

Students Sing, Act, Direct

April 24, 2008

Moody held their annual Music Drama Workshop Performance on Thursday, April 17 in the Alumni Auditorium. Students performed scenes from three Mozart operas—*The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Magic Flute*, and *Così fan tutte*—as well as Rodgers' and Hammerstein's musical *Oklahoma!*

Dr. Jori Jennings taught the workshop, a required course for all Moody Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Music candidates. Students Allison Brestel, Joy Cook, Elizabeth Kegg and Michael Lillard attended this year's class. Jennings solicited the help of four additional students—Jenna Cook, Lisa Galloway, Erin McLellan and Elsa Wiese—to participate in three numbers from *Oklahoma!*

While the focus is on singing and acting, the course is designed to give students experience in stage directing. "A lot of these kids will graduate and go out and be in charge of the children's musical for church, or some sort of Easter or Christmas cantata," says Jennings. "If you were going to do this in a church setting; you learn what you can do with a very limited budget, what you need to plan in terms of publicity and what you should put in the programs."

Jennings says the reward of teaching the course is the same for her each year: seeing her students develop their stage presence. "Usually somebody will up the ante," says Jennings. "They'll follow their instincts more; they'll do something just a little bigger and then the rest of the cast rises to the occasion."

This year the performance followed music major Joy Cook's senior recital. Cook says working with limited props and simple sets pushed the students to tap into their creativity and help the audience to be more imaginative. Cook says what she most enjoyed about the performance was playing a variety of characters. Her roles in this year's production included a boy, an 18th century Italian woman and a 19th century prairie woman.

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