

ENTERTAINMENT & ARTS

Otterbein readies 'Androcles and the Lion' for families

By LORI LOWE

Public Opinion & News Reporter

Are you and your kids tired of watching *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King*?

If so, Otterbein College Theatre has some new entertainment for all of you.

Tod Wilson, managing director for the theater department, said Otterbein College Theatre chose to perform the musical play *Androcles and the Lion* because it's "unique and interesting."

The theater group performs only one children's play per year, he added.

"In the past we have chosen a lot of the classic children's literature things like *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast*, things Disney has

■ 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 at Cowan Hall, 30 S. Grove St.

been doing lately," Wilson said. "We wanted to break the pattern and do something fresh and different."

Although Disney came out with the movie *The Lion King* earlier this year, it's purely coincidence the theater group chose to do its only children's performance as a story about a lion, Wilson said.

The play is geared toward children 5 to 14, but is entertaining to adults as well, Wilson said.

"It's a great opportunity for families to do something together, and especially in Westerville there's not a lot of fine theatrical work for children," Wilson said.

Androcles and the Lion, one of the most popular children's stories ever, is based on an Aesop's fable, Wilson said.

This particular version, however, combine's Aesop's classic fable with the style *Italian Commedia dell'Arte*, a way of performing and story telling, Wilson said.

"The two primary ele-

ments of that style are the use of stock characters, or stereotypes," Wilson said.

An overbearing father, two young lovers and a clowning servant are examples of stock characters seen in the play, Wilson added.

"These sort of classic types in the play are immediately recognizable to everybody," Wilson said.

Lots of physical humor and slapstick comedy are featured in *Androcles and the Lion*, Wilson added.

"There's a lot of that, which should be real entertaining for the children,"

Wilson said.

Although the style *Italian Commedia dell'Arte* has not officially been seen before in the theater group's plays, Wilson said, "It's not all that weird."

"You've seen those sort of elements in other theater performances," Wilson said. "It's really not all that far out ... It's just a way of telling the story in an entertaining and fun way."

The cast of *Androcles and the Lion* includes 13 Otterbein students, Wilson said.

Androcles, the clowning servant, is performed by Ju-

nior Andrew Hansen, and the lion is performed by Freshman John Mancz.

The two young lovers, Isabella and Lelio, are performed by Heather McClellan, a junior, and Corey Brill, a sophomore, respectively.

Performances will be seen at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 18; 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Nov. 19; and 1:30 p.m. Nov. 20 at Cowan Hall, 30 S. Grove St. on the Otterbein campus.

General admission tickets are \$4.50. Reserved seats are \$5.50, and are available by calling 823-1109.

KID STUFF

THE YOUNG AT ART

Audience will see behind 'Androcles'

By Nancy Gilson

Dispatch Entertainment Reporter

Christina Kirk thinks that *Androcles and the Lion* will show children how much fun theater can be.

"It's unabashedly theatrical," said the Otterbein College theater professor. "We're stressing how much fun a play is. They'll see everything being brought on stage. They'll see how the illusion is created."

Kirk and the cast she's directing will perform the 1964 musical in the style of Italian *commedia dell'arte*. Performances begin at 7:30 p.m. Friday, 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Saturday and 1:30 p.m. Sunday in Cowan Hall, 30 S. Grove St., Westerville.

Based on Aesop's fable, *Androcles* concerns a pair of lovers fleeing an evil captain. In his attempt to help them, the slave Androcles meets and befriends a lion. Later, his good deed is rewarded.

Many of the principal characters in the cast of 13 will wear large, three-dimensional masks.

"They have to do a lot of acting with their bodies," Kirk said.

Kirk has added a chorus of six to help tell the stories. Musical accompaniment will be a single piano.

"You don't need much to create magic — a piano, a trunkful of props and an empty stage."

Tickets cost \$5.50 reserved and \$4.50 general. For reservations, call 823-1109 weekdays between 1 and 4:30 p.m.



Tom Dodge /Dispatch

John Mancoz (the Lion) menaces Andrew Hansen (Androcles) in Otterbein Theatre's *Androcles and the Lion*.

the Moon will be performed free at two libraries: at 7 tonight at the Columbus Metropolitan Library, 96 S. Grant St., and 3 p.m. Sunday at the Bexley Public Library, 2411 E. Main St. The musical is performed by children and teen-agers. Call 486-8301.

