

Director's Note

If you're not yet familiar with *Bright Star*, I can't wait for you to discover it.

This is a story about resilience, forgiveness, and hope, qualities I believe we need more than ever. Though set in the American South of the 1920s and 1940s, *Bright Star* feels urgent and timeless. Like Alice Murphy and those around her, we too are living through uncertainty and change, searching for ways to heal and move forward. At the heart of this show is a profound truth. We are not defined by our pain. Our past shapes us, but it does not imprison us.

Alice's story also holds up a mirror to society. The strength she shows, the sacrifices she makes, and the way people judge her, it all connects to conversations we're still having today. About women's choices. About whose dreams matter. About who gets to decide the direction of their own life. This isn't just a story about the 1920s, it feels like now. But even with all that weight, *Bright Star* never loses its warmth. It's funny, it's moving, it's hopeful, and it genuinely believes that *"the sun is gonna shine again."*

So much of that hope lives in the music. Steve Martin and Edie Brickell have crafted a beautiful score that is deeply human. The bluegrass and folk influences don't just set the scene, it carries the whole emotional world of the show. Sometimes a fiddle says what words can't.

Directing this production at Marymount Manhattan College carries a particular weight and a particular joy. This is our final main stage musical as MMC, and what a show to go out on. *Bright Star* is, at its core, a story about community, and this production has been built in that same spirit. Actors and musicians share the stage as one ensemble, and every element you see and hear has been crafted by our extraordinary MMC student community. It took a village of dedicated young artists: performers, designers, technicians, and crew to bring this world to life, and watching them grow through this process has been one of the great privileges of my career as an educator.

My hope is that this production leaves you with something that lingers a little more faith in second chances, a little more belief in the power of human connection, and a reminder that even in our darkest moments, there is always a bright star waiting to be seen.

Welcome to *Bright Star*.

Michael Mendez, Director.