

# Actors study British accents for 'Absurd'

The accent is on the English social structure in the upcoming Otterbein College Theatre production of Alan Ayckbourn's comedy, "Absurd Person Singular," Oct. 21-24 at 8:15 p.m. in Cowan Hall.

To insure that the American cast members have the proper British accents, Otterbein theatre faculty member Joseph Proctor has been working with the students as dialect coach.

"None of the students have had dialect training before," says Proctor. "But they all have a good sensibility for accents."

The six characters in the play—three married couples—are on various rungs of the social ladder.

"Since the couple in the first act are ascending the social ladder and trying to overcome their background, they will speak with a hint of a central London dialect," says Proctor. "The other two couples will have a standard middle class accent with different character voices."

According to Proctor, three major approaches are used in dialect coaching.

Words are spelled out in the symbols of the international phonetic alphabet to help sound them out. Then students listen to cassette recordings of actual Britons speaking and of stage actors using a British accent.

A third approach involves feeling the physical placement of the sound in the mouth and throat.

Proctor points out that stage accents are seldom exact replications of real accents. "Instead we pull out some of the central sounds of the dialect to give the speech flavor."

The mastery of an accent other than one's own is very difficult according to Proctor. "There are so many things to think about when an actor is on stage. Stage action and attention to the other actors are really more important than a dialect. But, as an actor becomes more comfortable in a role, the dialect comes along."

Proctor, who joined the Otterbein faculty this September, received his Master of Fine Arts degree from Brandeis University and has

trained as an actor at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. He has acted professionally with resident companies in New England and taught voice and directing at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale for five years.

In addition to serving as dialect coach for "Absurd Person Singular," Proctor will direct the season's productions of "Twelfth Night" and "Tribute."

Tickets are available at the Cowan Hall box office 1 to 4:30 p.m. weekdays.



Brent Erdy and Cheryl Newcomb are Ronald and Marian Brewster-Wright, one of three English couples in "Absurd Person Singular," the opening production of the 1981-82 Otterbein College Theatre season, Oct. 21-24 at 8:15 p.m. in Cowan Hall.



OCTOBER 8, 1981

# Ayckbourn comedy opens season

The activities of three married couples as they ascend and descend the social ladder are chronicled in "Absurd Person Singular," the opening production of the Otterbein College Theatre's 1981-82 season.

Written by Alan Ayckbourn, the play follows the couples as each takes a turn hosting successive Christmas Eve parties. Dr. Charles Dodrill will direct the Otterbein production, which will be performed in Cowan Hall Oct. 21-24 at 8:15 p.m.

"Absurd Person Singular" first opened in 1973 in London, where it played for 18 months and received the London Evening Standard's award as "Best Comedy of the Year." Its American premier was at the Kennedy Center, and the play ran for 74 weeks on Broadway.

"This play is one of Ayckbourn's best scripts," said Dr. Dodrill. "It deals with true-to-life but comic

aspects of marriage and society."

The three couples portrayed in the play are Sidney and Jane Hopcroft, a socially ambitious businessman and his shy, compulsively neat wife; Geoffrey and Eva Jackson, a failing and philandering architect and his suicidal wife; and Ronald and Marian Brewster-Wright, a rich, socially established banker and his heavy-drinking snob of a wife.

The three acts of the play take place in three different kitchens which represent the different personalities and positions of the couples.

Dr. Dodrill said the play is not often produced because of the difficulty of the sets. "Fred Thayer, our designer, is finding it challenging to get cabinets and such for all the kitchens," he said.

A newcomer to the Otterbein theatre staff, Joe Proctor, will serve as dialogue

coach for the play. "He will help the actors with a range of British accents from middle to upper class," said Dr. Dodrill.

The cast for "Absurd Person Singular" will consist of Laura Rudy and Tod Wilson as Jane and Sidney

Hopcroft; Cheryl Newcomb and Brent Erdy as Marian and Ronald Brewster-Wright, and Susan Diol and Roger Tackette as Eva and Geoffrey Jackson.

Tickets to the play are available at the Cowan Hall box office.





# ENTERTAINMENT



## Otterbein opens season

Brent Erdy and Cheryl Newcomb portray Ronald and Marian Brewster-Wright, one of three couples dissected in Alan Ayckbourn's *Absurd Person Singular*. The British comedy exploration of marriage and status-seeking will open the Otterbein College Theatre season Wednesday. Performances at 8:15 p.m. in Cowan Hall continue through Saturday. Charles Dodrill directs.

*C.D.*  
**OTTERBEIN COLLEGE THEATRE**

presents

**ABSURD PERSON  
SINGULAR**

*It doesn't hurt to laugh!*

8:15 p.m.

COWAN HALL

**OCTOBER 21-24 (WED.-SAT.)**

Special Wed. Price—\$2.00

Thurs. thru Sat.—\$3.00

**SEASON TICKETS AVAILABLE**

**\$9.50 (Wed.)**

**\$13.50 (Thurs.-Sat.)**

**Cowan Box Office 1-4:30 p.m. weekdays**

**890-3028**





## 'Absurd Person Singular'

Marriage gets realistic yet humorous treatment in *Absurd Person Singular*, the opening production of the 1981-82 Otterbein College Theatre season. Cheryl Newcomb, left, and Laura Rudy, right, portray the wives of two of the three couples whose trips up and down the social ladder are the subject of the farcical comedy written by Alan Ayckbourn. Dr. Charles Dodrill will direct the play, to be presented Oct. 21-24 at 8:15 p.m. in Cowan Hall on the Otterbein campus.

P.O. 15<sup>th</sup>, Oct.



## *Host party.*

Tod Wilson, left, and Laura Rudy portray one of three couples who host parties on three consecutive Christmas Eves in the Otterbein College Theatre production of British playwright Alan Ayckbourn's "Absurd Person Singular" through Saturday in Cowan Hall at 8:15 p.m. Tickets are available at the Cowan Hall box office 1-4:30 p.m. weekdays.