

# BEERMAN

From Page 1

ing at his father's grocery store where a man asked him if he wrote music. The man paid him \$5 for every gospel song he wrote, a relationship that would lead to his involvement in the early civil rights movements.

At the age of eight, Beerman was being paid to write music and also began playing the clarinet and saxophone in the Peacock Club when his instrument was bigger than he was.

"I became sort of like the house mascot," Beerman said. "I've been writing music ever since."

Beerman's father was originally an engineer in Bell labs before the Depression hit and forced him into the grocery business. Beerman has a difficult time remembering his father ever talking to him.

"Parents never know what to do with kids who want to be a

composer," Beerman said. "My dad would take away my food and tell me to practice being a starving artist."

Beerman's involvement in the pre-civil rights movements has left a lasting impression on his life experiences. He even recalls a distant memory of seeing a young Martin Luther King Jr.

"I remember King's face and how he had no sense of hate," Beerman said. "I always look back at that face."

Beerman would participate in sit-ins, and though he was never arrested, as he described, he would be beat bloody.

After experiencing the hatred found in the civil rights movement he continued to believe he had no choice but to become a composer and often focused his writings on political and social issues.

Beerman majored in music at the University of Miami and Florida State. He attended graduate school at the University

of Michigan and was hired at Bowling Green State University in 1970.

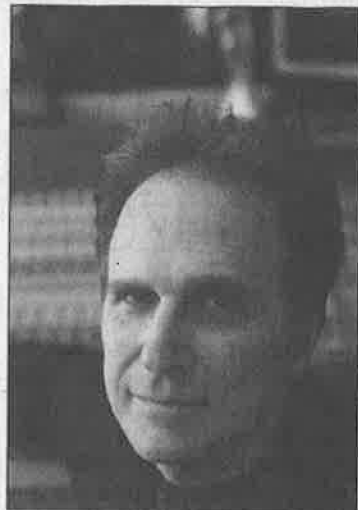
"I was brought here to establish an electric music and recording studio," Beerman said. "I've been here ever since then."

Beerman has taught nearly every course offered in the College of Musical Arts and has founded several groups and events. These include co-founding in 1971 the New Music Ensemble, the Electronic Music and Recording Studios and in 1979 the New Music Festival which features new musical works by living composers and College of Musical Arts faculty and students.

"It will be its 31st year," Beerman said. "It has people coming from all over the world to Bowling Green every fall."

His wife Celesta Haraszti, a native of Hungary and a dancer has been standing beside her husband since high school.

Beerman said marrying his



ENOCH WU | THE BG NEWS

**MAKING MUSIC:** Composer, performer, and instructor Burton Beerman sits in a recording studio at the College of Musical Arts.

wife is one of the best things he has ever done and described their story as a true Romeo and Juliet. Haraszti had a certain glow when speaking of her love for her husband.

"Every day I learn new and beautiful things about him," Haraszti said. "We grew up together and there is always such wisdom from him; he has this ability to have an amazing artistic insight."

The duo has worked together on several pieces and performances with Beerman's writing abilities and Haraszti's dancing talents.

Beerman has had a reputation in the field of electronic and computer music as an innovator and pioneer. His works merge audio and visual technologies with live instrumental performance, dancing and singing. Beerman also aided in the development of the BodySynth which is a wireless sensor system that is attached to a dancer who's movements will control video and sound.

"We have worked with dancers all over the world," Beerman said.

Beerman was presented the

Governor's Award for the Arts in 2008 and was also awarded the 2007 CINE Golden Eagle Award for his composition in the film documentary "203 Days" which featured the last 203 days of a cancer patient's life. His clarinet performances have also received worldwide attention.

Colleague and Associate Professor of Composition Elaine Lillios knew of Beerman before working at the University by purchasing a CD of his while she was an undergrad.

"Ten years later it was really amazing to be introduced to him as a colleague," Lillios said.

Lillios not only sees Beerman as a colleague but as a mentor as well.

"I still seek his advice when I get stuck," she said.

Despite his long list of accomplishments, Beerman continues to remember what he believes is important.

"Every once in a while you get to touch someone's life," he said.