

A Year in the Life of the Music Department

By Dr. Jan Helmut Wubbena, Professor of Music

As a child you gradually learned about the annual cycle. At first your year probably revolved around Christmas, Easter, and your birthday. Soon added to those predictable, highly anticipated events were snow and snowmen, the freedom to play outside and pick dandelions in the spring, warm summer days and playing in the water in a backyard wading pool, then a chill in the air and jumping into piles of colorful leaves. You learned that the thing hung on the wall was the calendar and was used for keeping records of upcoming events. Eventually you learned about spring-summer-autumn-winter and the names of the months, and you came to expect the beginning and ending of school. Seasons for soccer and baseball, Advent and Lent, New Year's Day bowl games, the Fourth of July, times at camp, Thanksgiving – all became cyclical in your experience. A year at JBU revolves in a similar way.

Many of you will have your first look at JBU during a campus visit sometime during your junior or senior year. We cannot stress the value of experiencing JBU first-hand. Meeting your admissions counselor and some of the faculty, bedding down in the dorm, spending a good bit of the day with music major in classes, the practice room, ensemble rehearsal, talking with other music majors at the lunch table – a visit to JBU will help you decide whether the JBU music program is what you are seeking.

Some students audition at the time of their first visit, whereas others come back for a second visit and complete the audition at that time.

Many students entering JBU for the first time (freshmen and transfer students) attend the Early Registration Program (always referred to as ERP, pronounced "urp") one weekend in June. At that time you'll meet some of the other new music majors, and you may meet music faculty members that you missed on any previous visit. You'll attend an academic advising session, and then you will register for classes for the fall semester. Your parents will be attending ERP sessions especially for them – their needs are different from yours, and we do our best to take care of them too. Lots of students look over Siloam Springs carefully – you'll want to locate the

Wal-Mart Super Center, maybe consider one of the local banks, find the pizza parlors, that sort of thing.

As a brand new student, you'll report to campus for new student orientation a few days before returning students come back from their summer break. First, you'll move into your dorm room and meet your roommate. You'll probably make a trip or two to Wal-Mart for some items that you hadn't anticipated needing. Then will come a moment you'll never forget: you hug your family members, you – and they – might shed a tear or two, and you wave till they are out of sight. You're on your own! You're a college student!

As a freshman, you'll be experiencing the annual JBU cycle for the first time, and all will be fresh and new. After this first go-round, you'll know to expect. Classes begin on Monday, but the preceding weekend is tightly scheduled with all sorts of events. If you didn't attend ERP for registration, you'll register for classes. You'll make a trip to the campus bookstore to buy the textbooks and other materials you'll need for your courses. Many students take a brief tour of campus to make sure they know where their classes will meet. If you are employed by the student work-study program, your work hours will be scheduled, and you may even meet with your supervisor for job orientation. You'll be assigned to a campus post office box, and your e-mail account will be established. You'll learn about the various student ministry organizations under the CAUSE umbrella, and you'll want to think about how you might want to worship God through service to others during your years at JBU. There is always a special chapel service Sunday morning conducted by the JBU chaplain and other members of the Campus Ministries Office.

The Office of Student Life holds a few social events to help you meet other new students and begin the process of establishing new friendships. On Saturday evening incoming students usually enjoy dinner at the home of one of their major professors. We in the music department usually meet at Dr. Beckman's home for a nice meal and time of fellowship. She will probably let you try out her Steinway in her beautiful studio upstairs, where you'll also see her MIDI equipment. You'll meet Mr. Beckman too.

Even if you auditioned for an ensemble scholarship previously, you'll need to check the orientation schedule for ensemble audition times. (This is for the purpose of placement.) There will be lots of people auditioning, so in the foyer you'll find a table manned by a friendly upperclassman (who could well be you in a couple of years). S/he will give you a form to complete and assign you a specific time slot. Also on this weekend you'll perform in your principal applied area for the video camera. This is the first entry on your performance portfolio-on-videotape. If you miss this taping session, don't worry – we'll catch you at the first master class.)

Finally it's Monday morning, and classes begin. You'll soon have a sense of what each of your professors expects of you, and what you may expect of him or her. You'll schedule your applied music lessons and practice times with your accompanist. You'll attend a meeting of all music majors, receive a copy of the recital schedule for the fall semester, and learn which events you'll be required to attend. Even if you aren't participating in the fall Music Theatre Workshop production, you'll probably hear about the auditions and sense a measure of excitement when the cast list is posted. You will soon determine what daily routine best fits your class schedule and lifestyle – where you'll fit in practice for your applied music lessons, study hours for your courses, your laundry and shopping, and leisure time (of which there will probably be less than you'd prefer). It will vary by the specific day of the week, but once you have a regular schedule, you'll have a sensation not unlike rhythm in music – and you may be surprised at how quickly Friday comes each week!

