

*New Stage Theatre
Presents*



Sweet Potato Queens

Book by Rupert Holmes

Lyrics by Sharon Vaughn

Music by Melissa Manchester

Based on the best-selling books of Jill Conner Browne

Starring Janine LaManna as Jill Conner Browne

Directed by Randy Redd

Music Directed by Carol Joy Sparkman

Choreographed by Taylor Newby

Sponsored by

SID DAVIS

*Chairman of the Board
PEOPLES BANK, MENDENHALL
COLLABORATIVE LAWYER AND MEDIATOR*

March 13-24, 2019

NEW STAGE
Theatre

*Costume Designer
Lesley Raybon*

*Lighting Designer/
Production Manager
Bronwyn Teague*

*Scenic Designer
Amanda Rehbein*

*Stage Manager
Elise McDonald*

*Technical Director
Richard Lawrence*

*Audio Engineer/Sound Design
Kurt Davis*

*Properties Design
Marie Venters*

Sweet Potato Queens

“Sweet Potato Queens” is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized performance are supplied by Theatrical Rights Worldwide (TRW), 1180 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 640, New York, NY 10036. www.theatricalrights.com

There will be one 10-minute intermission

THE SETTING

Where: Jackson, Mississippi

When: Now and Then

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

THE CAST

JILL	Janine LaManna*
TOO MUCH TAMMY	Mandy Kate Myers
FLOWER TAMMY	Courtney Holifield
FLOOZIE TAMMY	Taylor Newby
GEORGE	Drew Stark
TYLER	Ben Kahre*
MAMA	Jolyne Shirley
DADDY	Turner Crumbley*
WANNABEE	Hayden Schubert
WANNABEE	Cherry Rendel

SWEET POTATO QUEENS MUSICIANS

MUSIC DIRECTOR/KEYBOARD	Carol Joy Sparkman
WOODWINDS	Matt McDonald
DRUMS	Paul Heindl
BASS	Richard Brown
GUITAR	Jimmy Turner
Rehearsal Music Director/Accompanist	Tim Walker
Woodwinds Substitute	Dineijah Attidore-Charles

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

UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for listed performers unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance. Understudies for *Sweet Potato Queens* are: Sarah Coleman, Cherry Rendel, Hayden Schubert, and Jordan Williams

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

<i>It's Me</i>	Sweet Potato Queens & Jill
<i>SPQ-tiful</i>	Sweet Potato Queens
<i>Southern Side of Jackson</i>	Jill
<i>We Had Some Good Times</i>	Tyler
<i>Do What Makes Your Heart Sing</i>	Daddy
<i>Make a Wish</i>	Flower Tammy, Too Much Tammy, Floozie Tammy, & Jill
<i>Sears</i>	Mama
<i>The Only Thing I Know</i>	Floozie Tammy, Too Much Tammy, & Jill
<i>Cherries in the Snow</i>	Flower Tammy
<i>All That Matters</i>	Jill

ACT TWO

<i>Funeral Food</i>	Sweet Potato Queens
<i>Do What Makes Your Heart Sing (Reprise)</i>	Company
<i>That One Kiss</i>	Jill & Floozie Tammy
<i>No Man's Land</i>	Tyler
<i>Five</i>	Jill & Sweet Potato Queens
<i>The Promise</i>	Jill & Sweet Potato Queens
<i>It's Me (Reprise)</i>	George
<i>Mad Dog</i>	George & Company
<i>To Be a Queen</i>	Company

DIRECTORS NOTE

“Don’t miss the parade cause it’s passing!”

