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PUBLIC THEATRE**

MAY 29 - 31

JUNE 5 - 7

presents

FRIDAYS @ 7PM

SATURDAYS @ 7PM

SUNDAYS @ 3PM

STEEL MAGNOLIAS

BY ROBERT HARLING

\$25 GENERAL ADMISSION

\$22 SENIORS

\$15 STUDENTS

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STEEL MAGNOLIAS

by Robert Harling

Originally produced by the W.P.A. Theatre, New York City, 1987
(Kyle Renick, Artistic Director)

Director
Sarah Tatom

Cast

Truvy	Sarah Fye
Annelle	Annie Zander
Clairee	Colby Block
Shelby.....	Kelsey Keny
M'Lynn	Kay Ayers
Ousier.....	Deb Meeks

Production Team

Stage Manager.....	Susan Gaw
Costume Design	Sara McLoud
Lighting Design/Radio Voice.....	Zach Perkins
Props Design	Caleb Finley
Wig Design/Wardrobe Manager.....	Vi Sartwell
Sound Design.....	Patrick Adams
Dialect Coach.....	Brad Oxnam
Assistant Stage Manager	DeAnna Parker
Scenic Construction.....	Nick Baum
Scenic Artist.....	Rachel Oppmann
Wardrobe Assistants	Milly Johnson, Jamie Vaal
Technical Consultant	Evan Hernandez
Producer	Kate Foreman
Assistant Producer.....	Sarah Kennedy

Setting

Chinquapin, Louisiana, 1980s

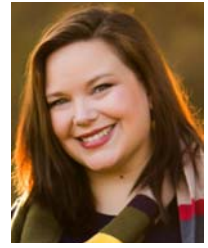
There will be one 15-minute intermission between acts.

A Note from the Director

For this production of *Steel Magnolias*, I kept returning to Truvy's line: "Laughter through tears is my favorite emotion." It perfectly captures what makes this play so enduring.

The heart of this story lives not just in its major events, but in the quiet moments between them; the pauses, the reactions, the unspoken truths, and the many different ways these women carry life's joys and burdens. Some meet hardship with humor, some with optimism, some with resistance, and some with fierce determination. What connects them all is their willingness to show up for one another with honesty, vulnerability, and love.

These women are funny, stubborn, messy, loving, frustrating... a bit like all of us in one way or another. They remind us that some of life's hardest moments are made bearable by the people willing to sit beside us in them, and Robert Harling beautifully illustrates through this story that life is rarely defined by singular events, but by the people who walk beside us through them. Thank you for joining us tonight. We hope you laugh, perhaps shed a few tears, and leave reminded of the beauty, resilience, and deep humanity found in shared experiences.



Sarah Tatom

— Sarah Tatom

Special thanks to the following individuals and organizations for their in-kind support:

Building Block School for the Arts	Maggie Hernandez
Columbia Academy	Sherry Johnson
Columbia State Community College	Susan Jones
Dr. Joe Cornelius	Sarah Kennedy
Lili Eubank	Maggie Kent
Ellen Foreman	MaryAnne Luther
Shirley Fye	Sara McCloud
Ghostlight Books	Beverly Mitchell
Micah Hartsfield	Jordan Tatom
Evan Hernandez	Sarah Tatom

The Cast



Kay Ayers (M'Lynn), a Millikin University theatre graduate, has been active in Middle Tennessee theater for decades, performing in productions such as WPT's *Sense & Sensibility* (Mrs. Dashwood), Franklin Theatrical's *Good Night Oscar* (June Levant), and WPT's *Romeo & Juliet* (Lady/Lord Capulet), as well as *Little Women* (Marmee). Her credits also include the leading roles in *Twelve Angry Jurors*, *The Lion In Winter*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Sweat*, and *The Great American Trailer Park Christmas Musical*. In addition to her stage work, Kay has contributed to regional films and national voiceover projects like *Veggie Tails*, *Franklin Towne*, *Sour Apples*, *The Shunning*, and the Audible book *Weighing: My Life If It Were A Musical* by Sandy Knox.



