

Singing Cadets enthuse Christmas music crowd

By Katherine P. Hurt
Staff Writer

As the old adage goes, they saved the best for last — or almost — at the Vocal Music Programs' Christmas Concert Sunday night. The Singing Cadets, as usual, were full of surprises as they performed for an enthusiastic crowd at Rudder Auditorium.

The crowd, of almost 2,000 people, whooped when Singing Cadet Director Robert Boone walked onto the stage and, for the first time during the concert, came alive as the joyous, freshly-scrubbed Cadets sang such numbers as "Do You Hear What I Hear," "The Little Drummer Boy" and "Sleigh Ride."

As an unplanned surprise for the victorious Aggie football team and for those who spurred them to victory, the Singing Cadets burst into an harmonious adaption of the Ag-

gie War Hymn, bringing the crowd to its feet, whooping all the while.

The Aggieizers, a barbershop quartet composed of Singing Cadets Rick Huff, Rick Thurman, Kent Copeland and Ken Denmark, were an additional treat in the Cadet repertoire.

The stocking cap-clad quartet sang a whimsical adaption of "The Twelve Days of Christmas," singing that their true loves brought them goodies such as 12 bell towers and 11 crying longhorns.

Unfortunately, the Singing Cadet's performance was the only one in which the audience had any fun — the rest of the Vocal Music Programs Christmas Concert was pretty dull.

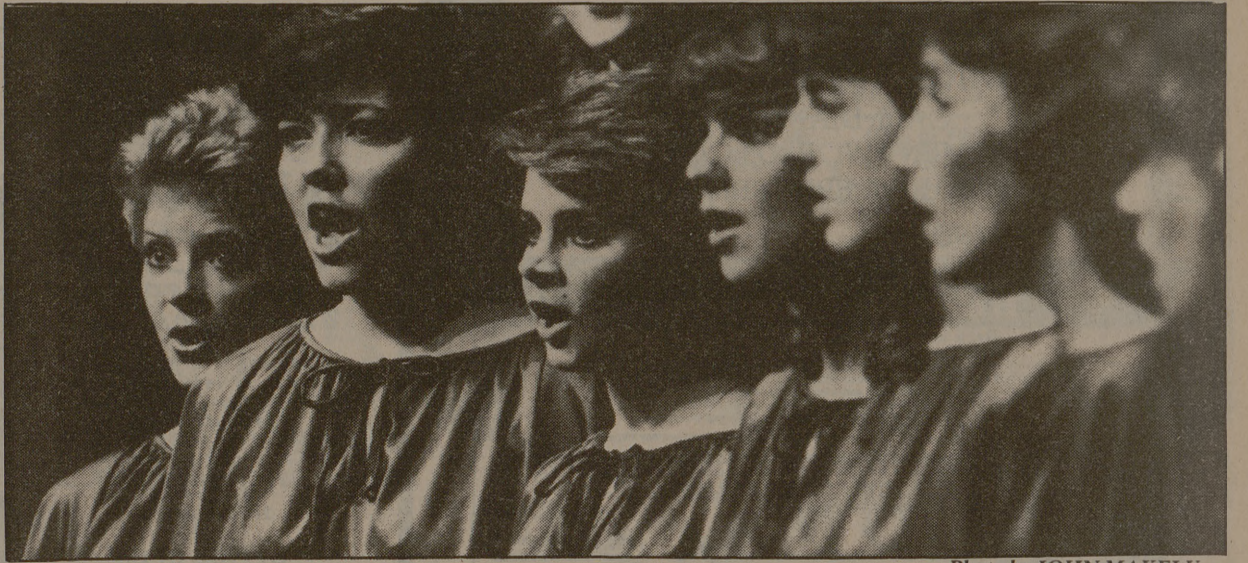
The concert got off to a slow start with The Women's Chorus, conducted by Patricia Fleitas, singing songs like "Coventry Carol," "The

Merry Sounds of Christmas," "He Came For Me" and "Here We Go A-Caroling."

