

Orchestra debuts in time for Fourth

East Tennessee Symphony to perform classics, favorites at Collegedale celebration

BY MIKE O'NEAL
STAFF WRITER

The annual Independence Day Fireworks Celebration in Collegedale this year commemorates more than the birth of a nation — it also celebrates the East Tennessee Symphony Orchestra's debut.

The 65-piece all-volunteer orchestra was organized last October and draws its members from the greater Chattanooga area.

"We are all here for the love of the music," ETSO board member Matthew Miller said. "This offers opportunities for talented, professional-caliber musicians who have other jobs. This provides an outlet to continue performing."

Musicians range in age from midteens to 60-plus, and experiences range from a high school band room to a lifetime of professional performances.

Brian Dickinson recently opened a veterinary practice in Ooltewah. He is also first chair French horn with the ETSO.

"I don't feel complete unless there is music in my life," Dr. Dickinson said. "For a lot of these players this fulfills that need."



Richard Hickam, center, conducts the East Tennessee Orchestra during rehearsal at the Collegedale Academy. The group will perform during the Collegedale Independence Day festivities tonight.

Now 33, Dr. Dickinson said he started playing the horn in sixth grade and never really stopped.

"It paid for college," he said. Three seats away from Dr.

Dickinson sits fourth chair French horn player, Jean Dickinson, his mother.

All four French horn players have performed with the Southern Adventist University

Orchestra and substituted with the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, she said.

"I've been an orchestra manager, a musician, an instrument repair specialist and painted

IF YOU GO:

Residents can celebrate the Fourth of July with music and fireworks at the following two events:

Collegedale

■ **What:** The East Tennessee Symphony and Orchestra

■ **When:** 8:30 p.m. today

■ **Where:** Veterans Memorial Park

■ **Cost:** Free

North Chattanooga

■ **What:** Pops on the River

■ **When:** 8 p.m. today

■ **Where:** Coolidge Park

■ **Cost:** Free

murals," Ms. Dickinson said. "What you see is something like this bringing together the community in a family-friendly setting — at least that is what we hope will happen."

As part of Collegedale's annual fireworks extravaganza, the orchestra will perform at Veterans Memorial Park near the intersection of Ooltewah-Ringgold Road and Apison Pike beginning at 8:30 p.m., according



STAFF PHOTO BY ASHLIE WHITE

Brian Dickinson, right, plays during the East Tennessee Orchestra rehearsal.

Orchestra: Debuts

● Continued from Metro

to ETSO conductor and musical director Richard Hickam.

The city provided \$2,000 to purchase the musical scores for today's concert, which features John Williams' compositions "Summon the Heroes," "Liberty Fanfare," "Hymn to the Fallen" and "Star Wars Suite." The orchestra also will perform Wilhousky's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture."

The program of popular tunes aims to please the public, but the musicians say their pleasure is in the playing.

Ann Walton, 28, said she started playing flute while in the seventh grade at Girls Preparatory School but switched to bassoon "because there were 10 flutes," and it is that instrument she now plays.

A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, Ms. Walton is working at the Tennessee Aquarium before beginning

ON THE WEB

More information about the concert and the East Tennessee Symphony Orchestra can be found at www.etsomusic.org.

doctoral studies in architectural history but wanted to keep performing in a large group.

"I always kept involved in community or chamber groups," she said. "It is nice to play good music with an enthusiastic group — they want to be here."

The free concert of patriotic music and fireworks is expected to draw a crowd of 5,000 to 9,000 — and possibly more, according to organizers.

"We recommend people arrive early, dress comfortably, bring lawn chairs or blankets and pack a picnic," Mr. Miller said.

E-mail Mike O'Neal at moneal@timesfreepress.com