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Montana State University to send people of West Berlin a tape recording of Christmas music

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

Montana State University will extend season's greetings to the people of West Berlin through a tape recording of Christmas music and a verbal Frohe Weihnachten (Merry Christmas), according to Dr. Erling S. Jorgensen, director of the MSU Radio-TV Studios.

The novel greeting will be broadcast over RIAS (Radio in American Sector), the German-language station in West Berlin licensed to the United States Government.

The recording features music by Prof. Eugene Weigel, composer-in-residence at MSU. The musical greeting is prefaced by a message recorded in German by Luise Wachtel, English major from Kusel, Germany.

One portion of the tape contains the Christmas carol from Weigel's opera, "The Mountain Child," sung by the Montana High School Music Camp Chorus conducted by Prof. Lloyd Oakland. The tape also includes "Child of the Mountain" from the same work, performed by the MSU Symphonette under the baton of Prof. Eugene Andrie.

The "hands across the sea" gesture was prompted by Prof. Weigel's experiences while he was in Germany to attend the Berlin Philharmonic Symphony's performance of his "Festivo" at the Berlin Festival in September. Upon his return to Missoula, he reported that the West Berliners whom he met were enthusiastic about cultural exchanges that lessened their sense of isolation. He pointed out that West Berlin is virtually an island fenced about by the Iron Curtain and that its citizens are eager for reassurance from the West that they are not forgotten.

Dr. Jorgensen, producer of the tape, has a special interest in the project because he served as a producer with the American Armed Forces radio station in Berlin in 1945-46.

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