Colby Block (Clairee) has been involved with WPT for years—most recently in the role of President of the Board of Directors. However, this marks Colby's WPT stage debut. Colby spends her time fighting for justice as a Public Defender, giving back to her community, and being mom (her favorite role of all) to the coolest toddler in town. Colby is grateful to share the stage with such strong women in a show about the strength of women. She dedicates her performance to Reve and Arianne — the strongest women in her life.



Sarah Fye (Truvy) is an actor, dancer, singer, comedian, and podcaster with a heart in New York City and roots in boots in Nashville, Tennessee. Some of her favorite roles include Alice in *Pizza Man*, Annie in *Silent Sky*, and Lucy in *Bright Star*. Sarah would like to thank her mom Shirley, a southern hairstylist with a heart of gold and hair to high heaven, for giving her a lifetime of study to play Truvy. For Corey Parker, always and forever.



Kelsey Keny (Shelby) feels so lucky and grateful to be here with this remarkable team. A few previous theatre credits include *Company* (Amy), *Noises Off* (Belinda), and *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Snoopy). A Lewisburg native, she spent many adolescent days coming to Columbia for Shady Brook Cinemas and Waffle House. When not performing, you'll likely find her doing a crossword puzzle or tending to the every whim of her cat, Bogart.

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The Cast *(continued)*



Deb Meeks (Ouiser) considers it an absolute joy to, once again, take the Watershed stage. Previous WPT performances include *Sense & Sensibility* (Mrs. Jennings/Gossip), *Carousel* (Gatekeeper), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Lady Bracknell), *Anastasia* (Dowager Empress), *Romeo & Juliet* (Nurse), and *Little Women* (Aunt March/Mrs. Kirk). Deb has been sharing her love of theatre with audiences for over fifty years and feels extremely blessed to be able to continue telling wonderful stories that warm hearts, bring a smile, cause a tear, awaken a heartsong, or elicit a great big belly-laugh or two. Since her move to the greater Nashville area in December of 2020, Deb has had the privilege (and pleasure) of working with several amazing groups of ‘thespians’ including WPT, Pull-Tight, Keeton, Consider This, and Nashville Repertory Theatre. Most recently, you may have seen her as Veta Louise Simmons on the Pull-Tight stage in Franklin in the beloved classic, *Harvey*. She is ever grateful for each and every opportunity and hopes you — “Please, oh please...enjoy the show!”



Annie Zander (Annelle) Originally from Colorado, Annie now lives and creates in Columbia, Tennessee. She holds a BFA in Acting from SAMC Theatre in Vancouver, Canada. Some of her past roles include Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Suzie Tyron in *The Ruby Sunrise*, Vic in *Without Rule of Law*, and Gonzolo in *The Tempest*. Annie is thrilled make her Watershed Public Theatre debut and to share this fantastic story with her local community.

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The Production Team

Patrick Adams (Sound Designer) is thrilled to be part of this production. With a passion for music and performance, Patrick has previously appeared in *The Sound of Music* as Captain Von Trapp and *The Wizard of Oz* as The Cowardly Lion. When not performing or audio engineering, he enjoys spending time with his wife and five children.

Nick Baum (Scenic Construction) is a local contractor who enjoys using his building skills to support the arts here in Columbia. He has constructed sets for many Columbia Academy productions such as *Newsies*, *Wizard of Oz* and *Mary Poppins*. His wife Christina and daughter Lilly have worked with Watershed Public Theatre, and he is excited to be a part of his third Watershed production.

Caleb Finley (Props Designer) is so excited to be a part of *Steel Magnolias*. Directing credits: *Into the Woods* (Watershed Public Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (WPT), *Bus Stop* (Peoria Players Theater), and *Les Mis: Student Edition* (Corn Stock Theater). On stage credits include: *Anastasia* (Ensemble), *Next to Normal* (Gabe), *Cats* (Skimbleshanks), *Chicago* (Mary Sunshine), and *Sweeney Todd* (Toby). Assistant Stage Manager credits: *Sense & Sensibility*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Carousel*, *The 39 Steps*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Now, pass me a plate of that armadillo cake please!

