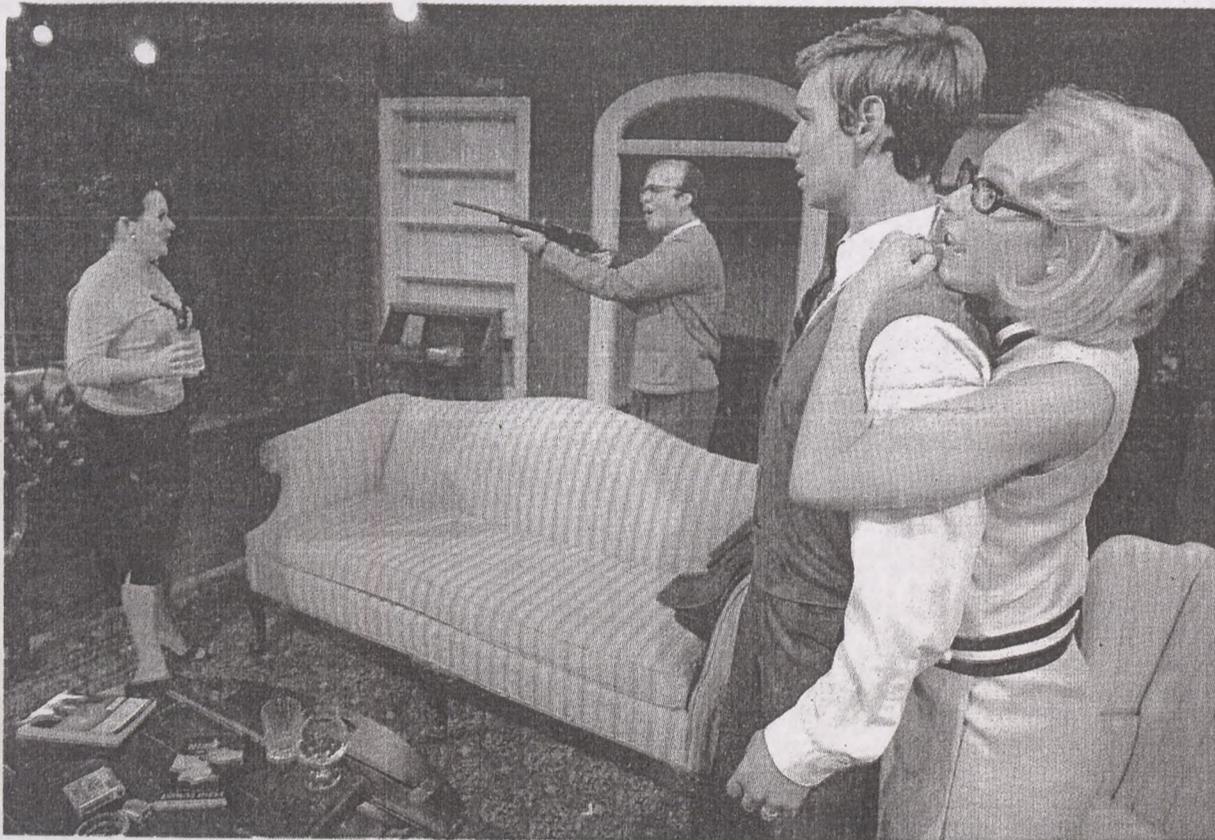


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DORAL CHENOWETH III | DISPATCH

From left: Caitlin Morris, Luke Dixon, Cory Smith and Clare Schmidt in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

OTTERBEIN DIRECTOR UNAFRAID TO TACKLE ACCLAIMED ALBEE DRAMA

BY MICHAEL GROSSBERG | THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Dennis Romer is fulfilling a dream by directing the Otterbein College Theatre production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

The acclaimed 1962 drama by Edward Albee, about a college professor and his wife who play vicious mind games with each other and another couple, will open tonight in the Campus Center Theatre.

"I've always wanted to direct an Albee play," Romer said, "because he's unlike any other playwright."

Although the Otterbein professor acted many years ago in two Albee plays (*A Delicate Balance* and *The American Dream*), Romer hadn't directed one.

The college in Westerville hasn't staged an Albee play since 1979-80, when it first presented *Woolf*.

"Often, Albee says the things we think when we're at a party," Romer

at a glance

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

OTTERBEIN COLLEGE THEATRE,
CAMPUS CENTER THEATRE,
100 W. HOME ST., WESTERVILLE
(614-823-1109,
WWW.OTTERBEIN.EDU/THEATRE)

SHOWTIME » 7:30 tonight and
8 p.m. Friday, Saturday and
Oct. 12-13

TICKETS » \$15

said. "But it's not everyday banter; his words are like weapons.

"Most of his plays are verbal warfare. People are always revealing

some secret or choosing not to reveal a secret."

Secrets are hidden and dramatically exposed in the first full-length Albee drama. Through three acts and three hours, the work charts the witty ups and bitter downs of a no-holds-barred cocktail party.

"It's a brutal look at marriage and not very kind to academia," Romer said. "Albee's characters seem to see right into the weak spots of the others.

"The main theme is truth and illusion."

Lucas Dixon plays George, a middle-aged English professor married to Martha (Caitlin Morris), the alcoholic daughter of the college president. Cory Smith and Clare Schmidt play Nick and Honey,

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a younger academic couple invited to George and Martha's home to socialize over drinks.

"George and Martha have created their own world of lies to cover up the sad truth," Dixon said, "and it's become painful to face the truth."

"The play is about living life without lies and how scary that can be. But it also leaves you with the promise for more happiness and comfort once you're able to be yourself."

Dixon, 22, has been praised by professors (including Romer) and received critical acclaim for other older roles at Otterbein. Among them: the fathers in *Father Joy* and *While We Were Bowling*, the announcer in *The 1940s Radio Hour* and Larry in *Company*.

"I appreciate the challenge," said Dixon, a senior who hopes to pursue acting as a career.

"Albee's characters are well-developed, and getting into George's brilliant mind and rhythm has been more challenging than anything else I've had to do."

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