Music professor wins Albany Student Press Faculty Member of the Year Award

BY JESS LAFEX
Editor in Chief

Dr. K. Drew Hartzell won the first annual Albany Student Press Faculty Member of the Year Award. A professor of music, Dr. Hartzell teaches several history and literature classes in the Music Department: Music History, Survey of American Music, Survey of Opera, period courses and Intro. to Music. He has been a professor at UAlbany since 1967, noting that the "invigorating, intellectual fervent" on this campus is what drew him to teach here. He recalled a time in the late 70s when he team-taught a class with a faculty member of both the Art and English Departments. Modes of Perception in the Arts was taught in four-class cycles. One each of three of those classes would deal with a topic relating to Art, English and Music, and the final of the four classes in the cycle would bring the three areas together. Dr. Hartzell recalled having a wonderful time participating in this class, but due to cut-backs, the course never resumed.

Dr. Hartzell received his B.A. in Music at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT. He later went on to get his M.A. and Ph.D. in Musicology at the Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester. He decided to teach, in part, because he grew up in academia. (His father always worked at a college.) The other major reason he began to teach was due to an experience he had while at Wesleyan.

Since there wasn't a great number of music faculty at Wesleyan, there weren't many classes, so all the music students needed to share the same listening rooms. Right away, he recognized he had a natural aptitude to notice things about the listening examples and about music in general. Since all the music students needed to share the few listening rooms, he was given the opportunity to help those students out. It brought "joy and better grades" to him while in college, and it led him to teach when he finished his degree.

One student nominated Dr. Hartzell, saying, "He is one of the only teachers who makes me want to learn." When asked what it is about his teaching style that makes students want to learn from him, Dr. Hartzell explained that he believes the function of a teacher is to help students see connections between things, not to know everything and dictate that information. While he does feel that a college professor should have a wealth of knowledge in the area that person teaches in, he doesn't feel it should be encyclopedic. He feels the goal of higher education is to prepare students to live a "good, satisfactory life," full of "wonderful, unexpected delights." His goal is to teach students to "enjoy the world through their own senses of discovery." So, in following with his beliefs, he gives students the chance to think, rather than just reciting information out of a book.

Congratulations to Dr. Hartzell for his time, dedication and the extreme care he shows toward his students that has lead him to this award. Thank you for all of your work!