

A HISTORY OF THE MARTIN LUTHER HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT THE FIRST THIRTY YEARS

by

David H. Krubsack



1968-1970

THE BEGINNING YEARS

When Martin Luther High School first opened its doors in the fall of 1968, the school had an enrollment of 85 students. In that initial year two classes in music were offered—Band with 11 members and Chorus with 16 members. The music faculty consisted of David Krubsack, who was the department chairman, director of the band and chorus and an instructor in the elementary band program, and M. Gary Lohmeyer who was a full-time instructor in the Lutheran elementary band program. The first co-curricular activity, the Brass Choir, was organized within the first several months of the school year. On December 14, 1968, the Music Department presented its first Christmas Concert in the high school's gymnasium. Amidst a background of Christmas trees and colored spotlights, the Brass Choir, Chorus, and Band (augmented by five faculty members) performed a program of 16 selections of the season. The concert included a narration and a closing hymn involving audience participation.

In April the Martin Luther Band joined the Milwaukee Luther High School Band for its concert tour to Iowa and Illinois. The tour culminated with a concert at Milwaukee Lutheran High on April 13. On June 6 the Martin Luther High Band, Brass Choir and Chorus performed its own Spring Concert in a program of popular and patriotic music.

During the 1969-1970 school year the Band was renamed Concert Band and the Chorus was renamed Concert Choir. Both groups doubled their membership with the band at 22 and the choir at 27. A class in Humanities for incoming freshmen was added to the department's curricular offerings. The Troubadours, a vocal and instrumental organization featuring folk, popular and contemporary Christian music, became the department's new co-curricular activity. Gary Lohmeyer taught the Humanities class and directed the Concert Choir and Troubadours while David Krubsack continued to direct the Concert Band and expanded his involvement in the elementary band program.

The Music Department again presented a Christmas Concert and a Spring Concert. In order to provide further opportunities for the expression of musical talent, a Chamber Concert was held on March 14. This concert would become an annual event in the school's concert schedule.

In spring the Concert Band took a one-day tour of the Lutheran elementary schools in the area. The tour's purpose was two-fold: to enhance each school's music education curriculum and to encourage grade school pupils to participate in an instrumental music program. An additional trip took the Brass Choir and the Concert Choir to the Chicago area. During the day's activities they participated in the chapel service at Concordia College in River Forest and toured the beautiful St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Chicago.

A significant development during the school year was the "Martin Luther Sunday" program (later called "Lutheran High School Sunday"). The purpose of the program was to visit the local Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregations, to enhance the worship services with special vocal and instrumental music, and to make Martin Luther High School more visible to the Lutheran community. The Brass Choir, Concert Band, Concert Choir, and a Faculty Choir visited 10 congregations throughout the year.

1970-1978
COMPLETING THE FIRST DECADE

◆ Curriculum and Faculty

The Martin Luther High School student body continued to grow during the 1970's; consequently, the music department continued to expand its curriculum and activities to meet student needs and interests. In the fall of 1970 a Beginning Band was offered for the first time. Two years later this group developed from 4 students into a 29-piece ensemble, was renamed Varsity Band, and made its debut performance at the Spring Concert on May 19-20, 1973. The Concert Band experienced similar growth. In the fall of 1971 the band's membership jumped from 34 to 61 and by the mid-70's reached a high of 76. During the 1975-1976 school year the Concert Band was renamed the Symphonic Band. The choral program, also, grew in number. In the fall of 1971 a choir for freshman students was offered. This 15-member group (renamed Chorus a year later) grew to a membership of 43 by 1978. In like fashion, the Concert Choir continued to grow—from a membership of around 44 in the early 70's to 60 by 1978. A class for in-depth study of music theory, music appreciation, art and architecture—Advanced Music—was added to the curriculum in the fall of 1970. This class was offered as a music elective for Juniors and Seniors, and within two years it replaced Humanities in the department's offerings.

In the early 70's the Concert Band enhanced school spirit by playing pep music at all home football and various basketball games. In the late 70's the Spartan Pep Band was formed. Members of the Symphonic Band and Varsity Bands combined their talents and efforts to continue that tradition.

In the co-curricular area the Jazz Lab was organized during the 1971-1972 school year. It presented its debut performance at the 1972 Spring Concert.

During these eight years several changes took place in the department's faculty. David Krubsack continued to direct the instrumental music program, but at Gary Lohmeyer's leaving in 1972, Mr. Krubsack assumed leadership of the school's two choirs as well. English and Theology instructor, Jeffrey Burkart directed the Troubadours. Beginning with the 1974-1975 school year the music department offered a band lesson program similar to that offered in quality public schools. In order to permit Mr. Krubsack the time necessary to teach those lessons, Jeffrey Burkart directed the Concert Choir. When Mr. Burkart left the Milwaukee area one year later, Robert Lindau accepted the call to direct all of the choral activities. He served in this capacity from 1975 to 1978.

◆ Equipping the Department

In the early 1970's the fledgling department received several major gifts. One was from the Lutheran Symphonic Band of Milwaukee which had disbanded; it gave its assets—four filing cabinets and their contents of concert band music—to the music department. Another was the choral and jazz ensemble library of the musical performance group of the Allis Chalmers Company; this gift was made possible through the efforts of Mr. Lee Vick. In addition, throughout the 70's the Martin Luther Ladies Guild faithfully provided instruments and supplies. All of these gifts greatly benefited the needs of a department growing in students and activities.

The band room saw a major change. From the school's first days the band room had a bare concrete floor. In the summer of 1971 risers large enough to hold an 80-piece band were built over half of the room. Completing the construction project were English instructor John Schultz, art instructor Ted Richer, Mr. Lohmeyer, Mr. Krubsack and Mr. Krubsack's son, Dave. Because of the risers the band room not only served as an excellent rehearsal area but also provided an appropriate setting for meetings and recitals.

◆ Concert Highlights

With an increasing number of students involved in the music program, the department was able to present more concerts, to perform a richer repertoire of sacred, classical, and popular selections and to capture this music for posterity.

First of all, the concert schedule was expanded. On March 12, 1972, the first Fine Arts Festival was held. This program consisted of a Chamber Concert, a one-act play, an Advanced Music audio-visual project and a display of works by the Art classes as well as refreshments served by the Home Economics classes. In 1976 this festival—themed “Images”—took on a bicentennial flavor. On May 7, 1978, the fine arts festival program—titled “Deca-fest”—celebrated Martin Luther High’s 10th anniversary and featured the artistic talents of the school’s students and alumni. Another first during these years was the Concert Choir’s initial Sacred Concert. It was presented on April 8, 1973, at Our Shepherd Lutheran Church in Greendale and featured Barbara Evans (’74) as organ soloist. One year later, on April 27, 1974, the bands scheduled their first Annual Band Concert. The evening’s program spotlighted the Varsity Band, the Concert Band, and the Jazz Lab. At the 1973 Christmas Concert the Troubadours made their debut concert performance at ML. Their presence at future Christmas programs then became a tradition.

