

Musician-conductor leads own orchestra

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biological University, in Southfield, in 1968. There, she studied for a semester before transferring to Schoolcraft College in Livonia to major in music. But she didn't begin organized, intense French horn lessons until attending the University of Michigan in her junior year.

NIXON GRADUATED with a music degree in 1972, only to have the hard-earned diploma revoked six months later when a professor claimed the straight-A student failed to take the final exam in music history. She was forced to accept an "incomplete."

"I was furious," Nixon said. "But it was his word against mine." Too proud to repeat the class, Nixon worked as a free-lance musician. She also began playing principal horn with the Michigan Opera Theatre.

She worked as a gauge designer for a Livonia firm before returning to the University of Michigan in 1984 to take the class needed to finish her degree. Ironically, waiting 12 years to repeat the class put her in the right place at the right time.

Being a performance major, the musician had to join the orchestra when she re-entered the university. Shortly after the semester began, she became enthralled with Professor Gustav Meier, conductor of the University's orchestra and opera. Coincidentally, the professor also turned up at the Michigan Opera Theatre that semester as the conductor for "The Magic Flute," an opera by Mozart.

"He inspired me," Nixon said. "He didn't just beat time. Through his body, I could see everything that was happening in the orchestra. Watching him, I decided I had to get out of the orchestra to study scores."

NIXON NOT only studied the music of classical composers, but she also started work on her master's degree in horn simply to study with Professor Meier. She even begged

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— Karen Nixon conductor

the Swiss-born professor to allow her in his conducting class.

And when she finally took the class shortly before earning her master's in 1988, she was convinced the remainder of her career would be in front of the orchestra. "I knew that I was never going to be satisfied playing just one line of music again," Nixon said.

The professor soon became her friend and mentor. And for the past three years, Nixon has assisted him with the editing and graphics of a textbook on conducting.

While working on the book, Nixon continually asks questions. The professor always supplies answers with grand examples that often turn into conducting lessons.

"I learned the craft of conducting long before standing in front of an orchestra," Nixon said. "The professor is enlightening."

AS A conductor, Nixon has trained herself to listen to the whole orchestra instead of only the horn section. When she plays in the orchestra today, she often misses her cues because she's listening for the high notes of the bassoon or violin.

"When you conduct, you feel like you're playing all of the instruments," Nixon said. "What's really thrilling is when you believe you're conducting the way Beethoven or Mozart wanted it."

Nixon's dream is to teach Professor Meier's method of conducting through private lessons at the college level. But for now, she's busy with Group du Jour, a 45-piece orchestra that she assembled and for which she conducts.

The group includes graduate students and friends from other orches-

tras. Like its name, Group du Jour changes from time to time, playing everything from the classics to jazz. What won't change is its conductor.

Group du Jour premieres at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 28, at the Marquis Theatre in Northville. Tickets are available at the theater (\$49-\$110) or at Belter's Jewelry in Plymouth for

\$10 (\$5 for students and seniors). The concert includes the music of Beethoven, Wagner, Rossini and Vivaldi. It will be Nixon's third public appearance as a conductor.

BESIDES CONDUCTING her own group, the Farmington Hills musician-conductor plays principal horn

with the Detroit Concert Band and the Detroit Concert Brass, a quintet she organized.

Her husband, Bill Lane, and her brother-in-law also play trombone in the group. Even her sister, Arlene, fills in on French horn when Nixon is conducting.

Nixon earned a specialist's in mu-

sic degree from the University of Michigan last year. This summer, she was invited to the Pierre Montoux Conducting School in Maine.

"I'm doing what I was intended to do," she said. "I'm convinced that I never made it to the symphony because I was meant to be a conductor."



SHARON LEMIEUX/Staff photographer

Joyce Stowell (left) of Northville displays rugs and Sue Soborowski of Novi displays fabric-covered frames. Both will be exhibitors in the Community Center of Farmington-Farmington Hills' 18th annual arts and crafts show.

Art event aids elderly

Original signed etchings, lithographs, serigraphs, woodcuts, batik, oils and watercolors will be featured at a benefit art auction at 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1, at the Detroit Baptist Manor, Alpha Building, 20251 13 Mile, Farmington Hills. Auction proceeds will benefit the 61 elderly residents at Hawthorn Center, which is owned by Detroit Baptist Manor. Money will be used for most activities, events and equipment.

Artists represented will include Renoir, Picasso, Norman Rockwell, LeRoy Neiman, Joan Miro, Matisse, Chagall and others. Starting prices will range from \$25-\$45. There will be investment art at higher bidding.

All art is gallery quality, framed and matted, and ready for hanging.

Advance tickets are \$5. Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served. For more information, call 737-8830.

