



PURE LIFE THEATRE PRESENTS

# PROGRAM

## Bright Star

Music By:  
**Steve Martin**

Lyrics By:  
**Edie Brickell**

Directed By:  
**Dr. Wade Newhouse**





Pure Life Theatre

Presents

# Bright Star

Music, Book, and Story by STEVE MARTIN

Music, Lyrics, and Story by EDIE BRICKELL

## Starring

HANNAH ACKMAN    BENAIHA ADESOJI    BRENDA BAILEY  
JOSEPH BASNIGHT    KAITLYN BLISS    CHRISTIAN BROWN  
VENIZA CATLETT    ANTHONY COOPER    GINNY DARCEY  
SKYLAR FABIEN    THOM HAYNES    VANAYA HENDERSON  
CHRIS INHULSEN    CHRISTA IRBY    DOUG KAPP    TAUFIKI LEE  
HOWARD A. LEWIS    RUTHIE MARTINEZ    ALIYA MCCRYNDLE  
VERLENE OATES    SKY SYMONDS    ELISHA THOMAS    NATASHA TYSON

## The Band

\*ANDREW CHUNG    STEVEN DIGGS    TED DOUGHERTY  
ESTYN GERBER    EMMAUS HOLDER    \*ANVI JOSHI  
SINCLAIR PALMER    BERNIE PETTEWAY    DIANE PETTEWAY  
\*OMAR RUIZ-LOPEZ    \*LINDI WANG    JOE WIMBERLEY

## The Production Team

Music Director	Scenic	Set Technical Director	Costume
DIANE PETTEWAY	DEB ROYALS	WENDELL SCOTT	JENNIFER IJEOMA

Lighting	Stage Manager/Sound	Stage Manager
DARBY MADEWELL	CHRIS ACEVEDO	JULIANNA FRASCA

ASM	Props	Choreographer
CHASTIN KORNEGAY	CRYSTAL PAGE	MORGAN PINER

Intimacy/Stage Combat	House Manager	Marketing Project Manager	Artistic Director
JEFF JONES	EMILY PARRIS	TIFFANI STATEN	AYA WALLACE

Directed by  
WADE NEWHOUSE

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# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

For me, as for many people of my generation, the name Steve Martin was once synonymous with a particular brand of dependable, good-hearted comedy. All day long on cable television, and later a basic staple of rental movie nights, "Steve Martin movies" such as *The Jerk*, *Three Amigos*, and (especially) *Roxanne* were part of my entertainment vocabulary. I remember being surprised to learn later that he had a lifelong interest in the banjo, then later again being surprised that he was a novelist. And then one day I learned that he had teamed up with Edie Brickell (another name from a very particular time in my youth) to write a Broadway musical.

*Bright Star* is that musical, and in less than ten years since its premiere, it has become a community and school theatre staple. You will quickly see why: it tells a story of love and family, of sorrow and hope, with songs that alternate between bluegrass and ballad, and showstopper. People tell me over and over how much they love it, and it's a great honor to be entrusted with Pure Life's production.

*Bright Star* feels universal in its treatment of tragedy and optimism, but for many of us, it carries a special poignancy this year. The near-destruction of Asheville and many of its surrounding communities in the hurricane last fall adds a bittersweet nostalgia to the setting of this story: the distant sepia-toned worlds of the 1920s and 1940s depicted here feel even more distant now, even more idyllic and lost to us. We already know that we can't go back to the Asheville of 1923, but today we realize that we can't even go back to the Asheville of 2023.

I visited Asheville last summer, about a month before the hurricane swept through, and when Billy Cane talks about writing stories with Thomas Wolfe, or Margo sings wistfully about whether he will come home from the mountains to be with her again, I remember my short visit as a faded snapshot of a Before about to become After: the ups and downs of Interstate 40, the first stretch of highway when hills become mountains, the bygone architecture of Biltmore Village, and (for me as for Billy Cane) the influence of Thomas Wolfe on those of us who live with language in North Carolina.

Working on this show has fueled my desire to return to the mountains and to see what has been lost and, more importantly, to experience what cannot be lost about a place and a community. Pure Life is donating a portion of its ticket sales to Asheville-area arts organizations, and it is my sincere hope that the warmth, friendship, and resilience that you see on the stage today will inspire your own journey toward peace and happiness in these difficult times.

"The sun is gonna shine again."