Secondly, the Concert Choir and the Symphonic Band increasingly performed more challenging pieces. Masterworks performed by the Concert Choir over these years included: selections from Handel’s Messiah (1971, 1973, 1974); Britten’s “A Ceremony of Carols” (1973); Bach’s motet “Jesu, Priceless Treasure” (1975); Roy Ringwald’s “The Song of Christmas” (1976); Bach’s Cantata No. 142—“For Unto Us A Child is Born” with a student orchestra and faculty soloists (1977) and Randall Thompson’s “Alleluia” (1978). Major band works and orchestral transcriptions programmed by the Concert/Symphonic Band included Howard Hanson’s “Dies Natalis” (1974); Tchaikovski’s “Francesca di Rimini” (1974), “1812 Overture” (1975) and “March Slav” (1977); Alfred Reed’s “Russian Christmas Music” (1975); Morton Gould’s “Cowboy Rhapsody” (1976); Handel’s “Worthy is the Lamb That was Slain” from the Messiah (1977) and Clifton William’s “Symphonic Dance No. 3” (1978). Starting with the 1975 Annual Band Concert outstanding student talent was showcased by the performance of major classical works. At that concert Joel Brondos (’75) performed Haydn’s “Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra in E Flat” backed by an orchestra composed of Martin Luther High students and Milwaukee area professional musicians. Also featured at this concert was Keith Hertig (’75) who soloed in Rimsky-Korsakov’s “Concerto for Trombone and Military Band” with the Concert Band providing the instrumental accompaniment. At the 1978 Annual Band Concert Kathryn Krubsack (’78) performed Mozart’s “Concerto No. 3 in E Flat for Horn and Orchestra”—with an orchestra also involving ML students and professional musicians.

In 1976 the music department presented several concerts to celebrate the nation’s bicentennial. At the Annual Band Concert—themed “America, the Beautiful”—the Symphonic Band performed a program of patriotic selections that were accompanied by slide presentations highlighting the nation’s natural beauty and historic events. The Spring Concert—“Musical America”—featured patriotic choral and instrumental music, both serious and secular. The program closed with a stirring performance of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” by the combined Concert Choir and Symphonic Band.

With the Spring Concert of 1971 the department began the tradition of recording its Christmas and spring concerts and releasing an LP album for students and the public. These albums were considered “performances for posterity.” Beginning with the 1975 Spring Concert—“A Fanfare for the Common Man”—the spring concert album contained two LP records. In 1978 all the performing groups released a special two LP album to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Martin Luther High School.

◆ Tour Highlights

Throughout the 70’s the annual band tour was an event eagerly anticipated by the instrumental students. They found it a joy to perform for Lutheran elementary pupils, to participate in the worship services of congregations in other parts of the country, to benefit from educational sightseeing, and to experience the fellowship with their hosts as well as each other. The tour to Rockford, Illinois, in 1972 was the ML band’s first overnight concert tour. The musicians spent the entire day giving concerts to the Lutheran schools of the city and were hosted by the families of Rockford Lutheran High students. In 1973 the band combined its 2-day tour with the Lutheran High School Instrumental Festival held at Concordia College in River Forest, Illinois. The tour was extended to 3 days in 1975 when the band shared its music with the Lutheran elementary and high schools of southern Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri. In 1977 the Symphonic Band took its first 4-day

tour, traveling to Indiana, Kentucky, and Illinois and combining it with another Lutheran High School Instrumental Festival at Concordia College. The Varsity Band joined the tour in River Forest to participate in the festival activities. At the evening concert both bands presented outstanding programs to a highly enthusiastic audience. Other tours included those to Chicago and Melrose Park, Illinois (1971), northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin (1974), Illinois and Indiana (1976) and Illinois, Indiana and Tennessee (1978).

The Concert Choir's traveling activities began in March 1974, with a trip to Concordia College, River Forest to participate in the Lutheran High School Choral Festival. In 1976 the Concert Choir took its first concert tour to the state of Indiana. The next tours took the choir to St. Louis (1977) and Minneapolis (1978).

✦ **Community Outreach and Special Events**

During the remainder of the school's first decade, the music groups became more and more involved in community outreach. The Lutheran High School Sunday program continued to be an effective and uplifting means of witnessing through worshipful music as well as maintaining a warm relationship with local Lutheran congregations. The Brass Choir, many times, was involved in additional special events. It was asked to participate in the city-wide Reformation Festival Services at Milwaukee's Performing Arts Center each year from 1971 to 1975. They provided special music for the conventions of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (1972), the Wisconsin-Illinois Lutheran high school teachers (1972), and the South Wisconsin District Convention (1976). On three occasions they traveled to Clintonville, Wisconsin, to participate in several celebrations at St. Martin Lutheran Church. The Concert Choir, also, made several special appearances. In 1973 the group provided choral music in a special Christmas TV program for the Milwaukee community. In 1974 the choir participated in the Good Friday Tre Ore worship service at Sherman Park Lutheran Church. The Concert Choir, with the Brass Choir, presented another Christmas Eve TV program in 1977. Activities of the Jazz Lab included playing for special events at local Lutheran congregations and schools, making two trips to perform in Janesville, and participating and being awarded Class A 1st place ratings in the 1977 and 1978 University of Whitewater Jazz Festivals.

In the fall of 1976 the music department was involved in two unique experiences. First was the Bicentennial Lutheran Hour Rally held in September at the Milwaukee Arena. The Symphonic Band provided sacred and patriotic music for the occasion, and the Concert Choir sang in the massed choir. In November the Concert Choir and the Brass Choir made a 2-day trip to Paris, Illinois, where they participated in the worship services of Grace Lutheran Church.

A new dimension was added to the department during the 1976-1977 school year. The WSMA (Wisconsin School Music Association) enabled the private high schools of the Milwaukee area to organize their own music festivals. These schools held their first solo-ensemble festival at Milwaukee Lutheran High School in the spring of 1977. Martin Luther High students won 9 starred first ratings qualifying them for the state festival. The Brass Choir's star was to be the first of 21 successive starred first ratings. In February of 1978 the Symphonic Band became the school's first entry into the WSMA Band/Choral Festival. The band received a 1st place rating. In the years to follow the ML bands would receive 17 successive 1st place ratings in WSMS festivals.

The 1977-1978 school year marked the 75th anniversary of Lutheran Secondary Education. In celebration of and thanksgiving for this milestone, a multi-media presentation—"The Story and the Spirit"—was staged on April 9th in the newly restored Pabst Theater. The Martin Luther High Concert Choir and Troubadours performed an afternoon program for this historic occasion.

At the same time Lutheran high schools marked 75 years of progress, Martin Luther High School was celebrating its 10th. As faculty and students, both in the school and in the music department, reflected upon those first 10 years, they were struck by the many blessings the Lord had showered upon them. This, indeed, was a time to thank Him for the blessings of the past and to confidently anticipate the years to come.

1978-1988
A DECADE OF STABLE GROWTH

◆ **Curriculum and Faculty**

For the Martin Luther High School Music Department the years from 1978-1988 were noted as an era of stability and growth. It offered a program that served the school and community, presented quality concerts, and embarked on exciting and enriching concert tours as well as one that helped students to grow in the development of their musical talents.

