

Every true story carries a secret untold.

New Stage Theatre Presents

BRIGHT STAR

A New American Musical

Inspired By A True Story

Music, Book & Story by
Steve Martin

Music, Book & Story by
Edie Brickell

Directed by **Francine Thomas Reynolds**

Musical Director **Carol Joy Sparkman**

Choreographer **Drew Stark**

May 28-June 9, 2019

Sponsored by



Selby & Richard McRae
FOUNDATION

NEW STAGE
Theatre

Stage Manager
Elise McDonald

Scenic Designer
Dex Edwards

Costume Designer
Caleb Blackwell

Sound Designer/
Audio Engineer
Kurt Davis

Lighting Designer
Andrew L. Prince

Properties Designer
Marie Venters

Production Manager
Bronwyn Teague

Technical Director
Richard Lawrence

BRIGHT STAR

Inspired By A True Story

Music, Book & Story by
Steve Martin

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Edie Brickell

Produced by

Joey Parnes, Sue Wagner, John Johnson
Zebulon LLC, Jay Alix & Una Jackman, Len Blavatnik, James L. Nederlander,
Carson & Joseph Gleberman, Balboa Park Productions
The Shubert Organization, Jamie deRoy/Catherine Adler/Cricket Jiraneck

In Association With

Rodger Hess, A.C. Orange International, Broadway Across America,
Sally Jacobs & Warren Baker

Diana DiMenna, Exeter Capital, Agnes Gund, True Love Productions

And

The Old Globe

“Bright Star” is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized performance materials are supplied by Theatrical Rights Worldwide (TRW), 1180 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 640, New York, NY 10036. (866) 378-9758 www.theatricalrights.com

There will be one 10-minute intermission

THE SETTING

Time: 1945-1946, and 1923-1924

Place: North Carolina

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

THE CAST

(in order of appearance)

ALICE MURPHY Sari Koppel
BILLY CANE Tyler Bellmon*
DADDY CANE John Maxwell
MARGO CRAWFORD Kathlyn Arcemont
MAX Sam Lovorn
FLORENCE Jennifer Smith
EDNA Sarah Coleman
DARYL AMES Drew Stark
LUCY GRANT Tess Jonas
JIMMY RAY DOBBS Jeremy Cooper
DADDY MURPHY David Sollish
MAMA MURPHY Jessica Wilkinson
MAYOR JOSIAH DOBBS Ray McFarland*
STANFORD ADAMS Chris Roebuck
DR. NORQUIST Andrew Fehrenbacher
STATIONMASTER Erick Weeks
COUNTY CLERK Mandy Kate Myers
ENSEMBLE Hosea Griffith, Cherry Rendel, Lawson Marchetti

*The actor appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association,
the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

MUSICIANS

CONDUCTOR/PIANO/KEYBOARD Carol Joy Sparkman
FIDDLE/VIOLIN John Uzodinma
BANJO/GUITAR Benjamin Williams
GUITAR John Jackson
MANDOLIN Ed Davis
DRUMS Paul Heindl
UPRIGHT BASS Steve Watson

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

“If You Knew My Story”	Alice, Company
“She’s Gone”	Daddy Cane, Billy
“Bright Star”	Billy, Ensemble
“Way Back in the Day”*	Alice, Ensemble
“Whoa, Mama”	Jimmy Ray, Alice, Ensemble
“Firmer Hand/Do Right”	Daddy Murphy, Mama Murphy, Alice, Ensemble
“A Man’s Gotta Do”	Mayor Dobbs, Jimmy Ray
“Asheville”	Margo, Ensemble
“What Could Be Better”	Jimmy Ray, Alice, Ensemble
“I Can’t Wait”	Alice, Jimmy Ray, Ensemble
“Please, Don’t Take Him”	Mayor Dobbs, Alice, Daddy Murphy, Mama Murphy, Stanford, Ensemble
“A Man’s Gotta Do” (Reprise)	Mayor Dobbs, Ensemble

ACT TWO

“Sun’s Gonna Shine”	Alice, Mama Murphy, Margo, Daddy Cane, Edna, Florence, Ensemble
“Heartbreaker”	Jimmy Ray
“Another Round”	Lucy, Daryl, Billy, Ensemble
“I Had a Vision”	Alice, Jimmy Ray
“Always Will”	Billy, Margo, Ensemble
“I Can’t Wait” (Reprise)	Ensemble
“So Familiar”	Alice, Ensemble
“At Long Last”*	Alice, Ensemble
“Finale”	Company

**Music and Lyrics by Edie Brickell*

TALE OF THE IRON MOUNTAIN BABY

This story reprinted from the St. Louis Iron Mountain & Southern Railway **ALL ABOARD** Vol.16

For any train fan, hearing the legend of the Iron Mountain Baby is a must. The story began in the mid afternoon of August 14, 1902. A 72-year-old Civil War veteran and farmer was returning to a spot near the St. Louis Iron Mountain & Southern Railroad. He had stopped near the Irondale rail trestle where he wanted to pick up some lumber for a barn he was building. Over the course of his journey, he saw a northbound train, Number Four, speed by. Moments later, he heard what he thought to be field mice squeaking.

To the great surprise of William Helms, he found an old-fashioned telescope valise containing a small infant. He concluded that the infant had been tossed off the train; however, the reason why still remains a mystery to this very day. Some thought the baby may have traveled over 500 miles in that valise. When Helms discovered the valise, it had been torn and the baby was badly bruised and injured. No one knew for sure if the child was going to live. It had a dent in its head and its left arm and leg were also hurt.

