

Conductor from page 1A

Farmington Hills City officials, including Mayor Nancy Bates, City Manager Bill Costick and Councillman Jon Grant, who has helped promote the group, attended and were impressed. The audience included families and dress codes from tuxedos to T-shirts.

Nixon, who played with the Michigan Opera Theatre, said she has already had requests for season tickets for next year and is planning four concerts: "Buckaroo Holidays," with a country theme, planned for October; "Joy to the World," planned for December; a repeat of the "Winter Fantasies," which was an audience favorite; and "Once Upon a Time," which will feature music inspired by literature.

The name "Group du Jour" comes from the fact that any given group of professional musicians could take part in a given concert. The cost and the difficulty of having more than one or two rehearsals have been offset by having a quality, professional orchestra to work with, Nixon said.

Members are performers in such orchestras as the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra and



Karen Nixon: 'Part of our purpose is to educate.'

the Toledo Orchestra.

Nixon said the musicians enjoy the more relaxed community atmosphere, and the audience responds to the cozier venues of the Mercy Center and Farmington High School.

"I think the audience likes that informality," she said.

Nixon added that the "theme concerts" are designed not only to

entertain and teach, but to show that classical music should be approachable and enjoyable for everyone.

"I think that when people hear how these composers lived, they realize that they were ordinary people who faced the same problems we all do," she said. "This music should be enjoyed by everyone."

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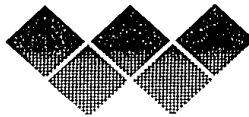
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