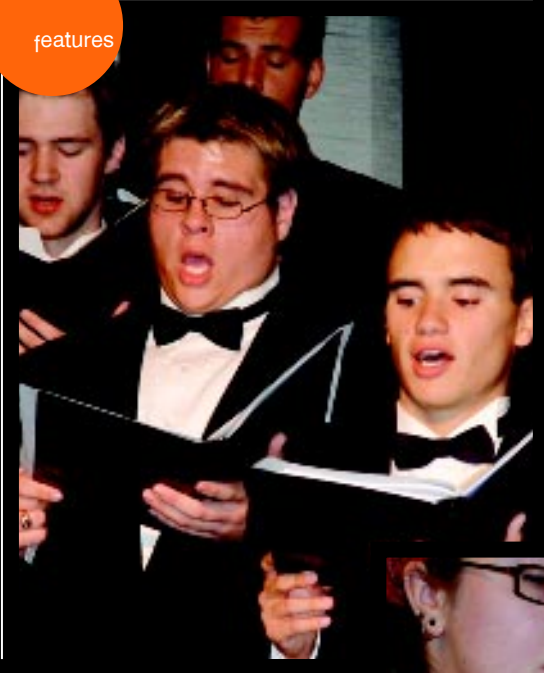


MUSIC @adrian



To senior Aaron Taylor, it was almost providence that he ended up at Adrian College. The music major started his college journey at a big state school, where the faster pace reminded him of Lansing, the city where he grew up and felt at home. But the new freedoms of college were a little more than he was ready for, and he ended up getting in trouble with the law.

Just by chance, his parents had moved to the Adrian area. Why not check out the colleges around here, they asked. When AC came through with a good financial aid package, he decided a slower pace might be good for him.

A year or two later, tragedy struck Aaron's family. After becoming very ill, Aaron's mother died right before semester exams.

"It's strange how things happen, how I ended up at Adrian so I could spend more time with my mom," Aaron said.

Aaron remembers how supportive the campus community was then.

"People were very concerned, including teachers outside the music depart-



ment,” he said. “That was a blessing. And when I came back, they were all pulling for me.”

To Aaron, the best part of AC is its small, caring atmosphere. However, it’s also a good time to be a music student: Adrian College’s music department is growing by leaps and bounds, and is restoring a long tradition of musical excellence at Adrian.

Five years ago, you could count the music majors on one hand. Today there are more than 35. Exceptional talents like Aaron Taylor are evidence of the caliber of students the program is attracting, and a high percentage of the adjunct faculty hail from top flight music schools like Bowling Green State University and the University of Michigan.

Ensembles have expanded considerably. There are currently about 90 students in the choir, and the concert band has more than doubled in size to around 40 musicians. There are a variety of other ensembles in addition to these main ones, including chamber choir, woodwind quintet, jazz band, and the world music ensemble, and students are encouraged to pursue their own ideas for other ensembles.

A big reason for the new breath of life coming out of Cornelius House is Tom Hodgman, the music chair. Now in his sixth year, Hodgman has a vision for the department. He actively recruits students, he works to perfect an all-star staff of adjunct professors, and he picks a lively repertoire of choir music to attract a wide range of students. He emanates enthusiasm and good cheer, and he has a deep faith that his students and his program can reach new heights.

“He always has time to help you figure out what’s best for you,” one student said. “And he goes out of his way to help create the best opportunities for you. He wants you to be successful.”

“I think it’s in my personality to be a builder,” Hodgman said. “I have a vision in my mind for what I’d like this department to be. But I also have a very strong and powerful desire to give these students everything I possibly can for them to be successful in their chosen careers.”

Much of Hodgman’s vision has been achieved in the last five years. Many more students are involved in choir, concert band and other ensembles. Developments to the curriculum include

working to streamline and improve the music education curriculum to make it cutting edge, and working with the theatre department to add a musical theatre degree. And a full-time position for instrumental music was added this year, which puts concert band in position for even greater growth. It is now time for the department to begin developing a vision for the next five years.

“We’re really at a pinnacle right now, and it’s time to make a new pinnacle. It feels really good to be where we are, but I don’t want to stop,” Hodgman said. “It’s an exciting time. There’s a true enthusiasm in the department, and it makes it a joy to work with these people.”

In addition to bolstering the department itself, AC music extends its influence in other ways that are worth noting:

MUSIC FOR THE CAMPUS

The AC music department is drawing more than just majors and minors. Because of its dynamic music programs, many students are choosing to make music a larger part of their liberal arts experience. When you take into account all music activity, from ensembles to lessons, there are about 300 students involved with music in any given semester – which is approaching a third of the campus. There are so many that Hodgman dreams about one day expanding the music facilities.

MUSIC FOR THE COMMUNITY

Something new this year is the Adrian College Community Music Program, an outreach effort that gives people in the area a chance to become involved with music at the College through a comprehensive set of musical opportunities. Two elements of the program were already established but are now formally organized under AC’s community music “umbrella”: the Lenawee Community Chorus and the Adrian Concert Band, both of which are open to the public. Similarly, AC faculty members have always offered private lessons, but only on an individual basis. Now community members can simply call the phone number for the program and find out about any type of lesson. And a new early childhood music program brings music to infants and young children at an age that

research shows is critical to musical development. Now parents and their children (ages birth to five) can interact together under the direction of early childhood music experts.

MUSIC FACTS

Faculty: Tom Hodgman, music chair, director of choral ensembles

Martin Marks, music education and instrumental studies, director of instrumental ensembles

John Dodson, half-time faculty member, music director of the Adrian Symphony Orchestra

Adjuncts: Lori Bitz, Wilnella Bush, Colleen Conway, Pete Ford, Shannon Ford, Kelly Hill-Kretzer, Cecilia Johnson, Aaron Keaster, Scott Kretzer, Richard Lange, Beth Major, Butch Marshall, Wendy Neuroth, Karen Nevins, Michael Yuen

Degrees: Bachelor of music in performance; bachelor of music education; bachelor of arts degrees in music, musical theatre and arts administration

Location: Cornelius House

Choir Tour: The annual tour each spring travels to churches and schools in Michigan and Ohio.

Choir: Approx. 90 students

Concert Band: Approx. 40 students

HEARING IS BELIEVING

Interested in what’s happening with AC music? Come hear for yourself!

The Showcase Concert is Nov. 13 at 7 p.m. in the recently-renovated Dawson Auditorium.