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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

KATIE ULRICH '29

Lyric Theatre's fall semester play is "The Importance of Being Earnest", written by Oscar Wilde. The performance will take place on Nov. 20, 21 and 22 at 7:30 p.m. in the Recital Hall.

The show is a comedy following the double lives of characters Jack and Algernon. "It's generally considered one of the greatest plays ever, and that's because it's so extremely well written," said Lyric Theatre Director Amanda Cox, "[Wilde] has a way of writing, not only plot-wise, but [in] his choice of words that makes every line funny," added Cox.

The cast of "The Importance of Being Earnest." COURTESY OF AMANDA COX

Cox grew up hearing about "The Importance of Being Earnest"; both her parents acted in it and frequently referenced it. "There are at least five quotes from the play that my parents said throughout my life," she shared. "And so I find that those are especially [my] favorite parts."

An excerpt of the play was performed at the Homecoming Collage Concert this October as a teaser. Music graduate student and stage manager Joshua Arizmendi said this scene is his favorite from the play– "Just seeing how Luc [Pereira] and John [Hutmire] ... interact with each other, it just seems so natural, and it's so entertaining." He continued, "It's cool to see how they're finding themselves within the characters."

Cox believes that the actors are "perfect" in their parts. "They're so inventive. They're so willing to try crazy things and take risks and see what works." Throughout the semester, the cast experimented and improvised to "delve into" their characters. After so much preparation, Cox looks forward to Houghton seeing its theater students in their element.

Music graduate student Lydia Rech, who plays Gwendolen, also believes the audience will enjoy the story. "You're going to be sitting there, laughing till you're crying or your face hurts," she commented. One of her favorite quirks of the play has been managing a British accent. "[Making] it very authentic and accurate to the setting of the show has been a fun challenge," she said.

Rech appreciates the Christ-centered nature of

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A Monumental Performance

SALIM FORD '28

On Saturday, Nov. 15, at 7:30 p.m., the Houghton University Chamber Choir will present its first recital of the year at Houghton Wesleyan Church, titled "Monuments." The performance features staples of choral works from the Renaissance and the 21st century. Chamber Choir Director Dr. Kevin Dibble described his programming process: "I wanted to pick things that were appropriately challenging, that would stretch us, that would grow us, that were beautiful, and that the audience would appreciate."

Chamber Choir performs in the Recital Hall. COURTESY OF KEVIN DIBBLE

The recital begins with Gregorio Allegri's "Miserere Mei, Deus". The piece is a setting of Psalm 51, and features a famously high soprano melody. Dibble described the piece as "One of [his] all-time favorites" and something he hasn't been able to sing or conduct before, aside from this year's Collage Concert.

Following this renowned, haunting choral work comes Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's "Stabat Mater". This year marks the 500th anniversary of Palestrina's birth, and the Chamber Choir will celebrate by singing one of his final compositions. "Stabat Mater" features a double choir, presenting a challenge for the Chamber Choir, with one or two singers on a part.

Dominic Larson '27, a tenor beginning his second year in Chamber Choir, recounted an evening rehearsal where the piece came together: "That night, it became clear that this group is really, really special." He described the double choir as "something [he's] never been a part of or seen in [his] life."

Finally, the concert will close with Arvo Pärt's "Berliner Messe". Larson spoke to the challenges of the eight-movement mass: "There's a lot of jumps, a lot of chaos." However, he's "really excited to see how it turns out." Dibble characterized the Holy Minimalist composer: "Pärt is very text-based; he's very introspective." He said that, despite centuries separating Pärt from the composers of the Renaissance, "There's a lot of crossover … in the way they approach vocal ideas and the way that composers approach setting the

See **CHAMBER** *page #2*

Dr. William Perrine

MIRIAM BROOKS '29

Dr. William Perrine is Houghton University's (HU) new Director of Instrumental Activities as of the 2025 fall semester. Perrine brings aspects of his faith into the courses he teaches, for example, in conducting and music education, and while conducting the HU Wind Ensemble and the HU Symphony Orchestra.