I’ve been thinking a lot about parades. When I was a kid I was over-the-top, obsessed with parades. Inspired by Brookhaven’s annual Christmas Parade, I would stage elaborate lineups with my toys around and under my twin beds - floats made from Lincoln Logs and Tinker Toys, plastic cowboys and army men marched in formation, GI Joe was my grand marshal. In the dead of winter, I decorated my lime green Schwinn Stingray with multi-colored toilet paper flowers to lead my own Rose Parade in our gravel driveway. Scout, our kingly German Shepherd, proudly wore a handmade floral collar. When I moved to New York, I volunteered to be a balloon handler and marched in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade. Clifford the Big Red Dog nearly got the best of me that blustery Thursday morning. I went on to work as a music director for the Macy’s Parade for a number of years. I even made my Broadway debut in a new musical at Lincoln Center called - you guessed it - **Parade**. So it seems that I’ve always had a thing for parades. And now I find myself at the helm of another parade! Now, if I’m being honest, even though I grew up just 50 miles south of Jackson, I’d never heard of the Sweet Potato Queens until Francine asked me to direct the musical celebrating one of Jackson’s most renowned icons, Jill Conner Browne. For the past seven months I’ve been immersed in SPQ-land. I drank the Kool-Aid (or the Mad Dog) and now I’ve added Jill’s hilarious books to a growing stack of my favorite Mississippi writers: Lewis Nordan, Eudora Welty, Mary Miller, Jesmyn Ward, Nick White, and Angie Thomas, to name a few. Jill challenges us all to “do what makes our heart sing.” My heart has sung a lot of different songs since I was a kid dreaming up parades and putting on shows in my Bogue Chitto bedroom. Coming home to Mississippi makes my heart sing - especially when I get to work with such tremendously talented theater artists. I bow down to the trio of legendary, award-winning writers who’ve brought these singin’ and dancin’ Mississippi Queens to the stage here in Jackson. I am in awe of our brilliant cast and wildly imaginative creative team. And I’m eternally grateful to Francine and everyone at New Stage for the opportunity to work a little magic on this stage. When I accepted this extraordinary challenge, I promised to deliver a show full of laughter and love. As you are waiting for our fantastical, fever-dream parade to kick off, make me a promise: forget your troubles, give your loved one (or whoever you came with) a big smooch, and ask yourself what would YOU do to be an SPQ!

Randy Redd

All I ever wanted to be in this life was 5'2", with long red hair, green eyes, large breasts, and little feet—and to be able to sing. Never got ANY of it and

because I never got anything that I wanted, I spent a great deal of my youth feeling like I didn't get ANYthing. Not a good place to be. This problem was exacerbated by my childhood Sunday School teachers' endless teaching of the Parable of the Talents—in which SOME got more than others—but EVERYBODY got at LEAST ONE. I thought that I was surely the exception to this.

I grew up and had a job that I hated but I loved the man that I worked for: Frank Mastronardi, a self-proclaimed Positive Mental Attitude Junkie. Thanks to Mr. M, I heard every word ever spoken by Zig Ziglar, Norman Vincent Peale and the like and one thing that they ALL said in common that really resonated for me personally was that "you should DO what makes your HEART SING, and the money will follow." But, I was 19 and working in the Credit Department at Sears so the heart-singing did not commence there and then.

Later, I discovered I was gifted in a few areas, for instance: smiling, waving, forming baseless opinions and bossing people around. After seeing photographs that showed a strong facial resemblance between my ADOPTED Mama and Queen Elizabeth of England, I made the totally logical assumption that I must be a long-lost royal relative but that did not prove true. However, I did know from that moment on that I was put here to BE a Queen. After all, what else have you ever seen any Queen do BUT smile and wave?

In the early 1980's, there was a Divine Cosmic Convergence wherein I heard about the Sweet Potato Festival in Vardaman, Mississippi and thought what a delight it would be to serve as the Queen of that—but it involves a pageant for which I was, even then, far too old and nowhere near pretty enough. Then,

at almost the same moment, I heard that Malcolm White was putting on the first ever St. Paddy's Parade here in Jackson and I said, with no hesitation whatsoever, "I'M IN IT." My best friend and Malcolm's wife, Vivian asked, somewhat derisively, "What are you gonna be?" As IF I had no plan and I replied, "I AM THE SWEET POTATO QUEEN," Vivian said, "So am I" and for the first few years, ANYBODY who was willing to put on a green ball gown from the Goodwill, ride in the back of a pickup truck, smile, wave, and throw sweet potatoes to the confused populace of Downtown Jackson—could BE a Sweet Potato Queen and there were not as many takers as one might expect for such an outstanding opportunity.

