Staff Appointments Made

It's been a long time coming, but tenure track appointments have finally been made to the positions of Director of Jazz Studies and Director of Band and Orchestra. It's been over two years since Mike and Janet Griffith made the decision to go west, and a year since Don Keranen decided to make his leave in New York a permanent move. The formal search process for both positions began this year. After several months of reviewing letters, vitaes, and tapes, and after four campus interviews the selections have been made and the contracts signed.

The Fine Arts Division is pleased to announce the appointment of Jeffrey Bell-Hanson to the position of Director of Band and Orchestra, and Michael Irish to the position of Director of Jazz Studies.

Mike Irish comes to MTU from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point where he has been Director of Jazz Studies for the past eight years. Some of you may remember him from his undergraduate days here at Michigan Tech. He earned a degree in Forestry in 1974. His musical training includes a B.M.E. from NMU and an M.M.E. from UW-Stevens Point, and he has a wide background in both jazz education and performance. He has taught students of all ages from elementary school to adults both in the public schools and in the private studio.

As a performer, Mr. Irish counts 24 years of experience as a professional guitarist, encompassing nearly every form of jazz and popular music. He has backed such entertainers as Bob Hope, Carol Lawrence, Rich Little, Robert Goulet, Rodney Dangerfield and Sandler and Young. He has appeared with jazz artists Clark Terry, Louis Bellson, Don Ellis, Lyle Mays, Bobby Shew, Frank Mantooth, Rich Matteon, Rob McConell, Don Shelton, Harold Jones, John Harmon, Joel DiBartolo, and Eddie Russ. His credits include performances at the Montreux Jazz Festival, the Kool Jazz Festival/Detroit, the first Wisconsin Jazz Festival and in resorts in Jamaica and Europe.

Mr. Irish is also a jazz adjudicator/clinician, and composes and arranges for large and small jazz ensembles. In 1985 he was selected as the first national recipient of the “Outstanding Achievement in Jazz Education Award” by (continued on page 3)
Pep Band Goes the Distance

Huskies Pep Band Members had to catch their breath after the 90-91 athletic season. To many it seemed like one of the busiest years ever. In fact, a comparison of this year’s schedule to previous seasons shows the same number of events. They just came at a relentless pace.

Band members may have been worn out from all the cheering this season. It began in the fall as fans watched the Huskies engineer several blow-outs on the gridiron for a 6-4 season. The good news continued into hockey season with a much improved team under Coach Brown and his staff. They finished 13-25-3.

The women’s basketball team was the big news this season. After winning the GLIAC title they earned a berth in the NCAA regionals in Kentucky; the first ever for a division II team at Tech. The Pep Band was there with them. We were allowed only 32 seats, but we brought a little bit of Huskies craziness to the normally staid crowds in women’s basketball.

Plans are to make a hockey road trip next season. The ban is still on at Lakeview Arena, and any college hockey arena willing to give up enough seats for our group is getting harder to find. Who knows where we’ll turn up? It may be at an arena near you.

Special thanks to those of you who joined in the festivities at the annual Great Lakes Invitational Tournament in Detroit. As always, our alumni make it a special performance. If you haven’t been to one yet, give it a try. We’ll be there again this year if you will.

KSO hits it big!

The Keweenaw Symphony Orchestra has made some big splashes this year, beginning with a record grant from the Michigan Council for the Arts. The MCA gave the orchestra a big boost before the season started with a $13,000 award in support of guest artist residencies. Unfortunately, this will probably be the KSO’s last MCA grant due to state cuts in arts funding. (See “From the Podium.”)

The New World String Quartet began the season with a week-long residency in September. The ensemble conducted several open rehearsals, including one with local musicians, and gave two recitals. They conducted string sectional rehearsals and a master class with members of the orchestra. This was the eighth visit to the Copper Country for the quartet. Their relationship with the Keweenaw spans more than 15 years.

