



# ACTING up

Stage direction and SCT newcomer stand out in 'Rumors'

By KRIS SISSOM  
Starkville Daily News

Starkville Community Theater newcomer Douglas Mitchell put in a fine performance Thursday night in SCT's season opener "Rumors."

Written by Neil Simon and directed by SCT rookie director Monroe Dewberry, "Rumors" will be staged tonight at 7:30 p.m., Sunday at 2 p.m., and again Oct. 7-9 at 7:30 p.m. and Oct. 10 at 2 p.m. at the Playhouse on Main.

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc., the plot of "Rumors" centers around an anniversary party at which the guests of honor are strangely absent.

The wife has vanished and the party guests, throughout the night, pick their country club brains for a solution to the dilemma of hiding a man who has attempted to commit suicide and merely nicked an ear.

Throw in a politician, a crystal worshipper, a little hearing loss and a smashed BMW that has only been driven 12 miles and you have the makings of a light-hearted, humorous production.

The rather large cast of "Rumors" includes both newcomers to and regulars of Starkville Community Theatre.

Quite effective with the audience were Mitchell, a newcomer named "Lenny" who paired nicely with Claire, played by Marianne Ulmer, an SCT classic. The playful bickering and one-liners delivered by the two actors made the audience cackle.

Other actors in the production included Carol Campbell (Officer Pudney) in her first dramatic appearance — anywhere — as a sidekick to Officer Welch, played by Tom Daniel, a cop just as satisfied by a good story as the truth.

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Brian Loden/SDN

Top: Marianne Ulmer, as Claire, and Doug Mitchell, playing the part of Lenny, act out their scenes in Neil Simon's "Rumors." Angie Marquez, playing the part of Chris, grasps the telephone and yells upstairs during the production of "Rumors" at the Playhouse on Main.

## Play

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Lyle Tate puts in an energetic performance as the exasperated Ken, who, along with his tipsy wife Chris (Angie Marquez), tries to keep his friend's suicide attempt a secret. Political hopeful Glenn (C.B. Lih) is also eager to keep the event, as well as his frank wife Cassie (Laura Daniel), quiet.

Gail McKinnon (Cookie) brings quite a bit of quirkiness to the stage

with her glittering headdress and wide-eyed exclamations, and Charles Campbell, a staple in SCT comedies such as "Divorce Southern Style" and "A Little Murder Never Hurt Anybody," is a natural comedian.

Dewberry, with the help of assistant director Paula Vaughan and second assistant Elizabeth Wheatley, can be commended for the superb directing of the actors' stage positions, especially the mad scramble of bodies just before intermission, followed by the languid attitude of the actors, who are artfully interspersed

on the split-level set, when the play resumes.

With a total of five doors, some upstairs, some downstairs, just about every inch of the set, decorated with the upholstery and artwork of an upper class home, is utilized. Set design is by Dominic Cunetto.

For reservations to "Rumors," call SCT at 323-6855.