



STAGE Write

FALL 2004

STARKVILLE COMMUNITY THEATRE

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 2

Membership nears 500; SCT expecting record season

Starkville Community Theatre is poised to reach more people than ever before during its 27th season. According to Debbie Dunaway, SCT Vice President for Membership, the theatre has sold more than 475 season memberships, and orders are still coming in.



"This looks like it could be one of our top years in terms of season tickets," Dunaway said.

There are several reasons to purchase season tickets, including discounted admission, a say in theatre business, and a chance to make reservations before the general public. "A season ticket gets you four admissions into SCT productions," said Dunaway.

"That means with one ticket you can see each show once, you can see one show four times, or you and friend could see two shows - all at a discount to the regular admission. "In addition to saving money, a season ticket makes

■ See Record page 4

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 119
Starkville, MS
39759

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



PAGE 4

STARKVILLE COMMUNITY THEATRE

FALL 2004

Gift

■ from page 1

The theatre purchased the keyboard and used it for the first time in this summer's musical review, *Welcome to the 60s!* It will be used again during the children's Christmas show next month and during the theatre's third production of the season, *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*.

The portion of Leadbetter's gift that went to match the BFA grant helped SCT complete its renovation and expansion project behind the theatre and renovation of the lighting system and control booth at the Playhouse on Main.

Soundproofing a small room adjacent to the control booth has also enabled SCT to make the shows more accessible to persons with visual impairments.

"We are very appreciative



Dewayne Leadbetter (left) shares a moment with Molly Watkins (center), SCT Vice President for Play Selection, and Becky Burns, who first played the keyboard donated by Leadbetter, during the summer musical.

of Dewayne's gift," said former SCT president Marsha Williams. "His contribution came at the perfect time to not only to allow us to purchase a much-needed keyboard, but also to let us move

forward and complete the renovation projects we have been working on.

"SCT could not continue to grow without the support of all our wonderful members," she added.

Record

■ from page 1

you a voting member of SCT, so you can have a say in theatre business. It also gives you the opportunity to reserve seats before non-season ticket holders, and this can be very important considering how quickly some of our shows are selling out," she added.

Season tickets are \$40 and \$30 for seniors.

"Season tickets make wonderful Christmas gifts," Dunaway added. "Buy two and you give the gift of the theatre and your time."

For more information, please call 323-6855.

Attend the
Christmas Potluck
Tuesday, Dec. 7
7:00 p.m.

Dedication, open house set for December 7

Starkville Community Theatre will celebrate the holidays in style on Tuesday, Dec. 7 - and you are invited!

The theatre will host a ribbon cutting at 4 p.m. for the new expansion, which was completed earlier this fall. The ceremony will be followed by an open house from 4-6 p.m. and the annual potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m. All SCT members are invited to take part in any and all of the events.

"We are so proud of our new expansion and so very grateful to our supporters who made it possible," said SCT President Ann Bonner. "The ribbon cutting and open house are an opportunity for us to show off the new space and say thank you all at the same time!"

The new expansion, which includes a dressing room, a green room, a storage area and construction area, was constructed using funds from a grant from the Mississippi Arts Commission and matching donations from the community.

The space has made a huge difference for the actors and volunteers who work on SCT's many productions.

In addition to the afternoon events, SCT will hold its annual pot luck dinner that same evening. Bonner said the dinner is also open to all SCT members and supporters.

"We will start with a social time at 6:30 p.m. and start the pot luck dinner around 7:00 p.m. And of course we will have some great entertainment.

"This dinner is for everyone, and we hope to have so many people we fill up the



Kathi Hester (left) and Alison Stamps (right) put the finishing touches on Stephanie Ashley's outfit in the new dressing room at Playhouse on Main, before the *Welcome to the '60s!* musical revue. The backstage area, which includes the dressing room, a green room, a storage area and construction area, will be dedicated on December 7.

upstairs and downstairs both," she said. "Just bring whatever you want and come join us. This is not just for a cast or crew; this is a great way for everyone to get involved."