Wade Newhouse





# Bright Star

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Alice Murphy/Cooper .....	BRENDA BAILEY
Jimmy Ray Dobbs .....	CHRIS INHULSEN
Billy Cane .....	BENAIHA ADESOJI
Margo Crawford .....	SKY SYMONDS
Lucy Grant .....	KAITLYN BLISS
Darryl Ames .....	JOSEPH BASNIGHT
Daddy Cane .....	ANTHONY COOPER
Mama Murphy .....	RUTHIE MARTINEZ
Daddy Murphy .....	HOWARD A. LEWIS
Mayor Josiah Dobbs .....	TAUFIKI LEE
Dr. Norquist .....	THOM HAYNES
Ensemble/Edna .....	SKYLAR FABIEN
Ensemble/Max .....	CHRISTIAN BROWN
Ensemble/Stanford .....	ELISHA THOMAS
Ensemble/Florence .....	GINNY DARCEY
Ensemble .....	HANNAH ACKMAN
Ensemble .....	VENIZA CATLETT
Ensemble .....	VANAYA HENDERSON
Ensemble .....	DOUG KAPP
Ensemble .....	NATASHA TYSON
Ensemble .....	CHRISTA IRBY
Ensemble .....	ALIYA MCCRYNDLE
Ensemble .....	VERLENE OATES

## BRIGHT STAR BAND

Piano/Musical Director .....	DIANE PETTEWAY
Drums/Percussion .....	EMMAUS HOLDER
Standup Bass .....	JOE WIMBERLEY
Keyboard Mandolin .....	STEVEN DIGGS
Cello .....	ESTYN GERBER
Cello (Substitute) .....	ANDREW CHUNG
Fiddler(Week 1) .....	OMAR RUIZ-LOPEZ
Fiddler (Substitute) .....	ANVI JOSHI
Fiddler (Week 2) .....	LINDI WANG
Banjo .....	TED DOUGHERTY
Viola .....	SINCLAIR PALMER
Guitar Mandolin .....	BERNIE PETTEWAY





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Jungle  
Book KIDS  
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**Camp Info.  
June 16 – July 3**

**Performance Info.  
July 5 & 6, 2025**

REGISTRATION IS OPEN

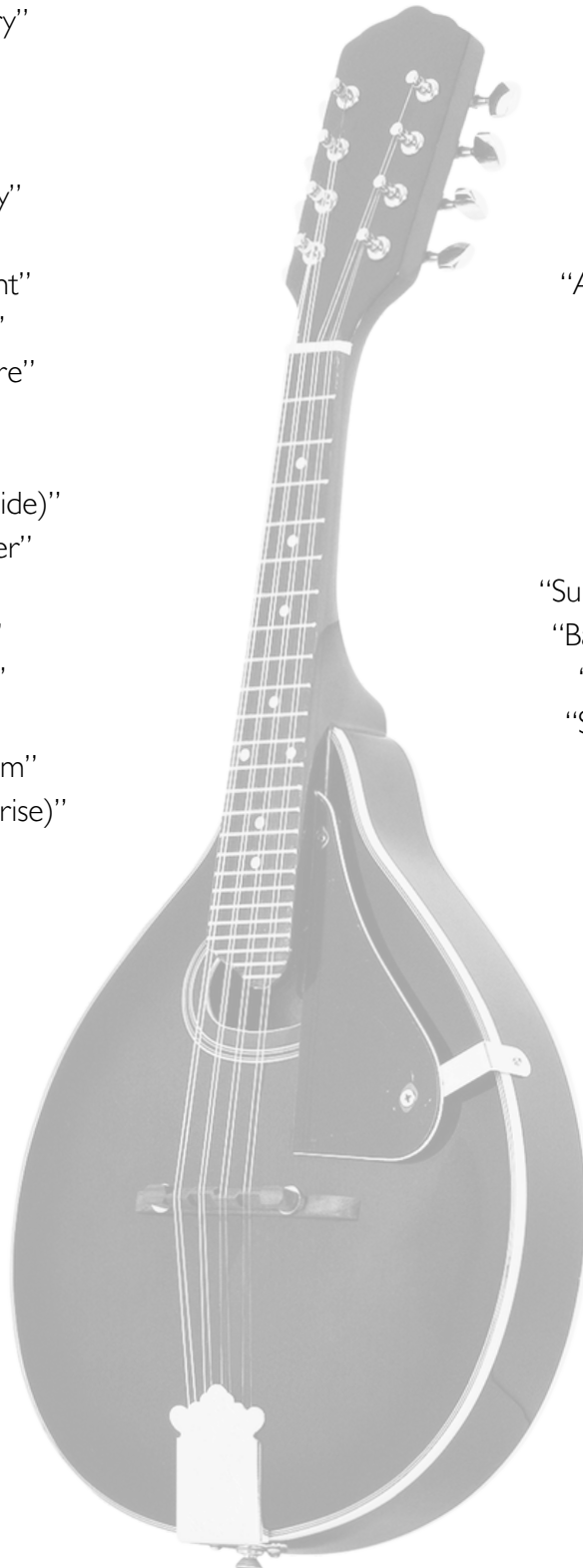
# MUSICAL NUMBERS

## ACT I

"If You Knew My Story"  
"She's Gone"  
"Scene Change"  
"Bright Star"  
"Way Back In the Day"  
"Whoa, Mama"  
"Firmer Hand/Do Right"  
"A Man's Gotta Do"  
"Bright Star Underscore"  
"Asheville"  
"Picnic Dance"  
"Underscore (By Your Side)"  
"What Could Be Better"  
"Scene Change"  
"I Can't Wait - Pt. I"  
"I Can't Wait - Pt. II"  
"Scene Change"  
"Please, Don't Take Him"  
"A Man's Gotta Do (Reprise)"

