

Starkville Community Theatre presents

James Comans, Brian Hawkins,
Thomas La Foe and Lyle Tate in

Forever PLAID

By Stuart Ross

Directed by Molly Watkins

April 24-27 and April 29-May 4, 2008



Produced by special arrangement with Music Theatre International

Forever PLAID

By Stuart Ross

The Cast

JinxLyle Tate
FrancisJames Comans*
SparkyThomas La Foe
SmudgeBrian Hawkins
PianistCarole Sorenson

**SCT acting debut*



Forever Plaid is set in the present time. There will be no intermission.

The Crew

Director	Molly Watkins
Assistant Director	Alison Stamps
Musical Director	Carole Sorenson
Choreographers	Molly Watkins & Pattye Archer
Light Design	Thomas La Foe
Set Design	Molly Watkins
Light/Sound	Tess Graham
Backstage Crew	Madeline Golden
Costumers	Paul & Cindy Ruff, Sue Snow, & Dennis Williams
Voiceover.....	Marcus Vowell
Set Dressing.....	Molly Watkins & Alison Stamps
Hair Consultation	Jansen Fair
Lobby Decorations.....	Amanda Powers & Kris Lee
Opening Night Party.....	Marcus & Krista Vowell
Box Office	Bob Anderson & Marsha Williams
Set and Props	Pattye Archer, Ann Bonner, James Comans, Patricia Cox, Nicholas Dinep- Schneider, Tess Graham, Brit Harris, Brian Hawkins, Kristin James, Thomas La Foe, Kris Lee, Evelyn Lowery, Bonnie Oppenheimer, Amanda Powers, Carole Sorenson, Alison Stamps, Paul Ruff, Lyle Tate, Mike Tate, Andrew Watkins, Molly Watkins, and Sophie Watkins

Special Thanks

Old Venice Pizza Company
Starkville Fire Department
The Chalet
Becky Burns
Pattye Archer
June Carpenter
Lee Dempsey
Madeline Golden
Kristin James
Bruce Lesley
Paula Mabry
Mike Tate
Krista Vowell
John Wells

Musical Numbers

Deus ex Plaid
Three Coins in the Fountain
Gotta Be This or That/Undecided
Moments to Remember
Crazy 'Bout Ya Baby
No Not Much
Perfidia
Cry
Sixteen Tons/Chain Gang
Catering Drill/She Loves You
The Golden Cardigan
Catch a Falling Star
Caribbean Plaid
Heart and Soul
Mercury
Lady of Spain
Scotland the Brave
Shangri-La/Rags to Riches
Love is a Many Splendored Thing



From the Director

This show has been a dream to do from start to finish! I could not have found a better cast! This music was hard—very hard. The guys and Carole worked hours and hours to get each note, each intonation, exactly right. Just when they thought they had the music down, we made them dance while singing! Carole even had to do some blocking! When I asked them to act on top of all of that, I thought they might mutiny. I can't say enough about how funny, positive, and hard-working this cast has been. All of the "mistakes" are actually planned and a part of the characters, I'm sure. Thank you all for making this experience memorable.

Alison Stamps, our resident Assistant Director, was invaluable in her organization, positive attitude, and commitment to having everything look just right. Her creative talents can be seen in each and every plaid-covered prop. We had great fun planning the details in the props and on the stage. This show wouldn't have happened without Alison.

Working on a show like this takes the support of some wonderful people. First, Pattye Archer was invaluable in helping with choreography, creating some wonderful set pieces, and doing the programs and posters. Her creative talents added a wonderful dimension to the show. Krista Vowell also helped by stepping in to add feedback and support. Finally, Madeline Golden agreed, at the last minute, to help us backstage—what a wonderful addition she has been to the Plaid crew. I am thankful for the wonderful help we have received.

Finally, I could not be involved in theatre at all without the loving support of my husband, Andrew, and good temperament of my daughter, Sophie. I only hope that Sophie develops the love for the theatre that Andrew and I share.

My dream for this show is that it provides some joy in everyone's life. Whether you are struggling with an illness, grief, stress, or just worried about your test next week, I hope this show allows you 90 minutes of escape. We all deserve our magic moments!

So, with 1 pianist, 4 plaids, 8 different instruments, 19 songs, 20 boxes of dental floss, 50 yards of plaid material, and 105 props, I am pleased to present to you—*Forever Plaid*!

