

Letters That You Will Not Get

WOMEN'S VOICES FROM THE GREAT WAR

Music by Kirsten Volness
Libretto by Kate Holland and Susan Werbe
Stage Direction by Kate Bergstrom
Music Direction by Mila Henry



WORLD PREMIERE

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Letters That You Will Not Get
Women's Voices from the Great War

The Space at Irondale, Brooklyn, NYC

July 29 - August 7, 2022

Presented as part of Irondale's On Women Festival 2022

Commissioned, Produced & Developed by **The American Opera Project**



Kirsten Volness Music

Kate Holland and Susan Werbe Libretto

Kate Bergstrom Stage Direction

Mila Henry Music Direction & Artistic Director of AOP

Sara Brown and An-Lin Dauber Set Design

An-lin Dauber Costume Design

Masha Tsimring and Krista Smith Lighting Design

Stefania Bulbarella Projections Design

CAST

Maria Maxfield Soprano, Woman 1

Jessica Sandidge Soprano, Woman 2

Sarah Beckham-Turner Soprano, Woman 3

Caitlin McKechney Mezzo-Soprano, Woman 4

Tesia Kwarteng Mezzo-Soprano, Woman 5

Tharanga Goonetilleke Soprano, Woman 6

Patrice Eaton, Caitlin Mead, Nivi Ravi Covers

QUINTET

Andie Tanning Violin I

Sunny Sheu Violin II

Tia Allen Viola

Titilayo Ayangade Cello

Eleonore Oppenheim Double Bass

Caitlin McKechney Associate Producer

Becca Pickett Production Stage Manager

Alyssa Van Gorder Production Manager

Sarah Schetter Technical Director

Analiese Puzon Asst. Production Manager / Asst. Stage Manager

Linnea Soderberg Wardrobe Supervisor

Jamie Godwin Projection Designer Associate

Joaquin Dagnino Illustrator/ Animator

Kamilla Arku Rehearsal Pianist

Anna Dorodnykh Asst. Stage Manager

Jemma Clarke Asst. Stage Manager

Rosamund Dyer Production Assistant

Robert Signom III & Scott H. Schneider Production Coordinators

William Mazza Studio Program Layout

SUPPORT



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PROGRAM

Dear Alice, Ensemble

L'Odeur de Mon Pays, Woman 1

Rilla of Ingleside, Ensemble

In Memoriam, July 19, 1914, Woman 4

Women of Europe, Woman 2

Folksong, Karonga, Woman 5

Socks, Woman 3

The Gift of India, Woman 6

Dear Jack, Woman 1

Not Only An Army Fights!, Ensemble

The Dancers, Woman 4

I Sit and Sew, Woman 5

War Girls, Ensemble

Bright Yellow Faces, Ensemble

Salonika, Woman 2

When the Vision Dies, Woman 1

Right and Left, Woman 2

Punjabi Folk Song, Woman 6

Penelope, Woman 5

Finally, Woman 4

There Will Come Soft Rains, Ensemble

In English. 75 minutes, no intermission.

WORLD WAR ONE (“The Great War,” “The War to End All Wars,” “The War that would be over by Christmas”) was the first global conflict of the 20th Century. It is tremendously challenging to understand the massive scale of this war – the number of countries that participated, the number of people who were affected (both soldiers and civilians), the sheer magnitude of the casualties (a total of 37.5 million soldiers and civilians, including 21 million wounded and 16.5 million deaths). It was also the first war in which 19th Century military tactics and strategies confronted 20th Century technological warfare.

There are so many striking things about the Great War. The network of alliances that drew nations almost blindly into war. The military blunders that led to the horrors of trench warfare along a 450-mile front that stretched from the coastline of the North Sea to the Swiss border. The other arenas of war (the Middle East, Africa, Asia and the Pacific) created conflict on a truly global scale. The illusion that the war would be quickly over. And the outcomes that we continue to live with today.

It was also the most literary of wars. The libretto that we’re using in *Letters* represents just a tiny sliver of the huge numbers of poems, letters, memoirs, and novels that were written by the women whose lives were forever changed during the four years of conflict. It is these diverse women’s voices (voices that for too long have been missing from the war’s history and its narrative) that will enable us and the audience to understand what women experienced during the 20th Century’s first war.

The women whose words you’ll hear – whatever their views of the war, however many loved ones they lost, whichever side of the conflict they found themselves on – were caught up in a cataclysmic chapter in human history. Their words bring this piece of history alive, and pay tribute not only to these women, but also to the tragic loss – on both sides – of so much human potential.

Susan Werbe, Co-librettist and Dramaturg

LETTERS THAT YOU WILL NOT GET: WOMEN’S VOICES FROM THE GREAT WAR

from:

Kate Bergstrom, Director

Mila Henry, Music Director & Artistic Director of AOP

Dear reader,

Our past (in so many ways) is all we know—what do we make of it in the present?

“When I was young, my mother would tell me of my great aunt, who planted a garden on top of her kitchen table. She was described as “unique.” I was inspired by her. In my imagination, she was a force of nature.” – *Kate Bergstrom*

“I loved to pretend I lived in the past when I was a little girl. I once buried an old key I had found, putting it in the soil of our front yard, thinking I would find it again. Hopefully someone will.” – *Mila Henry*

Welcome to this, our living excavation—our letter—and what is a letter but an excavation and sharing of the self, the moment, the present, with the intention and will for someone else to find and act on it? In our living letter, birthed from Kirsten, Kate and Susan’s score, women emerge as a trickle and a tundra in the Great War. These women are demanding reckoning through their words and their sounds, with horror and revelation. These women live in the past and present.

In our upended banquet table turned trench, our women storytellers—both vocal and instrumental—transform, re-configure and (most saliently) relate to one another as bodies through a single life cycle ravaged by war. What can dust to toxic, industrial dust regenerate? And even with that knowledge, what must we do? “Dear Alice,” one woman accounts, “if you could see me in my dirty clothes dashing around, doing errands, scrubbing, you would not think me the model heroine.” But it is exactly that regenerative spirit, the sense of maintenance labor, peace and humility that is heroic and necessary.

The table holds these questions: Who is invited, and what is true nourishment? The women you see are both witnesses and participants in the War, consumer and consumed. We seek not to victimize or capitalize them, but rather imbue them with teeth and prowess to invoke change, celebrate and mourn, and tangle and untangle the space between one another, between stage and audience, writer and reader.

We take the need for deep listening seriously, the kind of listening where story and song act as beacons for processing (not psychologising) trauma. The juxtaposition of the historical texts that Kate and Susan mined with Kirsten's contemporary music blurs the line between past and present; whereas an anecdote on a page reads as something that "happened", a voice in a song brings the "happened" to the "happening still", and to something that is heard. We ask you to not only witness our ensemble as performers, but to consider them as vessels for the ghosts of our past, who still haunt our present. What are they saying? Are you listening?

