



# STAGE Write

FALL 2003

STARKVILLE COMMUNITY THEATRE

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2

Starkville Community Theatre  
P.O. Box 1254  
Starkville, MS 39760



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## Expansion

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Commission money, we must contribute our 40 percent of the project funds," Marsha says.

"We have done well with the fund-raising, but we still need about \$7,000. Any contribution from \$10 to \$15,000 will be welcomed."

Marsha and her husband Clyde, an MSU English professor, and SCT members Mary Shelton and Stephen Cunetto, wrote the grant that won the Arts Commission Funding.

The Commission had \$4 million for grant requests last year and several groups with projects at the \$500,000 level.

SCT's project, based on a design by the office of Shelton Jones, Starkville architect, uses a metal-framed-and-sided extension to the rear of the brick commercial building that houses our



Left photo: Bob Anderson, Edwin Ellis, Thomas La Foe, Joan Embree, Mary Eleanor Anderson with the contractor. Right photo: Lyle Tate, Marianne Ulmer, Molly Watkins, Charles Petersen, Bob Anderson, Marsha Williams, Wayne Tubb and Dom Cunetto.



"storefront" theater.

In the remodeling of the former Main Street Katz store into a theater, most of the effort went into building a stage and a raked seating area with comfortable seats.

The very shallow area behind the stage remains the only workshop and backstage work space available. And the "green rooms" where actors dress and make up are ceiling-less plywood "boxes" at former store mezzanine level.

The addition will house a comfortable and well-lit "green room" and a shop at ground level and a storage floor above.

A major donation was made by Joe and Leota Cardwell, who gave money for the already-installed Assisted Listening system for patrons with hearing difficulties.

This system was in place for SCT's first show of the 2003-2004 season. Other

major contributors include Ruth Herman, Nona and Bryan Baker, the City of Starkville, the Starkville Visitors and Convention Bureau, and the Starkville Area Arts Council.

Contributions may be made by calling the theater at 323-6855 and leaving a message on the answering machine, or in person during the hours the box office is manned in and near production time.



Major contributors Ruth Herman, Nona and Bryan Baker, Leota and Joe Cardwell and Andy Gaston at the groundbreaking ceremony.

## Groundbreaking held for theatre's expansion project

Work on Starkville Community Theatre's rear addition began with a dusty, hot, groundbreaking ceremony Thursday, Oct. 24, on the theater's back lot.

SCT President Marsha Williams, current Board of Directors members, major donors, past presidents and board members, building committee members, and assorted fans gathered for photo coverage of the first few flying shovels full of gravel.

The serious work will begin when David Crowson of Crowson Construction Company (Louisville, MS) and his crew clear the rubble and begin the foundation work for the back-stage area. The projected completion date for the job is Jan. 31, 2004.

The addition is funded by many local contributors of both large and small amounts and by a \$59,120 grant from the Mississippi Arts Commission.

The Arts Commission money represents 50 percent of the total estimated project cost. The grant represented 60 percent of the original projected cost, but the bids were higher than expected, according to Williams.

"Before SCT can receive the Arts

## 'Inspecting Carol' opens Nov. 13

SCT's second production of the 2003-2004 season opens Thursday, Nov. 13 with a 13-member cast comprised of both veterans and newcomers.

*Inspecting Carol*, a comedy written by Daniel Sullivan and the Seattle Repertory Co., will be staged at SCT's Playhouse on Main Nov. 13 to 16 and Nov. 20 to 23. Patty Archer is directing the show with assistance from Alison Stamps and Stephen Cunetto.

The show tells the story of a theatre company in an artistic rut as its cast and crew rehearse the annual production of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

The characters learn that the company, already strapped financially, is to lose the National Endowment for the Arts grant money they need to keep their playhouse afloat. However, they learn that they have one more chance to keep the grant money pending one last inspection by an NEA official.

"Of course, confusion reigns as the company works to please the inspector, with hilarious results," said Archer, a



The cast of *Inspecting Carol*

former SCT officer and board member who directed last year's *Queen of Bingo* and four previous summer musical revues.

Cast members for *Inspecting Carol* include SCT veterans Madeline Golden, Marianne Ulmer, Lyle Tate, M.J. Etua, Molly Watkins, Jay Cooper, Ty Phillips, Thomas La Foe and Brian Hawkins, along with newcomers Joseph U. Seymer, Chad Allgood, Carole Ramsey and Vincent Smith.

