

# Steel Magnolias



# Steel Magnolias

by Robert Harling

Directed by **BETH REEVES**

Scenic Designer **MATTHEW SWINDELL**

Costume & Wig Designer **ALEX ALLISON**

Lighting Designer **KATIE UNDERWOOD**

Properties Designer **PATTI FENZEL**

Sound Designer **JULIANNE SLATON**

Technical Director **WALTER PIGFORD**

Production Stage Manager **REBECCA GOSSETT**

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

STEEL MAGNOLIAS is presented by  
special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

Truvy Jones **CHELCY CUTWRIGHT**  
Annelle Dupuy-Desoto **COURTNEY LOCKE**  
Clairee Belcher **RUBY FEAGINS**  
Shelby Eatenton-Latcherie **ALEIGHA BURT**  
M'lynn Eatenton **VANESSA (V.J.) ROBERTS**  
Ouiser Boudreaux **SHEILA GREEN**  
Voice of Radio DJ **CHIARA RICHARDSON**

### **SETTING**

Truvy's Beauty Salon  
Chinquapin Parish, Louisiana  
2008

Lead Asst. Stage Manager **MARIA SCOTT**  
Assistant Stage Manager **PAYTON SCHWARTZ**  
Assistant Stage Manager **LEILA WHEATON**  
Associate Lighting Designer **MALIYA McCALL**  
Costume First Hand **MOLLIE LIPKOWITZ**  
Assistant Technical Director **DAVID JONES**  
Production Assistant **MH HARRISON**  
Production Assistant **SCOTTIE SCOTT**  
Wardrobe Supervisor **MELODY CARTER**  
Sound Intern **MARI BOGUCKI**  
Wig Dressers **LILIANA HARRELL**  
**ALEX ALLISON**  
House Manager **DAVID McCRAY**

### **SPECIAL THANKS TO**

Natalia Temesgen, Kelli Leak, Jack Birth, Shaniya Horton, Ian Rossin

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# FROM THE DIRECTOR

## BETH REEVES



It's Saturday morning. As mom wakes me up, we have breakfast and drive to go get our hair done.

Listening to Anita Baker, Jill Scott, and Luther Vandross in the car, we drive past fields of cows eating early in the morning with farmers on their tractors. As we pull on the gravel driveway, we see a sign that says "Genelle's". I'm greeted by a rooster in the yard as opposed to a bell ringing as I walk in. Genelle was my beautician for over 10 years. Her salon was located right next to her house and was built by her husband, Gene.

To us, it was a place to come and look beautiful for church, the date that I had that night, or my senior pictures that were coming up within the next week. I could tell, as Genelle did my hair, that this place to her was a mansion-fit for queens. To her, it was a sanctuary, therapy session, a runway show to model our styles and outfits, to read the latest article in Ebony and Jet magazines, or to start a conversation on mental health within the community. This salon was a beacon of light for the women in the neighborhood. To let our afros out, to have braids re-braided and for our souls to be fed through laughter. But also to be fed through our stomachs. Gene was the best cook in town-grilling bar-b-que right outside the door.

Therefore, when asked to direct this script, I felt it was a calling to pay tribute to those times in Genelle's salon (mansion). I see/hear my mother, my sister, women in the church, friends, and even myself. It also goes back to times where Black women would get their hair done in the kitchen. As you walked into the house, you could smell that hot comb on the stove. I also recall going to Ms. Lonnie's house and getting my hair done in her kitchen as a little girl.

This story touches on self identity, sisterhood, life, death, beauty, and above all laughter. As a director, my vision for this production was to pay tribute to Oshun of the Yoruba people of Africa, the goddess of love and light. Oshun is often associated with the color yellow. If one looks closely, you will find yellow wallpaper on the set and a yellow light as the radio DJ speaks. I also want to pay homage to entrepreneur, political and social activist Madam CJ Walker who was a native of Louisiana (where this script takes place). She was the first female self-made millionaire. Lastly, Tamara Curry-Gill was a teacher, director and actor whose name I thought was so important to have in the rehearsal hall and on this stage. She is forever missed and this show is also dedicated to her spirit of love and beauty. As Truvy and Annelle make their hair butter named "Madam Tamara", Tamara reminds me in my spirit everyday to be a beacon of light.

I am so proud of this cast. We laughed, cried, vented, made discoveries and connected on so many levels in the rehearsal hall. I guess you could say it was like a salon-except no one came to get their hair done. I dedicate this performance to Genelle and Gene who have been gone now for 10 years. Thank you for being that beacon of light for me, my mom, my sister and the women in the community for years. You taught me "Laughter through tears is my favorite emotion."