Molly Watkins, Director

Author's Note

When most of us think of the 1950s, we think of rock 'n' roll, greasers, hot rods, Elvis, Annette, Fabian, DA., haircuts and teenage rebellion. But there was a flip side to this era - the side of harmony, innocence and the sincerity of dreams. It is the side that's been lost in the shuffle of progress. It was a time when most parents and kids listened and danced to the same music; when families partook of the ritual of gathering in front of the TV to watch their favorite variety shows, like the "Ed Sullivan Show" or "The Perry Como Show." It was a time when every family worked to fulfill the American Dream.

It was a period when four-part guy groups harmonized their way across the airwaves, jukeboxes and hi-fis of the country. Throughout the land, they would stand at a quartet of microphones, crooning a multitude of chapersoned prom-goers into dreamy romance.

They wore dinner jackets and bow ties (or perhaps cardigans and white bucks). Each move was drilled to precision. Each vocal arrangement soared to stratospheric heights of harmony. This sound crested right before rock 'n' roll stole the heartbeat of music across the globe.

During this time, guys across the country banded together to sing in the basement for fun. If things worked out they might be hired to sing at weddings, conventions, proms and country club socials. Inspired by the success of the recording stars, they made plans to move into careers of Fame and Fortune. But the musical taste of the USA was changing, and the country would not stop to listen to their dreams.

This is the story of such a group - **FOREVER PLAID**.

Once upon a time, there were four guys (Sparky, Smudge, Jinx and Frankie) who loved to sing. They all met in high school, when they joined the audiovisual club (1956). Discovering they shared an affection for music and entertaining, they got together and dreamed of becoming like their idols - The Four Aces, The Four Lads, The Four Freshman, The Hi-Los and The Crew Cuts. They rehearsed in the basement of Smudge's family's plumbing supply company. It was here they became Forever Plaid - a name that connects the continuation of traditional values of family, home and harmony.

Although rock 'n' roll was racing down the fast lane like a candy apple "vette," they believed in their music. As their sound developed, they sang at family gatherings, fund-raisers, and eventually graduated to supermarket openings and proms. They had little time for romance or leisure, for they supported their fantasy by holding down day jobs - Frankie was in dental supplies. Smudge was in bathroom fixtures. Jinx was in auto parts. Sparky was in better dresses. They devoted themselves to singing nights and on weekends. Then, finally, they landed their first big gig at the Airport Hilton cocktail bar - The Fusel Lounge.

February 9, 1964

En route to pick up their custom-made plaid tuxedos, they were slammed broadside by a school bus filled with eager Catholic teens. The teens were on their way to witness the Beatles make their U.S. television debut on the "Ed Sullivan Show" and miraculously escaped uninjured. The members of Forever Plaid were killed instantly. It is at that moment, when their careers and lives ended, that the story of *FOREVER PLAID* begins.

Through the Power of Harmony and the Expanding Holes in the Ozone Layer, in conjunction with the positions of the planets and all that astrotechnical stuff, they are allowed to come back to perform the show they never got to do in life.

And having completed their Mission of Harmony, our men in plaid must return to the cosmos. Although they may be gone, through this production their dreams live on forever.



About the Cast

James Comans (Francis) is absolutely thrilled to be appearing in his first SCT production, though he has been hanging around the theatre and its regulars for quite some time now. Before *Forever Plaid*, James could be seen in Theatre MSU productions, playing roles such as Jack in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Guildenstern in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. He also fostered his love for comedy early on as a founding member of MSU's Lab Rats Comedy troupe. After *Plaid* is over, though, James's next adventure has been set for June as he marries his fiancée, Kristin, and sets out with her to build a life together. James wants to thank Kristin, his friends and family, but most of all, the amazing women working behind (and in) the scenes on *Plaid*. We all have heard "Behind every successful man is a great woman," but seldom before was that ever so, so true as in SCT's production of *Forever Plaid*.

