

Starkville Community Theatre presents

Feeding on Mulberry Leaves

By Lucinda McDermott

Featuring
Bart Debicki
Kevin Jacobs
Rick Jordan
Brenda Mayo
Brad Moreland
Hunter Smith
Lizzie Smith
Abigail Voller

April 7-10 and
April 12-16, 2011

Directed by Mary-Kay Belant
Assistant Director Joby Prince



Feeding on Mulberry Leaves

By Lucinda McDermott

The Cast

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Jeb Flint..... | Hunter Smith * |
| Winky Flint..... | Bart Debicki * |
| Jean Flint..... | Brenda Mayo |
| Wanda Flint..... | Abigail Voller |
| Kenny Flint | Rick Jordan |
| Kathy Wilson | Lizzie Smith * |
| Benjamin Morris | Kevin Jacobs * |
| Robert Massey Duncan..... | Brad Moreland |
| Voiceovers | Marsha Williams |
| | *SCT Debut |

The Setting

A non-franchised convenience store,
Natural Bridge Gas & Groceries, off of Highway 11,
three miles north of the Natural Bridge in Natural Bridge, Virginia.

Fall, 1996

There will be a 10-min intermission between acts

The Production Team

| | |
|--|---|
| Director | Mary-Kay W. Belant |
| Assistant Director / Stage Manager | Joby Prince |
| Assistant Stage Manager | Ashley Garriga * |
| Set and Lighting Design | Edwin Ellis |
| Scenic Landscape Artist | Diane Ellis |
| Sound Design and Operator | Zac Ashmore * |
| Lighting Operator | Simone Cottrell |
| Stage Crew | Ashely Garriga and Daniel Maldonado * |
| Costumes | J'sette Belant, Brad Moreland, Kadeen Ross *, Janis Ross, Maggie Spann, and the cast of <i>Feeding on Mulberry Leaves</i> |
| Hair Design | Brad Moreland |
| Specialty Makeup | Jamie Brandon * |
| Properties | Evelyn Lowery, Lisa Ashmore, Patsy Stuart, Zac Ashmore, and Daniel Maldonado |
| Winky's Signs | Winky Flint * |
| Lobby Display | Marc Measells and Debbie McBride |
| Box Office | Bob Anderson and Marsha Williams |
| Opening Night Party | Marianne Ulmer * First time volunteers |

Set Construction

Edwin Ellis
Ashley Garriga
Sam Brandon *
Jerry Belant
Claire Belant
Marina Dandass *
Carnivore Ecology Lab
(Jared Duquette *, Chris Ayers *,
Nate Libal *, Deb Martell *)

Thierry Czarnecki *
Garrett Mittan *
Ben Chambers *
Daniel Maldonado
Ray Sizemore *
M.J. Etua
Elizabeth Hurt *
and the cast of *Feeding on
Mulberry Leaves*

From the Director

They say we live in the Age of Hyper-change. Sometimes I feel like it's just hyper-busy! Everyone involved in putting this play on the stage for you (like you, I am sure!) is committed to multiple other significant responsibilities. But the helpful nature of SCTers, both well-established and newcomer, is a force to be reckoned with. If there was a need at any point in our rehearsal and production process, from costume piece to set decision, from elusive prop to blocking snafu, from publicity question to sage advice, and from photo op to sound design, multiple people had ideas and were willing to work to achieve them. I am in awe of the talents, skills, and dedication I've had the pleasure to encounter over the past seven weeks. In fact, I've been scratching my head trying to remember the title of a Judy Garland film which includes a quote that goes something like, "Let's put on a show!" Whatever the proper answer to that question (any classic movie buffs out there?), the eager tone and shared effort I recall from that film captures what rehearsal and production for *Feeding on Mulberry Leaves* has been like – a truly collaborative process, where expression of the multiple talents of numerous people were both necessary and possible.