Ase'

*Beth Reeves*

# BIOS



**Aleigha  
Burt**  
SHELBY

Aleigha is an Atlanta based actress. She graduated from

Columbus State University with a Bachelor's degree in Theatre Performance in the Spring of 2021. During her freshman year of her collegiate training, she was in *Jackie and Me* here at the Springer, and she is so excited to be back for her second production! Aleigha would like to thank God for another opportunity to do what she loves and her parents for their endless support!



**Chelcy  
Cutwright**  
TRUVY

Chelcy is an Atlanta based actor/teaching artist. She is thrilled

to be back at Springer doing what she loves!! Springer credits include: *Shrek The Musical*, *Winter Wonderrettes*, *Kudzu the Musical*, *Ace: The Eugene Bullard Story*, *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *Dreamgirls*, and *Singing in the Rain*. Regional Credits include: *Vanity Fair*, *Mary Poppins*, *The Marvelous Wonderrettes*, *Cinderella*, *The Three Little Pigs*, and *For Colored Girls*. Love to Mom and Grandma for their constant support. God is good! For updates follow Chelcy on Instagram @chelcycut.



**Rubye  
Feagins**  
CLAIREE

Rubye is excited to return to the Springer stage for

this exciting season. She has performed in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (Mattie Campbell), *Kudzu The Musical* (Jackie Allred), *A Raisin in The Sun* (Ruth Younger), and *Amazing Grace* (Nana). She has also performed in the role of Beneatha Younger in *A Raisin In The Sun*, Ma in *Amazing Grace*, and Carol Deavers in *Charm School*. She is grateful to the Springer for every opportunity to experience the magic of the stage.



**Sheila  
Green**  
QUISER

Sheila is the mother of three sons and seven

grandchildren. By no means is she a stranger to the Springer's stage. Her first production was in the eighties, and she was in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. In the early 90s, she was cast in *Big River*, where she sang the ever so popular solo in the funeral scene. Some of her favorite Productions in which she appeared include *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*

# BIOS

and *Purlie Victorious*, in which she played the role of Aunt Missy. Sheila will be touring the country during the month of December with JPM Ministries out of Concord North Carolina taking on the role of The Spirit of Christmas Present in a hilarious production entitled *Ebenezer Scrooge*. None of this would have been possible without God's blueprint, and without the love and support of her family.



## Courtney Locke ANNELLE

Courtney is so incredibly excited and honored to be sharing the stage with these women to tell this beautiful story under the direction of the amazing Beth Reeves. Courtney has had the pleasure of playing Annie (TWICE) in *Evil Dead: The Musical* at the Springer as well as dream roles in *RENT*, *Cinderella* and *Chicago*. Courtney is incredibly grateful to her amazing family for their constant support!



## Chiara Richardson RADIO DJ

Chiara is a published poet, actor, educator, and Columbus, GA native. She has graced stages in productions of *The Front Porch Society*, *Amazing Grace*, *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery*, *Blues For An Alabama Sky*, *The Importance of Being*

*Ernest*, *For Colored Girls...*, and *NEAT* to name a few. Chiara has appeared twice on TVOne's, *Lexus Verses* and *Flow*. She is also featured in the award-winning documentary *3 Minute-Activist: Soul of Slam*.



## Vanessa (V. J.) Roberts M'LYNN

SAG-AFTRA, AEA

VJ is delighted and humbled to work at the beautiful Springer Opera House again. VJ holds a BFA from the University of Georgia in Acting and Writing. Previous roles include Cal in *To Kill a Mockingbird* first production directed by Ron Anderson; 5 productions of *Amazing Grace* as Ma; and Mrs. Mueller in *Doubt*. VJ has taught on camera acting at the Academy and served on the Springer Board of Directors. For the past 4 years, Rubye Feagins and VJ have co-hosted a public affairs talk show called RUVA on Magic 101.3 FM and the iHeart Media app on Sundays at 10 AM. The show highlights the Arts in the community. 24 years ago, VJ moved from Los Angeles to marry her college friend, Oz Roberts, and they have one daughter, Jessica Roberts. Recent credits include "Redeemed" and "My Brother's Keeper" by Manns/Mackey Production, and "Warrior" to shoot June 2020. VJ is represented by Catalyst Talent Management in Atlanta, GA.