Brian Hawkins (Smudge) is making his sweet 16th appearance on the SCT stage with his role as "Smudge" in *Forever Plaid*, and he couldn't think of a sweeter show in which to be performing. Brian's recent appearances include the 2007 SCT musical revue, *The Power of One*, and the rollicking farce *Not Now, Darling* in September 2006, in which he portrayed a philandering casino owner (TOTALLY playing against type). Favorite SCT roles include "Julian" in *Communicating Doors* in 2005, "Phil" in *Inspecting Carol* in 2003 and "Will Masters" in *Bus Stop* in 2002. When not running amok on the SCT stage, Brian works as the editor of the *Starkville Daily News*, recently celebrating his 10-year anniversary with the newspaper. He is also a member of First United Methodist Church, where he sings in the chancel choir, and is an active volunteer with Mississippi State's Famous Maroon Band and the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, among other activities. Brian thanks Molly, Alison and Carole for their incredible dedication, organization and huge amounts of work on this show. To Lyle, Thomas and James, "I can't think of three other guys with whom I've had more fun or with whom I'd rather share this incredible performing experience. Let's do this!" Brian lovingly dedicates this performance to his parents, Ron and Joyce Hawkins, in celebration of their upcoming and well-earned retirement.

Thomas La Foe (Sparky) is tickled plaid to be part of this production. When he was a little techie back in Greenville he saw and traveled with a production of *Forever Plaid* and loved every minute and every note of the show. Now that he's all grown up, he finally gets a chance to don a plaid tux and belt out the tunes he had only heard from the light booth. For those of you who may be skeptical about the "grown up" part, you might be surprised to find out that he plans to graduate this May with his Masters in Instructional Technology. He has been working toward this goal since 2000 when he first came to MSU and to SCT. "I would like to thank all of my friends here in Starkville for helping me realize that this is home, and SCT for introducing me to these friends (and finding me a job!). Thank you Molly, Alison, Carole, Maddy and Tess for doing everything for us. This one is for all of you...and a little bit for me. :)"

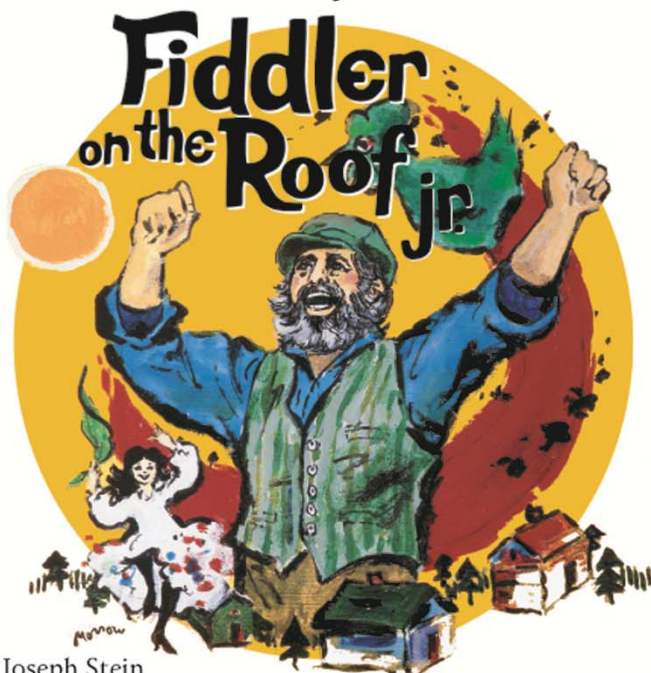
About the Cast

Lyle Tate (Jinx) has been a member of Starkville Community Theatre since 1999 and has appeared onstage (and off-) in over 35 productions including *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*; *Rumors*; *Noises Off*; *The Complete History of America [Abridged]*; *The Lion in Winter*; *The Foreigner*; and, most recently, *Art* (for which he was named to the 2008 MS Theatre Association All-Star Cast). Extra-SCT productions include *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (in 2000 with Tupelo Community Theatre and in 2006 with the Tennessee Williams Tribute Festival); *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (with Starkville FUMC); and *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding* (with MUW's Department of Music & Theatre). Lyle gives major thanks and appreciation to Molly, Alison, Carole, and his fellow Plaids for making this production a true theatre dream-come-true and love and hugs to Lee, who will be happy not to have to hear this music every single day for a while. Lyle dedicates his role in *Forever Plaid* to his dad. "If there is someone on the planet who is happier than I am that I'm in *Forever Plaid*, that person has to be my dad. Thanks, Dad, for your enthusiasm and excitement and for your and Mom's constant support of me in all of my theatrical endeavors. I love you guys!"