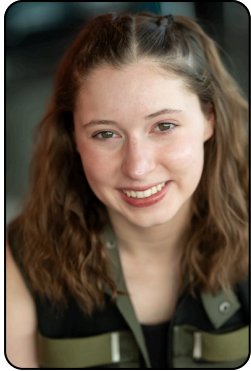
## ACT II

"Entr'acte"  
"Opening Act 2"  
"Sun's Gonna Shine"  
"Heartbreaker"  
"The Shiny Penny"  
"Another Round"  
"Another Round (Playoff)"  
"Scene Change"  
"Scene Change"  
"I Had a Vision"  
"Scene Change"  
"Always Will"  
"Scene Change"  
"Sun's Gonna Shine (Reprise)"  
"Baby Sweater Underscore"  
"I Can't Wait (Reprise)"  
"So Familiar/At Long Last"  
"Finale"  
"Bows"  
"Exit Music"





# CAST



Hannah  
Ackman



Benaiah  
Adesoji



Brenda  
Bailey



Joseph  
Basnight



Kaitlyn  
Bliss



Christian  
Brown



Veniza  
Catlett



Anthony  
Cooper



Ginny  
Darcey



Skylar  
Fabien



Thom  
Haynes



Vanaya  
Henderson



# CAST



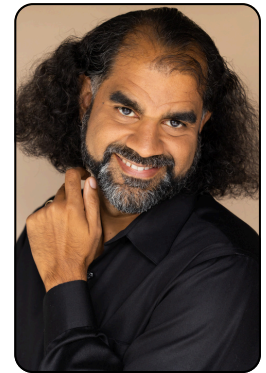
Chris  
Inhulsen



Christa  
Irby



Doug  
Kapp



Taufiki  
Lee



Howard  
A. Lewis



Ruthie  
Martinez



Aliya  
McCryndle



Verlene  
Oates



Sky  
Symonds



Elisha  
Thomas



Natasha  
Tyson

# WHO'S WHO in the CAST

**Hannah Ackman** (Ensemble) is making her debut at Pure Life! Credits include: Carousel (Louise Bigelow/Choreographer, Drop Spindle), Brigadoon (Dancer, CaryPlayers), A Christmas Carol (Dancer, TIP), and R&H Cinderella (Dance Captain, Southern Wake Players). She's currently studying animal science at NCSU and graduates during these shows! Hannah wants to thank her parents and sister who always encourage and support her passions.

**Benaiah Adesoji** (Billy Cane) is a local performance artist who currently resides in Raleigh, NC. By day, he is a document review specialist for SECU, and by the grace of God he is an artist who loves to create and tell stories onstage through music and theatre arts. Benaiah may be recognized for portraying King Darling III or winning Raleigh Little Theatre's 2023 DIVAS crown as well as Purelife Theatre productions playing Doctor Bird in Three Little Birds or Booster in August Wilson's 'Jitney.' Benaiah is grateful for the opportunity to tell this tragically beautiful story and look at the world through the fresh and hopeful eyes of Billy! He dedicates this performance to his ancestors, especially his mom and dad.

**Brenda Bailey** (Alice Murphy) is honored to be returning to Pure Life Theatre as a part of the cast for Bright Star. Brenda had the pleasure of performing with Pure Life earlier this season in the ensemble of their presentation of Bob Marley's: Three Little Birds. Prior to her work with Pure Life, Brenda also acted in productions with Magnolia Arts Center and various colleges such as North Carolina Central and Duke University. When not on stage, Brenda continues to play a role in theater behind the scenes as an assistant stage manager with Burning Coal Theater. Brenda supported multiple productions with Burning Coal this season such as: Rainmaker and Being Chaka. Outside of theater, Brenda can be seen performing in other artistic ways including singing with the band "Table Two", motivational speaking with Toastmasters International, doing live readings of her book "Wine and Word Play" and hosting poetry events throughout the Triangle.

**Joseph Basnight** (Darryl Ames) is a performer from Fayetteville, North Carolina who is excited to participate in his second show with Pure Life Theatre. A graduate from Terry Sanford High School, Joseph is a trained dancer who is pursuing dance as a full-time career. In his free time, he takes dance classes at The Core Academy.