MARION STAR
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OCT-26-94

Otterbein to stage children's play

By The Associated Press

WESTERVILLE — This year Otterbein College Theatre will present the children's musical *Androcles and the Lion*, one of the most popular children's plays ever written. This prize winning play has been produced in more than 20 countries. It will be performed at Otterbein Nov. 18-20.

Written in the style of Italian Commedia dell'Arte, a group of strolling players set up their stage and give a performance. Using authentic staging and stock characters of Commedia, Aesop's fable of lasting friendship becomes a colorful theatrical experience. Filled with zany comedy sure to elicit giggles and belly laughs from the youthful audience, the play also glows with the warmth of friendship.

In this timeless fable, Androcles serves as a slave to the villain Pantalone. When the handsome Lelio asks to marry Androcles' niece Isabella, Pantalone has the Captain hold her prisoner rather than pay her dowry.

Androcles helps Isabella escape and tells her to take the Captain's gold as dowry. In her rush to be reunited with Lelio, she forgets the gold and Androcles runs after her to return it.

He realizes he will be considered a thief and runaway slave and hides in a

cave where the lion lives. During their ensuing fight, the lion gets a thorn stuck in its paw. Androcles removes the thorn and they vow to be friends.

When the lion goes to find food, Androcles is captured by Pantalone and the Captain. He is taken to Rome and sentenced to be devoured by wild beasts. Isabella and Lelio race back to Rome and the lion follows them hoping to save his new friend.

When Androcles is released in the arena, the wild beast that is supposed to devour him is none other than the lion he befriended. There is a happy ending as the lion convinces Pantalone, the Captain and the crowd at the arena that all creatures were meant to be free. Lelio and Isabella are given permission to marry and Androcles is granted his freedom.

Assistant Professor Christina Kirk will direct. Kirk last directed *King Lear* at Otterbein. She also has directed shows as Actor's Summer Theatre in Columbus. The Living Theatre in New York

and the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C.

Otterbein graduate Beth Burrier-Bradstreet, a vocal music teacher in the Zanesville City Schools, will serve as musical director for this play. While a student, Bradstreet was involved in the productions of *A Chorus Line*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Quilters*. She served as assistant music director for the Otterbein Summer Theatre production of *Baby*.

Bradstreet is a member of Vocal BROQUE, a professional early music group in Columbus, and is also pursuing work as a freelance accompanist.

Androcles and the Lion will be performed 7:30 p.m. Nov. 18, 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Nov. 19, and 1:30 p.m. Nov. 20 at Cowan Hall, 30 S. Grove. St. Tickets are \$5.50 for reserved seating and \$4.50 for general admission.

Reserve tickets by calling the Otterbein College Theatre box office 1-4:30 p.m. weekdays at 823-1109.

Wendy's International is the corporate sponsor for this play.

Otterbein stages play for the kids

The Otterbein College department of theater will present the children's musical "Androcles and the Lion" at 7:30 p.m. Friday, 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Saturday, and 1:30 p.m. Sunday in the college's Cowan Hall.

The timeless fable will be presented in the style of Italian Commedia dell'Arte.

Androcles will be played by Andrew Hansen, and the lion will be played by John Mancz.

Tickets for the play are \$5.50 for reserved seating and \$4.50 for general admission.

To reserve tickets or for more information, call the box office at 823-1109.



Andrew Hansen and John Mancz will perform in "Androcles and the Lion," in the Otterbein College children's production, to be staged five times Friday through Sunday. Hansen will portray Androcles, and Mancz will suit up as the lion.



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'Androcles and the Lion'

Otterbein College Theatre presents the children's musical *Androcles and the Lion* in the style of Italian Commedia dell'Arte. In this fable, Androcles, played by Andrew Hansen (right), and the lion, played by John Mancz (left), learn to be friends. The play will be performed at 7:30 p.m. Friday, 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Saturday and 1:30 p.m. Sunday in Cowan Hall, 30 S. Grove St. Tickets are \$5.50 for reserved seating, \$4.50 for general admission. To reserve tickets call 823-1109.