



Technical director Greg Bell demonstrates how the seance table in the recent Otterbein College production of *Blithe Spirit* seems to jump and flip o

FRED SQU

Making the curtain rise

Theatrical engineer works magic offstage at Otterbein College

By Michael Grossberg
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Whenever an Otterbein College stage brims with scenic wizardry, the magicians most certainly include Greg Bell.

Since 1996, when he left Florida State University to become a professor at Otterbein in Westerville, Bell has served as technical director of the Theatre & Dance Department.

"I'm the person who takes the scene designers' drawings from the printed page to the stage," he said. "As kind of an engineer, carpenter and draftsman, I make sure the scenery and props are built on time and under budget."

He has helped bring to life 59 Otterbein shows, including *Kiss Me Kate*, *West Side Story*, *Noises Off*, *The Secret Garden*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Pinocchio*, *Hay Fever*, *Blood Brothers* and *Oklahoma!* — and, on the summer schedule, *Blithe Spirit*, *More Smoke on the Mountain* and *Art* (opening Thursday).

With Contemporary American The-

"He's a problem solver who likes complicated challenges and loves any sort of scenery that has to move."

DENNIS ROMER
artistic director

atre Company, he has worked on the effects for *Sleuth* and the mechanics for *Having Our Say*.

"I don't throw around this word too often, but he's a genius," said Dennis Romer, artistic director of the Otterbein theater program. "He's a problem solver who likes complicated challenges and loves any sort of scenery that has to move."

"If you go to Greg, he's going to tell you whether something can be done and will always try to deliver the best possible set."

For the supernatural atmosphere of *Blithe Spirit*, the Otterbein Summer

Theatre opener, Bell relied on pneumatic cylinders — "tubes with rods that can push against the floor."

He thus made a seance table bump, shake and tip over.

To avoid visible wires or hoses, he used a model-airplane remote control to operate the cylinders.

His first step in preparing a show is to meet with Rob Johnson of Otterbein or another scenic designer.

"I usually wait until he has an idea, and then he asks me if we can do this," said Bell, 50. "Then we do a little model, drawing or sketches, or get on the computer, to visualize how things will move."

The biggest challenge, he said, is to move scenery "without anybody pushing it."

For the May production of *Kiss Me Kate*, Bell engineered two dressing rooms to roll in and out with the help of hidden cables and electric motors.

"Every piece of scenery that has to move magically involves its own

See **CURTAIN** Page D9

Democracy or bust: Sculptor creates likeness o

PAINTS

AT
OR
PAINT
LE

\$4 OFF
per gallon
with this ad
thru July 2003

NVILLE
437
High

BEXLEY
237-7001
2906 E. Main

DUBLIN
873-2750
7020 St. Rt. 161

*M-F 8-7; Sat. 8-Noon

Ohio Dental Associates
Open 7 days a week

Weekdays
t. & Sun.

Welcome
insurance plans

d Whitening

with this coupon

ENTERTAINMENT & ARTS

'Blithe' should bring good cheer to summer stage at Otterbein

By **JOHN SHERIDAN**

News & Public Opinion Reporter

Books flying off shelves, phonographs playing without prompting, and tables that move by themselves set the ethereal theme of Otterbein Summer Theater's first production *Blithe Spirit*.

"There are seven or eight things happening without people seeing what's happening," said set designer and Otterbein professor Greg Bell, who said this production was particularly challenging, and would be particularly enjoyable for audi-

ences.

The plot centers on uber-sophisticated author Charles Condomine and wife Ruth come have a too close encounter with the realm of the great beyond when medium Madame Arcati invokes the spirit of the intellectuals first wife, Elvira, who doesn't want to leave.

Content to hang around the house, the sensual Elvira plots a lethal reconciliation with poor Charles, but when mistakes occur and it is Ruth who meets her fatal demise and Charles finds himself haunted

by these two very blithe spirits.

Written in 1941, *Blithe* remained the longest-running comedy in British Theatre for three decades. The production features guest equity actor Peggy Cosgrave, who was last seen on the Otterbein Summer Theatre stage in 2002 in the David Lindsay-Abaire comedy, *Fuddy Meers*.

Blithe is directed by Doreen Dunn and runs June 26 to 29 and July 9 to 12.

Among the challenging technical aspects of the show is

See **BLITHE**, Page 30A

Short North's Gallery Hop takes on Bicentennial flair with fireworks

By **BILL MELVILLE**

The Gallery Hop, held on the first Saturday of every

run from 5 p.m. to midnight.

The 15-minute firework display is possible for the Bi-

CREATIVE PAINTS



Benjamin Moore Paints

**GREAT
EXTERIOR
PAINT
SALE**

\$4 OFF
per gallon
with this ad
thru July 2003

Good from 6-13-03 to 7-19-03

WORTHINGTON

888-5386

1042 Proprietors Rd.

BLACKLICK

759-0200

781 Reyn-New Albany Rd.

***CLINTONVILLE**

263-5437

4334 N. High

BEXLEY

237-7001

2906 E. Main

DUBLIN

873-2750

7020 St. Rt. 161

*M-F 8-7; Sat. 8-Noon

*No other coupons valid with this offer.