During this time five classes continued to be the foundation of the department's curriculum: Chorus, Concert Choir, Varsity Band, Symphonic Band, and Advanced Music. The Chorus averaged 24 students a year with a high of 44 in 1979 while the Concert Choir averaged 54 members a year reaching a high of 61 in 1984. At the same time the Varsity Band averaged 33 students a year peaking at 49 in 1981, and the Symphonic Band averaged 73 musicians a year reaching its highest membership of 81 in 1981. Advanced Music offered the student an in-depth study of music theory and music history. Because of a core of 8 talented string players who entered Martin Luther High in the late '70's, String Ensemble was offered as an academic class from 1978 to 1981. To accommodate the student who belonged neither to band or choir but was interested in a music and arts experience, Humanities was added to the curriculum during the 1986-1987 school year. Another expansion of the music program occurred during the 1987-1988 school year when a program of private music lessons given during the school day was initiated.

Several co-curricular activities were established to enrich musical experiences. In the spring of 1983 a Percussion Choir was organized; it qualified for the State Music Festival and made its first ML concert appearance in May. One year later a newly-organized Flute Choir earned a berth at the State Music Festival and performed in concert on band tour and in the school's Annual Band and Spring Concerts. As talent and opportunity presented themselves, other groups flourished. One of these was a boy's quartet from the class of 1982—Don Krubsack, Brian Wegener, Ted Simpson, and Brent Neumann—which performed at activities in school and in the community. Another was the "Chicken Dinner Band" which provided entertainment for the ML Club's fund-raising events.

Seven instructors guided the students through the curriculum and related co-curricular activities. David Krubsack continued to head the department, to teach the Advanced Music and Humanities classes and to direct the Varsity Band, Symphonic Band, Brass Choir, Percussion Choir and Flute Choir. David Deffner, who replaced Robert Lindau, directed the Chorus, Concert Choir, Troubadours, and String Ensemble and any extra choral activities from 1978-1984. Michael Kesar took over the helm of the choral activities in 1984 and served until 1989. Three directors led the Jazz Lab during these years: Dorothy Pralle (1978-1984), Kathryn Krubsack (1984-1986), and Dan Finley (1986-1989). Ellie Quint began her service as a private voice teacher during the 1987-1988 school year.

◆ **Concert Highlights**

The department's concert schedule, established in the 70's, proved to be effective and was therefore continued throughout the 80's. Dates for the Annual Christmas Concert (2nd weekend in December) and the Annual Spring Concert (3rd weekend in May) became traditional. The Concert Choir's Sacred Concert was presented on the return day of the choir's annual tour. The Annual Band Concert was given on the first Sunday in May. One change from the past was the date of the Chamber Concert; it was moved to October or November in order to offer a fall musical program. Another change involved the activities of the Spring Concert. Beginning in 1980 the Spring Concert weekend included a Student Art Exhibition, an elaborate display of the outstanding creations of ML students in the Art, Home Arts, and Industrial Arts classes.

Concert repertoire continued to expand. The newly-formed String Ensemble gave its initial performance at the 1978 Christmas Concert, adding a new dimension to concert programming. The Concert Choir presented the works of choral masters such as: Buxtehude's "*Beloved Christians, Now Rejoice*" (1978), Sweelinck's "*Hodie, Christus natus est*" (1979), Randall Thompson's "*Alleluia*" (1980) and "*Peaceable Kingdom*" (1982), Bach's "*Jesu, Priceless Treasure*" motet (1981), Kodaly's "*Matra Pictures*" (1981, 1988), Berger's "*Brazilian Psalm*" (1984), Handel's "*Declare His Honor*" (1985) and Graun's "*Surely He Hath Borne Our Griefs*" (1986). Outstanding instrumental works performed by

the Symphonic Band included: Holst's "Mars" (1979, 1986) and "Jupiter" (1987), Hill's "Sioux Variants" (1979, 1983), Rossini's "William Tell Overture" (1980, 1988), Shostakovich's "Festive Overture" (1981, 1985), von Suppe's "Poet and Peasant Overture" (1983) and "Light Cavalry Overture" (1986), Verdi's "Manzoni Requiem" (1983), de Nardis' "Universal Judgment" (1985), and Timothy Mahr's "Fantasia in G" (1986). Some of the Tchaikovsky's favorites—"Francesca di Rimini" and "March Slav" were repeated. In 1984 Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" was reprogrammed with the band singing the opening Russian national anthem in Russian and in 4-part harmony. The handbell choir of Our Shepherd Lutheran Church joined the band for the finale of this thrilling transcription.

On December 12 and 13, 1987, the department broadened the concept of the Christmas presentation; it became a Christmas Festival. In addition to the typical Christmas concert ensembles, a large massed choir was included. Church choirs from nine local Lutheran congregations participated in the event creating a massed choir of 170 voices. In addition to several individual massed choir selections, the massed choir and Symphonic Band together brought the festival to an exciting conclusion with Ralph Vaughn Williams' "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name". David Krubsack served as the conductor of the massed choirs; Michael Kesar served as the festival administrator.

The festival was an exciting event, lauded by both audience and participants. Everyone felt that it was an event that should be continued, although not every year lest its uniqueness wear thin. After receiving input from the directors of the participating choirs, it was decided that the Christmas Festival be held once every three years.

◆ Concert Recordings

The practice of releasing a one-LP Christmas Concert album and a two-LP Spring Concert album continued until the Spring Concert of 1985. Because cassette tapes were becoming more popular, the 1985 Spring Concert was released as a plain cassette. And although the 1985 Christmas Concert was released as a LP record, it was the last concert album to be released in that format. For the next 13 years all concert albums were released as cassette tapes.

In 1984 the music department released a special LP of the top 25 ML pep songs. The album was titled, "Songs of the Spartans". The album included pictures of the Symphonic Band, candid shots of the Pep Band in action, and information about Martin Luther High School and its music department. The album was a hit with students and alumni.

◆ Tour Highlights

Concert tours in the years from 1978 to 1988 followed an effective, well-established formula. First of all, tours were held in March, the time between the basketball/wrestling season and all the spring sports contests. Secondly, the length of a typical tour was four and a half days—from Wednesday afternoon to Sunday night. This allowed the band or choir to participate in the congregation's Lenten service at the first tour location and to present special music in the Sunday morning worship service at the final tour stop. Scheduled for the three days in between were daytime assemblies in Lutheran elementary schools and evening concerts at Lutheran parishes. Educational sightseeing filled in the free time.

Tour destinations of the Concert Choir during the decade were: Indiana and Michigan (1979), Iowa and Minnesota (1980), Wisconsin and Minnesota (1981), Illinois and Missouri (1982), Illinois and Michigan (1983), Wisconsin and Minnesota (1984), Illinois and Indiana (1985), Illinois and Missouri (1986), Iowa and Nebraska (1987), and Illinois and Michigan (1988).

