

Regional search for musicians on

BY DAVID FLEISCHER
Staff Writer

If you love symphonic music, but don't love watching concerts with your hands in your lap, the artistic director of Richmond Hill's new orchestra may have the answer for you.

"Even I don't want to just sit and watch the orchestra play," says Jessica V. Kun with a laugh.

"People can enjoy music and also be a part of it."

Shows that are interactive and engaging, filled with dance and multimedia elements, will be a defining characteristic of the Richmond Hill Philharmonic Orchestra when it begins performing later this year.

First, however, Ms Kun has to find a few musicians.

She is scouring the region for enthusiastic, talented performers to join the ensemble, hopefully topping out at 50 to 75 players.

"I have 12 people now," she says. As the new house orchestra for the

► If you are interested in performing with the Richmond Hill Philharmonic Orchestra e-mail rhpo2008@gmail.com

Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, it has to be ready for the Nov. 1 opening gala, but Ms Kun does not seem concerned about the community's ability to rise to the challenge.

A GTA native, Ms Kun lived in the United States for the past seven years.

She moved to Richmond Hill, where her parents have lived for 20 years, for the express purpose of creating an orchestra for the new theatre.

"I found out about the performing arts centre and said, this place is serious about the arts," she says.

After having taken over many ensembles, being able to build her own from scratch and doing it somewhere with so much potential has her very excited.

"I know it's a thriving community ... I want to perform as much as possible

and share as much music as possible," she says.

Ms Kun's proposal to create an orchestra was greeted well by the town and she has five concerts scheduled, some with just the orchestra and backing performers such as Michael Burgess.

Being a part of the community is an important component of the orchestra's mission and Ms Kun is also excited about the centre's educational programs and the potential to use music as a teaching tool.

While she knows there are many pieces familiar to audiences and musicians in the orchestral repertoire, Ms Kun says what most interests her is digging a bit deeper.

"I want to pick the other things, the b-side stuff," she says.

The centre is still a construction site and while she has been privy to a few peeks inside, not surprisingly, she cannot wait to check out the stage, grab her baton and test out the pit.

Now all she needs is the musicians.



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Jessica V. Kun is artistic director of the Richmond Hill Philharmonic Orchestra and is auditioning musicians in the weeks ahead.

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