

To Feature Guest Professional Actress

"Ladyhouse Blues" A Bittersweet Tune of Life

Otterbein College Theatre will serve up "a slice of life" when it offers local audiences their first taste of "Ladyhouse Blues," February 6-9. According to director Ed Vaughan, the Kevin Morrison play, set in 1919 St. Louis, offers an honest viewpoint; as valid today as ever. "This is a naturalistic play," he said, "that takes a look at the family structure in post World War I grassroots America, with so many households having been without their men, and now all eagerly awaiting the return of husbands, fathers, and brothers.

"The whole cast consists of only five women: a young, earthy, widowed mother from the hills, and her four daughters," Vaughan explained, "She is desperately trying to keep her family together and hang on to their old ways, in spite of changing times." Street vendors still sing out about their melons and fresh fish in the production, refrigeration still comes from the iceman, and this family chooses to continue using oil lamps and gas for cooking. But throughout the play

audiences are given hints of the new America coming. Houses are switching on to electricity, the labor movement is rising, and women are beginning to assert their independence.

"Ladyhouse Blues" is set in an especially scorching St. Louis summer hot spell, exploring both the social and psychological state of women during the period, the resulting painful solitude imposed, the coming together of a family, and the impending change of life's ways.

Just scraping by with the help of two teenage waitress-daughters, both on the verge of leaving home (the younger to elope to California, and the older to serve as an advocate of working women) is Liz Madden, the uneducated and stubborn protective matriarch of her disintegrating family. Visiting are two older daughters: Helen, who is dying of tuberculosis and has been forced to leave her German husband and their son back in Arkansas to save them from the contagious disease; and insecure, pretty, and pregnant Dot, wife of a New York socialite who has begun to look down on her.

As this issue goes to press, the theatre department is in negotiations with a guest professional actress to play the role of the mother.

Each of the daughters' choices collides with Liz's expectations. But despite their individual interests, each is wedded to the "ladyhouse," one of a number of St. Louis homes made temporarily manless by the war. The ladyhouse has become a homestead, a bulwark.

"The realness of the play, with the

actresses busily baking cornbread, washing laundry, lighting kerosene lamps and wilting in the stifling heat, blends with a very impressionistic set by guest designer David Hammond," explained director Vaughan, who feels that blend is a particularly interesting and satisfying aspect of Otterbein's production. He added that the set extends a full eight feet over the edge of the stage, bringing much of the action right into the audience.

Less than 10 years old, "Ladyhouse Blues" grew out of the 1976 National Playwrights Conference in Waterford, Connecticut. First presented in a staged reading at the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theater Center, the play opened for a limited engagement at the Phoenix Theatre in New York in 1976, winning actress Jo Henderson an Obie award for her performance as the mother.

Otterbein Technical Director-Lighting Director Robert Fox will oversee technical direction for this production, with Otterbein Costume Designer Lucy Lee Reuther charged with costuming the women in their simple "farm woman" versions of the period dress. David Hammond has designed the lighting.

The comic drama will be presented at 8:15 p.m. for three consecutive nights: Thurs., Feb. 6 through Sat., Feb. 8. A Sunday matinee will also be offered at 2:00 p.m. on Feb. 9. Tickets for "Ladyhouse Blues" go on sale at the Cowan Hall box office (890-3028) beginning January 23. Box office hours are 1 - 4:30 p.m., and Saturdays of performance weeks. Mail orders are processed in advance of counter sales.



Director Ed Vaughan (left) and guest set designer David Hammond discuss plans for the set of "Ladyhouse Blues."

Betty Miller is Liz in 'Ladyhouse'

Betty Miller will portray Liz Madden in the Otterbein guest artist production of Kevin O'Morrison's "Ladyhouse Blues," tonight through Saturday at 8:15 p.m., and a 2 p.m. Sunday matinee in Cowan Hall.

Once in a while, New York-based actress Betty Miller wishes she had invented a glamorous stage name to use in her career. Usually though, the veteran of Broadway, off-Broadway, television and regional theatre is too busy acting to think about using anything other than the name her parents gave her.