We can only imagine the surprise Kate's mother and grandmother had coming home to that garden on the table. "That's crazy," one might think about Kate's aunt...but somewhere, underneath that all-too-familiar codification of women, there is room for the magic of discovery, for bringing the act of cultivation closer to home, for creativity as a bellwether towards regeneration.

We can only imagine the surprise that another child might have in finding an old key "from the past", when really it's from multiple pasts...but somewhere, underneath the earth, there waits a relic that had been imbued with life and returned to a new present. What curiosity and hope might it still unlock?

So, oh beloved penpal, thank you for joining us in the collective excavation and invigoration of Letters That You Will Not Get: Women's Voices from the Great War. We are grateful to deliver these messages, and these voices, at last.

*Sincerely yours,
Kate and Mila*

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

LETTERS THAT YOU WILL NOT GET : WOMEN'S VOICES FROM THE GREAT WAR

CREATIVE TEAM



Kirsten Volness, Composer

Smart, transcendent, and immersive, Kirsten Volness' emotive soundscapes integrate electronics and modern composition techniques with jazz and pop influences to create intimate and "irresistible" (*San Francisco Chronicle*) listening that is "nothing short of gorgeous." (*New York Arts*). Each of her compositions reveals "an exquisite sound world" (*New Classic LA*) with disparate, suggestive musical elements woven together to create sublime atmospheres inspired by nature, myth, spirituality, and environmental and sociopolitical issues.

Volness' music has featured at The Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States (SEAMUS), L'Institut International de Musique Electroacoustique de Bourges, The New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival (NYCEMF), Illuminus Boston, Electronic Music Midwest, Tribeca New Music, American Composers Alliance, and the Montréal and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals. Her rich commission history includes projects with the World Future Council Foundation, ASCAP/SEAMUS, BMI Foundation, Metropolis Ensemble, The American Opera Project, Kansas City Electronic Music and Arts Alliance, NOW Ensemble, Transient Canvas, Cambridge Philharmonic, and Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra. Volness received an OPERA America Opera Grant for Female Composers (supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation), New Music USA Creators Development Fund Grant, the MacColl Johnson Fellowship in 2017, the Fellowship in Music Composition from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts three times (2018, 2014, 2010), and the 2017 Composer-in-Residence position at the Music Mansion.

Also a sought-after performer, producer, and a passionate promoter of multimedia, Volness has cultivated and curated numerous festivals and series featuring the work of interdisciplinary artists. She is the Co-Founder, Co-Director and pianist for Verdant Vibes (Providence); multi-instrumentalist for Hotel Elefant (NYC); and Co-Director of homeless advocacy group Tenderloin Opera Company (Providence) among other affiliations. A graduate of the Universities of Michigan and Minnesota (summa cum laude), her teaching history includes positions at Reed College and the University of Rhode Island with guest appearances at Brown University, the University of Michigan, and Interlochen Arts Camp. kirstenvolness.com



Kate Holland, Librettist

Kate Holland trained in London at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art. As a writer, Kate is primarily collaborative, centering queer stories and womens' writing. She co-created the play *No Provenance* with award-winning playwright Caroline Prugh, which debuted at FringeNYC. Kate co-wrote and directed the short film *No Monsters in Berlin* which featured Berlin-based Syrian refugees as members of the cast and crew. The film was awarded the Jury Prize at the Diversity in Cannes Short Film Showcase as well as the Best Short Film at the 2017 New York Short Film Festival.

With her writing partner, Mala Ghedia, Kate is currently developing *No Monsters* into a web series. The pilot for *No Monsters* is presently in development as part of The Writers Lab: Europe. With fellow writer Marlowe Mitchell, Kate is working on a trans teen sports romcom, *Offsiders*. Kate has partnered with Susan Werbe on several projects featuring writings from the First World War, most recently co-creating the libretto for *Letters That You Will Not Get*, an opera based on womens' original writings.



Susan Werbe, Librettist

Susan Werbe is an independent scholar focused on the history of early 20thC England, including the social and cultural history of World War I. She has worked with artists to create performance pieces highlighting individuals' responses to the war, using writings from men and women on both sides of the conflict. Susan commissioned a dance piece based on an Isaac Rosenberg poem, performed at a 2013 Boston arts festival. She was executive producer/dramaturg for *The Great War Theatre Project: Messengers of a Bitter Truth*, performed in Boston, New York, and Letchworth (UK).

She has served as presenter or panelist at international conferences on WWI at the National World War I Museum in Kansas City and at the University of Kent, UK; as a panelist speaking on Visual Memory in a Time of Endless War hosted by Boston University, and at the 2018 War, Literature & the Arts conference at the USAF Academy.



Kate Bergstrom, Stage Director

Kate Bergstrom is a director, culture-shaper, and multidisciplinary creator in theatre, opera, and immersive narrative work. "A visionary, truly, but a visionary with a contagious sense of humor and a pulsating, enormous heart," (Curt Columbus, Trinity Rep's Artistic Director) Kate is based in New York where they help lead new inquiries into regenerative system building (Economy Lab-New Georges, OTVLeads, Big Eddy Film Festival) as well as new plays, operas, films and new takes on canonical works. Upcoming: *Alive & Well* by Erin Courtney, Houselight Productions, *It's A Wonderful Life: A Radio Play*, Alabama Shakespeare Festival. Recent: *Is Edward Snowden Single?* by

Kate Cortesi at The Pool/New Ohio (director), *The 39 Steps* by Patrick Barlow at St. Louis Rep (director), and h0tclub's *freeicecream.network* workshop at CounterPulse Dance (creator), *Unspeakable*, SPOKE Media (creator). Regional: Trinity Repertory Company (*A Christmas Carol*), Marin Theatre Company (*Noura, Brilliant Mind*), OPC + Playwrights Center (*Tomorrow Will Be Sunday*, director-dramaturg), Cleveland Play House (*Galilee 34* workshop, director), REDCAT (*Wholed*) and Curious Theatre Company. NY: Ars Nova (*HOTBOX*, co-creator), Bushwick Starr, La Mama, Culture Hub, Rattlestick, New Dramatists, JACK, Dixon Place, The Orchard Project, and The Sheen Center. Opera: Music Academy of the West Associate Director, 2019 (Director: *King Harold's Saga* Workshop, Co-Director, *The Shakespeare Salon* with James Darrah, AD: *Cold Mountain* with Dir. James Darrah), Opera Philadelphia (Assistant Director *Sky On Swings* with Dir. Joanna Settle) On Site Opera (Assistant Director *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with Dir. Eric Einhorn). They are an Ojai Playwrights Conference Affiliated Artist, New Georges Affiliated Artist and member of the intermedia performance group, h0t club. Kate is a critic at Rhode Island School of Design. Founding Director, On The Verge Festival. Central Coast BroadwayWorld.com's 2016 Person to Watch + 2017 Best Director. BA,UCLA + MFA in Directing, Brown/Trinity Rep. www.katebergstrom.com



