

Grateful Otterbein alumna returns for summer roles

By **Michael Grossberg**
Dispatch Theater Critic

Mandy Fox appreciates Otterbein College's theater program more now that she has been away for a while.

"It gives me a good touchstone to have been somewhere and come back," said Fox, 23.

The 1993 Otterbein graduate is in her third and final year at the Yale School of Drama.

She recently played Maggie in Otterbein Summer Theatre's acclaimed *Jake's Women* and is co-starring in the musical revue *Closer Than Ever*.

"I can remember being so incredibly stressed-out here in summer theater in years past," she said. "It was near impossible to do the rigorous rehearsals during the day and a different show at night.

"But that's the way it is *all* the time at Yale."

Looking back at her undergraduate years, Fox considers Otterbein's commercial focus a good preparation for actors with professional goals.

She has been catching up at Yale with some of the Western world's most important playwrights, including Ibsen, Chekhov and Strindberg. She recently understudied the role of Sonya in a Yale Rep revival of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*.

Although Fox felt inferior to some of

■ Otterbein Summer Theatre will present *Closer Than Ever* at 8 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday in the Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., Westerville. Tickets cost \$9.50-\$12.50. Call 823-1109.

her classmates in classical-theater training, "in commercial theater, I was way ahead of them."

She credits Otterbein's big-budget spring musicals; the intern program, which often sends students to work at New York casting and publicity agencies; and "the speed of work" during the summer.

Her favorite Otterbein roles: Sister Mary Amnesia, "as stupid as she was," from *Nunsense* and its sequel; the droll Baker's Wife of *Into the Woods*; and Bette in Christopher Durang's *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*.

She also appeared in Contemporary American Theatre Company's A... *My Name Is Still Alice*.

Fox was attracted to Neil Simon's comedy *Jake's Women* because of the chance to play someone who *isn't* the comic relief.

"It was marvelous because I was used to playing Otterbein's quirky, funny character roles," she said. "For me, it's nice to be challenged by some realism. Jake's second wife was career-oriented, earthy, and a leading lady."



Mike Munden / Dispatch

Mandy Fox, right, and pianist David DeVenney in Otterbein Summer Theatre's *Closer Than Ever*

In *Closer Than Ever*, which won an Outer Critics Circle Award for best off-Broadway musical, Fox, Josh Gildrie, Katherine Smart and Ben Sprunger sing David Shire and Richard Maltby Jr. songs about romantic and familial relationships.

The challenge is to *act* each song — not just sing it.

"We're supposed to be different people in each song, but they have similar issues," Fox said. "My character has definitely been around the block. She sings of marriage, of putting kids through college, of bringing boyfriends home (and explaining them to the kids)."

She created her character by studying the lyrics.

To make her character live, she often picks an image from the lyrics — say, a father — and thinks of what her character might want from the image, such as a need to be affirmed.

Fox has performed during Otterbein's summer season twice before.

This year is her first, though, as a guest artist. Her bonus is the chance to perform with Gildrie (Charlemagne in Otterbein's acclaimed *Pippin*), who graduated from Otterbein in May.

The two have been dating for two years.

"There's one song where it comes pretty close to our relationship," Fox said. "It requires less acting but more concentration."

MARION STAR
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PM CIRC. 20,420

JUL -6-95

789 Otterbein to present 'Closer Than Ever'

789 Otterbein Summer Theatre will end its season with 'Closer Than Ever,' a musical revue by David Shire and Richard Maltby Jr., the creators of last year's successful musical, 'Baby.'

'Closer than Ever,' featuring guest actress Mandy Fox, will be performed July 19-23 and July 26-30.

The songs are about love and loss and relationships, about spouses and lovers, parents and children, family and friends.

The most insistent thread of emotion that runs through the show is the realization that

although middle age may be a time of fulfillment in career and family, the yearnings of youth still nag.

It will be performed in the Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., Westerville. The opening night performance begins at 7:30 p.m. and all other evening shows begin at 8 p.m. Sunday matinees are at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$12.50 for Friday and Saturday shows, \$11 for Wednesday and Thursday shows and \$9.50 for Sunday matinees. Reserve tickets by calling the Otterbein Summer Theatre box office at 823-1109.



