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MSU Opera Theatre presents a clever Elizabethan-era comedy *Verdi's Falstaff runs March 22, 23, 24 and 26 at Fairchild Theatre*

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EAST LANSING, Mich. – The first-ever MSU production of Giuseppe Verdi's *Falstaff* premieres on campus this spring! Staged by **MSU Opera Theatre** Director and Professor of Voice [Melanie Helton](#), this towering final opera by the renowned 19th century Italian composer resonates with insightful, relatable humor about aging and self-perception. A large student cast presents performances at **Fairchild Theatre on Wednesday the 22nd, Friday the 24th and Saturday the 25th, at 7 p.m.; and Sunday, the 26th at 3 p.m.**

Helton produces The MSU Opera Season and serves as the stage director for the spring production. MSU Assistant Director of orchestras [Katherine Kilburn](#) will conduct the MSU Symphony from the pit, and Professor of Scene Design [Kirk Domer](#) from the MSU Department of Theatre is the set designer.

Combining Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV*, *Falstaff* tells the story of an aged, oversized knight and his endeavors to woo two married women to gain access to their husbands' fortunes. Although he is outsmarted by the women at every turn, Falstaff continues to believe he is irresistible, painting a tale of how our self-perception can often lead to foolish outcomes.

Verdi wrote *Falstaff* when he was close to 80 years old. It was the last of his 28 operas, his second comedy, and his third work based on a Shakespeare play. MSU Opera Theatre presents this lively and sweeping comedy featuring a large ensemble cast of student artists. The accessible and humorous opera is sung in Italian and subtitled in English, pleasing for new and seasoned operagoers.

"*Falstaff* is an incredible and exciting undertaking for the MSU Opera Theatre," said Helton. "It isn't a typical production for university opera companies, which makes us exceptionally proud of our student singers and instrumentalists. They've put their heart into this uplifting, comedic work during a time of pain and healing for our Spartan community. Thanks to our generous donors, we can stage a memorable and thoroughly entertaining opera that takes a light-hearted look at the foibles and follies of human experience."

Helton, a soprano with a rich performance resume, has directed the award-winning MSU Opera Theatre program for over 20 years. The spring production of *Falstaff* is the second of two fully-staged and costumed productions in the 2022-23 Encore! season. A third gala event in early winter celebrated the vocal arts and featured scenes from operatic masterworks.

At each performance of *Falstaff*, a preview lecture is held 45 minutes before the performance. The opera is generously sponsored by James and Susan Bonfiglio, Susan Davis, and the Eleanor H. and Harold E. Leichenko Opera Endowment established by Lauren Julius Harris. **The entire MSU Opera Season is generously supported by the Worthington Family Foundation.**

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.

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