**Kaitlyn Bliss** (Lucy Grant) is a junior at William Peace University, pursuing a BA in English with a minor in Interdisciplinary Arts. She recently completed the Disney College Program and is very excited to be back onstage in Bright Star, her first production with Pure Life Theatre. She would like to thank the cast, crew and directors for all their hard work, dedication, and energy that they put into this show. Most importantly, she would like to thank her amazing parents and friends for being a constant source of love and support throughout all her endeavors.

**Christian Brown** (Ensemble/Max) Hello my name is Christian Brown I'm 23 years old and I will be performing in the Musical Bright Start as Max and as a part of the ensemble. I have performed before in the Wedding Singer as Shane , Mr T impersonator and the male ensemble. I have been trained under the teachings of Wade Newhouse at William Peace University. Outside of performing I like to stay active with sports and also watch anime. I also like spending quality time with friends and loved ones.

**Veniza Catlett** (Ensemble) is thrilled to return to Pure Life Theatre Company, this time as part of the ensemble for Bright Star. Just a month ago, she assisted with stage management for Burning Coal's Being Chaka! Since relocating to the U.S. in 2022, Veniza has quickly become a key member and choreographer for FAPA-NC. Last year, she portrayed Cousin Chinese Bird in Three Little Birds with PLT. Before her move, she spent nearly a decade refining her craft as a resident artist and apprentice director with the Integrated Performing Arts Guild (IPAG) in the Philippines. Her performances have taken her across the Philippines, Asia, and the U.S., including multiple states (2018). Veniza is deeply grateful for the unwavering love and support of her son, Thaddeus, and her husband, Timothy, whose inspiration fuels her every day.

# WHO'S WHO in the CAST

**Anthony Cooper** (Daddy Cane) is from Rocky Mount, NC. He is excited to be returning to Pure Life Theatre in this production of August Wilson's Jitney! His previous work includes: Motown Sound of Christmas at Pure Life Theatre (Four Tops/Temptations/ Ensemble), Purlie (Ensemble/choreographer) at Pure Life Theatre, and Big River (Bill/Ensemble) at Round Barn Theatre & Jitney (Youngblood) at Pure Life Theatre. Special thanks to Pure Life and the cast and crew for this great opportunity and amazing experience. "I hope you enjoy the ride!"

**Ginny Darcey** (Ensemble/Florence) Ginny and her husband Tom moved to the Raleigh area from Lake Norman 4 years ago to be closer to their two sons. Prior to moving Ginny had the great pleasure of playing a myriad of characters in both musicals and straight plays; capping her final year there playing "Ethel" in On Golden Pond and "Clairee" in Steel Magnolias. Ginny and Tom are the very proud grandparents of 3 beautiful boys and also enjoy playing golf. Thanks to Deb Mizerk Royals for welcoming and including me to the Pure Life family.

**Skylar Jade Fabien** (Ensemble/Edna) is extremely passionate about acting and singing. She is thrilled to be performing with the Pure Life Theater Company again. Skylar's recent performances were in musical productions including: Urinetown, The Wedding Singer, and Motown the Sound of Christmas. Skylar draws her strength from the support of her family. In her spare time she enjoys drawing characters, inspired by the people that she knows and creating videos with her dogs Love and Ocean.

**Thom Haynes** (Dr. Norquist) is a software programmer (retired), standardized patient, audio-describer, fair housing tester, Clevelander, pescatarian pickleballer, singer with CSC, food bank volunteer. Proud papa of two men. Former board member – CPF and CP. Fave roles: Don (Hands on a Hardbody), Limping Man (Fuddy Meers), Garcin (No Exit), Marat (Marat/Sade), Sir Andrew (Twelfth Night), Algernon (Earnest).

**Vanaya Henderson** (Ensemble) is so excited to be part of Bright Star. This is her first production with Pure Life Theatre. She is a native of Durham, NC. Some of her past productions include Heathers the Musical (Ensemble), The Color Purple (Nettie), and A Christmas Carol (Mrs. Fezziwig). Vanaya is an alumna of North Carolina A&T State University. She is grateful to her family and friends for their support.

**Chris Inhulsen** (Jimmy Ray Dobbs) is excited to revisit the role of Jimmy Ray and make his Pure Life Theater debut! Select credits include A Chorus Line (Mike Costa) Honest Pint, Something Rotten (Peter Quince) RLT, Brigadoon (Charles Dalrymple) Cary Players, Tartuffe (Tartuffe) Meredith College, Assassins (John Hinkley) NCSU TheatreFEST, Big River (Huck Finn) Temple, Evil Dead: The Musical (Scott) Gilbert Theater, and more! He would like to thank his mom and dad and his girlfriend Autumn for their continuous support. Whatever you find yourself doing, keep the Arts part of your life!

**Christia Irby** (Ensemble) is delighted to appear in Pure Life's production of Bright Star. Previous credits include Bob Marley's Three Little Birds and The Sound of Motown Christmas.