During the same decade the Symphonic Band embarked on tours to Illinois, Missouri and Arkansas (1979); Illinois and Michigan (1980); Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky (1981); Illinois, Indiana and Ohio (1982); Illinois, Missouri and Kansas (1983); Illinois, Indiana and Ohio (1984); and Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas and Tennessee (1985). For the next three years the band extended the distance traveled during a tour by traveling and sleeping on the bus the first night. This became known as a tour with an "overnighter." Tour destinations then became Indiana, Tennessee, Georgia and Kentucky (1986); Indiana, Niagara Falls—New York, Toronto—Canada, and Michigan (1987); and Illinois, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Missouri (1988)

✦ Community Outreach and Special Events

During the school's second decade the scheduling of the meaningful Lutheran High School Sunday program became more structured. A plan was adopted in which the Brass Choir, the Troubadours, and the combined Brass Choir and Concert Choir would visit 15 area congregations each year. To avoid the months busy with church or high school activities, congregation visits were scheduled during the months of September-November and January-February. Lutheran High School Sundays were an enjoyable occasion. Students felt it was a privilege to participate in and enhance the congregation's worship service. Parents of the participants often traveled from church to church with the groups, appreciating the music and the unique worship styles of each individual congregation. Through it all, ML students and their parents enjoyed a special relationship with each congregation and anticipated the next visit.

The choirs and bands were active in providing music for a number of special events over these years. Brass Choir appearances included: the 75th anniversary of Bethesda Lutheran Home—Watertown, Wisconsin (1979), district or state Lutheran teachers conferences (1984, 1986), a chapel service in the International Center of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod—St. Louis (1985), the 100th anniversary of St. Martin Lutheran School—Clintonville, Wisconsin (1985), the 130th anniversary of St. John Lutheran Church—Plymouth, Wisconsin (1988) and the weddings of four Martin Luther alumni. The Symphonic Band was invited to play at two business meetings in the city of Milwaukee—the Aid Association for Lutherans in 1983 and the Taco Bell company in 1984. The Concert Choir performed at the Milwaukee County Courthouse Holiday Concert series where they sang carols and anthems for the celebration of Christmas. They also sang for special events in the Southridge Shopping Center. Troubadour performances included those at St. Michael's Hospital (1985) and the International Institute (1986) and for various functions in local parishes.

One of the educational opportunities that became more and more available for the music students in the 80's was the music festival or the honor ensemble. Some of these festivals were for high school choirs; the Concert Choir participated in the Choral Fest-Concordia College, Milwaukee (1981-1983) and the Lutheran High School Choral Festival-Concordia College, River Forest (1986). Martin Luther students were also able to apply and qualify for honors band festivals where one would be performing with the best musicians in the state. Students represented Martin Luther High School at the Carthage Lakeside Festival-Carthage College, Kenosha (1981), the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Honors Band Festival (1983-1988) and the All State Band of the National Band Association-Wisconsin Chapter (1988). A special honor came to two ML students when they were chosen to perform in the Milwaukee Civic Music Association's High School Showcase Concert. In 1986 Lynn Roge ('86) was featured on alto saxophone, and in 1987 Wendy Groth ('87) presented a piano performance.

✦ The Martin Luther Music Boosters

During the fall of 1980 department chairman Mr. Krubsack determined the time had come to establish a music booster organization. The music program had been blessed with tremendous growth over the previous 12 years. During those years parents had expressed an interest in helping to build and support an even stronger music program. Fund-raising for the band and choir and their tours was a project that had grown larger than student officers and their instructors could efficiently or effectively handle. Various products had been sold for 3 years: calendars (1978), candles (1979) and sausages (1980). With parent help the fund-raising effort could be expanded. A more immediate concern was the WSMA music festivals; Martin Luther High School was scheduled to host both the Solo-Ensemble Festival and the Band and Choir Festival during the 1980-1981 school year. These large-scale efforts needed careful planning and the aid of dozens of volunteers

A booster board was asked to serve as leaders in the organization's initial year. They were: Mert Troeger, chairman; Paul Eggold, vice-chairman; Ellen Troeger, secretary; Corky Prueser, secretary-elect; Norma Ulbing, treasurer; Sue Eggold, treasurer-elect; and Viola Neumann, member-at-large. Mr. Krubsack, Mr. Deffner and Miss Pralle served as advisors. Several preliminary meetings were held in order to delineate the goals of the organization and to draw up its by-laws.

The first ML Music Booster meeting took place in the school's Fine Arts Center on October 20, 1980. At that time the objectives and the by-laws of the organization were adopted. The guest speaker for the evening was Jay Bocook of Jensen Publications, Inc.; he gave the parents a vision for building an effective and successful booster organization.

The Music Boosters became very active in the activities of the music department. An annual meeting was held each September which involved a keynote speech by a noted musician, a beginning-of –the-year report from the music instructors, a preview of the tour itineraries, and pertinent information about the annual fund drive. Throughout the year Booster board members met to discuss everyday and special events, administer the fund drive, and keep financial records for the fund drive and the concert tours. In May the Boosters hosted the Annual Music Awards Night. Their special projects over the decade included two WSMA festivals in 1981 and the St. Olaf College Band Tour Concert (1982). They also provided gifts to purchase needed equipment and supplies for the department. Among the major purchases were new band uniforms, new choir gowns, an alto flute, a baritone saxophone, a baby grand piano, several file cabinets, and tour garment bags for the band and choir.

Thus, in a few short years, the Martin Luther Music Boosters had made a tremendous impact on the ministry of the Martin Luther Music Department and would do so for years to come.

✦ **The 1981 WSMA Music Festivals**

In the spring of 1981 Martin Luther High School hosted two WSMA music festivals. At that time there were 13 high schools in the WSMA Private School District— 9 Catholic schools and 4 Lutheran schools. The ML music teachers and Music Boosters made extensive plans to make the festivals a valuable experience for each participant—anticipating the number of entries, determining the needed adjudicators, selecting the necessary rooms and providing a piano for each, and organizing a cadre of volunteers for the various festival responsibilities.

The first festival, the Solo-Ensemble Festival, was held on February 28. There were 552 entries to be evaluated and 13 adjudicators to evaluate them. ML volunteers—45 students and 40 parents and teachers—effectively carried out their assigned jobs. Members of the Music Boosters served a delicious lunch for the adjudicators and the participating high school teachers. At the end of the day everyone agreed that the festival was a great success. Teachers, parents, and students of the visiting schools as well as the adjudicators expressed very complimentary comments about the beauty of the ML facility and the smooth operation of the music festival

The WSMA Band and Choral Festival, held on April 4, was equally as exciting and successful. Participating in this event were 13 bands and 15 choirs. Three adjudicators, stationed in the Band Room, Choir Room and Fine Arts Center, evaluated each performing musical group. Martin Luther High entered three performing groups in the festival—Concert Choir, Varsity Band, and Symphonic Band. All three groups presented outstanding performances. And when the ratings were posted, all three groups received first place awards.

At the end of the school year the Music Boosters and their advisors reviewed the entire year, they were pleased to see what a successful and productive year it had been. They fully realized the many blessings the Lord had bestowed upon the Music Boosters, the tours, the concerts, and the music festivals. It was an occasion for prayers of thanksgiving.

1988-1998 **EXPANDING THE HORIZONS**

During the third decade of Martin Luther High School, the Music Department was presented with and took advantage of ample opportunities to expand its ministry. During the first 20 years a solid foundation for music education and music ministry had been laid. The next 10 years were to see exciting new dimensions.