Due to the loving kindness of the Helms family, the baby pulled through. The community concluded that the baby was no older than five days old when the horrible incident occurred. The baby boy was given the name, William Moses Gould Helms. William - for his rescuer; Moses - for being found by the river; Gould - for the owner of the railroad. The family was so concerned about finding out who this child had belonged to, that the story had spread from coast to coast. The saga brought many women who claimed they were the baby's mother. However, when young William was 6, the Helms' decided that they loved him too much to let him leave. They became his legal parents through adoption.

When his father died, William moved with his mother to Salem, Missouri, where he graduated from high school. He then attended Braughton's University and Southwest State Teachers College at Springfield, MO. His schooling was financed by the Iron Mountain Railroad, which later became the Missouri-Pacific Line. In college, he learned the printer's trade which he practiced most of his life. He was married August 5, 1933 in St. Louis. He then moved with his wife, Sally, to Texas. They had one son also named William.

It was said that the Iron Mountain Baby did not like all of the fame his remarkable story had brought him. It is rumored that his son didn't even know about his past. Helms died January 31, 1953 at the age of 51. He was brought back on the Iron Mountain Railway for his burial in Hopewell, MO. It was only the second time in his life that William Helms rode on a train. It was a small family service that received no publicity. Later, it was thought that his son had died at age 14 and his wife had gotten sick and moved back to St. Louis. No one is certain if she died from the illness. But the fact remains that his wife and child are not buried beside him.

The Washington County, MO burial records list 'Sallie' Helms, 17 Sep 1904-1989 as being buried together with William Moses Gould Helms in the Hopewell Cemetery. William's adoptive parents, William (1835-1917) and Sarah Jane (1850-1925) (Knight) Helms, are also buried there.

While the legend of the Iron Mountain Baby is a remarkable story, its ending is just as mysterious as its beginning. The fame of the found baby had received so much attention that a song had been written in remembrance of that fateful August day. Even though the tale of the Iron Mountain Baby is an old story, the mystery still remains unsolved of who the baby really was.

Bright Star tells a "hypothetical story" based on this true event. Brickell came across a 1904 newspaper article about an abandoned baby that survived after being thrown from a train in a suitcase. "Our musical tells the story of what possibly could've happened, in a very joyous way," said Steve Martin.

THE CAST



KATHLYN ARCEMONT (Margo Crawford) is ecstatic to be back at New Stage! She is currently pursuing a degree in music education from the University of Southern Mississippi. Some of her favorite roles include Martha Cratchit in *A Christmas Carol*, Anna in *Spring Awakening*, Madame de la Grande Bouche in *Beauty and the Beast*, and Sister Mary Patrick in *Sister Act*. Arcemont would like to thank Francine, Carol Joy, and the entire cast and crew for their hard work, support, and talent! She'd also like to thank her family and friends for their love and support!



TYLER BELLMON* (Billy Cane) is thrilled to be joining New Stage Theatre in their production of *Bright Star!* Favorite theatre credits include: *Into The Woods* (Theatre Workshop of Nantucket), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Gretna Theatre), *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (CityRep Theatre), *Biloxi Blues* (Forestburgh Playhouse), *A Christmas Carol* (The Hanover Theatre), and *Oliver!* (Gallery Players). Bellmon is a graduate of Emerson College and holds a BFA in musical theatre. A huge "Thank you" goes out to his family and friends for their constant love and support. Follow him on all social platforms @tylerbellmon



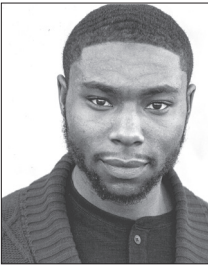
SARAH COLEMAN (Edna) is a recent graduate from Radford University where she earned a B.S. in theatre performance. She was last seen on the main stage in *Hell in High Water* (Petulia), *A Christmas Carol: A Ghost Story of Christmas* (Belle/Fred's Wife), and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Margot Frank). Favorite past performances include: *Heathers: The Musical* (Heather Duke/Dance Captain), *Oklahoma!* (Laurey Williams), *Anything Goes* (Reno Sweeney), and *Crimes of the Heart* (Meg Magrath). Coleman just completed an apprenticeship here at New Stage where she toured to local schools as Pinocchio in *Pinocchio!* and Joan Trumpauer in *If Not Us, Then Who?* From here she'll be moving to Richmond, Va. to be in Virginia Repertory Theatre's national tours of *Hansel and Gretel* and *A Christmas Carol*. She'd like to thank her family for the endless support, Marley Neville, Megan Ward and Dana Grindstaff for being the bomb, and her dog Jax for supplying endless happiness.



JEREMY COOPER (Jimmy Ray Dobbs) is thrilled to be making his New Stage Theatre debut! Originally from Jackson, Cooper has spent the last few years working as an actor and director in Atlanta, GA. Atlanta credits include *Assassins*, *Urinetown the Musical*, and the MAT-award winning productions of *The Robber Bridegroom*, *Dogfight*, and *Violet the Musical*. He received his theatre training from The University of Mississippi in Oxford, Miss. Cooper would like to thank his wife, family, and friends for their incredible support and encouragement over the years.



ANDREW FEHRENBACHER (Dr. Norquist) is delighted to return to New Stage for *Bright Star!* Credits include: *Beauty and the Beast* (Lumiere), *A Christmas Carol* (Ghost Fiddler), and *Sister Act* at New Stage Theatre, *Into the Woods* (Cinderella's Prince), *Les Miserables* (Jean Prouvaire), *Showboat* (Steven Baker), and *Die Fledermaus* at Mississippi College Opera & Music Theatre, *Find Me* (Male 1) at New Stage Unframed, and *Fiddler on the Roof* (Fiddler) at Jackson Academy. A classically trained violinist since the age of five, Fehrenbacher regularly plays at weddings, churches, and special events around Mississippi. Love to Mary.



