

Concert band bids bon voyage

by Kevin Fallon
staff writer

Sounds of music filled the Blasco Memorial Library on Tuesday. The Penn State Behrend Concert Band gave a concert, titled "Prelude to Paris," to say farewell to Erie before leaving for its tour to Paris.

The Concert Band, comprised of 47 students from across the United States, will leave for Paris on Dec. 17 for its first tour. The highlight of the trip will be a performance at the American Cathedral.

"Anytime you're given the chance to perform for a new audience, especially on an international basis, it raises the level of standards," said Dr. Gary Viebranz, director of the Concert Band.

The trip also includes visits to Versailles, the Musee d'Orsay, and the Loire Valley.

"I was aware of several festival performances in Europe," Viebranz said. "I thought that Paris would provide some wonderful experiences for the group."

Viebranz praised the students for working hard to prepare for this tour.

"Musically, the ensemble has grown tremendously since making this commitment. Culturally, we will grow through experiencing a portion of the world that many of our students have never visited."

The program for the tour features a mix of songs from both American and French cultures. "I wanted to provide our audience with a mix of selections...to create a diverse musical experience," said Viebranz.

The instrumental music program at Behrend was established in 1999. In addition to the Concert Band, the program also features Pep Band and Jazz Ensemble. There is no music degree at Behrend; so all music groups are open to anyone with an interest in music.

"We're very proud of all of our musical groups and believe that there's someplace for everyone who has an interest in performing," said Viebranz.

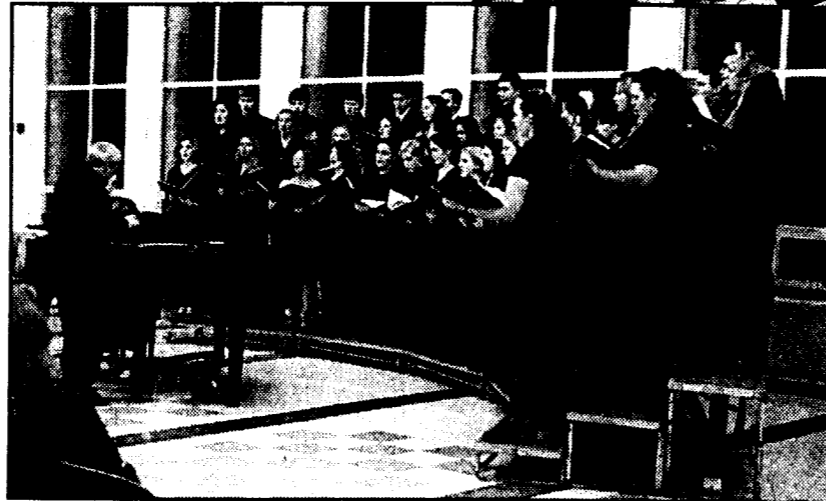
This trip to Paris is very important to the music program and students at Behrend. "To some extent, it will validate our entire program as a worthwhile endeavor, but the true value is in our potential to serve as musical ambassadors on a global basis."

Viebranz has directed the Concert Band for three years. He also instructs the Jazz Ensemble and Pep Band.

Right, Dr. Gary Viebranz talks to a packed McGarvey Commons during the Concert Band performance on Thursday. Below, Daniel Barnard directs the Concert Choir in a performance after the band.



PHOTOS BY ROB WYNNE



Daniel Barnard, below, conducts the Concert Choir Thursday night. Barnard composed two pieces that were performed.



Concert Band and Choir perform for large audience

by Paige Miles
managing editor

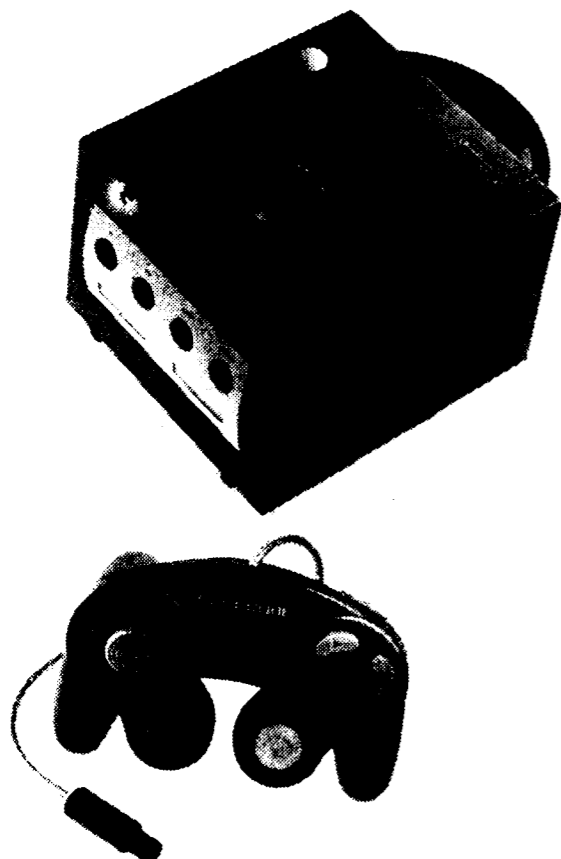
On Thursday night in McGarvey Commons, the Concert Band performed, followed by the Behrend College Choir.