**Doug Kapp** (Ensemble/Accessibility Coordinator) is honored to work with Pure Life Theatre Company again. This time, his role will be to get the word out about the accessibility options Pure Life will offer our community. We offer Touch Tours and Audio Description for our blind and low vision patrons. This is just the beginning of our efforts. Enjoy the show!

**Taufiki Lee** (Mayor Josiah Dobbs) Always giving glory and thanks to God, Taufiki has worked with various local theater companies to include JTP, TYTTA, Agape Theater, NCCU's theatre, MOJOAA, WTF, Li V Mahob and Pure Life. His most recent accomplishment was with Pure Life's production of Jitney by August Wilson where he played the obnoxious drunk Fielding. I appreciate the opportunity to work with this amazing cast and my first show with Dr. Wade Newhouse. What a great privilege it is to get to do this. I am looking forward to you enjoying this show and experiencing hope, redemption and the enduring power of love.



# WHO'S WHO in the CAST

**Howard A. Lewis** (Daddy Murphy) is a 21 year old Certified Personal Trainer, Stage and Voice Actor. He has been in shows such as The Wedding Singer, Death by Design, Burial at Thebes, A Version of Sophocles' Antigone, Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella and is ecstatic about his role as Daddy Murphy in Pure Life Theatre's Bright Star. He wishes to continue entertaining the community through Voice and stage acting.

**Ruthie Martinez** (Mama Murphy) has a BA in Biology and Drama from UNC-CH and an MFA in Acting and Directing from UNC-Greensboro. She was the Director of Fine and Performing Arts and the Upper School Theatre instructor and director at Greensboro Day School for over 20 years. She has taught at several community colleges, Salem College, Appalachian State University and currently works in education at Raleigh Little Theatre, where she directed and choreographed Cinderella 40. Recent acting roles include Betty in The Foreigner, Mark's Mom in Southern Baptist Sissies, the Chaperone in The Drowsy Chaperone, Rosie in Mamma Mia, Clairee in Steel Magnolias, and plays herself in the upcoming horror film, Mutilator 2.

**Aliya McCryndle** (Ensemble) is an eighteen year old freshman at William Peace University and a first time cast member of Pure Life Theater. With only a small amount of work done in acting, she hopes that this show will help broaden her horizon and help her become more adjusted to the acting world.

**Verlene Oates** (Ensemble/Producer) is the Artistic Director of Revolutionary Voices Theatre Company and Pure Life Theatre producing manager. She is the proud Nana of four adorable young people. She loves live theater and has performed with Pure Life Theatre, Justice Theater Project, Garner Towne Players, Women's Theatre, MOJOAA, Raleigh Little Theater, DL Production, NC State University Theatre and Li V Mahon. She is excited to pull double-duty as a member of the ensemble as well as a producer.

**Sky Symonds** (Margo Crawford) is an actor, music director, all-around theatre person and is thrilled to be working on her first show with Pure Life Theatre! She holds a B.A. in Theatre with a from Meredith College. Some of her favorite past roles include Carrie White in Carrie: The Musical, Nickie in Sweet Charity (Meredith College Theatre) and Jules/Ondine in Between the Lines (NRACT). Offstage, she can be found teaching voice or music directing at various local theatres. She'd like to thank her super cool friends and family for their endless love and support!

**Elisha Thomas** (Ensemble/Stanford) is thrilled to be a part of Bright Star, presented by Pure Life Theatre! He is a current student at William Peace University, where he previously had the joy of playing Sammy in The Wedding Singer. He is excited to bring this beautiful story to life on stage and continue growing as a performer. Elisha would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Director Wade Newhouse and Music Director Diane Petteway for their incredible guidance and support. He also sends a huge thank you to the amazing crew for their hard work behind the scenes. Much love to friends, family, and fellow cast members for making this journey so special!

**Natasha Tyson** (Ensemble) works in clinical research by day but has recently tapped into her passion for musical theater. She has participated in performance workshops hosted by Raleigh Little Theater and Actor's Training Ground and is ready to take her talents from theory to practice with Bright Star being her debut stage performance.



# RIDE THE CYCLONE

Part of Burning Coal's Second Stage Series

Directed by: Jireh Ijeoma

**June 13-15, 18, 28-29, 2025**

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Burning Coal Theatre: 224 Polk St., Raleigh, NC 27604



# BAND



Steven  
Diggs



Ted  
Dougherty



Emmaus  
Holder



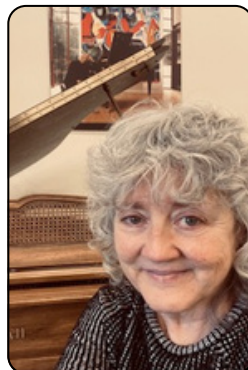
Anvi  
Joshi



Sinclair  
Palmer



Bernie  
Petteway



Diane  
Petteway



Omar  
Ruiz-Lopez



Lindi  
Wang



Joe  
Wimberley

Not Pictured: Andrew Chung (Cello), Estyn Gerber (Cello)



# WHO'S WHO in the BAND

**Steven Diggs** (Keyboard Mandolin) a Saint Augustine's University graduate, has been with the Pure Life Theater since its inception, participating in plays like Purlie and the annual Motown Sounds of Christmas, where he arranged the music for the horn section. He has served as Musical Director for She Persisted and The Face of Emmett Till with Pure Life.

