



STAGE Write

FALL 2002

STARKVILLE COMMUNITY THEATRE

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

SCT celebrating 25 years of entertainment

The year 2002 marks 25th anniversary of action, ambition, and accomplishment for the Starkville Community Theatre.

To celebrate the milestone, SCT will host a 25th Anniversary Gala in February. Details on the gala will be announced later.

Sitting in the 89-seat audience at the Playhouse on Main, one can almost hear the history that has been - and still is - SCT. Over 100 productions have been enacted by the players of SCT over the past 25 years, and the community support for these play-

ers is as strong today as it has ever been.

The Starkville Community Theatre was formed in 1978 to provide for the cultural and educational enhancement of the citizens of Starkville and the surrounding areas.

Theatre exists because of the continued need for people to have an outlet for creativity and for the desire to participate in the "unreal-real" world of imagination.

This need for creativity caused Jan Zeppelin, in 1978, to place a notice in the

Starkville Daily News announcing an interest meeting for creating a community theatre.

"I went to the Chamber of Commerce and met with its director," says Zeppelin. "She spoke with their Board, and they agreed Starkville needed a community theatre."

Around fifty people attended that initial meeting, and thus Starkville Community

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Starkville Community Theatre
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25th

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Theatre was born!

The first officers of the group were Bob Wolverton (elected president), Larry Jones, Bob Anderson, John Wells, and Zeppelin. A charter was drawn up, by-laws were established, and SCT was set to begin.

"Because of such initial excitement, we decided we couldn't wait until the fall to put

on our first show," Zeppelin remembers, "so we did one that summer."

Directed by Bob Anderson and held at the Ramada Inn, SCT's first production was Bob Randall's *6 Rms Riv Vu*. Sets and stage were built and moved in; lights were hung and numerous other details were taken into account.

"We scrounged in the beginning years, and we put on some good shows...and some not-so-good shows," Zeppelin says.

"Lordy, did we make do! But we had a great time."

In 1995, the theatre bought the Katz building at 108 East Main Street. After years of moving from facility to facility, SCT finally had a home of its own.

Almost immediately, the loyal volunteers of SCT began renovating their new building and transforming the formal retail shop into a wonderful space for the Starkville Community Theatre for many

years to come.

In 1999, volunteers again banded together to clean and to renovate the upstairs area.

Currently, plans are in the works for an addition onto the rear of the building. This addition will house a shop for set construction, more storage room, and new dressing rooms for the actors.

"Drama expresses our lives," Zeppelin says. "It [takes] the entire community."

Over

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So don't forget "faith, family, and food" and of course "tengo familia."

But it is not over yet. We plan to take an hour version of the play to the Mississippi Theatre Association Festival. This year the Festival will be held in Tupelo from January 17-19, 2003.

The MTA Festival consists of children's theatre performances, 6 high school plays, and 6 community theatre performances.

The Festival will also have workshops, community theatre meetings, fellowship and many good restaurants. We hope you can attend since this year's festival is a short distance away.

We know you will enjoy all phases of the festival. See you there!



Amanda Lopez (from left), Gabe Smith, Thomas La Foe and Kathi Hester from the cast of 'Over the River and Through the Woods.'

SCT's 'Over the River' is not over yet

By Dominic Cunetto

Can you believe it has been one month since the last performance of *Over The River And Through The Woods?* Everyone seems to have found the play entertaining, amusing, and sad.

The popularity of the play stems from its appeal to any ethnic group. Someone mentioned that six of the eight performances were sold out. That is great!

The cast and crew thoroughly enjoyed working on the play and would like to thank each and every member of the audience for their enthusiastic response.

The actors made the audience respond and the audience made the actors respond. You could feel the circular response in action.

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'Daddy's Dyin' opens November 14

Rehearsals are currently in progress for the second show in SCT's 25th anniversary season, *Daddy's Dyin' Who's Got the Will* by Del Shores.

A two-act comedy featuring a troubled and disjointed family, *Daddy's Dyin'* is a story about a family gathering together to witness the passing of their father and hoping to find the infamous will.

As the characters attempt to get along-and grab as much inheritance as possible, they discover that there is more to their family than they once thought.

"Each night at rehearsal, we discover another facet of the characters that is fascinating," says director Molly Watkins.

"The characters are interesting, real, and funny. It has been great watching them develop."

Buford "Daddy" Turnover (Lyle Tate) has recently suf-



The cast of *Daddy's Dyin'*

fered a stroke. He has occasional moments of coherency. His mother-in law, Mama Wheelis (Terry Reese-McDowell) rules the household.

The children include Lurlene (Marianne Ulmer) the preacher's wife, Orville (Paul Ruff) a trash collector, Sara Lee (Angie Marquez) a beautician who never left home, and Evalita (Molly Jones), a divorcee six times over. Other characters

include Orville's wife, Marlene (Madeline Golden) and Evalita's current fiancé, Harmony (Robert Woodward).