The actress is currently in town helping Otterbein College Theatre celebrate the silver anniversary of its guest artist program.

Otterbein was fortunate to catch up with Betty Miller in her home in Greenwich Village, N.Y. Most recently she spent nine weeks with the Seattle Repertory Company playing the lead of Kate Kellar in "All My Sons."

Next for the actress, following 'Ladyhouse,' is "a small film" called "Dottie." Ms. Miller will make the film with Elizabeth Franz. "We begin shooting my scenes in mid-February," she said, "on location at a big old house in the Pennsylvania countryside."

A favorite project for Ms. Miller was "You Can't Take It With You." She appeared in two different Broadway productions, with Colleen Dewhurst, Jason Robards, and later Eddie Albert.

Although she loves live theatre, the film she made will always stand out in her mind. "I never cried so many tears as in 'The Pope of Greenwich Village. Director Stuart Rosenberg kept telling me he could help me out with my tears if I

needed them, but I was determined to make my own. And I did," she recalled.

ON BROADWAY. Ms. Miller appeared in "The Queen and the Rebels," with Colleen Dewhurst, and "A Touch of the Poet," with Jason Robards, directed by Jose Quintero, who also directed Ms. Miller in seven productions at the Circle in the Square.

She received an Obie award for her performance in James Joyce's "Exiles" at the St. Mark's Theatre in New York.

She has many New York credits, has been with the New York Shakespeare Festival, had four seasons with the APA Phoenix Repertory Company, and appearances in "Before the Dawn" at the American Place Theatre and "Eminent Domain" at Circle in the Square.

She was also seen as Lady MacDuff at the Cambridge Drama Festival and was directed by Douglas Hughes in Edward Bond's "Summer" at the Manhattan Theatre Club.

She appeared in several different productions of Peter Schaffer's, "Equus," performing in regional productions in Florida, Los Angeles, and Chicago, working with Brian Bedford, Brian Murray, and Ken Howard.

She toured with the national company of "Deathtrap," with Brian Bedford, and toured in "The Price" with Joseph Buloff.

At the Guthrie Theater she appeared in "Eve of Retirement," directed by Liviu Ciulei. Last summer the actress worked with Robert Redford's Sundance Institute.

"This is really the first time in my career that I have worked with college students. It's extremely fascinating," she smiled, "but also a little frustrating not to have more time to prepare." Ms. Miller arrived in the Columbus area Jan. 20, just a little more than two weeks before the opening of "Ladyhouse Blues."

She is excited about her role in "Ladyhouse Blues," although the "mountain" flavor of the dialogue is somewhat of a departure for Ms. Miller, who seems to have made a habit of playing genteel, educated, upper-middle-class matriarchs. To help her prepare the proper phrasing and distinctive flavor of the part, she rented the classic film, "The Grapes of Wrath," before coming to Ohio. "I felt Jane Darwell's role of the mother was similar to the role I would be playing at Otterbein, in its lack of education and sophistication," she said.



Betty Miller

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Actress comes to Otterbein to star in 'Ladyhouse Blues'

Once in a while, New York-based actress Betty Miller wishes she had invented a glamorous stage name to use in her career. Usually though, the veteran of Broadway, Off-Broadway, television and regional theatre is too busy acting to think about using anything other than the name her parents gave her.

The actress — that's right, her real name is Betty Miller — is currently in town helping Otterbein College Theatre celebrate a banner year — the silver anniversary of its guest artist program. The visiting actress will play the leading role of Liz Madden in the school's upcoming production of Kevin O'Morrison's "Ladyhouse Blues," opening tonight at 8:15 in Otterbein Cowan Hall.

Otterbein was fortunate to catch up with the Colleen Dewhurst look-alike back home in Greenwich Village, New York. Most recently she spent nine weeks on the West Coast with the Seattle Repertory Company playing the lead of Kate Kellar in "All My Sons," until the play closed Dec. 28.

Next on tap for the actress after the Otterbein play closes, is "a small film" called "Dottie," which Miller will be making with fellow New York actress Elizabeth Franz. "We begin shooting my scenes in mid-February," she said, "on location at a big old house in the Pennsylvania countryside."