Mila Henry, Music Director

Mila Henry is a music director, pianist and conductor, as well as Artistic Director of The American Opera Project. Hailed "a stalwart contributor to the contemporary opera scene" (*Opera Ithaca*) and a "terrific" pianist (*Opera News*), she provides musical dramaturgy to AOP works and serves as Head of Music for their Composers & the Voice program. She maintains an active and versatile career, leading works spanning folk operas to rock musicals to crossover collaborations, and performing at venues such as The Apollo, BAM, Dutch National Opera, LA Opera, Library of Congress,

OPERA America, Opera Philadelphia and Pittsburgh CLO. Her recording credits include *Looking at You* (Bright Shiny Things), *Love & Trouble* (Roven Records), *Thumbprint* (National Sawdust Tracks) and *Voices of Women* (Affetto Records). She is also a member of the alt-country band Opera Cowgirls, and holds degrees from the Manhattan School of Music and Elizabethtown College. milahenry.com

DESIGN TEAM



Sara Brown, Co-Set Designer

Sara Brown (she/her) is a set designer for theater, opera, and dance. Selected designs include *Common Ground: Revisited* at the Huntington Theater Company; *The Day* at Jacob's Pillow; *Hagoromo* at BAM, produced by The American Opera Project; *Fellow Travelers* and *La Rondine* at the Minnesota Opera; *World of Wires* at The Kitchen in NYC and Festival d'Automne in Paris; *Prince of Providence* at Trinity Repertory company in Providence, RI; *Der Freischütz* with Heartbeat Opera in NYC; *The Mother of Us All* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She is an Assistant Professor at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Music and Theater Arts. You can see samples of her work at www.sarabdesign.com.



Stefania Bulbarella, Projections Designer

Stefania Bulbarella is a Video and Projections Designer from Buenos Aires, Argentina based in Brooklyn, NY. Off Broadway credits include: *Space Dogs* (MCC), *Semblance* (New York Theatre Workshop), *The Watering Hole* (Signature Theatre), *Will You Come With Me?* (The Play Company), *Turtle on a Fence Post* (Theatre 555), *Eva Luna* (Repertorio Español). Nominations: Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards for Outstanding Video/Projection Design for *Space Dogs*. www.stefaniabulbarella.com



An-lin Dauber, Costume Designer / Co-Set Designer

An-lin Dauber is a New York based set and costume designer. Notable set and costume designs include *Paul Swan is Dead and Gone*; *What You Are Now* (The Civilians), *The Song of Summer* (Mixed Blood Theatre), *The Kind Ones* (Magic Theater), *A Christmas Carol: The Live Radio Play*; *The Incredible Book Eating Boy* (Alliance Theatre), *It's A Wonderful Life*; *Lost in Yonkers* (Hartford Stage), *Into the Woods* (Arkansas Repertory Theater), *Common Ground Revisited* (Huntington Theatre Company), *And Then They Came For Me* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival), *Seven Guitars* (Yale Repertory Theatre), *The Thanksgiving Play* (Virginia Stage Company), *Macbeth* (Theater Alaska), *The Seagull* (Serenbe Playhouse), *Marisol*; *Blood Wedding*; *The Bar Plays: Small Craft Warnings* and *The Time of Your Life*; *A Bright Room Called Day* (The Williams Project). MFA Yale School of Drama. Proud Member of USA 829. www.anlindauber.com



Krista Smith, Co-Lighting Designer

Krista Smith is a Lighting and Projections Designer for theater, opera, and dance. NYC credits: *Threshold of Brightness*, *It is a Comfort to Know* (BMP Next Gen), *Ni Mi Madre* (Rattlestick Theater), *Zoetrope* (Exquisite Corpse Company), *Coop* (Paradise Factory), *At Black Lake* (The Tank), *Stinney: An American Execution* (Prototype Festival), *Good Person of Setzuan* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Twin Size Beds* (Under the Radar Festival & Joe's Pub), *Machinal* (Lee Strasberg Institute), *This American Wife* (New York Theater Workshop Next Door), *Doll's House Pt3* (Ars Nova). Regional work: Two River Theater Little Shakes, Triad Stage, Yale Repertory Theater, California Shakespeare Theater, Cinnabar Theater, Custom Made Theatre, Aurora Theatre, and Theatre FIRST. Artistic Team Member of Rattlestick Theater. MFA Yale School of Drama. Proud member of USA 829. www.KristaSmithLD.com



Masha Tsimring, Co-Lighting Designer

Masha Tsimring is a NYC based designer for live performance. Recently: *Der Freischütz* (Wolf Trap Opera); *Straight White Men* (Westport); *Private* (Mosaic); *Cunning Little Vixen & Salome* (Bard); *Puppet Lab* (St. Ann's Warehouse); *To the Yellow House* (La Jolla Playhouse). Internationally, her work has taken her to Russia, Chile, China, Germany, Ecuador, the Netherlands, Bolivia, and one very big boat. Homes for New York projects include Playwrights Horizons, Soho Rep, The Kitchen, Atlantic Theatre Co., Clubbed Thumb, PlayCo, Invisible Dog, Page73, and Bushwick Starr. In addition to design, Masha's interests include progress towards pay equity and a more ethical model of making in the American theater. Masha received her MFA from the Yale School of Drama. She is the Masha of design collective, Masha and the Bear Design and a proud member of USA829. More info at www.mashald.com.

CAST



Sarah Beckham-Turner, Soprano

A true singing actress, soprano Sarah Beckham-Turner has earned critical acclaim for being "soulful and affecting. . . with a bright and gorgeous controlled soprano." Beckham-Turner's 2017 season brought a huge success with New York City Opera's production of *Angels in America* as Harper and Ethel Rosenberg, in which she was hailed as "best. . . wry even in desperation as Harper, her voice cool yet vibrating with vulnerability" (*The New York Times*) and "the only singer who scaled the requisite peak of greatness...ideally and aggressively querulous as the drug-addled Harper Pitt, and, later, delicately savoring her cold dish of revenge as the ghost of Ethel Rosenberg. Ms. Beckham-Turner is both an artist and a star" (*The Observer*). Beckham-Turner has performed with companies throughout the United States and performs with the band The Opera Cowgirls. Beckham-Turner is currently on the voice faculty at West Texas A&M University and oversees their Opera program.



