



Violin Students Play for the Hungry

By Rich Freedman

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She's not quite to the point of urging Vallejo to adopt the slogan, "Violins, Not Violence." Still, Cecelia Pierotti likes to point to the success of her students as an example of something good local youth is doing.

And, once again, the students behind the strings gather for a recital that benefits a local charity Sunday, Nov. 20, 3 p.m., at the Community Presbyterian Church.

This time, the Contra Costa/Solano Food Bank in Fairfield receives the expected \$500 to \$1,000 raised at the free event that includes a raffle, dessert auction and, of course, music under the theme "Dazzling Duets."

Beyond the bucks, Pierotti encourages an "admission charge" of a can of food and hopefully, she smiled, "something you wouldn't want to eat yourself."

Not that beets or duck fat aren't on the best seller's list. But taste and nutrition -- think peanut butter -- would perhaps be a better choice, said Pierotti, who almost swore -- not around the kids, of course -- that the 10th annual event was going to be her last.

"It's a lot of work and as my studio gets smaller, there's less people to help," Pierotti said. "I wasn't up for it this summer."

She figured without the endless legwork of fetching silent auction items, however, the show could go on.

"We don't have to hit the streets and beg the businesses," Pierotti said.

Fortunately, the 28-year Vallejoan added, some new students injected needed enthusiasm into the concert.

The economy, said Pierotti, has taken its toll. Her studio once boasted about 40 students. Now it's in the mid-20s.

"I just have to reconcile," she said, believing most parents cling to paying for a child's music lessons until times get too tough. Well, the point of no return has arrived.

One area family lost a source of income, said Pierotti, and had to cut back. Another had to pay for a child's college so another child in the family couldn't take lessons any longer.

"It makes me kind of shudder," Pierotti said. "But I understand where they're coming from."

Yet, the students that remain are talented, Pierotti said, including the youngest, 4-year-old Bianca Santos, who has taken lessons since May.

"She's rockin' it," Pierotti said. "She's really great."

Others expected at the recital include sisters Jennifer and Janessa Tibbot, who'll do a Bach piece, and Melissa Young, who joins Pierotti for a Leclair Sonata Duet.

Former Vallejo librarian Michael Senturia again composes a piece for the event, coming up with "Make My Minor."

Despite the scaled-down event, "we'll have a good product," Pierotti promised.

This time, she's not even thinking it'll be the final recital.

"You can't keep us down," she said.

If you go :

What: Violin recital by the students of Cecelia Pierotti

When: Sunday, Nov. 20, 3p.m.

Where: Community Presbyterian Church, 2800 Georgia St., Vallejo

Admission: Free, suggested donation of canned food; raffle, dessert auction available

Info: (707) 557-3897

