

PARENT GUIDE • RATED PG-13

Parent Guide Information by Derek T. Pickens

Charleston Stage, now celebrating its 44th Season, is in residence at the Historic Dock Street Theatre. In this intimate setting no patron is more than 50 feet from the stage. Charleston Stage is South Carolina’s largest resident professional theatre. More than a half million students have attended Charleston Stage’s fully professional productions at the Historic Dock Street Theatre over the past 44 years. Charleston Stage productions feature dazzling scenery, stunning costumes, and casts of professional actors.

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Music, Book, and Story by Steve Martin Music, Lyrics, and Story by Edie Brickell

SYNOPSIS:

Inspired by a true story and featuring the Tony®-nominated score by Steve Martin and Edie Brickell, Broadway's *Bright Star* tells a sweeping tale of love and redemption set against the rich backdrop of the American South in the 1920s and '40s. When literary editor Alice Murphy meets a young soldier just home from World War II, he awakens her longing for the child she once lost. Haunted by their unique connection, Alice sets out on a journey to understand her past—and what she finds has the power to transform both of their lives. With beautiful melodies and powerfully moving characters, the story unfolds as a rich tapestry of deep emotion. An uplifting theatrical journey that holds you tightly in its grasp, *Bright Star* is as refreshingly genuine as it is daringly hopeful.

THEMES EXPLORED:

- Family
- Choices
- Strength
- Enduring Love
- Shame
- Truth

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CHARACTERS:

Alice Murphy - portrayed as both a teenager and adult. As an adult, Alice is an editor of a Southern literary magazine; intelligent, attractive, professional – but with an air of melancholy. Young Alice is rebellious, high-spirited, adventurous – looking to break out of small-town life and experience the world.

Billy Cane - a young soldier returning home from WWII; an aspiring young writer; fresh, open, optimistic, charming, and a little naïve.

Daddy Cane - Billy's father. A widower. Spry, good looking. Kind hearted, if a bit lonely.

Margo Crawford - a small-town bookstore owner; a childhood friend of Billy's who now harbors romantic feelings towards him; a natural beauty with a keen intellect.

Max - a customer at Margo's bookstore, at first, he has a crush on Margo, but later becomes Edna's beau.

Florence - an employee at Margo's bookstore and a childhood friend of both Billy and Margo.

Edna - an employee at Margo's bookstore.

Daryl Ames - An assistant at a literary magazine. Funny, with a dry and officious sense of humor. Insecure, and perhaps a bit socially awkward, but endearing and innately likeable.

Lucy Grant - A junior editor at a literary magazine. An ambitious, professional young "modern" career woman of the 1940's. Strong, forthright and provocative with a sharp sense of humor.

Mama Murphy - Alice's mother. A caretaker to her family and her rural community. A warm, loving, sensible woman. Hardworking, with great inner strength and compassion.

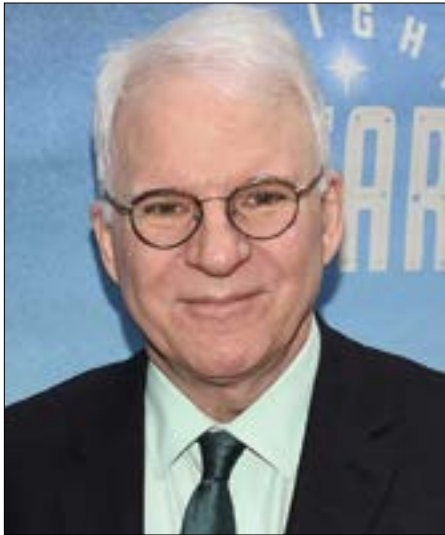
Daddy Murphy - Alice's father; an authoritative and a stern disciplinarian; devoutly religious, hard-working, a poor but proud farmer.

Mayor Josiah Dobbs - the Mayor of Zebulon; a political and financial powerbroker – distinguished, an imposing and controlling presence; has a genuine interest in protecting his son's future and his family name, but in doing so, is ultimately pushed to a point of extreme and irrevocable cruelty.

Jimmy Ray Dobbs - portrayed as both a teenager and adult. Seen in flashbacks - Young Jimmy is Mayor Dobbs' son and young Alice's beau; handsome, boyishly charming, well-built and intelligent; from a family of wealth and power and is being groomed by his father for a similar future in the family business; an independent thinker who is not afraid to stand up to his father for what he believes in; he has a sense of personal responsibility and morality as well as a deep reserve of passion and emotion.

