President's Corner

Greetings from the DaWGs and the Huskies Pep Band! This year will mark our first anniversary as a student organization, and we hope that you share in our excitement. As a student organization we are not only able to be loud at football, basketball and hockey games, but also at Winter Carnival competition and during Spring Fling events.

This past year, during Winter Carnival, the DaWGs made their first all-nighter snow sculpture, suitably enough of Underdog (or should it be UnderDaWG?). While we didn’t win anything, it was fun for those who helped and it made our presence known on campus. We also sent a few members to compete in other Winter Carnival activities such as beard contest, broomball, and dogsled race. Everyone participating had fun, and we plan to enter even more events this year; hopefully more members will get involved.

During the spring term, the Pep Band had the opportunity to travel with two of Tech’s sports teams. In March we went to St. Paul, Minnesota with the Hockey Team for the WCHA playoffs. Then, a week later, we accompanied the Women’s Basketball Team to the NCAA Final Four playoffs near Boston, Massachusetts. Both trips were exciting and the officers and Jeff are trying to plan a trip or two for this year.

The new officers for the 1993-94 school year are as follows:

President     Brian Coburn
Secretary     Helen Hamlin
Treasurer     Matt Staron

We plan on working hard with the Director, Jeff Bell-Hanson, to add more fun, social events to the Pep Band agenda in addition to football, basketball and hockey games. Other plans for this year include setting up and maintaining an alumni database for reunions and sending newsletters, so we can stay in touch with all of you. Later in the year we are planning a raffle to raise money for the DaWGs; stay tuned.

That’s about all for now. I look forward to seeing everyone soon. ▲

Brian Coburn,
President of the DaWGs

From the Podium

I am in my usual end-of-the-year state of exhaustion coupled with excitement about next season. This curious contrast mirrors the strange contradiction of 1992-93. It was a year of tight budgets, and a year of uncertainty about the future direction of the Fine Arts at MTU, but looking back it seems to have been one of the finest, most satisfying years in terms of the programs that we offered our students and the community.

In this issue of the news you’ll find stories about only some of the events that made the year a really special one, including last fall’s Pep Band Reunion. There aren’t enough pages to recount all of the good things that happened.

In a season when there were so many celebrations of the talent and the love for the arts in our community, the climax had to have been the season finale featuring all of MTU’s jazz ensembles and honoring the man who started it all, Don Keraenen. It was a truly touching moment as Don accepted a special achievement award from the university’s new Provost, Fred Dobney in front of a large crowd that included jazz studies alums from all over the country.

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KSO Assists in Birth

The Keweenaw Symphony Orchestra played midwife in the birth of a new orchestral composition during the 1992-93 season. On February 14, composer Jack Reilly sat nervously in the audience at Alumni Theatre in Houghton as his new orchestral work, Chuang-Tzu, was ushered into the world by the KSO. After the premiere Mr. Reilly couldn’t have been more pleased with the care and the “love” that his creation received in the hands of the orchestra.

The piece, a set of eight variations on an original theme, required the performers to span a multitude of musical styles within the 20 minutes of the performance. Reilly, a jazz pianist as well as a composer, wrote some variations in a very serious 20th century idiom with quartal harmonies, polytonality and some serialism, while other variations were jazz, gospel, folkrock, and hymn-like.

The title, Chuang-Tzu, refers to an ancient Chinese Buddhist philosopher noted for his wit and good humor. It alludes to Mr. Reilly’s own playful approach to improvisation and composition. “One of the first questions I asked the composer,” say Music Director Jeffrey Bell-Hanson, “was how much of the piece had been inspired by Mr. Reilly’s improvisations. As I expected, quite a bit had come from his jazz piano performances. When I heard him play I understood that even the sections that I had thought had been crafted through a slow, painstaking compositional process were improvisationally spawned. That revelation changed my approach to the music during the dress rehearsal.”