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# ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT **ROBERT HARLING**

made his directorial debut with “The Evening Star” for Paramount, which he also wrote for the screen based on Larry McMurty’s novel. “The Evening Star” reunited Shirley MacLaine and Jack Nicholson and co-stars Juliette Lewis, Bill Paxton, Scott Wolf, Miranda Richardson, and Marion Ross. “The Evening Star” is the continuation of one of the most beloved and acclaimed movies of our time, “Terms of Endearment.” Before launching a successful stage and screenwriting career, Robert graduated from Tulane University School of Law, but instead of taking the bar exam, he opted to become an actor in New York. After years of productive work as an actor in voice-overs and commercials, Harling was inspired to write the highly acclaimed stage play STEEL MAGNOLIAS, which was based on events from his personal life. STEEL MAGNOLIAS continues to thrive in theatrical productions throughout the world. Immediately bridging a career from stage to screen, Harling adapted his original play into the popular film of the same title, which starred Sally Field, Julia Roberts, Shirley MacLaine, Olympia Dukakis, Dolly Parton, and Daryl Hannah. Over the years, Mr. Harling has become a much sought-after screenwriter: other credits, to name a few, include “Soapdish,” which was based on Harling’s acting experience and starred Sally Field, Whoopi Goldberg, and Robert Downey Jr., and “FIRST WIVES CLUB” for Paramount, starring Bette Midler, Goldie Hawn, and Diane Keaton.





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# PRODUCTION BIOS

**Beth Reeves** is a professional teaching artist/actor/director who is a graduate of Columbus State University, where she received her M.Ed. in Theatre Education. She has worked with Dalton Little Theatre, The Creative Arts Guild, The Springer Opera House, Fountain City Poetry Slam, Alabama Educational Theatre Association among other arts organizations throughout the years. She has also worked with after school programming such as Girls Inc. of Columbus and Phenix City, Child Youth Service (Fort Benning) and Empowered Youth of Columbus. She has worked with New Horizons Behavioral Health to develop programming for young people using techniques of West African Storytelling as a form of catharsis. Beth also collaborated with Project Change Clubhouse and used the pedagogy of Theatre of the Oppressed as a paradigm for curriculum development for young adults dealing with substance abuse issues. Recently, she completed a residency with the Boys and Girls Club of Chattahoochee Valley titled "Black Excellence: Acting with Afrofuturism". She teaches African-American Theatre Performance and Socially Responsible Theatre for her alma mater (Columbus State Department of Theatre). At the Springer Opera House, Beth has performed in countless roles including Glinda in the *Wizard of Oz*, Lady of the Lake in *Spamalot*, Rose in *Fences*, Miss Andrews in *Mary Poppins*, and Calpurnia in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Beth has directed numerous productions for Dalton Little Theater, Dalton State College, Columbus State University and will direct *Look Forward: The Ruby Bridges Story* next season here at the Springer Opera House. Completing an artist-in-residency with South Columbus Elementary School in 2020, she used art strategies as a process for students to comprehend, empathize, and express the meaning of Ruby Bridges' tenacity to students in kindergarten and fifth grades.

**Rebecca Gossett (Production Stage Manager)** received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Design and Technology from Columbus State University in 2014 and has been the Springer's full-time Production Stage Manager ever since. She personally stage manages most of the Springer's mainstage series as well as oversees the stage management teams for the studio and children's theatre productions, as well as oversees the Springer's internship program with Columbus State University theatre students. Beginning this July, she will step into a new position as the Springer's Company Manager.

**Matthew Swindell (Scenic Designer/ Technical Director)** is the Springer's Director of Production. He graduated from Columbus State University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Design and Technology. He has worked on many Springer productions over the past ten years in a variety of different roles including Director, Scenic Designer, Lighting Designer, Technical Director, and Road Manager for the Springer's touring company, Springer Theatricals. You may also remember Matthew from his time on stage as Teddy Roosevelt in the Springer's 2017 production of *Newsies*.

**Patti Jo Fenzel (Properties Designer)** earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Design and Technology from CSU in 2010 and has worked in theaters around the country including Florida Repertory Theater, Texas Shakespeare Festival and Opera New Jersey.

**Julianne Slaton (Sound Designer/ Audio Engineer)** is a graduate of CSU where she earned a BFA in Theatre Design and Technology with a focus on Sound Design and Audio Engineering. She started at the Springer as a volunteer and transitioned to working here full time for the 2015 production of *A Chorus Line*. She has since enjoyed working as the Resident Sound Designer and Audio Engineer for almost every Springer production thus far, and looks forward to all of the future productions to come.