Yuri Vasilaki, formerly violist with the New World Quartet, appeared as a soloist with the orchestra later in the season playing what was apparently a Copper Country premiere of a viola concerto attributed to Ivan Khandoshkin. Mr. Vasilaki has also been a member of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and principal violist with the U.S.M.C. Chamber Orchestra in Washington, D.C. Currently he is principal violist with the Florida West Coast Symphony, and violist with the New College String Quartet.

That concert brought rave reviews both for the soloist and the orchestra’s performance of the Symphony No. 9 in E minor (The New World) by Antonin Dvorak. Hubert Mather, an occasional contributor to the Daily Mining Gazette, wrote of the concert, “...it was hard to realize that I was in the Copper Country”; “...that performance was surely the KSO’s finest hour.”

The Holiday Concert in December was preceded by a few days of panic as the guest soloist, harpist Yolanda Kondonassis, became ill and had to cancel. A frantic phone search yielded just the right replacement in Elizabeth Hainen, a young harpist from Toledo and runner-up in the 1989 World Harp Competition. Miss Hainen

(continued on page 4)

MTU Band News 2
"Staff Changes" (from pg. 1)

the National Band Association. His UW-Stevens Point Jazz Ensemble I was selected as the outstanding big band at the UW-Eau Claire Jazz Festival in 1985, 1988, and 1990.

Jeffrey Bell-Hanson has served in the position of Director of Band and Orchestra on a temporary basis for the past two years. Prior to that he had conducted college bands and orchestras at McNeese State University in Louisiana and Hutchinson Community College in Kansas. His experience also includes one other year at Tech as a sabbatical replacement for Mike Griffith in the mid-1980's. Mr. Bell-Hanson holds a B.M. from the University of Iowa and an M.M. from the University of Notre Dame where he co-conducted the basketball and hockey pep bands as part of his graduate assistantship. He is a candidate for a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in orchestral conducting at the University of Iowa where he has studied with James Dixon. He has also studied with Murry Sidlin at the Aspen Music Festival and participated in master classes with Harold Farberman, Daniel Lewis, Frank Brief, Ole Schmidt, Samuel Adler and Bernard Rubenstein.

Conducting credits include the Traverse Symphony in Traverse City, the Hutchinson Symphony in Hutchinson, Kansas, the McNeese Orchestra in Lake Charles, Louisiana, the Little Traverse Choral Society in Petoskey, Michigan, and the University of Iowa Chamber Orchestra. In 1988 Mr. Bell-Hanson conducted the world premiere of an opera entitled The Hollow by composer Keith Gates and librettist Susan Kelso.

In addition to his duties at Michigan Tech, Mr. Bell-Hanson spends his summers at the BayView Music Festival where he has been Music Director of the Theatre Arts Department since 1989. This summer he will also conduct a concert performance of the BayView Orchestra.

Chris Biernacki, flute and percussion, won the John MacInnes Memorial Pep Band Award for 1991. Jenny Larsen, trumpet, and Al Sorgenfrei, trombone, were the Crazy Hat Champs. Gold Band won the Husky Pep Band Full Contact Broomball Challenge.

"From the Podium" (from page 1)

has come to us through the Michigan Council for the Arts. Earlier this year, our new state administration eliminated arts grants from the budget.

That’s the bad news. The good news is that it doesn’t cost any more to make good music than bad. Musically, we have had a very successful year. The heart of our program is, as it has always been, excellent students who want to make music. Happily we still have that resource. Supporting those students, making sure that they have music to play, instruments on which to play it, and places in which to play is becoming trickier.

During 1991-92 we will be exploring some alternative funding sources, including new grants, changes in concert ticket prices, and alternative sources of funds for specific projects inside the university.

Your support will continue to be a great help. It can take many forms. Talking to a talented Tech-bound senior in your community about playing in the ensembles will help keep our talent pool strong; helping to promote a tour performance in your area can make our travel more cost-efficient.

