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now onstage

Mrs. Witherspoon

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

Reincarnation becomes a drag — hilariously funny yet sad — in the Christopher Durang comedy about a struggle for enlightenment.

SHOWTIMES » 7:30 tonight and 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday — and 8 p.m. May 9-10

TICKETS » \$15

'Wild Stages: Kabarett MFA!'

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY: DRAKE CENTER, 1849 CANNON DR. (614-292-2295, WWW.THEATRE.OSU.EDU)

OSU actors completing their degrees offer an evening of original one-act plays, monologues, puppet and shadow shows, songs and poems.

SHOWTIMES » 7:30 tonight through Saturday night and 3 p.m. Sunday — and 7:30 p.m. May 8-10 and 15-17

TICKETS » \$10 to \$15



OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Robin Schuricht in *Pull Up a Step and Have a Cup of Joe*

Pull Up a Step and Have a Cup of Joe

ECHOES IN TIME THEATRE: OHIO HISTORICAL CENTER, 171 E. 17TH AVENUE (614-297-2300, WWW.OHIOHISTORY.ORG)

Robin Schuricht portrays Mildred, a 1930s housewife with an unemployed husband.

SHOWTIMES » 7 and 8 p.m. Thursdays through May

ADMISSION » free with center admission of \$8, or \$7 for senior citizens, \$4 for children 6 to 12, free for members and for children 5 and younger (parking: \$4)

ROULETTE PLAYS KEEP MANAGING DIRECTOR SPINNING

BY MICHAEL GROSSBERG | THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH



Michael Moore and Melissa Bair in *Postcards From a Dead Dog*

MADLAB

The annual Theatre Roulette can be chaotic, exhilarating and exhausting, but two men involved in the latest MadLab festival keep returning for more.

"It's a labor of love," said Andy Batt, managing director. "I really don't do much else with my life during the festival."

During the ninth annual event, opening tonight, Batt's roles include festival coordinator, technical director, production stage manager, director of *Dark North*, actor in *This Bird* and director of several preview videos.

The first Theatre Roulette festival in 2000 sparked his interest in joining the troupe, he said.

Of the 50 people involved in creative and technical roles this year, Batt is the only one who has acted in all nine Roulettes.

The 2008 festival features

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at a glance

Theatre Roulette

MADLAB, 105 N. GRANT AVE. (614-221-5418, WWW.MADLAB.NET)

SHOWTIMES » 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, through May 23; and 2, 4 and 8 p.m. May 24

» **"Schisms"**: 8 tonight and May 9, 17 and 22, and 2 p.m. May 24

» **"Shylocks"**: 8 p.m. Friday and May 10, 15 and 23; and 4 p.m. May 24

» **"Shenanigans"**: 8 p.m. Saturday, next Thursday and May 16 and 24

TICKETS » \$10 to \$15, or \$8 for students and senior citizens, \$6 for members

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH | theater | THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2

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'SCHISMS'

OPENING TONIGHT

» **Postcards From a Dead Dog** by F.J. Hartland: A dysfunctional family uses an unusual form of communication.

» **This Bird** by Paul North: The idea involves a prostitute, a book for children and a hope of escape.

» **The Raft** by Kristyn Leigh Robinson: A just-married couple take an ill-fated honeymoon cruise.

'SHYLOCKS'

OPENING FRIDAY

» **Dark North** by David Skeele: A psychic on television regrets his talents.

» **Noir Lite** by Richard Martin Hirsch: A feminist satire pays tribute to the detective stories of Raymond Chandler.

'SHENANIGANS'

OPENING SATURDAY

» **Duet for Virtual Particles** by William Borden: A woman has a relationship with a man who sees himself as an alien.

» **The Rental** by Mark Harvey Levine: A woman finds Mr. Right — for a price.

» **The Memo** by Greg Vovos: The corporate grind is viewed as absurd.

» **Dr. Wu Has Been Eliminated** by John Busser: A mysterious disappearance takes place in the hideaway of an evil organization.

PLAYS

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nine plays divided among three "themed" nights: "Schisms," "Shylocks" and "Shenanigans."

California playwright Mark Harvey Levine is returning to MadLab this year with his

third festival entry, *The Rental* — one of four short plays in the "Shenanigans" evening, opening Saturday.

"I tend to write romantic comedies, and *The Rental* is another," Levine said from his home in Pasadena, Calif.

The Rental revolves around a woman who receives a strange present for her 30th birthday: a boyfriend for a day.

"Writing a 10-minute play forces you to be very tight and fast-paced," said Levine, who has had more than 300 plays produced worldwide. "If you're writing a comedy, you have to keep it funny."

His *Surprise*, which premiered at the 2005 festival, is a fast-paced romantic comedy about a man whose limited psychic powers annoy his date.

Saver, produced at last year's festival, is a Levine drama about a middle-aged couple coping with a father's leftovers.

"It's actually wonderful to get into a festival because they always get tons of submissions and yours is a long shot," said Levine, 44. "When

you feel you start to have a relationship with a theater that likes your work, it's very gratifying."

MadLab, Levine said, is good to its playwrights, keeping in "constant contact" as scripts are rehearsed, refined and performed.

As in past years, the company will end its four-week Roulette run with a celebratory marathon. All nine plays will be performed — with breaks — May 24.

"On the last performance of the last day," Batt said, "we bring out anyone (involved) in the audience, and we fill the stage."

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MADLAB

Kyle Sweeney and Jennifer Feather in *The Rental*



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GALA BENEFIT & CONCERT

FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2008

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ROBERT MICHAELS

"Flamenco's version of Led Zeppelin axe-god Jimmy Page" - Ottawa Sun

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at Barcelona
6:00 PM

CONCERT
at the Southern Theatre
8:30 PM

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