HOSEA GRIFFITH (Ensemble) is a graduate of Mississippi College with a B.A. in vocal performance. He made his debut at New Stage Theatre in *Beauty and the Beast*. Since, he's played the roles of Pablo in *Sister Act* and was also seen in *A Christmas Carol*. At Mississippi College Griffith had the joy of portraying Joe from *Showboat*, Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the Wolf in *Into the Woods*. Griffith is the son of Virginia Riptoe.



TESS JONAS (Lucy Grant, Dance Captain) is an NYC-based performer and writer and is so excited to be in Jackson for the first time! Recently toured the Midwest on the first national tour of *NOËL*, a new holiday musical by Eoin Colfer and Liam Bates. She has performed solo shows in NYC at both 54 Below and The Green Room 42, debuting her latest, *DIDN'T FALL FAR*, on May 15. Regional credits include *Little Women* (Jo March), *Jane Eyre* (Jane Eyre), and *The Spitfire Grill* (Percy). Jonas is also a 200-hour certified yoga instructor pursuing her 500-hour advanced teacher training. Love to her tribe. Instagram: @winterstormjonas_ More at www.tessjonas.com!



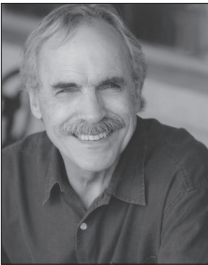
SARI KOPPEL (Alice Murphy) is originally from upstate New York and currently resides in New York City after training at Interlochen Arts Academy and The Hartt School to obtain her BFA in music theatre. Select regional credits include: *Picnic At Hanging Rock* (Miranda) with Goodspeed Musicals, *Always... Patsy Cline* (Patsy Cline) with Jean's Playhouse, *Pump Boys and the Dinettes* (Retta Cupp) and *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Trix/Ensemble) with Cider Mill Playhouse, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Helena), *Lend Me a Tenor* (Diana), and *Biloxi Blues* (Rowena) with The Monomoy Theatre, *Twelfth Night* with Commonwealth Shakespeare. Thank you to New Stage Theatre for including me in this amazing production! To my wonderful family, friends, and Boyce: thank you for your unwavering support and love. And to my little niece, "Mm my baby, I can't wait to see you."



SAM LOVORN (Max) is thrilled to be making his New Stage Theatre debut among this incredible cast. Lovorn graduated from Mississippi College with a B.A. in music education with an emphasis in voice and is currently the Assistant Choir Director at Warren Central High School in Vicksburg. At Warren Central, Lovorn has had the privilege to help direct *Hairspray* and the Mississippi High School Premiere of Disney's *Newsies* this past February. Some of his most recent stage roles include Prince Eric in *The Little Mermaid*, Race in *Newsies*, Joe in *Schoolhouse Rock! Live*, George in *I Love a Piano*, Lucas Beineke in *The Addams Family*, Prince Charming in *Into the Woods*, Luther Billis in *South Pacific*, Lord Farquaad in *Shrek the Musical*, and Joseph in *Joseph & the Amazing Technicolored Dreamcoat*. He would like to thank his family, friends, and students for their unending love and support.



LAWSON MARCHETTI (Ensemble) is delighted to make his New Stage debut with such an amazing cast and team! Born and raised in Jackson, he has just completed his sophomore year at the University of Mississippi, where he is pursuing a degree in English with an emphasis in creative writing, with minors in theatre and music. Some of his favorite roles have been Mr. McClam in *Fly By Night*, Harold Hill in *The Music Man*, Brindsley Miller in *Black Comedy*, Delmount Williams in *The Miss Firecracker Contest*, and Uncle Max in *The Sound of Music*. He would like to thank his friends and family for their unflinching support! Instagram: [laydownthe.lawson](#)



JOHN MAXWELL (Daddy Cane) started touring "*Oh, Mr. Faulkner, Do You Write?*" after its premiere here at New Stage in 1981. Since that time he has toured the show all over the world to twelve different foreign countries and most of the continental United States. Maxwell, the winner of the prestigious Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts in the state of Mississippi, holds a M.A. in theatre from the University of Mississippi. He has been the recipient of a Tennessee Williams Scholarship to study playwriting at The Sewanee's Writer's Conference, and is the 1992 recipient of the Susan B. Herron Playwriting Fellowship of the Mississippi Arts Commission. Most recently Maxwell was rewarded with two separate fellowships both in performance and playwriting from the Mississippi Arts Commission. He is the founder of Fish Tale Group, a non-profit organization dedicated to revitalizing interest in the Bible through original drama. His last appearance at New Stage was as Leroy Percy in *Hell in High Water*. He recently directed *And Then There Were None* and *Crimes of the Heart* at New Stage. Most recently he received The Best Actor Award for the screen version of "*Oh, Mr. Faulkner, Do You Write?*" at The 2011 Twain Harte Film Festival in Los Angeles. He also received Best Actor Award for the role at The 2006 Atlanta Film Festival.

actor chat

Stay and meet the cast after *Bright Star* following the show on Wednesday, May 29 and Wednesday, June 5. Audience members may ask questions of the actors, director and designers in an informal setting.



RAY MCFARLAND* (Mayor Josiah Dobbs) has appeared in numerous national tours and regional theatre productions of plays and musicals across the United States and in over forty productions here at New Stage including: *Sister Act*, *And Then There Were None*, *Hairspray*, *The Foreigner*, *Forever Plaid*, *Tuna Christmas*, *Red White and Tuna*, *Noises Off*, *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, as the title character in *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*, and *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Suicide Club*. McFarland also works in television commercials and industrial films as an on-camera actor and as a voice-over artist. He teaches acting and theatre tech classes at St. Andrew's Episcopal School where he also directs the Upper School theatre productions.