"This is such a talented cast, and I am amazed each night at their energy and dedication. It is not easy to work or go to school all day and then come to the theatre each night and learn blocking, lines, how to speak, how to stand - but this cast keeps giving their all,"

Archer said. "We have newcomers and veterans alike in this show, and that is always exciting."

The cast members say that *Inspecting Carol* could rank as one of the funniest plays ever staged at SCT.

"If you are having a bad week, come and see this play and the rest of your year will be filled with laughter. This play is nonstop comedy from start to finish," said Joseph Ura Seymer of Carthage, an MSU student making his SCT debut in *Carol* as Wayne Wellacre.

Ulmer, an MSU Department of Communication instructor who plays Zorah Bloch in the show, agrees.

"People should come to see this play to laugh out loud until their face hurts," Ulmer said.

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## Deathtrap opens SCT's 26th season with a bang

On September 28, 2003, SCT closed its season opener *Deathtrap* by Ira Levin. Over 600 people from the community saw the production.

Filled with surprises, twists, and humor, *Deathtrap* kept audiences on the edge of their seats.

Wonderful performances were given by Paul Ruff, Lyle Tate, Madeline Golden, MJ Etua, and Edwin Ellis.

The depth and talent that each actor brought to their respective roles set a high bar for the rest of the SCT season. Director Molly Watkins and Assistant Director Paula Mabry led a professional cast and crew to success.

One of the most impressive elements of the production, however, was the extent of community involvement that the show garnered. Students from Starkville High School and Louisville High School consistently participated in set building days on Saturdays.

These students learned from more experienced SCT members how to build, paint, and decorate theatre sets. Other volunteers gladly loaned weapons and set pieces to help decorate the set.

*Deathtrap*, both a success on stage and behind the scenes, was fun for the cast and crew and audiences.

Without so much help from the community, the show would not have been as successful or as rewarding. Congratulations to the cast, crew, and community for a great show!

## Be a part of selecting next season's shows

Ever wonder how SCT chooses the shows for each season? Welcome to the world of Play Selection!

SCT has a committee called the Play Selection Committee that meets once or twice a month to discuss different plays.

Led by the Vice President for Play Selection (currently Molly Watkins), the committee members read between 20 to 50 plays throughout the year to choose the best four to complete the next year's seasons.

Play Selection Committee meetings begin in early August and run throughout the year.

The committee spends



the fall reading several plays in the hopes to narrow down to four shows in the early spring.

After the shows are chosen, the committee turns to the daunting task of choosing directors.

Interested members tell the VP for Play Selection that they are interested in

directing, and the committee matches shows to directors. These steps take place in the spring.

The final step involves the committee's recommending the shows, directors, and calendars to the SCT Board and members. If approved, the next season is set.

Anyone can be on the Play Selection Committee, but it does involve a lot of reading.

Contact Molly Watkins at [molly@ra.msstate.edu](mailto:molly@ra.msstate.edu) if you are interested in suggesting a show or directing a show for the new season. For updates on play selection happenings, come to the SCT meetings!

## Christmas bells are ringing - time to get singing

For the past two Christmas seasons, a jolly group of SCTers has gathered at the Playhouse on Main and set out caroling to many Starkville residents.

This year, we are looking forward to another fun night of singing and spreading holiday cheer. Our caroling date is tentatively set for Sunday night, Dec. 14.

If you would like to carol with us, just grab a coat and scarf and join us at the Playhouse at 6.30 p.m., and we'll have a cup of wassail to steel us against the December chill and to "warm up" our voices before we set out on our journey.

If you or someone you know would like to be added to our list of stops along

our way, that's great, too! Just call the Playhouse at 323.6855, or call Lyle Tate at 312.3610 and leave a message on the machine saying, "Hey! Come sing to me!" and we'll do our best to get to you.

We've had such a great time and have shared many laughs caroling the past two years, and we'd love to have you to add to the merriment this year!

Please be on the lookout for emails on the SCT listserv regarding the caroling date/time as both are still tentative and subject to change. Closer to time, a message with the decided upon date/time will be posted on the theatre's answering machine as well. Thanks!



