

Brunch
serenade:
Karen Nixon
Lane leads
the Farmington
Philharmonic
Orchestra in
musical selections
at Sunday's
fund-raising
brunch in the
Botsford Inn.
The event
was a major
fund-raiser
for the young
orchestra.



JOHN STORMZAND/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Philharmonic orchestrates fun for families

By DIANE GALE
STAFF WRITER

You don't have to know a lot about classical music to enjoy orchestras.

And forget about leaving the kids at home for fear they might make a sound during the performance, according to Karen Nixon Lane, conductor, music director and promoter of the Farmington Area Philharmonic formerly known as Group du jour.

The philharmonic will perform Winter Fantasies Too at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 6, in Mercy Center's Dublin Hall, 26800 11 Mile about a half-mile east of Middlebelt.

"We encourage families to come with school-age kids, because that's our future," Nixon Lane said. "Last year there were people in the hall during intermission telling people to rush over and come to see us, before it was over."

"There is classical music that you can learn to like and have fun with. It's not quite as imposing as people think it is and it's approachable."

'We encourage families to come with school-age kids, because that's our future.'

Karen Nixon Lane
conductor, music director, Farmington Area Philharmonic

While the 4-year-old group still suffers an identity problem, that hasn't diminished expectations for this weekend's performance.

"We wouldn't be able to pick up the phone and say: 'Do you know there is a symphony in Farmington?' and have them say, 'Yes,' but we're getting there. More people hear us now. The community support is going to take a while."

Still, Nixon Lane is expecting 400-600 people for the repeat concert of last year.

"A good problem would be if there's no more room in the place," she said.

The players are a core group of professionals you might see at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Michigan Opera performances. When the group started, it was dubbed Group du jour, since the players changed

based on availability. Since that isn't true anymore, the name is fading.

"More and more we're the same people and basically they're the top freelance professionals in town," Nixon Lane said, adding that the orchestra is different from other community symphonies, because it doesn't mix amateurs with professionals. At one concert, for instance, all the first violins were concert masters from surrounding orchestras.

"By definition, a community orchestra is normally one who uses professionals to augment an amateur group," she said adding she hoped she didn't sound pretentious.

The Farmington Area Philharmonic is performing four concerts this season. Nixon Lane said she hopes to do a minimum of six concerts in the

new season starting in September. But the number of performances will depend on the support at concerts, donations and grants.

"The biggest response we get is people can't believe how good the orchestra is, and it's right in their back yard," Nixon Lane said. "They're sort of blown away about it. I think we have to let everyone know it's there. This is a very accessible group. It's not something they have to shy away from because they don't understand the classical."

Adult tickets for Winter Fantasies Too are \$12 general admission and \$10 for students and senior citizens. Family passes are \$45 for five people, which includes grandparents. Children 6 and under are free. Tickets are available at all Metrobank locations, Cookies, Catering and Carryout in the Muirwood Square at Grand River Avenue and Drake Road and at the door.

For more information, or if you want to be on a mailing list, call the Farmington Area Philharmonic at (810) 478-2075 or 478-6897.

Planner to help make money last

William Stewart, senior retirement planner at Lifetime, a financial planning group, will address the Monday, Feb. 7, meeting of the Farmington Chapter of the Older Women's League.



The meeting, which is free and open to the public, will be at 7 p.m. in the Farmington Branch Library, 23500 Liberty in downtown Farmington. Stewart, who specializes in

helping women plan their financial future, will discuss "Making Your Money Last a Lifetime." He will begin the evening with a short quiz, then describe the building blocks of a sound investment program for women over age 50. A question and answer period will follow and refreshments will be served.

For more information about the program, or for membership information on the Older Women's League, call Virginia Nicoll at 474-3094.

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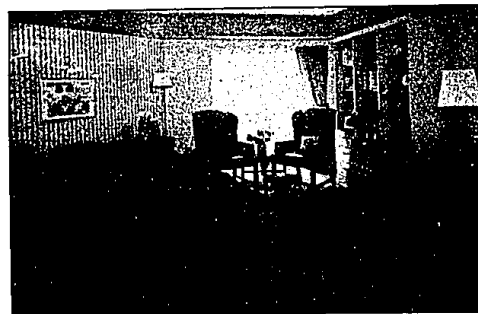
Date: Saturday, February 12, 1994
Time: 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
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