



THE SCORE

September

2007

The Blacksburg Community Band Newsletter

From the President . . .

I love to play music. I also enjoy just sitting back and listening during band and watch others play and enjoy what they are doing. There is a different look to each of you when you play. No matter the difficulty you have a look like no other time. It is peaceful and relaxed. It is the catharsis of music. It began in elementary school when we would attend music class. I would have some sort of percussive instrument in my hands and a peace would envelope me. It is not just the music that affects you but something that overtakes many senses; in the resistance in the keys and valves; in the glide of the slide; in the feel of the cool brass and chrome; in the slim mallet in your palm; in smooth finish of the wood. I even gleaned a bit of joy in the sticky pad on my flute. You can smell the oils, grease and wax. Taste the metal and wood. Hearing is a given. And there is the watching: the conductor, the music, the other musicians. It is so beautiful. So moving.

I have rough days in life. Life can be unpredictably trying and quite exhausting but no matter what has befallen me in the hours leading up to a rehearsal, it seems to melt away the moment my mallet hits the bar or the cymbals come together for

the first time. It is a simple movement yet the overwhelming sense of peace and joy is almost indescribable.

My friend, as I will always be honored to call her Judy Keffer, reveled in this peace and joy. She was one to watch truly enjoy each moment, each note and rest, throughout rehearsal and during concerts. She understood the true cathartic nature of music and rhythm. She knew the power of music. It is not just in the enjoyment of listening but in the pure light that is found by the senses while playing. Her face told a story of peace. As the cancer that took Judy from us continued to ravage her body she would come to band and play when she could and for as long as her body would allow. Judy used the music to ease her journey and her music help ease our loss.

It is a little lonelier in band without Judy. But I remember the elated pleasure she shared during our times in band and I draw from those memories and nothing seems so very tragic when I have music. Remember Judy and remember her joy in music and know that the music will see you through to a serene mind.

—Leslie



Upcoming MUSIC SORTING Get-togethers

Sunday September 30
Sunday November 4

Blacksburg Recreation Center
across from the High School
1pm - 4pm

Potluck and fun!!

<http://arts.bev.net/blacksburgcommunityband/>

M

MEET the Female French Horn Players

Derry Hutt and Ingrid Burbey have been playing their French Horns with the Blacksburg Community Band for approximately 8 and 7 years, respectively. Each lady has a full life beyond the band too.



Ingrid is a graduate student in computer engineering at Virginia Tech and is working on a project to understand and predict human movement patterns. Besides her graduate work she is a consultant for the Virginia Lottery (hey—does she play 50/50??) and is the assistant coach for the Blacksburg High School Cross Country Team. Ingrid is married and has three children—one just graduated from UVA and is now taking a job in Groton CT, the second is at William and Mary and the third is going to Blacksburg High School. For those of you who went to Claytor Lake State park picnic following our concert, Ingrid is the one that made that great chicken salad dish, so although she didn't confess this to yours truly, she is a gourmet cook as well!



From the half page of writing I have in notes it is clear that Derry is a very busy person. She wears many hats including landlord, licensed equine veterinarian (not practicing at the moment), Antique Restoration specialist and teacher (a chair caning course at the YMCA). Derry also finds time to volunteer with the Women's Resource Center and the Montgomery County Christmas Store, and in her "free" time she plays racquetball, tennis and volleyball and likes to hike and bike. She also tells yours truly that she likes to eat, which she must need after all those activities! As far as music goes, Derry is self-taught on the French Horn, and also plays guitar and harmonica by ear.

Keep up the great playing ladies!

UPCOMING CONCERTS

Thursday October 11, 2007 - Joint Concert with Roanoke College @ Roanoke College - 7:30pm

Sunday October 14, 2007 - Sinkland Farms Pumpkin Festival - 1:30pm

Tuesday December 4, 2007 (tentative)- AARP Location TBD, 12:00noon

Wednesday December 5, 2007 - Warm Hearth Karr Activities Center - 7:00pm

Thursday December 6, 2007 - XYZ Blacksburg United Methodist Church -6:00pm dinner, 7:00pm Concert.