The play itself harkens (slightly) to a (slightly) more leisurely time – the year is 1996, when, as the playwright points out, there was controversy over “whether women should be allowed to attend certain military academies.” Although the number of years between then and now is few, the gulf in terms of what American life was like is profound. Things have changed in other ways than the fairly common sight of a woman in military garb. In 1996, there was no internet – at least not for most non-scientists. Cell phones were a different sub-species from today's “smart phones,” and tweets were just a twinkle in the eyes of a couple of lovebird texts. For our cast, the acting process has involved making blocking and prop use choices by remembering what it was like to live without all the electronics. From this somewhat less frenetic outlook, the play presents what I like to think of (and hope you will enjoy as) a multiple perspective coming-of-age story, in which every single character experiences some kind of profound change and personal growth.

In true theatrical fashion, there are so many people to thank, not enough space in which to do it properly, and the certainty that if I start naming people I will surely leave somebody out and wind up kicking myself! So I'll keep it general for the most part and trust that the people who have been such a big part of my life for this short season already know about my gratitude, admiration, and profound enjoyment. Thank you, thank you,

all of you creative, resourceful and dedicated actors, visual and musical artists, technical designers, prop people, costumers, and set, tech, and stage crews.

Two people I must say “thanks” to by name: Edwin Ellis, for collaborating with me and helping me to rise to the task of director. I’ve loved every minute! And last, but certainly not least, all thanks to Joby Prince, assistant director extraordinaire, who has made so many smart and creative contributions to the production. You are awesome, Joby!

Finally, I’m thrilled to get to write what I’ve admired in other SCT directors’ notes – a tribute to my husband and children. J’sette and Claire, thanks for spending time on all of this so that I could still spend time with you! You always make everything even better than it already is. Luke (as “Winky” might say), you may not be here, but you are always *here*. And to my amazing, energetic, reliable, creative, kind husband, Jerry, thank you for pouring time and energy into doing so much at home so that I could pour myself into *Mulberry Leaves*. You must be taking better vitamins than I am, because you found even more “self” to pour into *Mulberry Leaves* along with me! I love the set. I love you. Let’s do it again soon!

Mary-Kay

From the AD

As we say here at the Natural Bridge Gas and Groc, it’s “time for me to put my oar in.” Seeing this show come to life brings back memories of 1996 when I was Jeb’s age. I was a high school senior, and I had it all figured out. I think we’ve all been there. Like the characters in this show, you eventually figure out that life doesn’t go like you planned. I love that every character in this play finds a way to overcome his or her struggle and grow, and I have been privileged to be a voyeur in these moments. I have held my breath so many nights at rehearsal watching these characters discover that life isn’t easy but finding their family is always there for them. My hope is that while you watch this play you will see a sacrifice every actor and crew member has made. A lot of nights away from loved ones go into making in a play. So why do we do it? Well, it’s about having something rare and remarkable, about being one of the few Bombyx Mori silkworms that are allowed to live and become the white silk moth who flies, and it’s about passion, Kenny, passion.

Joby

About the Cast

Bart Debicki (Winky)

Bart is a doctoral student in management strategy at Mississippi State University. Born and raised in Poland, Bart has been living in Starkville since 2006. He is thankful to the entire cast and crew and to Starkville Community Theatre for this amazing theatre experience, and to Tiffany for her support and putting up with his evening absences for rehearsals.

Kevin Jacobs (Benjamin)

Kevin is excited about his debut at Starkville Community Theatre. Performing on stage has been a lifetime dream for him. He remembers daydreaming of this moment as a young boy sitting in his bedroom window. Kevin graduated from the University of South Carolina many ages ago with a bachelor's in broadcast journalism and theatre and is



now nearing the end of his education for good as he finishes up his broadcast meteorology degree here at MSU. For the first time in a long time, he says, he knows everything will be OK. Kevin thanks Old Venice for giving him flexibility with his work schedule to be a part of this play. Also, he thanks Marianne Ulmer for

recommending him for this role and gives a grandmother kiss on the cheek to Mary-Kay for seeing a spark in him for such an outstanding and bold character.