The Concert Band, directed by Dr. Gary Viebranz, opened the night with "The Cowboys Overture," written by John Williams and arranged by James Curnow. "Fantasie en Rose," performed third, was composed by Behrend's Daniel Barnard, lecturer in music and director of choral ensembles at Behrend.

The Behrend College Choir performed alone, and also combined with the Episcopal Cathedral of St. Paul Choir. The College Choir sang "For God Alone," a piece also composed by Barnard.

The College Choir also sang Christmas carols such as "Carol of the Bells" and "Silent Night."

The video game market just gets tougher



This baby wants its buttons pressed.

by Stephen Lynch
Knight Ridder/Tribune
News Service

By all appearances, it's late in the game. Except, says Mark Surfas, president of the video-game publication GameSpy.com, it's really the first quarter.

"The gaming industry is beginning this huge ascent," he says. "By the end of the decade, it'll be four times what it is today."

That's quite a claim, considering video games are already a \$20 billion-a-year business, rivaling Hollywood movies and MTV's stars for the attentions of youth. Analysts are expecting video games to be especially popular this holiday season, as

more Americans ... to stay in and plug in after the terrorist attacks.

Yet, when you look closer, there is evidence of a larger, untapped audience. For one, the age of video-game players has crept up during the past decade, as a generation raised on Pac-Man has held onto their joysticks into their 20s and 30s. As technology has improved, video games are seen less as childish distractions and more like interactive movies both parents and kids can play.

Thursday, Microsoft unveiled the Xbox, its first foray into the home video-game market. Sunday, Nintendo released its next-generation machine, the GameCube. They are to video games, Surfas says, what the first sound

and color movies were to film.

Microsoft "is getting in on the ground floor," he adds. "We think there's room for everybody."

Others are more wary. Peter Moore, chief operating officer for Sega, knows how tough the market can be, considering his company abandoned the console business after the disappointing sales of the Dreamcast.

"There has never been three successful platforms on the market," he says. "But the demographics and psychographics really have expanded. Maybe there can be three consoles as long as there is a clear differentiation."

Indeed, setting the Xbox apart will be Microsoft's biggest challenge. Despite the proximity of their release dates, most observers don't think the Xbox and GameCube will cut too much into each other's sales. Nintendo's target audience is 12 to 17, while Microsoft is going after the older teens and 20-somethings. Instead, it's the Xbox versus the PlayStation 2, the Sony console that came out last year.

Beth Llewelyn, director of public relations for Nintendo, says the GameCube has plenty of games that will appeal to older players, but admits that the Xbox-PS2 rivalry "sort of allows us to sneak in there."

"To discount (the younger) market is a mistake," she adds. "Pokemon was the No. 1 selling game last year."

Nintendo also has remained focused on video games only, and, unlike the PS2 and Xbox, the GameCube isn't able to play DVD movies. But the GameCube also costs \$200, where the other two consoles are \$100 more.

Considering Morgan Stanley estimates that Microsoft could lose \$1 billion before breaking even on the Xbox in 2004, one wonders why it's bothering to challenge Sony with such a similar console. The question is compounded by the fact

that this is Microsoft's first hardware product.

Moore says that despite the risks, Microsoft just doesn't want to be left behind, especially if the theory that this is just the beginning of the video-game business is true. "This is a vehicle for the living room," he says. "They want to be in the living room and not just on the PC."

MICROSOFT XBOX

Price: \$300

Bonus material: Plays DVD movies with \$30 upgrade; built-in CD recorder; broadband hookup for future online gaming

Key titles: The fighting game "Dead or Alive 3," featuring roundhouse kicks and plenty of pixel cleavage; the space marine shoot-'em-up saga "Halo."

