

>> Dickon encourages Mary to search for the secret garden in "Show Me the Key." Plehal decided to portray Dickon as a ghost although traditionally he is played as living.



> Lily Craven reaches for her husband Archibald in "How Could I Ever Know?" Lily, though dead, still interacted with the living characters throughout the play.



Photos courtesy of Nathan Bowen.



> Archibald Craven embraces Mary Lennox and Colin Craven in the final number. Both Acts I and II ended in large musical numbers that featured almost the whole cast.

cast

Thomas Brigham	Archibald Craven
Abigail Stokley	Mary Lennox
Andrew Collie	Dickon
Rebecca Phillips	Martha
Barret Ambruster	Dr. Neville Craven
Tommy Gillespie	Ben Weatherstaff
Rebekah Rochte	Colin Craven
Bess Kaye	Mrs. Medlock
Melissa Bailey	Mrs. Winthrop
Sarah Black	Lily Craven
Alyssa Shevchuk	Ayah
Greg Genovese	Fakir
Ben McVety	Capt. Albert Lennox
Maurene Comey	Rose Lennox
Carrie Bruner	Alice
Jake Nelson	Major Holmes
Monica Holt	Claire Holmes
Brian Paljug	Lt. Ian Shaw
Zach Armstrong	Lt. Peter Wright
Chris Maggoliolo	Major Shelley
Chelsea Cottle	Mrs. Shelley
Tim Warguleski	William
Tim Koch	Timothy
Katherine Rubida	Jane
Mary Myers	Besty
Kate Hughes	Victoria
J.T. Carter, Ashley	Dreamers
Holcomb, Anna Hunter,	
Caroline Jackson, Kate	
Lee, Lucy Mathias, Ere	
Nelson, Luci Samp	

fresh twist

Sinfonicron Light Opera puts new spin on *The Secret Garden*

While many spent their winter breaks at home, the Sinfonicron Light Opera Company cast, orchestra and crew spent most of their break on campus rehearsing. This year, Sinfonicron performed the classic tale *The Secret Garden*, by Frances Hodgson Burnett (adapted for stage by Lucy Simon and Marsha Norman), but with a new viewpoint.

Director Dan Plehal and the cast spent much of rehearsal time analyzing the script and developing characters. "*The Secret Garden* is a well-known and often-performed show that can be good with a normal amount of effort," senior Plehal said. "But in order to make the show great, it needs to be pushed beyond its normal boundaries and layered with strong choices and conceptualizations." Most of the big decisions made dealt with the interaction between the living in the dead. The line was often blurred, and it became difficult to tell who was alive and who was not.

This interaction especially challenged audience members in scenes such as the Finale of Act I ("Final Storm"). This scene was also tricky to perform for both cast, orchestra, and crew members. "It had a lot going on, many different musical themes overlapping and almost the entire cast on stage, not to mention multiple locations, ghostly apparitions, and a maze," Plehal said. These ghostly apparitions, or "dreamers," flooded the stage with their long cloaks and hauntingly powerful melodies, leaving many audience members with goose bumps. After the performance, audience member freshman Katie Reid recalled the scene as being "awesome to hear and see."

The performance also featured simpler

scenes with less complexities. Archibald Craven and Dr. Neville Craven, played by juniors Thomas Brigham and Barret Ambruster respectively, infused the smaller number "Lily's Eyes" with emotion as they sang of lost love.

Although much of the play intellectually stimulated audience members, numbers such as "If I Had a Fine White Horse" added comic relief to the story. Rebecca Phillips played the character of Martha lightly and humorously. Plehal especially enjoyed this scene. "It gave us the opportunity to push the humor and physical comedy as far as we could," he said.

The performances ran smoothly, except for during the final performance, when the lights went off randomly. It took technicians nearly 15 minutes to find and fix the problem. Freshman Chelsea Marotta, who plays viola in the orchestra, panicked slightly in the pit. "I didn't even realize they were out on stage when they first went off," Marotta said. "I was totally shocked when I realized it wasn't just us!" Fortunately, the show continued smoothly after the problem was discovered and fixed.

Overall, *The Secret Garden* brought new twists to what many considered an already beloved tale. Plehal's directing decisions stimulated audience members to challenge their own beliefs about what happens after death. Plehal asked his audience members to look at life as more than an "all-or-nothing state of being," as a measure of "quantity." As Archibald Craven reminded Mary Lennox, "they're not gone, you see, just dead."

>Gianna Darbin