

CONCERT HALL

These doctors have a good stageside manner, too

By TOM KEOGH
Special to *The Seattle Times*

The next time you need emergency medical care at Virginia Mason Medical Center, you might find yourself being treated by a clarinetist.

Don't worry: That reed player is Dr. David Frank, who will slip out of his white coat and into evening attire to join the 100-member World Doctors Orchestra this Sunday (June 7) at Benaroya Hall.

The concert is WDO's 16th public performance to raise funds for health-care charities in host cities around the world. Concert proceeds in Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2012 went to the Hugo-Tempel Foundation to treat HIV in that nation's underserved provinces. Performances in April in Dresden and Berlin, Germany, benefited treatment for epilepsy.

The Seattle concert, organized at the local level by Frank, will raise money for The Seattle Times Fund for the Needy, which supports a dozen nonprofit community agencies that help children, seniors and families.

The WDO was founded in 2007 by Stefan Willich, professor of medicine at the Charité University Medical Center in Berlin. Willich conducts the orchestra, which can draw upon a full roster of more than 1,000 physician-musicians from 50 countries. Frank says the WDO players visiting here represent 13 nations.

In an email from Berlin, Willich says his motivation for creating the WDO was to "combine the pleasure of fine music with global medical responsibility. While our daily work focuses on healing one patient at a time, as an orchestra we promote the conviction that neither national borders nor politi-



COURTESY WORLD DOCTORS ORCHESTRA

Stefan Willich conducts the World Doctors Orchestra. The WDO performs at Benaroya Hall on Sunday, June 7, with proceeds going to The Seattle Times Fund for the Needy.

cal or economic interests should limit access to basic health care."

Coordinating a WDO concert is a complex operation requiring members (all of whom have orchestra experience) to be so proficient in their parts before a concert that they're ready for marathon rehearsals mere days before a performance.

Frank says the players get the music months in advance.

"Because we're all compulsive doctors, we

learn the music inside out, and are absolutely ready for rehearsal. We have three full days of it scheduled here. I'm bringing in coaches, mostly retired symphony players, to lead sections."

Frank, who studied clarinet at the University of Illinois — graduating in 1970 — and taught music for a year before attending medical school at Loyola University, also plays in the all-volunteer Northwest Symphony Orchestra.

CONCERT PREVIEW

World Doctors Orchestra

7:30 p.m. Sunday, June 7, at Benaroya Hall, 200 University St., Seattle; \$27-\$77 (206-215-4747 or seattlesymphony.org).

He learned about the WDO in 2008 via an ad Willich placed in both music and medical journals. Frank joined the orchestra for its inaugural concert that same year in Berlin.

"I remember going to the first rehearsal," he says, "and we all looked at each other wondering, what is this going to sound like? It turned out to be pretty good."

Frank says a handful of WDO musicians not only have thriving practices, they manage to be professional musicians as well. One of those is Vancouver, B.C.-based Dr. Mark Lupin, a violinist with a busy dermatology practice, who is a former NASA mathematician with a specialty in fluid dynamics.

Lupin, who spent "intense years" of study on violin under the famed Jascha Heifetz, joined the WDO in 2009 and has served as its concertmaster. At Benaroya, he'll play the solo on Dvorák's Violin Concerto in A minor. (The rest of the program includes Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5 and local composer Samuel Jones' "Overture for a City.")

The time with Heifetz, Lupin says, helped prepare him for life.

"I am lucky to have the best of both worlds, music and medicine," he said in an email. "I don't consider them or math to be separate fields of study or practice. They blend well and often overlap."

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