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OTTERBEIN SUMMER THEATRE

Coward's 389 'Private Lives'

Otterbein College Theatre opens its 2007 season with a production of the Noel Coward play "Private Lives," directed by Doreen Dunn.

Revived in 2002 by the Royal National Theatre in a production that sparkled on Broadway, Private Lives is one of the most flip-pant plays ever written. Elyot and Amanda, once married and now honeymooning with new spouses at the same hotel, meet by chance, reignite the old spark and impulsively elope. After days of being reunited, they again find their fiery romance alternating between passions of love and anger. Their aggrieved spouses appear and a roundelay of affiliations ensues as the women first stick together, then apart, and new partnerships are formed.

Private Lives runs June 21-24, June 28-30, and July 6-7. The opening night performance begins at 7:30 p.m. June 21 and is followed by a reception. The Sunday matinee begins at 2 p.m. June 24. All shows will be held in the Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., Westerville.

The box office is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and one hour prior to performances. Tickets can be purchased by calling the box office at (614) 823-1109.

The Otterbein Summer Theatre Box Office is located in the lower level of the Campus Center, 100 W. Home St., Westerville. For more information, log on to the Otterbein College Theatre Web site, www.otterbein.edu/theatre.

COWARD

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artificial or stylized.

"The style is very hard for today's audiences because we're not used to seeing that kind of sophistication."

At Otterbein, Dunn has directed three Coward plays: *Blithe Spirit* (2003), *Hay Fever* (2000) and the revue *Oh, Coward!* (1978).

The best Coward, she says, skewers human foibles and approaches romantic farce.

"Coward knocks through the walls of pretense and lets the audience see what's underneath. The characters try to be polite, but underneath they're manipulative and cruel — and that's funny.

"They're being the way we all want to act, if we could get away with it."

mgrossberg@dispatch.com



Coward's best

The British playwright (1888-1973) also acted, directed and composed songs for musicals. Among his greatest plays:

- ▶ *Hay Fever* (1925)
- ▶ *Private Lives* (1930)
- ▶ *Design for Living* (1933)
- ▶ *Blithe Spirit* (1941)