We are beginning a new chapter in the history of the fine arts at Michigan Tech. We have assembled a strong staff with a commitment to building on our tradition of excellence. We value your partnership in the process.
New for 1991-92

✓ Visitors to the SDC Music Offices will find Msrs. Bell-Hanson, Irish and Yaacobi all in room 236. The offices are being redesigned to provide a more spacious layout, and a friendlier reception area. Stop in and have a cup of hot java.
✓ We got a great deal on a new pair of bass drums last fall. They are 26 and 28 inches respectively and have a silver finish.
✓ Our former tenor drums were renovated this year for use as field drums. Bottom heads, snare beds, and snare equipment was added. The new sound is dry and crisp.
✓ Drum stands were purchased for our "new" field drums. No more chairs!
✓ We hope to establish a lending library of recordings for students' use. The holdings will include any recordings (in any format) that might be of help to students in their musical studies. Donations of old, but usable recordings are welcome.

My thanks to you for your continued support of the MTU Bands. It's your gifts that make all of the above, as well as many of our activities during the year, possible.

"KSO" (continued from page 2)

performed the Handel Concerto for Harp with the KSO, and Benjamin Britten’s Ceremony of Carols with the Chamber Chorus during her stay. At last report, Ms. Kondonassis was doing fine.

The season closed with a packed house for the KSO's performance of the Mozart Requiem. The concert, the orchestra's homage to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in the bicentennial year of his death, was held in St. Joseph’s Church in Lake Linden.

Solists were in Residence, Gabriely Watson, Alicia Hunter, Robert Mishler and Will Nichols. Jim Bicigo was the trombone soloist. The MTU Chantry Choral and the Copper Country Chorale together formed the chorus. That evening the KSO established a new standard for future “finest hours.”

"Soloists..." (from pg. 3)

rehearsals with both of the MTU Jazz Ensembles.

In April graduating senior Jennifer Schueerman performed as soloist on our final concert of the year. She played two movements of the Concerto for Oboe and Strings on Themes of Corelli by Sir John Barbirolli. Members of the KSO string section accompanied her.

One of the works on that final concert, the Folk Song Suite of Ralph Vaughan Williams will likely end up on a cassette of MTU ensemble recordings that Mu Beta Psi will assemble and market next year. This project follows a cassette assembled by the fraternity this spring of local rock bands. Requests for either of these recordings can be directed to Mu Beta Psi in the Student Organizations Office at the MUB.

Plans for the coming year include a tour to Detroit or the Minneapolis, and a concert dedicated to the great American Bandmaster P.S. Gilmore in April.

If you live along a tour route, and would like to help sponsor a concert, please contact Jeff Bell-Hanson late in the summer or early this September.

Alumni News

Shawn Carlson, ’90, is recovering nicely from an ear injury and is working in the mining industry. We hope he's playing his tenor sax again soon.

Carl and Elizabeth (Brotherton) Davis, ’90’s, were married in October at St. Al’s and are now residing in Schaumberg, Ill.

Mike and Janet Griffith are in Wyoming. Mike is conducting the orchestra at the University of Wyoming, and Janet is doing lots of playing while she finishes her D.M.A.

Don Keramen is spending warm months freelancing in the New York area. In the winter he heads for Jamaica.

Karen Kraft, ’90, will spend the next year in Germany studying. After that... Wait for another update.

Art Siewert, ’90, got married last fall too. His new wife’s name is Herta, and we need an address update for them!

Rob Wernberg, who has been Acting Dir. of Jazz Studies for the past two years, will be returning to his career as a professional guitarist, banjo player and teacher in Nashville later this summer. Cathy will be nursing at Vanderbilt and pursuing an advanced degree. Many thanks to Rob for the good times and great music. All the best!

If you have news, send it to Jeff Bell-Hanson;
209 WAHC; Michigan Tech; 1400 Townsend Dr.; Houghton, MI 49931, or call: (906) 487-2825.

This should be the biggest part of our newsletter! Let us know what you’re up to.

MTU Band News 4