Kate Foreman (Producer) is a Columbia native who has worked in professional theatre in Middle Tennessee for nearly 20 years, including eight years working for Nashville (formerly Tennessee) Repertory Theatre. Kate is thrilled to be working at the helm of Watershed Public Theatre. Many thanks to husband John, the WPT board of directors, the cast & crew, friends and family for their amazing support. Thanks to YOU for supporting local theatre!

Susan Gaw (Stage Manager) holds a degree in theatre from Winthrop University and has been working in live entertainment for more than 30 years. Thanks to Nate, Allison, and Adam for all the stuff!

Evan M. Hernandez (Technical Consultant) is a 25-year veteran of technical theater at every level from community theater to Broadway. He worked with Tony Award-winning designer John Lee Beatty on the 2012 Shakespeare in the Park Production of *Into the Woods* starring Amy Adams and Donna Murphy.

Milly Johnson (Wardrobe Assistant) is thrilled to be back working with Watershed Public Theatre. She has worked on other WPT productions including *The 39 Steps*, *Sense & Sensibility*, and *Carousel*. Milly is currently a student at Columbia State Community College. She would like to thank Kate and her mentors at Watershed for believing in her and giving her this opportunity, as well as her family for always supporting her.

Sarah Kennedy (Assistant Producer) is enjoying yet another Watershed Public Theatre experience. By day she is the director of Ghostlight Books. In between peddling books, teaching, directing and keeping up with her son Benjamin and miscellaneous pets, she also coordinates youth arts field trips and advises for youth arts and education in multiple organizations regionally and nationally, including serving as WPT's Community Engagement Director.

The Production Team *(continued)*

Sara McCloud (Costume Designer) is a reuse textile artist who loves to forage in thrift stores and other people's houses for the materials she needs. A native of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, she studied costume and fashion design at MTSU. She later worked in NYC designing for the Fringe Festival, sewing for Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, running crew off-Broadway and assisting multiple costume designers. Sara is delighted to be returning to WPT after her previous adventures designing *Anastasia* (2023), *Much Ado About Nothing* in Riverwalk Park (2025) *A Doll's House* (2025) and *Into the Woods* (2026) She currently resides in Columbia with her two children, Arthur and Beatrice, and her fiancé Alex Saylor.

Rachel Oppmann (Scenic Artist) is a junior at MTSU where she studies acting, musical theatre and scenic design. She spent this past summer working as the scenic intern and a scenic painter at The New London Barn Playhouse in New Hampshire. This is Rachel's first Watershed Public Theatre production, having previously worked on *Children of Eden* (Scenic Designer), *Carmen* (Scenic Designer), *Natasha Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812* (Scenic Charge), *Pirates of Penzance* (Scenic Designer), *Our Town* (Assistant Scenic Design/Scenic Painter), *Tomato Plant Girl* (Scenic Charge), *The Super Flute* (Scenic Design), *Alice By Heart* (Scenic Design), and many more.

Brad Oxnam (Dialect Coach) is very happy to work on another production with Watershed Public Theatre. He coached dialects for WPT's *The 39 Steps* and *Tom Sawyer*, as well as performed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2018) and *A Victorian Christmas Carol*, and directed *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare Abridged*, and *James & the Giant Peach*. MFA, University of Southern Mississippi, MSW, Florida State University.

DeAnna Parker (Assistant Stage Manager) DeAnna began her love of working behind the scenes in productions at Lee University, including *Meet Me In St. Louis*, and as Assistant Stage Manager on *Sense & Sensibility*. Since returning home to Columbia, DeAnna has worked with Watershed Public Theatre on *Little Women*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and now *Steel Magnolias*. When she's not working on a show, DeAnna is studying for her Master's in Counseling or spending time with her family.

Zach Perkins (Lighting Designer/Radio Voice) recently relocated to Columbia from Kansas. He has worked on several Watershed Public Theatre productions, including serving as lighting designer of *A Doll's House* and *Into the Woods*. Other WPT credits include serving as Technical Director of *Much Ado About Nothing* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and as Assistant Technical Director of *Anastasia* and *The 39 Steps*. Local performance credits include *Romeo & Juliet* and *Those Wicked Stepsisters* with Watershed Public Theatre, as well as *Hamlet for Community Theatre*, *Inherit the Wind* and *Father of the Bride* with Maury County Arts Guild. He has enjoyed getting involved in local theatre and can't wait to do more!

