

Monday, Dec 18, 2017

'Martha' brings romance, comedy and opera to Oakland University stage

Oakland University's School of Music, Theatre and Dance will present *Martha*, a romantic comedy opera by Friedrich von Flotow, on Jan. 9, 11, 13 and 14 in Varner Recital Hall.

Filled with beautiful music, charming choruses and timeless operatic confusion, *Martha* tells the tale of Lady Harriet Durham, a maid-of-honor to Queen Anne, and her confidante, Nancy.

Bored with court life in the early 1800's, the pair decide to attend a fair in Richmond, England, where girls hire themselves out as servants.

"While there, they agree on a lark to be hired as maids to some local farmers, Plunkett and Lionel," said Dr. Drake Dantzler, coordinator of opera studies and associate professor of voice at Oakland University.

While the ladies prove totally inept at their tasks, both farmers quickly fall for their new maidservants — Lionel for Harriett, who has disguised herself by giving her name as "Martha," and Plunkett for Nancy, who has given her name as "Julia."

"Harriet also falls in love with Lionel, but can't marry him because he is of a lower class," Dantzler said.

Once confronted with actual work, Harriet and Nancy also realize they don't enjoy country life, and escape through a window after Plunkett and Lionel go to bed.

"Many events ensue, but in the end, it is discovered that Lionel is in fact the Earl of Darby," Dantzler said. "Lionel and Harriet are free to marry, and Plunkett and Nancy discover they love each other too."

Charming and cheerful, *Martha* features several famous numbers, including "The Last Rose of Summer," Lionel's famous aria "Ach so Fromm," and the spinning wheel quartet.

"The audience will enjoy a light-hearted evening of tuneful songs and passionate duets, and are sure to leave with the music stuck in their heads," Dantzler said.

According to Dantzler, the show will be performed in English, with full costume, set and an orchestra led by conductor Victoria Shively. The cast is comprised of OU voice performance voice education students.

Admission is \$10 for students and \$20 for the general public. Varner Hall is located at 371 Varner Drive in Rochester, MI.

For more information, visit the School of Music Theatre and Dance [website](#), call 248-370-2030, or email mtd@oakland.edu.

Performance Schedule:

- Thursday, Jan. 9, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Jan. 11, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Jan. 13, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.



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- Sunday, Jan. 14, 2018 at 3 p.m.