Today, there are over 6,400 Chapters of Sweet Potato Queen® Wannabe™ groups in 37 countries and it is STILL the Best Job I Ever Had. I did say, out loud, that very first year, "SOMEbody will PAY me to do THIS!" because it absolutely made my heart sing then—and it still does, every single year. So, thanks for all that Positive advice, Mr. M!

Her Royal Highness Jill Conner Browne



THE CAST



JANINE LAMANNA* (Jill Conner Browne) has a career spanning over 25 years in theatre, film and television, and concert halls around the world. Her Broadway credits include Janet Van De Graaff in the Tony award winning hit, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, Nicki in the revival of *Sweet Charity* starring Christina Applegate, Gertrude McFuzz in *Seussical* (earning her a Drama Desk Nomination for Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical), Lois Lane in *Kiss Me Kate*, *The Look of Love*, *Swing!*, and Evelyn Nesbit in *Ragtime*.

She also played Velma Kelly in the First National Tour of *Chicago*, and was Chita Rivera's stand-by in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*. LaManna is the first actor to play the infamous Carmen Sandiego on the PBS series, *Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?* Other credits include, *Devious Maids*, *Two Weeks Notice*, and *Candide* with the New York Philharmonic for PBS' *Great Performances*. Numerous off-Broadway and regional theatre credits include *Enter Laughing* and *High Spirits* at the York Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Eugene O'Neil Theater, Goodspeed Opera House and an IRNE nomination for her role as Amneris in *Aida* at North Shore Theater. She can be heard on the original cast recordings of *Sweet Charity*, *Seussical*, *Enter Laughing*, *Kris Kringle – the Musical*, and *The Music of the Sherman Brothers*. In 2007, after being featured on CNN's *American Morning* for her roles as a Broadway star and military wife, she was invited to sing at the White House for National Military Spouse Appreciation Day. LaManna was honored in 2006 with the Wagner College Fellows Award.



MANDY KATE MYERS (Too Much Tammy) recently appeared in *54/54/54* at Feinstein's/54 Below in New York. Some of her additional New Stage credits include Babette in *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, Jonnie Pat Satin in the premiere staged reading of *Glory! Glory!*, Mrs. Darling in *Peter Pan*, *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*, Mama Bear in *Shrek the Musical*, Cindy Lou in *The Marvelous Wonderettes*, and Star-To-Be in *Annie*. Other favorite roles include Kate Monster in *Avenue Q*, Latrelle in *Sordid Lives*,

CB's Sister in *Dog Sees God*, Amy in *Company*, June in *Musical of Musicals: The Musical*, and Kate Keller in *All My Sons*. A graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, Myers serves on the Board of Directors for Fondren Theatre Workshop and Cheshire Abbey Animal Rescue, and also works as Workshops Coordinator for BroadwayCon in New York.

actor chat

Stay and meet the cast after *Sweet Potato Queens* following the show on Wednesday, March 20. Audience members may ask questions of the actors, director and designers in an informal setting.



COURTNEY HOLIFIELD (Flower Tammy) is a native of Jackson. She is a recent graduate from Belhaven University where she received her BFA in musical theatre. Previous favorite roles include: Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel* (Julie Jordan), *1776* (Martha Jefferson), *Into the Woods* (Cinderella), *The Music Man* (Marian Paroo), *Shrek* (Princess Fiona), and *Big Fish* (Jenny Hill). Holifield is extremely excited to return to New Stage Theatre and tell this fabulous story with such an amazing company. Thank you all for coming and enjoy!

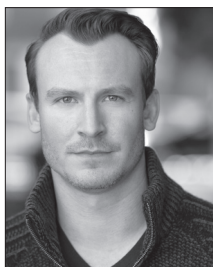


TAYLOR NEWBY (Choreographer/Floozie Tammy) is pumped to be making her New Stage debut! After traveling the world as a singing, sparkling mermaid, and a rapping showgirl for Royal Caribbean, she is very excited to get her land legs back in this production of *Sweet Potato Queens*! Huge thanks to Randy, Ben, and the Newby fam, I love you all!!



