

# D *Starkville* DAILY NEWS

## SCT's 'Inspecting Carol' boasts 13-member cast

*From the Starkville Daily News*

Starkville Community Theatre's second production of the 2003-2004 season is currently in rehearsal 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. Pattye Archer is directing the show, with assistance from Alison Stamps and Stephen Cunetto.

The show tells the story of a theater 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, an 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 LaFoe 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 U. Seymer of Carthage, an MSU student making his SCT debut in "Carol" as Wayne Wellacre.



**The cast of Inspecting Carol**

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. The show's humor has literally given the cast plenty of laughs, said Hawkins, managing editor of Starkville Daily News, who is making his second appearance in an SCT play as Phil Hewlitt in "Inspecting Carol."

"The neatest aspect of 'Inspecting Carol' is working as part of an ensemble cast in a show with endless comic possibilities. The humor in the play runs the gamut from soup to nuts," Hawkins said. "All of us in the cast have had a many moments during rehearsal where the dialogue alone has sent us into fits of laughter. It's just that funny."

Like many a previous SCT production, "Inspecting Carol" also boasts a few plot twists and quite a few surprises for the audience. Some aspects of the show reflect real-life experiences on the SCT stage for the actors, said Golden, who works in the Mississippi

State Office of Agricultural Communications and portrays Dorothy Tree-Hapgood in the show. "I love community theater because of all the great people you get to know and love and because all the craziness that happens in the theater company portrayed in 'Inspecting Carol' has happened, does happen and will happen again here at our very own SCT," Golden said.

"Expecting the unexpected is what makes this so much fun."

Much of the staging for the show will provide SCT audiences with some new viewing experiences. The cast is working hard to make the show one audiences will remember and forming friendships in the process, said Tate, a serials specialist with MSU Libraries who plays Sidney Carlton in "Carol."

"Audiences will be totally surprised at some of the punches this show pulls. We're doing things onstage at the Playhouse that we've never done before," Tate said. "What better job could there be than working alongside your best friends every night and hopefully getting applause at the end? SCT is just home for me."