

# M.U.S.-icology 101

Lecture No. 4

Topic: *The Evolution of M.U.S.*

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**W**elcome and welcome back, everyone! For those of you who are new around here, I'm not just the Lab Geek, I am a former M.U.S. Executive from way back. I submit a regular column for this newsletter on the history of M.U.S. in specific, and sometimes the department in general. Why? Well, when I returned to campus in the fall of 1996, I noticed a lot of changes within a basically familiar environment—some good, some not. So I use history to teach my “lessons.” If you wish to read the first three articles, they are all available on my personal web site at <http://www.jazzace.ca/music/mus/> (you need Adobe Acrobat Reader to view them).

And now, onto today's topic. In the late '70s, the Music Undergraduate Society was not the only student group that music students would know of. In fact, there was a separate society for music education students that was equal or stronger than M.U.S.. Since music students did not necessarily have to complete a BMus degree to be a music teacher, the music education society had a broader base from which to draw.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the scenario



**The 1982/83 Executive:** *Top Row:* Derek Stoll, Scott Stewardson, Jeff Manley. *Middle Row:* Melissa Cardinal, Anthony Reimer, Darryl Williams. *Bottom Row:* Cynthia Yuschyshyn, Deanna MacGregor (D'Ath at the time), Carole Berger, Susan Baker. *Missing:* Debbie Piquette. *Photo from University Yearbook.*

started to change. There was no question that getting your music degree first, especially for the secondary education major, was the route of choice (and rightly so). In fact, the reason music doesn't have a five- or six-year joint degree program with Education (like Drama does, for instance) is because we already had our five year plan when those later plans surfaced—we were leaders.

By the time I chose my route, music education was the largest discipline in the department. With which society would the music ed. students lay their loyalties? In the end, it was the work of music education students themselves that made M.U.S. far more than it was prior to that time, and far more encompassing than a music education society could be. The work of Jeff Manley and Scott Stewardson was crucial in this regard.

Jeff and Scott liked to have fun; they were

diligent but not “serious.” It was this social element that gave M.U.S. the critical mass it needed to thrive. As mentioned in a previous column, students participated heavily in Campus Rec intramurals, as well as having intra-department sporting activities involving staff and students. We had an annual ski trip (which I will do a separate column on around Ski Week, er, Reading Week) and of course, the annual Swing/Big Band Cabaret. (Some of these things still exist today, but overall, the social element of M.U.S. is much less significant than at its peak in the 1980s.)

This social glue caused almost every music student to become an M.U.S. member, giving M.U.S. more credibility when approaching the department on academic matters. It is this point that often gets lost. There were a lot of battles fought over calendar changes, course evaluations, and even how recital hour attendance was managed. I perceived that student input in the form of a diligent and respected M.U.S. made an impact.

Music education students dominated in numbers during this time, but they were benevolent and inclusive. In fact, on the 1982/83 executive (*see photo*) there was a representative for each music discipline. They were a part of the M.U.S. Academic Council (yes, called MUSAC for short). That committee made sure that academic matters were not forgotten in the M.U.S. mandate, while adding to the sense that each area was important.

Of course, music education students no longer dominate the student population; performance majors do. That certainly changes the texture around here. It has been suggested to me that the loss of *esprit de corps* that I mentioned in my first column can mostly be attributed to this fact. I think *that* is a gross oversimplification, especially because I know a number of performers around here who are real “team players.” But to suggest there is *no* effect is ridiculous, considering how much solitary practice time is required to prepare a recital. (We won't even get into the need for ego.)

The challenge for the current M.U.S. executive is to understand why the organisation still exists (while the music education society does not) and to retain the all-inclusive leadership style that made M.U.S. thrive. Performance students also have a responsibility: to provide “team” leadership amongst students in the department, with a sensitivity to the needs of the different disciplines. After all, if there had been no one to teach them, no one to compose new music, or no one to understand the music of the past, where would the performer be?