Monday December 10, 2007 - Wheatlands Retirement Community (Small Group) - 7:00pm

Tuesday December 11, 2007 - English Meadows (Small Group) 7:00pm

Wednesday December 12, 2007 - Dress rehearsal for Holiday Pops Concert

Sunday December 16, 2007 - Holiday Pops Concert Blacksburg High School - 4:00pm

PLEASE HOLD THESE DATES

Comments from the Podium

This past spring, the Blacksburg Community Band was presented with a survey to gauge the attitudes of the band on a number of issues. Even though the band officers feel that they are approachable by anyone in the band, they also feel that it is always a good idea to provide an opportunity for anonymous input from the band. Some people prefer the anonymity of this type of input, often for negative comments that they would be uncomfortable presenting in person. Also, some people that feel that everything is more or less fine the way it is have no particular need to provide input outside of a survey like this that asks specific questions of them. This survey was answered by 32 respondents, which is about 16% of the 195 people on our listserv, but closer to 50% of the active members of the band. It is assumed that most of the respondents are active members that play with us every week. Since it truly is anonymous, it is impossible to know who answered what, although a few of the responses voluntarily identified the individual. Those specific identities have been removed from the full copy of the results that will be shared with the band.

Several of the questions seemed to evoke straightforward answers and the respondents were more or less in agreement, and others were more difficult to find common ground. In fact, there are a few questions that have a clear disagreement between band members. The largest difference of opinion is the type of music that we should be playing. There is little consensus as to what type of music that the band likes

and what we should be playing. It needs to be understood that many of these issues addressed in this survey are dealt with throughout the course of the year, and if a comment is made to one of the officers or one of the conductors, they are always discussed and considered. Your comments and suggestions are not ignored. However, no matter how passionate you are about your suggestion, the feelings of the majority of the band or the needs of the band as a whole are always given priority. If you feel that you would like to make more of a difference with your suggestions, please talk to one of the officers. We will be having our band elections in a few weeks and if you would like to be involved in setting the direction of the band, there is always room for you on the Executive Board. It is your opportunity to make a difference with your band!

On page 4 of this newsletter I've summarized the survey results. If you are interested in receiving a full copy of the results, please let me know <ed.schwartz@vt.edu> and you will be sent a PDF file of the complete results.

- Ed -

Upcoming Music Events at Virginia Tech

The Marching Virginians Band-A-Rama Scholarship Benefit Spectacular

7:30 pm, Friday, September 21, 2007 - Burruss Auditorium

University Chamber Music II: Vox Balaenae

8:00 pm, Saturday, October 6, 2007 and 3:00 pm, Sunday, October 7, 2007 - Squires Recital Salon

Jazz Band Concert

8:00 pm, Friday, October 19, 2007 - Jefferson Center

Blacksburg Community Strings

8:00 pm, Friday, October 26, 2007 - Squires Recital Salon

Our own Bruce McGarvey performs Mozart's Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra.

Early Music Ensemble

3:00 pm, Sunday, November 4, 2007 - Squires Recital Salon under the direction of our very own John Howell



Summary of Survey Results

Area I – General Questions

It is clear that most of the respondents either love their experience with the band or like it a lot. Most respondents also said that they would definitely encourage someone else to join the band. The main reasons that many of the band continue perform with the band are the enjoyment of playing concert band music and the enjoyment of being with the other people in the band. The answers to the questions about social events were a bit more spread out and the general consensus was that the social events are ok and enjoyable, but there wasn't a great outcry for more events. This is clearly an area that needs more attention.

Area II – Administrative Questions

The general consensus was that the Executive Board is doing a fine job and that they are doing pretty good at keeping the band informed. The communications at rehearsals seem to be good and the e-mail communications are very good. Also, most of the band also seems to know most or all of the board members. One note mentioned that they were happy that much of the leadership goes on behind the scenes. This highlights the extra commitment of the board members.

Area III – Rehearsal Questions

Most of the respondents felt that the rehearsals are run pretty well, generally with good pacing. There were a few that thought rehearsals move too fast and others that thought they move too slow, but generally, just right. Most respondents found the conducting easy to follow and directions clear. The consensus was also that the conductor is responsive to musical questions. To the question of guest conductors, most are happy as things are with an occasional guest conductor. To the question of discipline in rehearsal, surprisingly, most responded that things are just right, but there were a number of respondents that thought our rehearsals are somewhat lax. It should also be noted that there was some concern from those in the band that suffer from hearing loss that there is often too much chatter when the conductor is talking. It really makes it difficult for them to hear what is going on. The 10 to 12 minute break also seems to be just right for most, and it does provide some social time for the group and well needed rest for the chops. The last question dealt with sectional rehearsals. Some feel that they make a big difference and others feel that they don't hurt. A few don't feel that sectionals make a difference.

