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**MSU Opera Theatre presents comedic tale of love and understanding**  
***Mozart's La Finta Giardiniera runs November 16, 17, 18 and 20 at Fairchild Theatre***

**Contact: Michael Sundermann, MSU College of Music Communications Office**  
**517-353-2043, [sunderm7@msu.edu](mailto:sunderm7@msu.edu)**

**EAST LANSING, Mich.** – The MSU Opera Theatre brings a lesser-known work by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to the stage this fall in a comedic story of love lost and then found again. Staged by MSU Opera Theatre Director and Professor of Voice [Melanie Helton](#), *La Finta Giardiniera*, “The Secret Gardener Girl” bursts with youthful passion and enthusiasm and features a full student cast in November at **Fairchild Theatre on Wednesday the 16th, Thursday the 17th, and Friday the 18th, at 7 p.m.; and Sunday, the 20th at 3 p.m.**

Helton produces The Opera Season and serves as the stage director for the fall production. MSU Director of Orchestras [Octavio Más-Arocas](#) will conduct the MSU Symphony from the pit, and Assistant Professor of Scene Design [Ranae Selmeier](#) from the MSU Department of Theatre is the set designer.

Set in the late 1700s in a provincial Italian town, Mozart’s *La Finta Giardiniera* reveals a tangled but charming and comedic tale of love lost and found again. Each character comes with a hidden past that leads to self-discovery, forgiveness and understanding—themes that Mozart explored musically throughout his life. Mozart wrote the opera when he was 18 during a time when he struggled to find audiences for his operas. The work has withstood the test of time and reveals the composer’s intuitive understanding of human nature and his sophisticated use of orchestration to explore on-stage drama. The result is a lively, accessible opera sung in Italian and subtitled in English for the new or seasoned operagoer.

“We’re incredibly excited to bring Mozart’s earliest opera to the stage again, and to uplift our community through the arts with this light-hearted drama,” said Helton. “Our exceptionally talented student singers and instrumentalists have put their heart into this production. Thanks to our generous donors, we’re able to stage a memorable and thoroughly entertaining opera that touches on the depth of love and human experience.”

Helton, a soprano with a rich performance resume, has directed the award-winning MSU Opera Program for over 20 years. *La Finta Giardiniera* was first presented back in 2011 and is the first of two fully-staged and costumed productions in the 2022-23 Encore! season. A third gala event in early winter celebrates the vocal arts and featured scenes from operatic masterworks.

Upcoming events in the MSU Opera season are [A Celebration of the Beautiful Voice](#), Sunday, January at 3:00 p.m., generously sponsored by Nancy and Charlie Seebeck; followed by [Giuseppe Verdi’s Falstaff](#), March of 2023, Wednesday, the 22nd, Friday the 24th, and Saturday the 25th at 7 p.m., and Sunday the 26th at 3 p.m.; generously sponsored by James and Susan Bonfiglio, Susan Davis, and the Eleanor H. and Harold E. Leichenko Opera Endowment established by Lauren Julius Harris. All MSU Opera Theatre events are held in the Fairchild Theatre, with preview lectures held 45 minutes before the performance.

The entire MSU Opera Season is generously supported by the Worthington Family Foundation and *La Finta Giardiniera* production is generously sponsored by Susan Davis.

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**Mark Whitfield teaches, tours through MSUFCU Jazz Artist in Residence program  
Dec. 1-9, 2018 (cont.)**

Reserved seating tickets are \$22 for adults, \$20 for seniors (age 60 and older) and \$7 for students. Information on this and other concerts, recitals and performances in the 2022-23 Encore! Season can be found at [music.msu.edu/events](https://music.msu.edu/events).