After 3 years Caltech Students Get Another Concert

Alternative Rock Band Third Eye Blind performs to Crowd This Last Saturday

Photo by Alan Gee

Third Eye Blind's lead singer reaches out towards the crowd and in an attempt to relate he revealed that he had "never successfully completed a problem set in his entire life." Many students felt a (temporary) boost in self-esteem.

Photo by Talia Weiss

Anthony Chong, ASCIT President, introduces the band to a growing crowd of students.

Photo by Alan Gee

Third Eye Blind band member Brad Hargreaves.

Caltech-Occidental Concert Band Gives First Concert of Year

By Mythili Iyer
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Caltech Occidental Concert Band gave its first concert of the 2009-2010 year on Friday evening, finishing to a standing ovation from a packed auditorium. The ensemble, played a varied program that was a fitting end to a term that included a feature article in the LA Times and an opportunity to work with one of the preeminent living composers of band music.

The first half of the concert, the audience was treated to the band's Carnagie Hall performance, the highlight of a trip last spring to New York City.

After intermission the band opened with Tetsunosuke Kushida's "Collage for Band," a piece inspired by Japanese folk songs, coaxing new sounds from their instruments. William Bing, the band's longtime conductor, said he had recently been introduced to the sound of Asian band music and hoped to incorporate it more into the band's repertoire.

The concert continued with a guest conductor, assistant professor of Geology Paul Asimow, who led the band in a rendition of Richard Strauss' "Allerseelen." Asimow's introduction of the piece elicited laughs from the crowd as he related the spirited tale of a young Strauss secretly studying the works of Richard Wagner under his disapproving father's nose. The piece, a wistful recollection of the beginning of a romance, gave the band the chance to demonstrate its dynamic range, with dramatic outbursts followed by lyrical song.

Next up was composer and serial soloist Les Deutsch. A member of the JPL staff, he performed an impressive piece of his own composition in which he played no less than four instruments - a swingin' tuba, a saxophone playing a march, a dulcet piccolo melody, and trumpet fireworks. His piece, "Themes and Pertubations," was an odd but spirited combination of instruments.

The band finished with its tour de force "Angels in Architecture," written by noted composer Frank Ticheli. The band was fortunate to have the opportunity to rehearse with Ticheli himself prior to the concert.

The Caltech Occidental Concert which is open to students, faculty, alumni, and community members associated with Caltech, Occidental, and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory rehearses once a week and gives three major concerts, one per academic quarter, the next of which is this coming February at Occidental College.

CLUE to make a comeback

By Casey Jao
STAFF WRITER

After nearly two years of disuse, the ASCIT student course review service is coming back. The CLUE -- the name of the service -- grew inactive in 2007 as students turned to the online Teaching Quality Feedback Reports (TQFR) for course evaluations. But student dissatisfaction with last year's revision of TQFR is spurring a revival of the earlier system.

From its debut in 2004 to last winter, TQFR served students essentially the same purpose as CLUE. While CLUE was student-run and TQFR overseen by the administration, they both served as online forums for students to provide and view feedback on courses and professors. At the end of each term students were asked to complete anonymous questionnaires for their courses, and their evaluations were published along with thse of their peers. But unlike with CLUE, TQFR results could be viewed by the entire Caltech community, not just the undergraduates. CLUE was a service by the students for the students. TQFR was primarily a means for faculty to get feedback on their teaching.

With the help of the Academics and Research Committee (ARC), the administration renovated TQFR last winter to be more faculty-centric.

"To improve teaching at Caltech, we need to give faculty constructive feedback," wrote vice-provost Melany Hunt, the TQFR administrator, in an email. "When we revised the survey, we changed the questions so that they focused more on teaching effectiveness rather than course popularity."

The revisions also removed students' written comments from public view. Previously the completed questionnaires were reviewed prior to release for

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In This Issue

Will the Calzookie ever return to Caltech?
How long will royal decree keep http://imgs.xkcd.com/comics/

By Daniel Haas
UNDERGRADUATE

Let me tell you a story. A long time ago, there existed a glorious edifice dedicated to the ideals of freedom, liberty, and decent food in exchange for D-Bal.

That time is gone from us. We now live in a dank world, the underbelly of true reality, a world in which incoming freshman have only heard whispers and rumors of such a magical place. A place where students could hang out from 10 pm to 2 am every night; a place where they could banter with reasonably competent student employees; a place where they could work free of the oppression of the outside world; a place where there were three flavors of milk shake and the Calzookie, designed by Jesus Christ himself.

In short: it was the best of times, it was the greatest of times. It was the time of the Coffee House.

But where has it gone? Why is the Red Door locked, night after night? Was there some sort of accident, or maybe some plague which selectively wiped out the entire staff? No.

With reasons dubious at best, the Head of Dining Services Peter Daily issued a royal decree stating "there shall be no institution heretofore known amongst the peasantry as 'Chouse' until such a time as an official CDS employee may be on hand every night to oversee and to grill and fry the victuals in need of grilling or frying."

The townspeople of Caltech would have quaked in fear had they known of this proclamation, but most of them were not even made aware of the decision. Rather, we who toil under the Impinger only found out in conversation with the student-managers of Chouse.

The reason given was that there had been complaints about the quality of the food, especially those foods which were fried and grilled. I can say with certainty that -- at least during the shift on which I toiled away -- every dish was served with relative speed and the best of quality that can be imparted upon the supply of food we had, and if any customer had issue with this, I and my compatriots were more than willing to make it once more.