Rick Jordan (Kenny)

Rick is pleased to be onstage for the second time at SCT. You might remember him as “Arnold” in *The Boys Next Door* as well as “Teveye” in the SCT production of *Fiddler on the Roof, Jr.* Rick also appeared in a number of plays and musicals at Starkville High School. He thanks Mary-Kay for all of her help and encouragement throughout the play and Joby for her great knowledge of 90s music and all of our lines. Rick thanks his mom, dad, and all his brothers for their encouragement and love. “Thanks, also, to my biggest fan!”

About the Cast

Brenda Mayo (Jean)

Brenda is excited to be back onstage at SCT. She has appeared onstage in *10 Out of 10: The Perfect Score*; *Let Freedom Sing*; and *The ABCs of Broadway*. You may also remember her as “Sister Aloysius” in *Doubt: A Parable*. Brenda was

hidden in the lighting booth for *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Strange Snow*, and she co-directed *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare [Abridged]* with Thomas LaFoe.

Brenda thanks Mary-Kay, Joby, and all of her cast mates for being so patient

and understanding during the rehearsal process. She also thanks Aunt Scottie for taking care of her and everything else these past few weeks.



Brad Moreland (Robert)

Feeding on Mulberry Leaves is Brad's fourth production since joining SCT in 2009. You may remember him as “Doc” in *Leading Ladies* and as “Frankie” in *Forever Plaid: Plaid Tidings*. Brad then went on to perform in the highly successful 2010 summer revue, *The ABCs of Broadway*. Brad thanks his fellow cast mates, director Mary-Kay Belant, and assistant director Joby Prince for making this production such a wonderful experience. He also thanks the many hours put in by the extremely talented set, costume, and technical crews; the show couldn't go on without them!

Hunter Smith (Jeb)

Hunter is a virgin... to the SCT stage, and he is giddy with excitement at the thought of premiering in this show. A senior at Starkville High School, Hunter plans on leaving Starkville after graduating in order to pursue his lifelong dream of being a hobo on the magical streets of San Francisco. Hunter would like to extend sincere gratitude to his family and friends, especially his amazing mother, Brenda Mayo. He wishes broken legs to all of the cast, as well as his enemies.

About the Cast

Lizzie Smith (Kathy)

This is Lizzy's first time onstage since high school, so be gentle. She thanks Mary-Kay for casting her and for always being there to listen to her jokes even when they weren't funny – which was most of the time.

Abigail Voller (Wanda)

Feeding on Mulberry Leaves is Abigail's second play and her fifth production with SCT, having formerly appeared in *A...My Name Will Always be Alice*, *The Power of One*, *The ABCs of Broadway*, and *Unnecessary Farce*. It wasn't until the second night of auditions that Abby fell in love with Wanda's no-nonsense, yet sarcastic, attitude, and she loved the process of getting to know her and the rest of the family over these past few months. Abby is grateful to have been a part of this production and its process, and she thanks Mary-Kay and Joby for their vision, for their hard work, and for inviting her into this special family. Abby also thanks everyone who helped with the set, props, and costumes in order to help the company truly be the Flints. She is forever indebted to her parents for introducing her to theatre and Broadway at a young age and for supporting her theatre life – "I owe you bunches! Anyway, if you guys need anything, I'll be on my stool – I gotcha covered."



SPECIAL THANKS

Bob Anderson, Pattye Archer, Peppy Bidy, Faye Caldwell,
David Carter, The Chalet, Clark Beverage Company,
Cotillion Club, Frito-Lay, HPC Publishing, The Lodge, Don Mabry,
Paula Mabry, Brenda Mayo, Mississippi University for Women,
Natural Bridge Gift Shop, Oby's, Starkville Tours, Wallace Sansing,
William Sansing, Sue Snow, Shane Stallings, Virginia Visitors' Center,
Wade Incorporated, and Christopher Walrath

Upcoming Dates

- Friday, April 22nd – Fourth Fridays at 7:30 p.m.
- Monday, May 2nd – SCT General Meeting at 6 p.m.
- Monday, June 6th – SCT's End-of-the-year Banquet

SCT Receives Building Grant

Starkville Community Theatre's Playhouse on Main will undergo major improvements this spring and summer, thanks to a \$42,200 Building Fund for the Arts (BFA) matching grant and local contributions.