Daddy's Dyin' Who's Got the Will opens on November 14th at 7:30pm. Other performances are November 15-16 and November 21-23 at 7:30 p.m. and November 17 and 24 at 2 p.m.

Reservations are encouraged and can be made by calling 323-6855.

News & Notes

For the 2002-2003 season, SCT has sold 425 season subscriptions. That's 65 more than last season.

SCT's website (<http://www.library.msstate.edu/sct/>) has information on the current and upcoming productions, photos, and lists of opportunities for involvement. Next time you're cruising through cyberspace, stop in for a visit. Newly inundated SCT President Marsha Williams encourages SCT subscribers and supporters to come to the regular business meetings, to volunteer for the committees that select the plays, maintain the theater, and keep the show on the road.

Meetings are at 7 p.m., upstairs in the Playhouse, the first Thursday of each month, unless otherwise noted. The next open meeting is at 7 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 7.

"Bring A Friend Sunday" is a new effort to fill the theater's comfortable seats on the first Sunday of each new production. Season members may bring a friend the first Sunday for half of the normal price of a single ticket.

Recent productions have been sold out the second week of performance, including the second Sunday.

Sunday performances were started long ago to accommodate theater-lovers who prefer afternoon performances or find it easier to get to the theater then. Now that the second Sunday performance has gained a following, SCT encourages better attendance on first Sundays.

Since its beginnings, SCT has produced a "First-Night-Party" on the opening night of each production. Everyone who attends the show is invited upstairs afterward for a celebration.

The cast, crew, and theatre fans have a chance to talk about, analyze, and deconstruct the play, and just plain enjoy each others' company. It's a lot of work to put together a community theater production, and it's all done by volunteers. First night parties are one of SCT's ways of thanking everyone involved for their hard work and support.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY!!!! Sell-out audiences are becoming much more common. Don't miss your chance to see the latest production!

Children's Christmas musical Dec. 13, 14

What do the Starkville Community Theatre and the title character from the Broadway classic *Mame* have in common? Both believe 'we need a little Christmas' – now!

To help celebrate this year's holiday season, SCT will produce a children's Christmas musical. But to make the show a success, the theatre needs a lot of talent – now!

Auditions for the children's musical will be held Sunday, Nov. 3 from 2-4 p.m. and Monday from 6-7 p.m. The show is open to all children 16 and under. Production dates are Dec. 13 and 14.

Directed by Pattye Archer and MJ Etua, the show will feature popular



Christmas carols, hymns and even a few Broadway tunes, like "We Need a Little Christmas" from *Mame*.

"We have a great selection of music – most of which the children and our audiences will already know," said Etua.

The Christmas musical, which is not part of the regular season, was created as a way to get more children involved in SCT.

Etua said music would be available during the auditions.

"We will have music available for anyone wanting to audition Sunday and Monday. All the children need to do is come ready to sing," she said.

Archer said she and Etua realize that the holidays are a busy time, so the rehearsal schedule for the show will reflect that.

"We will have a limited number of rehearsals, and children will be expected to learn songs on their own time," Archer said. "And parents will need to make a commitment to get children to rehearsals and the performances on time."

For more information, please call the theatre at 323-6855 and leave a message.

Put 'drama' in your Christmas gift-giving

Season tickets for the remaining SCT productions would make fine Christmas gifts for friends and family already supplied with slippers, ties, and chocolate.

For senior citizens, a ticket for each of the remaining two productions costs \$15. For regular tickets, the cost is \$20.



Season tickets may be used in sequence, one for each production, or both tickets may be used for one production.

As a stocking-stuffer, buy a gift certificate to be used at one show:

\$10 for seniors, \$12 for regular tickets. Information available by leaving a message at the Playhouse, 323-6855.

Project P.L.A.Y. takes children to Africa

By M.J. Etua

For Project P.L.A.Y. this year I decided it would more economical to write a play for the children. I could then concentrate on one theme and also write characters, which would highlight the talents of each of our young actors.

Our cast included six new actors between the ages of five and ten and eleven returning actors between the ages of 5 and 13. Our crew included to high school students, both age 15. Chad Talkington, a Starkville native who now works as a professional set designer in New Orleans, designed the set.

We began auditions on the last two weekends in May and began rehearsals in the first week of June. We had scheduled 10 performances: five evening shows

during the last week of June and five free daily performances specifically for day care centers and day schools.

The Macon library asked us to do a presentation for their summer program. On June 11, we went Macon and did two programs for a total of 40 children.

On June 12 we did two programs for the Starkville library for a total of 200 children.

During the day shows, six different organizations requested performances. We gave four free performances for a total of 250 children.

The evening performances were also well received.

SCT has been asked to showcase The Storyteller at the annual Mississippi Theatre Association convention in the third week of January 2003, in Tupelo.