Hard-pressed to name one favorite project over the years, Miller cited "You Can't Take It With You," in which she appeared in two different Broadway productions, with Colleen Dewhurst, Jason Robards, and later Eddie Albert.

Although she loves live theatre, the film she made will always stand out in her mind. "I never cried so many tears as in 'The Pope of Greenwich Village,'" she reminisced. "Director Stuart Rosenberg kept telling me he could help me out with artificial tears if I needed them, but I was determined to make my own. And I did."

On Broadway, Miller appeared in such plays as "The Queen and the Rebels," with Colleen Dewhurst, and "A Touch of the Poet," with Jason Robards, directed by Jose Quintero, who also directed Miller in

seven productions at the Circle in the Square. She received an Obie award for her performance in James Joyce's "Exiles" at the St. Mark's Theatre in New York.

She enjoys appearing in several different productions of the same play, as was the case with Peter Schaffer's "Equus," in which the actress performed in regional productions in Florida, Los Angeles, and Chicago, working with Brian Bedford, Brian Murray, and Ken Howard. She toured with the national company of "Deathtrap," working again with Brian Bedford, and toured in "The Price" with Joseph Buloff. At the Guthrie Theater she appeared in "Eve of Retirement," directed by Liviu Ciulei. Last summer the actress worked with Robert Redford's Sundance Institute.

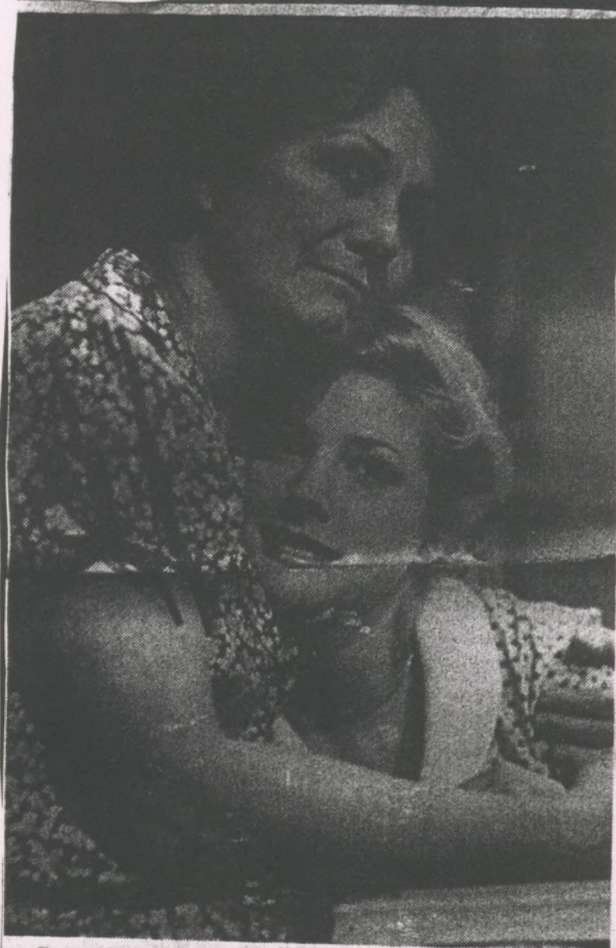
"This is really the first time in my career that I have worked with college students. It's extremely fascinating," she said, "but also a little frustrating not to have more time to prepare." Miller arrived in the Columbus area on Jan. 20, just a little more than two weeks before the Feb. 6-9 weekend run of Otterbein's "Ladyhouse Blues." With 3-4 hour nightly rehearsals at the College, this schedule is a far cry from the usual four weeks of full-day rehearsals called for in most of her contracts. She is not overly concerned though, because she's "so impressed with the caliber of students and how prepared they are." The Otterbein cast was in rehearsal together for two weeks prior to the guest actress's arrival.

