



Saint Viator High School to Mount Neil Simon's "Rumors"

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The dinner guests try to figure out what to tell the police before they arrive.

Saint Viator High School students break out their swankiest evening gowns and black tie formal wear for this weekend, as they mount Neil Simon's sophisticated dinner party comedy, "Rumors."

The plot revolves around an ensemble cast of four married couples who arrives at an anniversary party only to discover that their host has been shot and his wife has gone missing.

From there, rumors run rampant as the guests all try to discover what

happened --- and keep it from the police.

"It is very high-energy comedy, with a cast of colorful, neurotic characters," says Director Kate Costello. "It's described as a 'drawing room farce,' with slamming doors, running up stairs and tripping over phone cords, all of which calls for lots of theatricality.

"It's really a screwball comedy --- with an element of mystery," Costello adds.

It was just this type of physical comedy that kept the play from being developed into a film, Costello says, but makes the show perfect for high school students looking to get hooked on slapstick and broaden their theatrical experience.

Freshman Tim Ackerlund of Schaumburg has performed in more than a dozen musicals with the company, Schaumburg on Stage, at the Prairie Center for the Arts, but Rumors is his first comedy.

In it, he finds himself a long way away from large scale, musical theater numbers. Instead, he is cast as Glen Cooper, a politician accused of cheating on his wife.

"I like the tighter focus with an ensemble cast like this," Ackerlund says. "It lets you focus on your characterization more. And it helps that as a cast, we're very close. I think our camaraderie with one another comes across on stage."

Junior Ciara Collins of Mount Prospect makes the transition from her role as the Wicked Witch in last winter's "Wizard of Oz," to playing one of the dinner guests, Claire.

"She's very sarcastic and always has an answer for everything," Collins says. "It's so many lines to memorize and it's been hard to get the timing down, but once you get it, it's really fun. We're having such a good time with it."

Another dinner party guest, junior Kevin Anderson of Roselle, agrees that the banter back and forth between characters makes the show sing, so to speak.

"It's the situations (Simon) puts you in, and all of the witty dialogue," Anderson says. "It's all legitimately funny."