MANDY KATE MYERS (County Clerk) is thrilled to be a part of this production with New Stage Theatre! She was last seen on the New Stage main stage as Too Much Tammy in the new musical *Sweet Potato Queens*. Myers also recently appeared in *54/54/54* at Feinstein's/54 Below in New York. Some of her New Stage credits include Babette in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, Jonnie Pat Satin in *Glory! Glory!*, Mrs. Darling in *Peter Pan*, Mama Bear in *Shrek the Musical*, Cindy Lou in *The Marvelous Wonderettes* and *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*. Other favorite roles include Kate Monster in *Avenue Q*, Kate Keller in *All My Sons*, Latrelle in *Sordid Lives*, CB's Sister in *Dog Sees God*, Amy in *Company*, and Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*. A graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, Myers serves on the Board of Directors for both Fondren Theatre Workshop and Cheshire Abbey Animal Rescue, and also works as Workshops Coordinator for BroadwayCon in New York.



CHERRY RENDEL (Ensemble) is a graduate from the University of West Florida where she received her B.A. in theatre. She is originally from Orlando, Fla. and is very excited to finish the season at New Stage Theatre. Some of her favorite shows she has been a part of include *Our Town*, *Once on this Island*, *The Music Man*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, and New Stage Theatre's productions of *A Christmas Carol*, *Hell in High Water*, *Sweet Potato Queens*, and *Sylvia*. She would also like to thank her family and friends for their endless love and support.



CHRIS ROEBUCK (Stanford Adams) is thrilled to make his return to New Stage, as he is a former education director and resident teaching artist at New Stage. Roebuck was also an acting intern at New Stage Theatre, working with four other interns to take three touring shows across the state. Among his numerous professional acting credits, Roebuck has appeared in *Sister Act*, *Shakespeare In Love*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Robber Bridegroom*, *Shrek*, *The Foreigner*, and *The 39 Steps*. His directing credits include *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Goodnight, Moon*,

The Cat in the Hat, *The Lion*, *The Witch*, and *The Wardrobe*, *The Weir*, *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, and *Dead Man's Cell Phone* at New Stage and *American Buffalo* and *Dinner with Friends* with Fondren Theatre Workshop.



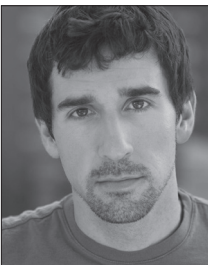
JENNIFER SMITH (Florence) is excited to be working with New Stage Theatre, where she has enjoyed roles such as Grace Farrell (*Annie*), Raven/Ensemble (*The Robber Bridegroom*), Abby (*Musical of Musicals: The Musical*, Unframed) and Creda in Leslie Jordan's *Glory! Glory!* She has recently worked with Madison Center Players (*Once Upon a Mattress*, *Rex's Exes*, and *Oklahoma!*) and has appeared in Dollywood's *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* as Nancy Baxter for the past three Christmas seasons. Smith also toured Asia and Europe with the cast of

Disney's Beauty and the Beast (Mrs. Potts). She is a singer, songwriter, and worship leader. Her EP, *Inside Out*, takes an intimate look at loss and grief. Special thanks to her husband, Chris, for his continued love and support!



DAVID S. SOLLISH (Daddy Murphy) is currently Chair of Theatre at Belhaven University, but will be taking on a new position in August as Director of the BFA Musical Theatre program at Anderson University's South Carolina School of the Arts. Sollish holds a Ph.D. in musical theatre direction from Bowling Green State University. New Stage Theatre: *A Christmas Carol* and *A Toast to Broadway*. Regional: *1776* (Adams), *Chicago* (Amos), *Annie* (Warbucks), *Seussical* (Horton), *Sound of Music* (Max), *Oklahoma!* (Jud), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Mitch), *Inherit the*

Wind (Drummond), *The Tempest* (Prospero), and *Death of a Salesman* (Ben) among many others. Many thanks to Francine and the staff of New Stage for this opportunity and, as always, to my amazing wife, Kelsey, for her never-ending love and support!



DREW STARK (Daryl Ames, Choreographer) New Stage productions include *A Christmas Carol* (Solicitor), *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Mr. vanDaan), *Sister Act* (Ensemble/Choreographer), *Shakespeare in Love* (Marlowe/Choreographer), *A Time to Kill* (Musgrove/Fight Choreographer), and *33 Variations* (Mike Clark). Other New Stage credits include his performance in the Eudora Welty New Play Series premiere staged reading of *Glory!*, *Glory!* with Leslie Jordan and the Mississippi Play Series *Perfect*

Arrangement by Topher Payne. A Mississippi native, he received his B.A. from the College of William and Mary. A trained dancer in NYC and professional fight choreographer, Stark is currently serving as New Stage's Education Associate. Some of his favorite musical credits include: **Young Frankenstein** (Frederick Frankenstein), **Damn Yankees** (Applegate), **CATS** (Rum Tum Tugger), and **Seven Brides for Seven Brothers** (Benjamin/Fight Choreographer). Hugs to his family! Romans 8:28



ERICK WEEKS (Stationmaster) is a native of Pearl, Miss. He graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi with a B.A. in communication studies. Weeks is currently serving as the Theatre Director for Pearl High School and the Proud Sponsor of Thespian Troupe 4537. He serves as the Chapter Director for MS Thespians and as a National Advocacy Leader for the Educational Theatre Association along with being the Chapter Director for MS Thespians and as a National Advocacy Leader for the Educational Theatre Association. Weeks is a newly appointed member of the board of Director's for Fondren Theatre Workshop. He was last seen in Fondren Theatre Workshop's production of **Sordid Lives** as Brother Boy. Weeks is excited to make his debut at New Stage. He would like to thank the entire cast and crew for such a delightful artistic journey. "Act well your part, there all the honor lies." -Alexander Pope