Otterbein's musical revue

Closer Than Ever will be performed at 8 p.m. today through Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday in the Otterbein College Theatre, 100 W. Home St. Tickets are \$12.50 for Friday and Saturday shows, \$11 for Wednesday and Thursday shows and \$9.50 for Sunday matinees. To reserve tickets call 823-1109. The actors, who take on several roles in the show, include (from left): David De-Venney, Katherine Smart, Ben Sprunger, Mandy Fox and Josh Gildrie.

COLUMBUS DISPATCH
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JUL-16-95

Page 11

1389

THIS WEEK IN THE ARTS

Sophisticated revue. Otterbein Summer Theatre will present *Closer Than Ever*, the off-Broadway revue of David Shire and Richard Maltby Jr. songs about romantic and family relationships, at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 2 p.m. next Sunday — through July 30 — in the Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., Westerville. Tickets cost \$9.50-\$12.50. Call 823-1109.

Lancaster Festival. The annual Lancaster Festival will open Wednesday with concerts and art exhibits in Lancaster, 35 miles southeast of Columbus. The festival, to run through July 29, this year will feature guest artists Dudley Moore, Ben Vereen and Jon Kimura Parker. For more information, call 800-LANFEST.

A dog and his friends. Columbus Junior Theatre's Youth Performance Company will present *Snoopy!*, the one-act musical based on Charles Schulz's *Peanuts* comic strip, at 2 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and 2 and 4 p.m. Saturday and July 26-29 at 504 N. Park St. The show is recommended for all ages. Tickets cost \$7, or \$6 for children, students and senior citizens. Call 224-6672.

Grimm's fairy tale. A Premiere Playhouse's Family Theatre Series will present *Rumpelstiltskin*, com-

poser-lyricist Darryl Bojanowski's one-act musical based on the Grimm's fairy tale, at 10 and 11:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday; and 1:30, 3 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday in NewMarket mall, 1-270 and Sawmill Road. Tickets cost \$3.50. Call 798-8537.

Flash Cadillac at the Pops. Picnic With the Pops will feature Flash Cadillac, the '50s pop-rock group, at 8:15 p.m. Saturday on the Chemical Abstracts Service lawn, 2540 Olentangy River Rd. Gates will open at 5:30 for picnicking. Albert-George Schram will conduct. Musicians and audience will twist to classic rock 'n' roll and are encouraged to "come as you were." Lawn tickets cost \$12 in advance at Big Bear, Big Bear Plus and Harts stores, \$14 through the symphony box office (224-3291) and at the gate.

Light Opera offering. The Columbus Light Opera will present Victor Herbert's classic operetta *Naughty Marietta* at the Roth Resler Theatre, Leo Yassenoff Jewish Community Center, 1125 College Ave. The show will be directed by Roger Stephens and stars Mark Baker, Robert Gutierrez and Carolyn Irvin. Performance times are 8 p.m. Saturday, 2 p.m. next Sunday and 8 p.m. July 26-29. Tickets cost \$16 and \$18. Call 236-6237 9 a.m.-1 p.m. weekdays.



Ben Vereen and Dudley Moore
... appearing at Lancaster Festival

CURTAIN CALLS

This guide to central Ohio theater is based on recent Dispatch reviews. For show times and dates, see the Theater listings on Page 21.

All in the Timing — The year's best comedy so far — actually, six comedies in one — and the funniest play that CATCO has staged in years. Playwright David Ives, whose imagination lies somewhere between Woody Allen and Rod Serling, has conceived a new language of laughter that tweaks the mundane conventions of space and time, but respects the higher realities of life, death, love and hope. Director Jonathan Putnam briskly shapes Ives' intellectual slapsticks. **Contemporary American Theatre Company.** (Reviewed by Michael Grossberg.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream — A pleasing blend of comedy, fantasy and romance. Shakespeare's playful romp through a Greek forest is a perfect choice to baptize Schiller Park's new stage. It doesn't take long to get to the amusing Bottom of this passion- and potion-filled play: John Tener's ability to project the oafish weaver's rustic voice and doltish personality give an antic production even more energy. **Actors' Theatre.** (M.G.)

Closer Than Ever — A Smart, Foxy and well-Dunn finale to **Otterbein Summer Theatre's** fine season. Mandy Fox, Josh Gildrie, Katherine Smart and Ben Sprunger deftly tackle a variety of nameless characters in lyricist Richard Maltby, Jr. and composer David Shire's intelligent and often wise musical revue about issues from young adulthood to late middle age. Doreen Dunn choreographs and directs with understated sophistication and witty nuance. This off-Broadway hit is not recommended for pre-teens because of adult themes and mild profanity. **Otterbein Summer Theatre.** (M.G.)