The entire concert, including works by Bernstein, Milhaud, and Adolphus Hailstork, was a landmark event for the orchestra. In its 22-year history it has never done a concert of music written entirely in the 20th century (other than pops programs). Considered a risky proposition for any orchestra, even in the 1990’s, it paid off. One concertgoer wrote of the program, “It made me realize what a gem our own KSO is for our community.”

Following up on the success of the February program was an all Beethoven concert in May conducted by Director of Arts and Choral Activities Milt Olsson. The program was built around the Mass in C and featured the combined talents of the MTU Chamber Chorus and the Copper Country Chorale.

The season opened with a pops program featuring local musicians, including Jazz Studies Director Mike Irish, pianist and percussionist Charles White, percussionist Joe Tompkins, and bassist Dan Komarzek. It continued in October with a special appearance by Deborah Chodacki, a clarinetist from the faculty of the Interlochen Academy of the Arts. Ms. Chodacki, recently asked to join the University of Michigan faculty, performed the Weber Clarinet Concerto No. 1 in F Minor with the orchestra.

Identity Crisis

If you drive to the MTU campus from the east on US 41 next time you visit you may think you’re in the wrong university when you see the sign for McNair Hall. Coed has recently been renamed for the second president of Michigan Tech.

President McNair (1899-1924) is credited with an instrumental role in expanding the campus beyond 2 buildings, and the curriculum beyond it’s original mining thrust. His vision helped set the remote mining college on the road to it’s current status as one of the country’s respected research institutions, and a perennial “best buy” in engineering, science, and related fields.

As of this writing, the dormitory still bears the name “Coed”, even though the Board of Control has officially approved the name change.

Remember Dean Woodbeck, the mild-mannered Director of Alumni Communications with the heart of a Pep Band Member? He provided this information. If it’s all a cruel hoax, it’s not my fault.
Pep Band Storms the Country

The Huskies Pep Band wrapped up another busy season with road trips for tournament play. This year two teams, Womens’ Basketball and the Hockey Huskies, secured playoff spots that took the Pep Band first to St Paul for a WCHA play-off against arch-rival NMU, and the following week to Waltham, MA (Boston) for the NCAA Division II Womens’ Basketball Final Four.

Restrictions on numbers of bandmembers admitted meant that we were represented by a small contingent of 30 to 35 in each case. Once again these small groups proved that when you put 30 to 35 Huskies Pep Band members into any room with their instruments and a crowd, the results are explosive!

Though NMU squeaked by us on the ice in the opening game of the WCHA play-off, the St. Paul Civic Center was alive with the sound of Fight, Tech, Fight the Engineers’ Song, and a few other musical classics that we won’t mention in this column. The next day the Huskies Band, under the leadership of Student Director Todd Sattersten, drew rave reviews for it’s scorching performance along side the Minnesota Band at the World Trade Center in Saint Paul during the WCHA Pep Fest. The band has been informally invited back next year to play in the Minnesota State Capitol Rotunda.

In Waltham the band squared off with Bentley College’s

“The Huskies Pep Band shows off it’s winning style in a spring program on campus.

Pep Discjockey in Bentley’s home gym at the NCAA Final Four. It was one of the more “curious” experiences that Director Jeff Bell-Hanson has seen on the road. Never-the-less, the Huskies Pep Band took no prisoners, and the women’s basketball team won that game, finishing third in the tournament.

Special thanks goes to the coaches, players, Rick Yeo and Pres. Curt Tompkins for making these trips possible.▲

“Alice” Plays In the Band Too

The instrumental ensembles were well represented in the 1993 spring musical at Tech. The show, A..My Name Is Alice, a musical review conceived by Joan Micklin Silver, featured three members of the Pep Band, a member of the KSO, a member of the Jazz Lab Band, Band and Orchestra Director Jeff Bell-Hanson at the piano, and Karen Bell-Hanson in the cast.