The Women's Chorus had a performing quartet too, appropriately named The Beauty Shop Quartet. The girls' uninspiring rendition of "Chocolate in My Stocking," drew no response from the crowd until they threw chocolate kisses to the audience.

As the curtain closed on the women's choir, The Reveliers, a 15-member mixed chorus, rose from the orchestra pit. The forcibly-animated, folksy group elicited a fair amount of applause for their synthesized-pop renditions of "A Christmas Song" and "What is Christmas."

The Reveliers descended all too slowly back into the pit as the curtains opened for The Century Singers, a 40-member mixed choir. The most memorable part of the Century Singers' performance of "Festival



The Texas A&M Women's Chorus.

Photo by JOHN MAKELY

Magnificat" and "Gloria from Messa di Gloria" was Jeff Wright's fabulous piano accompaniment.

The Reveliers ascended again singing, "I can hear the sounds of Christmas as they echo through the years ..." echoing Lojeski's arrangement of "The Merry Sounds of

Christmas," sung earlier in the concert by the Women's Chorus.

After the Singing Cadet performance, the Reveliers sang jazzy, commercialized renditions of Christmastime classics "I'll Be Home For Christmas" and "Go Tell it on the Mountain," with a few too many

inserted "dooby-wahs" and "shoo-bops."

At the end of the concert the crowd rose with oohs and ahs as the Vocal Music Programs' massed chorus sang a joyous, full-bodied rendition of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" from "The Messiah."

Computer farming project developer to teach Brazilian farmers technology

By CATHIE ANDERSON
Staff Writer

Faculty members at the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil will be instructed about computerized farm technology by a Texas A&M agricultural economics professor.

Dr. Jim McGrann, who has taken a month's leave of absence from A&M to go to Brazil, said he has been working on computer applications for farming for 10 years. During the past five years, he has worked on the University's Year 2000 Computer Farm project.

The Computer Farm, at the Stiles Farm Foundation near Thrall, Texas, applies computer technology to large scale commercial farming operation.

The objective of the program is to adapt computer technology and make it useful to farmers, McGrann said.

Computerized farming in Texas is challenging because farmers have a greater variety of crops and land, he said. This means decisions are more difficult to make.

McGrann said the computer can

give answers to a series of questions, but it is up to the farmer to make the ultimate decisions. The computer gives a list of data from which conclusions can be drawn.

"The computer will one day become a very common tool for farmers," McGrann said, "an extension of the human mind."

He said some farmers, students, and instructors are resistant to using this particular tool.

"They will be left behind," McGrann said. "Computers will become inaccessible tools for them. We have students in their 20s saying, 'Technology will never be useful.' But we have a man who's 74 years old who's thrilled by computers."

"You find that the more innovative producers find computers most useful. They find very creative ways to use the computers. They (innovative farmers) have made decisions that have paid for their computers."

McGrann said that computers will help farmers in the transition from being overly agriculture-oriented to becoming more business-oriented, a change that he said is necessary.

Financial problems will be even more troublesome because of depressed economic conditions, so farmers will have to learn to depend on accountants and economists to help with those problems, McGrann said. Computers will help producers learn more about economics and finance, and farmers will become more competitive.

McGrann said 85 percent of the software at the computerized farm is designed to help the farmer with budgeting. Those particular software programs are the most effective pieces of equipment, he said.

Priced at \$5,000 each, the computers will help the farmer do advanced planning more efficiently than previously, McGrann said.

The Year 2000 Computerized Farm trains farmers in how to interpret computer output, not in how to formulate advanced programs, he said.

Courses at the Stiles farm last from two to three days and include:

- Farm and ranch accounting and financial statement analysis.
- Range livestock management information, performance records and decision aids.
- Farm and ranch budgeting and financial planning.
- Crop production and operating cost field records.
- Marketing information and strategy analysis.
- Beef cattle performance records and decision aids.

