

OTTERBEIN  
COLLEGE

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GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Otterbein College Theatre's production of the Oscar and Tony award winning "Amadeus" Oct. 16-19 promises to be a visual feast. Katie Robbins, new costume designer/assistant professor of theatre at the college, used her inspired imagination and design expertise to create period costumes that lend the play a refined air of authenticity.

Set in the Vienna of the 1780s, Peter Shaffer's play is a historical interpretation of the complex relationship that may have existed between Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the greatest musical genius of his time, and Austrian court composer Antonio Salieri.

"It was a very elaborate period," Robbins comments. "We are dealing with the upper classes and royalty in "Amadeus," and the look is extremely elegant, ornate and baroque."

The fabrics required to capture such elegance for characters like Salieri, Mozart and Constanze (Mozart's wife), include lush brocades, velvets and satins. The designer/professor traveled to an out-of-state outlet to purchase the fashion materials and wigs in order to remain within the costume budget.

"Overall," notes Dr. Charles Dodrill, the play's director and chairman of the department of theatre and dance, "'Amadeus' has the largest non-musical budget (near \$15,000) in the history of Otterbein College Theatre stage productions. And we feel this production is of such quality that we are entering it in the 1987 American College Theatre Festival. 'Amadeus' will be competing against 30-40 other college plays from Ohio, Indiana and Michigan to perform at the regional Festival." Winning plays from the regional Festival in May, he notes, have the opportunity to perform in the national Festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. in the spring.

Designing character costumes for productions likes "Amadeus" is a lengthy process, Robbins indicates. "I start with reading the script several times until I begin, as a designer, to get

a feeling for the characters -- see them walking and talking in my mind. Then I meet with the director and other designers to ascertain how they picture the characters and see how close we come, concept-wise. From there, I try to put it all on paper so that when I say 'rose,' it is clear that the director and I are thinking of the same shade."

A tragi-comedy, "Amadeus" pits Saleri's musical mediocrity against the genius of Mozart, and explores the bitter ramifications. Such intrigue is a road map for costume designers.

"I generally try to approach every production by becoming familiar with the characters and what motivates them," Robbins explains. "As a designer, it's my responsibility to assist the actor and the director in making those character statements. It all has to work together."

Tickets to see Robbins' outstanding designs at work in "Amadeus" may be purchased at the Cowan Hall box office, 890-3028, 1-4:30 p.m. weekdays, and at the door for one hour prior to each performance. All performances are in Cowan Hall Theatre, 8 p.m., on Oct. 16-18 and 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 19.