Steven is happily married to his wife Vera with whom he shares the blessing of four children.

**Ted Dougherty** (Banjo) A lifelong guitarist, Ted took up the banjo five years ago and fell in love with the instrument, learning both traditional clawhammer and modern bluegrass styles of playing. Having played banjo for the Cardinal Gibbons High School production of Bright Star in 2023, Ted is thrilled to have the opportunity to participate in Pure Life Theater's current production. An experienced opera singer, Ted makes his primary living teaching voice in his home studio and online.

**Emmaus Holder** (Drums/Percussion) is a music and band teacher at Moncure School in Pittsboro, NC and the percussion instructor for Northwood and Seaforth High Schools in Chatham County. He is a graduate from UNC-Chapel Hill and an avid cyclist, runner, rock climber, and Lord of the Rings nerd.

**\*Anvi Joshi** (Fiddler Substitute) I am Anvi Joshi, a sophomore at Enloe High School in Raleigh, North Carolina. I've been playing the violin since I was 4, so 13 years as of this fall. I recently started playing the viola with the North Carolina Chamber Music Institute. This is my first time in a pit orchestra (I'm usually in the play), but it won't be my last.

**Sinclair Palmer** (Viola) Sinclair Palmer is a multi instrumentalist from Durham, NC. They have performed locally, nationally, and internationally with projects such as The Tallest Man on Earth, DUNUMS, Meltdown Rodeo, The Muslims, and countless more. They have also performed on state and national television and radio, including broadcasts on CBS, KEXP, and PBS.

A former music teacher, Sinclair is also the national Program Coordinator for Musical Empowerment, a Durham-based non-profit connecting children with free music lessons through college mentors.

**Bernie Petteway** (Guitar Mandolin) is one of North Carolina's critically acclaimed guitarists. His diverse background includes appearances with a variety of jazz, rock, traditional, and rhythm and blues ensembles. He has recorded and appeared in concert with nationally known artists Pat Benatar, Erich Kunzel (conductor St. Louis Symphony), Neil Sedaka, Bee Gees, David Palmer (Jethro Tull), Monica Mancini, Bill Conti, Roger McGuinn (The Byrds), the Pointer Sisters, and many others.

Bernie has frequently been a guest soloist with the NC Symphony and has provided guitar accompaniment for many local North Carolina theater companies as well as national touring productions. He has composed music for television programs nationally syndicated by PBS. He was one of the founding members of the legendary jazz-fusion group 3PM which EER-MUSIC.com's tribute page calls "one of the most underrated jazz rock fusion bands to have ever existed."

Bernie is endorsed by Collings Guitars and Schaefer Guitars of Austin TX.

\*Anvi Joshi (Fiddle) to perform April 25 & May 1

\*\*Andrew Chung (Cello) to perform May 4



# WHO'S WHO in the BAND

**Diane Petteway** (Musical Director/Piano) is thrilled to be working with the amazing Pure Life team to bring this beautiful show to life! She has worked at the intersection of story, music and movement for too many years to count. Bright Star is a favorite show because it combines a beautiful story and string band harmonies, and it reminds of her daddy. Special gratitude to Brenda who worked so hard to inhabit Alice in her many stages of love and grief, to the creative team and this amazing cast, and to the band—especially her husband Bernie—for bringing this show to triangle audiences.

**\*Omar Ruiz-Lopez** (he/him, Fiddler) is a distinguished musician and educator currently based in Hillsborough, NC, with a remarkable command over multiple instruments, including violin, viola, guitar, and mandolin. His roots lie in North Carolina, having been a part of the burgeoning Triangle music scene for 13 years until his move to Nashville in 2023 and back in 2025.

Since his time in Nashville, Omar has played and recorded with artists such as the GRAMMY-nominated band War and Treaty, Franklin Jonas, Lizzie No, Harper Grace and Langhorne Slim, and cowritten with songwriters such as Rachel Baiman and GRAMMY-nominated Melody Walker (Sierra Ferrell, American Dreaming). He is currently working on an EP with Willa Frank (Paper Wings) and a full-length album with Rachel Baiman producing.

