

OTTERBEIN  
COLLEGE

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Feb. 24, 1987

GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Otterbein College senior BFA and theatre scenic design major Stephanie Haney has been selected as the set designer for the college's March 12-15 production of "The Crucible." There's something very challenging in such work, she says, with "taking the playwright's theme and executing it well -- understanding what he was trying to convey and then doing it for him."

Long hours of study and theatre experience have qualified Haney to serve as set designer for the college theatre's main stage production of Arthur Miller's riveting drama about the Salem witch trials. She has worked on almost every Otterbein College Theatre production since she was a freshman, served as set designer on the college's production of "Extremities," and completed community theatre work such as an Opera Theatre set design for a children's tour of "Hansel and Gretel" and portraits used as set dressings for a Players Theatre production of "Painting Churches."

"I'm staying in agreement with the Puritan mind and way of life," she says of her set design plans for the upcoming play, "and trying to be true to their world of plainness and color choices."

Prior to working on the upcoming production, Haney recently had a

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chance to test her wings through a three-month, professional internship at the Arena Stage, one of the country's leading regional theatres, in Washington, D.C. In addition to all the experience gained during the internship, Haney says she had hoped the term would help her develop a preference for either set designing or scene painting. While she came away still loving both roles, the internship did assist toward defining responsibilities. "I'm clearer now," Haney comments, "and I better understand the difference."

Arena Stage personnel was made up of "a warm, friendly, receptive group of people that really let us get involved." As one of seven interns from such institutions as Yale, New York Drama League and the California Institute of the Arts, the Otterbein student was included not only in scenery preparation but in budgetary and planning sessions as well. "We realized from that that it is a company -- a business -- not just a group of people putting on plays."

Haney worked on productions of "The Marriage of Bette and Boo," "The Piggy Bank" and "Measure for Measure" during her time at Arena Stage, a forum that called for precise work. "The theatre is so close to the audience, that things had to be realistic," she notes. Besides working with the head scenic artist on various projects, Haney was able to observe and assist him with a work at the Washington Opera and with a display at the Library of Congress.

Although the theatre intern came in contact with limelight personalities (Placido Domingo to name but one), it was the behind-the-scenes artists that impressed her. "You may see a set and be impressed," she explains, "but learning first hand what lacquers to mix

with what sort of dyes to achieve that effect -- just observing all the professional techniques was amazing. I didn't just see a set and applaud -- I was there to see it happen! Also, I learned a lot about professional theatre relationships. The designer, master painters and costume head, for example, all have to quickly establish a rapport and be able to rapidly blend their ideas to get the production off the ground."

A native of Amlin, Ohio, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Haney of Rings Road, Haney has known since her early days in the theatre program at Hilliard High School that creating scenery was her niche in life.

A high school field trip to New York for a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the theatre world at work reinforced the goal for the young woman, and today she is on the precipice of seeing her dream of working in professional theatre become reality. After graduation, the young artist hopes to become more involved in community work and expand her portfolio before going on to graduate school.

Expressing herself artistically within the world of theatre is a satisfying venture, she claims. "There is something wonderful about all those people working together to tell a story. It makes our art more of a communal process."

Those interested in seeing Haney's work in "The Crucible" may call the Otterbein College theatre box office beginning Feb. 26 at (614) 890-3028. Performances in Cowan Hall on the college campus will be March 12, 13 and 14 at 8 p.m., followed by a Sunday matinee performance on the 15th at 2 p.m.