

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

Music, theater and dance offers new certificate programs

By Amanda Benjamin, student writer

The **Department of Music, Theater and Dance** is now offering 16-credit graduate and post-graduate music certificates in music education, conducting, pedagogy and performance. The graduate certificates are for anyone interested in pursuing a graduate study in a planned program, but do not want to commit to a degree.

Along the same lines, the post-graduate certificates allow for a more in-depth study after a master's degree without pursuing a doctorate.

According to Joe Shively, Graduate Program Coordinator, these programs are good for teachers who need to take classes for certification. Patrick Conaton taught high school for two years, and upon returning to Oakland University for a master's degree in music education, has worked with the OU Pep Band and one of the concert bands.

"Overall, it's a different perspective," he said. "Leaving the high school job for this, I feel like I haven't missed a step."

The CARMU certificate in music education is designed to meet the needs of music teachers, to help them expand and extend their professional skills and understandings by studying and improving their practice.

The certificate in conducting is also designed for music teachers, as well as music professionals, who are interested in developing high-level skills and understanding instrumental or choral conducting.

The pedagogy certificate is a program for pianists or singers, which enables them to explore approaches to teaching a major instrument or voice, to expand knowledge of repertoire and technique and to further personal performance skills and musical understanding.

The certificate in performance is a program for pianists, singers or orchestral instrumentalists, which is designed to expand knowledge of repertoire and technique and to further their personal performance skills and musical understanding.

"I've gained knowledge that I can use, practical knowledge that I can use in the classroom," said Robin Barker, who is pursuing her master's degree in vocal education. She works in the Detroit Public Schools and said she has learned different strategies and ways of teaching.

"We try to teach lifelong musicians versus teaching a class," she said. According to Barker, she had students writing poetry and songs - things they weren't doing before.

Working toward an independent master's degree in music history, Eric Swanson said the "Theory of Learning" class he took completely changed his style and approach to teaching, and he liked the brain power and diversity of experience in the classroom.

"I feel a whole world of research has been opened," he said.

"All the professors here are really great, and I'm getting a lot out of the classes," said Eliana Riley, who is majoring in vocal performance. "It has a more intimate setting because it's smaller."

According to Conaton, the professors are friendly and approachable. "The one-on-one attention you get from them is very valuable and very useful."

"I'm very pleased with Oakland University," Barker said. "The instructors are wonderful." She added that the professors are very professional and knowledgeable with a caring, personal touch. "The knowledge has been invaluable. The relationships have been invaluable," she said. "I've already told people how great Oakland University is."

For more information about the graduate and post-graduate music certificates, contact Joe Shively at shively@oakland.edu or 248-370-2287.

SUMMARY

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