Together with Lizzy Ross, Omar co-founded the Americana group Violet Bell, where their collaboration seamlessly intertwines top-notch songwriting with a variety of musical landscapes. Omar, a bilingual songwriter and undercover composer, crafts music that beautifully reflects his cultural roots entwined with a rich tapestry of diverse musical influences.

**\*\*Lindi Wang** (Fiddler) Lindi Wang, born in Taiwan, teaches the music department's applied lessons in violin. She holds a B.M. in Violin Performance from the Chinese Culture University, and a M.M. in Violin Performance from East Carolina University.

For the past 15 years, Lindi has been concertmaster for the Raleigh Civic Symphony Orchestra and the Raleigh Civic Chamber Orchestra. She is also a sub violinist for the N.C. Symphony, and performed as concertmaster with the Carolina Philharmonic in Carnegie Hall, NY. She is a founding member of Vida Strings.

**Joe Wimberley** (Standup Bass) is really excited to be on stage with these fabulous voices for his first time playing with Pure Life Theatre. He's played bass on many local stages, including RLT, JTP, Meredith College, Sweet Tea Shakespeare, and Seed Art Share. I share the joy of musicals with my lovely wife, Renee!

\*Omar Ruiz-Lopez (Fiddle) to perform April 24, 26, & 27

\*\*Lindi Wang (Fiddle) to perform May 1, 2, 3, & 4

# ABOUT US

## Our Mission & Vision

**Vision:**

Pure Life Theatre Company serves the community through exceptional theatrical experiences and life-giving performances that explore and nourish truth, hope, redemption, and love.

**Mission:**

To create, inspire, and sustain a theatre company that celebrates ethnically diverse and intergenerational leadership through the organization and in the ways we serve the community.

## A Special Thank You

Dear Friends,

Thank you for being here with us today at Pure Life Theatre. Every time our house lights dim and the stage comes to life, it's because of patrons like you who understand that theatre is more than entertainment—it's a living, breathing connection between performers and audience, between stories and hearts, between past and present. Your presence transforms our stage into a space where magic happens, where communities gather, and where understanding grows. Whether you're joining us for the first time or have been part of our Pure Life family for years, you are essential to making these moments possible. Each production we mount is a celebration of our shared humanity, made meaningful by your engagement, support, and willingness to experience these stories with us.

Theatre has the unique power to unite us, challenge us, and remind us of our shared humanity. This season, we're proud to support a cause that extends beyond our stage. A portion of ticket sales will go toward Hurricane Helene Relief efforts through ArtsAVL, aiding artists and arts organizations in Buncombe County, NC who were affected by the devastation. If you'd like to make an even greater impact, we invite you to donate directly using the link below.

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# PRODUCTION



Chris  
Acevedo



Julianna  
Frasca



Jennifer  
Ijeoma



Chastin  
Kornegay



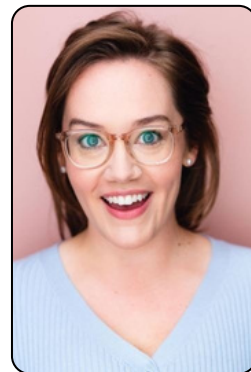
Darby  
Madewell



Wade  
Newhouse



Crystal  
Page



Morgan  
Piner



Deb  
Royals



Wendell  
Scott



Tiffani  
Staten



Aya  
Wallace

Not Pictured: Jeff Jones (Intimacy Coach/Stage Combat)

# WHO'S WHO in the TEAM

**Chris Acevedo** (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be back on his third adventure with Pure Life! Previously, he has staged managed "Jitney" and "Three Little Birds." Chris has also done numerous work with theatre companies throughout the Triangle. He would like to thank his family and friends, his co-SM Julianna for being a great support, and all of the supporters of the arts! We need you now more than ever so thank you for being here! Instagram: livinglife1994

**Julianna Frasca** (Stage Manager) is excited to be returning to Pure Life Theatre in their production of Bright Star after stage managing for The Motown Sound of Christmas! Over the past year she was the Production Stage Manager for Hitchcock Blonde with Brave New Classics, Hymn, and Being Chaka with Burning Coal Theatre and Ma Rainey's Black Bottom with Pure Life Theatre. Julianna would like to thank her wonderful husband, William, and loving dog, Nacho, for supporting her while she leaves every night for rehearsals.

**Jennifer Ijeoma** (Costume Designer) is excited to be working on Bright Star. Jennifer works alongside the leadership of Pure Life Theatre Company as the managing director of Revolutionary Voices Theatre Company. Her love for the arts has propelled her to dive more into costuming the theatre world. Jennifer has costumed Being Chaka, The Motown Sounds of Christmas, Fences, MaRainey's Black Bottom, She Persisted, Hymn, Home and Jitney. She has created costumes for Burning Coal Theatre, Pure Life Theater and Revolutionary Voices summer camps production of Newsies, Beauty and the Beast Jr, and Willie Wonka Jr. Jennifer has worked in education for 27 years and strongly advocates for the NAACP's ACT-SO program.

