

Visit To C'ville: Band Awes

By DON HOENSCHEL

Michigan State University's magnificent concert band played a two-hour concert to dedicate the Louis E. Schmidt auditorium at Clarenceville High School. Send a tin ear to listen to music made by the angels and played by the young, and you get more awe than criticism. It was Dr. Harry Begian coming home to Livonia with a carefully trained big band, each member wonderful in his skill and talent and blessedly cynical.

"WE HAD TO blow our heads off to be heard," said one band member. "The acoustics in the place are horrible."

Another said the band left its best performance in the rehearsal room. There were bad lips, a few overdrives on notes and a general weariness when the curtain parted for the concert.

The saxophone soloist, Jack Krippl, didn't make the concert and Prof. Byron Autrey, instructor in trumpet at MSU, came on beautifully as his replacement.

Autrey was called back for two or three encores. And even if the reviewer doesn't know a grace note from second base, the sound was good. If you like trumpet, Autrey is as good as Al Hirt. Maybe better.

DR. BEGIAN, who came out of 17 years as music director at Detroit's Cass Technical High School and three years at Wayne State University, went to MSU last July as director of bands.

At intermission at Clarenceville, he looked like he had swum 20 laps in Bobby Kennedy's swimming pool.

Throughout the concert he was fighting busted lips and missed cues, the acoustics and the fatigue, he won.

When people back in the orchestra seats and others leaning against the carpeted retaining wall groan "Oh, no," when mercifully the encores and the curtain pulls back you know the concert was pretty good.

THE AUDITORIUM seats are low, and it's tough to see beyond the conductor. Begian was enough to look at and his band was enough to hear.

The band played Lola Flores, Pasa Doble for opera, and followed with Overture to



CONDUCTOR — Harry Begian, left, a former Livonian, checks over a score with Byron Autrey, professor of trumpet at Michigan State University.

Colas Breugnot and Loebes-
tod from "Tristan and Isolde" by Wagner (no relation to an obscure major league catcher). It was a great concert by a great band a great conductor. You'll pardon if the reviewer paid more attention to a blond French horn player, who chatted amiably of earlier times at Interlochen and once was a fair slugger on a pickup softball team in a backyard.

When you listen to a concert in which a daughter plays the French horn with the Michigan State University concert band, it's great even if the acoustics are lousy.

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