

Orchestra looks to share dreams

BY AURELIO SANCHEZ
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For 10 years, the New Mexico Special Orchestra and Dance Troupe has been making audiences feel something pretty special, and they can feel it too.

"Music and dance are transcendent universal languages and mediums of expression," said Gair Linhart, New Mexico singer/songwriter and founder of New Mexico Special Orchestra.

"We can promise you some poignancy, and a lot of good feelings and happiness," Linhart said of a debut performance of an original dance musical by Linhart called "Everything That You Feel."

Since 1999, the award-winning ensemble special orchestra has been helping children and adults with developmental disabilities find and spread joy through music, Linhart said. The ensemble will stage the musical Saturday, June 27, at the Albuquerque Main Library Theater. The show recently played at the Albuquerque Folk Festival. "We knocked them dead," Linhart said.

In the plot written by Linhart, Hector is a young man who, separated from home and the person he loves most, goes to a new setting, where he is at first very unhappy, losing weight and his interest in life.

"However, with the chance to make new friends and an opportunity to make music at his new community-based home, Hector's interest in life is revived," Linhart said. He added that though the play has a very serious side, it also has a lot of slapstick comedy and laughs.

There's a scene in which Mayzee, a character in the play, loses her cell

"Everything That You Feel"

WHEN: 1:30 p.m. Saturday, June 27

WHERE: Albuquerque Main Library Theater, Fifth and Copper

HOW MUCH: Free

phone in the toilet, but undeterred, dives in after it and emerges with the phone intact, but wearing a toilet seat draped around her neck.

In another part of the play, an orchestra leader who insists he will play classical selections instead is interrupted by the irrepressible Rapping Bryan, who walks on stage in a gaudy costume, with beautiful women on both arms.

Last year, the orchestra's presentation of "Grease, the Musical" was a big success, Linhart said.

For members of the orchestra, the chance to play and sing in a musical production is the realization of lifelong dreams, he said.

Choreographer Azita Creighton leads the Spécial Orchestra Dance Troupe.

The ensemble has performed in public previously at the Special Olympics in Ireland, and the dedication of the New Mexico Rail Runner.

"Our dream is to have our play filmed by a motion picture producer, and to see our concept of special orchestra, born in New Mexico, spread nationwide and worldwide," Linhart said.

Magician Robert Copeland will make a return appearance before and between scenes, following his first performance before the group last year.