This year's event will be hosted by Jack and Mary Jo Wallace. If you have questions about the dinner, please contact the Wallaces at 323-3439.

"We will see you on Dec. 7," Bonner added.

Gift provides match funds for BFA grant

Starkville Community Theatre received a huge surprise from one of its newest supporters earlier this year when Dewayne Leadbetter made a generous contribution in memory of his mother, Linda Faye Gray-Leadbetter-Mann.

Leadbetter, a Library Associate at MSU, contributed \$10,000 toward two specific projects. First, he wanted the theatre to purchase a new electric keyboard, and second he wanted his gift to be used as matching funds for an \$8,890 grant SCT received from the Mississippi Arts Commission's Building for the Arts program.

"I am honored to be able to give this donation in memory of my mother," Leadbetter said. "She was an artist and a supporter of the arts, and this contribution to Starkville Community Theatre really honors that part of her."

■ See Gift page 4

Seasoned cast brings Williams' classic to life

Starkville Community Theatre's second show of the season, *The Glass Menagerie*, was a huge success.

Under the direction of Bob Anderson, the four-member cast played to large crowds, including an entire audience of high school students who had been studying the classic, for nine performances.

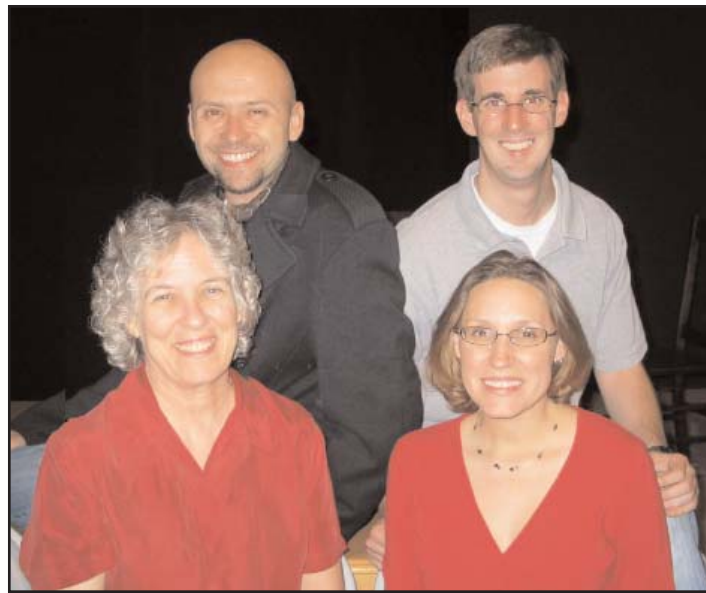
Set in St. Louis in 1938 near the end of the Depression and before World War II began, *The Glass Menagerie* is one of Tennessee Williams's best-known plays.

"It's a play that is grounded in Mississippi, both by its author's origins and its central characters' early experiences," SCT director Bob Anderson said. "SCT was delighted to bring Williams's first -and best- play to Golden Triangle-area audiences."

The cast included Jay Cooper, Marc Stewart, Elizabeth Williams, and Marsha Williams as Tom, the Gentleman Caller, Laura and Amanda, respectively.

"The cast really worked hard to make *The Glass Menagerie* a memorable experience for SCT members and area audiences," Anderson said.

As Tom Wingfield, Cooper found himself playing the nar-



Marsha Williams, Jay Cooper, Elizabeth Williams and Marc Stewart entertained audiences in "*The Glass Menagerie*."

rator, interpreter, and central figure in the play. A native of Williamson, West Virginia, Cooper is manager of Walgreens in Columbus.

His previous SCT experience includes roles in *Marriage to an Older Woman* and *Inspecting Carol*; he has also had lead roles in *Bell, Book, and Candle* (Wood Junior College) and *Dial M For Murder* (in West Virginia).

