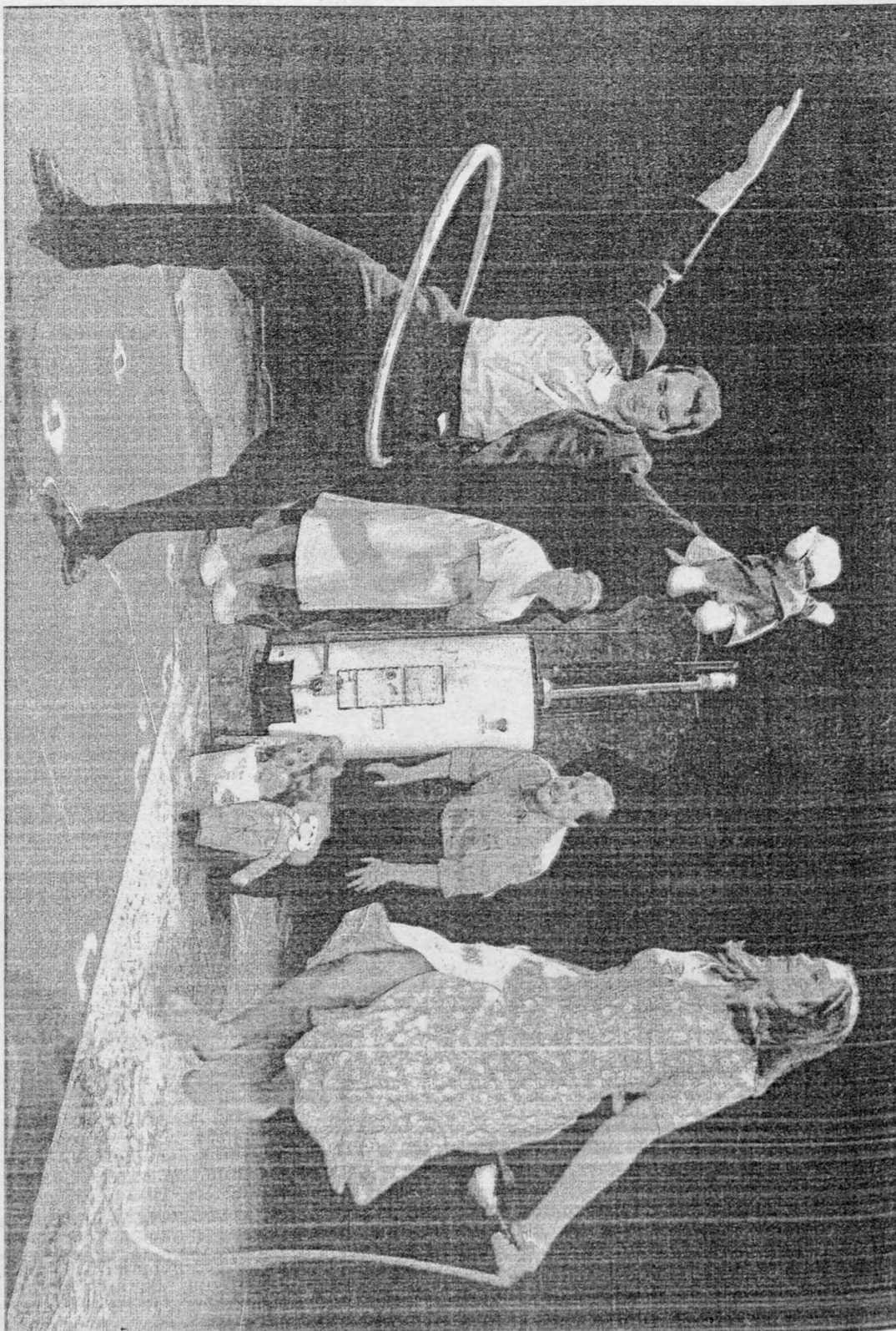


**City as character**  
The new novel by John Jakes, a pro at historical fiction, is out today | D6

# The Arts



Tom Weaver, left, Peggy Cosgrave, Scott Wilson and Audrey Hueckel in Otterbein Summer Theatre's *Fuddy Meers*

FRED SQUILLANTE | DISPATCH

# Memorable amnesia

Playwright's tale of daily forgetfulness grows in popularity

By Michael Groseberg  
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

**M**any writers might find serious drama in the plight of a woman who wakes up every morning remembering nothing about the day before.

But that strange form of amnesia inspired 32-year-old playwright David Lindsay-Abaire to create a poignant comedy: *Fuddy Meers*, which opened Thursday at Otterbein College.

"What an odd thing to experience for this woman to wake up and not know who she is, where she is, or who the man who walks into the room is," Lindsay-Abaire said from New York.

▶ Otterbein Summer Theatre's *Fuddy Meers* continues at 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday in the Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., Westerville. Tickets cost \$16. Call 614-823-1109.

the-wall. I don't start a play thinking what's really funny, but I see the world in a very skewed, absurd way." Inspired by a news report about a woman with a rare type of amnesia, he

See AMNESIA Page D6



Playwright David Lindsay-Abaire

CHRISTOPHER GROSS | SOUTH COAST REPERTORY

"The tone of the play is difficult to characterize: It's a wacky comedy but also a dark mystery, and that's hard to sell."

DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE  
playwright



# Equity actress glad to be part of Otterbein show

"Ee hersh poopos." (He hurts people.)

"An noon onion stammy." (No one understands me.)

"Fuddy meers." (Funny mirrors.)

Whenever Peggy Cosgrave strains to speak in *Fuddy Meers*, Otterbein College audiences strain to understand her while laughing in sympathy.

