

Lemonade ^{FOR THE} Lawnboy ...the musical!

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UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP INSPIRES UNLIKELY ARTISTIC COLLABORATION

Dream team of Minnesota artists, writers and musicians come together to create a very original musical.

HASTINGS, MINN. — APRIL 11, 2016 — What do you get when you explore the magical, yet tangled, intersection between the genius of art and the self-destruction of addiction; set it to catchy music against a backdrop of vivid visual art; and deliver it via a powerhouse cast of performers? You get "[Lemonade for the Lawnboy: The Musical!](#)," a new musical theater production running for one week this June in Hastings.

The story-within-a-story musical is a multilayered artistic collaboration based on the life and art of the formerly down-and-out [David W. Cook II](#) — the local artist known as "[the Flower Bomber](#)" for his public guerrilla art installations of giant, colorful flowers — who once worked as a lawn boy for the wealthy women of Minnetonka.

“[Lemonade for the Lawnboy: The Musical!](#)” runs June 1 through June 5 at the [Hastings Arts Center](#), 216 4th Street East, Hastings, and is made possible with support from the [Hastings Prescott Area Arts Council](#). Tickets are available for \$20 [here](#).

Developed by [Greta Grosch](#), writer of the last four highly successful [Church Basement Ladies](#) musicals, “Lemonade for the Lawnboy: the Musical!” tells the story of David Cook and his unlikely friendship with Janet Letnes Martin — inspiration for the *Church Basement Ladies* series.

In real life, the widowed Martin took the recovering substance abuser Cook into her home where he soon turned her garage into his art studio. Eventually Martin and Cook collaborated on a fictional humorous recipe book entitled [Lemonade for the Lawnboy](#), inspired by David’s art and the society women for whom he once worked. As playwright Greta Grosch worked to adapt this book into a musical, she came to realize that the *real* story was that of Martin and Cook — his artistic expression as a catalyst for recovery, and their friendship as a balm for Martin after the loss of her husband.

The musical features [the music](#) of Minnesota band, [the Smarts](#) (music and lyrics by Joe Weismann and Jim Kennedy), house band for the former [MPR show "In the Loop."](#) Grosch discovered the band’s music while hosting the artists’ showcase [Sample Night Live](#) where, for five seasons, the Smarts have also been house band. As she listened to their work, she began to imagine their music as the soundtrack for the musical.

“This show has traveled a very convoluted path — it was inspired by a book, but written *about* the people who wrote the book,” says Greta Grosch, playwright. “I adapted the story, and incorporated existing music by The Smarts, then had *that* music arranged by Musical Director [Dennis Curley](#), to be performed by a cast of musical theatre performers.”

“In the show there’s a tension between two realities,” Grosch explains. “There’s the imaginary world of Cook’s ladies — a Technicolor showplace with elaborate and campy musical production numbers, populated by over-the-top society women who, in actuality,

are three dimensional art sculptures. This world is contrasted with drab reality, where Cook — a gay, recovering drug addict — is holed up in a grieving widow’s suburban garage, struggling with his demons as best he can. “

The musical features Cook’s art prominently, both as set decoration, and as a main character in the play. “David’s art uses broken and found objects to create something beautiful,” adds Grosch. “I love that, in a sense, this entire musical was also created from found objects, right down to the music.”

The Smarts are working closely with the production, and Cook himself is set decorator. Costume designer Katrina Benedict has been partnering with Cook to create costumes that reflect, and represent, his artwork.

Inspired by the book of the same name, and the lives of its authors, LEMONADE FOR THE LAWNBOY; The Musical! is a brand new show written by Minnesota playwright Greta Grosch, featuring a cast of professional Twin Cities actors, and music from Jim Kennedy and Joe Weismann of Twin Cities band "The Smarts." Based on real-life experiences and featuring some exceptional three-dimensional sculptures, the show explores the magical, tangled intersection between the genius of art and the self-destruction of addiction. For more, visit www.LawnboyMusical.com.

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