DREW STARK (George) New Stage productions include *A Christmas Carol* (Solicitor), *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Mr. van Daan), *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 serving currently 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



BEN KAHRE* (Tyler) is thrilled to be making his New Stage Theatre debut in *Sweet Potato Queens!* Off-Broadway: *A Loss of Roses*, *The Commons of Pensacola*, and *The Steadfast*. Regional: *The Who & the What*, *Higher*, *Noises Off*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Television: *Jessica Jones*, *Mysteries of Laura*, and *The Blacklist*. He is a graduate of the University of Evansville and has a “Masters in Pretending” from the American Conservatory Theater.



JOLYNE SHIRLEY (Mama), a graduate of The American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York, has appeared Off-Off Broadway in several productions including *The Blue Hotel* and *Caper at the Cloisters*. She appeared at Lincoln Center where she sang back up for Bette Midler in *The Gershwins—A Tribute*, and has several soap opera and local advertising credits. Since has had the joy of appearing in numerous New Stage productions including *Annie*, *Breaking Up is Hard to Do*, *Side By Side By Sondheim*, *Dearly Departed*, *Marvin's Room*, *Hank Williams: Lost Highway* and *First Baptist of Ivy Gap*.



TURNER CRUMBLEY* (Daddy) recently played Ebenezer Scrooge in New Stage's *A Christmas Carol*. Previously for New Stage: over two dozen productions, including *The 39 Steps*, *Dracula*, *Red, White & Tuna*, and *Gutenberg! The Musical!* Further acting work includes *Big River* (Mill Mountain Theatre), *Beauty and the Beast* (Jefferson Perf. Arts), *Unnecessary Farce* (St. Michael's Playhouse), *A Tuna Christmas* (Cape May Stage), *The Minute Men* (Great American Melodrama), and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Stage One). Movie Credits: *Bad Moms*, *21 Jump Street*, *Contraband*, and *Strange Weather*. Crumbley also directed New Stage's 2016 production of *A Christmas Story: The Musical*, the theatre's 50th Anniversary production of *A Christmas Carol*, and the Unframed productions *The Good Thief* and *Welcome to the Moon*. Laurel, Miss. native. USM graduate. turnercrumbley.com



HAYDEN SCHUBERT (Wannabee/Acting Apprentice) is a graduate from Southern Illinois University with a BFA in musical theatre. A current acting apprentice, he has been seen at New Stage as Peter vanDaan in *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Fred/ Young Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, and L'amour in *Hell in High Water*. Other credits include *Tarzan in Tarzan: The Musical* (Grandstreet Theatre), Willard Hewitt in *Footloose: The Musical* (Jenny Wiley Theatre) and Melchior Gabor in *Spring Awakening* (Southern Illinois University). He would like to thank his amazing friends and family for their constant support! www.haydenschubert.com



CHERRY RENDEL (Wannabee/Acting Apprentice) is a recent 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 start learning and creating 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 *Hell in High Water* and *A Christmas Carol*. She would also like to thank her family and friends for their endless love and support.

THE BAND

CAROL JOY SPARKMAN (Musical Director/Keyboard) is the Director of Choral Music at Clinton High School in Clinton, Miss., where she directs five choirs and two pop a cappella ensembles. She began her career as a member of the Mississippi College music faculty where she was the collaborative pianist and was Musical Director for The Mississippi College Opera/Musical Theater. Sparkman received the Bachelor of Music Education and a Master of Music 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. Sparkman has been the Musical Director for the New Stage productions of *Beauty and the Beast*, *Sister Act*, and the upcoming production of *Bright Star*. She is excited to work with such talented performers, band, and production staff for *Sweet Potato Queens*.

MATT MCDONALD (Woodwind) is the Director of Bands at Northwest Rankin High School in Flowood, where he directs the Northwest Rankin High School "Cougar" Marching Band, teaches symphonic band, AP music theory, saxophone quartet, and woodwind quintet. He regularly performs with the Mississippi Wind Symphony. McDonald received his Bachelor of Music Education and Master of Music Education degrees from the University of Mississippi.

PAUL HEINDL (Drums) received his Bachelor and Master 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.