Perrine's love for music began in his childhood when he was introduced to piano and trumpet by his father, who was also his first music teacher. Since Perrine learned about Christ and music at the same time, he became comfortable with mixing the two in his everyday life. Following this path, he participated in ensembles and choirs throughout his private high school experience. He said, "I always looked forward to participating."

Perrine received his Bachelor's in Music Education from Transylvania University in Kentucky, his Master's in Wind Band Conducting from the University of Nebraska Lincoln, and his Doctorate in Music Education from Indiana University. After years of studying, Perrine said, "I enjoyed my education and wanted to continue in that field."

Emma Illian '27, a student in Symphony Orchestra, said he treats his students like accomplished musicians. Illain also stated that he does not shy away from expressing his faith in class, "He has a vision for Orchestra, and makes sure to include God in that vision."

DR. WILLIAM PERRINE

Perrine is enthusiastic about his new position, "Sometimes I feel I have the silliest job, but it really is just the most wonderful job." Conducting, teaching and being around young musicians is something he enjoys. Perrine commented, "This position compares well to my old position of Associate Professor of Music at Concordia." He said, "Houghton is a place where I can flourish with a big team in the Music department." Perrine admires the faith aspect of HU and loves that everyone works together to make music for the glory of God.

When Perrine learned that Concordia would be facing closure, he wondered where God would lead him and how he would get there. While conducting one of Concordia's last Orchestra rehearsals, a student approached him and encouraged him to investigate an open position at HU. Perrine stated, "My wife and I were intrigued by the idea of living in New York, so I decided to investigate." He was interested in the position, applied and now he calls HU home.

When asked about his favorite courses to teach at HU, Perrine said, "I love them all, but teaching and conducting always held a special spot in my heart."

Aubree Yoder '27, a student in Perrine's conducting course, said, "Professor Perrine always makes sure that students learn in the time they have with him, but he makes the time fun and interactive." She said that Perrine is always patient with his students and encourages growth over perfection.

Perrine commented on the struggles of being a Christian in the music education industry. Often, he felt people valued his opinions on music less because others would assume that a Christian in Music would only listen to or play Christian pieces. At HU, the problem is much less severe. Perrine said, "Christian musicians are well received at HU, and in this position, I can continue to support young people who doubt their security."

Associate Director of the Greatbatch School of Music, Dr. Kevin Dibble, said that after Theodore Kuschere retired from being Houghton's Director of Instrumental Activities, there was an opening for fresh perspectives. Dibble said, "It has been pleasant having Dr. Perrine as a coworker." Dibble said that Perrine exhibits his faith well and that he works hard to make HU music happen. ⋆

Cast members of "The Importance of Being Earnest" rehearse in the Recital Hall. COURTESY OF AMANDA COX

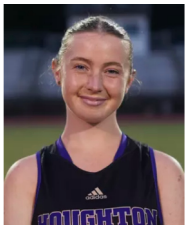
EARNEST *from page #1*

that she always brings it around to have some sort of message about either redemption or reminding us what our identity is in Christ, and that we are loved, and that we are the body of Christ, we are a family." Arizmendi agreed– "I saw that [the students] ... were really putting in effort to hone their crafts for God's glory."

Student tickets to the show will be sold for $5 ahead of time and at the door. According to Cox, the performance is not to be missed.

"I think that students will really enjoy watching their student colleagues being crazy and getting mad at each other, and falling in love and falling out of love and falling back into love, and just the absolute chaos," Cox said. ⋆

STAR ⋆ PLAYER



LAUREN THURBER '27

This week's *STAR* player is Lauren Thurber '27, a midfielder for the women's field hockey team who is majoring in Psychology with a track in clinical counseling. Thurber decided to come to Houghton because she felt God was calling her to be in a Christ-centered atmosphere."Lauren is the perfect teammate. She's positive when things don't go her way, she brings humor that we all love, and she works hard through anything. She is steady on and off the field; she represents Christ well and is a ray of sunshine for all she comes in contact with!" said one of Thurber's teammates, Adelle Hunter '27. Lauren went on to say that she loves how her team feels like a family. "My favorite thing from this past season was a game we had in a torrential downpour!" she shared, "I felt like I was running in a puddle the whole time because my shoes were so wet. Our team was ringing out our shoes for a week after that game, but we had so much fun and it motivated us even more to win!" Thurber is excited for next season and is motivated to grow on and off the field. ⋆

CHAMBER *from page #1*

their similarities: "They're all sacred pieces that are longer. [There's] more of a cohesive theme between all three of the pieces than we normally would have."