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

Price: \$200

Bonus material: Future games will interact with the Game Boy Advance, letting you take characters on the road

Key titles: Mario's brother takes on ghosts with a vacuum cleaner in "Luigi's Mansion"; with its crystal-clear soundtrack and detailed X-Wings, "Rogue Squadron II" is better than the last "Star Wars" movie.

SONY PLAYSTATION 2

Price: \$300

Bonus material: Plays DVD movies and CDs; able to run many older (less expensive) original PlayStation games

Key titles: Having the right combination of storytelling and action, "Metal Gear Solid 2" should be the most popular game this season; virtual football just keeps getting better with "Madden NFL 2002."

Through the Looking Glass

By Mike Pingree
KRT Campus

A BABY? OH, THAT EXPLAINS EVERYTHING

A Pennsylvania woman went home from work early with what she thought was a stomach virus. It turned out to be a 7-pound baby girl named Jasmine. The woman was unaware she was pregnant. "It was my first baby," she explained.

SO, DOES THIS MAKE ME LOOK FAT?

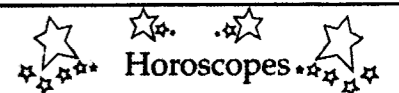
A retail center in Scotland now provides "shopping boyfriends" for women whose husbands/boyfriends/love dudes refuse to go shopping with their ladies. Women can drop off their men in the video section of the Braehead Shopping Center in Glasgow and be provided with surrogates who accompany them to the stores and are "enthusiastic, attentive, admiring and complimentary."

I KNOW THIS LOOKS BAD, OFFICER

A Florida man was arrested for placing a tiny video camera in the toe of his shoe and using it to look up women's skirts. He was given a year's probation. As soon as his sentence was up, he got caught doing it again.

NEXT TIME, TRY THE HEIMLICH, PAL

A man was rushed to the hospital in Wichita, Kan., with a wire coat hanger stuck in his throat, a unique situation that baffled doctors until they operated on him and found a balloon filled with cocaine hooked on the end. The man had bent the hanger and stuck it down his throat in an effort to recover the coke which he said he accidentally swallowed at a party. He is expected both to recover and to go to jail for felony drug possession.



Aries (March 21-April 19) - Today is an 8 - There's too much on your agenda. How are you going to do it all? If you find yourself double-booked, get a friend to represent you at the events you can't make.

Taurus (April 20-May 20) - Today is a 6 - The money is finally headed your way. Wrap up the deal you've been negotiating. You can take the pressure and hand some out. Never falter, never fail.

Gemini (May 21-June 21) - Today is a 7 - If you have a strong partner on your side, you can talk anybody into anything. If you and your mate disagree, the fur will fly. Things will get very interesting either way. Yes, there is a happy ending.

Cancer (June 22-July 22) - Today is a 5 - Take time to do your calculations carefully. No need to hurry. Make sure you avoid mistakes, because there may be a bit of confusion. Stay cool and help others do the same.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22) - Today is an 8 - You don't have to do everything now. You can relax and let some of your friends take over. They've got some good ideas and should be quite effective. So what will you do? You're the coach!

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) - Today is a 6 - It's time to make your report on recent activities. Management wants to know what's going on. They'll be asking lots of questions. Luckily, you've got a good memory. Give them the facts and get your next assignment.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct 22) - Today is a 9 - Think you could get off work early? There are places to go and people to see. If you get to do that as part of your job, even better! If possible, take your sweetheart along. If not today, tomorrow.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) - Today is a 5 - If the game were easy, you'd be bored. And this game sure isn't boring. You have a whole bunch of choices to make involving your money and the money of others. Heed your roommate and/or your mother's advice.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) - Today is an 8 - Don't argue with a person who's trying to set you straight. Accept the coaching and become more effective. Divvy up tasks in order to accomplish more.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) - Today is a 5 - You could make a hefty profit now by finishing up your own lists. Get to work on all the stuff you've jotted down, from good ideas to obligations. Do the obligations first. It'll clear your head.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) - Today is an 8 - You're vindicated. You didn't need to know everything. The situation's back to normal - or close enough - and you can finally relax. Schedule an evening full of your favorite people and favorite things.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20) - Today is a 5 - More changes are under way, both in your career and at home. This causes confusion, but you can find your way through it. You might also find something better than you had before. Follow the light.