

# Petie Dodrill prepares Otterbein cast for 'Heidi'

Petie Dodrill, director of the Little Theatre at Gahanna's Lincoln High School, is busily preparing "Heidi", her 20th production at the Otterbein College Children's Theatre, to be presented Nov. 18 at 7:30 p.m., Nov. 19 at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., and Nov. 20 at 1:30 p.m. in Cowan Hall.

The cast of "Heidi" includes 15 Columbus-area children and Otterbein College students.

"I especially enjoy working with the combination of children and college students," said Mrs. Dodrill. "They can learn so much from each other."

"The absolute, complete innocence of a child is so essential to the honesty re-

quired in good acting," said Mrs. Dodrill. "The college-age students can learn from the openness of the children who, in turn, can work towards the level of professionalism of the older students."

Mrs. Dodrill is pleased with the group of children in "Heidi." "They are very perceptive, imaginative and quick to learn," she said, pointing out that they only have four weeks of rehearsals. "We rehearse every evening, seven days a week, and the children seem to thrive on it. I'm sure their parents feel different, however," she said.

Mrs. Dodrill is in her 15th year at Lincoln High School where she teaches speech and drama. She has seen her theatre program there grow from her first class of 18 students to over 100 students enrolled in three different drama courses.

"We have a beautiful new theatre, and our production last year of 'Charley's Aunt' did very well in district and state competitions, winning several awards. Many of my students go on and major in drama in college."

One of Mrs. Dodrill's former students, Gary Scott, is now an Otterbein freshman and a member of the "Heidi" cast.

In addition to her work at Lincoln High and at Otterbein, Mrs. Dodrill works with the TAG (talented and gifted students) program in the Gahanna Public School System and each year troupes to the area schools with her productions of fairy tales.

Until recent years, Mrs. Dodrill designed most of the costumes for all the Otterbein College Theatre productions. Her husband, Dr. Charles Dodrill, heads the Otterbein Theatre Dept. They are Westerville residents.

Mrs. Dodrill's interest in the theatre dates back to her own childhood and she holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and theatre from Penn State University and a master's degree in acting and directing from Ohio University.

She met her husband when they were both in the theatre program at Glenville State College in West Virginia. After their marriage, they studied and acted to-

gether at the University of Kansas, coming to Otterbein in 1958.

A love of travel has provided inspiration for Mrs. Dodrill's designs and directing. "It's our favorite thing to do as a family," she said enthusiastically. "In 1971,

we spent six heavenly weeks touring England and Europe. That trip is everybody's favorite memory!" The Dodrills have returned to Europe several times and each trip brings new ideas.

All three Dodrill children had some theatrical exper-

ience at Otterbein while they were growing up. Tracy, now a professional actress-singer in New York City, played a local village child in the first Otterbein production of "Heidi" 13 years ago.

Trish, a junior at Miami

University majoring in business, was the Dormouse in "Alice in Wonderland."

Brad, a graduate student in physics at Ohio State, began and ended his theatrical career as a Munchkin in "The Wizard of Oz."

The children helped their mother visualize what would make good children's theatre when they were young. "They were good gauges," said Mrs. Dodrill. "They helped me see the story through a child's eyes. I remember asking them about Never Never Land when we were doing a production of 'Peter Pan' and they assured me that it had a pink sky and huge flowers."

"That kind of imagination is what makes children so special to work with. If adult actors can hold onto that, it's wonderful."



Three Otterbein theatre students, from left, Mary Beth Robinson, Mike Blankenship, and Carol Giffen, work out the fine points on the upcoming Otterbein College Children's Theatre production of "Heidi," Nov. 18-20 in Cowan Hall. The students are in charge of designing costumes, sets and lighting, respectively. Tickets are available at the Cowan Hall box office, 1-4:30 p.m., weekdays or prior to the performance.



Tirzah Wise, right, is Heidi, and Chris Kayor is Peter in the Otterbein Children's Theatre production of "Heidi." The play is Nov. 18 at 7:30 p.m., Nov. 19 at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., and Nov. 20 at 1:30 p.m.