RICHARD BROWN (Bass) earned his Masters of Music degree in performance from DePaul University and his Bachelor of Music Education degree from the University of Memphis. He was a full time member of the Memphis Symphony at the age of 19. His 21 year teaching experience includes teaching in New Orleans, St. Louis, and Chicago. He is an adjunct professor of acoustic and electric bass at Belhaven University and performs with the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra. He has toured internationally as a classical, jazz and cruise ship musician. He has recorded with Grammy winner, Cassandra Wilson and others.

JIMMY TURNER (Guitar) earned his Bachelors of Music and Masters in Music in guitar performance degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi. Turner maintains an active private studio, performance schedule, and serves as an adjunct faculty member at Millsaps College and teaches guitar at Mississippi College. His students have won top honors and prizes in local and state competitions. Turner has played in New Stage Theatre's productions of *The Robber Bridegroom*, *It Ain't Nothin' but the Blues*, *Breaking Up Is Hard to Do*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *The Marvelous Wonderettes*, *Hairspray*, *Shrek The Musical*, and *One Man, Two Guvnors*.

TIM WALKER (Rehearsal Music Director/Accompanist) is a native of Jackson, but spent the majority of his childhood years in Wiggins, Miss. Walker's music career began in ninth grade, when he became pianist of his local church. He is a graduate of William Carey University in Hattiesburg with Bachelor's degrees in Biology and Chemistry. Walker holds a Master of Music in conducting from New Orleans Baptist Seminary where he is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Music. Walker's life in music has taken him from church to stage. He previously severed

as Conductor of The Acadiana Symphony Youth Orchestra in Lafayette, LA and also served as Conductor for Lafayette's Chapter of Christian Youth Theatre productions of **Wizard of Oz** and **Les Miserable**. Walker's most recent musical adventure took him across the pond in January to St. Petersburg, Russia to accept the honor of guest conductor at **Epiphany Nights Musical Festival**. Walker and his family are proud to call Jackson home and love being part of this diverse community.

DINEIJAH ATTIDORE-CHARLES (Woodwinds) was born on the island of St. Thomas, USVI and is currently a junior at Jackson State University. She is the principle flautist in the Jackson State University Symphonic Wind Ensemble as well as the orchestra and also plays the baritone saxophone in Jazz Ensemble II.

THE PRODUCTION STAFF

RUPERT HOLMES (Book) has won Tony® awards as playwright, lyricist and composer. Broadway: **The Mystery of Edwin Drood** (Tony® award winner for Best Musical and Tony® awards to Holmes for Best Score and Best Book); **Curtains** (with Kander and Ebb, Tony nom. Best Musical, Drama Desk Award to Holmes for Best Book, Tony® nom. for Book and Additional Lyrics); **Say Goodnight, Gracie** (Tony® nomination to Holmes for Best Play); Broadway thrillers include **Accomplice** (Edgar Award) and his adaptation of John Grisham's **A Time to Kill**. Regional: **The Nutty Professor** (book and lyrics, with music by Marvin Hamlisch, 2012 BroadwayWorld "Best Musical"). TV: created and wrote AMC's Emmy-winning **Remember WENN**. Holmes is also an award-winning mystery novelist...wrote, arranged and conducted platinum albums for Barbra Streisand including his songs for the Golden Globe-winning score of **A Star is Born**. Holmes is himself a platinum hit singer-songwriter of the seventies and eighties, and the recent recipient of ASCAP's prestigious George M. Cohan award "for the breathtaking diversity of his creative career."

MELISSA MANCHESTER (Composer) starred in the national tours of Andrew Lloyd Webber's **Music of the Night** and **Song and Dance**. She also created the role of Maddy on the NBC television hit series **Blossom**. In 1980 she became the first recording artist in the history of the Academy Awards to have two nominated movie themes in a given year: "Through The Eyes Of Love" and "The Promise." She was nominated for a Grammy® Award in 1980 for "Don't Cry Out Loud" and won the Grammy® Award for best female vocalist in 1982 singing "You Should Hear How She Talks About You." In addition to performing, Manchester has composed music for the animated feature **The Great Mouse Detective** and written the scores for the musical **I Sent a Letter to My Love** and for **Lady and the Tramp II**, the sequel to the Disney animated classic. Manchester also co-wrote the radio mainstays "Midnight Blue", "Come In From The Rain" and

“Whenever I Call You Friend.” She was presented the Governor’s Award by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences for her contributions to the music and recording arts. In 2015, Manchester celebrated her forty-year career with the release of her 20th studio album, *You Gotta Love the Life*.