He was the first manager of the Starkville Walgreens and has recently returned to the Golden Triangle area following

more than a year in the corporation's district offices in Memphis.

SCT veteran Marsha Williams portrayed Amanda Wingfield, mother of Tom and Laura. A charter member of SCT, she has had numerous on-stage and backstage roles during SCT's 27-year history.

After completing a two-year tenure as SCT president, she performed as Ethel in *Moon over Buffalo*, earlier this fall. A native of Baton Rouge, LA, she is a Research Associate at the Social Science Research

Center at MSU. She calls her role a "challenging and rewarding one."

Elizabeth Williams, a Starkville native and special education teacher at MSU's T. K. Martin Center for Technology and Disability, played Laura, who collects glass figurines and copes with anxieties.

As a Starkville High School student, she performed in SHS's annual musicals in addition to other plays. At SCT, she has performed in two summer musical revues, *Sentimental Journey* (2001) and *Welcome to the '60s* (2004).

At the Mississippi Theatre Association's 2004 festival in January, she was named to the All-Star Cast for her work in SCT's festival entry, *Deadline Dawn*.

Marc Stewart returned to SCT as the "Gentleman Caller," Tom Wingfield's former classmate and current co-worker. An MSU graduate and native of Myrtle Beach, SC, Stewart was in MSU productions of *A Doll's House*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Gypsy*, and *The Man Who Came to Dinner*.

His earlier SCT stage experience came in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* (2000). In January he enters training as an Army JAG officer.

Love and laughter come to life on the SCT stage in February

Ten amazing actors will take the Playhouse stage in February 2005 in various relationship roles in one of the hottest and funniest musicals in recent years!

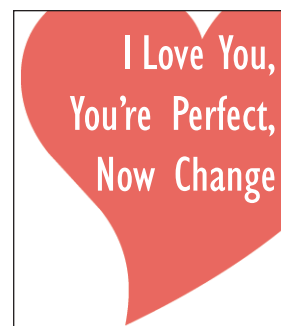
I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change, currently in its ninth year playing off-Broadway, is a hilarious and touching look at life, love, and the pursuit of sanity and the perfect mate through dating, marriage, parenting, divorce, and more dating.

Written by Joe Dipietro (*Over the River and Through the Woods*) and Jimmy Roberts (*A...My Name is Alice*) and with songs and situations to which everyone in SCT's audience can be sure to relate, *I Love You...* is sure to please!

Directed by the team of Paula Mabry

and Pattye Archer (most recently the directors of this year's MTA award-winning *Deadline Dawn* and this summer's blockbuster *Welcome to the '60s!*, respectively), *I Love You...* features a knockout power-house cast.

MJ Etua, Joe Evans, Madeline Golden, Christina Kenney, Thomas La Foe, Paul Ruff, Lyle Tate, Marianne Ulmer, Krista Vowell, and Molly Watkins will keep SCT



crowds laughing, clapping, and cheering for more when *I Love You...* opens on February 10th.

"I am so thrilled to be a part of this musical," said Tate. "I fell in love with this show a little over three years ago and have wanted to bring it to SCT ever since."

"It's so much fun, and this cast is just going to blow people away--if I do say so myself! What a joy it will be to stage this production with so many of my closest friends," he added.

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change will open on February 10th and run through the 13th, reopening on the 15th and running through the 19th. Keep watching for announcements as to when reservations are available!

Christmas and children go together this December

Holiday musical runs Dec. 9-11

Santa Claus is coming to town, and he is bringing a new Christmas musical for the children of Starkville and Oktibbeha County.

That's right! Starkville Community Theatre is once again teaming up with Santa to present a children's Christmas musical.

Santa Jr.'s World Tour, is written and directed by MJ Etua. The show focuses on a young boy whose grandfather is Santa Claus. The boy, Santa Jr., circles the world in the show, allowing the audi-

ence to experience Christmas from many different cultures, Etua said.

