The performing arts at the University of Rochester have been immeasurably improved through the contributions of Richard R. Andre, New York Kappa ’96. The 1996 optical engineering graduate, who minored in music, has made a major impact on the cultural scene, contributing more than 1,200 hours to the university glee club and university choir — as accompanist, assistant director, publicity officer, and rehearsal conductor; 500 hours to the university chamber singers, as tenor soloist and rehearsal conductor; and more than 400 hours to the Newman community choir, as cantor, instrumentalist, and musical director. For the school’s committee on performing arts, he recruited, directed, produced, and served on the executive board, contributing more than 800 hours of his time. A founding member of the Student Broadway Company, he served as musical director and actor for 300 hours and also gave more than 100 hours to the Greece Performing Arts Society. His own concerts took another 600 hours of preparation.

Described as a person of vision, Rich has worked tirelessly to improve, motivate, and involve others in productions. His large-scale musical, Closer Than Ever, took 10 months to bring to fruition — structuring rehearsals, coaching, learning technical fields, and eventually producing a top-rate off-Broadway play, with a minimal budget, inexperienced cast and crew, and lengthy negotiations with the administration to use an adequate facility.

Although Rich’s personal strengths are considerable, he also has the ability to work behind the scenes to bring factions to a unity of purpose. Sometimes just a name change can bring about better understanding. For example, the committee on performing arts mounted its first production under his proposed name which better suggests its purpose — STAGE or Student Theater Arts Group, etc. Sometimes just enhancing each individual’s contribution to the whole enabled cast members to recognize their own importance to a production. His facilitating between groups with similar purposes enabled the student body to enjoy the fruits of their efforts, whether or not they were English majors or professional musicians.

Able to take charge in a time of crisis, Rich assisted professors with orchestration, script writing, and directing. His assistance in running rehearsals enabled the Student Broadway Company to complete its production of Me, Myself, and I — which was a success. His effort to make Todd Theater available to student-activity-fee-funded groups became a topic in the campus elections, and greater concern enabled all who share in theater functions to share responsibilities.

Rich’s final concert in May, entitled “What It’s All About,” was a one-man show. He performed 18 musical numbers and shared brief passages from his favorite literary works; 40 performers joined him for various portions of the production. Believing that in the sharing of music we experience beauty and emotion, he worked tirelessly to enable others in his university community to enjoy a rich cultural experience.

He is a member of Tau Beta Pi, Phi Beta Kappa, the Acoustical Society of America, AIP, and SPIE. In May he received his M.S. in optical engineering from his alma mater, and he now works for Anvik Corporation, which designs and builds microelectronics manufacturing lithographic equipment.