

Atkinson drama featured at Playhouse

Cincinnati native and resident Thomas M. Atkinson has written a sobering drama of the heritage and realities of Appalachian society, *Clear Liquor and Coal Black Nights* which opened Jan. 12 and will run through Feb. 7 in the Robert S. Marx Theatre.

In the hills, forests and mines of Appalachia, there exists a rich culture, ravaged but not altogether destroyed by the mining companies, economic hardships and the stereotypes of the last 50 years. With this as a setting, Atkinson has assembled 24 characters, among them four men who are bound by the final wish of a dying friend. Each must share a piece of his past never told before. The resulting memories reveal haunting, pervasive guilt and a spirit still alive but

weakened.

The large cast of *Clear Liquor and Coal Black Nights* includes many faces familiar to Playhouse audiences. Paul Ukena Jr. (Orval Pack) most recently appeared as the Creature in *Frankenstein* earlier this season but has been seen in numerous Playhouse productions including *Greater Tuna*, *The Real Thing*, *As Is* and *K2*. Henry Dardenne (Ray Lee Parker) returns after making his Playhouse debut as Victor in *Frankenstein*. Bob Elkins (Reverend, Lloyd Parker, Reverend Elijah) was in the Playhouse production of *Caligula* and has also been a member of the Playhouse improvisation program. Last year, Elkins played Orval in the Stable Players production of *Clear Liquor and Coal Black*

Nights at the Cincinnati Theatre Festival.

The play will be performed every day except Mondays through Feb. 7. Matinees are scheduled for Saturdays and Sundays and for Wednesday, Feb. 3. Lenhardt's Caterers provides gourmet dinners prior to each evening performance with 24-hour advance reservations. The Playhouse is equipped with a hearing enhancement system and individual units are available. For information and reservations, call the Playhouse box office at 421-3888 or toll-free in Ohio at 1-800-582-3208. Hearing impaired patrons equipped with a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) may call (513) 421-3957.