



AHMANSON THEATRE
MARK TAPER FORUM
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For immediate release.

**CAST ANNOUNCED AND REHEARSALS HAVE BEGUN FOR
CENTER THEATRE GROUP PRODUCTION OF STEVE MARTIN AND EDIE BRICKELL'S
"BRIGHT STAR" AT THE AHMANSON THEATRE
Full Cast Joins Previously Announced Carmen Cusack in Moving New Musical
That Runs October 11 through November 19, 2017**

Rehearsals have begun and the full cast is set for "Bright Star" at the Ahmanson Theatre. Presented by Center Theatre Group, the Tony Award-nominated Best Musical, with music, lyrics and story by Grammy, Emmy and Oscar winner Steve Martin and Grammy winner Edie Brickell, will be directed by Tony Award winner Walter Bobbie and choreographed by Josh Rhodes. It begins previews October 11, opens October 20 and runs through November 19, 2017.

Joining the previously announced Carmen Cusack, the cast includes Stephen Lee Anderson, David Atkinson, Jeff Austin, Maddie Shea Baldwin, Jeff Blumenkrantz, Allison Briner-Dardenne, Patrick Cummings, Kaitlyn Davidson, A.J. Shively, Devin Archer, Kelly Baker, Audrey Cardwell, Max Chernin, Robin De Lano, Richard Gatta, David Kirk Grant, Donna Louden, Kevin McMahon, Alessa Neeck, Robert Pieranunzi and Michael Starr.

Inspired by a real event, this original musical tells a sweeping tale of love and redemption set against the rich backdrop of the American South in the 1920s and '40s. Propelled by an ensemble of onstage musicians and dancers, the story unfolds as a rich tapestry of deep emotion, beautiful melodies and enthralling performances. Marc Snetiker of Entertainment Weekly called "Bright Star," "A genuinely delightful show bolstered by an incredible debut from Carmen Cusack."

"Bright Star" won the 2016 Outer Critics Circle Awards for Best Musical and Best Score and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Music. It also received five 2016 Tony Award nominations including Best Musical, Best Score, Best Book, Best Lead Actress in a Musical and Best Orchestrations.

Carmen Cusack made her Broadway debut last year in "Bright Star," for which she received a Tony Award nomination for Best Actress in a Musical. She was featured last fall in New York City Center's gala concert of "Sunday in the Park with George" and in Los Angeles in "For The Record – Scorsese: American Crime Requiem." Other credits include "The First Wives Club: The Musical" (Chicago's Oriental Theatre), "Sunday in the Park with George" (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), "Carrie" (MCC), "South Pacific" (Lincoln Center Theater and national tour at the Ahmanson) and "Wicked" (first U.S. tour and Melbourne, AU). West End

credits include “Over the Rainbow” (the Eva Cassidy story), “Les Misérables” (Fantine), “The Secret Garden” (Rose), “Personals” (Kim) and “Phantom of the Opera” (Christine). This year, Carmen starred in the world premiere of Karen Siff Exhorn’s “Do This,” a one-woman play at Gulfshore Playhouse in Naples, FL. She recently released the Live at 54 Below album, “If You Knew My Story,” and she sold out eight shows at Feinstein’s/54 Below in NYC. This summer, she starred in “Sondheim on Sondheim” with the Boston Pops in Tanglewood, Boston and at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles.