# 'Heidi' is next production

The sentimental children's favorite "Heidi" is the upcoming production of the Otterbein College Children's Theatre Nov. 18-20, in Cowan Hall on the Otterbein campus.

Performances are set for Nov. 18 at 7:30 p.m., Nov. 19 at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., and Nov. 20 at 1:30 p.m.

"Heidi" will be directed by Pettie Dodrill, who has directed numerous Otterbein Children's Theatre productions in the past, including the 1981 production of "Cinderella." Mrs. Dodrill teaches speech and drama in Gahanna's Lincoln High School and heads the school's Little Theatre program.

"This is the classic story of a little girl who yearns for a home," said Mrs. Dodrill. "It is the kind of story that any young child who has adored a grandparent and who has strong feelings about home will relate to."

"Heidi" will be set in turn-of-the-century Europe, and its elaborate sets will include an Alpine background for Heidi's home in Switzerland and a wealthy Victorian home in Frankfurt to which Heidi is sent against her will.

Otterbein's production of the classic will include a musical score featuring Swiss folk songs and yodelling.

"We have lots of treats in store for a young audience, including some live goats and kittens on stage," said Mrs. Dodrill.

The role of Heidi will be played by Tirzah Wise of Worthington. Christopher Kayor, Mark Fontana, and Nicole Ebert, all from Westerville, will play the roles of Peter, Seppi, and Clara, respectively. In addition, ten others will have roles as village children.

Otterbein theatre students in "Heidi" will include Tim Gregory as the Alm Uncle and Da Huekler as Peter's grandmother. Linda Cole will play Fraulein Rottenmeier, Laura Stitt will play Madam Seseman, and Mr. Seseman will be portrayed by Jim Harlow.

The role of Barbel will be taken by Charlotte Dougherty and hat of Dete by Joanna Fröbian. Gary Scott will play the Minister of Dorfli, M.ry Kuroff will play Brigitta, Jeff Offenberger will play Sebastian, and Linda Peters will play TINETTE.

Tickets to "Heidi" will be available at the Cowan Hall box office beginning Nov. 7, from 1 to 4:30 p.m. weekdays and for one hour preceding each performance at the door.

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## auditions

Auditions for several roles in the Otterbein College Children's Theatre production of "Heidi" will be Monday at 6:30 p.m. in the Battelle Fine Arts Center. Rehearsals will begin immediately for the production set for Nov. 17-20.

Children's roles include Heidi, Peter, Seppi, Clara, and several village children. "Heidi" must look eight years old, have long blonde hair and must be able to sing. Girls ages 8 to 11 may audition for the role of Heidi.

The role of Peter requires a boy who looks 9-10 years old and is able to sing. Boys ages 9-12 may audition. Blonde hair is preferred for the part of Peter.

For Seppi, the role calls for a boy who looks 9-10 years old and sings. Boys ages 9-12 may audition for Seppi.

Girls 9-12 years of age may audition for the role of Clara. They must look 9-11 years old and are not required to sing.

Children ages 8-12 may audition for four to eight roles as village children.

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## 'Heidi'

Chris Kazor, left, is Peter and Tirzah Wise, right, is Heidi in Otterbein Children's Theatre production of "Heidi."



continues now through Sunday in Cowan Hall at Otterbein. Performances are 7:30 p.m. today, 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. tomorrow and 1:30 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are available at the door or by calling 890-3028 between 1 and 4:30 p.m.



# Otterbein staging 'Heidi'

*Heidi*, the story of a homesick little girl, will be staged by the Otterbein College Children's Theatre on Nov. 18-20 in Cowan Hall on the Otterbein campus in Westerville.

*Heidi* will be directed by Petite Dodrill who has directed numerous other Otterbein children's theatre productions, including the 1981 production of *Cinderella*. Dodrill teaches

speech and drama at Gahanna Lincoln High School.

The role of Heidi will be played by Tirzah Wise of Worthington.

Performances are set for 7:30 p.m. Nov. 18, 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Nov. 19 and 1:30 p.m. Nov. 20.

Tickets, \$2, will be available at the Cowan Hall box office.