SHARON VAUGHN (Lyrics) started her career in music as a recording artist. After being “discovered” singing in a local lounge by country star Mel Tillis, she moved to Nashville from her hometown, Orlando, Florida. Vaughn spent years as an A-lister session singer (Dolly Parton, Kenny Rogers, George Jones and many others) until her first self-penned song became a hit on the Oak Ridge Boys. Followed soon by the iconic, “My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys”, by Waylon Jennings, which was also recorded by Willie Nelson for the Oscar®-winning soundtrack of *The Electric Horseman* film. She has over one hundred recorded country songs, including many Number Ones and CMA’s Event of the Year with Lorrie Morgan and Keith Whitley, ‘Til A Tear Becomes A Rose’. In 2008 Vaughn moved to Stockholm, Sweden, branching into the pop realm with Agnes’ worldwide hit, “Release Me”. Currently splitting her time between Nashville, London and Stockholm, she continues working between continents and composing all genres of music... including scores for musical theatre in Europe and the US. Vaughn has been nominated for the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame.

JILL CONNER BROWNE (Author, the *Sweet Potato Queens*® books) formally trained in Absolutely Nothing, Browne discovered that her only innate abilities are smiling, waving, and forming instantaneous, baseless opinions about literally everything. Along with these dubious distinctions, it was also observed that people willingly mind her directives. She attributes this to their fear of her enormous stature but she is more interested in the obedience itself than the reason for it. Seeing by these traits and skills that she was fitted only for royal office and finding all existing (foreign and domestic) positions to be filled, Browne created herself THE Sweet Potato Queen in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1982 and has done little else ever since. (Other than producing and successfully bringing to adulthood one spectacular daughter, Bailey, and writing 9 bestselling books—3 NYTIMES Best-sellers, 2 of which were #1—Browne has spent years in happy Slothdom in Mississippi, where she is greatly entertained by her husband, The Cutest Boy in the World, Kyle Jennings, and an assortment of large rescue dogs and one gigantic cat.

RANDY REDD (Director) Directing credits include *Swing Wings*, *Extraordinary Joe*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *Smoke on the Mountain*, *The Who’s Tommy*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and *Fiction in Photographs*. As an actor, Broadway credits include *Parade*, *Ring of Fire*, *MDQ*, Terrence McNally’s *Some Men*, *The Burnt Part Boys*, Randy Newman’s *Faust*, *Pump Boys & Dinettes*, Alain Boublil’s *Manhattan Parisienne*,

Allegro directed by John Doyle, and *The View Upstairs*. Film/TV: *Beautiful Creatures*, *The Last Five Years*, *After the Storm*, *Kinsey*, *From Broadway With Love* (PBS), the *Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade*, and the *Tony Awards*. His first play, *Mississippi Sugar*, based on the works of Lewis Nordan, was developed and produced at The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. Other original work: *Awful/Good*, *Touché*, *What's That Smell*, *Elkin Dab*, and *Mister Mississippi*. He is the Producing Artistic Director of JOOKMS, a new company devoted to locally sourced devised theater in Mississippi.

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!

AMANDA REHBEIN (Scenic Designer) is a New York-based set designer with having designed for Theatre Row, Town Hall, Classic Stage Company, The Juilliard School, and Abrams Art Center. Notable credits include production design for *After the Storm* a documentary film showcasing a production of *Once on this Island* following hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. She designed events and installations for top brands like Heineken, Nike, Victoria Secret, W Hotels, Diesel, Bon Appetit, Net-A-Porter, and Time Warner Cable. Rehbein also works in commercial restaurant design in New York City. She earned her degree in theatre design at Concordia University in Montreal and her Masters in Fine Arts at New York University in design for stage and film.