JESSICA WILKINSON (Mama Murphy) was last seen at New Stage as Louise in **Morningside**. A SAG-AFTRA actor from the Jackson area, some favorite New Stage credits include Mother Superior in **Sister Act**, Truvy in **Steel Magnolias**, Annie Sullivan in **The Miracle Worker**, and Percy in **Spitfire Grill**. Other favorite shows include **Best of Enemies**, **The Miss Firecracker Contest**, **Hairspray**, **The Foreigner**, **Boeing Boeing**, **The 39 Steps**, and **Annie**. Select feature film credits include **The Livingston Gardener**, **Starve**, **As I Lay Dying**, **Joe Dirt 2**, and **I Killed My BFF**, working with actors such as James Franco, James Kyson, Tim Blake Nelson, James Caan, and David Spade. Wilkinson has a M.A. in English and taught high school English and theatre arts for four years at Florence High. During that time, she was awarded Distinguished Arts Educator in Theatre Arts by the MS Alliance for Arts Education. She now teaches high school English and public speaking at Jackson Prep and will take on the role of Director of High School Theatre in the fall. She is also a mom to Belle Grace, 16, and Noble, 12, and a wife to Lenny. She is very grateful to her family for all their support. www.imdb.me/JessicaLemonWilkinson



Find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram or sign up to receive our newsletter at newstagetheatre.com to get updates on events, casting, and more!

MUSICIANS

ED DAVIS (Mandolin) began playing mandolin over 30 years ago. Though not professionally trained, lessons steeped in fiddle tunes and interaction with other musicians has proven to be his measure of success. Davis, who also plays guitar, enjoys playing many styles of music with bands and other individual musicians at events, churches, musical productions, or just good old fashion pickin's.

PAUL HEINDL (Drums) received his B.M. and M.M. of Music Performance from The University of Mississippi where he was active in many of the university instrumental ensembles. He has been teaching and writing for percussion sections across the state of Mississippi since he was 17. Heindl is an active clinician, adjudicator and performer and has played with the Corinth, Meridian and Mississippi Symphony Orchestras as well as the Mississippi Wind Symphony. He is currently a section member of the Meridian Symphony Orchestra. Heindl plays drum set for the Mississippi Opera Cabaret series. He performs regularly with jazz, country and rock acts locally and regionally, and performs weekly at Countrywoods Baptist Church in Byram. He also performs musicals regularly at high schools and colleges in the Jackson area, and this musical marks the fourth production he has been a part of with New Stage. Heindl teaches privately in the Jackson area and lives in Clinton with his wife, Adriana and five daughters Annelise, Kali, Haddie, Esli, and Ashlyn.

JOHN JACKSON (Guitar) graduated Magna Cum Laude earning both a B.M. and M.M. in guitar performance from The University of Georgia. He has won several awards as a guitar performer, and has taught multiple competition winning students. Jackson currently teaches guitar as a member of the music faculty at Hinds Community College, and performs regularly in classical, jazz, and popular styles. www.jjacksonguitar.com

CAROL JOY SPARKMAN (Musical Director/Piano/Keyboard) is the Director of Choral Music at Clinton High School in Clinton, Miss. Before teaching at CHS, she was a member of the faculty at Mississippi College, where she was the collaborative pianist, and was Musical Director for Opera/Musical Theater. Sparkman received the B.M.Ed. and a M.M. in vocal coaching/accompanying degrees from Mississippi College. Sparkman is a founding member of a collaborative national team who has established Service-Learning partnerships for continuing education in choral music. The partnership travels each summer to South Africa to work with music educators and choirs. She serves on the MS ACDA Board as Repertoire and Resource Chair for Contemporary and Commercial and is the Southeast Regional Director for the A Cappella Education Association. Sparkman is a frequent accompanist for choral festivals, international conductors and performing artists across the country. She is also a vocal coach for both professional and amateur singers in the Southeast Region. Carol Joy was the Musical Director for the New Stage productions of *Beauty and the Beast*, *Sister Act*, *Sweet Potato Queens: The Musical* and *Toast to Broadway*.

JOHN UZODINMA (Fiddle/Violin) earned his M.M. in performance from Louisiana State University and his B.M. from the University of Southern Mississippi. While attending LSU and USM, he successfully led the symphony orchestra as concertmaster. He truly has a burning passion for music and this passion has driven him to attend numerous summer music festivals and to compete in multiple competitions in locations ranging from British Columbia, Canada, to Sydney, Australia. Hailing from Madison, Miss., Uzodinma has also had the distinguished honor of performing in the presence of keynote speaker and former President Bill Clinton at the Medgar Evers 50th Anniversary Celebration at the National Arlington Cemetery in Washington, D.C. He plans to further his musical studies at The University of Texas at Austin, where he will pursue his Doctor of Musical Arts Degree.

STEVE WATSON (Upright Bass) has toured globally as a jazz and classically trained musician. Originally from Ottawa, Canada, he received a M.M. degree from the Manhattan School of Music, then toured North and South America, Europe and Asia with the likes of Maynard Ferguson and the Glenn Miller Orchestra before returning to Studio, Broadway and R&B Club performances in New York City. Now in Mississippi since 2013, he is a member of the Mississippi Symphony, and the Mississippi Arts Commission Artist Roster, was a featured cast member of New Stage Theatre's hit production of *Million Dollar Quartet*, and currently records internationally from his own Mississippi-based recording studio. www.stevewatson.com

BENJAMIN WILLIAMS (Banjo/Guitar) is a composer in central Mississippi and an Associate Professor of music theory and composition at Mississippi College. Raised in Northeast Ohio, Williams earned degrees in music composition from The University of Akron (B.M and M.M.) and The Ohio State University (D.M.A.). Williams also performs locally with the jazz ensemble Brick Street Trio and New JXN, a group dedicated to modern classical music performed with local musicians.