Patrice Eaton, Mezzo-Soprano

Patrice Eaton is a versatile performer in various musical genres and a frequent performer of premiere works. Ms. Eaton's career in opera began as a member of the children's chorus of both the Metropolitan Opera and New York City Opera. Most recently Ms. Eaton has performed with On Site Opera in *Gianni Schicchi* as Zita, Wynton Marsalis and Jazz at Lincoln Center at the White Light Festival, and *Carmen* with Downtown Symphony Orchestra. She is a proud member of Sigma Alpha Iota Music Fraternity, a Lifetime and National Board Member of the National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM) and the Artistic Director of Three on 3 Music.



Tharanga Goonetilleke, Soprano

Critically acclaimed soprano, Tharanga Goonetilleke's performances have been praised by the *Washington Times* as 'Magical' and her voice by *The New York Times* as 'appealingly rich'. Tharanga is the only Sri Lankan woman to attend The Juilliard School where she received her Artist Diploma for Opera and MM degree. She received a BM degree with a minor in Biology from Converse College. She is also an Associate of the Trinity College of Music, London. She has mastered over a dozen major operatic roles including Mimi (*La boheme*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Ginevra (*Ariodante*) and Blanche (*The Dialogues of the Carmelites*). Tharanga is currently a performer, visual artist, illustrator, and TED Fellow (2015). She runs her private music studio and is faculty at the Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts and Summer Performing Arts with Juilliard at Nord Anglia Schools. She serves on the board of trustees for the Visual Arts Center of NJ.



Tesia Kwarteng, Mezzo-Soprano

Tesia Kwarteng is a Ghanaian-American multi-faceted artist equally at home on the operatic stage, on screen and in the studio. She made her principal debut at The Metropolitan Opera in Brett Dean's *Hamlet* as a Pit Singer. She also made her Off Broadway debut at Lincoln Center Theater in Ricky Ian Gordon and Lynn Nottage's new opera *Intimate Apparel* (Mayme/ ensemble). Tesia also covered the role of Ruby/Sinner Woman in Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up In My Bones* at The Metropolitan Opera. Other recent performances include Maurya in *What Lies Beneath* (On Site Opera) and the *Written in Stone* workshop (Washington National Opera) as Laurel in Carlos Simon's *It All Falls Down*, and Victoria Wilson in Kamala Sankaram's *Rise*. Kwarteng made her Austin Opera debut featured in recital in their Live from Indy Terrace Broadcast. She has also participated in the young artist programs at Tri-Cities Opera, Opera Theater of Saint Louis, The Glimmerglass Festival, Virginia Opera and Chautauqua Opera. www.tesiakwarteng.com



Maria Maxfield, Soprano

Maria Maxfield enjoys a versatile operatic career focusing on the performance of classical and new works. Maxfield has performed as an ensemble member with The Metropolitan Opera since 2018, and was most recently seen in the Met's new production of Verdi's *Don Carlos* in the spring of 2022. Operatic highlights include Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* (Opera Colorado), Frasquita in *Carmen* (Opera Omaha), Monica in *The Medium* (Opera Memphis) and Julie in *Carousel* (Union Avenue Opera in St. Louis). Maxfield has been a participant of the Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Artist

program, a member of Opera Omaha's Voices in Residence program, the Gerdine Young Artist program at Opera Theatre of St. Louis and the esteemed Steans Music Institute at the Ravinia Music Festival. Maxfield has been an active concert and chamber singer, performing as a Soprano Soloist in Handel's *Messiah*, Lloyd-Webber's *Requiem*, Mozart's *C Minor Mass*, Poulenc's *Gloria*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and Mahler's *2nd Symphony*.



Caitlin McKechney, Mezzo-Soprano

Caitlin McKechney, mezzo-soprano, is a vocalist, multi-instrumentalist, song-writer and producer. As a performer, she has been seen in a wide variety of roles including Inez in Andy Vores's operatic treatment of Sartre's *No Exit* and Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* (both with Florida Grand Opera), the title role in *Carmen* (Opera Memphis, Painted Sky Opera, Tacoma Opera), Lilli Vanessi in *Kiss Me Kate* (Broadway Theater of Pitman, North Street Playhouse and NightBlue Theater) and a member of the 6 person actor-musician show *The Irish and How They Got That Way* by Frank McCourt. Caitlin's first musical theater work that she composed, *Muse: The Women of Picasso*, was included in Shri!l Fest 2.0, produced by the feminist theater group The Shri!l Collective. Caitlin is also "head Cowgirl" and co-arranger for the Opera Cowgirls, an all-female alt-country opera fusion band for whom the original song cycle of *Letters...* was originally written. www.caitlinmckechney.com



Caitlin Mead, Soprano

Soprano Caitlin Mead is a native of Madison, WI and made her debut as Third Spirit in the Madison Opera's production of *The Magic Flute* at age 15. A specialist in contemporary repertoire, Ms. Mead performed in the world premieres of *Ganymede 5* (Evan Kassof, Philadelphia Fringe Festival), *Hester* (Richard Alan White, Center for Contemporary Opera-CCO), and *Jane Eyre* (Louis Karchin, CCO). Other role performances include Lisa (*La Sonnambula*), Giannetta (*L'Elisir d'Amore*), Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), and Ilia (*Idomeneo*). Equally comfortable performing improvisatory and experimental works, Ms. Mead performs as part of visual artist John Hitchcock's award-winning *Bury the Hatchet* exhibit. The exhibit has appeared at the Chazen Art Museum, the Missoula Art Museum, the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, the SRISA Firenze, and the Portland Art Museum.



Nivi Ravi, Soprano

Tamil-American soprano Nivi Ravi has been hailed for her "graceful operatic" voice which "stirs audiences" and brings "goosebumps." She recently made her professional debut as "Iphigenia the Younger" in *Iphigenia*, a new opera by jazz legends Wayne Shorter and Esperanza Spalding. She has been recognized by the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society's Young Musicians Program and the National Young Arts Foundation and has appeared as a vocal soloist in Alice Tully Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and the Gewandhaus Mendelssohn-Saal. In 2021, she completed her bachelor's degree in music and neuroscience at Harvard University, where she performed with the Harvard College Opera, Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum, and Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra.