Arts and crafts show Saturday

More than 100 artisans from across the state as well as out of state will show off their finest works at The Community Center of Farmington-Farmington Hills 18th Annual Arts and Crafts Show.

The day-long show will be Saturday, Oct. 27 at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus.

Building H, Orchard Lake Road at I-96.

The juried arts and crafts show is one of the mainstay fundraisers for The Community Center, an independent, non-profit organization. The growth and success of the previous shows enabled the need for an off-site facility.

"Based on the caliber of artists the committee of jurors has selected, we expect the largest attendance ever," said a Community Center spokesperson.

The show will have a wide variety of new and returning artisans.

The event will take place at Oakland Community College's H Building, the gymnasium, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 27.

The admission charge will be \$1 per person and parking is free.

Light refreshments will be sold at the show.

For more information, call The Community Center at 477-8404.

Music group offers season of top stars

In a preview of his Dec. 5th Carnegie Hall concert, world renowned keyboard artist Eugene Izraelin returns to Cranbrook after 24 years for a performance with the Cranbrook Music Guild Chamber series on Thursday, Nov. 8.

Since his debut at 17 with both the New York Philharmonic and Philadelphia orchestras, he has played all over the world and with every important conductor.

A world-class artist and an American legend, he has made more than 30 recordings for Columbia, including the award-winning complete Beethoven piano trios with violinist Isaac Stern and cellist Leonard Rose.

The chamber series season opened Oct. 17 with the St. Clair Trio. After debuting in 1969 to critical acclaim by both audiences and critics, this major new Detroit-area ensemble has received favorable response from audiences and critics.

It brings together three well-known artists: violinist Emmanuelle Bosniert, Detroit Symphony concertmaster (the first woman named to that position in a major symphony); DSO assistant principal cellist Marcy Chanteaux; and pianist Pauline Martin.

The Guild's popular Christmas concert Tuesday, Dec. 11 features the Eastern Michigan University Chamber Choir. These young singers bring a repertoire that spans the centuries for this festive holiday concert. The Cranbrook student brass choir will again greet concert-goers outside the front door of Cranbrook House, playing ancient carols and motifs.

The Guild will host the Cavani String Quartet on Tuesday, Feb. 19. This on-the-rise young ensemble is winner of the prestigious Naumburg

Chamber Music Award in 1989 and first prize at both the Cleveland Quartet and Carmel competitions. Performances in Europe, Canada and the U.S. have garnered high praise. The quartet is currently in residence at Cleveland Institute of Music.

Two distinguished Michigan artists come to Cranbrook House for the Tuesday, March 19 concert with the Jelinek-Gurt Duo. Cellist Jerome Jelinek is a long-time faculty member at the University of Michigan and a former Detroit Symphony Orchestra member. Pianist Joseph Gurt teaches at Eastern Michigan and has appeared extensively in solo and ensemble recitals. Both musicians are well known in the Detroit area.

The April concert will feature Julie B. Lang, harpist, and winner of the Guild's Betty Brewster Scholarship. The annual award is given to an outstanding graduate student at U-M School of Music and serves to promote and support rising young music stars.

ALL CONCERTS are at 8 p.m. in the Cranbrook House Library. For the 39th year, Cranbrook Music Guild offers an intimate musical salon like those of centuries ago in the great houses of Europe and America. All concerts are followed by a candlelight reception in the Oak Room.

Cranbrook House is at 350 Lone Pine, Bloomfield Hills, across from Christ Church Cranbrook. Parking is in the church parking lot with shuttle bus service to the mansion door.

Memberships in the series are limited because of the small size of the library. Season tickets for the six concerts are \$65 each. For ticket information or a brochure, call 751-2435.

Epoxigraphs on view

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In 1988, Fred Myers discovered the ancient petroglyphs and pictographs in Utah. Since that experience, he has sought to preserve the ancient drawings and paintings through his art.

Myers creates metal sculptures from Corten steel, virtually indestructible, giving renewed life to the timeless art. His floor-standing sculptures of petroglyph figures range in height from 3 feet to almost 6 feet. Myers, who recently died, was from Colorado.

Arizona resident Susan Rist's "Modern Primitive Man" is 6 foot 3 inches. The metal pipe man is primarily black, except for the open circle forming the head, which has vibrantly colored en-

larged bolts set into the see through face. Rist's man retails for \$6,500.

Art at the Posner Gallery ranges from \$250 for an unframed piece to \$8,800 for a 3-D wall sculpture. "Basically, we try to look for unique work," Madeline Posner said.

When buying a piece of art for your home, Posner said let this rationale be your guide: if you're going to love it when you walk into the room, time after time.

Posner Gallery is at 32407 Northwestern Highway, Farmington Hills. Hours are Tuesday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; closed Monday.

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