Each class requires a \$145 fee, but seminars on farm and ranch management can be taken in either Dallas, Austin or Lubbock for \$50.

"New ideas for our program come from the farmers, ranchers, and extension services involved in our program," McGrann said. "You can only identify what their needs are by talking to them. You have to understand that you just can't sit in your office and dream up what they're going to need. You have to get out and talk to them."

McGrann said farmers evaluate the computer programs before they are released to the public.

Researcher designs injury analysis system

By MARYBETH ROHSNER
Reporter

An injury detection system, being developed by a Texas A&M researcher, will help medics determine a wounded soldier's condition during chemical attack.

The heavy, protective clothing soldiers must wear when chemical weapons are used makes medical diagnosis difficult, said Charles Lessard, associate professor of bioengineering.

"The soldier and paramedic are in multi-layered suits," Lessard said. "The problem is that we can't remove the suit so we can't check vital signs."

Lessard said an instrument placed on an unconscious soldier's trachea (the neck air passage) can pick up the sounds of the soldier's breathing and heartbeat. Damaged or fluid-filled lungs have distinctive sounds, he said. Lessard and other researchers record and analyze the sounds of healthy and unhealthy lungs, using cadet volunteers as examples of normal lungs.

"We can get a great deal of information about the individual's condition just by the sounds at the trachea," Lessard said. The instrument can be placed underneath the neck of the protective suit without exposing the soldier to toxic chemicals in the environment.

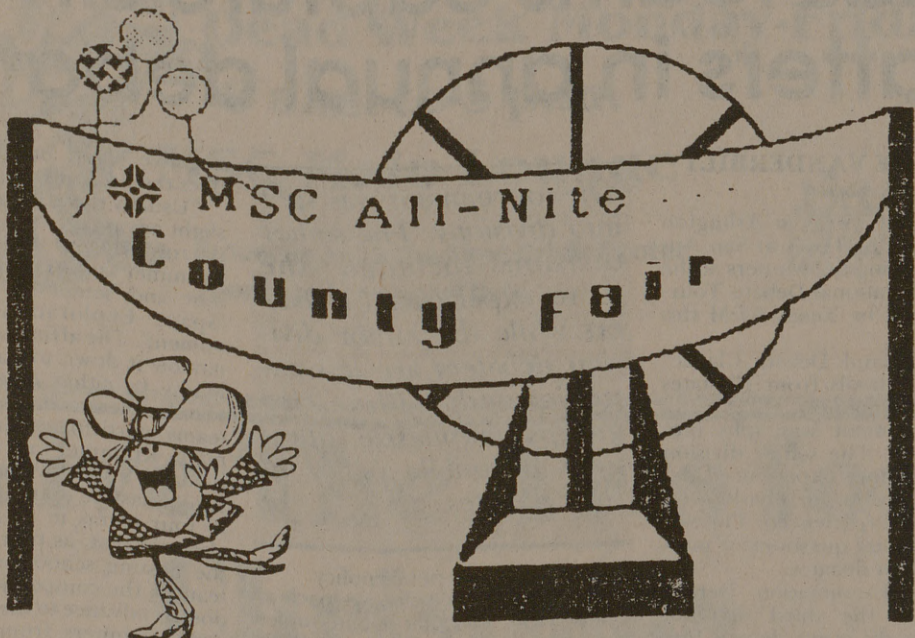
Because paramedics, not doctors, will use these systems on the battlefield, Lessard said the detection system must be easy to operate and carry. Each unit will include a small computer for data analysis.

Lessard also is developing a temperature gauge for the detection units.

"In the suit, an individual is going to get very hot," Lessard said. "There may be a lot of thermal casualties, so the temperature indicator will be good to have."

The instrument may also have civilian uses. Lessard said the instrument could monitor infants to prevent crib deaths.

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