BFA grants, supported by State of Mississippi bonds and administered through the Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) requires grantees to raise \$40 for every \$60 in grant funds.

"We at SCT are deeply grateful for legislative action which created the 2010 BFA program. It provides an excellent incentive for communities throughout Mississippi to strengthen arts organizations," SCT President Alison Stamps said. "The grant will also provide economic benefits to the community."

Bond funds totaling some \$2 million were available for distribution.

SCT has occupied its current Playhouse on Main since 1995. It was the former Katz Department Store.

Stamps noted that persons wishing to make contributions to the project may do so at "BFA/SCT," P. O. Box 1254, Starkville, MS 39760. "Contributions are tax-deductible," Stamps pointed out.



Building Committee members Alison Stamps, (standing from left) Bob Anderson, Andrew Watkins, Happy Deas and Ediwin Ellis.

Call for Directors

SCT is accepting requests to direct shows for the
2011-2012 Season:

- See How They Run – September 8-17
- She Loves Me – November 10-19
- Uh-Oh, Here Comes Christmas – December 13-18
- Beau Jest -- February 9-18
- Second Samuel—April 12-21

If you wish to direct, please email Alison Stamps als11@msstate.edu or Terry McDowell reeseterry@hotmail.com). Submit your name, preference of show(s), and the order of preference.

Deadline: April 15th . To learn more information about directing qualifications, email Alison Stamps at als11@msstate.edu.



Please Join Us for Fourth Fridays

Friday, April 22nd at 7:30 p.m.

Poetry

Writers? Do you have something you'd like to have read at Fourth Fridays?

Email us at fourthfridays@yahoo.com.



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Highway 12 &
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Starkville, MS 39759

Hours of Operation:

7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. (Monday-Friday)

Same -Day Service:

Tuesday-Friday; in by 8:00 a.m. - out by 4:00 p.m.

Anderson Scholarship

Starkville and Oktibbeha County high school seniors who intend to major in theatre or theatre education in college are eligible to apply for the Mary Eleanor Anderson Scholarship, an endowed scholarship honoring the late Mary Eleanor Anderson. Mrs. Anderson was instrumental in the formation of SCT 34 years ago and in SCT's purchase of the Playhouse on Main.

Students interested in applying for the scholarship should contact Mrs. Paula Mabry at 323-6852. Completed applications are due no later than April 15 and should be mailed to:

Mrs. Paula Mabry
206 Hiwassee Drive
Starkville, MS 39759

Rising Stars & Project P.L.A.Y.

Rising Stars will be holding Audition Workshops geared towards **Project P.L.A.Y.** for any youth or young adult on:

- Saturday, May 7 at 9 a.m. and
- Saturday, May 14 at 9 a.m.



For more information about these workshops, contact MJ Etua at mjmetua@yahoo and cc Simone Cottrell at sdcottrell@gmail.com.

Auditions for Project P.L.A.Y. will be held Saturday, May 21 at 9 a.m. at the Playhouse on Main. Other important dates include:

- Project PLAY begins Wednesday, June 1st from 1-3:30 daily
- Project PLAY performances are Wednesday to Friday, June 22nd to 24th at 7 p.m. and Saturday, June 25th at 2 p.m.

Starkville Community Theatre



Proudly Presents Our
35th Season



See How They Run

(Farce)

September 9-11 and 13-17

She Loves Me

(Musical Comedy)

November 10-13 and 15-19



Beau Jest

(Comedy)

February 9-12 and 14-18

Second Samuel

(Drama/Comedy)

April 12-15 and 17-21

