

Show choir's dinner theatre going high tech

by Darren MacDonald
Staff

"That's too low," shouts singer Holly Smith, after an unsuccessful attempt to rehearse *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy*. "No," shouts back Howard Alexander as he heads back to the piano, "you just don't have the right notes."

This is the scene at rehearsal number six for the Show Choir as they prepare for their fourth dinner theatre, entitled *All That Jazz*.

"We try to do one show in the spring, and one show in the fall," says Kim Alexander.

Although the theme this year is jazz, she says the choir tries to perform a mixture of songs in every show.

"We always perform a few silly songs and try and keep it light," she says. "We try and change the pace a lot so people don't get tired."

This year's show marks the first time the choir is using a sequencer for both rehearsals and performance.

"The school board has invested about \$9,000 in each school strictly for MIDI (musical instrument digital interface)," says Howard Alexander.

The equipment includes a Roland U-20 keyboard synthesizer that can play up to six different sounds at once. Many of the sounds—such as the drums—are "sampled", which means that they play an actual recording of a drum sound.

The person playing the synthesizer can then take the sampled drum, and manipulate it in several ways until they have the sound they want.



The scene at last week's rehearsal in the Alexander's basement: from left, Holly Smith, Sharon MacKenzie, Judy Flear and Kim Alexander.

For the Sept. 26 show, Alexander will arrange the music for each song, and program it into the sequencer, a device which organizes the music so it plays as a single song.

"I haven't decided yet whether or not I'll tape record the music from the sequencer, or use the sequencer itself at the show," he says.

The big advantage of being able to program the music beforehand is that it frees Alexander from having to play piano during the performance.

"This way I get to sing," he says.

"Each song takes a minimum of an hour to input. For a more complicated song, such as *I Got Rhythm*, inputting can take as long as four hours."

Alexander says he hopes to use the technology with a live

performer for the next dinner theatre.

"For the next show, I'm hoping to have a combination of live and taped music," he says.

In all, there will be eight choir members in the show, including Matthew Bliss, Judy Flear, Margie Fulton, Bill Houston, Sharon MacKenzie and Garth Sweetnam.


Unlike last time, when they performed in Schreiber, this show will be at the Masonic Temple in Terrace Bay.

Other songs on the program include *Mr. Sandman*, *Am I Blue?*, and *Embraceable You*.



Reginald Belair, M.P. will be at the municipal office in Terrace Bay
Wednesday, September 16th from
3 - 4:30 p.m.

For an appointment with Mr. Belair,
please ask the operator for zenith 21240.



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