The food was significantly better than not only fast food, but even the very food served by Dining Services for our evening meals; and certainly better than any other fresh food served in walking distance of Tech, especially for D-Bal. If the food quality was that bad, we wouldn't have made the positive profit margin that we routinely did-- or we would have seen rashes of food poisoning throughout the student body.

The proposed solution was to hire a CDS employee (non-student) to oversee Chouse. We were unhappy with this, in that it seemed unnecessary, but acquiesced since (as we are often made aware), students have the short end of the power stick. However, weeks then passed with not a hint as to when it would open. It has since been revealed that the search for an employee to work those hours began less than two weeks ago, when we were told it would start before the beginning of term.

As a compromise, I offered as a solution that each employee be given more rigorous, CDS overseen training: then allowing us to work alone, as we have for years without too much incident.

To this, I was told "Student employees are different than regular employees. You are first and foremost students and our full time employees are here to work. You may look at it as a fine line, but there are many others that want to make sure that you (students) have opportunities to work yet make certain that it does not interfere with your studies."

Woah. Back up. Never were our grades the issue here. Each employee of Chouse, just like every student waiter, like every library employee, like every student working in the Y or the Housing office, is fully aware of how to manage their own time; if they aren't, we don't shut down the library in response, do we?

Are we not adults, or at the very least, of an age where we need to learn how to manage just this kind of thing? Does administration not think we can handle having paying jobs? What is the whole point of coming to this institution if not to make oneself viable in the work force? Sure, it's not a lab tech job, but it is a paying job.

I write this not as a vent for my emotions, nor as a rallying cry for people to sit-in at Peter Daily's office. No, I write this merely to remind people that there was a time when administration trusted us enough to be able to serve food, but once again decided that we rather need to be coddled. There was a time when you could eat fresh food at night, rather than buying overpriced C-Store snacks over and over. There was a time when a young boy could dream that one day, he too could make curly fries and joke with customers from behind that crystalline counter.

I ask of you only to remember Coffee House, because if you don't, it will never return.

ASCIT Board of Directors Meeting - Minutes

November 9, 2009

Officers Present: Anthony Chong, Andrey Poletayev, Pallavi Gunalan, Nadia Iqbal, Michael Maseda, Laura Conwill, Maral Mazrooei

Guests: Tim Black, Daniel Obenshain, Chris Hallacy

Call to order: 12:11 PM

Funding Requests: Vote on the Veritas Forum proposal from last week (seeking funding for advertising and recording the November 18 event). **VOTE: Approved (6-0-0)** $100 for advertising.

President's Report: Anthony is meeting tomorrow night with reps from houses to talk about house endowments.

Review Committee: Dano says that Jacob King, an alum, is writing a paper on the voting system we use and would like access to our data but with all the names taken out. The Review Committee decided the BoD should decide if this is allowed. Andrey noted decided that he is an alum, and a member of our committee. **Vote: Approved (6-0-0)**

Officer Reports:

- **V.P. of Academic Affairs (ARC Chair):** Andrey's sending a survey soon concerning modifications to CLUE, TQFR, and Moodle.

- **V.P. of Nonacademic Affairs (IHC Chair):** The IHC talked about appropriateness concerning houses pranking other houses and individuals. They discussed stealing and now it pertains to the non-academic honor code. Since Avery is still frequently singled out, David is going to create a proposal to submit to the house Excomms to vote on whether Avery is a house (a similar proposal was unsuccessful last year). Tim and Pallavi wrote articles for the Tech about rotation committee and the mural policy.

- **Operations Director:** Since Thursday, Michael met with the student reps on the library committee on the books. It's only the old books that need synopses added.

- **Social Director:** We have forty-five volunteers for the concert! Nadia's going to figure out exactly what jobs we need volunteers for with Tom and Lorri. They will also figure out the guest policy.

- **Secretary:** The flow chart flows now.

- **Treasurer:** ASCIT will not have to contribute funding for the HMC buses. All of the club funding requests for fall term have been submitted. Checks will be ready soon. We received $2000 from the alumni fund for the concert; other donors are the Gnome Club, Student Life, MHF, and ASCIT.

- **Scheduling**: Midnight donuts will be Wednesday, November 18! Tonight the BoD is eating dinner in Lloyd.

Meeting adjourned: 12:35 pm

Submitted by Laura Conwill
ASCIT Secretary

New CLUE to be more useful for students

"profanity and hateful comments." As TQFR expanded to cover all divisons, screening for "profanity and hateful comments...became a very time consuming process" and "delayed the release of the survey results," wrote Hunt.

As students can no longer view their peers' comments, the revised TQFR is "not very useful to students," said Andrey Polateyev, ASCIT VP of Academic Affairs. He noted that response rates have dropped substantially since the TQFR was revised.

"Since TQFR is for professors, we want to have something for the students," said he.

Polateyev is working with the Donut dev team to restart CLUE. Last Friday he invited undergraduates to complete an online survey about what they want in a course review system. He expects the new CLUE questionnaire to ask about course specifics, such as teaching quality or unit accuracy, in addition to the usual general evaluation.

"We're planning on expanding [the questionnaire] a little to make it more useful," said Karthik Sarma, a dev team member.

The new CLUE would operate independently of TQFR. In particular, students would likely end up completing surveys for both feedback systems. TQFR response rates might take a further hit, said Polateyev. But ultimately "we have to have a student feedback system," he said. He remained open to the possibilty of integrating CLUE and TQFR in the future.

"I have had some discussions with ARC on how to support both CLUE and TQFR but we haven't done anything yet," wrote Hunt.

For now, the dev team is planning to send out course surveys for the past few quarters, during which CLUE was inactive. Sarma hopes that the system will be back and running by the end of second term.