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Allegro Sinfonia celebrates 10th anniversary

Maria Jette will sing
in special concert

By TROY PIEPER
Sun Newspapers

Allegro Orchestral Association is celebrating its 10th birthday this year, and founder William Stuber has seen his wishes come true.

"I wanted to start an orchestra, so I could continue conducting in the Twin Cities," Stuber said. The San Francisco native moved here to study orchestra conducting as a graduate student at the University of Minnesota. During that time, he conducted the Minnetonka Civic Orchestra. When he graduated, he assembled players from around the metro into what has grown to a 60-piece volunteer orchestra.

"In the beginning, it was just my own motivation, spending endless hours on the phone determined to get people here," he said. He said that somehow he enlisted musicians that make up a "very high level orchestra," and their talent attracts other talent, so now musicians are recommended to him.

He said the orchestra fits a need in the region, because there are people who

want to play in an orchestra with other skilled musicians and there are people in the community who enjoy classical music. A few times each year Allegro Sinfonia performs at Wayzata Community Church, where it is orchestra in residence. The concerts are free and open to the public.

But the symphony is only one component of Allegro Orchestral Association. The association also sponsors a two-week Annual Orchestra Camp in June for youth. Staff members are all professional musicians, including Stuber and others like the conductor of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies.

Stuber said that Allegro tries to reach all audiences in the western suburbs. The camp gives children from grade school to high school age a chance to study music, when schools are making more and more budget cuts to their music programs.

A newer addition to Allegro Orchestral Association programs is Allegro Con Brio, an orchestra of paid professionals. Each year, it offers a concert to help audience members understand music's im-



Jette

pact on their daily lives, said Stuber. The pros come from such prestigious enclaves as the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Minnesota Orchestra.

"It's meant to make orchestra music more accessible to the general public, without presenting a typical pops concert," said Stuber.

This year's show will be anything but typical, considering Allegro's new partnership with Mind Body Solutions, a nonprofit organization that provides "practical, intelligent approaches to health and wholeness," said founder Mathew Sanford.

Mind Body Solutions works under the idea that the mind and body work better together, Sanford said. Music, he said, affects our minds and bodies perhaps more than any other human invention, and it's the connection between mind and body that Sanford teaches people to cultivate and explore, using programs like yoga.

Sanford has a perspective on that connection as a victim of an accident that took away his mobility from the chest down.

When Stuber came to him asking about the relationship between music and the mind-body connection, Sanford was intrigued. Sanford wrote an essay in Allegro's 2004-2005 season program,

UPCOMING ALLEGRO EVENTS

"Passionate Reflections," conducted by William Stuber, featuring music by Moncayo, Barber and Rachmaninoff and lyrics sung by Maria Jette, will be performed at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, April 29, at Wayzata Community Church, 125 E. Wayzata Blvd. in Wayzata. It is free and open to the public.

The youth Orchestra Camp will be held from June 13 to 23, and this season's Allegro Con Brio concert will be on June 17. Tickets are available at www.allegronotes.org or by calling 952-258-0394. Tickets are \$20 for general admission and \$15 for students.

about music as a way of seeing the "connectedness" of the body and mind. He said he wants to show that music is a rich part of life, rather than just entertainment. "It's broader than whether or not one likes a song."

Sanford will continue his work with Allegro, including speaking to students at this summer's Orchestra Camp. "In the words of Nietzsche, life without music would be a mistake," he said.