Stanford - Loyal assistant to Mayor Josiah Dobbs

Dr. Norquist - The local family doctor in Zebulon



MUSIC, BOOK, AND STORY

Steve Martin

As an actor, comedian, author, playwright, screenwriter, producer and musician—Steve Martin is one of the most diversified performers and acclaimed artists of his generation. Martin has been successful as a writer of and performer in some of the most popular movies of recent film history—appearing in more than 50 films over the course of his career. With titles such as *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*, *Parenthood*, *Father of the Bride* and *Cheaper by the Dozen* franchises, *Baby Mama* and *It's Complicated*, Martin's films are the kind that are

viewed again and again. Martin wrote the screenplays for some of his most celebrated films including *The Jerk*, *Roxanne*, *Bowfinger*, *L.A. Story* and *Shopgirl*. Martin's first film was a seven-minute short he wrote and starred in, *The Absent-Minded Waiter*. The film was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Short Film, Live Action in 1977. Martin's work has earned him an Academy Award, five Grammy awards, an Emmy, the Mark Twain Award, an AFI Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Kennedy Center Honors.

Martin began his career as a writer on "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour", for which he earned his first Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing Achievement in Comedy, Variety, or Music in 1969. In the mid-1970s, Martin shone as a stand-up on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, made appearances on HBO's *On Location* and NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, and became the first comedian to sell out an arena performance. As one of the most celebrated comedians, Martin's comedy album *Let's Get Small* (1978) went platinum in the United States and won a Grammy for Best Comedy Album.

Martin originally used his passion for the banjo as part of his stand up comedy routine, but in 2010, he released his first album, *The Crow: New Songs for the 5-String Banjo*. Since then, Martin has played many prestigious stages including Carnegie Hall, Royal Festival Hall in London, and the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. Martin released his second full length bluegrass album *Rare Bird Alert* in 2011. In 2013, Steve Martin released his third full-length album called *Love Has Come For You*, a unique collaboration with songwriter Edie Brickell. *Love Has Come For You*, won a Grammy for "Best American Roots Song" for the title track and inspired the Broadway musical *Bright Star*. *Bright Star* received five Tony Award nominations and also received Outstanding New Broadway Musical and Outstanding New Score at the Outer Critics Circle Awards. Martin and Brickell's second album together, *So Familiar*, was released on Rounder Records and featured 12 remarkable songs that brought the acclaimed duo's musical collaboration into fresh creative territory.

BACKGROUND INFO

His latest play, *Meteor Shower* was recently on Broadway starring Emmy Award-winner Amy Schumer. His other plays include *Picasso at the Lapine Agile* and *The Underpants*, both of which Charleston Stage has produced. Born in Waco, TX, in 1945, Steve Martin was raised in Southern California and began working as a comedian and magician at area amusement parks, including The Magic Shop at Disneyland. Martin went on to Santa Ana College, and then earned his Theater Arts degree from UCLA.



MUSIC, LYRICS, AND STORY

Edie Brickell

Edie Brickell is an American singer and songwriter known best for her group “Edie Brickell and the New Bohemians.” Born and raised in Texas, Brickell attended the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, and later attended Southern Methodist University but dropped out to pursue her music career.

In her lifetime, Edie Brickell has been nominated for three Grammy Awards and won one for Best American Roots Song for “Love Has Come For You,” which inspired the musical *Bright Star*.

She is married to Paul Simon of Simon and Garfunkel.

FUN FACTS

- *Bright Star* opened on Broadway on March 24, 2016 and ran for 109 performances before closing on June 26, 2019.
- The show earned 5 Tony Nominations including Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical (Steve Martin), Best Original Score, Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role, and Best Orchestrations.
- *Bright Star* was also nominated for 6 Drama Desk Awards, and won for Outstanding Music.
- *Bright Star* received a Grammy Nomination for Best Musical Theatre Album

CONTENT WARNINGS

Bright Star is a stirring story of family and love, and is recommended for ages 13 and up due to some mild language, depiction of violence toward an infant, and scenes with drinking. The following words are used in this production: “damn,” “hell,” and “bastard.”

HAVE KIDS WHO'D LIKE TO TAKE THEATRE CLASSES?



Acting Classes

200+ Students Attend Acting Classes After School

Charleston Stage's TheatreSchool offers classes year round for students from kindergarten through high school at Charleston Stage's West Ashley Theatre Center. Acting classes for students of all ages and abilities are taught by members of Charleston Stage's Professional Resident Acting Company. Classes range from beginning classes to performance workshops and performance troupes. Classes culminate in mini-performances held at the West Ashley Theatre Center. Tuition scholarships are available for need-based students.