✦ **Curriculum and Faculty**

Over this ten-year period, the curriculum still contained its tried and true performance classes: Chorus, Concert Choir, Varsity Band, and Symphonic Band. In terms of student numbers during this time the Chorus averaged 20 members a year, hitting a high of 39 in 1995; the Concert Choir averaged 49 members reaching a top of 61 in 1997; the Varsity Band averaged 24 musicians a year, the highest being 32 in 1996; and the Symphonic Band averaged 73 members a year, peaking at 81 in 1995. To accommodate a large number of Sophomore to Senior girls who were interested in singing

beyond the Chorus or Choir, a Girl's Chorus was added to the curriculum in 1993. This group averaged 15 members a year with a high of 20 in 1997.

Two academic classes were offered during this time. Humanities, a one-semester course was offered to all Juniors and Seniors and became a class that could fulfill either a social studies requirement or a music elective. Advanced Music became a one-semester course that offered music theory, composition, conducting and sequencing skills to qualified music students.

The private lesson program grew quickly; it included further studies in voice, woodwinds, brass, percussion and keyboard. Each year several dozen students took advantage of this opportunity to study with professional musicians.

Two new co-curricular activities entered the ML musical scene. A Saxophone Choir was established in the spring of 1993, performing on band tour and making its home debut at the Annual Band Concert. In the spring of 1995 the Clarinet Choir was organized; its first performances were also on band tour and at the Annual Band Concert. Both groups enjoyed consistent success at the district and state solo-ensemble festivals.

The well-established Jazz Lab made strong showings during these years, winning a berth in the state solo-ensemble festival for 8 successive years.

An addition was made in the pep band scene. In the fall of 1989 Vince Purpero ('92) and Dan Kilimann ('92) formed a small student-led pep ensemble called the Tower of Power. The original purpose of the group was to play for the girl's basketball games. In the following years the athletic director and the band director established a season's schedule of Pep Band appearances at key home girl's and boy's basketball games. The Tower of Power, each year directed by a competent student leader, covered the rest of the home games

Beginning in 1989 the Troubadours took on a new look. Since 1972 the group had existed as an elite SATB ensemble, singing a cappella or with piano accompaniment. The 90's version of the Troubadours used synthesizers, individual microphones, a sophisticated sound system and recorded background music. They also entered the WSMA music festivals and received highest ratings at the district and state festivals.

To enhance the musical experiences of the various co-curricular ensembles, local musical experts were invited to rehearsals. These guest clinicians conducted, taught, and shared professional tips; they helped each group to become an even better performing organization.

During this 10-year period the ML music students were led by thirteen instructors. Department head David Krubsack taught the Humanities class, directed the Varsity Band, Symphonic Band, Brass Choir, Flute Choir (1988-1993), Jazz Lab (1991-1998), and Percussion Choir (1996-1998) and led the Saxophone Choir during its initial season. Michael Kesar, at ML since 1984, directed the choral activities through the 1988-1989 school year and then went on to pursue graduate studies. Starting in 1989 Timothy Franz ('76) returned to his alma mater to assume the leadership of the choral program, directing the Chorus, Concert Choir, Girl's Chorus and Troubadours. He also revised and then taught the Advanced Music class.

Adjunct instructors rounded out the music department's teaching staff. These instructor included Duane Gandre: woodwind instructor and assistant Jazz Lab director (1988-1998); Ellie Quint: voice instructor (1987- present); Kathryn Krubsack ('78): brass instructor (1994-); Dan Finley: brass instructor and Jazz Lab director (1988-1989); Nanette van Deusen: brass instructor and Jazz Lab director (1989-1990); Lisa Klunder ('84): percussion instructor and Percussion Choir director (1989-1994); Lynn Lewandowski ('86): director of the Flute Choir, Clarinet Choir and Saxophone Choir (1993-1996); Margo Luecht: director of the Flute Choir, Clarinet Choir and Saxophone Choir (1996-present); Rebecca Rehorst ('91): keyboard and percussion instructor (1996-1998); and Claudia Drews: keyboard instructor (1998).

♣ Concert Highlights

The concert seasons of the 90's expanded in several, exciting ways—challenging, colorful and more contemporary repertoire, frequent festival presentations, and an ever-growing audience. Scheduling for the concerts remained the same as in previous years except for the Chamber Concert. It was moved to a Sunday in February so that participants in the WSMA district solo-ensemble festival could present their selections in a concert setting before attending the festival.

The choral scene was enhanced by the addition of the newly formed Girl's Chorus, a male octet (1996), a barbershop quartet (1997) and a student-organized and student-directed Girl's Show Choir (1998).

The Concert Choir programmed the following masterworks: Handel's "*For Unto Us a Child is Born*" (1990); Sweelinck's "*Hodie, Christus natus est*" (1992, 1996); Haydn's "*The Heavens are Telling*" (1993); Bach's "*For Unto Us a Child is Born*" cantata (1993), "*Jesus, Priceless Treasure*" motet (1997), and "*Mass in B Minor*" selections (1998); Schein's "*Who with Grieving Soweth*" (1995); and Houston Bright's "*Kyrie Eleison*" (1997). Other classical choral selections included: Benjamin Britten's "*Ceremony of Carols*" (1990); Randall Thompson's "*Peaceable Kingdom*" (1992, 1996) and "*Alleluia*" (1996); and F. Melius Christian's "*O Day Full of Grace*" (1994) and "*Lost in the Night*" (1994).

Major works performed by the Symphonic Band included: James Curnow's "*Rejouissance*" (1991); Claude Smith's "*Eternal Father, Strong to Save*" (1994); del Borgo's "*Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night*" (1995); James Barnes' "*Variants on a Moravian Hymn*" (1995); Robert Smith's "*The Ascension*" (1996); movements from Verdi's "*Manzoni Requiem*" (1996); and Barry Kepetz's "*Variations on 'Lobe den Herrn'*" (1997). Traditional favorites continued to grace concert programs: "*Universal Judgment*" (1989, 1995); "*March Slav*" (1991, 1996); "*William Tell Overture*" (1992, 1998); "*Mars*" (1995); and "*Overture 1812*" (1993, 1997). One of the most ambitious works programmed by the Symphonic Band was performed at the 1996 Annual Band Concert. "*Lonely Beach*" by James Barnes commemorated the World War II Normandy Beach invasion on June 6, 1944. The work featured antiphonal off-stage trumpets, an off-stage percussion choir, a female chorus (which was sung by the girls in the Concert Choir and the Girl's Chorus), and a soprano soloist (sung by biology instructor Debbie Schneider). The graphic, dramatic music described the wind and the waves, the landing of the troops, the noise and carnage of battle, the finality of death, and a mystic eulogy to the fallen. The entire presentation caused everyone to realize the horror of war, and the audience was solemnly impacted by its message.

A number of ML students were featured in classical masterworks with an orchestral ensemble. Robert Groth ('89) performed Haydn's "*Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra*" at the 1989 Annual Band Concert. At the 1994 Annual Band Concert ML French horn players were featured in Robert Schumann's "*Concertpiece in F Major for Four Horns and Orchestra*". The horn quartet consisted of Kathryn Krubsack ('78), Kris Scaffidi ('94), Heidi Morris ('94) and Joelle Froehling ('95).

