

Meet the Cast of “Cole & Hoagy”



Ellie Bennett is delighted to be making her debut with Claude McNeal Productions. A recent graduate from Northern Kentucky University, some of Ellie's recent credits include Violet in *9 to 5 the Musical*, featured ensemble in *The Lightning Thief - the Percy Jackson Musical*, and Maireid in *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*. When she isn't performing on stage, Ellie can be found behind the scenes as a director or lighting designer. She would like to thank her friends and family for their support, and most importantly, she would like to thank and glorify God in every way she can.



Michael Davidson. This production marks Michael's third project with Claude McNeal Productions having played Sir Danvers Carew in *Jekyll & Hyde The Musical* and also portraying Ned Lampkin in the PBS docu-drama, *Dreaming a City*. His favorite past roles include Van Buren in *Damn Yankees*, Father in *Ragtime* and Harry the Horse in *Guys and Dolls*. He's appeared in numerous musicals at Booth Tarkington Civic Theatre, Footlite Musicals and Buck Creek Playhouse. Michael originated the role of Leon Trotsky in the Gregory Hancock Dance Theatre world premiere of *La Casa Azul The Musical*. "Much appreciation to Jeff, Jerry and Claude for the chance to help tell these timeless musical stories."



Benjamin Elliott is making his debut with Claude McNeal Productions! Having studied Musical Theatre at Anderson University from 2018-2022, Benjamin has since been performing and teaching professionally, specializing in classical voice. Stage credits include Alonso Smith in *Meet Me in St. Louis* (Myers Dinner Theatre), Sid in *Albert Herring* (Miami Classical Music Festival), Lucius Andronicus in *Titus Andronicus* (Indy Bard Fest), and Harry Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life* (Beef and Boards Dinner Theatre). Benjamin currently lives in Noblesville, Indiana, taking care of his cat, Stella. Special thanks to Theo Hicks, Fritz Robertson, and Rebecca Edie.



Mackenzie Foulks is an Indianapolis native with degrees in Musical Theatre and Psychology from Anderson University. She recently completed her second cruise contract as a Vocalist with Royal Caribbean, and previously performed for two seasons at King's Island in Ohio. She is thrilled to be in this show with her best friend Abigail Simmon and is grateful for performance opportunities both local and abroad. Mackenzie would like to thank her family for their endless love and support. And many thanks to the Claude McNeal team for their kindness and excitement in creating this wonderful production!



Susan Merriman is delighted to be making her debut with Claude McNeal Productions after a career as a massage therapist. Susan is excited to return to her musical theatre roots. Born into a musical family, she's been performing since the age of 5 with her sisters and went through school singing in choirs and performing in musicals, including *The Music Man* and *Once Upon a Mattress*, as well as original musical reviews and children's theatre. In recent years she's found singing Jazz suits her and she enjoys singing at the Jazz Kitchen Jam sessions in Indianapolis alongside her saxophonist husband. She would like to thank her husband, Rich, for his constant support and encouragement, CMP for giving her this opportunity, and especially her parents, who made music and performing a way of life.



Abigail Simmon is a graduate of Anderson University where she studied Musical Theater and World History. Her most recent credits include Jane Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*, and Sally in *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*. Abigail is a huge fan of Cole Porter and is thrilled to be working on her first show with Claude McNeal Productions. She would like to thank her family and friends for their support.



Daniel Wilke is happy to be making his first appearance with CMP. He has been stage acting for two years and is enjoying every moment of it. Previous roles for Daniel have been Ensemble in *Beauty and the Beast*, Captain Phoebus in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, NIM in *Eurydice*, Richard Loeb in *Never the Sinner* and Gorlinsky in *Anastasia*. He would like to thank his partners Sarah and Maggie for always being supportive as well as his vocal coach, Alexandra Kocoshis, for pushing him to get out of his comfort zone and giving him more confidence.

Featured Guest Artists



Bob Motz is returning to the theatre after a 20-year hiatus. He was a long-time resident company performer with Claude McNeal's American Cabaret Theatre (ACT), located at the historic Athenaeum. Bob joined the company after seeing a show at French Lick Resorts. He auditioned and remained with the theatre from 1986-2008. Some of his credits include playing Hoagy Carmichael in ACT's *The Immortal Hoagy Carmichael*, as well as Don Quixote in their production of *Man of La Mancha*, and Scrooge in Claude's adaptation of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Other credits include playing in Claude's *Fabulous '50's* at the Hannah Theatre in Cleveland, as well as Marley's Ghost in *Dickens' Christmas Carol* at Beef 'n' Boards, Ghost in *He Held Me Grande* at the IRT, and two years of children's shows at the Lilly Theatre at the Children's Museum. Movie credits include playing District Attorney John Sayles in the film *Eight Men Out*. Bob is so thankful for the support of his family, especially his wife, Renee'.



Monica Cantrell

(Monica's bio was unavailable at this time, but suffice it to say, she is an Indianapolis legend!)

A few highlights - With a career in local theater that spans nearly 30 years, singer and actress Monica Cantrell is an Indianapolis native, probably known best for performing as Billie Holiday in Lanie Robertson's 1986 play *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, a role she began in 1991 at the Phoenix Theatre.