Carole Sorenson (Pianist & Musical Director) is employed with the law firm of Brunini, Grantham, Grower & Hewes, PLLC in Columbus. Carole has appeared on the SCT stage in several productions, including *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*; *Inspecting Carol*; *A...My Name Will Always Be Alice*; and summer musicals *25* and *The Power of One*. Carole also served as accompanist for First United Methodist Church's production of *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, as well as accompanist for the Mississippi State University Music Education's production of *The Fantasticks* and the Mississippi State University Women's Chorus production of Puccini's *Suor Angelica*.

It has truly been one of the highlights of the year to have been an honorary *Plaid* these past few weeks. "Thomas, James (aka 'Thing'), Lyle and Brian, how completely amazing your transformations have been from mild mannered SCTers by day, to *Forever Plaid* in a matter of just a few weeks. Each rehearsal and every minute spent perfecting this show has been some of the best moments I have ever spent on this stage. I absolutely had a blast from start to finish!! Molly, thank you for entrusting this task of accompanying your Plaids. I'm still a little disappointed we didn't 'mix it up' at least once, but there's always next time. It has been my honor to have been under your direction. Alison, thank you for all of your organization, your outstanding Calypso dancing skills, and your continued laughter and support throughout this process. Finally, thank you, David, for supporting my great passion for music and for your encouragement during this run. I'll be home soon!"

Starkville Community Theatre Presents



Book by: Joseph Stein

Lyrics by: Sheldon Harnick

Music by: Jerry Bock

Friday, May 9 at 7 p.m. & Saturday, May 10 at 2 p.m.

Greensboro Center Auditorium

Tickets are \$10 for adults
and \$3 for children

Tickets will be on sale at the door.
Call 323-6855 for more information.



SCT Elections

Starkville Community Theatre will elect officers and members of its Board of Directors during the regular May meeting of its membership. Please plan to attend:
Monday, May 5 at 6:00 pm.

Starkville Community Theatre

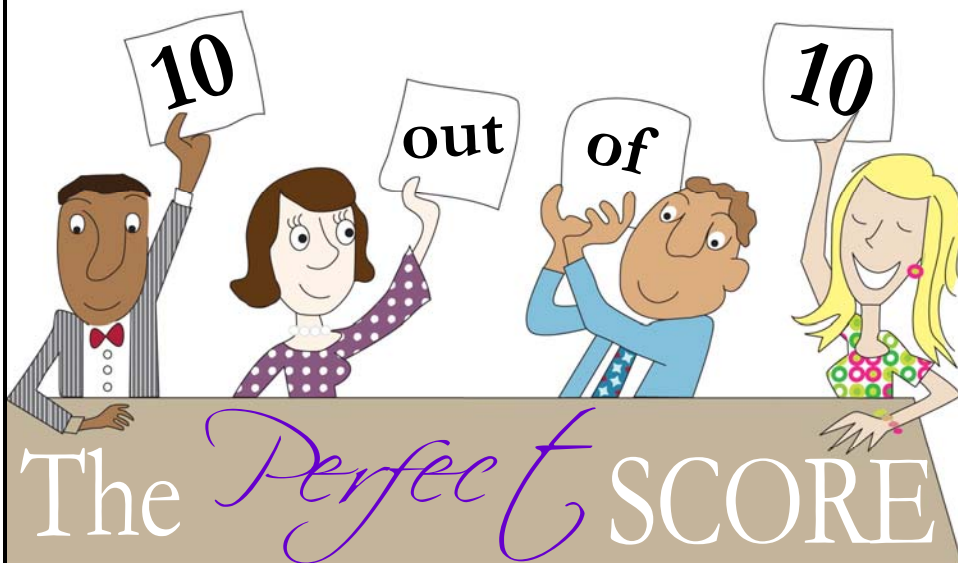
Presents the 10th anniversary of its
annual Summer Musical Revue
July 17, 18 and 19 and 24, 25 and 26

Featuring songs from the first nine years!

Auditions

Auditions will be held
Monday, May 12 and Tuesday, May 13
7:00 p.m. at the Playhouse on Main

For more information contact Pattye Archer at prcher@library.msstate.edu



Introducing the 2008-2009 Season

The Importance of Being
EARNEST



By Oscar Wilde ~ September 11-20, 2008

COMPANY

By Stephen Sondheim ~ October 30--November 8, 2008

DOUBT

By John Patrick Shanley ~ Feb. 19-28, 2009

Let's Murder
Marsha



By Monk Ferris ~ April 23-May 2, 2009

The 2007-2008 Season is sponsored by a grant in part from the Mississippi Arts Commission and in part from the National Endowment for the Arts.

