

THEATER

STAGE NOTES

Otterbein staging clever farce

By Michael Grossberg

Dispatch Theater Critic

How the Other Half Loves, which opens tonight at Otterbein Summer Theatre, is one of British playwright Alan Ayckbourn's most clever of farces.

Three couples — the husbands work at the same office — become romantically entangled at successive dinner parties.

Attempts to hide a fling between one husband and another wife lead to a mounting series of misunderstandings with the innocent third couple.

How the Other Half Loves, which was a London hit in 1970 and a Broadway hit in 1971, has gone on to become one of Ayckbourn's most frequently revived signature works.

Doreen Dunn, who staged the farcical *Noises Off* at Otterbein in 1997, will direct a student cast.

Performances will be at 7:30 tonight, 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday — through July 11 — at the Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., Westerville.

Tickets cost \$14-\$16. Call 614-823-1109.

NAME CHANGE

Grandparents Living Theatre is changing its name to Senior Repertory of Ohio Theatre Company as part of an effort to broaden its focus and visibility.

"Our goal is to enlarge and enhance the theater's position in the community, state, nationally and internationally," said artistic director Nancy Nocks.

The troupe's outreach programs will continue to operate under the name of Grandparents Living Theatre, but the touring com-

pany and home-season productions will be presented under the new name.

The troupe, founded in 1985, performs throughout central Ohio in hospitals, nursing homes, senior centers and preschools. It tours year-round. It is one of two companies selected to represent the United States at the Senior Theatre Festival in Cologne, Germany, where it will perform the final show: *I Was Young, Now I'm Wonderful*. The musical revue about aging was created by former artistic director Joy Reilly, composer-lyricist Bill Benton and composer Gerald Harvey.

For more information, call 614-228-7458.

CATCO GROWS

Contemporary American Theatre Company has hired two staff members to upgrade its marketing department.

Maureen Ryan, who has 14 years of theater experience, will become CATCO's sales manager July 1. She is currently executive secretary of the Ohio Theatre Alliance and directed CATCO's acclaimed productions of *How I Learned To Drive* (1999), *The Gin Game* (1997) and *Scotland Road* (1997).

Deanne Hoover, a 1994 graduate of Ohio University, recently joined the staff as a marketing assistant. She came from Orlando, Fla., where she spent nearly two years working on media relations and communications for the Amateur Athletic Union, a nonprofit sports organization.

Ryan and Hoover will assist Vicky Christian, hired in April as CATCO's first full-time marketing director.

CATCO will launch its 15th sea-

son next month with *Dead Guilty* (July 20-Aug. 28), Richard Harris' psychological thriller about a confused British woman. For more information, call 614-461-0010.

'CHICAGO' POSTPONED

The Broadway Series has postponed its encore tour of *Chicago*, initially announced as a nonsubscription option for October.

The producers of the national tour have had difficulties casting the major roles in the Kander and Ebb musical. The tour is scheduled to reopen with new stars in January.

"We are working with them to reschedule *Chicago* for Columbus as soon as casting is complete and dates become available in 2000," said Laurie Pomerson, Broadway Series manager.

Millennium Season ticket holders will receive full refunds for *Chicago* immediately if they purchased tickets to that show as an option with their season tickets, Pomerson said.

Season subscribers will have "first dibs" on *Chicago* once it's rescheduled, she said.

For more information, call the Broadway Series at 614-224-7654.

'WORTHIES' POSTPONED

Worthington Community Theatre has postponed its 25th anniversary celebration of its seasonal "Worthie" awards to July 17 at the Hearth and Eagle restaurant, 7800 Olentangy River Rd.

Committee heads John Falkenbach and Betty Coulter are arranging the event, which will include past members and Worthie recipients as honored guests.

For more information, call Sue Rapier at 614-485-0556.



Tom Dodge / Dispatch

From left, Mandy Wheeler, Robin Borovic and Geoffrey Martin in Otterbein Summer Theatre's *How the Other Half Loves*

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Ayckbourn farce opens OST season

Otterbein Summer Theatre will open its 33rd season this month with the Alan Ayckbourn farce, "How the Other Half Lives."

Ayckbourn has been hailed as the British equivalent of Neil Simon, in that he is a prolific writer of successful stage comedies.

"How the Other Half Lives" is considered to be one of his best.

The play follows the romantic tangles of three couples who are linked by the husbands, who all work in the same office.

The triangle consists of Frank and Fiona, Bob and Teresa, and Mary and William Detweiler.

Bob and Fiona have a fling. When their spouses get nosy about where they were one night, the guilty lovers fabricate the same explanation: that they were consoling another couple, Mary and William, over the imminent break-up of their marriage.

Teresa and Frank are shocked at the news, and each invite them to dinner on successive nights, hoping to patch up their troubles — which Mary and William know nothing about.

These misunderstandings launch one farcical situation after another.

The show will be performed June 24-27, June 30-July 1 and 3, and July 7-11 at the Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.

Tickets are \$14 for Sunday and Wednesday performances, \$15 for Thursdays, and \$16 for Friday and Saturday nights.

Tickets will be available beginning June 14 at the box office, between noon and 8:30 p.m. except Sundays, noon to 2 p.m.

