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July 8, 1998
GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEIL SIMON COMEDY CLOSES OTTERBEIN'S SUMMER SEASON

Otterbein Summer Theatre will welcome Equity Guest Actor Phil Kilbourne for the season's final production — Neil Simon's *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*.

Simon's semi-autobiographical comedy, *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*, harkens back to the golden age of television and his days as a writer for Sid Caesar's *Show of Shows*.

Simon's fellow writers on that show, who are portrayed in this hilarious play, were a collection of some of entertainment's most eccentric individuals. They gathered daily in a small room to bat ideas for skits back and forth, to argue, schmooze and kibitz the day away, but still managing to get enough down on paper to justify their paychecks. The play recalls the insanity, the mind-boggling cascade of jokes and the fury, real and simulated, that kept the writers' room in a constant state of turmoil.

The group includes Milt, an aggressive insult artist; Ira, a serious hypochondriac; Val, a Russian émigré who can't master the pronunciation of the obscenities he wants to hurl at the other writers and Carol, the sole woman on the writing staff, although to survive she has to act like a man, curse like a man and suffer through pregnancy like a man.

At the center of all this is Max Prince, played by Kilbourne, the star of the show. Max is a big-hearted maniac who ingests liquor and pills in equally large quantities and who cares most about making people laugh.

The play follows the beginning of the end of the show as NBC threatens to cut the show's running time, budget and even one of the writers threatening the manic camaraderie of the writing group.

Joel Sigel of ABC-TV said of *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*, "Flat out hysteria! A must see! Neil Simon has never been funnier."

Kilbourne was most recently seen at Otterbein as Polonius in *Hamlet* and last year he directed *The Miser*. Kilbourne graduated from Boston University with a B.F.A. in Theatre and received his M.F.A. in Direction from The Ohio State University.

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At Ohio State he directed *Eleemosynary*, *Speed-the-Plow*, and the acclaimed production of Moliere's *The Imaginary Invalid* which was named as "Best Production of the Year" by *The Columbus Dispatch* and which won one of the very first Central Ohio Critics Circle awards.

Recently in Columbus, Kilbourne directed *Romeo and Juliet* at Actor's Theatre and *Jack and Jill* for Red Herring. As an Ohio actor, Kilbourne has played Titus Andronicus for Actor's Theatre, Charles in *Blithe Spirit* for CATCO and Lloyd in *Reckless* for Ohio State.

He has performed more than 60 roles with Summer Theatre at Mt. Holyoke College and the New Century Theatre in western Massachusetts. His recent roles there include Baron Victor Frankenstein in *Frankenstein*, Inspector Goole in *An Inspector Calls* and John Barrymore in *I Hate Hamlet*. In his 20 years as an actor, Kilbourne has over 150 professional credits to his name. He now lives in St. Paul, Minn., where he works for Theatre-at-Work.

Adding to the quality of this production is Scenic Designer D. Glen Vanderbilt, Jr., a Professor of Theatre at Ohio Wesleyan University. He has worked around the country as a designer, director and educator at Interlochen Center for the Arts, CATCO, University of Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Vanderbilt University, Northwestern University and Hong Kong Repertory Theatre.

This is his sixth production for Otterbein. His *A Perfect Ganesh* design for CATCO recently won an award for merit from the USITT-Ohio Valley, which Vanderbilt has won on five previous occasions. His design for *Angel Street* (Interlochen Arts Camp) was selected for the Design Expo '96 at the National USITT Conference.

Otterbein Summer Theatre will present *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* in the Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St. in Westerville, Aug. 6-10 and Aug. 12-16.

The opening night performance begins at 7:30 p.m. and all other evening performances are at 8 p.m. Sunday matinees are at 2 p.m. On Sunday, Aug. 16, there will also be a 7:30 p.m. performance.

Tickets are \$14 for Sunday and Wednesday performances, \$15 for Thursday and Friday nights and \$16 for Saturday and opening night. Order tickets by calling the Otterbein Summer Theatre box office at 823-1109 between 12:30 and 8:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday and one hour prior to performances on Sunday. The box office will be closed July 20, 27 and Aug. 10.

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Dates, times and location of performances are as follows:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Thursday, Aug. 6	7:30 p.m.	Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.
Friday, Aug. 7	8:00 p.m.	Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.
Saturday, Aug. 9	8:00 p.m.	Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.
Sunday, Aug. 10	2:00 p.m.	Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.
Wednesday, Aug. 12	8:00 p.m.	Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.
Thursday, Aug. 13	8:00 p.m.	Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.
Friday, Aug. 14	8:00 p.m.	Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.
Saturday, Aug. 15	8:00 p.m.	Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.
Sunday, Aug. 16	2:00 p.m.	Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.
Sunday, Aug. 16	7:30 p.m.	Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.