

SCT presents 'Proposals'

Starkville Daily News

"Proposals" is a fun-loving play that is capable of entertaining all ages of theatergoers this weekend at the Playhouse on Main.

Starkville Community Theater opened its 2000-2001 Season by presenting Neil Simon's play Thursday night.

In the play, the animated, romantic entanglements of the Hines family overlap on one idyllic afternoon at their Poconos retreat in the summer of 1953.

Housekeeper Clemma faces the guilty husband who deserted her years earlier, while recovering alcoholic Burt yearns for the ex-wife he still loves. Daughter Josie pines for Ray, who arrives with a dim model, and a Miami gangster with a gift for malapropisms completes the gathering.

"Proposals" is directed by Bob Anderson, who recently directed 1999's SCT production "Grace and Glorie." The assistant director for "Proposals" is Molly Watkins.

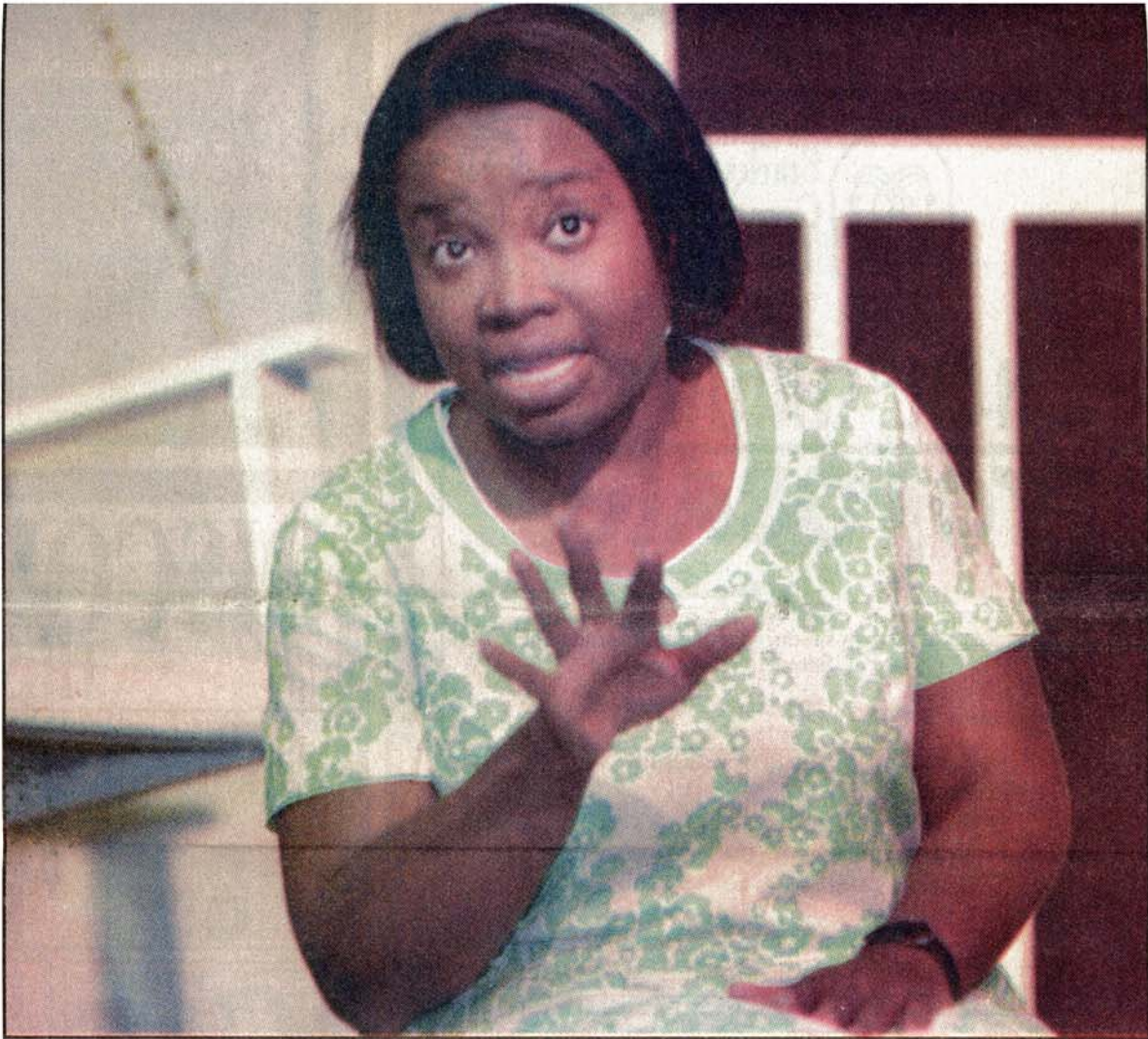
The cast includes Wilson Boyd as Vinnie Bavasi, Kim Devore as Sammie, M.J. Etua as Clemmie Diggins, Liz Johnstone as Annie Robbins, Warren Nybo as Burt Hines, Lyle Tate as Ray Dolenz, Amelia Watkins as Josie Hines, Joe Wiley as Ken Norman, and Ross Williams as Lewis Barnett.