Steve Martin is one of the most well-known and pervasive talents in entertainment and one of the most diversified performers in the industry today, a successful author, playwright, producer, actor, screenwriter and comedian for more than three decades. His work has earned him an Academy Award, five Grammy Awards (two for comedy, three for music), the Mark Twain Award and the Kennedy Center Honor. Martin’s films are widely popular successes, such as “The Jerk” (1979, also screenplay); “Planes, Trains, & Automobiles” (1987); “Roxanne” (1987, also screenplay); “Parenthood” (1989); “L.A. Story” (1991, also screenplay); “Father of the Bride” (1991); and “Bowfinger” (1999, also screenplay). As an author, Martin’s work includes the plays “Picasso at the Lupin Agile” and “The Underpants;” the best-selling novella, “Shopgirl;” and his memoir, “Born Standing Up.” Steve Martin is also an accomplished Grammy Award-winning, boundary-pushing bluegrass banjoist and composer. In 2013, 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 their musical “Bright Star,” which opened on Broadway in March 2016 and received five Tony Award nominations and seven Drama Desk Award nominations, winning for Outstanding Music. “Bright Star” also won 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 bought the acclaimed duo’s musical collaboration into fresh creative territory. Steve Martin and The Steep Canyon Rangers will release their newest collaboration “The Long-Awaited Album” on Rounder Records on September 22, 2017.

Edie Brickell released the debut multi-platinum album “Shooting Rubber Bands At The Stars” with New Bohemians in 1988. Her more recent works include a 13-track collaboration with Steve Martin titled “Love Has Come For You,” which earned a Grammy for “Best American Roots Song.” In 2015, the duo released a second album titled “So Familiar,” which featured 12 new bluegrass songs that bring the duo’s musical collaboration into fresh creative territory.

Walter Bobbie most recently directed the world premiere of “Big Night” by Paul Rudnick at Center Theatre Group’s Kirk Douglas Theatre. He also directed the New York productions of “Bright Star,” “Venus in Fur,” “The Landing,” “Golden Age,” “School for Lies,” “Irving Berlin’s White Christmas,” “Chicago,” “The Submission, Cabin Pressure,” “The Savannah Disputation,” “New Jerusalem,” “High Fidelity,” “The Other Woman,” “The Marriage of Bette and Boo,” “Sweet Charity,” “Twentieth Century,” “Footloose,” “Durang

Durang,” “For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls” and “A Grand Night for Singing.” He was Artistic Director of City Center Encores! where he also directed “Fiorello!,” “Chicago,” “Tenderloin,” “Golden Boy,” “No, No, Nanette” and “Zorba,” as well as the Carnegie Hall concerts of “South Pacific” and “Carousel.” Bobbie serves on the Board of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. He is a recipient of the Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle and Tony Awards.

The Grammy-nominated original cast recording of “Bright Star” charted on five different Billboard lists in its first week of wide release. The cast album from Ghostlight Records placed at No. 1 on the Top Current Blue Grass Albums chart, No. 2 on the Top Broadway chart, No. 5 on the Americana/Folk Albums chart, as well as hitting the Top 100 on the Billboard Top Albums chart and Top 200 on the Overall Digital Albums chart.

The “Bright Star” creative team includes Tony and Emmy Award winner Eugene Lee (scenic design), Tony Award winner Jane Greenwood (costume design), Tony Award nominee Japhy Weideman (lighting design), Tony Award nominee Nevin Steinberg (sound design), Tom Watson (hair and wig design), Grammy Award winner Peter Asher (music supervision), Rob Berman (supervising music director and vocal arrangements) and Tony Award nominee August Eriksmoen (orchestrations).

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation’s preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles’ leading nonprofit theatre company, programming seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2000-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation’s leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

The “Bright Star” tour is produced by Center Theatre Group by special arrangement with Joey Parnes, Sue Wagner, John Johnson, AT&T PAC/ SHN (Dallas), Blumenthal Performing Arts (Charlotte), Broadway Series South (Raleigh), The Curran (San Francisco) and Theatre Under The Stars (Houston), in association with The Old Globe (San Diego).

Tickets for “Bright Star” are available by calling (213) 972-4400, online at www.CenterTheatreGroup.org or at the Center Theatre Group Box Office located at the Ahmanson Theatre. Tickets range from \$30 – \$130 (ticket prices are subject to change). The Ahmanson Theatre is located at The Music Center, 135 N. Grand Avenue in Downtown Los Angeles, 90012.

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September 13, 2017