



Good music . . . good medicine

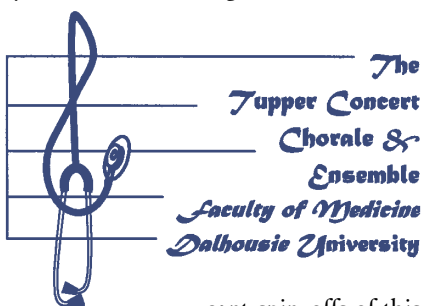
Thirty years ago, Ron Stewart and 2 of his classmates produced a musical variety show that has since become a yearly event at Dalhousie University's School of Medicine. Thirty year later, Stewart, a former minister of health in Nova Scotia who now teaches emergency medicine at Dalhousie, has once again spearheaded a bit of medical school musical magic.

Good music . . . good medicine, a new chorale, band and string ensemble, gives medical students a musical oasis away from the rigours of medical education. Response has been overwhelming, with nearly 100 medical students, many in their first year, eager to attend rehearsals. Many of the students are delighted that their musical talents need not be put on hold during medical school.

The program also opens up new research opportunities for students. It is funded by an endowment named in honour of Dr. Bernard Badley, who recently retired after spending 20 years as conductor of the medical school's Tupper Band. Stewart, the

endowment's chief fund-raiser, hopes to raise \$350 000 over the next 5 years to cover the modest expenses of the band, string ensemble and choir, and to fund several student research projects every summer. The latter will focus on the positive impact music is believed to have on health. This year, 2 students will be researching the effects of music on the lifestyles of older people living in seniors' residences.

Stewart hopes other medical schools eventually adopt the Good music . . . good medicine concept. He is also rather proud of the program's logo, which he conceived.



Stewart, who plans to host a world seminar on music in medicine in Halifax next year, is convinced one of the significant spin-offs of this kind of event will be the production of more physicians who find music personally fulfilling and will be eager to help identify the possible untapped benefits that music can have on patient care and many aspects of contemporary medicine. — © Dorothy Grant, Halifax

New aid for breast self-exam



Only 25% of Canadian women conduct a monthly breast self-examination. Two excuses predominate among the other 75%: limited tactile sensitivity and discomfort with touching themselves. Now a new "Sensability" pad from Becton-Dickinson attempts to address these issues. The pad consists of 2 thin plastic sheets with a liquid lubricant sealed between them. It reduces friction between a woman's fingers and her breasts by clinging lightly to the skin. The pad comes complete with an instructional video and written instructions. Call 800 268-5430 for information.

Dalhousie's ER doctors given departmental status

The Division of Emergency Medicine at Dalhousie University has become only the second in Canada to receive departmental status. The move, approved by the university's Board of Governors in June, means that Dalhousie joins Queen's University in having a full-fledged Department of Emergency Medicine.

Dr. Douglas Sinclair, who will head the new department, said there are great variations in the way academic emergency medicine is treated across the country. "I think this is an-

other sign of the maturing of the specialty and recognition of the work we are doing," he said, adding that the move will help put emergency doctors on an equal footing with other specialists, such as anesthetists and obstetricians.

Emergency medicine was already a free-standing division with its own budget at Dalhousie, and its budget will not grow because of its new status. "This will not change the academic and research activities we have been involved in," added Sinclair, "but it

better reflects what we do. It is certainly nice to have this distinction and recognition among our peers in the academic community."

Sinclair is convinced that the Dalhousie decision will be repeated elsewhere because "emergency medicine has shown that it has a unique body of knowledge. At the moment, though, there is great variance across the country in the way the specialty is treated."

The new department has 40 part-time faculty members, spread throughout the Maritime provinces.