

INGA SWEARINGEN STAYS IN TUNE WITH STUDENTS AND CAREER

BY SCOTT ROARK

HARMONY CAN BE IN MUSIC OR JUST A WAY OF LIFE.

Inga Swearingen (MU '02) thrives on both, singing her distinctive style of vocal jazz to critical acclaim and international recognition. The San Luis Obispo native has performed multiple times on the live NPR broadcast "A Prairie Home Companion" with Garrison Keillor. She also has performed with internationally known pianist Art Lande and with the Leon Anderson Quartet at Carnegie Hall.

Swearingen discovered her love for singing early on. "I grew up on a street filled with kids, and our favorite pastime was putting on talent shows and musicals," she recalls.

She declared a major in music after arriving at Cal Poly. Swearingen enjoyed the program's balance of teaching and performing. She credits her voice teacher, Jackie Kreitzer, for being a strong influence in starting a performing career and enjoyed "the thrill" of being an assistant conductor for the University Singers with Tom Davies.

Now Swearingen is teaching music at Cuesta College, a few miles down the road from her alma mater. "I've found teaching to be very creative and rewarding, and I'm grateful to have the opportunity to share what I've learned so far," she said.

Swearingen has two self-produced albums under her belt. She is working on her third. The vocalist is constantly blurring the line between genres, drawing inspiration from every group she has been a part of, whether it's vocal jazz or choral music. Other forms of music are waiting to be explored.

"I want to learn how to yodel," Swearingen said with a smile. "No kidding." □

