

INTERLOCHEN AND N.C.S.A. COMPARED

by Jean Battey Lewis from the Washington Post

Up in the northern Michigan woods an unusual experiment in education began seven years ago and has grown and flourished to become one of the most unusual schools in the world.

Called the Interlochen Arts Academy, it is a four-year college preparatory school that emphasizes music, dance, drama and the visual arts. The school is an outgrowth of the famous summer music camp, called the National Music Camp, begun by Joseph Maddy in 1928.

While the music camp (it has now become an arts camp) is large with 1800 children in attendance in a summer, the arts academy has only about 400 students. It intends to remain at that size.

One student there called it "a musical utopia." To most of the teen-agers at Interlochen, who seem to have found their thing at a precocious age, there is an almost overwhelming opportunity to eat, breathe and sleep music - or dance, or sculpture, or acting.

On a recent weekend in early March when "nothing special" was going on students who wanted to were bused in to Traverse City (the nearest town) on Friday night for a concert by the Amati String Ensemble.

Alexander Schneider, who played here for so many years with the Budapest String Quartet, was on campus for a couple of weeks rehearsing the orchestra. Saturday afternoon he led the orchestra in a demanding rehearsal and that evening the whole school turned out for the concert. Attendance was required but the place would probably have been full anyway.

After the Saturday night concert, the bleachers were rolled away and the area was turned into a dance hall with a rock band from the University of Michigan. The band was composed of Interlochen alumni who, remembering the isolation of their school days, had volunteered their services.

On Sunday there was a student recital and a concert by the school cello instructor.

The isolation of Interlochen, which gives it such a peaceful, picturesque air to the visitor, provides the school with some of its major headaches. A surprising number of first-rate artists fly to the northern tip of Michigan for short stays as artist-in-residence or to give single concerts. In the past year the school has been visited by Isaac Stern, Dave Brubeck, Jorge Mester and Lukas Foss.

On the other hand it is hard for the school to get and keep musicians of top quality for year-round teaching staff. The musical environment includes the students themselves and their unusual musical sophistication, the resources of a huge record-listening library and lending library of orchestral and solo scores; the marvelous and numerous practice rooms which line the basements of all the dorms; and the opportunity for daily orchestra rehearsals, playing in small chamber groups and hearing an almost weekly orchestra concert as well as solo concerts by students and faculty which are scheduled several times a week.

All this adds up to a student body that gives the impression of clear-headed energy and focus in a time when those traits are sometimes in short supply. These privileged students are living in an atmosphere where a single-minded concentration on the flute or the bass fiddle is an accepted way of life.

Music is the big thing at Interlochen but there is a sizable dance department too. Students take both modern dance and ballet. Helen McGehee, a principal dancer with the Martha Graham company, was in residence for two months this year and the dance company performed at Carnegie Hall this past December.

While the dance department has grown steadily since the opening year when there were only seven majors it dipped slightly this past year, possibly because the head of the department left and has not been replaced. The level of competence of the student dancers does not equal that of the music majors.

Interlochen has trod a cautious path in its unusual combination of a school bustling with long-haired artist students and a generous endowment of conservative Midwest money. Insurance tycoon, W. Clement Stone is a principal benefactor; others are Roscoe Bonisteel and Dow Chemical.

There has been a considerable change in the campus in the past year and from here it looks like a healthy flexibility. This year the

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THE MUSIC PLAYING IN MY HEAD

MIKE FERGUSON

"The long and winding road always leads me to your door" -
Don't Keep Me Waiting/Paul McCartney

Despite the rumors and realities concerning the stability of the Beatles, the quartet continually produces excellent music. There remains a certain quality which makes it uniquely important, charming, and refreshing. To their credit, they are able to create pieces of substantial vision and merit even in personal (artistic) crisis. Of all the artists in rock, few have the charismatic and aesthetic appeal of the Beatles.

As an art form, rock has pulled a curious trick. Rather than continue to forge into the new territory it once opened, rock is currently re-examining its basic format. And the Beatles are among the chief, if not primary, investigators. (Some might call this artistic regression, but it is essential to the art that its roots be fully expanded before any truthful mutation occurs).

The Beatles latest LP, *Let It Be*, although not yet officially released, is available on a bootleg label (Kum-Back Records). Processed from raw tapes of the original recording sessions, the record is of extremely inferior quality, imperfect and hollow sounding. At best, the sound resembles a transistor radio. Yet, a definite impression of the music can be formed.

As *The Beatles and Abbey Road* explored the basics of rock, *Let It Be* keeps distinctly in touch with the music's origins. Few Sgt. Pepper decorations appear. As one song suggests, the Beatles are "getting back".

Let It Be will be (is) an important LP because it recognizes in full brevity the scope of rock and roll tradition; indeed, it is a celebration of that tradition. Not to say that it recalls the old days or is part of the current rock and roll revival hype. The Beatles musically express knowledge of and joy in basic rock. But they add their own (sympathetic) nuances and expand what is essentially a limited form (pure rock). They even embrace rock cliches, turn them around and give them life and meaning.

The following is a sequential evaluation of *Let It Be*:

Side I - *Get Back* starts the record, the same version as the single. A comfortable place to begin and we're set with the tone of the record. *Get Back Home*, *Loretta*. A strong '50's backbeat supports either Paul or Ringo on *Can He Walk?* The words are incomprehensible (a very poor take) it lasts only a minute. One, two, three, four... and we're into *Let It Be*. An irresistible McCartney composition with piano and

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