

ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS



LINDA ANN CHOMIN

Violinist happy about playing with DSO

It's been quite a whirlwind for Elayna Duitman since returning to America from Holland in August. After playing with the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra for just six months, she secured a chair in the second violin section of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

At age 26, the Canton musician already has earned a degree at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, lived and studied abroad — and is now performing under the direction of Neeme Jarvi.

"May 6 was our last concert with Jarvi," said Duitman. "He's a fabulous conductor."

We did Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and he was so clear. Landing the position wasn't as easy as playing with the internationally-known conductor.

After reading an ad in the *International Musician* in January, Duitman spent the next four weeks preparing for the DSO audition.

More than six weeks after performing her first concert with the DSO, Duitman still finds it incredible that she was chosen over nearly 100 applicants.

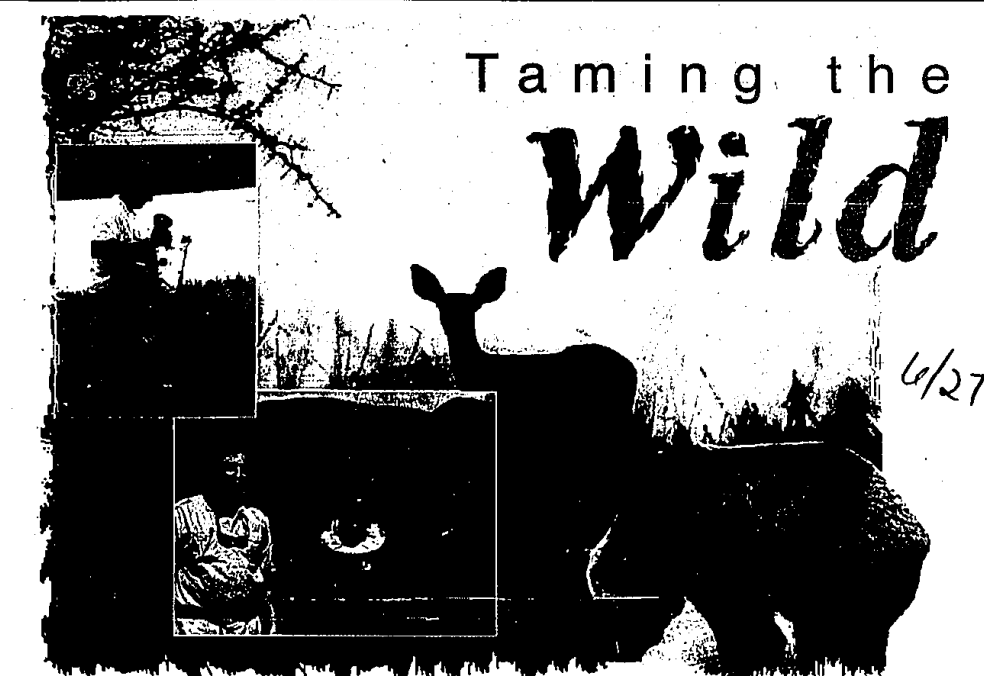
"I was really happy when they told me I got the position," said Duitman. "There were three rounds during the four days of auditions. I was the only finalist left but that didn't mean I got the job. Music director Neeme Jarvi still had to hear me. He can say this isn't up to my standards."

But Duitman was and she partly credits her early training for the success.

"At age four my parents found a good violin teacher so they decided it would be violin," said Duitman who was born in Florida and moved to Iowa at age 9. "My three-year-old sister and I began Suzuki. It's a great method because it teaches kids to use their ears and to learn everything by heart. I didn't learn to read music until about 7. You do it in a group and it's more fun and there are games. To start really young is a bonus. The earlier you start the better because it's harder to catch up."

By high school, Duitman was "pretty serious" about music, forging any of her thoughts about becoming an astronaut, doctor or ballerina. In her senior year at the New England Conservatory of Music, life would take a turn though. It was then she met husband-to-be, Zergen Velinge, while per-

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Filmmaker leaves documentaries for movie made in Michigan

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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Jim Jabara doesn't seem to mind leaving behind the elephants in Sri Lanka and panthers in Tanzania for the chance to bring a heart-warming story with a message to the screen. The filmmaker's traveled all over the world making documentaries for National Geographic, PBS and the Animal Planet. Now he's back home in Michigan to begin shooting a film about a little boy with cerebral palsy.



