

## Enthusiasm for Taconic Music Debut

Music Review By Jim Lowe  
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MANCHESTER — Aesop is credited with saying, “A man is known by the company he keeps.” That’s good news for Taconic Music, which presented an impressive inaugural chamber music concert Saturday afternoon to a standing-room-only audience at the Manchester Community Library. Co-founders and directors Ariel Rudiakov and Joana Genova-Rudiakov, fine violist and violinist respectively, provided artistic direction for the Manchester Music Festival for the last 16 years. When their contract unexpectedly wasn’t renewed in September, the Rudiakovs decided that they wanted to continue serving their community with music and music education, and created Taconic Music.

The Rudiakovs are high-level professional instrumentalists, and the “company” they kept Saturday underscored that. Violinist Deborah Buck is first violinist of the Lark Quartet and co-director of Weston’s Kinhaven Music School, and cellist Sophie Shao is one of the country’s best-known chamber musicians, touring with her acclaimed Sophie Shao and Friends.

Both have performed often with the Rudiakovs at MMF, and are supporting them in their new venture.

Their expertise was showcased in Antonin Dvorak’s String Quartet No. 12 in F Major, Op. 96, called the “American” as it was written when

the composer was in Iowa. But the beautifully crafted Romantic work is also full of New World themes and flavors, as American as anything George Gershwin or Aaron Copland ever wrote.

Genova-Rudiakov led from the first violin chair, playing with a warm and beautiful lyricism, her reserve drawing the listener in, balanced by Shao’s overt expressiveness. Buck and Rudiakov plied the internal lines with flair, without drawing attention to themselves. While not as homogenous as an established quartet, Saturday’s performance was beautiful and inviting.

Newcomer clarinetist Todd Palmer joined the four in Carl Maria von Weber’s Clarinet Quintet in B-Flat Major, Op. 34. (Palmer, a world traveling soloist, commissioned Ricky Ian Gordon’s “Orpheus and Eurydice,” presented during the summer by Vermont Opera Project in Proctor.)

Palmer employed his charismatic virtuosity in this work he called operatic, with the clarinet as the singer, the strings as the orchestra. And Palmer really went for Weber’s virtuosity — not unlike the composer’s piano works — with gusto, but he relished the sensitive melancholy adagio. Not always refined, his performance was certainly exciting, matched all the way by the Taconic strings.

The other “company” the Rudiakovs kept Saturday was their incredibly enthusiastic all-ages

audience that packed the library’s Hunter Community Room. Perhaps the Rudiakovs were prescient with their program statement: “Our new Taconic Music endeavor embodies the experience, passion and humanity of making music for, with and among friends.”

*Taconic Music will present its New Year’s Eve Celebration at 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 31, at the Inn at Manchester, with the Taconic Chamber Players featuring singer Maxine Linehan. Tickets are \$25 for the concert, \$50 for concert and dinner.*

*Taconic Music is also presenting four concerts in December and January for families, mostly free; for information, go online to [www.taconicmusic.org](http://www.taconicmusic.org).*

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