

ROADBUG

Stories and Songs from Two Cultures

by Roadside Theater of Whitesburg, Kentucky
and Junebug Productions of New Orleans, Louisiana

See, everybody has a story, their own story.

*Trouble is, seems like some people
are always wanting to tell our story for us.*

*But, we got to tell it ourselves!
Otherwise, how we gonna know it's us?*

-Roadbug Script

Take two of the most vital oral traditions in the South, season them with the blues, bayou funk, four part harmonies, fiddle, and guitar and you've got the recipe for ROADBUG. Here we have the African American and the Appalachian Mountain storytelling and music traditions as practiced by the ensembles, Junebug Productions from New Orleans and Roadside Theater from Whitesburg, Kentucky. ROADBUG serves up these ingredients in a nourishing stew that preserves each of the distinct flavors.

In this family performance, the audience will encounter the wit of archetypal characters like Junebug Jabbo Jones and Jack. Junebug is a folk hero born of the Civil Rights Movement. A descendant of the African Praisesingers and Griots, he embodies the wisdom of common people in their struggle for justice.

Jack, too, is an Everyman character. Usually Jack is a boy of indefinite age, living with his widowed mother in poverty. He succeeds in his trials through a combination of cleverness, will, and blind luck.

In 1981 the Roadside and Junebug companies began working together in response to growing divisions between white and black working class people and a rise in Ku Klux Klan activity. Or, as Junebug might explain it, "Because the ducks had gotten so much water, all the chickens were going thirsty."

The ROADBUG performers all grew up in the traditions that they enact. They learned the older stories and songs from their community. Because the actor/storyteller/musicians remain a part of these living traditions, they also improvise as the spirit moves them.

For almost two decades, Roadside Theater and Junebug Productions have been creating original plays about their respective places and people. Both companies tour throughout the United States and have represented the U.S. at festivals in Europe and Africa.