Naughty Marietta — A wonderfully sung production of Victor Herbert's operetta. The strong voices of Mark Baker as Bras Pique, Carolyn Irvin as Marietta and Roberta Gutierrez as Adah are enhanced by the Light Opera Chorus, well directed by William Boggs. The show is old-fashioned, but well-paced and often funny,

thanks to staging by Roger Stephens. **Columbus Light Opera.** (Reviewed by Barbara Zuck).

The Phantom of the Opera — Thrills, chills, capes and drapes. Andrew Lloyd Webber's pop opera arrives with its shimmering spectacle, archetypal romance, sexuality and beastly beauty intact. As the disfigured genius obsessed with music and a young soprano, Thomas James O'Leary projects mystery, horror and an eerie grandeur. As Christine, Diane Frantantoni fuses her gutsy personality and velvety voice into a soulful radiance. **Broadway Series.** (M.G.)

Pippin — Columbus Junior Theatre's *Pippin* revives the style and many of the pleasures of the 1972 Bob Fosse show in the a cozy setting. The young cast (ages 16 to 21) has magic to do and energy to spare in this sexy, funny version of the life of Charlemagne's son. Mike Kempisty is a winning, befuddled Pippin with Tim Buchholz hard at work as the Leading Player. **Columbus Junior Theatre.** (Reviewed by Nancy Gilson)

SubUrbia — Eric Bogosian's recent off-Broadway hit offers a jagged, rowdy slice of life and death about a group of young adults hanging out somewhere between their fun-loving teen-age years and an uncertain future. Grippingly serious and shockingly hilarious, Contemporary American Theatre's most contemporary play yet isn't for the fainthearted. Director Dennis Romer has cast the nine-member ensemble well with some of the best of central Ohio's newer and younger talents. Strongly recommended for mature audiences. **Contemporary American Theatre Company.** (M.G.)

White Man Dancing — Stephen Metcalfe's recently revised version of his two-act comedy-drama, about a shaky marriage and a firmer friendship, is the funniest and most substantial play in the "4M Project." Director Robert Tolan does a nice job with the script's trickiest aspects: the sudden shifts between present and past conversations, often staged at once. The "guy" scenes are hilarious. **Shadowbox Cabaret.** (M.G.)

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389

THEATER

A Premiere Playhouse, NewMarket mall, I-270 and Sawmill Road — Family Theatre Series: Toad: the Musical, tonight-Saturday, 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays, 1:30, 3, 7:30 p.m. Saturdays, \$3.50; 798-8537.

Columbus Junior Theatre, 504 N. Park St. — Pippin, through July 30; 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays-Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays (7:30 p.m. Sunday), \$8; Snoopy!, 2 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday and July 26-29, \$7, \$6 students and senior citizens; 224-6672.

Contemporary American Theatre Company, 512 N. Park St. — All in the Timing, through Sunday, Aug. 2-6, 16-20; for times and ticket prices, 461-1382.

Imaginating Dramatics Company — Time Treks, 7 tonight, Livingston branch of Columbus Metropolitan Library, 3434 E. Livingston Ave.; Let's Put on a Show!, 4:30 p.m. Friday, Griggs Amphitheatre, 2933 Riverside Dr.; 486-8301 or 486-0594.

Mystery Cafe Dinner Theatre, Jai Lal Prime Rib, 1421 Olentangy River Rd. — Marriage Can Be Murder, show and din-

ner, through Oct. 7; 8 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays; \$29.95; 523-9347.

Ohio Festival Theatre, 79 N. High St., New Albany — Eat on a Hot Tin Roof, Sunday through July 25; \$5, \$3 students and senior citizens; reservations; 268-2671.

Ohio Theatre, 39 E. State St. — The Phantom of the Opera, through Aug. 19, \$17.50/\$67.50; for times, 431-3600.

Otterbein College, Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., Westerville — Closer Than Ever, through Sunday and July 26-30; \$9.50-\$12.50; 823-1109.

Palace Theatre, 276 W. Center St., Marion — Can Can, Friday-Sunday and July 28, 29, \$12/\$8/\$6, \$5 students; 383-2101.