♣ Alumni Involvement

An exciting dimension of the music program during this decade was the involvement of alumni in composing music for the ML performing groups and in personally performing in the high school concert programs. Donald Krubsack ('82) began the process by composing psalm antiphons for the Brass Choir (1987, 1995). Jeffrey Torres ('78) was commissioned to write original works for the Brass Choir and arrange hymns for the high school's Lutheran High Sunday program. Consequently he wrote four brass choir fanfares (1989, 1990, 1993, 1994) several of which included two or three herald trumpets, plus an arrangement of "Beautiful Savior." He also provided settings for brass choir, SATB choir, congregation and organ of the hymns "Immortal, Invisible, God only Wise" (1992), "Glory be to God the Father" (1993) and "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" (1994). In addition Jeffrey composed a work for the Symphonic Band based on the ancient chant "Of the Father's Love Begotten"; this composition was first performed at the 1992 Christmas Concert.

In 1993, a number of events were planned to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Martin Luther High School. One of these, held on March 23, was the first alumni recital. Performing in this historic event were French hornist Kathryn Krubsack ('78) and tenor soloist and trombonist Donald Krubsack ('82). They were accompanied by Teri Larson Krubsack on the

piano. The featured work for the evening was “*Serenade for Tenor Solo and Horn*” by English composer Benjamin Britten.

A second alumni recital was scheduled for January, 1994. Alumni spotlighted in this program were soprano soloist Cindy Louise (Pritzlaff) Ovokaitys ('84), pianist Rachel (Koeller) Chapin ('85) and flutist and saxophonist Lynn Roge ('86). Lynn's program consisted of both classical and popular works with guitar accompaniment by Steven Lewandowski and sequenced accompaniment by Timothy Franz. Cindy and Rachel's performance included eight sacred selections which they had jointly composed.

Over the years band alumni joined the Martin Luther Pep Band at football and basketball games. On two occasions an Alumni Pep Band was organized. These groups played at the Alumni Basketball Tournaments in 1994 and 1995. At both events dozens of alumni dusted off their instruments, warmed up their embouchures, and enjoyed playing for one more game at their alma mater.

On May 3, 1998, an alumni concert band was formed to perform a final time under the direction of retiring Mr. Krubsack. The occasion was the school's 25th Annual Band Concert. After the traditional program of band and ensemble music, an alumni band of 75 members joined the Symphonic Band to conclude the concert. Their program included several serious compositions for concert band and an “Afterglow” of five favorite pep tunes. It was an evening of special music and of special, warm memories.

◆ **Concert Recordings**

The tradition of recording the ML concert programs continued throughout the 90's. A single audio cassette was made available for each Christmas concert and spring concert. In 1997 and 1998 the spring concerts were produced on a double audiocassette.

The Symphonic Band released two special recordings during these years. In observance of the school's 25th anniversary in 1993, the band released “Spartan Spirit Songs,” a cassette collection of 36 pep songs played at the Spartan athletic events. These selections were the favorites of fans, teams and band members during the school's 25-year history. In 1998 the Symphonic Band produced the school's first CD in another collection of ML pep songs. Titled “Sounds from Spartan Country”, the CD's repertoire consisted of 36 selections, most of which were performed by the band during the mid 90's.

◆ **Tour Highlights**

Between 1988 and 1998 the music department's concert tours were greatly expanded; they also followed a different formula from previous years. Now, in each school year, there was a short tour and a long tour. The short tour was similar to the tours of the 80's—four and a half days in length, from Wednesday to Sunday. The long tour was held during the Easter vacation plus the following two school days. The Concert Choir and the Symphonic Band alternated years for the short or long tours. This plan allowed each touring group to increase the number of congregations contacted, to travel to further destinations around the country, and to include a richer fare of educational sightseeing activities. These long tours usually required the touring musicians to sleep on the bus one or two nights. Three tours to California necessitated moving the band or choir members by plane as well as by bus. These challenges were always eagerly accepted by the participants.

The Concert Choir's tour ministry included the following destinations: Illinois, Ontario—Canada, Ohio and Indiana (1989); Illinois, North Carolina, Kentucky and Indiana (1990); New York City, Long Island—New York, Pennsylvania and Indiana (1991); Iowa, Colorado and Nebraska (1992); Illinois, Niagara Falls—New York, Ohio and Michigan (1993); the “Totally Texas” tour, with performances in Plano, Austin, Houston, Waco and Dallas (1994); Wisconsin, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Minnesota (1995); Missouri, New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado (1996); Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania (1997); and California, with concerts at Torrance, Irvine, Imperial Beach, El Cajon and Lake Forest (1998).

During these same years the Symphonic Band developed a four-year tour cycle to the following destinations—Florida, Ozark country, Washington, D.C., and California. The band also auditioned for and won the honor to present concert performances at Walt Disney World’s EPCOT CENTER and at SEA WORLD in San Diego, California. Band tour itineraries included: Florida, with performances in New Port Richey, Winter Haven, Oviedo and at Walt Disney World’s EPCOT CENTER (1989); Illinois, Arkansas, Tennessee and Missouri (1990); California, with concerts in La Mesa, San Diego, Escondido, El Toro, Orange and at SEA WORLD (1991); Maryland, Washington, D.C., Virginia and Ohio (1992); Florida, performing in New Port Richey, Eustis, Lakeland, Oviedo and at EPCOT CENTER (1993); Illinois, Arkansas, Tennessee and Missouri (1994); California, with performances in Riverside, Lancaster, Escondido, San Diego, Lake Forest, Orange, and at SEA WORLD (1995); Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Ohio (1996); Florida, with performances in New Port Richey, Clearwater, Lakeland, and at EPCOT CENTER (1997); and Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee and Missouri (1998).

The 1998 Band Tour offered a new feature in the annals of ML concert tour history—a band tour web page. The idea for a tour web page was formed in the creative minds of trombonist Nathan Schlehlein (‘98) and Matt Wilm (‘98). Through the joint efforts of these two students the band’s activities were recorded and processed each day throughout the tour. Consequently, each day parents and friends of the band members as well as the people from host congregations could enjoy the band’s concerts and sightseeing adventures over the Internet.

✦ Festival Concerts

The Christmas Festivals continued throughout the 90’s following the tri-annual plan. The Christmas Festival of 1990 was themed “Come, Worship the King.” Ten choirs from neighboring Lutheran churches under the direction of Timothy Franz joined the ML bands and choirs. In addition, pianist Wendy (Groth) Prostek (‘87) was a featured part of the program. She provided pre-concert music, accompanied the choirs, and performed her own “Christmas Improvisations.” Highlights of the concert were Handel’s “For unto Us a Child is Born” sung by the 239-voice massed choir and “O Come, All Ye Faithful” sung by the choirs and audience with the accompaniment of the Symphonic Band and the pianist.

The school’s third Christmas Festival—“Exult in Messiah’s Birth”—was held on December 11 and 12, 1993. In this festival the ML choral and instrumental ensembles were joined by 10 church choirs and 2 handbell choirs from Lutheran congregations in the area. Wendy Prostek returned as the accompanist for the choirs. Outstanding selections in the program included choruses from the Bach cantata “For unto Us a Child is born” by the Concert Choir, Alfred Reed’s colorful “A Christmas Intrada” by the Symphonic Band, and a spectacular arrangement of “Do You Hear What I Hear” by the 224-voice massed choir and the Symphonic Band.