She is excited about her role in "Ladyhouse Blues," although the "mountain" flavor of the dialogue is somewhat of a departure for Miller, who seems to have made a habit of playing genteel, educated, upper-middle-class matriarchs. To help her prepare the proper phrasing and distinctive flavor the part, she rented the classic film, "The Grapes of Wrath," before coming to Ohio. "I felt Jane Darwell's role of the mother was similar to the role I would be playing at Otterbein, in its lack of education and sophistication," she said.

Although Betty Miller wants audiences to remember her as "warm

and appealing" in "Ladyhouse Blues," the versatile actress may already be remembered by some as another not-so-warm long lost mother who got stabbed in the back two years ago in the popular daytime drama, "Another World."

Performances of "Ladyhouse Blues" are set for 8:15 tonight through Saturday with a special matinee performance on Sunday, at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are available at the Cowan Hall box office (890-3028) weekdays (and Saturday) from 1-4:30 p.m.



Betty Miller, in the leading role of Liz Madden, dreams for better days with her daughter Dot, played by junior Liana Peters, in "Ladyhouse Blues."

'Ladyhouse Blues' opens at Otterbein

"Ladyhouse Blues," Kevin O'Morrison's bittersweet story of a family in 1919 St. Louis, left temporarily manless by World War I, opens next Thursday through Feb. 8 at 8:15 p.m., with a 2 p.m. matinee Feb. 9 in Cowan Hall.

Five women, a widowed mother and her four daughters, carry the play that pivots around the return of the one man in their lives—a Navy son and brother—due back from Europe any moment.

A special guest professional actress, Betty Miller, of New York City, will play the lead role of the mother. It was for this role that actress Jo Henderson won an Obie award in 1977 for her performance at the Phoenix Theatre in New York.

Junior Catherine Randazzo, a junior, is the understudy for the lead role of the mother, Liz Madden, a proud, feisty matriarch used to hardship, but now struggling against the times to keep her daughters on an even moral keel.

Each of the daughters is on the brink of a major change in her life. Helen, the oldest, who will be played by Otterbein junior Nancy Fox, is a ravaged beauty who has come home to die of tuberculosis, cast away by a "foreigner" husband, who wants to protect himself and their small son from the disease.

Junior Liana Peters is Dot, a former model, beautiful but also very insecure. She is married to a New York socialite, now pregnant with their second child, and home for a "visit." Contemplating divorce from the uppity husband who has grown tired of her, Dot is turning more and more to the bottle she keeps hidden in her bedroom.

Terry, a waitress, played by junior Gina Grogg, and banner carrier for labor and feminism, she shocks her mother by announcing that she has been elected to travel to Washington to speak for women's rights.

Eylie, the spunky youngest daughter, is played by freshman Cathy Collins. A local waitress, she is itching to escape the confines of the ladyhouse by eloping to California with her Greek boyfriend.

Director Ed Vaughan, assistant professor of theatre, calling the production a "slice of life" play, says its lessons are as valid today as ever. "It is a story of a stubborn mother from the hills desperately trying to keep her family together," he explained, "and hang on to their old ways, in spite of changing times." Vaughan promises an exciting realism to the Otterbein production.

The actresses will be washing laundry, lighting kerosene lamps and wilting in the stifling heat, but throughout the play, audiences are given hints of the new America coming. Houses are switching on to electricity, the labor movement is rising, and women are beginning to assert their independence.

Guest set designer is David Hammond, Director of Theatre at Upper Arlington High School, who has designed a "very impressionistic set," according to Vaughan. The set extends a full eight feet over the edge of the stage, bringing much of the action right into the audience.

Otterbein Technical Director-Lighting Director Robert Fox will oversee technical direction for this production, with Otterbein Costume Designer Lucy Lee Reuther charged with costuming the women in their simple "farm woman" versions of the period dress.

David Hammond has designed the lighting.

Junior Todd Freeman is stage manager, assisted by Chris Cox, also an Otterbein junior.

Tickets for "Ladyhouse Blues" are on sale at the Cowan Hall box office, 1-4:30 p.m. weekdays, and 1-4:30 p.m. Feb. 8. Mail orders are processed in advance of counter sales.

Guest actress Miller veteran of stage, screen and soap

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January 30, 1986.