THE PRODUCTION STAFF

STEVE MARTIN (Music/Book/Story) is one of the most well-known and pervasive talents in entertainment. His work has earned him an Academy Award, five Grammy Awards (two for comedy, three for music), an Emmy, the Mark Twain Award and the Kennedy Center Honor. As an author, Martin's work includes the plays *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, *The Underpants*, and *Meteor Shower*. Also an accomplished banjoist, Martin created the Steve Martin Prize for Excellence in Banjo and Bluegrass, an award established to reward artistry and bring greater visibility to bluegrass performers.

EDIE BRICKELL (Music/Book/Story) released the debut multiplatinum album *Shooting Rubber Bands at the Stars* with New Bohemians in 1988. Her recent works include a 13-track collaboration with Steve Martin titled *Love Has Come For You*. The album won a Grammy for Best American Roots Song and inspired the musical *Bright Star*. Their second album, *So Familiar*, is out now.

FRANCINE THOMAS REYNOLDS (Artistic Director/Director) has been the artistic director at New Stage since 2006 and has worked as a theatre artist for 30 years. She recently directed *Sweat, Hell in High Water, The Diary of Anne Frank, Sister Act, Shakespeare in Love, Silent Sky, Beauty and the Beast, Best of Enemies, Our Town, Red, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, and *A Time To Kill*. Recent portrayals include Dr. Katherine Brandt in *33 Variations*, Polly in *Other Desert Cities*, Lucille in *Dividing the Estate*, and Edna Earle in Eudora Welty's *The Ponder Heart*. She has directed a variety of shows including *All The Way, The Whipping Man, The Grapes of Wrath, Hairspray, Mahalia: A Gospel Musical, The Great Gatsby, Lombardi, Boeing, Boeing, A Christmas Carol, Gee's Bend, A Raisin in the Sun, Annie, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, A Soldier's Play*, and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*. Reynolds is serving her third term on the Board of Directors for the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for American theatre and is on the Board of Directors for the Mississippi Theatre Association. She was a session leader for the 2018 and 2017 TCG National Conventions and panelist for the 2016 TCG National Conference *Theatre Nation* and the 2016 Mississippi Community College Creative Writing Association Contest. Other associations include Leadership Mississippi Class of 2014; 2017 and 2014 National Endowment for the Arts grants panel, Mississippi Arts Commission grants panel, Poetry Outloud adjudicator, Southeastern Theatre Conference adjudicator, Mississippi High School Drama Festival adjudicator, South Atlantic Modern Language Association national conference presenter, and Mississippi's English Speaking Union Shakespeare Competition judge. Reynolds worked as a locations casting director in film and television for several years. Originally from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Reynolds enjoys living in Jackson with her husband, Chuck.

ELISE MCDONALD (Stage Manager) has lived several places in Mississippi but calls Jackson home. She is a graduate of The University of Southern Mississippi with a B.A. in theatre. She began stage management while at Southern and was able to work on shows such as *Light Up the Sky, A Lesson From Aloes, Fallen Angels, The Good Doctor, Big Love, Little Shop of Horrors*, and *Electra*. She worked as a production assistant in stage management at the Arkansas Repertory Theatre and was backstage for several shows including *Les Miserable, The Foreigner, The Elephant Man*, and *The Who's Tommy*. McDonald begins her eighth season at New Stage. Some of her favorite past productions include: *Dracula, The Foreigner, The Great Gatsby, Hairspray, The Grapes of Wrath, The Whipping Man, All The Way, Peter Pan, One Man Two Guvnors, Crimes of the Heart, The Robber Bridegroom, Steel Magnolias, The Million Dollar Quartet, And Then There Were None*, and *Shakespeare in Love*. She is excited to be working with New Stage and would like to thank her family and friends for their unending support!

DEX EDWARDS (Scenic Designer) serves as the Head of Design at Ole Miss and has spent the last 25 years designing and directing nationally and internationally. During ten years as resident designer at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, his designs won the Critics' Choice Award four years in a row. Regionally, he has designed for theatres such as Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, The Brooklyn Academy of Music, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, Portland Centre Stage and the Sacramento Theatre Company. Outside the US he has designed for the Queen's Mill

Theatre and the Winter Garden, both in Toronto, and at the Berlin Opera House. He served as Design Consultant for the 1996 Olympic Centennial Park and as Concept Designer for the 1994 World Cup Opening Ceremonies in the nation's capital. Prior to returning to Ole Miss in 1998, he received a Carbonell Award Nomination for designing the world premiere of Jimmy Buffet's *Don't Stop the Carnival*. His design of *Much Ado About Nothing* for Chicago Shakespeare won Chicago's coveted Jefferson Award for best scene design, and he also won the Boston Critic's Circle Award for his design of *Miss Saigon* at the North Shore Music Theatre. Commercially, his designs have appeared recently in both Las Vegas and Branson.

CALEB BLACKWELL (Costume Designer) is a native of Magee and is ecstatic to be back in Jackson to join New Stage to tell this wonderful and touching story. An optician by day, he can't help but stay out of the costume shop. Favorite past credits with New Stage include *Beauty and the Beast*, *Sister Act*, *Hairspray*, and *Annie*. He currently lives in Memphis, Tenn. Thanks to Francine and Lesley for this rare chance to be close to home and enjoy time well spent with his Jackson family.