CURTAIN CALLS

This guide to central Ohio theater is based on recent Dispatch reviews. For show times and dates, see the Theater listings.

The Best of the Best — After five years in and near Downtown, funky, fast-growing Shadowbox Cabaret has hit the big time with its sexy first time at Easton Town Center. Consistently strong singing, satirical acting — and even erotic dancing performed without a hint of the usual parody — lifts this fun-loving celebration to just below the troupe's best variety shows. From Rebecca Gentile's crazed mugging in "Psycho Head in a Box" to Julie Klein and Stacie Boord's amusing failure to communicate in "Copy Shop," many sketches have been polished to meet the troupe's recent higher standards. In the mildest and most touching piece, Bruce Jacklin and Matt Hahn tenderly reprise their dugout roles in *Donkey Baseball*, Don Nigro's short one-act about male bonding, women, sports and God. Profanity and crude subject matter make this show inappropriate for children. **Shadowbox Cabaret.** (Reviewed by Michael Grossberg.)

How the Other Half Loves — A well-paced, well-mounted, crisply staged revival of one of Alan Ayckbourn's early farce about two British couples embroiled in adultery and deception. Director Doreen Dunn deftly balances the ample physical slapstick and verbal fire-

works. All the performers are funny, but Robin Borovic, as Bob's initially confused wife, achieves an emotional depth and intelligence that ground her later scenes in a gripping psychological realism. Only onstage could such a brilliantly theatrical farce come to such madcap life. **Otterbein Summer Theatre.** (M.G.)

Julius Caesar — Despite the surprisingly minimal scenic design and colorless costumes, director Robert Behrens helps a solid ensemble cast make their words count in Shakespeare's drama about Roman history, political intrigue, murder, suicide, omens and portents. John Heisel is convincing, commanding and oblivious in the title role, while Nick Baldasare is heroic and silky as Marc Antony. **Actors' Theatre.** (M.G.)

Murder at Raccoon Lodge — The best-written, best-performed mystery-comedy ever produced by Cloak & Dagger Dinner Theatre. Columbus writers Kim Fleming and Doug Martin have shaped the characters to the troupe's biggest talents, making the whodunit plausible enough to reward amateur sleuths and weave in funny shtick, a la *The Honeymooners* and *Columbo*. Producer-director Bill Saunders' antic pacing and rewrites build upon his clever concept and the enjoyably retro subtext of '50s sitcoms. **Cloak & Dagger Dinner Theatre.** (M.G.)

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369 Otterbein's theater season opens with farce

WESTERVILLE — Otterbein Summer Theatre will open its 33rd season with the hilarious Alan Ayckbourn farce, "How the Other Half Loves" June 24-27, June 30-July 1 and 3 and July 7-11.

All Otterbein Summer Theatre productions are held in the Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., Westerville.

The box office will be open noon-8:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon-2 p.m. on Sunday, beginning Monday. For information, call (614) 823-1209 or (614) 823-1657.

Regular ticket prices are \$14 for Sunday and Wednesday performances; \$15 for and \$16 for Friday and Saturday nights.

This play, a news release states, follows the romantic tangles between three couples of different social strata that are linked by the husbands, who all work in the same office.

Socially, the triangle's pinnacle consists of upper-middle class Frank and Fiona. At the center are Bob and Teresa, firmly in the middle of middle class. At the base of this triangle are Mary and William Detweiler.

Bob and Fiona, both frustrated with their spouses, find each other for a fling. When each of their marital partners gets nosy about where they were the night they stayed out together until dawn, the guilty lovers each happen to fabricate the explanation that they were consoling another couple, Mary and William over the imminent break up of their marriage.

Teresa and Frank shocked at this upsetting news about the Detweilers, impulsively invite them to dinner on successive nights, hoping to patch up their troubles, which Mary and William don't know they have.

Otterbein opens summer season

Otterbein Summer Theatre will open its 33rd season with the Alan Ayckbourn farce, *How the Other Half Loves*, to be performed Thursday through Sunday, next Wednesday, July 1 and July 7-11 at the Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.

Tickets \$14 for Sundays and Wednesdays, \$15 Thursdays and \$16 Fridays and Saturdays.

The box office will be open from noon to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon to 2 p.m. Sunday.

For more information call 823-1209 or 823-1657.

Drawing lessons offered evenings

Ginny Baughman will offer small-group drawing lessons on Tuesday evenings this summer. Time slots available are from 6:30 to 8 p.m. for ages 9-15, 8 to 9 p.m. for adults.

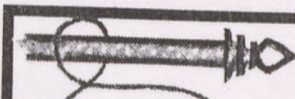
Scheduled topics are: Tuesday, Perspective; July 13, Shading; July 20, Designing Your Drawings; July 27, Figure Drawing; Aug. 3, Portrait Drawing; Aug. 17, Pen and Ink Drawing; Aug. 24, Colored Pencil Drawing.

Cost is \$20 per class or \$55 for any four classes. To register for a class, call Baughman at 891-2145 at least one week in advance.

Baughman also offers classes for children at Inniswood Metro Gardens. Slated is:

■ Nature Art, Tuesday through July 2, 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. for ages 6-8, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for ages 9-12. Cost is \$25.

To register for Inniswood classes, call 895-6216.



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