The 1996 Christmas Festival—“Proclaim His Glory”—was a powerful proclamation of the life and work of the Savior. The concert music highlighted significant events, past and future, which did and will proclaim His glory—advent, Christmas, ascension and the resurrection. Participating in this concert were the high school’s four choral groups and three instrumental ensembles plus two handbell choirs and five church choirs from area Lutheran congregations. Pianist Rebecca Rehorst (‘91) was the choir’s accompanist and theology teacher Paul Doerr served as the narrator. The program climaxed with Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus” from *Messiah* performed by all the members of the massed bands and choirs.

After the meaningful and successful Christmas Festival of 1987, the members of the music department discussed the possibility of a band and choral festival for the Lutheran elementary schools. Thus, on April 28, 1989, such a festival at Martin Lutheran High School—the Lutheran Elementary and High School Choral and Band Festival—was born. Schools which participated in this first elementary festival event were: Mt. Olive Lutheran, Hales Corners Lutheran, Our Fathers Lutheran, St. Paul Lutheran and Ebenezer Lutheran. The participant’s schedule for the day consisted of afternoon rehearsals for the massed choirs and bands, an evening meal served by the ML Music Boosters, and an evening concert for parents and the public. The concert program included the 186-voice massed elementary choir, the 36-member Martin Luther Elementary Beginning Band, the 78-member Martin Luther Kadet Band, the elementary Jazz Lab, the high school’s Concert Choir and Symphonic Band, the combined choirs, and the combined bands. The program closed with the hymn “Jesus Shall Reign where’er the Sun” by the audience and all the participating musicians. Michael Kesar served as the conductor of the massed choirs and administrator of the festival activities; David Krubsack directed the combined bands and Kathryn Krubsack led the elementary Jazz Lab. Responses to the festival were most positive. Students,

parents, elementary school choir directors, and the ML Music Boosters all agreed that the festival was exciting and inspirational and “just plain fun.”

Plans were made to schedule more elementary festivals in the future, holding them bi-annually. Consequently, festivals were held in 1991, 1993, 1995 and 1997. The day’s schedule for these festivals followed the format set up in the first festival—rehearsals, meal, concert. In 1991 the massed children’s choir consisted of 131 students from four schools and elementary bands numbering 43 and 84. Because of the recent Gulf War the program closed with a patriotic selection for massed bands and choirs—“With Liberty and Justice for All”—and with a hymn for audience and combined musicians—“Our God, Our Help in Ages Past.” The massed children’s choir grew to 179 members from five schools in the 1993 festival; the elementary bands also increased their membership: 45 in the Beginning Band and to 105 in the Kadet Band. In 1995 the festival grew to a peak of 279 singers from six Lutheran elementary schools. The members of the Beginning Band numbered 47 and the Kadet Band, 112. The 1997 festival included 201 singers from five Lutheran elementary schools and 48 and 99 instrumentalists in the Beginning and Kadet Bands.

◆ **Community Outreach**

The Lutheran High School Sunday program continued to be an important part of the school’s community outreach. The Brass Choir, Concert Choir and Troubadours faithfully maintained an active schedule of congregation visits according to the plan laid out in the late 80’s. In the 1997-1998 school year the woodwind choirs also began participating in church worship services. During this time the ensembles’ traditional presentations were enhanced by new hymn arrangements and original hymn texts. Alumni Jeffrey Torres provided several richly scored arrangements. For the closing hymn Rev. Stephen Bartelt, Director of Finances and Association Services, wrote an original text—“Lord, You Build our Faith and Future.” Year after year the Lutheran High School Sunday provided a meaningful experience for ML students, their parents and the congregations they visited.

The Brass Choir was given many opportunities to serve through the gift of music. Its special performances throughout the decade included: district and state professional church workers conferences (1988, 1991, and 1996); the centennial celebration of Zion Lutheran Church—Embarrass, Wisconsin (1988); city-wide Reformation celebrations and vespers (1989, 1992, 1994, and 1996); the 125th anniversary celebrations of St. John Lutheran Church Day School—Plymouth, Wisconsin (1990); Closing Worship Service of the Lutheran Education Association’s 50th Anniversary Convocation (1993); the worship service of Lutherans for Life 11th National Convention (1993); the 104th anniversary celebration of Emmaus Lutheran Church in Milwaukee (1994); and CarolFests at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa (1993 and 1997).

ML’s choral groups were invited to perform at many church and community functions. The Chorus sang at the Concord Retirement Center (1994), a Wisconsin Memorial Park Memorial Service (1995), the Christmas at Trimborn Farms festivities (1996), a retirement luncheon at Milwaukee’s War Memorial (1996) and an American Legion Auxiliary Meeting (1996). Concert Choir performances included a City of Greendale Memorial Day Service (1994) and a Lutheran Women’s Missionary League Opening Service (1998). The Troubadours gave presentations for the Christmas at Trimborn Farms festivities (1996) and for a chapel service at Lutheran High School in Sheboygan (1998).

◆ **Special Events and Honors**

Year after year an increasing number of Martin Luther music students were chosen to participate in the festivals and concerts of state and university honor ensembles. These events included the All-State Band Concert of the National Band Association—Wisconsin (1989-1998), the UWM Annual High School Honors Band Festival (1989-1998), the UWM High School Honors Orchestra Festival (1991-1995), the Concordia Honors Choir—Ann Arbor, Michigan (1995-1998), the Concordia Honors Choir—River Forest, Illinois (1996), and the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point Annual Horn Choir Festivals. Several students were chosen to be members of the WSMA High School Honors Band—Jody Luecht (’97) in 1994 and Kim Brathol (’98) and Christopher Canapa (’98) in 1997. Ron Schafer (’94) won honorable mention in the Young Artist’s Audition of the Milwaukee Symphony League and was invited to perform in concert with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Saxophonist Jody Luecht and clarinetist Diana Schaidt (’97) were chosen to perform in the Milwaukee Civic Music Association’s 1997 High School Showcase Recital.

In the fall of 1995 the Concert Choir participated in a Lutheran Choral Fest at Concordia University Wisconsin.

In 1996 the Symphonic Band was invited to participate in the Annual Marquette University Band Festival on March 4. Performing in this festival meant that, although there would be no competition between bands, each band would be adjudicated by a nationally-known conductor/educator. The band members found the experience to be very valuable and were pleased to receive highest commendations on their performance. In subsequent years this educational festival would be added to the band's yearly performance schedule.

The Symphonic Band received a singular honor in 1991 when it was chosen by the Milwaukee Civic Music Association to showcase the best in Milwaukee high school bands by performing in its "Celebration of Music Achievement" Concert. This was the Civic Music Association's very first effort of this type. The purpose of the event was to recognize the achievements of musicians and music teachers in the Milwaukee community as well as those of local high school bands and choirs. The program was held on May 15 in the Pitman Theater of Alverno College. The band's major work of the evening was the classical "March Slav" by Peter Tchaikovsky.

