



Monday, October 1, 2001

## All-student review to premiere this week

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

Oakland University's **Department of Music, Theatre and Dance** is presenting "Hey There, Good Times!" its first ever student-produced musical review, beginning Thursday, Oct. 4, at 8 p.m. at Varner Lab Theatre.

Senior Theatre Performance major Travis Walter wrote the musical as a tribute to American composer Cy Coleman, whose numbers include "Hey Look Me Over," "I've Got Your Number" and "If My Friends Could See Me Now." Walter's production brings together 40 of Coleman's songs from 10 different musicals. The review is musically directed by graduate student Jan Flynn and choreographed by junior Susan Tottingham.

"I wanted to enhance some of my skills before I graduate and be well-versed in all areas of theatre production," said Walter, who conceived the review as part of an advanced directing project. "I own a lot of Coleman's sheet music. He writes a lot for baritones and altos – songs that I could sing in my repertoire. I've enjoyed his material for a long time, so I wanted to see if we could make a story out of his music."

The review includes five men and five women characters, with about 10 scenes of dialogue that serve to connect one song to the next. Still, even with the multitude of songs the review runs just over two hours.

"The musical numbers are what really tell the story," Walter said. "I wanted to get the music out there and tried not to alter that. The action all circles around a bar where three couples meet – a married couple, a lounge singer and club patron, and a People Magazine photographer and a working girl. The message or theme is that it's not where you start that matters, it's where you finish."

Among the challenges Walter faces is directing his peers, many of whom are friends and classmates. "We're all trying to make the best show we've ever been involved with," said Walter, who has previously directed one-act plays and a handful of scenes in classes. "I've never worked before with a staff entirely made up of students. So it's hard working with your peers and trying to direct them. And it's hard to have the entire review in my head and try to get it down on paper. Sometimes it's hard to communicate those things. But overall, we have a really good time."

Show dates for "Hey There, Good Times!" are Oct. 4 and 5 at 8 p.m., Oct. 6 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Oct. 7 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for all seats and are available by calling the Varner Box Office at (248) 370-3013 or by visiting the **Ticketmaster** Web site.

### SUMMARY

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