

Strand Theatre Shelbyville, Inc.

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Holiday humor

Written by David on December, 3 2008

Haupt steps up with ?Crazy Family Christmas?

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In the spirit of yesterday's variety shows - such as "The Sonny and Cher Show," "The Carol Burnette Show" and "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour" - Cindy Haupt brings madcap, over-the-top silliness to the Strand Theatre stage. Like those once popular television programs, Haupt's original production of "Our Crazy Family Christmas" features sketches interlaced with singing and dancing.

"We are going to have fun, and it's going to spill out into the audience," Haupt said.

Performances will be on Dec. 13 at 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 14 at 2:30 p.m. Doors to the Strand will open 30 minutes prior to each show. At the end of the show, Santa and Mrs. Claus will pose with children for free photos.

All proceeds from the show will be donated to the Strand Renovation Fund. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. Tickets for children ages 10 and under are \$5. Tickets are available at all Strand Theatre events as well as the following Shelbyville businesses: Mickey's T-Mart, Mac's Music, Smashed Productions and Karma Music.

Haupt created the concept and wrote the dialogue. She also performs and directs. Kim Wallace - who met Haupt during their performances of the Shelby County Players' rendition of "Nonsense" - provides music direction.

Realizing that the element of surprise amplifies humor, Haupt isn't revealing many details of her holiday romp. For a long time, even she didn't know what the show looked like in its entirety. Since the Strand is a busy venue that is used by a wide variety of performers, Haupt had to work around a hectic, fragmented schedule - often only rehearsing portions at a time.

Although she is tight-lipped about most aspects of the family-friendly production, she did reveal that the audiences will recognize the holiday songs and some of the goofy characters. Also, many performers will be familiar to fans of the Shelby County Players. Approximately 25 actors, actresses and behind-the-scenes people have worked on the "Our Crazy Family" production.

"It's wonderful to pull so many talents together," Haupt said. "We've had fun."

Creating a holiday production has been a fun ride for the arts lover, who is comfortable on the stage or behind the scenes.

"I started working on this in July," Haupt said. "I've been consumed by creativity."

Although Haupt has performed onstage as an actress with the Shelby County Players and a vocalist with the Shelby Community Band, this is first time in the director's chair. The experience has been fun but exhausting.

"There's so much that goes into a show," she said. "You have to be on top of everything. I have a deeper respect for directors now."

David M. Finkel, director of the Strand Theatre of Shelbyville Inc. executive board, hopes that a holiday show at the Strand will be an annual tradition. Since the theatre opened on Jan. 17, more than 6,200 people have attended live performances at the Strand.

"The Strand is all about facilitating live performances in Shelby County," Finkel said. "When you are attending a live performance anywhere in the community, you are fulfilling the Strand's mission."

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