



NEWS

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GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT

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OTTERBEIN OFFERS MODERN VISION OF HAMLET

Audiences can expect to see a new *Hamlet* set in a contemporary world at Otterbein College this spring but they can expect to feel the same excitement and intensity which audience members felt upon viewing the original productions during Elizabethan times.

Otterbein College Theatre will present *Hamlet*, one of Shakespeare's most famous and universally appealing dramas, March 6-9 and 13-16. This production will be staged in the College's smaller Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St., making it more intimate and accessible than most other versions of this play.

The opening night performance on March 6 will be at 7:30 p.m. All other evening performances begin at 8 p.m. and the Sunday matinees are at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$12 for Friday and Saturday shows and \$10 for Thursday and Sunday shows. Reserve tickets by calling the Otterbein College Theatre box office at 823-1109 between 1 and 4:30 p.m. weekdays.

This dramatic tragedy has been produced worldwide and has been the subject of several successful films. In the story the Danish prince Hamlet returns home to find his father dead and his mother, Gertrude, hastily remarried to his uncle, Claudius. Soon afterward Hamlet is visited by the ghost of his late father who reveals that it is Claudius who is responsible for his death. The ghost implores Hamlet to avenge his murder and so this melancholy tragedy is inevitably set in motion.

Otterbein's production of *Hamlet* promises to be an exciting one as Guest Director Robert Behrens brings his unique re-vision to the stage with a *Hamlet* set in a contemporary world. While the majority of the text remains in tact, Behrens' interpretation promises to be one that will reach today's audience.

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In this contemporary setting, a few roles which have been traditionally played by male actors, will be played by female actresses. For example, one of Hamlet's closest friends, Horatio, will be played by a woman. This diversion from the original text is in keeping with Behrens' goal to give audiences a contemporary *Hamlet*, a world in which today it is not uncommon for members of the opposite sex to be friends.

The dress of the actors has been updated to reflect modern styles including college students and the rich and powerful. The weaponry has been updated as well and the audience will hear gunfire during the show, symbolic of the clashing swords of Elizabethan times.

Behrens, who has worked on four other productions of *Hamlet*, has been living and working in Columbus for the past six years as a free-lance director, actor and fight director. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees in theatre from the University of Akron. He also studied stage combat at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and his American combat training was with Drew Fracher of the Society of American Fight Directors. He studied directing at Ohio University.

In the professional arena he has worked as a fight director for The Great Lakes Theatre Festival, The Cleveland Play House, The Dallas Theatre Center, Player's Theatre and The Nebraska Repertory Theatre.

As an actor he has performed with the Great Lakes Theatre Festival, the Old Globe Theatre and The Cleveland Public Theatre. In addition he has experience as a fight director and an actor with nearly every theatre in the Central Ohio area.

His directing experience includes work at The Young Vic in London, The Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, The Cleveland Playhouse, CATCO, Actor's Theatre, Gallery Players, Columbus Junior Theatre and the Arden Shakespeare Company.