

# UCSC student is classical record sleuth (and studies micropaleontology, too)

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**W**HEN I COULDN'T FIND AN obscure classical recording I wanted to buy for a gift last summer, I was given the business card of Michael Jay.

Jay, a musician and an earth science major with focus on micropaleontology at UCSC, searches out hard-to-find classical records for a number of his regular clients. Along with that, he says he often "prescribes" music to suit their personalities and tastes.

It took him almost five months to find what I wanted — indeed, I had about given up.

But Jay doesn't give up — and he usually finds what he is looking for — including my own request.

What has turned into a nice little side business for the student and musician began with his own frustration in tracking down the classical records and tapes he wanted for his own collection.

"In my sophomore year here," he says, "I went to the Record Factory and told them they needed me. There was no job opening at the time!"

"But they took me on and in exchange for records I took over their classical section. I developed it to eight times the size it had been — but the frustration still existed because requests by customers were often not in stock or readily available."

And so, he began record sleuthing on his own. And now he gets from two to five phone calls a day from clients — some of whom may simply hum snatches of a musical work that they have heard and want, but cannot identify.

"One of my customers woke me up one night with a phone call," he says. "she placed the phone directly over her radio and had me listen. She wanted to buy the recording and didn't know the name. I was able to pick out that it was the Boccerini Cello Concerti."

He says that after the last Cabrillo Music Festival, he was besieged with calls from people who wanted obscure pieces they couldn't find.

"A lot of my customers are frustrated with the music scene as it now stands," he says. "They're tired of listening to rock and roll drums beating monotonous music on the radio and they're basically being led to classical."

"Movies are using a lot of classical music and people are wanting the sound tracks."

"I lead customers on a path — I might say, 'Why don't you try Stravinsky?' — if their eyes turn red, we'll back track to Debussy — and so on."

"It's not that people don't like some music — it's just that they don't understand it and have to be led. I try to help cultivate their tastes. For instance, I've taken one customer from Mozart and Stamitz and tried to move her a little more

into the romantics like Mendelssohn and later Beethoven."

Jay comes from a musical family — he and his father, brother and sister play stringed instruments and his mother is a music educator with the La Jolla Chamber Orchestra.

"Basically," he says, "my father tried to raise a string quartet instead of a regular set of children!"

"I love music," Jay says.

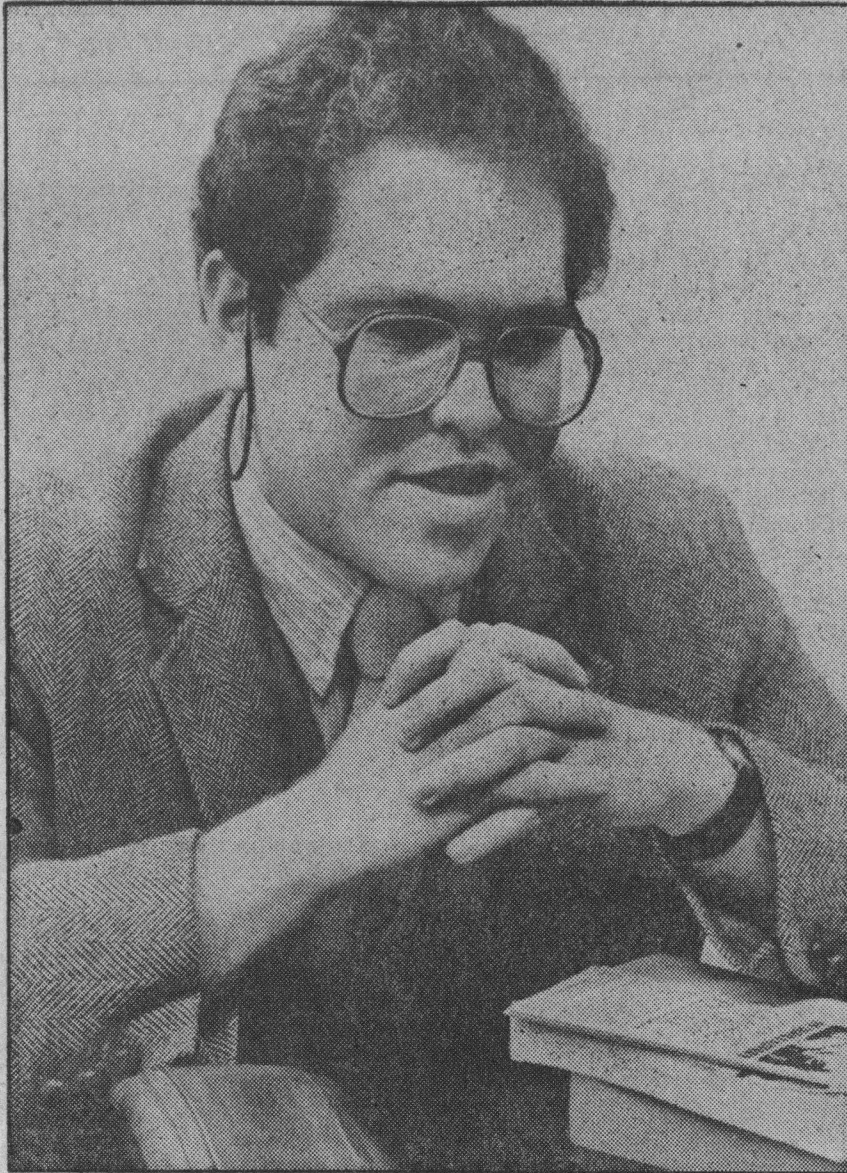
"If everything else should be gone from the world, the string quartet should remain. It is the highest form of any sort of expression — it can produce the most beautiful, enriching tones, the most melodic quality and the most deep and harsh tones, too."

He believes the biggest difference between classical and popular music is that classical doesn't deal with just a single mood but deals with whole movements — the full series of emotions.

He adds, quite simply:

"Music is worth living for."

(In case you were wondering, micropaleontology is the study of the very small fossils found in sediments laid down on the ocean floor and is of special interest to the oil industry.)



"I love music," says Michael Jay, UCSC student and violinist whose sideline is searching out hard-to-find classical recordings for his clients. "If everything else should be gone from the world, the string quartet should remain. It is the highest form of expression." He says his clients are tired of listening to rock and roll drums beating monotonous music on the radio and are basically being led to classical.