Register online today at CharlestonStage.com/Education!



ArtReach In-School Workshops

Bringing Professional Actors Into the Classroom

Charleston Stage's Resident Professional Actors provide dynamic workshops in area schools through a partnership with Engaging Creative Minds. Workshops use theatrical skills to teach academic subjects and can be combined with a school matinee performance experience. For information on booking ArtReach workshops, contact Marybeth Clark, Director of Education, at (843) 225-3900 or mclark@charlestonstage.com.



TheatreWings High School Apprenticeships

A Tuition-Free Apprentice Program For Teens

The TheatreWings High School Apprentice Program is designed to allow talented young people the opportunity to work directly with theatre professionals and gain first-hand experience in professional theatrical production. Students explore stage management, lighting and sound, as well as set and costume design and construction. Designed for highly dedicated students, TheatreWings requires more than 100+ hours of apprenticeship each season. For more information, email TheatreWings Co-Coordinators Ravyn Meador or Caleb Garner at wings@charlestonstage.com.

For more information on our programs, call the Education Office at (843) 225-3900 or visit CharlestonStage.com/Education.

DOCK STREET THEATRE



For almost 300 years audiences have delighted in performances at the Historic Dock Street Theatre which stands on the site of the very first theatre building in America which opened its doors in 1736. The current building, originally The Planter's Hotel was built in 1803 and in 1937 was converted into the Dock Street Theatre know today. Charleston Stage presents over 150 performances at the Historic Dock Street Theatre playing to theatre goers from every state in the union and many foreign countries. The Dock Street Theatre, newly renovated in 2010, is currently owned and managed by the City of Charleston. Other

performing arts groups including Spoleto Festival USA perform here annually.

On February 12, 1736 the Dock Street Theatre opened with a performance of *The Recruiting Officer*. Built on the corner of Church Street and Dock Street (now known as Queen Street), the Historic Dock Street Theatre was the first building in America built exclusively to be used for theatrical performances. Flora, the first opera performance in America, took place at the Historic Dock Street Theatre.

The original Dock Street Theatre was probably destroyed by the Great Fire of 1740 which destroyed many of the buildings in Charleston's French Quarter. In 1809, the Planter's Hotel was built on this site and in 1835 the wrought iron balcony and sandstone columns of the Church Street facade were added. A number of notable persons worked and patronized the Planter's Hotel including the noted 19th Century actor Junius Brutus Booth (father of Edwin and John Wilkes Booth). Robert Smalls, an African-American Civil War hero, who stole a steamboat in the harbor and sailed it out past the Confederate-held Ft. Sumter and turned it over to the blockading Union Fleet, served as a waiter in the hotel's dining room prior to the war. Charleston's famed Planter's Punch was first introduced here.

After the Civil War, the Planter's Hotel fell into disrepair and was slated for demolition. But in 1935, after Milton Pearlstine made the property available to the City of Charleston and at the urging of Mayor Burnet Maybank and other notable citizens, the original building became a Depression Era WPA (Works Progress Administration) project. At that time, the present theatre was constructed within the shell of the

DOCK STREET THEATRE



Planter's Hotel. The hotel's grand foyer became the grand foyer of the theatre and the hotel's dining room now serves as the box office lobby. The beautiful woodwork and mantels of the second floor drawing room were salvaged from the Radcliffe-King Mansion (circa 1799) which stood at the corner of George and Meeting Streets and was razed to build the College of Charleston gymnasium, another WPA project. Modeled on eighteenth century London playhouses by Charleston architect Albert Simons, the present Dock Street Theatre's new stage house and auditorium were built in the hotel's courtyard. The local carpenters who were put to work as a part of this Depression era relief effort utilized locally grown and milled native black cypress for the beautiful warm wooden interior. Following this \$350,000 renovation, The Historic Dock Street Theatre's second grand opening took place on November 26, 1937. Notables in the audience included author DuBose Heyward (*Porgy*) who was named writer-in-residence.

The Historic Dock Street Theatre reopened for the third time on March 18, 2010 after a three year, \$19 million dollar renovation by the City of Charleston. This extensive full-scale renovation brought the historic theatre into the 21st century with state-of-the-art lighting and sound, modern heating and air conditioning, and new restrooms and seating. In addition, the theatre was made seismically secure and fully handicapped accessible. Extensive sound-proofing was added to ensure that outside noises no longer intruded on performances inside.