Audition dates for 'Marriage to an Older Woman' set

Auditions for Marriage to an Older Woman will be held at the Playhouse on Main on Tuesday and Wednesday, December 10 and 11, beginning at 7 p.m.

The cast includes two men - Carl (a 60ish entrepreneur) and Howard (a 44 year old real estate man) and two women - Babs (a woman who does NOT look 73) and Freddy (Bab's daughter, a business woman, 38).

**AUDITIONS:
DECEMBER 10 & 11
7:00 P.M.**

All the action takes place when Carl meets Babs at the midnight buffet on a romantic cruise, when they both reach for the last stuffed mushroom.

Three days later, they marry. When Babs' daughter, Freddy, points out the differ-

ence in their ages, Carl points out that his captivation with Babs has nothing to do with age!

However, Carl is ready to retire. He wants to relax, play some golf, do some reading, putter around in a garden and "keep from getting tense!"

Having a 73-year-old wife fits his plans exactly!

But, as it turns out, Babs isn't ready for anything of the kind. She likes living in the

city in an apartment, "...in the middle of the ACTION!"

She wants to BE exciting, part of the excitement. She is NOT looking forward to a peaceful retirement...Never even considered slowing down! And this is the heart of the complications: the conflict that keeps things moving, exciting, and hilarious!

Books will be at the playhouse at times to be announced a bit later.

Big Time! raises big money

Starkville Community Theatre had a big time this summer with the annual musical revue.

Featuring numbers from nearly 20 Broadway productions and 16 talented cast members, *Big Time!* raised more than \$6,700 for SCT.

The funds were raised during three sold out performances at the Playhouse on Main and two dinner-theatre productions at the State Theatre, located behind the International Bistro.

"We decided to add a show to the musical revue this year, because of past success," said director Pattye Archer.

"In the past we have had a Friday and Saturday night performance, but this year we added a Thursday show."

The Friday and Saturday performances were followed by a dessert reception. Thursday's show was performance only.

Following the Friday night performance, the owner of the State Theatre expressed an interest in producing the show as a dinner theatre.

After talking with the cast, Archer approached the SCT Board about collaborating with the State Theatre.

"We felt like it was a wonderful opportunity to not



Sixteen talented performers took the stage for Big Time!

only extend the run of the show, but to partner with Dave and the State Theatre by offering a dinner theatre experience for the community," Archer said.

"The event was very successful, and I hope SCT has an opportunity to work with the State Theatre again."

The cast of *Big Time!* included MJ Etua, Madeline Golden, Brian Hawkins, Thomas La Foe, Angie Marquez, Terry McDowell, Vivien Miller, Seth Oppenheimer, Chandra Reyes, Cindy Ruff, Paul Ruff, Gabe Smith, Lyle Tate, Andrew Watkins, Molly Watkins and Toni Woodward.

Banquet celebrates 24th season

On June 6, SCT held its annual end-of-season banquet at the Playhouse on Main.

Open to anyone who'd like to attend, the end-of-season banquet each year traditionally commemorates and celebrates a successful season of productions, and this year's banquet did just that.

Catered by local chef Tracee Watkins' company Freeland Foods, the evening of dinner and entertainment was well attended.

For the evening's entertainment, banquet coordinators Madeline Golden and Lyle Tate compiled a group of actors to preview pieces from

the then upcoming 2002-2003 season. Involved in the readers theatre styled performance were Golden, Thomas La Foe, Terry Reese McDowell, Tate, Andrew Watkins, Molly Watkins, Marsha Williams.

The banquet also officially brought to a close the presidency of Terry Reese McDowell and ushered in new president Marsha Williams. McDowell served as SCT president from 2000 to 2002.

"Serving as president of SCT has been a great adventure and lot of work," McDowell said, "but I've had a wonderful experience."

Blues and BBQ much fun, as always

The rain held off again this year. The police showed up to close off the street. The "Old Venice" crew came out for a spot of blues.

"Big Jim and the Hotshots" showed up again to play the blues. And a whole lot of volunteers worked to set up and serve up the food.

Before that, there were the donors of goods, services, and time. This year, "Nice Save" Award goes to James McPhail, who took on the barbecuing of two large ice chests full of pork shoulders at the last minute.

Other major contributors included (of course) "Big Jim and the Hotshots," Pattye Archer and her communications students (who came to

pull pork, serve dinner, and help clean up), Kroger's Supermarket, Chi-Chi's Balloons, Sara Lee, Starkville Bank Association, City Bagel, Little Dooney, Winn Dixie, Starkville Ice Co., Pepsi America, and Food Max.

Though not the biggest crowd ever, 2002's group seemed to enjoy the event.

A couple of rows of "under-10's," who brought their parents, lounge chairs and their sippy cups, were particularly in sync with the beat.

Due to all the donated food, time, and talent, SCT raised \$700 toward its new building addition. Thanks to all who helped and all who were there to enjoy the evening.