MIT stands for Musician In Training

By Kimberly Elness

"How many music majors do you know who have had a year of physics or a year of calculus and three science distribution courses and a laboratory course and a chemistry course?"

That rather rhetorical question was asked by Elizabeth (Lib) King '70, the only music major who, to my knowledge, fits the above description.

Lib is MIT's only music major this year. Last year there were five or six.

"It's more unusual that there is only one music major than that there are any," she explains.

The last time a music major came to MIT was in 1967. Lib didn't come here to major in music. "I am not a musician," she explains. "Just being here, I'm in school."

"I'm a sophomore, Lib became a junior last year. After doing the assignment, Lib decided to make a change majors."

"Lib realized that she could not spend the year doing music," she continues. "I've been interested in chemistry for several years."

"How did she get interested in music, at a highly technical institution?"

Lib had always liked music and composition, but she thought of it, "as a talent one was born with."

"It never occurred to me that you could be taught to compose," she continues.

"Then she took a course called 'Elements of Music.' One of the assignments given by Rosamary Harkness, the professor, opened Lib's eyes. The students were given a provided program, and were told to set a base line for it. After doing the assignment, Lib realized that she could compose, after all. That was the beginning of her formal study."

"My mother was a great inspiration to me," says Lib, smiling at the memory of the sound of the piano.

"All right, so she came as a music major. Why did Lib stay after deciding to major in music?"

"I didn't think about transferring. "If I had done it, I'd have transferred," Lib adds."

"So why didn't she?

"There were other factors in her decision, like the greater opportunities to become well-rounded here than at a conservatory. Lib believes it is important to have some understanding of science."

"It's very difficult to be ignorant of sciences here.

"It is not so difficult, however, to be ignorant of the Humanities possibilities. If the possibility of majoring in something other than science or engineering had been stressed in her interview, says Lib, she would have been a music major from the start."

"To Lib's knowledge, no one has ever come to MIT with the intention of majoring in Humanities."

Prof. Travis Merritt of the Humanities Department would also like to see the possibility of majoring in Humanities made more widely known. Although the admissions office has been cooperative in this area, Merritt feels that it would help if more of the Educational Counselors were made aware of it.

"What exactly are the requirements for degree in music?"

"First of all, MIT doesn't give degrees in music. One receives a "Bachelor of Science in Humanities and Science" degree."

"To my knowledge, fits the Humanities major."

"The requirement of the Humanities major is the completion of the first-year humanities block."

"There are any humanities courses one is interested in."

"If you're thinking of hockey at all think drastically reduced this year, so if you plan to play hockey at MIT this year you're thinking of this in particular."

"I think the new rink is open to any MIT student. Both graduates and undergraduates are needed to play."