

# Jealousy, murder and elaborate costumes make *Amadeus* a must see production

Michelle Wood  
Pilot staff

Jealousy. Murder. Religion. Beautiful women in fancy clothes. All of these will be on Gardner-Webb's campus next month. No, *Days of Our Lives* is not coming to film an episode on the quad. But there will be a performance of Peter Schaffer's *Amadeus*, a play Keith Cassidy agrees has a little of everything.

The play is about the famous composer Wolfgang

Amadeus Mozart and the less famous Antonio Salieri. The play takes place around the turn of the 18th century, and is a fictional story based on historical facts.

On his deathbed, Mozart accused Salieri of poisoning him. At the time, most people dismissed the claim, thinking that Mozart was delusional from the poison. Later, on his own deathbed, Salieri admitted to the poisoning. Once again, the claim was dismissed as the ravings of an old, delusional

man.

Many years later, Peter Schaffer heard the story and thought, "What if it's true?" He decided to take the facts and build on them, filling in the gaps, and *Amadeus* was born.

Schaffer paints Salieri as a man who loves God and falls in love with music. He makes a deal with God that he will live a life of virtue if God will make him a music star. Things go well for a while. Enter Mozart. In Salieri's eyes, Mozart is the one who is truly blessed. In

fact, Salieri refers to Mozart by his middle name, Amadeus, which means "beloved of God."

Mozart however, is an immoral, selfish, conceited womanizer. Salieri feels betrayed. He cannot reconcile the supposed blessing of Mozart and the apparent lack of blessing for himself. It does not seem fair that a man with no virtue should prosper. Jealousy consumes Salieri and...well, no reason to give away the end.

Student director Kathy Tomlinson describes the play as "outstanding," and says that students can expect elaborate

costumes and wigs, as well as plenty of wonderful music.

Keith Cassidy will be starring as Salieri, as well as directing the play. He says this will be tough, and Tomlinson's help will be invaluable. "I can't view the play as objectively as I would if I weren't in it... She can watch from the audience and give actors, including myself, notes that I am not in a position to see."

Opening night is April 22 and the play runs through April 26. The play starts at 8:00 each night, excluding Sunday, which will be a 2:30 performance.

## Burkett leads discussion of Darwin book

Andy Bailey  
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On March 16, Dr. Barbara Burkett hosted a book discussion of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* as part of the Year of the Scholar (YOTS) 100 Books Discussions.

Burkett started by saying that evolution, to Darwin, was the "mechanism by which species adapt." She went on to describe each chapter individually, critiquing them on their viability.

Burkett said that Chapter 1 starts out with the concept of artificial selection. Darwin mentions common species of pigeons that have separated greatly by human selection. Burkett told the group that Chapter 1 builds the case for Chapter 2 dealing with natural selection. It includes the famous passages about variation and survival of the fittest. It is not, Burkett pointed out, about "nature red in tooth and claw."

Burkett noted that to Darwin, *The Origins of Species* was an abstract of a much larger work, but he wanted to publish a first edition quickly.

Burkett injected that Chapters 9 and 10, which deal with fossils, and Chapter 11

and 12 on geographical distribution were basically correct. She added that many did and still attack fossil records, saying that they are incomplete, and that evolution cannot be proven. She countered this by saying, with the conditions for fossil formation, it's surprising we have as much as we have.

Burkett also reminded everyone that Darwin had people to thank. It was Thomas Malthus' essay on the principle of population that gave him the idea of adaptation. Charles Lyell's work gave him the basis for the time required for evolution.

Burkett mentioned that Chapters 5, 7 and 8 are out of date and used "old" science. Genetics changed the "laws of variation," and new science replaced Darwin's ideas of instinct and hybrids.

Burkett wrapped up by reiterating what she said at the start of the discussion: that Darwin's *The Origins of Species* was "ponderous." She remarked that the main points are good, (where applicable) but that he includes lots of details that bog down the reader. She also said it is very hard to understand (as it was for her) the first, second, and even third time that one reads it.

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