

"Mead said, 'ent' system to challenges of the night the actors' the audience design every at the artist in is to serve a White said. to draw at- e're doing. Our e theatrical ship bring the ability." Bridge will be tonight, 8 Thursday and 2 8 p.m. Feb. al, 30 S. lile, Tickets 39.

of Annie, will feature a o girls chosen or audition. r girls will per- orphan cho- use and Mar- winning a of the comic session-era or- Kelsey Base- n Bury, New y, Columbus, Hilliard. nal Winches- Reynders- Picketing- Huen Hoover, Higgins Me- dey McNa- on. pool of 58, the taught a from the audition, the addition, an Atlanta association for family nrie at 7:30 n. Wednes- n, Broad St. 47 at the d in the day in the p.m. Sat- n, Sat- Office (614- minister out-

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STAGE NOTES

389 Designers devise plan for Miller play on sound viewpoint

Seabirds. Police sirens. Trucks and daytime traffic, circa the 1950s. The quieter sounds of nighttime traffic.

Sounds like a plan — a creative plan between two veteran collaborators on the sound design of *A View From the Bridge*, opening tonight at Otterbein College Theatre.

Designer Dana White and audio engineer David Mead have developed the aural tapestry to provide a foundation of realism for Arthur Miller's 1955 tragedy about desire and betrayal within a tight-knit Italian family in New Jersey.

"It's like a Greek tragedy, with a strong right hook to the heart," White said.

Mead agreed.

"Arthur Miller's play builds to a strong ending by showing the relationship of an immigrant family (the Carbones) and the problems they go through by trying to do the right things for the wrong reasons."

The "slightly dark" design concept "creates a background pulse of a tragedy," White said.



MICHAEL GROSSBERG

"There's a certain inevitable march toward the end, when Eddie Carbone finally recognizes his own fatal flaw and discovers, too late, that he has a kind of forbidden love for a young woman whom he's been treating as a daughter."

White, an Otterbein professor who teaches theater design and stage management, and Mead, president of Live Technologies, a Columbus lighting, staging and production company, used the sound of old-fashioned sirens to evoke a "sense of some danger," White said, while the shift in traffic sounds helps establish the time of day or night.

The environmental sounds blend with opera into the underscoring of the more theatrical scenes with the play's narrator, White said.

White and Mead, who began collaborating in the 1980s, have designed about 20 shows together.

"Working together is a lot of fun," Mead said.

"Our relationship is based on mutual respect. We specialize in different things, (so we) complement each other when we work on designs... We both have musical backgrounds, but Dana is the musician, and I'm the technician, in terms of our approach to things."

One of their biggest chal-



KARL KUNTZ | DISPATCH

Sound designers Dana White, left, and David Mead on the set of *A View From the Bridge*

lenges at Otterbein has been adapting Miller's intimate drama to the larger scale and acoustics of Cowan Hall's auditorium.

"The building is not an intimate space, and that's the first requirement we'd like to have to create a good aural atmosphere," Mead said.

To compensate, Mead and White carefully positioned four separate sound systems on and around the stage:

- Speakers, mounted on both sides of the stage, to "envelop" the audience and bring theatergoers into the play.

- A speaker system, mounted on the front of the stage, to "bring the sounds of the city... to the front door."

- A single speaker, mounted in an onstage phonograph, to create the illusion that the actor

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JAN-29-2004

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JAN-30-2004

THEATER REVIEW | A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Solid acting fulfills Miller's vision

389
By Michael Grossberg
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

With its cautionary tale of family conflict, forbidden desire and betrayal, *A View From the Bridge* ranks as one of the great American plays.

Yet this 1955 drama continues to be overshadowed by Arthur Miller's previous success.

Otterbein College Theatre's fine production sheds light on a tragedy that might have been named *Death of a Longshoreman* — if Miller hadn't already bestowed a similar title on his breakthrough work.

Just as the beleaguered head of a household deserved in *Death of a Salesman*, "attention must be paid" to *Bridge's* Eddie Carbone, masterfully portrayed by guest actor Mark Mann.

Struggling to make ends meet for his Italian-American family and newly arrived immigrant countrymen on the lesser side of the Brooklyn Bridge, Carbone unconsciously re-enacts the dramatic arc of a Greek tragedy. His fatal flaw: blindness to his own motivations and impulses.

Mann projects a rough masculinity and fierce protectiveness that make his behavior comprehensible — if not forgivable. While Carbone's actions have a terrible impact on his

► Otterbein College Theatre will present *A View From the Bridge* at 8 tonight and Saturday night and 2 p.m. Sunday — and 8 p.m. Thursday through Feb. 7 — in Cowan Hall, 30 S. Grove St., Westerville. Tickets cost \$14. Call 614-823-1109.

wife, niece and the visitors he welcomes into his home, Mann's emotional complexity makes the audience sympathize with him as well as his victims.

Mann, most visible last year in comic roles at Contemporary American Theatre Company and Red Herring Theatre Ensemble, hasn't found a dramatic role this juicy in years.

Lindsey Powell elicits sympathy as Eddie's naive niece, caught between her uncle's controlling demands and Tom Lo-Schiavo's ardent courtship as Rodolpho, an illegal immigrant staying temporarily at the Carbone's home.

At Wednesday's student preview, nuanced support came from Katie Decioccio, as Eddie's frustrated wife; Chris Austin, gentle bear aroused to anger the other visiting immigrant and Zach Kleinsmith, as the Italian lawyer who narrates the play with flashes of foreboding.

Director Dennis Romer knit the 15-member cast into a con-

vincing ensemble that evokes the hustle and bustle of the outside workaday world as well as the simmering conflicts behind a family's closed doors.

Ruth Boyd's plain ethnic period costumes and David Mead and Dana White's atmospheric sound design establish the time, place and class well, while Sheryl Warren's lighting reinforces the emotional currents.

Perhaps the only questionable aspect of the production is Romer and scenic designer Stephanie Gerckens' decision not to settle for realism.

The roof of the Carbones' home is outlined as if it was one of the ships on the dock where Eddie works, while the lawyer's office and neighboring tenements are outlined with the twisted fluidity of a Warner Bros. cartoon. Such a stylized design seems unnecessary, cluttered and distracting, especially in the first act.

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