The show is a collection of cleverly written vignettes about women and the things that they experience and feel in today’s complicated world. It deals with lifelong friendships, overbearing school teachers, blind dates, relationships of all kinds, career women, romance novels, and even male strippers, all threaded together with delightful music and a lot of laughs. Though it’s a show about women, men can learn a lot and have a lot of fun in the process.

Directed by Troupe leader Sue Stephens, the cast featured Jennifer Mueller, BA! player and first treasurer of the DaWGs, Danielle Henderson, flautist in the Huskies Pep Band, Stephanie Newton, violist in the KSO, Amy Bebensee, member of The Troupe (a student theater improv group) and Karen Bell-Hanson, local marketing consultant and definitely the better half of the Bell-Hanson family. In the pit were Music Director and pianist Jeff “Fingers” Bell-Hanson, Katrina Markson on keyboard (flautist in the Pep Band), and Toby Erickson, percussionist (Jazz Lab Band drummer).

The MTU production is over, but if you want to see the show, an updated version of it is playing at the Mixed Blood Theater in Minneapolis through June. Call (612) 338-6131 for information.▲

“From the Podium,” from pg. 1

In speaking with Don the next day he expressed the hope that what really showed during the evening was all of these alumni were not just former students, but lifelong friends.

As I reflect on my five years at Michigan Tech, I can’t think of a better goal for my tenure here. All of us in this program, faculty and students alike, do what we do because it is a way to reach out to each other and to the world. To borrow a metaphor from engineering, it’s a way of building bridges between people. It seems like exactly the right thing to be doing in world full of chasms.▲

Jeff Bell-Hanson,
Director

Tenure, Anyone?

The newest tenured faculty member in the Fine Arts Division is Jazz Studies Director Michael Irish. Though Tech has tenured many of its alumni in other departments, this is a first for the Department of Humanities. Besides his Baccalaureate degree in Music Education from NMU and his Masters Degree in Music from UW-Stevens Point, Mike holds a BS in Forestry from MTU. He’s and alumnus of some of the earliest editions of the MTU Jazz Lab Band and the Huskies Pep Band. From the “glory days” at DaTech he went on to distinguish himself as the Director of Jazz Studies at UW-Stevens Point, a program that he built from scratch.

Since joining the Tech faculty 2 years ago Mike has

(Cont. on page 4)
WS Tour Falls Victim to Tough Times

Though musicians usually mean their instruments when they talk about their “axes”, this year the MTU Wind Symphony faced an axe of a different kind.

The Budget process in the Fine Arts Division was held up until late October, 1992 while faculty members in all of the programs spent funds cautiously, not knowing how much was actually available. When the figures came back, the news was not good. Though operating budgets stayed at 1991-92 levels, money for vital support positions, such as the KSO’s concertmaster, the Music Librarian, and the Theater Shop Foreman were no longer available from the Humanities Department. These positions had to be absorbed by the Fine Arts Division in order to keep our operation running.

To make ends meet reductions were made that affected most aspects of our operation, but took the biggest toll on the most expensive parts of the programs, most notably group travel. Charter bus rates have risen over 100% in the last six years. A football trip to the Superior Dome in Marquette requiring two buses costs over $1,000 at current rates. Estimates of transportation costs for the Wind Symphony tour of Wisconsin and Illinois that had been planned for March 1993 came in at nearly $4,000. Coupled with the generally tight budgets in public schools throughout the Midwest, paid bookings for this year’s tour were hard to find.

“In year’s past we’d have made as much as possible from concert sponsors and made up the rest out of available funds, says Music Director Jeffrey Bell-Hanson. “This year neither we, nor the sponsors could pool enough money to make the tour work.”

Other student groups (the Jazz Lab Band and The Troupe, a theater group) were able to tour because of their smaller sizes. They went in university vans and private cars. The Wind Symphony’s size made that approach too expensive as well. Even with the reduced cost Jazz Studies Director Mike Irish found paid concerts scarce.

