STEPHEN BOATRIGHT

If you're looking for Christmas cheer, Greenville's downtown theaters are serving up both the naughty and the nice.

Three family plays — at Greenville Little Theatre, Warehouse Theatre and Centre Stage — bring on the nice.

But watch out for a wickedly witty double-bill also at the Warehouse, a show that's just for grownups.

By Paul Hyde
Arts Writer
phyde@greenvilleonline.com

DOWNTOWN

GLT's 'Wonderful Life' is about 'all of us'

Familiar holiday movie's story comes to stage

YOU CAN GO

What: "It's a Wonderful Life"
When: 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday; also 8 p.m. on Dec. 13-15; also 3 p.m. on Dec. 9 and 16
Where: Greenville Little Theatre, 444 College St.
Tickets: $26 with discounts available for seniors, children and groups of 10 or more
Information: 864-233-6238 or www.greenvillelittletheatre.org

What accounts for the perennial appeal of "It's a Wonderful Life"?

Suzanne McCalla, who's directing the Greenville Little Theatre production of the play, said that everyone can relate to the character of George Bailey, the banker who contemplates suicide after a financial setback.

"We all find ourselves at some point in life when things don't go our way," said McCalla.

Yet it's Bailey's redemption through the support of friends — and a guardian angel named Clarence — that really hits home and makes the story an ideal Yuletide tale, she added.

"It's a Christmas story because it's all about faith, hope, love, family and all of the things we associate with Christmas," McCalla said. "It's really about all of us."

McCalla's staging of "It's a Wonderful Life" opens Friday for seven performances through Dec. 16.

This marks the first-ever production of the play by Greenville Little Theatre. Based on the

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Greenville Little Theatre's "It's a Wonderful Life" brings the familiar film story of George Bailey to the stage. MYKAL MCELDOWNEY/STAFF

WONDERFUL

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1946 Frank Capra film, the script was adapted for the stage by Virginia's Barter Theatre.

McCalla's son Sam works at the Barter Theatre, and McCalla caught a production of "It's a Wonderful Life" there and decided it would make a perfect holiday play for Greenville Little Theatre.

The popularity of the film, which starred Jimmy Stewart, already has created a strong local interest in this stage production, McCalla said.

"Everybody knows this story, and people love to see something familiar," she said.

One of the better-known phrases from the movie suggests that an angel gets his wings every time a bell sounds. McCalla, who designed the sound for the play, uses a variety of bells during scene changes.

"It's a Wonderful Life," with a cast of 30, features Evan Harris as George Bailey, Meg Foster as Mary, Monty Tucker as Clarence and Robert Simms as Mr. Potter.

■ For the latest in local arts news and reviews, follow Paul Hyde on Twitter: @PaulHyde7. You can also find Paul on Facebook.