Dibble spoke movingly about his hopes for the recital: "My goal for this concert is to take the audience for an hour out of the rapidity of social media and the anger of politics and division of our country and our world and put us all in this space of calm, peaceful, reflective prayer."

The Chamber Choir worked hard to bring together the inherently challenging melodies and harmonies of the Renaissance and the Holy Minimalism Movement — momentous eras, each in its own right. You are invited (free of charge) to enjoy three monumental pieces that create a space for introspection and prayer. ⋆

Letter to the Editor

WESLEY SIMONS '28

What pushes people to despise the Croc? These shoes, though not designed to be offensive, still manage to provoke a polarizing response. Some pretend they are God's revelation to footwear, while others consider them ugly abominations. Though I do not fall into either camp, I still generally enjoy Crocs and believe that some counterpoints should be made to the recently published article.

One argument that I believe is fair to make is that Crocs are quite expensive, and Jibbitz are certainly not worth their price. However, it is important to consider that a basic Croc is similarly priced to many other sandals and considerably cheaper than several running shoes. If one still wishes to reduce the price, one can turn to the interminable market of knock-off clogs.

Regardless of how one purchases Crocs, one must confront a highly controversial aspect of the shoes: their use case. Should they be regarded as sandals? Running shoes? Works of art? Doorstoppers? Filth that should be burned at the first opportunity? Though one could imagine many uses for the iconic clogs, I believe that they lend themselves more naturally to some tasks than others.

Crocs, for most people, tend to fall into one of two categories: an upgraded slipper or a more robust sandal. We will begin with the slipper argument. Crocs are quite comfortable and are very easy to slip on or off. However, the heel strap allows them to stay closer to the foot much easier than a traditional slipper, making them ideal for extended use cases such as doing small chores outside. Furthermore, if one wants more of a slipper "feel," one can simply use the clogs in casual mode (or, as it is sometimes referred to, defense mode).

The sandal argument also follows a similar logic. Sandals are great for relaxed walks during the summer or perhaps days at the beach or the pool. Crocs are both better suited for walking (again, due to the heel strap) and extremely well designed for water use. The holes in the clogs help with drainage, making them great to wear both in and out of the water. I would also argue that they are ideal for scenarios where one will be in contact with water but still needs to have more athletic footwear, such as canoe trips or days spent at summer camps.

These are certainly not the only two use cases for Crocs, but they are the ones that I believe make the most sense. Speaking from experience, one can run in Crocs (to varying degrees of success), but if one will be doing lots of running, one should probably invest in the shoe that is named after the activity. Similarly, though one could rock climb in Crocs, I would consider this potentially unsafe and urge this person to again consider the shoe that is named after the activity. In fact, I do not believe that Crocs are best suited to replace any one type of shoe but rather exist to fill the gaps in between different types of footwear.

Now, we come to a more interesting question: the intersection of Crocs and fashion. I do not personally believe that Crocs are meant to be particularly fashionable, though this is certainly open for debate. Just look at SZA, Justin Bieber, Ariana Grande, Lil Nas X, Jacob Collier, and others—all people who allegedly have a sense of fashion (or, perhaps more accurately, pay someone to have a sense of fashion for them) and have been spotted wearing the clogs. Furthermore, due to the almost infinite variety of colours and styles that one can choose from, they could be considered easy to consistently pair with several outfits. However, I would hope that most are not thinking of wearing the clogs to a formal event, as I do not believe they are best suited for this. (Though of course I would be remiss not to mention the Crocs x Balenciaga clogs, which can retail for $1,000 and could perhaps be worn on a red carpet due to their luxury status.)