Park Playhouse Teen Theatre — Wheels, 11:30 a.m. today, Whetstone Park of Roses, 3929 N. High St.; 645-7469.

Shadowbox Cabaret, 232 E. Spring St. — White Man Dancing, 8 tonight-Saturday, July 28, 29; \$12, \$6 students and senior citizens; 341-7448.

Weatherlane Playhouse, 100 Price Rd., Newark — Lucky Stiff, 8 p.m. through Saturday; \$10-\$15; 366-4616.

TODAY ON THE TOWN

Editor: Michele Toney/461-5075
Columbus Dispatch 7-21-95

All in the Timing, Contemporary American Theatre Company, 8 p.m., 512 N. Park St. Tickets: \$14-\$25. Call 461-0010.

Clint Black, 7:30 p.m., Polaris Amphitheater, 2200 Polaris Parkway. **Tim McGraw** and **John Berry** will open. Tickets: \$9.50-\$29.50 at the amphitheater box office (noon-6 p.m.) and Ticketmaster outlets (431-3600).

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Ohio Festival Theatre, 8 p.m., outdoor stage at Rts. 161 and 605, New Albany. Tickets: \$5, or \$3 for students and senior citizens. Call 268-2671.

Closer Than Ever, Otterbein Summer Theatre, 8 p.m., Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., Westerville. Tickets: \$9.50-\$12.50. Call 823-1109.

Columbus Jazz & Rib Festival, with Spyro Gyra and Bela Fleck & the Flecktones, noon-midnight, Bicentennial Park and Riverfront Amphitheater. Free. Call 645-3800.

Kinsey Report and **Big Daddy Kinsey**, 9 p.m., Stache's, 2404 N. High St. Tickets: \$12 at Aardvark Video, Monkeys Retreat, Singing Dog Records, Used Kid's Records, Stache's and Ticketmaster outlets (431-3600); \$14 at the door.

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389

THEATER



A Premiere Playhouse, NewMarket
mall, I-270 and Sawmill Road — **Act II**
Series: Dinner theatre: *Brewster's Mil-*
lions, Thursday-next Sunday and Aug.
10-13, 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2
p.m. Sundays; dinner at 6:30 p.m.,
\$23-\$25, \$8-\$10 show only; 798-8537.

Actors' Theatre Company — *The King and I*; 7:30
p.m. Thursday; 8 p.m. Friday, Saturday, Aug. 9-12,
16-19, 23-26; \$5, \$2 12 years old and younger;
Schiller Park outdoor amphitheater; bring blankets
or lawn chairs; 444-6888.

Columbus Junior Theatre, 504 N. Park St. — *Pip-*
pin, 2 today, \$7, \$6 students and senior citizens;
224-6672.

Contemporary American Theatre Company, 512 N.
Park St. — *All in the Timing*, Wednesday-next Sun-
day and Aug. 16-20; *SubUrbia*, tonight and Aug. 9-
13, 23-27; for times and ticket prices, 461-1382.

Imaginating Dramatics Company — *Time Treks*,
10:30 p.m. Wednesday, Hilltop Library, 2955 W.
Broad St.; 2 p.m. Thursday, Northside Library, 1423
N. High St.; 486-8301 or 486-0594.

Mystery Cafe Dinner Theatre, Jai Lai Restaurant,
1421 Olentangy River Rd. — *Marriage Can Be Mur-*
der, show and dinner, through Oct. 7; 8 p.m. Fri-
days, Saturdays; \$29.95; 523-9347.

Ohio Theatre, 39 E. State St. — *The Phantom of*
the Opera, through Aug. 19, \$17.50/\$67.50; for
times, 431-3600.

Otterbein College, Campus Center Theatre, 100 W.
Home St., Westerville — *Closer Than Ever*, 8 to-
night; \$9.50-\$12.50; 823-1109.

Reality Theatre, 736 N. Pearl St. — *Jeffrey*, 8 p.m.
Thursday-Saturday, Aug. 9-12 and 16-19, \$14, \$8
senior citizens; 294-7541.

UpStage Productions — *Just-So Stories*, Friday,
Saturday, Aug. 11, 12, 18, 19; Obetz Community
Center, 1611 S. Chillicothe St., Obetz; \$5, \$4 senior
citizens and children; 262-5558.

Weathervane Playhouse, 100 Price Rd., Newark,
Ohio — *Dracula*, 8 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday, \$10-
\$15; 366-4616.