BRONWYN TEAGUE (Production Manager/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 (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 (Audio Engineer/Sound Designer) 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 got 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.

SARAH COLEMAN (Acting Apprentice) is a recent graduate from Radford University where she received a B.S in theatre performance. She is currently on tour playing Pinocchio in *Pinocchio* and she was last seen playing Petulia Croserie in *Hell in High Water*, Belle/Fred's Wife in *A Christmas Carol: A Ghost Story of Christmas* and Margot Frank in *The Diary of Anne Frank* here at New Stage! 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). She'd like to thank her family for the endless support, Megan Ward, Marley Neville, and Dana Grindstaff for being the bomb, and her dog Jax for supplying endless happiness.

JORDAN WILLIAMS (Acting Apprentice) feels especially honored to have the opportunity to participate in this year's apprentice company. He was last seen on stage as James Goodin in *Hell in High Water*. Williams is currently a student at Tougaloo College pursuing a B.A. in mass communications. Williams has played Al in the critically acclaimed play *Pill Hill* by Sam Kelley and Cory Maxson in August Wilson's *Fences*. He has performed stand-up comedy in the Los Angeles area at several social events and comedy clubs, including the Comedy Store, Comedy Union, The J-Spot, and "Way too Funny Wednesday" in Atlanta, Georgia. Williams ultimately plans to attain a Masters of Fine Arts and become an acting professor. He hopes to help make more people smile as he continues to pursue his career.

Light Board OperatorSarah Coleman
Running Crew Hayden Schubert, Cherry Rendel, Marie Venters, Jordan Williams
Carpenter.....LaZerrick Travis
Costume AssistantLydia Lippincott
Box Office Associates..... Kerri Puckett, Amy Smith

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

FRANCINE THOMAS REYNOLDS (Artistic Director) has been the artistic director at New Stage since 2006 and has worked as a theatre artist for 30 years. She recently directed *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.

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.

Thank you Jill Conner Browne for making our hearts sing!

Finale Costume Design by Colleen Grady

Special Thanks to Theatre Under The Stars

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By Lynn Nottage

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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!



New Stage depends on the support of volunteers to keep the curtain rising.

You can make a difference by giving a few hours of your time. Some jobs require a regular commitment throughout the season, say once or twice per show; others are assigned "as needed." If you have a little free time and want to get involved, there are many opportunities available from ushering to scenic painting, poster hanging to ticket taking.

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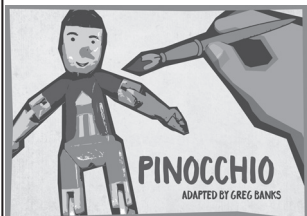
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New Stage Theatre Arts-in-Education

PINOCCHIO

Adapted by Greg Banks



Adapted by Greg Banks, this captivating and unique 50-minute retelling of Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* will ignite the imagination of young audiences everywhere! This updated, fast-paced version of the classic tale follows the little puppet Pinocchio on his quest to become a real boy. Will the all-too-tempting delights of puppet shows and alluring adventures be too much? Children are invited to interact with the cast throughout Pinocchio's many adventures. Follow Pinocchio as he discovers that only by being truthful, selfless, and kind will his dream of becoming a real boy become a reality.

**Best suited for elementary school audiences.*

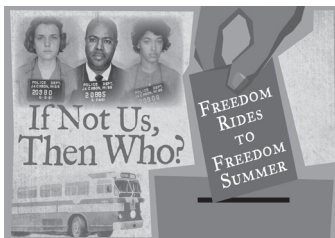
Available for performances beginning October 9, 2018 through May 10, 2019.

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Music chronicles two historic events that made an unforgettable impact on American history....and Mississippi. In 1961 thirteen "Freedom Riders" began a journey to fight racial segregation. In 1964, Mississippians and out-of-state volunteers alike organized

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**Best suited for middle and high school audiences.*

**Available for performance beginning January 7, 2019 through May 10, 2019.*

For more information on educational programs at New Stage Theatre, contact Sharon Miles, Education Director, 601.948.3533 ext. 232.

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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.