Jessica Sandidge, Soprano

Jessica Sandidge, soprano, has been described as a "voice of both power and beauty" by *Opera Wire*. She joined the Metropolitan Opera in their 2016/17 season as Jano(c) in Janáček's *Jenufa*. In 2017 she returned as Sylvainne(c) in *The Merry Widow*, and again in the 2018/19 season as Dawn(c) in the premiere of Nico Muhly's *Marnie*. This season she made her role debut as Marie in *La Fille du Régiment* with Sarasota Opera, where she also sang Musetta (*La bohème*) and Walter (*La Wally*) last season. Last season she also made role and company debuts in Los Angeles with Pacific Opera Project in a Gluck double bill of *La Corona/Il Parnaso Confuso* and performed Elle in *La Voix Humaine* with Angels Vocal Art. She has also performed with New York City Opera, St Petersburg Opera, Pittsburgh Festival Opera, and has been a soloist at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. www.jessicasandidge.com

QUINTET



Tia Allen, Viola

Tia Allen has performed on many of the notable halls around the world with artists such as Tony Bennett, Lady Gaga, Kygo, Dua Lipa, Frank Ocean, and Cee-Lo and many others. She is currently holding the viola chair in the Broadway show *Jagged Little Pill*. Some of her Broadway performances include *My Fair Lady*, *Spongebob Squarepants*, and *An American in Paris*. She has made televised performances on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, *Law and Order*, and *SNL* to name a few. She has performed in the films *The Joker*, and *Annie* remake. Allen has performed as principal violist at his Castleton Music Festival and held fellowships in the Spoleto Festival and the Aspen Music festival. She is the founder/director/violist of Diverse Concert Artists who perform at the Kennedy Center and BAM featuring Bryce Dessner's *Triptych (Eyes of One on Another)*. She teaches with the Harlem School for the Arts and has held chamber music residency at the University of Iowa (Harlem Symphony Chamber Players) and University of Massachusetts (Lowell with Quatuor Mahogany).



Titilayo Ayangade, Cello

Titilayo Ayangade is inspired by and dedicated to the work of musicians of color in order to spotlight the voices in music that often go unheard. A member of duo kayo and the Thalea String Quartet, Titilayo has been a top prize winner at both the Fischoff and Chamber Music Yellow Spring competitions, held residencies at Britten Pears and Avaloch Farm, as well as crafted programs of marginalized music for the Caramoor Center for the Arts and the Boulanger Initiative. Titilayo has worked closely with musicians such as Yo-Yo Ma, Michelle Cann, and many others. She is currently finishing a D.M.A. at the University of Maryland. Titilayo has crafted seminars on non verbal communication, literacy and storytelling in receiving the 2021 Ann Divine Educator Award. A 2021-22 Artist in Residence at the Strathmore Center for the Arts has led Titilayo to begin writing compositions of her own, leaning on her lived experiences as a Black woman in the sea of classical music to create evocative multimedia performances. www.titilayoandco.com www.duokayo.com



Eleonore Oppenheim, Double Bass

Eleonore Oppenheim is a genre surfing musical polyglot. Current projects include *big dog little dog* (a duo with composer/violinist Jessie Montgomery), an acoustic trio with Glasser and multi-instrumentalist Robbie Lee, and the supergroup the Hands Free (with James Moore, Caroline Shaw, and Nathan Koci), among others. Eleonore has an exciting repertoire of commissioned solo pieces and has worked with composers including Philip Glass, Steve Reich, and Meredith Monk, in Missy Mazzoli's "all-star, all female", bandsemble Victoire and Florent Ghys' low strings and drums powerhouse Bonjour, and with many other artists. She writes/arranges

for all the aforementioned groups, and is a go-to chamber musician, soloist, recording artist, and large ensemble player. She enjoys the theater as well and spent the better part of 2019-2020 performing in Daniel Fish's reimagining of *Oklahoma!* off- and on Broadway. She is an alumna of the Juilliard School, the Yale School of Music, and Stony Brook University.



Sunny Sheu, Violin II

An avid musician and collaborator, Sunny most recently performed in Radio City's Christmas Spectacular orchestra. She was hired as a stunt double and music advisor for Taiwanese film *Reborn*, where she performed all the violin tracks live on set (2020). In 2017, Sunny premiered *Cracked Orlando*, a high-modernist baroque opera by Jonathan Dawe and the Center for Innovation in the Arts (CIA). She premiered various works in Alice Tully Hall with the New Juilliard Ensemble (2018). The CIA invited Sunny to produce and perform in their Beyond the Machine festival (2019). There, she worked closely with and performed alongside composer Jack

McGuire, choreographer Can Wang, and actor Brittany Vicars in *We All Should Help* and *The Wasteland*. Sunny experiments in music production and film scoring. Sunny also teaches violin and piano privately in Manhattan and can be found playing jazz, classical, and indie rock music in venues all over NYC.



Andie Tanning, Violin I

Andie Tanning is a violinist and the cofounder/musical director of Wild Shore New Music, now in its ninth year as Alaska's premier new music festival. She released her debut album, "Dandelion," in December 2018. Steve Dollar writes "The stylistically diverse Dandelion is not only a scrapbook of Tanning's experiences and influences, but also an open and always surprising collaboration with composers and video artists whose spirits are illuminated through the violinist's intrepid musicianship and exploratory nature" (National Sawdust Log). She has toured internationally in New York City Players, as a multi-instrumentalist in Object Collection and New

Paradise Laboratories, a fiddle player in the musical, *The Snow Child*, a violin sub in the Broadway revival of *Oklahoma!*, and is currently subbing in *Moulin Rouge*. Ongoing musical collaborations include the development of a new song cycle based on the poetry of James Tate, with Eve Beglarian, Jim Fletcher and James Moore, and the minimalist rock band Thee Reps.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Becca Pickett, Production Stage Manager

Regional: Kentucky Opera; Merola Opera Program; Opera Roanoke; Dayton Opera; Opera Ithaca. NY: Manhattan School of Music Opera Theatre; Broadway Bares XXIII-XXX (BC/EFA). Off-Broadway: *Romeo & Bernadette* (Eric Krebs Theatrical Mgmt); *Charolais* (Fishamble); *Ethel Sings – The Unsung Song of Ethel Rosenberg* (Undercover Productions); *Tail! Spin! and Nevermore – The Imaginary Life and Mysterious Death of Edgar Allen Poe* (DRTM). Int'l: *Sherlock Holmes* (with David Arquette); *Central Avenue Breakdown* (Daegu, South Korea). Love and thanks to the support at home. For Beth. Proud member AEA, SMA. www.beccapickett.com

Lulu Guzman, Assistant Director

Lulu (she/her/ella) is a director and new works enthusiast. Her work celebrates bilingual tongues, same sex kisses, and unapologetic ladies. When she is not dwelling in a theater you may find her curating Pinterest boards or enjoying the company of friends. She has worked in arts administration with organizations such as The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center and Theater Masters. Directing Credits include: Bryna Turner's *At The Wedding* (Assistant Director, LCT3); Kate Cortesi's *Is Edward Snowden Single* (Assistant Director & Line Producer, The Pool Plays); Abby Wilson's *As Long As The Light* (Guest Director, The National Theater institute); <https://luzman894.wixsite.com/mysite>