# THEATRE COURTESIES

**Katie Underwood (Lighting Designer)** is a senior member of the Springer artistic staff responsible for casting and contracting production personnel for all mainstage and studio productions. She is also one of several directors on our staff with past credits including *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Great Gatsby*. Katie serves as the primary lighting designer for productions taking place in our McClure Theatre with favorite designs including *Ace: The Eugene Bullard Story*, *The Jungle Book*, and *Mother of Rain*. She is a Springer Theatre Academy alumni and a graduate of the CSU with a BFA in theatre design and technology. Katie is currently pursuing an MBA from Kennesaw State University and will graduate in July. She is an avid runner and fitness enthusiast. When not in rehearsal or doing school work, Katie enjoys spending time with her husband and two girls. If she's not at work or at home, she's probably at the gym.

**Alex Allison (Costume Designer)** has been working as a costume and wig designer across the US and also worked with Norwegian Cruise Lines as a Production Wardrobe Supervisor. He worked on shows like *Jersey Boys*, *Swing the Musical* and an original production of *Warren Carlyle's Havana!* Alex grew up in Lincoln, NE and began performing at local community theatres at a young age. His favorite costume and wig design credits include *Grease* and *Stardust Road* at Temple Theatre in Sanford, NC; *Hairspray* at Pinewood Bowl Inc. in Lincoln NE; *Guys and Dolls* at The Stage Theater in Hickman, NE; *Wigs for Bonnie and Clyde* at The Stage Theater in Hickman, NE; *The Drowsy Chaperone* at The Monomoy Theatre in Chatham, MA; and *The Fantasticks* at The Monomoy Theatre in Chatham, MA.

**Maliya McCall (Associate Lighting Designer)** is a senior at Columbus State University and is graduating this May with her BFA in Theatre Design and Technology with a concentration in Lighting Design. You may have seen some of her design work at Columbus State in *Pipeline*, *Everlasting*, or *Kill Move Paradise*. She is very excited be assisting with *Steel Magnolias* and hopes you enjoy the show!

## ELECTRONIC DEVICES

No doubt we have all been distracted by a cell phone or watch alarm ringing or lighting up when attending the theatre. Out of consideration for your fellow audience members, we ask that you turn off all electronic devices that emit noise or light. Thank you.

## ALLERGY ALERT

For the safety of those with allergies, please refrain from the use of scented perfumes, colognes, or lotions before coming to the theatre.

## LATE SEATING

We endeavour to minimize the distraction for our patrons and actors when seating latecomers. If you arrive late for a performance, you will be seated at the first appropriate moment in the show in designated latecomer seating. You are welcome to move to your assigned seat at intermission.

## EMERGENCY EXITS

We ask that you please take a moment to identify the exit nearest you, so you can safely exit in the event of an emergency.

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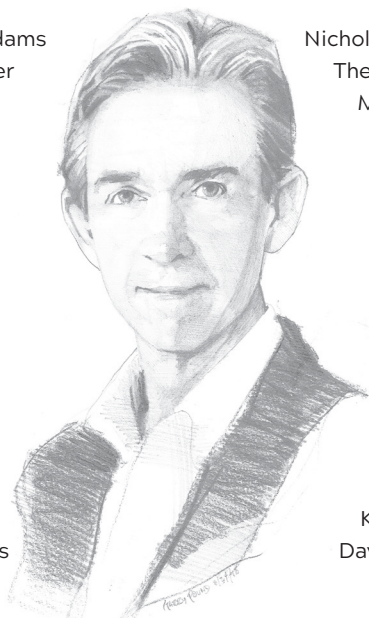
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Remembering  
RON ANDERSON

January 28, 1952 - August 24, 2016



As an actor, Ron Anderson breathed life into the roles he portrayed. As an instructor, he taught his students how to disappear into a character. But it was in the role of mentor that Ron truly changed lives; helping actors not only become various characters, but also teaching them how to build character within themselves. The Pezold Foundation is proud to recognize the immeasurable contributions Ron made to our community and to celebrate the arts he dedicated his life cultivating.