“Things are tough all over, not just here,” says Bell-Hanson. Dean of the College of Sciences and Arts Max Seel helps put these tight times in perspective:

“The good news is, no cut for next year. ... The governor made a commitment that we will get the same money for education that we got this year. ... At the same time California [universities] are talking about 20 or 30% cuts.”

“The future always looks brighter,” Bell-Hanson maintains. “We’ll start sooner, make our product more irresistible, promote it more aggressively, and look for alternative methods of funding. We are excellent ambassadors for MTU, and a lot of people want to see the best students come here and get the finest, most well-rounded education they can. We just have to translate that into tangible support.”

(Tenure..., Cont. from page 3)
Wind Symphony Goes Theatrical

The MTU Wind Symphony will “blow” into the future this coming season with a new look, and a new approach to performances.

Gone will be the old wool tuxes with the block “MTU” stitched onto the breast pocket; gone will be the white and black combination for the women. The ensemble will step onto stage in November with its new, unisex look. Black slacks and crew-neck shirts with “Wind Symphony” screened in white will give the ensemble an informal, more flexible look for the changing style of performance.

“That’s just window-dressing,” according to Music Director Jeff Bell-Hanson. “The real revolution will be in the approach to the performance.” Though the group will still maintain a traditional concert set-up as a basis, they will no longer be rooted to the stage like a symphony orchestra. The group will invite the audience along for excursions into the world of theater, concert hall, opera, and film as it weaves together programs that Bell-Hanson terms “entertainments” rather than “concerts”.

The new look comes out of a recognition of the need to entertain in a way that is compatible with what audiences can see in films, on television, or from the most popular professional groups such as the Canadian Brass or the Kronos Quartet. The challenge will be to balance entertainment value with the need to present only the best literature available for the ensemble in the best performances possible.

Bell-Hanson believes that the last part of the equation will come naturally. If the members of the group feel good about what they have to share with the audience, they’ll work hard to perfect it. The trick may be in finding literature that lends itself to this approach.

Current plans are to open the season with a comic synopsis of Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro. Theater director Sue Stephens, leader of The Troupe, a student improvisational theater group, will lend her expertise to the project, as well as a couple of actors to help portray some of the rather confused characters in the cast of this comic classic. “Some of the music exists. Some we’ll have to transcribe,” says Bell-Hanson. “Having their own arrangements will help make this a unique experience for the musicians and our audiences.”

A spring concert tour will include excerpts from the Mozart opera, as well as other “entertaining classics”. Watch for a tour performance near you.

MTU Fine Arts Division
Music Calendar 1993-94
Fall Quarter

October 16
October 17
November 5
November 12, 13
KSO, Chamber Chorus, CC Chorale
Wind Symphony
Jazz Showcase: Jazz Bands, Singers
Echoes From Heaven
Calumet Theatre, 8 PM
Calumet Theatre, 3 PM
Walker Theatre, 8 PM
Walker Theatre, 8 PM

Winter Quarter

December 3, 4
December 11
December 12
February 4, 5
February 13
Fine Arts Fund-Raiser
“A Turn-of-the-Century Christmas Party”
KSO, Oratorio Chorus: MESSIAH
Jazz Bands with Wendell Harrison
KSO with Ross Harbaugh, Cello
Walker Theatre, 8 PM
Calumet Theatre, 8 PM
Calumet Theatre, 3 PM
Walker Theatre, 8 PM
Calumet Theatre, 3 PM

Spring Quarter

March 11, 12
April 17
April 22
April 24
May 1
May 13
Post-Tour Concert
Jazz Lab, Wind Symphony, Singers
KSO, Wind Symphony with Kevin Thews, Trumpet
Jazz Singers
Echoes from Heaven Gospel Choir
Chamber Chorus
KSO / Jazz Lab Band Fund-Raiser Dance
Walker Theatre, 8 PM
Calumet Theatre, 3 PM
MUB Ballroom, 8 PM
Grace United Methodist Church, 7 PM
Grace United Methodist Church, 7 PM
TBA
New for 1993-94

Pep Band Con-cussionist Bill LaPalm worked with his father last summer to create a number of drum and bell harnesses for the Pep Band. They cost a fraction of their commercial equivalents and are custom made for our rather eclectic collection of instruments. Thanks, Bill!