**Chastin Kornegay** (Assistant Stage Manager) graduated from Salem College with a degree in Creative Writing. Since then she has lived in four different states and been involved in a number of different productions both onstage and backstage including Music Man, Raleigh Little Theater's Cinderella, and Aida. Chastin worked with Pure Life Theater in September of 2024 as the assistant stage manager of Three Little Birds and is so excited to be back! When she's not in the theater she is volunteering on the planning committee for Griot and Grey Owl—a Black southern writer's conference that takes place every fall in Durham, NC. You can follow her on Instagram as KingChastin or on BlueSky as Chastin LeNai.

**Darby E. Madewell** (she/they, Lighting Design) is thrilled to make their debut with Pure Life Theatre Company! Recent credits include Cinderella and Hands on a Hardbody with Raleigh Little Theatre and The Gravitational Pull of Bernice Trimble with Theatre in the Park. When she isn't backstage, Darby is completing their master's degree in computer engineering at NC State University.

**Wade Newhouse** (Director) is a Professor of English and Chair of the Department of Humanities and Interdisciplinary Arts at William Peace University. Favorite roles in local productions include Macbeth (Bare Theatre, Sweet Tea Shakespeare), Syndey Bruhl in Deathtrap (Forest Moon, NCSU TheatreFest), Preacher in Southern Baptist Sissies (NRACT), Vincent/Theo in Vincent (Peaceabilities), Chris Belling in Curtains (RLT), and Felix in The Odd Couple (Forest Moon). Directing credits include The Wedding Singer, Zombie Prom, Assassins, Dracula, and Julius Caesar (WPU) and Richard III (Sweet Tea Shakespeare).

**Crystal Page** (Prop Designer) is excited to join Pure Life Theatre as a Prop Designer, driven by her passion for bringing stories to life through creativity and detail. Known for her collaborative spirit, Crystal excels in team environments, working seamlessly with directors, set designers, and production crews to help elevate every performance. Most recently, she served as a Prop Designer for August Wilson's 2025 production of Jitney and as a Costume Assistant under Jennifer Ijeoma for Pure Life Theatre's 2024 production of Motown Sound of Christmas.

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**Morgan Piner** (Choreographer) is a proud N.C. State University and Circle in the Square Theatre School alumna. She is a Bitzer Performance Award winner and N.C. State Artist of the Year award winner. She never anticipated that her years of clogging, serving as Dance Captain at Zebulon Middle School, and living in Asheville would prepare her for such a poignant musical. A North Carolina native, Morgan has deep ties to the state, making Bright Star especially meaningful. She enjoys bringing compassion to art education as a performer and choreographer and is grateful for the opportunities dance has given her—including playing Penelope Featherington in Tyce Diorio's Unofficial Bridgerton Dance Project and earning a BroadwayWorld nomination for Best Choreography in a Professional Musical. When she is not choreographing, you can find her working in media production, specializing in film, commercial content. [jumpingmullet.com](http://jumpingmullet.com)

**Deb Royals** (Scenic Designer) is honored to be a part of the Core Leadership for Pure Life Theatre Company and eager to support its mission to explore and nourish truth, hope, redemption, and love. She is deeply grateful for the support of her husband, Joe, and loves him and their three boys - Danny, Noah, and Eli beyond words.

**Wendell Scott** (Set Technical Designer) is excited to work with Pure Life again. He is an experienced bass and lead guitar player and enjoys playing all types of music. Wendell is a master carpenter and loves woodworking. He currently works as an IT professional.

**Tiffani Staten** (Marketing Project Manager) brings two decades of theatrical expertise to August Wilson's Jitney. As a veteran stage manager, she has shepherded productions across the country, including previous stagings of Jitney and King Hedley II at Ensemble Theatre, Robert Townsend's Musical Theatre of Hope for Gospel Music Channel, and The Color Purple at The Justice Theatre Project. Currently dividing her time between project management in entertainment technology and children's book writing, Staten continues to champion storytelling in all its forms. Working alongside Pure Life Theatre's extraordinary marketing team has been a pleasure and a joy. Iron does indeed sharpen iron. (Shout out to Benaiah Adesoji, Maria Barber, Connie Lea, and Darius Hooks).

**Aya Wallace** (Artistic Director) is the Artistic Director of Pure Life Theatre, a performer, educator, and advocate whose work spans dance, theater, and corporate leadership. She holds a Master's in Dance from NYU and a B.S. in Kinesiology from Temple University. Aya has taught all ages, choreographed for major NC theaters, and performed award-winning roles. Her work explores culture, identity, and social justice. She's also a Client Specialist and an active community volunteer and board member.





# SPECIAL THANKS

Maria Barber  
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