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Intuitive Production Management is a New York based theatrical production firm specializing in Off-Broadway, Opera, Dance and Live Events. Founded by Robert Signom III and Scott H. Schneider, its mission is to bring superior production values and personalized support to each performance. Other collaborators include Heartbeat Opera, Mint Theater Company, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Aquila Theatre Company, Opera Naples, CAMP Stores, Arts Brookfield, Parity Productions, LaGuardia High School, Tri-Cities Opera, Bronx Opera, New Camerata Opera, and Opera Saratoga. www.intuitiveprodmgmt.com

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The American Opera Project (AOP) is a non-profit organization that provides resources and opportunities to artists for the creation of new lyric theater. AOP has led the contemporary opera movement for over thirty years through the commissioning, developing, and producing of new works, training programs for student and emerging composers and librettists, and community engagement. www.aopopera.org

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VOICES AND SOURCES

as they appear in the libretto

Nora Saltonstall, American, 1894-1919

Angèle Fournier, French (*dates unknown*)

Kathryn M. Johnson, American, 1878-1954

Käthe Russner, German, 1892- ?

Violet Asquith Bonham-Carter, British, 1887-1969

Marie Pireaud, French, 1892-1978

Kishan Devi, Indian, young Sikh girl from the Punjab region,
dates unknown

Violet Cecil, British, 1872-1958

Lucie Delarue-Mardus, French, 1874-1945

Anna Akhmatova, Russian, 1889-1966

Lida Gustava Heyman, German, 1868-1943

Anonymous, Malawian, *dates unknown*

Jessie Pope, British, 1868-1941

Sarojini Naidu, Indian, 1879-1949

Anonymous, British, *dates unknown*

Editorial from *The Gleaner*, a Kingston, Jamaica daily newspaper
founded 1832

May Sinclair, British, 1863-1946

Ellen La Motte, American, 1873-1961

Edith Sitwell, British, 1887-1964

Alice Dunbar-Nelson, American, 1875-1935

Laura Verity, British, *dates unknown*

Caroline Rennles, British, 1888-1985

Lilian Miles, British, *dates unknown*

Kathleen Gilbert, British, *dates unknown*

Anonymous, Irish, *dates unknown*

May Wedderburn Cannan, British, 1893-1973

Käthe Kollwitz, German, 1867-1945

Anonymous, Indian, *dates unknown*

Dorothy Parker, American, 1893-1967

Elizabeth Lazenby, American, *dates unknown*

Sara Teasdale, American, 1884-1933



LIBRETTO

TIME: 1914-1918

THE FIRST song (*Dear Alice*) introduces all the voices; the second song (*L'Odeur de Mon Pays*) sets the scene of the French bucolic pre-war countryside that will be destroyed during four years of fighting. The final song (*There Will Come Soft Rains*) reminds us that ultimately the earth will reclaim and heal itself from men's wanton destruction.

Dear Alice

Woman 3 Dear Alice...

Woman 4 My dear Father,
I must write you a few lines...

Woman 3 Dear Alice...

Woman 4 ...even though I could drop with weariness.

Woman 2 My beloved Paul,
Take care of yourself so that nothing will happen to you...

Woman 4 Dear family,
The devastated country is much more strange and fantastic
on a sunny day...

Woman 5 Memories will ever crowd the mind and cause the eye
to kindle...

Woman 1 Charles,
Yesterday Sunday I was at Meaux, hoping always to see
you arrive...

Woman 3 Dear Alice...

Woman 1 ...disappointed hope. I was forced to go away, it was bad luck
that you were not able to come.

Woman 6 Dear Father, this is Kishan Devi. We were really scared after
receiving your letter...

Woman 3 If you could see me in my dirty clothes dashing around
doing errands, scrubbing, you would not think me the
model heroine.

Woman 4 I understand too well how strongly you feel about the fate of our fatherland. Only our patients, in their awful agony, yearn for one thing, peace –

Woman 1 The luck of there being such an adventure left in the world! and you there to have it –

Woman 6 Father, I shall read all your letters. I do not fight with anyone. My heart is yours...

Woman 5 To represent the womanhood of our race in America – these fine mothers, wives, sisters and friends who gave the flower of their young manhood to the ravages of war.

Woman 3 The light on the piles of bricks, the half standing houses, the stretches of bleak fields full of trenches and wires –

Woman 1 Violet passed on news from George: He said that up to date it had all been the most glorious fun.

Woman 6 Dear Father, please take leave and come to meet us. Please do come. We repeat again and again. We do not have any more envelopes.

Woman 3 How I would like to be able to go and find you and bring you back with me... when will this war end which causes so many tears.

Woman 2 Things are hopping in Paris. The women are rebelling. Let's hope that will do some good and above all bring the end –

Woman 4 Why then the sacrifice of all these lives? Father, father can this truly be the will of God?

L'Odeur de Mon Pays

Woman 1 The scent of my country was in an apple.
I have bitten it, with eyes fully closed,
to imagine myself standing in a green meadow.
The shadows of the poplars are long rays;
I heard the sounds of birds filling the hedgerows.
To eat, with eyes closed, the plump apple
from your meadows, bountiful Normandie.
Ah! I will never be cured of my country!
And who ever has been cured of her youth?

ENSEMBLE Rilla of Ingleside

Woman 5 What was your dream?

Woman 2 I was standing on the veranda steps, looking down over the fields of the Glen.

Woman 6 All at once, far in the distance, I saw a long, silvery, glistening wave. It came nearer and nearer – just a succession of little white waves like those that break on the sandshore.

Woman 1 The Glen was being swallowed up. I thought 'Surely the waves will not come near Ingleside' – but before I could move or call they were breaking right at my feet.

Woman 3 And everything was gone – there was nothing but a waste of stormy water.

Woman 4 I tried to draw back – and I saw that the edge of my dress was wet with blood – and I woke – shivering.

In Memoriam, July 19, 1914

Woman 4 We aged a hundred years and this descended
In just one hour, as at a stroke.
The summer had been brief and now was ended;
The body of the ploughed plains lay in smoke.

The hushed road burst in colors then, a soaring
Lament rose, ringing silver like a bell.
And so I covered up my face, imploring
God to destroy me before battle fell.

Women of Europe

Woman 2 Women of Europe, when will your call ring out?
Summer's glory was shattered by lightning –
The lightning of the most frightful of all wars.
Millions of women's hearts blaze up in anguish.
Women of Europe, where is your voice?
Are you only great in patience and suffering?
Women of Europe, where is your voice that should be sowing
seeds of peace?