Overall, I do not believe that Crocs should be the only pair of shoes one owns, but I do believe they have certain merits that are worth pointing out. Though these arguments may not be bulletproof, I hope that they provide a Croc-solid foundation for discussing the clogs. ⋆

Wesley Simons '28 is a math major who enjoys listening to music, creating music, reading, and playing Mario Kart Wii. He has been spotted wearing Crocs around Roth, at summer camp, and throughout the Highlander Wilderness Adventure. He is not a Crocs Ambassador, though he would accept the sponsorship to help pay for his tuition.

SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor should be less than 300 words

SUBMIT TO **star@houghton.edu**

Have an opinion you want to share?

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Movie Review

Dead Poets Society

ANJULI SAIKIA '27

Warning: spoilers

"Carpe diem, seize the day, boys. Make your lives extraordinary." - Mr. Keating

This simple yet powerful line captures the heart of *Dead Poets Society*, a film that, several decades after its release, still moves people. Directed by Peter Weir, the 1989 drama stars Robin Williams as the unforgettable English teacher John Keating, exploring the tension between conformity and individuality, fear and courage, tradition and change. More than the story of a group of students attending a rigorous boarding school, *Dead Poets Society* is a meditation on the human spirit's desire to live meaningfully, a theme that resonates with Christian values of purpose and authenticity.

Dead Poets Society centers on a group of boys whose lives are changed by a new English teacher, Mr. Keating. The culture at Welton is dominated by discipline, academic pressure, and parental expectations until Mr. Keating challenges this. Mr. Keating encourages his students to think for themselves, read poetry passionately, and "look at things in a different way." Keating's teachings awaken something that had been suppressed in them by their rigid environment: creativity, curiosity, and the desire to live truly. From this, the students begin to meet in a cave to read poetry and share their dreams, ultimately reviving the secret 'Dead Poets Society.'

During this film, Robin Williams delivers one of his best performances as Mr. Keating, who is a gentle, humorous, and very humane character. Undeniably, Mr. Keating's teaching methods are quite unusual, but his message is certain: life is short, and it is meant to be lived purposefully. He does not tell his students to rebel for rebellion's sake, but rather, to find out who they are and to pursue what is noble, true, and beautiful. It is a call to authenticity that finds its echo in the book of Romans stating, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). In that respect, Mr. Keating's philosophy parallels with the Christian invitation to think deeply, live boldly, and honor the unique gifts that God has given us.

However, the film also recounts the price of living authentically in a world that fears change. One of the most heartbreaking parts of Dead Poets Society is the story of Neil Perry, a bright and passionate student whose dreams conflict with his father's expectations. Neil's tragic decision at the climax of the movie forces both the characters and viewers to confront the consequences of suppression and silence. His death is not glorified but mourned, a reminder of the deep human need for freedom, love, and understanding. For the audience, it is a sobering moment that calls for sympathy and awareness of how easily pressure and fear can destroy a person's sense of hope.

That emotional pain and longing are what give the film its power, and the way it is portrayed on screen makes the story even more affecting. Cinematically, the movie is beautiful. The muted autumn hues of New England, the haunting soundtrack, and the quiet intensity of the performances create a reflective atmosphere. Every frame feels intentional, enhancing the film's emotional depth. As the students in the final scene stand on their desks in defiance and gratitude, calling out "O Captain! My Captain!" to their dismissed teacher, the message of *Dead Poets Society* reaches its peak. This is not simply a gesture of rebellion, but the acknowledgment of truth. They had learned to see the world in a different way and to stand up for what was right, even if it cost them.

Ultimately, *Dead Poets Society* is a film about the sacredness of life, about awakening to the beauty of existence, using our voice, and living courageously in the face of fear. From a Christian perspective, it reminds us that faith and imagination are not opposites but partners. Both call us to see the world not just as it is, but as it could be, to live with conviction, gratitude, joy, and love. ★

Puzzles of the Week

POLISH WORD SEARCH

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