Otterbein College Theatre is celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary with next weekend's of "Ladyhouse Blues" by Kevin O'Morrison, and actress Betty Miller will step into the spotlight to help celebrate the anniversary.

Miller is a veteran of stage and screen, having worked in just about every medium possible for an actress. Her roles include everything from soap opera and film work to Broadway and regional theatre productions.

On Broadway, Miller has appeared in "The Queen and the Rebels," with Colleen Dewhurst and "A Touch of the Poet," with Jason Robards. Off-Broadway she won an Obie award for her performance in "Exiles" by James Joyce at the St. Mark Theatre in New York. She has also appeared in two different Broadway productions of "You Can't Take It With You."

She has also appeared with the New York Shakespeare Festival and spent four seasons with the APA Phoenix Repertory Company.

She has toured with productions of "Equus," "Deathtrap," and "The Price." She has appeared at the Guthrie Theater in "Eve of Retirement."

She has also appeared in a film. "I never cried so many tears as in 'The Pope of Greenwich Village,'" said Miller. "Director Stuart Rosenberg kept telling me he could help me out with artificial tears if I needed them, but I was determined to make my own. And I did."

Miller also has worked in the world of soap operas. Her character on "Another World" was stabbed in the back two years ago. "This is the first time in my career that I have worked with college students," said Miller. "It's extremely fascinating, but also a little frustrating not to have more time to prepare."

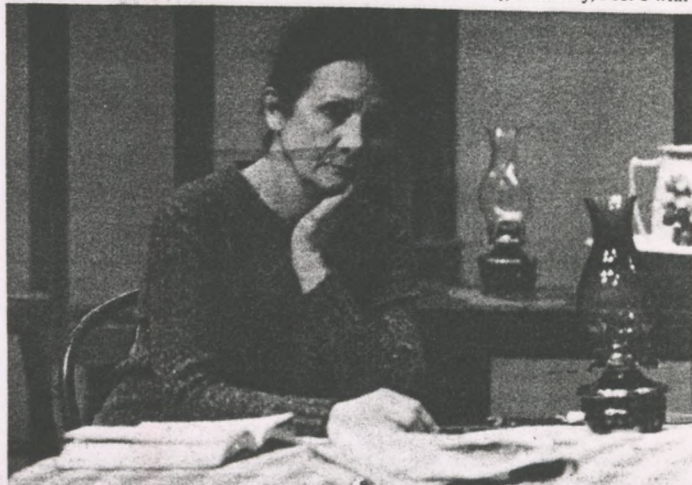
Miller has been here since January 20, but is not too worried because she's "so impressed with the caliber of students and how prepared they are."

"I like Liz Madden," said Miller about her character in the play. "Underneath the

somewhat gruff exterior of a busy woman always giving her daughters direction, there is a special warmth that emerges at odd moments."

Performances will be 8:15 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 6 through Saturday, Feb. 8 with

a matinee performance on Sunday, Feb. 9 at 2 p.m. Tickets are available in the Cowan Hall Box Office, which is open weekdays from 1-4:30 p.m. Tickets are free with student ID.



—Photo by Dan Bravard

Guest actress Betty Miller is seen on the set of "Ladyhouse Blues."

Thursday, Jan. 30, 1986

Columbus Dispatch Weekender

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College serves 'slice of life'

Otterbein College Theater will serve up "a slice of life" when it offers local audiences their first taste of *Ladyhouse Blues* on Feb. 6. The play, written by Kevin O'Morrison, is being directed by Ed Vaughan, of the Otterbein theater faculty.

Ladyhouse Blues is set during an especially scorching St. Louis summer hot spell, and explores the social and psychological state of women during the period; the resulting painful solitude imposed by so many men being away at war; the coming together of a family; and the impending change of life's ways.

The cast consists of five women: a young, widowed mother from the hills, and her four daughters.

The drama will be presented at 8:15 p.m. for three consecutive nights: Feb. 6 through Feb. 8. A 2

p.m. performance on Feb. 9 also is scheduled.

Tickets can be purchased at the Cowan Hall box office, 890-3028. The box office is open from 1 to 4:30 p.m. weekdays and the Saturday before the performances.

