

BRIGHT STAR

Synopsis & Character Breakdown

The story of one woman at two different points in her life: the first, when she is a wild young thing growing up barefoot and carefree in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina; the second, when she is a well-to-do magazine editor in Asheville, 22 years later. Her story is inevitably woven with that of an idealistic young man named Billy, with whom she shares a mysterious connection. As a young teen in Zebulon, NC, Alice Murphy is hopelessly in love with small town heartthrob Jimmy Ray, the mayor's son. Although their love was pure, it falls victim to the interference of ambitious parents, and their infant son is whisked away before their happy ending could ever begin. More than two decades later, Alice is the successful editor of The Asheville Southern Journal, and meets a promising young writer named Billy. Eventually they realize that they share a hometown, and when Alice sees the handmade sweater she knitted for her baby twenty years before in his personal belongings, she realizes that he is the son she lost so long ago.

FEMALE ROLES:

Alice Murphy (Young to Older Adult)

Vocal: Mezzo Soprano. **Range:** High Note C5/Low Note F3 – Belt, Folk, Country.

Dual roles. Alice at age 36-37 is an editor of a southern literary magazine; intelligent, attractive, professional, but with an air of melancholy. Young Alice at age 16-17 is rebellious, high-spirited and adventurous, looking to break out of small-town life and experience the world. She must be very strong singer and comfortable in folk and bluegrass styles.

Margo Crawford (Young Adult)

Vocal: Soprano. **Range:** High Note F#5/Low Note B3 – Folk, Country

A small-town bookstore owner; a childhood friend of Billy's who now harbors romantic feelings towards him; a natural beauty with a keen intellect.

Mama Murphy (Mature Adult)

Vocal: Mezzo Soprano. **Range:** High Note C5/Low Note G3 – Folk, Country

Alice's mother; a caretaker to her family and her rural community; a warm, loving, sensible woman; hardworking, with great inner strength and compassion.

Lucy Grant (Young Adult)

Vocal: Soprano. **Range:** High Note D5/Low Note A3 – Belt, Folk, County

A junior editor at a literary magazine; an ambitious, professional young "modern" career woman of the 1940s; forthright and provocative with a sharp sense of humor; must be able to vocally carry a big up-tempo "foot stopping" song and dance/move very well.

MALE ROLES:

Billy Cane (Young Adult)

Vocal: Tenor. **Range:** High Note A4/Low Note C3 – Folk, Country

A soldier returning home from WWII; an aspiring young writer; fresh, open, optimistic, charming, and a little naïve.

Jimmy Ray Dobbs (Young to Older Adult)

Vocal: Tenor. Range: High Note A4/Low Note C3 – Folk, Country

Dual role. Jimmy Ray in his early 20s in flashbacks is Mayor Dobbs' son and young Alice's beau; handsome, boyishly charming, well-built and intelligent; from a family of wealth and power and is being groomed by his father for a similar future in the family business. He is an independent thinker who is not afraid to stand up to his father for what he believes in; he has a sense of personal responsibility and morality, as well as a deep reserve of passion and emotion. The same actor will also play an adult Jimmy Ray at age 38-40.

Mayor Josiah Dobbs (Mature Adult)

Vocal: Baritone. Range: High Note G4/Low Note A2 – Folk, Country

The Mayor of Zebulon; a political and financial powerbroker--distinguished, even elegant, an imposing and controlling presence; has a genuine interest in protecting his son's future and his family name, but in doing so, is ultimately pushed to a point of extreme and irrevocable cruelty.

Daddy Murphy (Mature Adult)

Vocal: Baritone. Range: High Note G4/Low Note A2 – Folk, Country

Alice's father; an authoritative and a stern disciplinarian; hard-working, a poor but proud farmer.

Daddy Cane (Mature Adult)

Vocal: Tenor. Range: High Note A4/Low Note C3 – Folk, Country

Billy's father; a widower; spry, good-looking; kind-hearted, if a bit lonely.

Darryl Ames (Young Adult)

Vocal: Tenor/Baritone. Range: High Note E4/Low Note C3 – Folk, Country

An assistant at a literary magazine; funny, with a dry and officious sense of humor; insecure, and perhaps a bit socially awkward, but endearing and innately likable; some character singing required but not a major singing role; should be able to move well.

ENSEMBLE ROLES:

Max – a customer at Margo's bookstore, at first, he has a crush on Margo, but later becomes Edna's beau.

Florence – an employee at Margo's bookstore and a childhood friend of both Billy and Margo.

Edna – an employee at Margo's bookstore.

Stanford – Loyal assistant to Mayor Josiah Dobbs

Dr. Norquist – The local family doctor in Zebulon

Government Clerk – A clerk at the Office of Records in Raleigh

Well-Dressed Woman – A woman (38-40) living in Raleigh.

PERFORMANCE RUN: November 7 – November 24
Rehearsals begin September 9