Vi Sartwell (Wig Designer/Wardrobe Manager) has worked with Watershed Public Theatre for over three years. She loves to act, sing and help backstage. She is currently a hairstylist at Studio Gaven and recently began her journey of designing wigs. She'd like to thank Kate Foreman, her family and her friends for always supporting her.

The Production Team *(continued)*

Sarah Tatom (Director) has worked as a theatre professional for over 20 years, including the last decade as a teacher and director at Columbia Academy. She holds a B.A. in Theatre Design and Production from Freed-Hardeman University. She has enjoyed working both on and off stage with Watershed Public Theatre for several years and is a member of the Watershed Company. *Steel Magnolias* marks her first production directing for Watershed.

Jamie Vaal (Wardrobe Assistant) is excited to be part of this production's costume team. She has previously worked on costumes for several other shows and loves helping bring characters and stories to life on stage. One of her favorite parts of theater is seeing a production come together from rehearsals to opening night. She is grateful to be part of such a talented cast and crew and hopes you enjoy the show!



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*Saturday, June 27 - Columbia State College - Columbia
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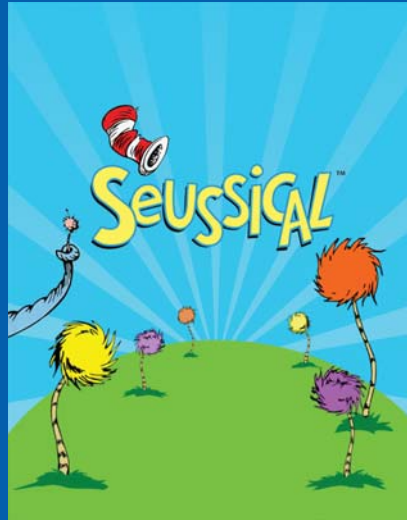
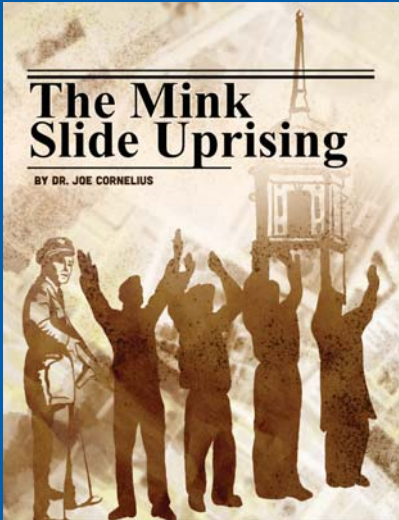
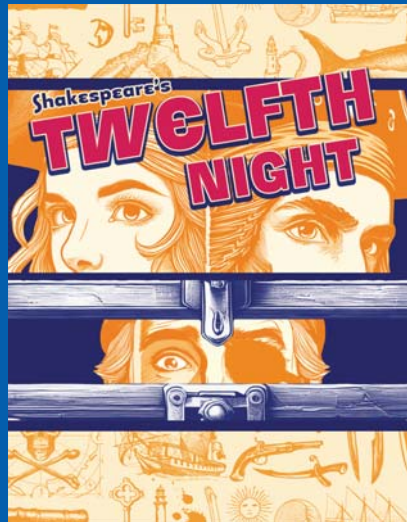
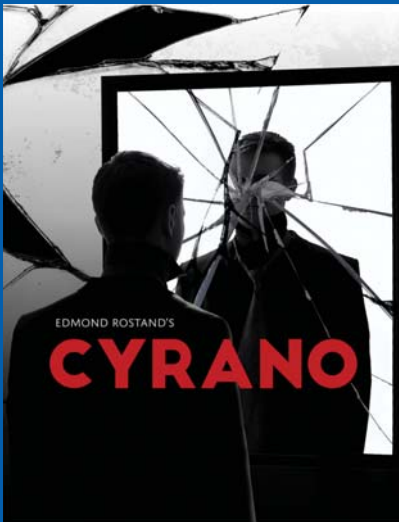
Apprentice Company 2025-26

Aubrey Cavitt	Madalyn Kirk
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Henry Franklin	David Sharp

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