

OTTERBEIN
C O L L E G E

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GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Otterbein College Theatre this year offers *Man of La Mancha*, one of the great musical classics of the modern theatre, as the College's spring musical spectacular.

This internationally-acclaimed musical play combines the madly comic eccentricities of the immortal fictional figure Don Quixote with a moving account of the adversities that beset his creator Miguel de Cervantes. The show opens with Cervantes in prison trying to save his manuscript from destruction. To do so, he acts out scenes from his tales of Don Quixote beginning with the famous episode of the knight tilting windmills.

Junior Jess Hanks fills the dual role of Cervantes and Quixote and with an amazingly quick make-up job transforms himself on stage before the audience's eyes from the broken prisoner to the eccentric knight as the Spanish author becomes his hero.

In the two-hour parade of characters on the stage and more than 20 rousing songs, the show crystallizes the thousand episode-crammed pages in which Cervantes exposed the absurdities of his day.

Don Quixote is the errant knight who believes the long dead age of chivalry is still alive. With his faithful servant Sancho Panza by his side, Quixote goes forth in his tarnished armor in quest of adventure, determined to redress all grievances, right wrongs and champion lost causes in the pursuit of honor and renown.

Under the delusion that he is a courtly knight, he tilts with a windmill he takes to be a giant in disguise, and embarks on countless equally ridiculous forays, mistaking the coarse, mocking peasants he encounters for gentle lords and ladies. Quixote's gallantry is extended to a slatternly tavern wench whom he sees only as a fair maid in distress; to a ruffianly innkeeper who to him is lord of a castle and to a coarsely impish barber who becomes to him a courtly sorcerer. The sober-faced Don pursues his lunatic career with fanatical zeal, completely oblivious of the mockery he receives from those around him.

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Despite setbacks, beatings, scorn and disillusion, the Don keeps on tilting at real and metaphorical windmills, an invincible idealist. Eventually the pathetic but noble-hearted man returns home to regain his sanity and die quietly in bed.

Senior Colby Paul will portray Aldonza, the raucous bar maid who appears in the Don's deluded eyes as the fair Dulcinea, a maid of delicate beauty. In the end, when Quixote is lying on his death bed, a feeble old man who has forgotten his days of knighthood, Dulcinea comes to his bedside to whisper the words of the song he once sang, *To Dream the Impossible Dream*. The memory of Quixote floods the old man's conscience. He rouses himself, stands up and for a last precious moment is Don Quixote again.

Man of La Mancha is co-sponsored by the Department of Music at Otterbein with Assistant Professor Craig Johnson acting as Music Director and Assistant Professor David DeVenney acting as Vocal Director. Theatre Instructor Director Dennis Romer, who directed last year's very successful *Evita*, will again direct the musical this year. Patricia Hiatt, a newcomer to Otterbein College Theatre, will be the choreographer for this year's musical.

At Otterbein, *Man of La Mancha* will be performed May 1 through 5. The opening night performance is at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday matinee is at 2 p.m. All other performances begin at 8 p.m. and all performances will be held in Cowan Hall, 30 N. Grove St. For tickets and further information, call the box office at 898-1109 from 1 to 4:30 p.m. weekdays.