SEARS / Central Ohio Dental Associates

Family Dentistry - Open 7 days a week

10 - 8 PM Weekdays

11-5 PM Sat. & Sun.

- Courteous staff
- Emergencies welcome
- Accept most insurance plans

Bleaching and Whitening
\$195! with this coupon

Central Ohio Dental
Sears - East
Sears - West
Sears - Tuttle

261-1488
868-0773
274-5738
791-1939

S. Sehgal D.D.S. Inc.

EASTON.

ENTERTAINMENT & ARTS

'Blithe' should bring good cheer to summer stage at Otterbein

By JOHN SHERIDAN

News & Public Opinion Reporter

Books flying off shelves, phonographs playing without prompting, and tables that move by themselves set the ethereal theme of Otterbein Summer Theater's first production *Blithe Spirit*.

"There are seven or eight things happening without people seeing what's happening," said set designer and Otterbein professor Greg Bell, who said this production was particularly challenging, and would be particularly enjoyable for audi-

ences.

The plot centers on uber-sophisticated author Charles Condomine and wife Ruth come have a too close encounter with the realm of the great beyond when medium Madame Arcati invokes the spirit of the intellectuals first wife, Elvira, who doesn't want to leave.

Content to hang around the house, the sensual Elvira plots a lethal reconciliation with poor Charles, but when mistakes occur and it is Ruth who meets her fatal demise and Charles finds himself haunted

by these two very blithe spirits.

Written in 1941, *Blithe* remained the longest-running comedy in British Theatre for three decades. The production features guest equity actor Peggy Cosgrave, who was last seen on the Otterbein Summer Theatre stage in 2002 in the David Lindsay-Abaire comedy, *Fuddy Meers*.

Blithe is directed by Doreen Dunn and runs June 26 to 29 and July 9 to 12.

Among the challenging technical aspects of the show is

See *BLITHE*, Page 30A

Short North's Gallery Hop takes on Bicentennial flair with fireworks

By BILL MELVILLE

Suburban News Reporter

Goodale Park is among the best spots in the Short North to watch the fireworks from Red, White & Boom!

While it will remain so for this year's Boom! on July 3, there will be good views from most places in the Short North, as it has its own set of fireworks at 10 p.m. July 5 during

The Gallery Hop, held on the first Saturday of every month, will still have open art galleries on that night, but the festivities will extend throughout the entire Short North.

"It will be a mini-Boom. We've never had fireworks in the Short North before and it's probably the only time it will get done," said Mary Martineau, director of the Short North Business Association.

The Bicentennial Hop will

run from 5 p.m. to midnight.

The 15-minute firework display is possible for the Bicentennial Hop because of the closure of Interstate 670, which is currently being widened and reconstructed.

With the road closed until October, it creates an isolated place right next to the Short North where fireworks can be launched.

See *GALLERY*, Page 30A

St., home of Sean Embry and Michael
home of John and Bridget Drstvenssek.

News photo by Rosemary Kubera

Bridget Drstvenssek, co-chairwoman of the Haus und Garten Tour, stands in the remodeled kitchen of her Jaeger Street home, which is part of the tour. The tour co-chairman is Drstvenssek's husband, John.

TRY

ARE

l, O.D.

ional

ce

Exams

Designs

stacles

gery

t

ision

Built

1830

State St. N.

Star

Lincoln St.

Behind

Office

1

sterville

GALLERY

Continued from Page 28A

The fireworks will be run by Sunset Fireworks Ltd. of St. Louis, which has run the Red, White & Boom! fireworks since 1989.

Red, White & Bicentennial Boom! will run from 11 a.m. to midnight July 3 in downtown Columbus.

In conjunction with the celebration of Ohio's Bicentennial, event organizers have expanded Boom! to include a number of suburbs as partners and also have made the Gallery Hop and the July 6 U.S. Men's National Soccer Team game events related to Boom!

"With the opportunity to work with the city this year, it seemed like a good chance to do something we couldn't normally do," Martineau said.

To create a block party atmosphere, North High Street

will close between Second Avenue and Poplar Street at 8 a.m. July 5.

At Second Avenue, there will be an entertainment stage which will feature performances throughout the evening.

There also will be street performers throughout the

area.

The areas which hold the monthly Hop will remain open as usual, but for those closer to the Second Avenue stage, where there aren't as many restaurants and bars, there will be beverage trailers and food vendors.

BLITHE

Continued from Page 28A

a jumping table that Bell manipulates with compressed air a model airplane remote control. "There are a lot of special effects in this production," said Bell. "We want the audience to think something magical is happening on stage."

Blithe is the first three summer theater programs. The Otterbein Summer Theatre Box Office and all performances will be located in the Campus Center Theatre,

100 W. Home St., Westerville.

Opening night performances begin at 7:30 p.m., Sunday matinees are at 2 p.m. and all other performances begin at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$16.

Box office hours will be Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and one hour prior to all performances. The box office will be closed on Mondays.

For more information call (614) 823-1109.