

Eastman School of Music

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ROCmusic Hires New Executive and Artistic Director: Rachel Mills

ROCHESTER, NY (July 27, 2022) — ROCmusic, a collaborative and innovative arts-outreach program that engages children and their families in the experience of making and appreciating classical music, has hired Rachel Mills as its new Executive and Artistic Director, as of July 2022. Mills joined the ROCmusic faculty in January 2019 as lead cello teaching artist, arriving with a diverse background of music education and performance experience. Since then, the cello program has expanded to include both a beginner and intermediate track and has successfully produced an annual Cello Day serving the Greater Rochester community. In addition, Mills has been on the cello faculty at The Hochstein School since 2019.

Previously, Mills served as a secondary lesson instructor at Oberlin College, as well as an Oberlin College String Prep Department teacher for community students in the Oberlin, Ohio area. She has also held positions at the Roberts Community Music School through Roberts Wesleyan College and The Music Store, Inc. Mills is passionate about equal access to high level music education. She has thrice traveled to Panama to perform and teach with Cuarteto Girasol through the national concert association there. In 2019 and 2020 she was invited to perform and teach at the SA' Oaxaca Strings International Music Festival in Mexico.

“My experiences abroad reinforced the notion that anyone, no matter the age, background, or ability, can and should have the opportunity to learn to make music if the desire is there,” states Mills. “I am continually inspired by the determination and energy in our ROCmusic students. In stepping into this new role, I hope to continue expanding their opportunities for growth and immersion in the music world.”

Mills received a bachelor degree in cello performance from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. She continued higher education studies at the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague in the Netherlands where she was a recipient of a Holland Scholarship and an Excellence Scholarship. A native of Rochester, NY, Mills grew up through Hochstein's honors certificate program. She has been a featured soloist with the Hochstein Youth, Penfield,

and Genesee symphony orchestras, as well as performed on the “Live from Hochstein” radio show and Hochstein’s Spotlight on Faculty recital series.

Gary Palmer, Assistant Director and Dean of The Hochstein School, says “Rachel Mills is a long-standing member of the Hochstein community – first as a distinguished student as a Merit Scholarship recipient and Honors Certificate Program graduate, and more recently as a valued faculty member. Ms. Mills has already displayed her dedication to ROCmusic as a teacher in the program, and it is exciting to see her moving into the leadership role. ROCmusic will benefit tremendously from her wealth of experience as an educator and performer, as well as her commitment to the Rochester community.” Hochstein President & Executive Director Hilary Field Respass adds, “I’m so pleased to see Rachel Mills moving into this new role – especially as a Hochstein alum – and look forward to collaborating with her in this incredibly important work.”

Curtis Long, President and CEO of Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, notes, "It is fantastic to see someone with extensive experience in the Rochester music education world--both as student and teacher--taking this leadership role. Great things have been happening in the ROCmusic program and we are excited to see where Rachel Mills takes the program from here ."

Jamal Rossi, Joan and Martin Messinger Dean of the Eastman School of Music, says,“Rachel Mills’ appointment signifies a new and exciting chapter for ROCmusic. Rachel’s previous work with ROCmusic, her ties to the Rochester community, as well as her extensive teaching and performing experience, make her a true asset to ROCmusic families and the organization as a whole.”

“City of Rochester and the Department of Recreation and Human Services is pleased to welcome Rachel Mills to the role of Executive and Artistic Director of the ROCmusic Program,” shares Dr. Shirley Green, Commissioner of Recreation and Human Services

ROCmusic is a partnership between The Hochstein School, Eastman School of Music (University of Rochester), Eastman Community Music School, Gateways Music Festival, City of Rochester, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Rochester City School District.

Established in 2012, ROCmusic recently expanded to all four quadrants of Rochester, giving every student a better opportunity to receive musical instruction. ROCmusic is looking forward, constantly working to better serve the community, and growing to serve more and more people in the city of Rochester.

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About ROCmusic

ROCmusic is an innovative arts-outreach program that engages children and their families in the experience of making and appreciating classical music, offering tuition-free classical music instruction and instrument lessons to students in grades 1-12 who reside in the city

of Rochester, NY. The program is designed to instill a love of learning, responsibility, respect, and academic success, ultimately positively affecting social change in our students and the communities surrounding them. Every gift made to the ROCmusic fund is a deductible donation that directly benefits student scholarships and the organization's operational cost. No previous musical experience or training is required and there is no charge for instruments, participation, or instruction. For more information please visit: <https://www.esm.rochester.edu/rocmusic/>

About Eastman School of Music:

The Eastman School of Music was founded in 1921 by industrialist and philanthropist George Eastman (1854-1932), founder of Eastman Kodak Company. It was the first professional school of the University of Rochester. Mr. Eastman's dream was that his school would provide a broad education in the liberal arts as well as superb musical training. The current dean is Jamal Rossi, appointed in 2014. About 900 students are enrolled in Eastman's Collegiate Division—about 500 undergraduate and 400 graduate students. Students come from almost every state, and approximately 20 percent are from other countries. They are guided by more than 95 full-time faculty members. Six alumni and three former faculty members have been awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music, and numerous alumni and faculty have received Grammy Awards. Each year, Eastman's students, faculty members, and guest artists present more than 800 concerts to the Rochester community.

About The Hochstein School:

The Hochstein School was founded in commemoration of genius and is dedicated to providing access to opportunity regardless of age, level of skill, ethnicity, or ability to pay. Hochstein's vibrant community of musicians, dancers, and supporters choose to come together to develop the ability to speak and communicate through music, dance, and expressive arts (music, art, and dance therapy). Established in 1920 as The David Hochstein Memorial Music School, today Hochstein serves approximately 3,500 students annually from a 12-county region surrounding Rochester, N.Y. and continues its commitment to the Rochester community by offering a variety of free and low-cost concerts and performances in the Hochstein Performance Hall, and locations around our city, throughout the year. For more information, visit www.hochstein.org.

About The Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO):

The **Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra** (RPO) has been committed to enriching and inspiring our community through the art of music since its origins in 1922. The RPO presents approximately 150 concerts and broadcasts a year, serving up to 170,000 people through ticketed events, education and community engagement activities, and concerts in schools and community centers throughout the region. Music Director Andreas Delfs joins the ranks of former notable RPO music directors, including Erich Leinsdorf, David Zinman, Mark Elder, and Conductor Laureate Christopher Seaman. Principal Pops Conductor Jeff Tyzik, now in his 28th season, has earned a national reputation for

excellence in pops programming during his tenure with the RPO. The RPO reaches more than 15,000 youth through its specific education programs.

About the City of Rochester, New York:

Located in western New York on the Genesee River and the southern shore of Lake Ontario, the City of Rochester, with a population of 208,046 residents, is the seat of Monroe County and the third most populous city in New York State. The metropolitan area has a population of almost 1 million people. Rochester combines small-town accessibility with big-city services and amenities. Amidst some of the most beautiful scenery in the United States, residents enjoy a housing market known for great bargains, short commute times, world-class cultural and entertainment offerings and a fast-growing innovation economy poised to thrive in the 21st century. A host of colleges and universities produce an educated workforce that drives the city's innovation and technology sectors. The city's rich history as a center for civil rights and social justice remains an important element of Rochester's legacy. Mayor Malik Evans is the city's 70th Mayor.