Area IV – Concert Questions

The majority of respondents felt that 18-25 concerts a year is fine. A few felt that this is too much and a few felt that this is too few. Most members are reasonably happy with the music selections and that the music is generally suited to our audiences. Most feel that the difficulty of the music is just right. But again, there are a few that think that the music is too difficult and a few that think that it is too easy. This is the part of the survey where individual tastes became very evident. Some respondents wanted more classical music transcriptions, others fewer transcriptions, some wanted more swing music, others had a problem with swing music. Some wanted more marches, others wanted fewer marches and more TV themes, and it went on like that. For every entry that liked one style, another entry didn't like that style. It is clear that it will always be a challenge to negotiate the middle ground where the majority of the band is reasonably happy with the music that we are performing. However, we have always performed music that is donated to the band. Another comment mentioned the fact that we have music in the folders each year that we never get around to playing.

One issue that came up in several areas throughout the survey is the very difficult and often contentious issue of which concerts we should play. One concert that was specifically mentioned was the Claytor Lake Armed Forces Day concert. It is always difficult to make this type of decision and with many concerts such as this, the band is often split on what to do.

Another concert issue is that of the joint concert. Most respondents are in favor of another joint concert. Although most don't care who we play with, traveling long distances are not as popular. Of the four bands that were listed as possible to approach for a joint concert, there was a pretty even distribution across all four bands, Peninsula Concert Band (Yorktown/Hampton), Wataugua Concert Band (Boon, NC), Roanoke Community Band (Roanoke), National Guard Band (Roanoke). Other bands as write-in votes were the Roanoke College Band (we are performing with them in October) and The Rolling Stones (Kendra will get right on this one).

The final concert issue is our concert attire. Most are happy with the dress code for the concerts. The feeling seems to be that we are casual enough for the normal concerts and that for the more formal concerts there is an inkling that we should ask everyone to dress more formal (i.e. require a white dress shirt/blouse, and possibly ties for the men). This translates that the polo shirts would be too casual for the spring concert. With that said, it was also acknowledged that the current flexible policy provides a comfort level for those students with a limited wardrobe. Other comments included the desire for everyone to wear slacks at all concerts, while another comment suggested that we need more color in our casual attire (i.e. red, white and blue). Although the board will be discussing some of these suggestions, another comment sort of summed it up, "When I read about what some other bands have as dress codes, I shudder!! I think we're fine."

Area V – Final Comments

This area of the survey generated a wide range of comments, many of which were personal in nature (meaning they focused on issues specific to them and not necessarily applicable to the entire band). It did provide an opportunity for several people to thank the band leaders for their efforts.

■ Fred Hodges composed the following poem and read it as a portion of the celebration of Judy Keffer's life on July 10.
 ■ Fred writes that "Judy was an amazing spirit and friend. I enjoyed our time in band and our conversations at her bed in the weeks before her death."
 ■ I composed the poem in an attempt to give focus to Judy's life and faith journey for her family and many friends.
 ■ There were many different beliefs and doctrines represented.
 ■ However, the sum of Judy's life and faith can hardly be encapsulated in few words or even tomes of doctrine.
 ■ Judy demonstrated her love for family and friends. Judy demonstrated her passion for caring for others.
 ■ I am proud to call Judy Keffer my friend."

God Had a Daughter
by Fred Hodges

God had a daughter and God loved her very much.
 God gave her a keen mind.
 God made her inquisitive.
 God infused her with strength.
 God taught her to think for herself.
 She knew her mind; spoke her mind [and was even a little stubborn].

God's daughter was not interested in many of the things God's sons seem interested in.
 She cared for the land, sky, and waters.
 She hated pollution and the abuse of the environment.

She cared for people and her community.
 She thought she could make things better for everyone.
 She hated abuse of power.
 She was not happy when people were hurt or hungry.

She saw God in music and art.
 She saw God in mountains and trees.
 She saw God in the underdog who needed an advocate.
 She saw God in different images from other cultures of the world.
 She didn't always see God in the words and images used by God's other children to describe and reveal God.

God's daughter saw God in LOVE.

Somewhere along her journey this daughter began to

question the typical language and images about God.

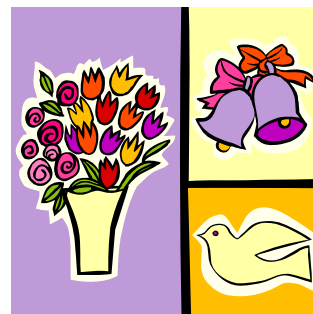
God's daughter continued to love God's creation.
 God's daughter continued to love God's other children.
 God's daughter continued to love.

God always loved his daughter.
 God is LOVE.
 God's daughter saw God as LOVE.

Eventually God's time and his daughter's time intersected and became one.

Now God can talk to God's daughter and she can talk to God.
 All the other children's language, names, and images do not interfere.

God loves God's daughter and God's daughter loves God.





**Clarinets, Percussion and Brass at the
Blacksburg 4th of July Parade, 2007**

Band Officers

President:

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Vice President:

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