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MSU Opera Theatre presents Mozart's 'Così Fan Tutte' Nov. 19-23

Modern audiences can relate to this timeless opera

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EAST LANSING, Mich. – Audiences from the late 18th-century Vienna to present day Mid-Michigan can all relate to Mozart's comic masterpiece with the timeless theme of testing lovers' fidelity when the Michigan State University Opera Theatre brings *Così Fan Tutte* to East Lansing in November.

More than 40 members of the MSU Symphony Orchestra will join the opera company of 27 singers in four presentations of this beloved opera in the recently renovated Fairchild Theatre Nov. 19 at 7:30 p.m.; Nov. 21, and Nov. 22 at 8 p.m.; and Nov. 23 at 3 p.m.

Melanie Helton, director of MSU Opera Theatre and professor of voice, is stage director. Maestro Marcello Cormio will serve as conductor, guesting from his current position as director of opera at West Virginia University. Cormio recently conducted *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* to rave reviews at Sarasota Opera and has appeared with opera companies and orchestras around the United States and Europe.

Sung in Italian with English surtitles, *Così Fan Tutte* ("All Women Are Like That") takes place in Lago di Garda, Italy, during the late 1700s and tells the story of two young officers who disguise themselves in order to test the faithfulness of their fiancées.

Although considered an opera buffa or comedy, Mozart's masterpiece ranges from sidesplitting farce to heartrending drama. The story starts with Ferrando and Guglielmo, two young officers discussing their certainty of their lovers' faithfulness. An old cynic, Don Alfonso, interrupts with the claim that he can prove that their fiancées, like all women, are untrustworthy. Alfonso instructs the officers to court the women, who happen to be sisters, in disguise as "Albanians" to test their fidelity. A scheme of love and seduction ensues resulting in an unexpected outcome.

"I think the audience will truly enjoy *Così Fan Tutte* and its dazzling score, dramatic scenery, and elaborate costuming," says Helton. "But the heart of the performance is in the quality and the expression of the voices that these talented students possess, and the nuance and sophistication of their acting."

Helton will preview the show 45 minutes before each performance.

Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$18 for seniors, and \$5 for students, and are available from the College of Music box office – in person at the Music Building, Room 102, 333 W. Circle Drive, or over the phone at (517) 353-5340 – online at music.msu.edu, or at the door one hour before the show.

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