Folksong, Karonga

Woman 5 At Karonga
People perished there, at Karonga.
Why did they perish?

At Karonga
People perished there, at Karonga.
Why did people perish
At Karonga?

Young men died there.
Why did people die?

Socks

Woman 3 Shining pins that dart and click
In the fireside's sheltered peace
Check the thoughts that cluster thick -
20 plain and then decrease.

He was brave – well, so was I –
Keen and merry, but his lip
Quivered when he said good-bye –
Purl the seam-stitch, purl and slip.

Never used to living rough,
Lots of things he'd got to learn;
Wonder if he's warm enough –
Knit 2, catch 2, knit 1, turn.

Wonder if he's fighting now,
What he's done an' where he's been;
He'll come out on top somehow –
Slip 1, knit 2, purl 14.

The Gift of India

Woman 6 Lo! I have flung to the East and West
Priceless treasures torn from my breast,
And yielded the sons of my stricken womb
To the drum-beats of duty, the sabres of doom.

Scattered like shells on Egyptian sands,
They lie with pale brows and brave, broken hands,
They are strewn like blossoms mown down by chance
On the blood-brown meadows of Flanders and France.

When your love shall offer memorial thanks
To the comrades who fought in your dauntless ranks,
And you honour the deeds of the deathless ones,
Remember the blood of my martyred sons!

Dear Jack

Woman 1 My dear Jack,
Everything must be over between us.
Write back as soon as you can to say you forgive me Jack!
Shall wait impatiently for your answer.
All at home send their love to you.
Trusting this will find you in the best of health,
I remain,
Very Sincerely Yours
Ivy

ENSEMBLE Not Only An Army Fights!

Woman 5 Not only an army fights!
A whole nation must actively fight!
We are all in the same boat,
we share the same risks.
Women must take the place of the men
in doing real army work.
Let us be thankful, we still have our two hands.
Let us be thankful, and use them.

Woman 1 We go along a highway of grey stones,
through green fields and lines of trees
flung out as a screen against the sky.
The very expression of peace –
An immense quiet and serenity –
It is all unspeakably beautiful.
I am going straight into the horror of war.

Woman 2 If there is horror here you are not aware of it as horror.
From the moment the doors close behind you,
you are in another world...
Before these multiplied forms of anguish,
what you feel –
if there is anything of you left to feel –
is not pity, it is so near adoration.
If you are tired of the burden of self,
go into these great wards.
You will find instant release.
Their torment is your peace.

Woman 6 I have known every sound of his voice
I have known every line of his face
and every tuft of beard on his chin.
No other measure of time
than the rhythm of his breathing,
no mark or sign of time
than the crescent of his eyelashes.

And I have known these things so long –
I have known these things so long –
I have known these things so long –
Like a separate wound in my memory.

Woman 3 No one was fond of Rochard:
he had only been there a few hours.
He meant nothing to any one there.
So Rochard died
a stranger among strangers.
Many people to wait upon him,
but no one there to love him.

All We had 368;
200 seriously wounded –
Bleeding faster than we could cope with it –
200 dangerously wounded,
We had 368;
We were full up by 2 a.m.,
a collision up the line,
the line was blocked by dead horses.
We had 368;
All night we grappled with them.
Two were dying at St Omer;
without a break we grappled with them.
We had 368;
Bleeding faster than we could cope with it –
Two were dying at St Omer,
But we kept the rest alive
We kept the rest alive
We kept the rest alive to Boulogne.

The Dancers

Woman 4 The floors are slippery with blood:
The world gyrates too. God is good
That while His wind blows out the light
For those who hourly die for us –
We still can dance, each night.
The music has grown numb with death –
But we will suck their dying breath,
The whispered name they breathed to chance,
To swell our music, make it loud
That we may dance, - may dance.
We are the dull blind carrion-fly
That dance and batten. Though God die
Mad from the horror of the light –
The light is mad, too, flecked with blood, –
We dance, we dance, each night.

I Sit and Sew

Woman 5 I sit and sew – a useless task it seems,
My hands grown tired, my head weighed down with dreams –
The little useless seam, the idle patch;
Why dream I here beneath my homely thatch,
When there they lie in sodden mud and rain,
Pitifully calling me, the quick ones and the slain?
You need me, Christ! It is no roseate dream
That beckons me—this pretty futile seam,
It stifles me—God, must I sit and sew?

ENSEMBLE **War Girls**

Woman 6 There's the girl who clips your ticket for the train

Woman 3 And the girl who speeds the lift from floor to floor

Woman 1 There's the girl who does a milk-round in the rai,

Woman 4 And the girl who calls for orders at your door.

All Strong, sensible, and fit,
They're out to show their grit,
And tackle jobs with energy and knack.
No longer caged and penned up,
They're going to keep their end up
Till the khaki soldier boys come marching back.

ENSEMBLE **Bright Yellow Faces**

Woman 6 Well I'd got this bad throat, you see,
and the doctor,
he said it was some kind of poisoning.
Well, you see,
they used a lot of asbestos at Bray's.

Woman 2 Well of course we all had bright yellow faces, you see,
'cos we had no gas masks in those times and all our hair –
The manager used to say, 'Tuck that hair under!'
So it was all bright ginger, all our front hair, you know.
And all our faces were bright yellow – they used to call us
canaries.

Woman 5 Well she was ill.
She went to the doctor
and the doctor said that she was under the influence of
alcohol
because she was falling about,
couldn't hold herself up,

she was falling about.

So the doctor told her to come back again when she was
sober, he said.

Well, I said to him, I said,
'She doesn't drink.'

He said, 'Well,' he said, 'I think she was under the influence
of drink.'

And I said she wasn't.

I said, 'There's something wrong with her,' I said.

Woman 3 When I think now, my sister she said
it's a wonder you and me's living,
all that asbestos,
'cos all these nozzles and things were made of asbestos,
you know.
It used to lay on the floors.
You could see your footprints in it.

Woman 1 You filled up the gains.
Gains were like cartridges but bigger.
You filled them up with this black rock stuff.
And everyone turned yellow there.
And you washed so that the yellow came off,
but it was always in your system.

Woman 4 And of course she was only 19, she wasn't 20 –
she died before she was 20.
And so any rate, my landlady sent for a doctor
and they took her in the hospital.
She died in terrible agony.
She died in terrible pain.
They reckoned that black powder it burnt the back of her
throat away.
And the continual breathing of this black powder
it sort of burnt the back of her throat away.

Used to make you wonder, you see, and we were working
with it.

Salonika

Woman 3 My husband's in Salonika,
I wonder if he's dead.
I wonder if he knows he has
A kid with a foxy head.

