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## **Orchestra goes baroque but not bust**

**By JOE MATYAS, Free Press Arts & Entertainment Reporter**

Orchestra London will wrap up the serious side of its 1999-2000 season tonight without a conductor.

The orchestra's core of two dozen full-time professional musicians will do so buoyed by the knowledge that the symphony has a fighting chance to avoid bankruptcy at the end of this month.

Lack of a conductor for the final Sinfonia concert isn't a cost-cutting measure related to the debt crisis.

It's part of the artistic approach to a baroque program being performed under the leadership of concert master Joseph Lanza.

The use of the orchestra's first violinist as concert leader is a throwback to the baroque period.

"It was common in those days for a musician to lead the orchestra," he said. "It's an authentic part of the baroque experience."

Lanza has a demonstrated interest in baroque music and has been leading the orchestra in a program of it once a year for the past six years.

"It's very tuneful music with a clear beat based mostly on short dance motifs," he said. "It's a pleasure to play and easy to appreciate."

Tonight's program consists of Vivaldi's Four Seasons, excerpts from Telemann's La Bourse and Gabrieli's Canzona for Brass.

The latter is an inside joke for the orchestra, said Lanza. Canzona means a song-like instrumental piece and the orchestra occasionally refers to brass pieces as Gabrieli canzonas, whether they are or not.

"It's a code we use for brass pieces by obscure composers," said Lanza. "The ones we'll be playing this time are all from the 16th century and one was actually written by Andrea Gabrieli."

The cover-all name isn't the only humour connected with tonight's program.

Composer Georg Philipp Telemann lived over a stock exchange (La Bourse) in Frankfurt and wrote an emotional piece based on the ups and downs of the market.

"It's a whimsical composition with some beautiful light moments in it," said Lanza. "As a theme for the market, it still works today."

Theme music was the rage during the baroque period, said Lanza.

"Composers were writing music to express specific moods or ideas and (Antonio) Vivaldi was at the forefront of it."

The Four Seasons by Vivaldi is the most recorded classical music composition of all time, a captivating piece that contains the major elements developed by the composer -- the great string solos and the returns to full orchestration after the cadenzas.

The Four Seasons remains popular because it's one of the most striking examples of musical scene-painting, evoking images of buzzing flies, chirping birds, dripping rain, howling winds, thunderstorms, hot languid days and other seasonal "moods."

Lanza said such baroque classics require a different kind of emphasis on notes and dynamics to bring out their melodic purity and rhythmic clarity.

"Our is an adaptable orchestra that plays this repertoire very well," he said.

The musicians hope they're still playing next season.

Faced with a deficit and a demand from creditors that \$330,000 be paid by May 31, the orchestra launched a special fund-raising campaign this spring and is now \$57,000 short of the goal.

"We're ahead of schedule, but not out of the woods yet," said Lanza. "We need another \$10,000 by May 17 and \$57,000 by May 31. If we miss one of these targets, we fold."

## **IF YOU GO**

**What:** Concertmaster Joseph Lanza leads Orchestra London's core musicians in a Sinfonia program of baroque music

**Where:** Centennial Hall, London

**When:** Tonight, 8 p.m.

**Tickets:** \$15 to \$30