

# BRIGHT LIGHTS BOOMING VOICES

Junior Will Armour leads the group in "Tempted by the Fruit of Another," originally by Squeeze.



DANIEL KOCH | Photographer

## Twisted Measure shines at fall concert and beyond

Meaghan Carey  
Reporter

Dressed in all black, the co-ed a cappella group, Twisted Measure, sang and danced barefoot for its annual Fall Concert Dec. 4-5 in Yeager Recital Hall in front of a packed house of students, family and friends.

The set list was comprised of 12 songs, with an additional encore performance dedicated to alumni in attendance. Performances featured songs by notable artists Amy Winehouse and Taylor Swift, as well as lesser-known artists soulDecision and Robert Randolph.

Both male and female singers from the group provided individual numbers. Juniors Will Armour and Alex Schreiner gave impressive solo performances of "Tempted" by Squeeze and "Break Even" by The Script, respectively. Sophomore Liz Passannante and senior Stephanie Lane also sang impressive renditions of Katy Perry's "Use Your Love" and Leona Lewis' "Run."

"I like the fact that (Twisted Measure) is co-ed," junior Stephanie Oden said.

Junior Leah Hoyland said she admires the group's variety.

"It provides for a big array of sounds," she said.

Oden also praised Twisted Measure for its performance of "popular songs," specifically "Use Somebody" by Kings of Leon.

Oden said the performance showcased not only impressive vocal talent, but also personality and emotion. Those who were not singing a solo provided energy in the background by dancing.

The encore, "Faded" by soulDecision, was a choreographed piece. At one point, some male performers had dance solos that provided comic relief and resulted in laughs rippling throughout the audience.

What makes Twisted Measure unique — besides the fact they are a co-ed group — is their connection and close bond with both current and past Twisted Measure members.

At the beginning of the concert, a Twisted Measure alumnus introduced the group.

"The alumni ensure us that we're moving in the right direction," senior and president Alexa Terry said. "We try to stay true to our roots. We pride ourselves on spending time with each other. The close knit bond — it makes it that much more rewarding."

Passannante said she also appreciates the sense of community the group provides.

"Twisted Measure has been a huge support system for me and has also served as an outlet for me during my time at Elon," Passannante said. "This amazing group has provided me with great friends and brings me so much joy every day."

Besides its fall performance, the group performs several times throughout the year in preparation for bigger shows, as well as to get more exposure.

"We do little gigs," Lane said. "Elonthon, Make-A-Wish concert and Midnight Meals are all events we do. Most of the time we're showcasing new stuff. The fall concert is basically a debut of new songs we have not performed, as well as songs we have performed before."

Twisted Measure has previously been to the SoJam workshop in Durham, N.C., as well to Washington, D.C., for fall break to showcase its talent. The group works together with Twisted Measure alumni to help organize the annual Fall Break trips.

"(Fall break) is a great experience to promote our group," Terry said. "Sometimes we (even) street sing."

Whether on the stage or on the street, the members of the group agree it's necessary to rise to the occasion and put on the best show possible, which means performing with a high level of energy, emotion and personality, as well as enlivening crowds.

"What I tell the group before we go out is never lose the passion for not only music, but for friends and artists that share the love and enjoy what (music) is," Terry said.



DANIEL KOCH | Photographer

Senior Kelly Wardle sang "Wild at Heart" by Glorianna during her last concert with Twisted Measure. Wardle will graduate in December.



DANIEL KOCH | Photographer

Twisted Measure is Elon's co-ed a cappella group. It performed its annual Fall Concert on Oct. 4-5 in Yeager Recital Hall.

### PERFORMANCE REVIEW

★★★★☆

## 'Assassins' acts as 'shooting test' for senior seminar group

Lauren Ramsdell  
Reviewer

What else would one expect from the man behind one of the bloodiest musicals of all time, "Sweeney Todd," than another rollicking good time full of bloodlust and murder? Stephen Sondheim did it again with "Assassins," a controversial musical picked up by the senior music theater majors for one of their seminar pieces.

"Assassins" features all of the major presidential assassins in U. S. history, beginning with John Wilkes Booth up until John Hinkley, attempted assassin of President Ronald Reagan.

Director and senior acting major Sarah Pace had to make the assassins believable characters, which meant drive behind their motives. She did extensive of research into the characters and claims it was some of the hardest work she completed during the production.

She said "Assassins" is possibly Sondheim's most controversial musical. But, "these people need their stories told, too," Pace said.

"Assassins" is set in a kind of alternate-reality carnival, where assassins and attempted assassins throughout the decades are free to mix and mingle and talk to each other about what makes them tick, or rather, what makes them want to shoot a president. Catering to the crowd at this twisted fair is the Proprietor, played with creepy deadpan by senior Paul H. Miller, who offers guns for sale to one and all.

The carnival feel extended outside of the Black Box Theatre, where cotton candy and other carnival goodies were for sale.

"It's a piece of Americana," Pace said. "But a broken America."

In contrast to the dirty and disjointed scenery, members of the ensemble wore muted tones of



LAUREN RAMSDELL | Photographer

The ensemble sings during their performance about how they were all able to save President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

white, representing the true America.

The set, lighting and sound were all spot-on when it came to setting the "creepy carnival" atmosphere. Though the music was pre-recorded, it was never overbearing as some canned music can be. All of the lyrics were heard loud and clear, meshing well with the accompanying background music.

All cast members played their parts well, but the standout was Charles Guiteau, assassin of President James Garfield, played by senior Teddy Scott. Guiteau's character could be manic one moment and deeply depressed the next, and Scott carried his weight without a single slip-up. Scott's performance of the dramatic lead up to the eventual hanging of Guiteau made the audience audibly gasp.

John Wilkes Booth, played by senior Christopher Wood, was the antagonist in the carnival. Sneaking up behind the people who would become assassins,

he would implore them to make something of their lives, to go down in history — to shoot a president.

The voice of reason was the Balladeer, who sang the stories of the assassins as they were introduced. Played by senior Eric Mann, he offered the glimmer of light many of the assassins missed in their own lives. But, as it is well known, history cannot be changed, and even despite the Balladeer's pleading, Booth won over all of the assassins — even a reluctant Lee Harvey Oswald.

"Assassins" could well have been a melodramatic piece, but in typical Sondheim style, bits of dark humor snuck through the solemn nature of the subject. One such scene involves Booth and attempted assassin of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Guiseppe Zangara. Zangara, played by senior Roy San Filippo, had a lifelong stomach ailment that made him a cranky, bitter man.

"Your stomach hurts?" Booth questioned. "Have you tried shooting the president?"

"No," Zangara replied. "Will that help?"

"Well, it can't hurt."

Sophomore acting major Amy McNabb said she enjoyed the experience of seeing "Assassins," and thought the senior class did a great job selecting the piece.

"It really rattles you up," she said.

On each night of the performance, admittance to the show was difficult to obtain, with lines beginning around an hour and a half before doors even opened. Every night, a substantial amount of students were turned away from the door, a testament to how well the senior seminar class did with the piece they chose.

Despite the touchy subject matter involved, "Assassins" and the senior musical theater seminar pulled off with aplomb what most companies would be too afraid to touch.