The musical, featuring children aged 5 and up, will be staged Thursday-Saturday, Dec. 9th through 11th.

"This will be our second Christmas show for children, and we are very excited," said Etua. "Last year we were unable to do the show because of all the renovations on the building. But now we have our new expansion complete, and there is more room than ever before for all the



children in the show."

Etua, who directs Project P.L.A.Y. every summer, said it is important for children to have the opportunity to experience theatre - both as an audience member and as a

member of the cast or crew. She is proud of SCT's efforts to provide theatrical opportunities for local children.

"Any time you give children the opportunity to be in the theatre and experience what it is like to be on stage and part of a show you are doing something worthwhile," Etua said. "We all know that the arts have wonderful benefits for children, and this is our way of reaching out."

For more information on the show, or to make a reservation, please call the theatre at 323-6855.

Make plans to attend MTA Festival 2005 in Meridian

If you love great theatre, Meridian is the place to be this January.

Meridian Community College and the Mississippi State University Meridian Campus will host the 2005 Mississippi Theatre Association Festival the weekend of January 14-16.

The festival will feature community theatres and high schools from across the state competing for awards including Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Director and Best Show.

This year the top community theatre show will advance to the American Association of Community Theatre's festivals. SCT will compete for that honor with the original show, *Loose Hog in the House of God*, written by thomas kristopher.

"MTA is a wonderful experience for anyone who loves theatre," said SCT president Ann

Bonner. "This is not just something for people who are involved with a show. If you enjoy good theatre, you will enjoy the festival."

"With this year's festival being so close, it is a great time for you to see what MTA is all about. Especially since in 2006, SCT will be hosting MTA here in Starkville," she added.

Those attending the 2005 MTA Festival will enjoy a fun-filled weekend with performances from community theatres, nine high schools and children's theatres as well as workshops and plenty of time for networking.

"The Community Theatre Division is continuing to grow and become one of the best divisions in MTA. I want to encourage the SCT family to partici-

pate in the Mississippi Theatre Association's annual festival by coming to see the

Cunetto to direct SCT's MTA entry

Building on a long reputation of excellence, Starkville Community Theatre will once again enter a competition show to the Mississippi Theatre Association Festival.

Directed by Dominic J. Cunetto, a former president of MTA, SCT will produce *Loose Hog in the House of God*, an original work by thomas kristopher, better known to SCT audiences as Kris Lee.

The award-winning play will have its official debut in New Orleans, but the author - who got his start here in Starkville - is allowing SCT to perform the "tragic comedy" for competition in January.

Starring Gabe Smith as Macon and Deanna Dye as Yinnie, the show focuses on an abandoned roadside in the red clay hills of Mirra, Mississippi, where Macon, a young man on the run, has unfortunately wrecked his car.

Tucked away on a billboard sign on top of this overpass is the mysterious and engaging Yinnie, a young woman who unwittingly

helps Macon come to terms with the crime of passion he's committed and his overwhelming source of anger.

Whether on purpose or by accident, Yinnie forces Macon to recognize the consequences of ignoring his own self-worth. Together they devise a plan to conquer not just the world around them, but themselves as well.

Cunetto said the cast will soon begin rehearsals for the production, which will compete against other community theatres during the 2005 MTA Festival. Assisting with the show are Marcus Vowell, assistant director, and Thomas La Foe, technical director.

SCT has had a great deal of success at MTA during recent years, including last year when the cast and crew of *Deadline Dawn* received numerous awards including Best Director (Paula Mabry), Best Ensemble Acting (MJ Etua, Thomas La Foe, Gabe Smith and Elizabeth Williams), Best Actress (MJ Etua), Best Show Runner-Up, and two All-Star awards.

shows and take part in the workshops and social events," said SCT's Stephen

Cunetto, who serves as executive director of MTA.

For more informa-

tion on MTA, visit the organization's website at <http://www.mta-online.org/index.htm>.