ANDREW L. PRINCE (Lighting Designer) is a Project Manager with Davaine Lighting. He also has a freelance production business and has designed for many musical artists, corporate clients, local schools and churches. Prince served eight years in the United States Navy as a nuclear-trained submarine electrician, and has studied computer and network engineering at Auburn University and Southwest Florida College. His theatre credits include lighting shows such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Into the Woods*, *Shrek*, *The Music Man*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *The Sound of Music*. He is excited to be working with the outstanding staff and cast at New Stage Theatre, and would like to thank his wife Mary and twin boys Lucas and Owen for their love and support.

BRONWYN TEAGUE (Production Manager/Resident Lighting Designer) has recently completed her MFA in lighting design at the University of Southern Mississippi. While at Southern, she designed lights for several productions including *Peer Gynt*, *The Seagull*, *The Matchmaker*, and *Machinal*. Prior to Southern she earned a B.A. in theatre from Mississippi University for Women. Credits from the W include lighting design for *Stuart Little*, *When Night Falls*, and special effects design for *Blythe Spirit*. Teague has worked on numerous productions with Tupelo Community Theatre as lighting designer, scenic artist or technical advisor. Immediately prior to New Stage, she was technical director for Carey Dinner Theatre in Hattiesburg. Teague also spent several years working for different theaters in the Salt Lake City area including Desert Star Playhouse, Hale Center Theatre, and Utah Contemporary Theatre.

RICHARD LAWRENCE (Technical Director) serves as the vice president of Fondren Theatre Workshop and has appeared in *A Christmas Memory* at New Stage, FTW's *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Buck Nekkid for Jesus*, directed FTW's *Every Christmas Story Ever Told*, and most recently appeared as Trekkie Monster in *Avenue Q*. He was also the director of the widely successful productions of *Cabaret* and *Company*, which were joint productions of FTW and Actor's Playhouse of Pearl, with support from New Stage. Lawrence has been seen in New Stage productions of *The Trip to Bountiful* and UnFramed's *The Eight: Reindeer Monologues*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *The Weir*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, and *Dublin Carol*. Lawrence has won two Best Set awards at Mississippi Theatre Association conferences.

LESLEY RAYBON (Costume Shop Supervisor/Resident Costume Designer) joined New Stage in 2004 as an acting intern and since then has worked both onstage and off. She has found her place as the Resident Costume Designer and has enjoyed designing shows, and working with guest designers and costume shop assistants. Some of her favorite shows include: *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Goodnight Moon*, and *A Wrinkle in Time*. When not at New Stage, she is a barista at Starbucks, a puppeteer with Puppet Arts Theatre, wife to her wonderful husband Lawrence, and mother to her daughter EV.

KURT DAVIS (Sound Designer/Audio Engineer) is a Jackson area native and graduate of the University of Mississippi, where he earned his BFA in theatre design and technology. While there, he designed and engineered multiple Ole Miss Theatre productions, including *The Crucible* and *The Laramie Project*, and was awarded 2nd place for sound design for *Marisol* and *Oedipus Rex* at SETC. After graduation, he moved to Washington, D.C. and worked as a sound operator at The Shakespeare Theatre Company for two-and-a-half years. While there, he had the opportunity to work directly with Broadway-based sound designers on multiple STC productions. Davis is excited to further his knowledge and experience in his first season at New Stage Theatre.

MARIE VENTERS (Properties/Production Associate) is a recent graduate of Belhaven University where she received her B.A. in theatre with an emphasis in dramatic writing. During her time at Belhaven, Venters worked backstage on several shows, such as *Godspell*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Big Fish: The Musical*, and *The Music Man*. Her stage managing credits include: *Night Mother* and *Into the Woods*. Venters also worked as a scenic painter on most shows during her time in Belhaven's theatre department, including: *Doubt*, *Shrek: The Musical*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Big Fish: The Musical*, *Mayfair Ma Chere*, *The Music Man*, *The Glass Menagerie*, and others. She was nominated for Best Sound Design by the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in 2017 for *Big Fish: The Musical*. This is Venters' first season at New Stage Theatre. She is very thankful for the opportunity, and would like to thank everyone in her life for their ongoing love and support.

LAZERRICK "Z" TRAVIS (Production Assistant) is a native of Canton and graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2016 with a B.A. in scenic design. After graduation he went on to Florida Studio Theatre in Sarasota for a production internship. Travis came back to Mississippi in 2017 and had been employed by Nissan in Canton, before coming to work at New Stage. His other interests are acting within the film industry.

Assistant Stage Manager Julia Polsen
 Light Board Operator Darby Frost
 Sound Board Operator Noelle Jones
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 Carpenters Chace Giadrosich, Jimmy "JR" Robertson, Michael Tobin
 Costume Assistant Lydia Lippincott
 Dance Captain Tess Jonas
 Box Office Associates Nina Frost, Kerri Puckett, Amy Smith

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

DAWN BUCK (Managing Director) has worked on staff at New Stage for more than 20 years. She began her career at New Stage in the fall of 1981 as a box office assistant. Since that time, she has worked as box office manager, audience services director, house manager, bookkeeper, business manager and marketing director. Buck's other professional artistic credits include the USA International Ballet Competition, the Thalia Mara Arts International Foundation - World Performance Series presenting a series of performing artists including American Ballet Theatre, Aquila Theatre of London, Joshua Bell, Alvin Ailey, Cirque Eloize, Wynton Marsalis, and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. She attended Belhaven University and is an alumnus of Leadership Jackson and a graduate of Dale Carnegie. Buck also completed a residency on theatre management at the Eugene O'Neill Center through a grant from the Foundation for the Extension and Development of Professional American Theatre (FEDAPT). Prior to serving on the staff of the USA International Ballet Competition, she worked with America Reads - Mississippi overseeing and training 270 AmeriCorps members who provided one-on-one tutoring in reading for students in primary K through the 3rd grade across the state. In 1990, she served as vice president of administration and finance for Imageworks - Films for Business. She helped produce commercials, documentaries and training videos. Buck resides in the Heatherwood neighborhood in Jackson with her husband David, who retired in 2009 after a 26 year military career with the U. S. Air Force and the Mississippi Air National Guard. He has recently initiated beekeeping as a new hobby.