And when the war is over
What will the slackers do?
They'll all be after the soldier boys
For the loan of a bob or two.

And when the war is over,
What will the soldiers do?
They'll hobble along on a leg and a half
But the slackers will have two.

When the Vision Dies

Woman 1 When the vision dies in the dust of the market place,
When the Light is dim,
When you lift up your eyes and cannot behold his face,
When your heart is far from him,

Know this is your war; in this loneliest hour you ride
Down the roads he knew;
Though he comes no more,
At night he will kneel at your side,
For comfort to dream with you.

Right and Left

Woman 2 Where are my children now?
What is left to their mother?
One boy to the right and one to the left,
My right son and my left son,
As they called themselves.
Where are my children now?
One dead and one so far away –

Punjabi Folk Song

Woman 6 May you never be enlisted,
You who have left me crying.
Married men win battles
Tell me, o foreigner,
Where is this written?
Take the bachelors to war,
Then the victory will be yours.

Penelope

Woman 5 In the pathway of the sun,
In the footsteps of the breeze,
Where the world and sky are one,
He shall ride the silver seas,
He shall cut the glittering wave.
I shall sit at home, and rock;
Rise, to heed a neighbor's knock;
Brew my tea, and snip my thread;
Bleach the linen for my bed.
They will call him brave.

Finally

Woman 4 Finally, when the end came,

When the end came,
Finally, when the end –
It took everyone's breath away.

From the old French woman in the village bakery,
To the grinning Tommy who passed you on the road –

Finally, when the end came –

Or even to the Germans in the camps
Who tossed their caps into the air,
No one could realize it.

When the end came,
Finally, finally –
It took everyone's breath away.

On the 11th day
Of the 11th month
“Hostilities ceased at 11am”

Finally, when –

A clerk brought the communiqué into the ward

Finally, finally,
That was all.

ENSEMBLE **There Will Come Soft Rains**

Woman 1 There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,

(with

Woman 4
joining)

And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,
And wild plum trees in tremulous white,
Robins will wear their feathery fire
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

All And not one will know of the war, not one
Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree
If mankind perished utterly;
And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,

Would scarcely know that we were gone.



THE EMBODIMENTS OF LETTERS

THE WORDS of real women, representing women's war experiences from many countries on both sides of the conflict, many social classes, and very different views on the war. (*Titles in parentheses denote the quoted songs from the opera.*)

MOTHERS

One who embraces the war, even after her only child is missing for months and then reported killed.

"Violet passed on news from George: he said that up 'til now it had all been the most glorious fun." (*Dear Alice*)

Another persuaded her husband to allow their youngest son to follow his older brother into the army and he was killed shortly thereafter.

"Where are my children now? What is left to their mother?" (*Right and Left*)

DAUGHTERS

Young women who volunteered as VADs (Voluntary Aid Detachments, or nurses' assistants) in theatres of war, and as ambulance drivers.

"Dear family, The devastated country is much more strange and fantastic on a sunny day." (*Dear Alice*)

OR a daughter trying to explain to her father even as she understands his support for the war, she sees its horrible reality daily as a nursing sister.

"I understand too well how strongly you feel about the fate of our fatherland. Only our patients, in their awful agony, yearn for one thing, peace – " (*Dear Alice*)

OR one young Punjabi girl who was too young to do anything but worry about her father.

"Dear Father, this is Kishan Devi. We were really scared after receiving your letter..." (*Dear Alice*)

WIVES

Women sitting at home, waiting for their husbands to return alive – whole (physically and mentally), or at least returning home as opposed to dying. Some knit "Shining pins that dart and lick" (*Socks*) almost frantically; others sew resignedly, bitterly, "I sit and sew – a useless task it seems." (*I Sit and Sew*)



A working class woman who views the war as one more way her life will be upended by forces beyond her control. “My husband’s in Salonika / I wonder if he’s dead.” (*Salonika*)

LOVERS AND FRIENDS AND SISTERS

At the war’s beginning, expressing enthusiasm for a friend’s volunteering, “The luck of there being such an adventure left in the world! And you there to have it – ” (*Dear Alice*)

OR the young fiancée back home who has tired of waiting for her soldier to return, “My dear Jack, Everything must be over between us. Write back as soon as you can to say you forgive me Jack!” (*Dear Jack*)

OR women who lost their lovers, “When you lift up your eyes and cannot behold his face, / When your heart is far from him.” (*When the Vision Dies*)

OR sisters whose brothers have gone off to war, “The Glen was being swallowed up. I thought ‘Surely the waves will not come near Ingleside’ – but before I could move or call they were breaking right at my feet.” (*Rilla of Ingleside*)

WOMEN OF COLOR

Women from Africa and India:

Africa, where men were taken into service by their imperial masters: “At Karonga / People perished there, at Karonga. / Why did they perish?” (*Folksong, Karonga*)

India, where women hoped the sacrifices made by Indian regiments would be rewarded by the end of the war by granting self-determination. “Remember the blood of my martyred sons!” (*The Gift of India*)

NURSES

Somewhat older career nurses who—if British—nursed during the Boer War, or American nurses who came from US civilian hospitals. “If there is horror here you are not aware of it as horror. From the moment the doors close behind you, you are in another world...” (*Not Only An Army Fights!*)

Career nurses who were recruiting in the Caribbean for overseas service. “Not only an army fights! A whole nation must fight!” (*Not Only An Army Fights!*)

Younger volunteers who had no previous nursing experience. “When the end came, Finally, when the end – It took everyone’s breath away.” (*Finally*)



MUNITIONS WORKERS

British working-class young girls in their late teens and early 20s. Paid less than their male counterparts, but making more money than any previous pre-war work.

Women who were quite simply cogs in the war machine whose health and welfare were never given a second thought. “Well I’d got this bad throat, you see, and the doctor, he said it was some kind of poisoning.” (*Bright Yellow Faces*)

Women who lost sisters who worked beside them in the factories, “...she died before she was 20...They reckoned the black powder it burnt the back of her throat away.” (*Bright Yellow Faces*)

WOMEN BEARING WITNESS

Black American women who bore witness to the racist policies and ongoing discrimination that Black American soldiers faced throughout the war. “To represent the womanhood of our race in America – these fine mothers, wives, sisters and friends who gave the flower of their young manhood to the ravages of war.” (*Dear Alice*)

European women who exhorted their sisters in the combatant nations to speak out against the war. “Women of Europe, when will your call ring out?” (*Women of Europe*)

Women who had to stand passively as their countries became engulfed in the conflict. “The summer had been brief and now was ended; / The body of the ploughed plains lay in smoke.” (*In Memoriam, July 19, 1914*)

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Punjabi Folk Song

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Penelope, Dorothy Parker

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