P.O. 1-23-86

* Vaughn to direct 'Ladyhouse'

Kevin O'Morrison's bitter-sweet "Ladyhouse Blues" will be performed Feb. 8-9 at 8:15 p.m., with a 2 p.m. matinee Feb. 9, in Otterbein's Cowan Hall. Ed

Vaughan is the director of the first Otterbein College Theatre production of 1986.

Less than 10 years old, "Ladyhouse Blues" grew out of the 1976 National Playwrights Conference in Waterford, Conn., and was first presented as a staged reading at the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theatre Center.

The cast consists of only

five women, a young widowed mother from the hills, and her four daughters. "The

Each of the daughters' choices in life collides with her mother's expectations, from the two teenage waitress-daughters, both on the verge of leaving home (the older one to serve as an advocate of working women and the younger one to elope to California), to the protective matriarch's two older "visiting" daughters. One is dying of tuberculosis and has been forced by her German husband to leave him and their son back in

mother is desperately trying to keep her family together," Vaughan explained, "and hang on to their old ways, in spite of changing times."

Arkansas to save them from the contagious disease. The other daughter, pretty, but insecure, the pregnant wife of a New York socialite who has begun to look down on her mother, a situation her mother escapes by sneaking back to the bottle she keeps hidden.

But despite their individual interests, each is wedded to the "ladyhouse," one of a number of St. Louis homes made temporarily manless by the war. The ladyhouse has become a homestead. The story's turning point comes when the family is notified of the only son's death from cholera, and the mother, out of stubborn pride, refuses to claim his insurance from the Navy.

Tickets for "Ladyhouse Blues" go on sale at the Cowan Hall box office today. Box office hours are 1-4:30 p.m. weekdays and the Saturday before the performances. Mail orders will be processed in advance of counter sales. More information is available at the box office.

Feb. 6-9 — Otterbein College Theatre presents **Ladyhouse Blues**, set in St. Louis in 1919. Five women await the return of the family men from the war in Europe. Curtain 8:15 p.m., except Sunday matinees, 2 p.m. Otterbein College, Westerville. 890-3028.

West's Suburbia News 1-29-86

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Otterbein College to show play 'Ladyhouse Blues'

Otterbein College Theater will present *Ladyhouse Blues*, Kevin O'Morrison's bittersweet story of a family in 1919 St. Louis, left temporarily manless by World War I.

The play opens at 8:15 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 6 in Cowan Hall.

A special guest profes-

sional actress will play the lead role of the mother.

The comic drama run through Saturday, Feb. 8. A Sunday matinee will also be offered at 2 p.m. on Feb. 9. Tickets are *Ladyhouse Blues* are on sale at the Cowan Hall box office (890-3028). Box office hours are 1-4:30 p.m. weekdays and 1-4:30 p.m. on Saturdays.

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Otterbein to present play

Otterbein College Theatre will serve up "a slice of life" when it offers local audiences their first taste of "Ladyhouse Blues" Feb. 6.

A special guest professional actress will travel from New York City to play the lead role of the mother in Otterbein's production. It was for this role that actress Jo Henderson won an Obie award in 1977 for her performance at the Phoenix Theatre in New York.

Less than 10 years old, "Ladyhouse Blues" grew out of the 1976 National Playwrights Conference in Waterford, Ct., and was first presented as a staged reading at the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theatre Center.

"Ladyhouse Blues" is set in St. Louis summer hot spell, and explores both the social and psycholo-

gical state of women during period; the resulting painful solitude imposed by so many men being away at war; the coming together of family; and the impending change in life's ways.

The cast consists of five women: a young, widowed mother from the hills, and her four daughters.

The comic drama will be presented at 8:15 p.m. Feb. 6-8. A Sunday matinee will also be offered at 2 p.m. Feb. 9.

Tickets for "Ladyhouse Blues" are on sale at the Cowan Hall box office from 1-4:30 p.m. weekdays and the Saturday before the performances.

Mail orders will be processed in advance of counter sales. For more information, call the box office 890-3028.