Switching locations: Filmmaker Jim Jabara leaves the wild behind to tell a fictionalized story about a little boy with cerebral palsy. Jabara is pictured during filming of projects with Michigan black bears, Asian elephants, and the Masai people in Africa for "The Golden Jackal."

Jabara's already put in plenty of leg work scouting locations in Plymouth, Brighton and surrounding areas in order to make the movie tentatively titled *Discovery on Blackbird Island* after a book by Johnnie Tuitel. Securing rights to the story, writing a script and finding investors are just a few of the tasks needed to lay the groundwork before filming begins in mid-July.

"I think you can make a good film anywhere but

it's hard in Michigan to pitch people," said Jabara whose public service announcement for Michigan's lion license plate can be seen locally. "Banks don't have good feeling about movies. It's a foreign subject to them."

But Jabara isn't about to give up on the project featuring a heroic-type character confined to a wheelchair. Jabara and wife Josephine believe in the film. Since founding Our Small Planet Films and Multimedia in 1991, they've produced award-winning movies around the world. It's time to tell a story with role models who set a good example for children. Jamie, the youngest of their three children, has cerebral palsy and is a hero to them.

Film plot

"It's about these kids discovering cats and dogs who were put there by a person working with an organization involved with stealing animals to sell them to laboratories," said Jabara. "Through a series of clues, they crack a pet theft ring. It's all about animal welfare and what Johnnie can't do but can do. There's not too many films where a kid with a disability can be a hero."

"There are really two reasons for making it," added Josephine, vice president of United Cerebral Palsy-Michigan. "There's a lack of movies that don't contain foul language and bad role models. I'm active in

schools and the parents complain about it all the time, and second, that you're a kid whether you have a disability or not."

"There are 500,000 people with cerebral palsy in the U.S. right now. We wanted to make a family feature film but it's been difficult to find someone with a disability, ages 11 to 14, with acting experience."

"They're still looking for a child to fill the role regardless of

acting credentials. Age is critical, the younger the better, because Jabara would eventually like to turn all four of Tuitel's books into films."

"We have someone in mind but we'd still like to find out if there's anyone with a disability with acting experience or a hidden talent to send in an audition tape," said Jabara.

Previous projects

Making this film may be the biggest challenge in Jabara's career so far, one he never envisioned while making videos of his band while a student at the old Plymouth High School on Main Street. In fact, it wasn't until after receiving a degree in environmental education 25-years ago that Jabara decided to go into television production.

From there it was on to filming *The Sloth Bear* for international distribution in the series *Wild Horizons*, *Asian Elephants: Wanted Alive*, and *Florida Panther*, co-produced with *Living Planet*.

Please see WILD, B3



DANCE

Dancers: Berlin-based Beata & Horacio Cifuentes, known as the King and Queen of Oriental Belly Dance, will perform their dance show "Egyptian Love Affair" on June 29 at the Clawson High School Auditorium. Local Middle Eastern-style dancers will also perform.



Elaborate dance

Forget Shakira and Britney, belly dance show is authentic, modest

BY LANA MINT
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Katie Johnston of Rochester discovered the art of belly dance by accident. Her mom had an old book on the subject that Johnston happened to stumble upon.

The teenage student enrolled in classes in Birmingham and now more than one year later will perform on Saturday, June 29 in an elaborate show featuring internationally acclaimed dancers.

The family-appropriate belly dance show at Clawson High School Auditorium includes special guest dancers Beata and Horacio Cifuentes of Berlin who are known as the King and Queen of Oriental Belly Dance (also known as Middle Eastern or Arabic-style dance.)

Johnston is excited about the show — and it's all because of a book owned by Mom.

"She never got into it, but I got really interested in it," Johnston said. "I've always wanted to be a performer... Belly dance is awe-

some. It's an expression of womanhood. It's art where the product is yourself... it's more natural than ballet, but the history of it is just as rich."

Forget pop stars Britney Spears and Shakira who've been belly dancing on stage in scantily-clad clothes for the last few years.

The show's sponsor and Johnston's instructor, Cedena Boukran, is bringing integrity back to belly dance, an ancient dance that cel-

Please see DANCE, B3