

# The Michigan Daily

# ARTS

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**Practice,  
practice,  
practice.**

## MICHIGAN ORCHESTRA EMBELLISHES SCI-FI CLASSICS

By Julie Sills  
For the Daily

Undergraduate and graduate students drawn from schools all over the University, together in one room, making some of the best music on campus. Who are these talented, outstanding, energetic University students? Let me introduce you to the Michigan Pops Orchestra!

"The Michigan Pops started eight years ago to create a fun all-student orchestra committed to enhancing musical diversity across campus," said Michael Chang, its longest-serving member, and this is just what the Pops have done. Chang, currently in his eighth year, is a perfect example of the players' loyalty and devotion. Joining the group as a freshman in the fall of 1995, and still a strong member today, he rehearses with the Pops every Sunday night in Revelli Hall (also where the Michigan band rehearses), while he pursues a graduate degree in electrical engineering. "There have been several conductors during my time here and they all have the mark of the Pops — the difference with them is that they are all a lot of fun" Chang comments.

Fun isn't enough to describe the Pops' current conductor's enthusiasm for his love of music and for the Pops. Chris Lees, relaxed on his podium, smile from ear to ear, directs his group of 75 artists, easing them through an eclectic mix of musical pieces with a positive encouragement that produces an energy felt throughout the entire room.

Currently, the Pops are at work on their upcoming fall

2003 concert, "Pops in Space," that includes pieces from "Star Wars," "ET" and "Apollo 13," to Dave Matthews Band's "Satellite," and more classical works, such as, "Moonlight Serenade" and "It's only a Paper Moon." Lees looks forward to taking advantage of the theatrical aspects of performing at the Michigan Theater. Last year they played "Fantasia" songs while showing clips from the movie, and this fall Lees is "excited to surprise the audience with all of the multi-media and visual displays they have in store."

Like many of the Pops members, Fatima Syed grew up playing the violin, continuing throughout high school. When she came to the University as an engineering student, she hoped to keep up her passion and in finding the Pops Fatima felt right at home. Now in her third year, and executive director of the board, she feels, "The Pops, who are a part of UAC, are most unique because they are the only completely student-run orchestra on campus." She further commented, "It's great to be on the board because not only do you play with the group, but you're a part of making the entire picture run smoothly."

With a larger turnout this year than ever before at their annual fall auditions, the Pops unfortunately had to turn students away for the first time. They were, however, overjoyed by the excitement everyone displayed in joining. If you missed the fall audition you can contact the group for a possible spring tryout.

"In rehearsal it is critical to work together, to breathe together," exclaimed Lees. This group really does that — they are more than just members of an orchestra, they are artists and friends, "All together under the basis of making awesome music and meeting cool people."

### Pops in Space

Sunday Nov. 9 at  
8 p.m.

At the Michigan  
Theater

[www.umich.edu/  
~uac/mpops](http://www.umich.edu/~uac/mpops)

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