The guest Equity actress plays Gertie, a recent stroke victim who has developed her own garbled language, in David Lindsay-Abaire's offbeat comedy about a woman suffering from amnesia about the day before.

As the woman's mother, Gertie struggles to help her.

"There's enormous frustration because she's the only one who knows every piece of the puzzle, but she has no ability to express it," Cosgrave said.

Cosgrave, who appeared last summer in Otterbein's *Women Who Steal*, was thrilled to return to play the pivotal supporting role.

"We make the audience laugh, and then we slap them. I love Lindsay-Abaire's bittersweet sensibility about people. He's an inventive writer, and his words are very specific and clever."

To memorize the complex dialogue, she recorded it on a tape recorder, leaving pauses after each sentence so she could repeat them while listening to the tape.

Cosgrave said she found it helpful that Lindsay-Abaire included the actual meaning of Gertie's gibberish in the script.

Cosgrave appears regularly at regional theaters across the country. Since January, she has played roles in Cincinnati, New York City, Rochester, N.Y., and Manalapan, Fla.

"In resident theater, where I make my living, subscribers usually won't support a play this far out."

The 56-year-old actress also said that she was attracted by the college's nurturing atmosphere.

"Otterbein reminds me of how well I was treated as a young student."

Performances continue at 8 tonight through Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday in the Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., Westerville.

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

## Educators' workshop

Contemporary American Theatre Company is gearing up for its first Columbus Young Playwrights Festival next season by presenting a free workshop.

Columbus metropolitan-area educators may attend a Wednesday workshop with discussions by academic experts



Peggy Cosgrave

about techniques and exercises for teaching playwriting to seventh- to 12-grade students.

Carole Close, director of the Cleveland public schools' Center for Conflict Resolution, will demonstrate a model class-

room program to explore biased judgments and how they lead to labeling.

Rebecca Nelson, associate director of Ohio State University's Multicultural Center, will talk about hate crimes in conjunction with *The Laramie Project*, CATCO's season opener (Sept. 17 to Oct. 20).

Karen Sue Jewell, associate OSU professor in the Department of African-American Studies, will discuss black women's history during the civil-rights era in conjunction with CATCO's *Blessed Assurance* (April).

The festival, open to any school in central Ohio, invites students to write a short play about a main character who must choose between respecting his or her identity and being accepted by society. The theme is related to the theater's theme for the season — tolerance, identity and diversity.

Six winning scripts — limited to five characters and running no more than 20 minutes — will be cast and directed by the professional theater company for May performances in the Riffe Center's Studio Two Theatre.

Workshop registration will open at 8:15 a.m. Wednesday, with discussions running from 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the LVC Theatre at Ohio Dominican College's Spangler Library, 1216 Sunbury Rd.

Admission is free but is limited to educators.

For more information, call Education Director Thomas Stephens at 614-461-1382, Ext. 130.

## Worthie awards

Worthington Community Theatre recently chose *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* as its show of the year.

At the "Worthie" awards ceremony honoring the best of the community theater's past season, *Charlie Brown* received 11 awards for acting, direction, choreography, costume design and crew work. *Death of a Salesman* and *I Hate Hamlet* received eight awards each.

Dave Robinson won the Curt Meeks Award.

Michael Grossberg is Dispatch theater critic.

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JUL-31-2002

## Otterbein Summer Theatre ends with a laugh

39 Otterbein College ends its summer season with "Fuddy Meers," a memorable comedy of lost memories. "Fuddy Meers" runs August 1-4 and 8-11.

Imagine waking up every morning without a single memory of the day before! Each morning, Claire is handed a manual of her likes, dislikes, family pictures and instructions of day-to-day living. Claire's daily journey down memory lane is complicated further by a limping, lisping, half-blind, half-deaf man who crawls from under her bed; a dimwitted thug with a foul-mouthed hand puppet who pops up at her window; and a claustrophobic lady-cop that's been kidnapped by her well-meaning husband and rebellious teenage son. This poignant and brutal new comedy traces one woman's attempt to regain her memo-

ry while surrounded by a curio-cabinet of alarmingly bizarre characters.

"Fuddy Meers" was produced by Manhattan Theatre Club in New York City on October 12, 1999. It was subsequently transferred to the Minetta Lane Theatre in New York City, and produced by the Manhattan Theatre Club and Jean Doumanian Productions on January 27, 2000.

The Otterbein Summer theatre production of "Fuddy Meers" features Guest Equity Actress Peggy Cosgrave, who was last seen on the Otterbein Summer Theatre stage in 2001 as Peggy in the Carter Lewis production of "Women Who Steal."

"Fuddy Meers" will run Aug. 1-4 and 8-11 in the Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., Westerville. The performance on Thursday, Aug. 1 begins at 7:30

p.m. and will be followed by a reception. The performances on Sunday, Aug. 4 and Sunday, Aug. 11 begin at 2 p.m. All other performances begin at 8 p.m.

Tickets are \$16. The box office will be open noon-8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and one hour prior to performances. The Otterbein Summer Theatre Box Office is located in the lower level of the Campus Center, 100 W. Home St., Westerville. To order tickets, call (614) 823-1109. For more information about the 2002 Otterbein College Theatre season, call (614) 823-1239. NOTE: This production contains adult language and is not suitable for children.

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JUL-31-2002

## ARTS BRIEFS

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### Otterbein wraps up summer theater

Otterbein College ends its summer theater season with *Fuddy Meers* Thursday through Sunday and Aug. 8-11 in the Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.

The opening night performance begins at 7:30 p.m. and is followed by a reception. Sunday performances begin at 2 p.m., all others at 8 p.m.

Tickets are \$16. The box office will be open noon to 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and one hour prior to performances.