  
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**Paul R. Pierce (Producing Artistic Director)** has led the Springer Opera House as producing artistic director since 1988, taking the State Theatre of Georgia to new artistic heights while expanding its audience and influence throughout the nation. The Springer has conducted major facility expansions and historic preservation projects under Paul's leadership and established the Springer as a leader in Columbus' economic, tourism and film industry development. For 34 years, Paul has directed and produced more than 300 comedies, dramas and musicals at the Springer. A Rome, Georgia native with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Georgia, he is an Equity actor who has performed in over 1,000 American and Canadian cities with stock, regional, touring and children's theatre companies. He is the former associate director at Repertory Theatre of America, the former managing director of Virginia's Wayside Theatre and the former producing artistic director at the Harbor Playhouse in Corpus Christi, Texas. Paul is the author of nine plays and *The Springer Ghost Book*.

**ARTISTIC STAFF**

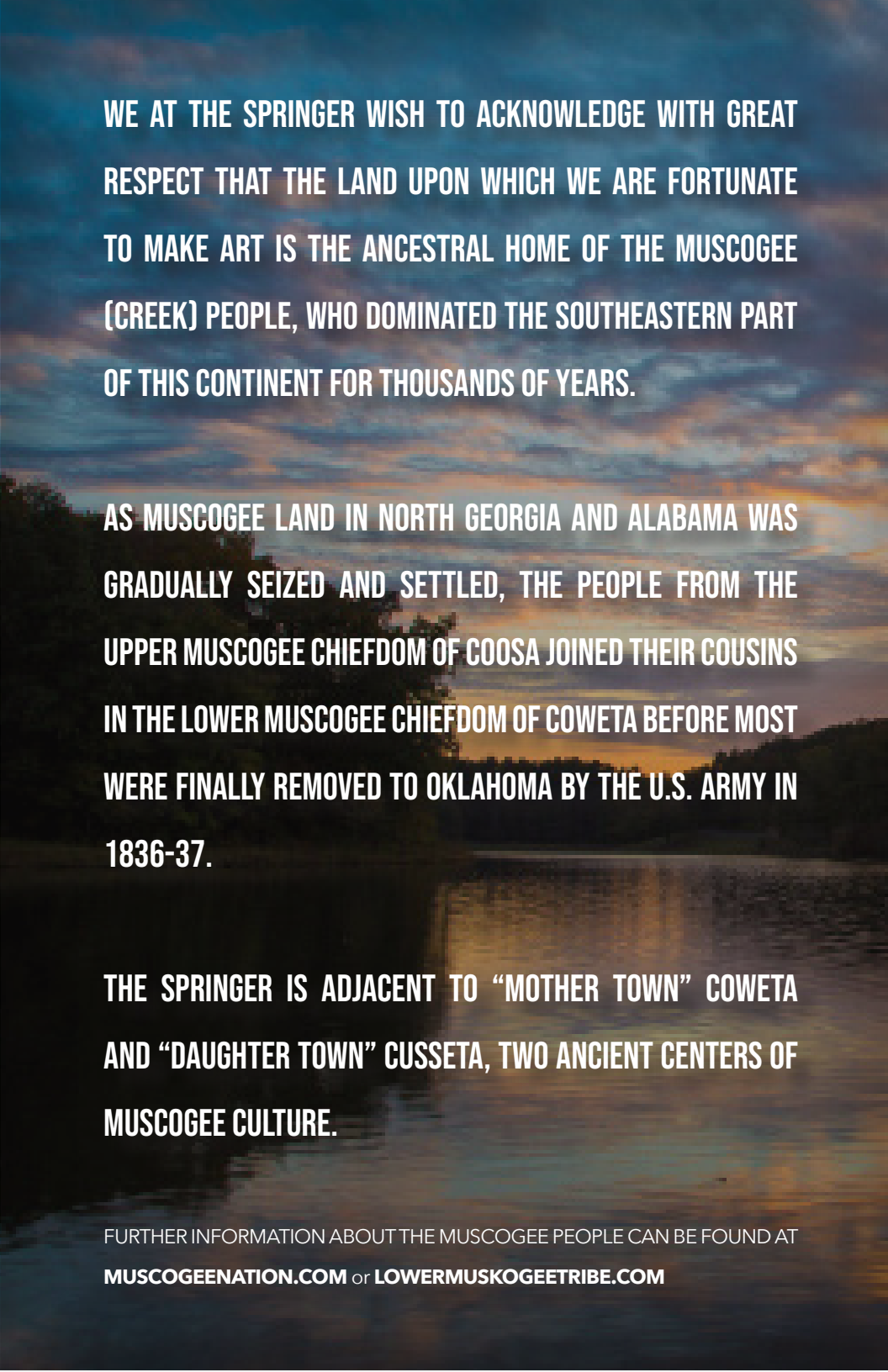
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