'Lefty' trades in horn for baton

For Name Nixon, being a left-handed woman in a job traditionally occupied by right-handed men has not been a handless, "If you please the musicians, the word spreads," Nixon said. "(Conducting) jobs come through musicians."

Conducting the Troy and Pontiac-Oakland Symphony orchestras, and the Farmington Hills-based Group du jour, has been a challenge, but not because of her

sex, she said. The challenge was to convince herself and then her college professor that she wanted to conduct and was willing to throw herself into the work. For Nixon, who had played the French horn for several years with the Michigan Opera Theatre and free-lanced with other orchestras, the idea of conducting was foreign, almost repulsive.

"I had no intentions of being a conductor," she said. "I had become sort of cynical shout my work. I would think about how

many notes I had to play and how many dollars I'd get. You sort of lose the whole reason you went into music in the first place.

But that changed when Nixon studied under Gustav Meljer at the University of Michigan and played for him in MOT's production of "The Magic Flute."

"That began my rediscovery of the reason I went into music," ahe said. "That was in 1980."

After much effort, Nixon finally convinced her mentor that she was more than a horn player. His

method of instruction focused on knowing the music so well, that conducting becomes an extension of the work, she said.

She had to know the music well for her first time conducting. "I had nover stood on a podi-um," she said. "Here! was con-ducting Beethoven's Seventh Symphony for my graduate re-quirement."

And as for being left-handed?
"Most people don't notice," sh

Orchestra

from page 1A

their talents to more popular

their taients to more personal telemes. For that reason, Group du jour combines classical and more contemporary music during performance. In its November performance, the group featured classical music that has been used in films such as "The Raging Buli" and "Moonstruck."

Little response

Little response
But so far, the response to the
group has been disappointing.
"I was impressed by two things
about their performance," said
Farmington Hills city councilman
and former Mayor Jon Grant. "I
was really impressed with their
performance. And I was impressed by how few people showed
up."

up."
That, vows Grant, must change.
He plans to help organize a performance around some sort of
party later this year. For now, he
and Nixon are hoping people simply attend a Group du jour concert.
"I've asked a lot of people if
they knew we had a symphony in
Farmington Hills." Grant said.
"They looked at me like I fell off a
Christmas tree."
Nixon, a Livonia native, has
been given a lot of support by her
husband, Bill Lane, a consultant
with Ford Motor Co. and an accomplished trombone player who
adds his talent to Group du jour.
Nixon's mother, Helen, and
older brother, Curt, have also
passed out filers and gathered
props for the South Seas motif of up."
That, vows Grant, must change.

Sunday's performance. Sister Cindy Reid helps with promo-tions and sister Arlene end her husband, Andy, perform in the

Strictly professional

Despite the help of "Team Nix-on," as she calls them, the group is strictly professional, something unique to Detroit area community

symphonics.

"Out of 26 community symphonies in the area, we're the only one made up solely of professional musicians." Nixon said. "They're from Ann Arbor, Toledo, Michigan Opera Theater and Detroit Symphony Orchestra. I know them all and I know what they can do."

can do."

Nixon, who jokingly refers to herself as the "Avis" of the family ("I'm second oldest and I try harder"), has been conducting for 10 years with the Troy Symphony and is also conductor and music director of the Pontiae-Oakland Symphony.

She would like to see Group du jour prosper in Farmington Hills, but named the group with the thought of not tying it down to a community.

"I called it Group du jour be-

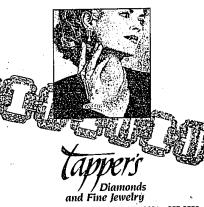
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