Another exciting event for the Symphonic Band was the "Lutheran Band Extravaganza" which was held at Milwaukee's historic Captain Frederick Pabst Theater. Professor Louis Menchaca of Concordia University Wisconsin advanced the idea of a combined concert for the Milwaukee community involving the bands at Concordia University, Milwaukee Lutheran High School and Martin Luther High School. Throughout the 1996-1997 school year detailed plans were made for the event. The Music Boosters organizations of both high schools did much to help the three directors with their work. Finally, the day arrived—Friday April 18, 1997. The program included selections by Milwaukee Lutheran's Concert and Symphonic Bands, Martin Luther's Symphonic Band, and Concordia University Wisconsin's Symphonic Wind Ensemble. The combined bands closed the program with several numbers and a hymn for audience participation. It was a wonderful evening for all. For the students, to play great music to a large appreciative audience in such a historic edifice, it was a most memorable experience.

◆ **WSMA Festival Highlights**

The WSMA festivals were always an exciting part of the school year for the ML musicians. Band and choral students spent the months of January and February preparing for the Solo-Ensemble Festival held each year during the last weekend of February. Everyone and every group tried to get a starred-first rating and "go to state." And each year a large percentage of the ML entrants did qualify for that honor. What was exciting to see was that the growing number of large group ensembles—Brass Choir, Flute Choir, Clarinet Choir, Saxophone Choir, Percussion Choir, Jazz Lab, Girls Show Choir, and Troubadours—consistently qualified for the WSMA State Music Festival. In 1998, especially, the school had a record performance when 64 students and all eight large group ensembles received starred firsts.

WSMA band and choral festivals also gave ML music students opportunities to display their talents. Because of performance and tour schedules the Symphonic Band and Concert Choir seldom were able to participate; the Varsity Band usually represented Martin Luther High and never failed to bring home a first place rating. A highlight came in 1991 when all three groups entered the festival held at Milwaukee Lutheran High School. All three returned with a 1st place rating.

During the 1990's Martin Luther High School took its turn hosting the festivals. On February 24, 1990, the WSMA Solo-Ensemble Festival came to the ML campus. Eleven high schools submitted 503 entrants necessitating the hiring of ten adjudicators. Thirty-seven students and forty-one parents and teachers worked as volunteers; they guided the contestants, aided the adjudicators, kept records, moved equipment, served the food, and cleaned the school at the end of the activities.

On March 31, Martin Luther High hosted the 1990 WSMA Band and Choral Festival. Eighteen bands and choirs from ten different high schools participated in the event; two adjudicators, working in the Band Room and Fine Arts Center, evaluated each ensemble. Forty-one volunteers—drawn from the ranks of ML parents, teachers and students—brought the day to a smooth and successful conclusion.

The largest WSMA festival hosted by Martin Luther High was the solo-ensemble festival held on February 24, 1996. Seven Catholic, four Lutheran and two private high schools participated in the event; fourteen adjudicators listened to the 745 entrants. Once again the ML family came through beautifully. Thirty-five students and fifty-six parents and staff served as volunteers to make the day's activities a very worthwhile venture.

Over a 15-year period Martin Luther High hosted five WSMA festivals. Each time the school received many wonderful compliments about the school's appearance, the smooth operation of the festivals, and the excellent care given to the people who were involved. For the ML volunteers it was a privilege to provide a memorable occasion and an enjoyable, educational experience for the hundreds of students who participated.

♣ **The Music Boosters**

The Martin Luther Music Boosters continued to be a very active and an extremely important organization. Each year they invited well-known musicians and educators to inform and entertain students and their parents at the Annual Fall Meeting. Among the speakers were professional singers Bob and Ellie Quint, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra bassist Laura Schneider, and noted music professors Dr. Richard Fischer (Concordia University-River Forest), Dr. Ken Kosche and Dr. Louis Menchaca (Concordia University Wisconsin), and Prof. Kurt von Kampen (Concordia University-Ann Arbor).

In the annual fund drives the Boosters diversified the types of products sold. Added to the traditional sausage and candy were popcorn, greeting cards, gift wrap, calendars and specialty items. Each November the Boosters set up a booth at the school's Sugar Plum Faire where they promoted Martin Luther High School and its music department and sold candy and concert recordings. With more students involved in the school's musical organizations and with each group planning longer tours, fund drives were very successful.

Almost every year the Boosters sponsored or co-sponsored a significant school event. These projects included five Lutheran Elementary and High School Choral and Band Festivals, the WSMA Band and Choral Festival (1990), the WSMA Solo-Ensemble Festival (1990, 1996), the St. Olaf College Band Tour Concert (1994), The Orono High School-Minnesota Band Tour Concert (1996) and the Lutheran Band Extravaganza (1997).

Through the efforts of the Boosters the music department was able to receive many instruments and other educational items needed to maintain a dynamic program. Other organizations such as the ML Club, the ML Guild, the Student Council and the AAL as well as individual donors also greatly helped to provide department equipment. Among the major purchases were a computer and accessories, a studio piano, a synthesizer and case, the overhaul of three tubas, new choir risers, and new band instruments—bass flute, euphonium, soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone, marimba, vibraphone, and xylophone. The Boosters were also able to reach out beyond the music department to underwrite the costs of ML Library books and AV materials, to provide scholarships for students attending summer music camps, and to gift the Lutheran High School Association's Shepherd of Youth Endowment Fund.

♣ **Reflections**

As one reflects on the first 30 years of Martin Luther High School, one can see the clear evidence of the Lord's rich and abundant blessings. From the first year on He provided a beautiful facility and the supplies and equipment as they were needed; caring teachers and staff who were able to touch lives positively in and out of the classroom; hundreds of students who filled their classrooms and activities with talent, vigor and spirit; the active support of enthusiastic parents; and the day by day presence of the Lord through His Word and Spirit.

As I reflect on the first 30 years of the Martin Luther High School Music Department, I cannot help but be overwhelmed by everything the Lord has done for its students and directors. There has been the continual growth over the years: growth in the number of students involved in the music activities; growth in the number of active co-curricular organizations; growth in the quality of music repertoire; growth in the amount of music, instruments and supplies to equip a vital music department. There have been the many opportunities to serve others by participating in school activities such as chapels, pep rallies, athletic and other special events, and out-of-school activities such as Lutheran High School Sundays, other worship services, conventions, and festive celebrations. There have been the enriching, educational experiences: exciting recitals, concerts, and festivals at Martin Luther High; dozens of successful WSMA contests and

festivals; numerous all-state and honors ensembles; and over 50 uplifting, Spirit-filled band and choir tours. Through these many experiences the band and choral musicians were able to edify their listeners all over the country. They also had the privilege to serve as ambassadors for school music, Lutheran education, and their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In light of such wonderful blessings one can only be moved to thank and praise the Lord, gratefully, joyfully. May He continue to bless the ministry of Martin Luther High School and its Music Department.

“Give thanks to the Lord, call on His name; make known among the nations what He has done. Sing to Him, sing praise to Him; tell of all His wonderful acts. Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Look to the Lord and His strength: seek His face always. Remember the wonders He has done, His miracles, and the judgments He pronounced.” (I Chronicles 16:8-12)

David H. Krubsack

August 24, 2007