A used, satin-silver finish Sousaphone was purchased from Michelsen Music to replace a deceased Martin. It's a full-sized, instrument with a full-bodied tone.

Bill Field and Brad Boyce (if you don't know Brad you may remember Brent, his brother) spent several hours giving the fiberglass horns brand new black and gold paint jobs. (Yes, we needed them all this year!)

The Band and Orchestra office PC is receiving some upgrades as this newsletter is being written. The increasing importance of the computer in keeping personnel and library records, and the age and lack of compatibility of the disk drives with other machines in the Fine Arts Division have made the need for hard storage and a high density floppy painfully obvious.

Two alums donated instruments to the Band this season. Mary West donated a ride cymbal with a gorgeous, dark sound, and Phil Carey donated a chrome shell snare drum. Both instruments are being used and appreciated by our students.

If you attend a hockey game at MacInnes Arena this season you'll hear and see the new, improved Mighty Wurltitzer. Al Sorgenfrei (trombone) and Dale Katchorek (BA!) added new electrical connections and an "applause" light to the HPB's not-so-secret weapon.

Mu Beta Psi donated four new cordura timpani covers to replace the shredded vinyl ones.

Pending projects include the replacement of the Pep Band Stripes, and a transport rack for BAs and drums.

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.

Back Together Again!

The Huskies Pep Band hosted it's first-ever reunion during Homecoming weekend last fall. Members flew, drove, walked and crawled in for the event that included a fire-up rehearsal on Friday, a party at the MUB, the traditional HOBO Parade, a tailgater for all Band members, a 40-something trouncing of Winona State by the Huskies Football Team, and a reception for the alumni at the President's house after the game.

Many good stories were shared, many beverages were consumed, and the Director nearly lost it when several of the MUB's serving pans full of beer showed up at the President's tea and cookie reception after mysteriously disappearing the night before. Some things never change.

Past bands were well represented by members from the 60's, 70's, 80's, and even the 90's.

The consensus from the group seems to be that we should do this every couple of years, and look for a hockey weekend for the next meeting. If any of you have further input, please contact Jeff Bell-Hanson by mail or phone. The next reunion will take place sometime during the 1994-95 academic year. Watch for the next newsletter and be ready!

Alumni News

Rebecca Crane (clarinet) and Matt Netter (bass) will be tying the knot on July 3 this summer. Both are presently living and working in the Twin Cities area, but will return to Houghton for the ceremony.

Gayle Kirby (clarinet) is working for Marathon Oil in Findlay, Ohio. Gayle plays in a community band that recently participated in an invitational festival for bands in the Pacific Rim.

Jeff Paulsen (bass trombone and PB Student Dir.) returned to the MTU campus for Spring Term '93 to finish his degree in Forestry. Jeff lives in Baltimore with his wife Larae Norgard (clarinet) and their two daughters. Jeff works as a real estate sales trainer and she works as an electrical enginner. He plans to attend Wesley Seminary in Washington, D.C. in the fall to begin training for the ministry.

Elizabeth (baritone) and Carl (tris) Davis welcomed a new member into their family this year with the birth of their daughter, Jessica.

Mary and Dan Rodeck are now residing in Little Rock, Arkansas where Mary teaches piano and Dan continues to serve as an officer in the U.S. Army. You may remember Mary as a pianist or as your teacher in History and Appreciation of Music in the late 80's. Dan taught in the Army ROTC program at Tech when he wasn't playing trumpet in the KSO.

In Future Issues:
Watch for a full report on the current move to establish a Fine Arts Department at Tech, the Performing Arts Center drive, and an announcement about the next PB Reunion!

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.

Let us know what you're up to.

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