; Melissa Matson, viola; Spencer Phillips, double bass; Carol Rodland, viola; Scott Kluksdahl, cello; Robyn Schulkowski, percussion; Michael Burritt, percussion; Eastman Percussion Ensemble

Friday, May 9, 7:30 p.m. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 25 Westminster Road. Kathleen Bride, harp; Robert Poovey, organ; The Ying Quartet; The Pollock Quartet

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