TONY ON THE TOWN

Closer Than Ever, Otterbein Summer Theatre, 8 p.m., Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., Westerville. Tickets: \$9.50-\$12.50. Call 823-1109.

Fiddler on the Roof, Summer Movie Series, 2 and 7:30 p.m., Palace Theatre, 34 W. Broad St. Tickets: \$3, or \$2.50 for senior citizens, at the door.

Bruce Hampton & the Fiji Mariners, doors open at 8 p.m., Chelsie's, 980 N. High St. Admission: \$5.

The Imaginary Circus, A Premiere Playhouse, 1:30, 3 and 7:30 p.m., NewMarket mall, I-270 and Sawmill Road. Tickets: \$3.50. Call 798-8537.

James Carter Quintet, 7:30 and 9:30 p.m., Wexner Center for the Arts, N. High Street at W. 15th Avenue. Tickets: \$14, or \$10.50 for Wexner Center members, at the center box office and Ticketmaster outlets (431-3600).

Jeffrey, Reality Theatre, 8 p.m., 736 N. Pearl St. Tickets: \$14, or \$8 for people with disabilities and senior citizens. Call 294-7541.

Marriage Can Be Murder, Mystery Cafe Dinner Theatre, 8 p.m. (doors open at 7:15), Jai Lai restaurant, 1421 Olentangy River Rd. Tickets: \$29.95. Call 523-9347.

A Midsummer Night's Dream, Actors' Theatre, 8 p.m., Schiller Park amphitheater, German Village. Free. Call 444-6888.

Naughty Marietta, Columbus Light Opera, 8 p.m., Leo Yassenoff Jewish Community Center's Roth/Resler Theatre, 1125 College Ave. Tickets: \$18. Call 236-6237.

The Phantom of the Opera, Broadway Series, 2 and 8 p.m., Ohio Theatre, 39 E. State St. Tickets: \$17.50-\$67.50 at Ticketmaster outlets (431-3600).

Picnic With the Pops, Columbus Symphony Orchestra with the Ohio State University Marching Band, 8:15 p.m. (gates open at 5:30), lawn of Chemical Abstracts Service, 2540 Olentangy River Rd. Tickets: \$12 at Big Bear and Harts stores, \$14 through the symphony box office (224-3291) and at the gate.

Pippin, Columbus Junior Theatre, 7:30 p.m., 504 N. Park St. Tickets: \$8, or \$7 for children, students and senior citizens. Call 224-6672.

Snoopy! Columbus Junior Theatre, 2 and 4 p.m., 504 N. Park St. Tickets: \$7, or \$6 for children, students and senior citizens. Call 224-6672.

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TODAY ON THE TOWN

Closer Than Ever, Otterbein Summer Theatre, 8 p.m., Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., Westerville. Tickets: \$9.50-\$12.50. Call 823-1109.

Dave Hole, 9 p.m., Stache's, 2404 N. High St. **Mighty R and the Velvet Kingsnakes** will open. Tickets: \$12 at Aardvark Video, Monkeys Retreat, Singing Dog Records, Used Kid's Records, Stache's and Ticketmaster outlets (431-3600); \$14 at the door.

Little Women, Summer Movie Series, 1 and 2, 7:30 p.m., Palace Theatre, 34 W. Broad St. Tickets: \$3, or \$2.50 for senior citizens, at the door.

A Midsummer Night's Dream, Actors' Theatre, 8 p.m., Schiller Park amphitheater,

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THEATER

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Reality Theatre, 736 N. Pearl St. — *Jeffrey*, 7:30 tonight, 8 p.m. Friday, Saturday, Aug. 3-5, 9-12 and 16-19, \$14, \$8 senior citizens; 294-7541.

Shadowbox Cabaret, 232 E. Spring St. — *White Man Dancing*, 8 p.m. Friday, Saturday; \$12, \$6 students and senior citizens; 341-7448.

Weathervane Playhouse, 100 Price Rd., Newark — *Dracula*, 8 tonight-Saturday and Aug. 2-5; \$10-\$15; 366-4616.

The
other
paper
July
20-26,
1995

Closer Than Ever—David Shire and
Richard Maltby Jr.'s musical revue, present-
ed by Otterbein Summer Theatre, 8 pm, Ot-
terbein College, Campus Center Theatre,
100 W Home St, Westerville. Tickets \$11.
Thru 7/30. 823-1109.