

Sculpture renders FSO conductor 'speechless'

FLINT — Enrique Diemecke, conductor of the Flint Symphony Orchestra, will forever adorn the Flint Institute of Music, thanks to the work of a local artist.

Sculptor Suzanne Johnson spent five months creating a bronze bust of the Maestro's likeness. The FIM unveiled the sculpture, presenting it to Diemecke during a gala before the symphony's first performance of the season Sept. 30.

The sculpture is a portrait of Diemecke done in bronze and mounted on a granite base. FIM board member William Hengten commissioned Johnson to create two busts of Diemecke; one will stay at the FIM and the other will go to the National Symphony of Mexico where Diemecke is the music director and principal conductor.

"You want to do your best capturing not only the features



Suzanne Johnson , William Hengten and Enrique Diemecke

but the personality, too," Johnson said. "It captured an aspect of him — his passion and showmanship—that I really admire."

Diemecke, FSO music director and conductor since 1989, is known for his exuberant, passionate direction of the symphony, often times waving his

BD View Photo/Courtesy Church Johnson

arms or whole body during performances.

Diemecke is internationally renowned, guest conducting at several symphony orchestras around the world ruing his career.

Johnson, a sculptor for the past 20 years, has gone to FSO performances for the past three

years, giving her ample time to observe Diemecke. "Your eye is constantly composing," she said of watching Diemecke. "I'm very, very inspired by music."

Johnson is remodeling a church in Grand Blanc and plans to open a sculpting studio and art gallery later this year. She also sits on the city's DDA and Brownfield Redevelopment boards.

Despite Diemecke's gift for captivating audiences—he enthralled members during a speech at the Grand Blanc Chamber of Commerce this summer—the Maestro was uncharacteristically at a lack for words at the sculpture presentation.

"Actually, I've never seen him speechless—which was surprising," said FIM Marketing Director Cynthia Mooney, adding it was apparent that Diemecke was touched by the presentation — *Jim Newell*