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Sthefany Flores

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# New music professor seeks to make opera more accessible



Dr. Stafford Turner uses his passion for opera to make the musical art more accessible to the general public. Photo by: Hannah Haggerty

By: Sthefany Flores

Dr. Stafford Turner is the newest addition to Gardner-Webb's music department, teaching and coaching his students to use their voices in various styles and genres of music.

Although he has worked in larger settings, when asked about his shift into the University's community, he responded that it reminded him of his undergraduate school, Shorter College, a small Christian college in Rome, Georgia. "It's like coming home," he said.

Dr. Turner completed his B.M. at Shorter College, followed by his M.M. at University of North Texas and finally his D.M.A. at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

He is passionate about his career and the role of teaching students of all vocal ranges numerous techniques from different styles of singing. However, his true passion lies in opera.

As an undergraduate, Dr. Turner wasn't so fond of opera. "[It] grew on me," he said. He theorized that his initial aversion may have to do with opera being an "acquired taste." Dr. Turner wishes to take his experience and find ways to make opera more accessible to the general public.

He spoke of the language barrier that is seen in many operas and how the barrier can turn off a large part of the general audience.

Another area he feels needs to be addressed is the stereotype that opera is only for those of a high social economic class. "We have a responsibility in opera to break down the stigma of classism, I feel a responsibility to make it as accessible as possible."

The upcoming opera, "Cosi Fan Tutte," is a reflection of this sentiment. Dr. Turner translated the original Italian text into English and set the opera in a modern setting in order to open it up to a wider audience.

The new setting is a West Texas diner called The Roasted Armadillo. The romantic comedy displays two couples and their comedic tropes resulting from a bet made by the men of the relationships and a mutual friend.

"Cosi fan tutte" will be performed in the Dover Theatre on February 11th-14th, 2016.