Children and adults alike set sail this summer with the wonderful production of *Sails and Tales*, an original play written by SCT's own MJ Etua. Etua is the director of Project P.L.A.Y., SCT's summer children's theatre program.

## Auditions for *Proof* to be held December 2 and 3

SCT will hold auditions for *Proof*, the third regularly scheduled show for the 2003-2004 season, on Tuesday and Wednesday, Dec. 2 and 3 beginning at 7 p.m. onstage in the Playhouse on Main.

Cast members will be needed for four roles, 2 men and 2 women.

ROBERT is in his 50s. He is Catherine's father... described by the author as having a "rumpled, academic look..." he is a professor of mathematics.

CATHERINE is about to have her 25th birthday. She is

**AUDITIONS:  
DECEMBER 2 & 3  
7:00 P.M.**

described as "exhausted, hap-hazardly dressed."

CLAIRE is in her early thirties. She is sophisticated, stylish, attractive, a successful, pragmatic Wall Street type.

HAL is 28 or so. "...semi-hip clothes. He carries a backpack and a jacket..." He is a graduate student in mathematics.

Scripts will be available at

the Playhouse during the run of *Inspecting Carol*, and may be obtained at the box office.

A critic for the *New York Observer* says: "...As I was saying, I know exactly where I stand on scientific matters. I stand shamefacedly and headachy at the bottom of the class."

As the wise man says: "It's all a mystery to me." Science and befuddlement are the passing Zeitgeist of today's drama.

But my relief that David Auburn's *Proof* is less about its ballyhooed higher mathematics and the fragility of life and love

was matched by my delight in his fine and tender play.

"*Proof* is sure to be Mr. Auburn's breakthrough drama... *Proof* surprises us with its aliveness and intellectual modesty, and we have not met these characters before. Mr. Auburn takes pleasure in knowledge ... At the same time, he is unshowily fresh and humane, and he has written a lovely play."

The director is Bob Anderson. To contact him: e-mail him at [rgal@ra.msstate.edu](mailto:rgal@ra.msstate.edu) or phone him at 323-3259.

## Season tickets to be sold for three remaining plays

Here is your last chance to purchase a season ticket for the remaining three plays.

Your season ticket will enable you to beat the crowd and make early reservations, receive invitations to special events, and vote during all SCT general membership meetings.

In addition, your purchase will help support the arts in our community and Mississippi.

The season tickets for the three remaining plays will be sold at the box office during the run of our second play *Inspecting Carol*. The cost will be \$30.00 for Regular



season tickets, and \$22.50 for senior season tickets.

In addition, SCT Christmas gifts may be purchased for single or multiple performances - Regular (\$12 or multiples thereof), Seniors (\$10 or multiples thereof).

Please place your orders by calling 323-6855.

We hope to see you at the second play of the SCT 2003-2004 Season.

## Deadline Dawn auditions set

Auditions for *Deadline Dawn*, SCT's entry for the upcoming Mississippi Theatre Association Festival to be held in January on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, will be held Tuesday, Nov. 25 and Sunday, Nov. 30 at 6 p.m. at the Playhouse on Main.

Directed by multiple MTA award-winner Paula Mabry, *Deadline Dawn* consists of a cast of two women and two men. The characters

in this drama include a man and a woman who kidnap the daughter of an ambassador and hold her hostage, and a priest who tries to intervene.

Last year, SCT's *Over the River and Through the Woods* was well received at MTA, earning acting awards for Kathi Hester, Gabe Smith and Madeline Golden.

For more information, call the theatre at 323-6855.



Joe Cardwell (left) was one of Starkville Community Theatre's dearest friends and strongest supporters.

## SCT loses dear friend, supporter

Starkville Community theatre joins the rest of the community in mourning the death of Dr. Joe T. Cardwell. Dr. Cardwell and his wife, Leota, who survives him, are long-time supporters and benefactors of SCT.

Major gifts include the lighting control system, given in honor of their son, David,

and the newly installed hearing- or sight-systems which will give assistance to patrons. Joe will be missed.

He and Leota always supported SCT productions by their presence and praise. The Starkville Community Theatre extends our heartfelt condolences to Leota and to the Cardwell family.

## SCT goes High Tech

Reserve your seat to SCT's next production online:  
[sctreservations@bellsouth.net](mailto:sctreservations@bellsouth.net)