M.J. Etua (as housekeeper Clemma) steals the show every time she hits the stage. With her sass and wit and meandering stories, she was the favorite of Thursday night's audience. Clemma is an interesting character because she exists both in the storyline and steps outside of it at times to narrate the play as someone looking back on her life.

Clemma's anger flares when long-lost husband Lewis Barnett (Ross Williams) steals back into her life. Williams does a fantastic job of playing a man who has learned what life is about, what is most important to him and how to accept his own shortcomings gracefully.

Kim Devore (Sammie), a graphic artist and 1999 graduate of MUW, is making her first appearance on the SCT stage. She does a great job of playing the ditzy, whining model

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Brian Loden/SDN

M.J. Etua plays the part of Clemma Diggins in Starkville Community Theatre's production of Neil Simon's "Proposals." Etua portrays the role of the maid that keeps the Hines' family in check as well as dealing with issues from her past. Vinnie Bavasi, played by Wilson Boyd, left, portrays a past acquaintance to Josie Hines, (Amelia Watkins), who is confronted with loves past and present. The play will be staged Thursday through Saturday at 7:30 p.m. nightly and Sunday at 2 p.m.

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who finds a fitting mate during the play.

Warren Nybo (Burt) has been active with the Columbus Community Theatre for 25 years and works for the US Postal Service. Nybo plays a hopelessly romantic ex-husband who flirts with his wife, eavesdrops on his daughter's conversations and fights with his own health. His most poignant acting is during the moments he spends talking with his daughter about her troubles.

Lyle Tate (Ray) is a senior at MSU in interior design and has been involved with SCT for the past two years. Tate plays a man who is in denial about his feelings for an ex-girlfriend who is engaged to his best friend. Unfulfilled in his field of work, Ray is a blend of insecurity and argumen-

tativeness, which Tate balances nicely in his portrayal of the character.

Wilson Boyd (Vinnie) and Amelia Watkins (Josie) are both students at MSU.

Boyd employs an interesting accent to convey his unusual vocabulary, and both Boyd and his speech were a hit with Thursday's theatergoers.

Watkins plays the creative daughter of divorced parents who seems to have inherited her father's romantic tendencies. The romantic chemistry between Watkins and Tate, even when they are bickering fiercely, shines through to the audience.

Joe Wiley (Ken) is a manager at Wal-Mart, and Liz Johnstone (Annie) has lived in Starkville one year after moving here from Canada. Johnstone plays the ex-wife of Burt who returns home occasionally to try and make peace with her daughter. Worldly and pampered, Annie has a difficult time connecting with the outdoorsy husband and daughter she left behind when she remarried.

Wiley plays the fiancée ousted by Josie and spends his part in the play blending anger with humor. The scene in which he describes Josie's prodding him with a stick to get his attention is not to be missed. Thursday's audience was in stitches.

"Proposals" will run through Oct. 8 at the Playhouse On Main, located at 108 East Main Street in Starkville. Curtain time for Oct. 5-7 is 7:30 p.m. nightly. Curtain time for Oct. 8 is 2 p.m. The house will open for seating one-half hour before curtain on all show dates.

Reservations are strongly recommended and may be obtained by calling SCT at 323-6855. Individual show tickets may be purchased for \$15 (\$12 seniors, \$7 students), or season tickets may be purchased, which give admission to each of SCT's four main season performances and the privilege of being able to reserve a ticket for the night of choice before tickets go on sale to the general public.