

# Symphonic convergence

There's a scientific law that says nature abhors a vacuum, but that doesn't really explain the newly formed St. Petersburg Symphony, which is giving its second pair of concerts this weekend.

"We are trying to develop a community semiprofessional orchestra for the market of people interested in good music who are unwilling or unable to spend the money for a ticket to a Florida Orchestra concert," said conductor **Cameron Horne**.

Sounds great; the more music the better. But what about the orchestra that already fills that niche in the market?

The Tampa Bay Symphony is a well-established community orchestra that has attracted some good musicians to play under conductor **Jack Heller**. Last Sunday, the symphony's 90 players gave an impressive performance of Mahler's *Titan Symphony* and other works at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center.

There are a number of musicians who play for both orchestras, including **Steven Price**, executive director and co-founder of the St. Petersburg Symphony. Price, who makes his living as a business executive, is principal oboe in both orchestras.

"I don't want to do anything to hurt the Tampa

## CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

Symphony after leaving another community orchestra, the Suncoast Symphony of Clearwater. Horne was Suncoast's conductor for a year, but he departed because of differences with the board. The Suncoast Symphony has a 10-concert season in 1995-96.

The St. Petersburg Symphony seeks to distinguish itself from the all-volunteer Tampa Bay Symphony — only Heller is paid — by hiring close to half its 45 or so players. Nobody's getting rich, with pay ranging from \$10 to \$65 per concert.

"The people who get paid are the ones in shortest supply, and that's string



JOHN FLEMING

PERFORMING ARTS

■ Can the new St. Petersburg Symphony co-exist with the Tampa Bay Symphony, a well-established community orchestra? Absolutely, say the new group's founders.



Violinist Douglas Johnson rehearses *Swan Lake Suite* at Clearwater High School.



St. Petersburg Symphony conductor Cameron Horne directs *Russian Sailors' Dance*.

Times photos — SCOTT KEELER