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Opelika/Auburn News

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## New play, *Sockdology*, packs punch

Greg Markley  
Opelika-Auburn News

*Sockdology* is a term referring to a knockout blow or a finishing touch, and Jeffrey Hatcher's new play, *Sockdology*, packs a heavy punch.

*Sockdology*, which premiered recently at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, is a darkly humorous play that raises some interesting questions about the night Abraham Lincoln was assassinated.

On the night in 1865 when President Lincoln was shot, he was attending a performance of *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. After shooting the president, John Wilkes Booth jumped to the stage and fled.

Jeffrey Hatcher's comedy attempts to discover what happened next in the crime of the century.

Because Booth was an actor, all of his fellow thespians were suspected of taking part in the plot to assassinate Lincoln that night. *Sockdology* revolves around secretary of war Edwin Stanton's attempts to see if any of the actors signaled for Booth to commit the heinous act.

As Stanton applies the pressure, the actors attempt to avoid the glare of the inspector's questions causing chaos and mayhem on the stage.

The lead character, Laura Keene, who serves as head of the *American Cousin* troupe, is played with a take-charge attitude by Greta Lambert. Ms. Lambert invests her character with the right amount of confidence and concern as the events unfold.

ASF veteran Philip Pleasants plays Stanton, who is driven to find a conspiracy. Mr. Pleasants shows the right amount of anger in the role, along with genuine sadness that the president has been killed.

"They'll lie of course," Stanton says at one point.



Special to the News

### Rodney Clark and Sonja Lanzener perform in ASF's production of *Sockdology*.

"They're actors."

As Professor William Withers, Chris Mixon portrays a character obsessed with Jeannie Gourley and chases her around in a subplot to the chaotic events on stage. His musical animations are good for many laughs.

Rodney Clark portrays Harry Hawk, the docile, timid stage counterpart of Ms. Keene.

Mr. Stanton hits upon Hawk's meekness when he rages, "Mr. Hawk, you are authority incarnate."

All in all, *Sockdology* is a welcome addition to the roster of plays. It continues in repertory through July 24 on the Festival Stage.

For more information, call the ASF Box Office at (334) 271-5353 or (800) 841-4273.



Greg Markley is assistant city editor of the *Opelika-Auburn News*.