On Saturday or Sunday after the first week of classes the entire department is invited to a social sponsored by CMENC (Collegiate Chapter of the Music Educators National Conference) and hosted by Dr. and Mrs. Wubbena. A lot of pizzas are brought in, and the faculty members bring desserts. If the weather is cooperative, you'll find people enjoying the pool. Indoors there will probably be people back in the den watching one of the first college football games of the season. Others will be sitting around and getting acquainted with other new students or catching up on summer activities. A game of Scrabble will probably be in progress on the living room floor. And you will almost certainly hear a spiel about the value of CMENC membership, even for students who do not expect to enter the field of public school music education.

Most students find weekends less hectic, but you'll find yourself in the practice room at some point, at the desk in your room, in a study carrel in the library, at a computer terminal – Monday is coming, and you must be ready.

You'll want to visit local churches – we suggest that you ask your professors and returning students where they worship on Sundays for ideas about where you'd like to visit and be assured that you know someone. Congregations of every worship style and persuasion are found in Siloam Springs. Your college experience would be enriched by visiting churches with a variety of traditions and worship practices.

Wherever you go to church, you'll find a JBU presence. Look at the people in the pews behind and in front of you, in Sunday school, in the choir, on the praise-and-worship team, on the eucharistic teams who on Sunday afternoon visit the local nursing homes, the hospital, shut-ins, even the city jail – you'll find JBU professors, administrators, staff members, and students.

The regular schedule you'll establish will be broken from time to time by special events.

Twice each semester you'll attend a Lyceum concert by a guest artist. Many times this artist will conduct a master class at which three or four students perform. You may look forward to the time when you too might receive coaching from an artist who earns his living by performing. On occasion you'll travel to Tulsa or Fayetteville for a special event – to go to an opera or ballet, attend a symphony concert, take in a museum.

Three times each semester there will be a "general recital" on Tuesday afternoon instead of the weekly master class. In your first semester of study you may be exempted from performing at a general recital, but thereafter you'll perform once per semester. By the time of your first appearance in a general recital you'll have performed in master class in front of some of your peers. Everyone in the department attends the general recitals, so the audience is larger and broader. Those who do not hear you except at this time will often note the progress you are making and comment on it. The general recitals are videotaped, and your performance will be added to your performance portfolio-on-video.

Each semester there are solo recitals or half-recitals presented by senior music majors (sometimes by juniors as well) that fulfill a degree requirement. You'll want to attend these – the performers have usually become your friends, and freshmen often look at the upperclassmen as role models. You'll probably start thinking about your senior recital after attending a senior recital for the first few times! The senior recital represents the culmination of the student's performance study in the principal applied area – it's one of a small handful of "high points" of the collegiate career of a music major. After the recital there is usually a nice reception hosted by the performer's family in the small lounge adjacent to Jones Recital Hall.

Fall break begins at the end of the sixth week of classes, and classes resume the next Wednesday. Homecoming is usually the next weekend, and there is a special Homecoming chapel. Often the Cathedral Choir sings at a special event during Homecoming. Music education majors and CMENC members attend the annual conference of the Arkansas Music Educators Association in late October or early November. You'll register for classes for the spring semester in early November. The Music Theatre Workshop fall production is usually held in mid-November. Thanksgiving Break begins at the conclusion on classes on Tuesday of that week (we hope you'll rest and catch up on sleep).

Classes resume the following Monday, and the pace picks up considerably in the two weeks of classes and one week of final exams that remain – they are cram-packed! In most years the Instrumental Ensemble fall concert is presented on the first Thursday following the break. The last general recital is held on the following Tuesday, during the last week of classes.

The annual Christmas Candlelight Service is presented on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights, with the final run-through on Wednesday night. "Candlelight" is the probably the biggest annual event in the Music Department, certainly in terms of attendance. Each night the Cathedral of the Ozarks is filled to capacity, and people travel great distances to attend. Chances are good that, once you have participated in Candlelight, you will want your family to attend at least once, even if you are many hours from home. Candlelight is truly special. After the last service on Saturday night you and your family will be invited to the Open House hosted by Dr. and Mrs. Wubbena – it's a tradition dating back to 1990! You'll remain dressed in your formal attire – men in tuxedos, women in long black dresses – and enjoy food, drink, and

conversation in a warm, elegant atmosphere. Flash photography is permitted. And someone will probably put a candy cane in your pocket as you leave!