BILL MCCARTY III (General Manager) is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and has extensive background in wholesale and retail sales and real estate property management with the Jitney Jungle stores. McCarty has volunteered with New Stage for more than 40 years in all areas including production, running crews, lighting and sound design and New Stage fundraising events. He is involved in the day-to-day management, maintenance and production for the theatre and serves on the Board of Directors. His favorite design credits are *Greater Tuna* 1986 production, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Gin Game* and *A Christmas Carol* 1984 production.

MELISSA TILLMAN (Marketing Director) is a graduate of Belhaven University where she received a B.A. in technical theatre. She served as the audience services director at New Stage, has worked as a box office associate at Lawlor Events Center in Reno, Nevada and assisted with many box office activities at Belhaven University. Tillman has stage managed many shows in several parts of the country, including Las Vegas and Tennessee. Her stage managing credits include *Oklahoma!*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Taming of the Shrew* and *Love's Labours Lost*. Her most recent work includes *Noye's Fludd* and *La Boheme* with the Mississippi Opera. This is Tillman's thirteenth season with New Stage. She currently resides in Madison with her husband, Kyle; son, River; and their dog, Vash.

SHANNON FROST (Marketing Associate) received a B.A. in Communication/Theatre from Malone University and a M.A. in Theatre from Regent University. Previous experience includes: theatre manager at Regent University's Theatre Department,

managing director for The A.C.T.S. Series at Regent University, marketing director at Red Clay Theatre, marketing director at New Stage Theatre, and theatre teacher at Christ Covenant School. Frost is currently an adjunct professor of Arts Administration at Belhaven University, and is the financial and membership director of the Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education. She resides in Jackson with her husband, Joe and kiddos, Nina, Darby, Emory, Beau, and Violet.

SHARON MILES (Education Director) received her theatre training from the University of Southern Mississippi. As an actor, writer, director, and all around supporter of the arts, she is extremely excited to join the New Stage team as education director. Miles has been working as a professional actress for almost twenty years and has worked as a contracted guest artist in the New Stage Theatre Education Department since 2011. Most recently, she served as the music director for the First Stages Camp production of *Lion King Kids*. As a true education and arts advocate, Miles has been the director of a non-profit organization that focused on improving academics and incorporating arts in a public school in Hattiesburg for nearly 10 years. As the director of Neighbors at Hawkins, she worked closely with classroom teachers and administrators to coordinate in-school and afterschool tutoring as well as an afterschool arts program. Miles truly believes that helping a child discover one thing that they are good at can build their self-esteem and that confidence can spill over into every aspect of their lives. Discovering theatre at a young age was a game changer in her life and she wants to offer that same experience to students throughout the state of Mississippi. Some of her favorite theatrical roles at New Stage include: Stage Manager in *Our Town*, Gwen in *A Time to Kill*, Fannie Lou Hamer in *All the Way*, Miss Nelson in *Miss Nelson is Missing*, Cassandra in *Vanya, Sonia, Masha and Spike*, and Alex the Lion in *Madagascar the Musical*.

ALISA PRICE (Box Office Manager) begins her third season at New Stage. She is a former intern of New Stage Theatre, and performed in *Death of Salesman*, *Charlotte's Webb*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Most recently, she appeared in New Stage's Unframed production of *Steal Away*. Price has performed with several theatre companies in Virginia, including Swift Creek Mill Playhouse, Theatre IV, and Richmond Theatre Company for Children, where she later became the Marketing and Sales Director. She is an active member of the theatre ministry at Jackson Revival Center. Price resides in Ridgeland with her husband, Hillery; and their children, Darryn, Gabriel, and Elijah.

BETTY WONG (Box Office Assistant/Education Assistant) begins her 14th season at New Stage. She enjoys traveling to schools throughout the state with the Professional Intern Company to provide live theatre experiences for students of all ages. When not on the road, you can find her in the box office. She has also served for many years as a volunteer in other areas of the theatre. Her professional work experiences in education and her passion for live theatre has contributed to the growth and expansion of New Stage's Educational Department. She has served as a consultant to school districts throughout the state of Mississippi. Wong has a B.S. in Educational Psychology from Mississippi State University, and a M.Ed. from Delta State University.

BARBARA MARTIN (Box Office/Business Office Assistant) is in her 23rd season at New Stage. First joining the staff in 1997, she has served as box office assistant for 19 years and as box office manager for the two years before and during the Intermission Season. She also assists with development, reviews and maintains theater insurance coverages, and performs other business office functions.

CARLA MARSH (House Manager) received her B.A. in criminal justice with an emphasis in juvenile justice from Jackson State University. She is pleased to be returning to New Stage for her 15th season. Marsh is employed full time with the Hinds County Sheriff's office.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The staff of New Stage Theatre wishes to thank the following individuals and companies for the generous donation of time and resources to this production and the 53rd season.

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BOX OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

During performances, the box office will remain open until 7:30 p.m.

Saturday: 4:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Sunday: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday hours only apply during the run of a show.

TELEPHONE/WEBSITE

Main Number: (601) 948-3533

Box Office: ext. 222

Artistic Director: ext. 224

Managing Director: ext. 246

Marketing Director: ext. 226

Education Director: ext. 232

Website: www.newstagetheatre.com

Email: mail@newstagetheatre.com

New Stage Theatre is a Constituent of Theatre Communication Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre.