



OTTERBEIN
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NEWS

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April 3, 1995
GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**OTTERBEIN COLLEGE THEATRE
SWEEPS INTO SPRING WITH *SWEET CHARITY***

Following the success of last year's *Pippin*, Otterbein College Theatre this spring will again present a Bob Fosse inspired musical. *Sweet Charity* will be performed at Otterbein April 27-30 and May 4-6 with Department of Theatre and Dance Chairperson John Stefano directing. Stella Hiatt Kane, who choreographed *Pippin*, will serve as choreographer again this year. This production is co-sponsored by the Department of Music.

Sweet Charity, originally directed and choreographed by Fosse, was a hit on Broadway and ran for 18 months in the mid-1960s. In researching this musical, Fosse and his wife, Gwen Verdon, who starred in the original production, visited dance halls in New York. In fact, Verdon went "undercover" to work as a hostess for three months.

While Fosse conceived the idea for *Sweet Charity*, he was joined by several other theatrical greats to create this tour-de-force musical. The story was written by Neil Simon with music by Cy Coleman and lyrics by Dorothy Fields.

This is an extravagant musical with 19 scenes set in 12 locations. Many of the actors in the 36-member student cast will be playing double and triple roles to round out the 99 characters that cross the stage in *Sweet Charity*.

The show is punctuated by such well-known tunes as *Big Spender*, *If My Friends Could See Me Now*, *There's Gotta Be Something Better Than This*, *Rhythm of Life* and *I Always Cry at Weddings*.

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Professor Craig Johnson will serve as the musical director and lead a 25-member orchestra to give Cy Coleman's strong score a big jazz band attitude.

The story itself centers on Charity Hope Valentine, a dime-a-dance girl at Manhattan's Fan Dango Ballroom who is naive, outgoing and brimming with faith in worthless men. One fellow of whom she is enamored steals her purse and pushes her into a Central Park pond. The next, an actor, stashes her in a closet when his mistress arrives.

Through it all, she is a hopeless and hopeful romantic who searches tirelessly for a good man — any good man— who will take her out of the tawdry ballroom and put her in a kitchen. Charity, who quite literally wears her heart on her sleeve with a heart tattooed on her upper arm, dreams of being a suburban housewife.

In an attempt to change her luck, she goes looking for culture at the 92nd Street Y and ends up stuck in an elevator with a claustrophobic. But he may be just the man she's looking for. She calms his panic and later he returns the favor when her fear of heights is revealed as they get stuck in a parachute ride at Coney Island. Obviously they are made for each other — almost. The usual formula of true love triumphing is turned on its ear in this ironic slice of life that is also a bright and festive musical extravaganza.

Otterbein College Theatre will present *Sweet Charity* April 27-30 and May 4-6 in Cowan Hall, 30 S. Grove St. The opening night performance on April 27 will be at 7:30 p.m. All other evening performances begin at 8 p.m. and the Sunday matinee on April 30 is at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$12.50 for Friday and Saturday shows and \$10.50 for Wednesday, 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 beginning April 12.