Final exams begin Monday morning at 8:00. Exams are scheduled in two-hour blocks, with two periods in the morning and one in the afternoon on each of the five days. You would do well to put your final exams on your calendar at the very beginning of the semester, because you must take the final exam at the scheduled time. No exceptions are permitted, so schedule your travel home for a time after your last final. You can check for your final grades on-line within a few days after the end of the semester. Some professors will probably have entered some of your final grades before you even leave campus.

Applied music juries are also held during final exam week. Performing for the jury constitutes the final exam in your private applied music lessons. It will last only five or ten minutes, and your applied teacher will be sit on the jury together with other faculty members. The juries are videotaped, and your jury performance is added to your performance portfolio-on-video.

You now have one semester of college under your belt, and you probably will have earned 15 or more hours of credit that count towards graduation. You are an experienced college student!

The second semester will feel much like the first. There will be tryouts for the spring Music Theatre Workshop production. You'll soon settle into a new schedule of classes, individual practice, rehearsals, and such, and it will soon become routine. There will be more recitals and other special events to attend. All will feel familiar – you've done it previously.

On the first weekend of the semester the Cathedral Choir will travel to Mount Sequoyah in Fayetteville for the annual choir retreat. You'll spend two days in intensive rehearsals and bonding with your fellow choir members. In mid-February the CMENC members travel to the All-State Conference, usually held in Hot Springs or Pine Bluff, where you'll stay for two nights, attend clinics, visit the exhibits (including a JBU booth – you may be asked to “man” it at some point), and possibly attend performances by some of the state's outstanding high school ensembles as well at the All-State Choir, Band, and Orchestra. This important event helps to ground prospective music educators in the profession.

Late in February promising voice majors will travel to the state NATS competition. This event is hosted by a different college every year – you might travel to Jonesboro (Arkansas State University), Little Rock (UALR), Arkadelphia (Henderson State University and Ouachita Baptist University), or Fayetteville (University of Arkansas). The rest of us will eagerly await news: Who has advanced to the semi-finals? to the finals? placed first, second, or third? We are always proud of the achievements of our NATS competitors.

Spring Break occurs in mid-March. Unless the Cathedral Choir is going on tour in May, the choir will tour during spring break. You'll sing in churches and schools, and you'll stay in private homes. You'll get to see a good bit of the USA if you are a member all four years, because a single state or region is the primary destination, and that destination is different every year. You might spend the week in California or Florida. Tours have also focused on Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. Or the upper Midwest – the choir has performed in Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, South Dakota, and Nebraska too. One day of the tour is always devoted to recreation – Disneyland, Carlsbad Caverns, Juarez (Mexico), Universal Studios, a ski resort, museums in downtown Chicago, the Grand Canyon, or the beach. Choir tours may be among your fondest JBU memories. The post-tour concert is always held the Tuesday night after the end of choir tour. After numerous performances the preceding week the music has "gelled," and the choir is always in top form.

You'll register for any of the summer terms and the fall semester after you return from spring break. This is always a good time to review your four-plan and make sure that you're going to fulfill all graduation requirements in timely fashion.

As the academic year nears its end, you'll pause for an evening to attend the annual Music Banquet, sponsored by CMENC. There's an extra-special buffet dinner, followed by a program as we celebrate the achievements and give thanks for the blessings of the past year. Students provide the evening's entertainment (one year that might involve you!), and it could be anything from a musical spoof to a humorous PowerPoint presentation. Seniors are recognized and presented with their performance portfolios-on-videotape. Finally, outstanding students are rewarded for their good work the preceding year with special scholarships from endowed funds.

These provide monies in addition to any music major scholarships or ensemble scholarships already held. (You may have noticed several perpetual plaques on display in the lobby of the first floor Cathedral.) At the very end, the Oiesen Award is presented to the student chosen by the faculty as the model music major.

You'll take your final exams and perform for the applied music jury from Monday through Friday of exam week. The Cathedral Choir always performs at the spring graduation ceremonies on Saturday morning. You'll probably have everything packed and loaded, so that you can leave immediately thereafter – but not before saying goodbye to the many friends you have made in your first year at JBU. It will be but a few short months before you'll return to campus, confident because you'll have already experienced a year in the life of the Music Department.



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