



Image credit: Louise Reimer

Summer Institute 2021

*Shoulder to Shoulder into the Fray:
The Resilient Women of Opera*

Virtual Binder

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Enduring Understandings

The arts can express and mirror a full range of human experience through the use of expressive language, music, drama, and visual symbolism.

The arts can teach us to remain courageous and resilient in the face of adversity.

The arts can both reflect and challenge important issues about the role of gender in society.

The arts and humanities are deeply interdisciplinary and can provide teachers with numerous access points to their subject matter.

Studying arts and humanities can help students to understand the culture and time period in which one or more works were created and our culture today.

Guiding Questions

1. Why opera? Why now?
2. How can opera provide a model for self-empowerment, collaboration and self-expression for our students?
3. What does opera reveal about the culture and time period in which it was created? What does opera reveal about our culture today?
4. How does opera teach us to remain courageous and resilient in the face of adversity?
5. In what ways does opera reflect and challenge important issues about the role of women in society?
6. How does opera's heightened emotional language mirror our internal emotional landscapes?

Welcome to Summer Institute

Dear friends,

The closing line in my 2020 annual report letter was: *Remember, the pandemic does not get the final word; rather, we get the final word in how we choose to live our lives in difficult and unfamiliar times.*

As the enormity of the pandemic emerged, the Muse staff with a supportive board reaffirmed the organization's core values of accessibility, inclusivity, social justice, equity and diversity and then pushed the boundaries of creativity to shape programs for the new virtual world. We led from the head and the heart. No matter where one stood, the importance of compassionate leadership came into sharp focus as the COVID-19 crisis moved through our lives. Day after day, compassionate leaders emerged to bravely face circumstances never experienced before.

Job descriptions and titles do not ensure compassionate leadership, but individuals who held onto to their deepest values and beliefs had a clear map through the challenges. From the custodians in our building to the board, artists, teachers, parents and staff, compassionate leaders emerged. Each day we strove to express hope, joy and creativity through our work and communications, even when we felt we had no more to give.

Often, in this letter, I highlight the importance of professional development, and the summer institute's focus, but not this year. The real story of this year is YOU! At a time of historic challenge, you showed love, kindness and true courage to your colleagues and students and their families. And that will never be forgotten.

As I recently wrote: *the arts get us to where we need to be mentally, physically and academically.* They also help us stay in touch with our spirituality (whatever that means to you). When we bring the arts into our teaching and our lives, we create the world in which we want to live in and we embrace our humanity even when life is hard.

Through this institute, let's give thanks and celebrate joyful teaching and learning. *Shoulder to shoulder, into the fray, the resilient teachers of Muse are changing the world for the better!*

Take a deep breath and exhale and let's enjoy learning together.



Mary Campbell Zopf
Executive Director

Overview of the Institute

Most important, the goal of the summer institute is to build a professional learning community where our teachers feel cared for and are brave learners. The institute focuses on creating a learner-centered environment where teachers share their unique voices with their peers as they work toward a strong foundation in creative knowledge and the skills needed to further their professional success as creative teachers. Over the years, our most successful summer institutes featured learner-centered educational practices:

INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGIES. We welcome diverse learners, including those who have no formal training in the arts or are not subject matter experts. Activities are grounded in collaboration, community building, personal exploration and sharing. These pedagogies are the same ones we hope to see in their classrooms as they find relevant ways to elevate 'student voice' in learning and the life of the school.

TIME TO CONNECT. Staff, artists and presenters work with our teachers individually, in small groups, and with larger class activities to help promote the dynamic, interactive, learning community that is at the heart of the summer institute.

ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE A PURPOSE. Learning experiences challenge our teachers in new ways that have a lasting impact, enhance their work with students and advance the overall theme of the institute and create a bridge to innovative and relevant curriculum and instructional practices.

Daily Learning Goals

Monday, July 19

1. Participants understand what makes opera operatic: themes, structure, music, characters and tone.
2. Participants explore tableaux, pantomime, text and subtext as the building blocks for opera creation.

Tuesday, July 20

1. Participants can explain connections between opera and societal issues, such as in *The Merry Widow* the representation of women's experience of marriage and marriage laws and customs.
2. Participants gain the skills to identify opera moments and create an original libretto for an aria.

Wednesday, July 21

1. Participants understand how music is used to define a character by examining the music in *Carmen*.
2. Participants see how opera can illuminate societal issues that characterize Carmen's life and status.
3. Participants understand how outsider status can be examined through opera and popular music from both a historic and a contemporary perspective.
4. Participants gain insight into the world of props, sets and visual design for the stage.

Thursday, July 22

1. Participants are prepared to draft a lesson and bring it to life in their classrooms with their students.
2. Participants understand how there are diverse contributors to opera in America.
3. Participants understand the contemporary forces that shape opera today.

Graduate Credit Opportunity

Our work with schools, teachers and students is grounded in theory, research, best practice and joyful learning. At the center of this work is a pedagogy that is arts-based and experiential and allows for the application of learning in a wide range of subject areas. Muse's aim is to strengthen the connection between the arts and the classroom through curriculum and instructional practice, so that students experience learning as a lifelong creative exploration and interdisciplinary process.

All institute participants are invited to create a lesson plan or infused new content into an existing lesson based on their institute experiences. **This year, teachers who intend to implement their lesson plan may earn three graduate-level credit hours from the University of Dayton, upon successful completion of all course requirements.** Our institute artists will return during the 2021-2022 school year to build upon our institute learning and join us in refining in-process lesson plans. As we have done in the past, a selection of exemplary lessons will be posted on the Muse website.

[Muse Machine's Lesson Plan Explanation & Template](#)

[Documentation of Learning Guide](#)

[Muse Machine's Experiential Learning Philosophy](#)

Presenter & Artist Biographies

Please refer to the [Summer Institute website](#) for expanded biographies.



Brandon Anderson is an award-winning singer/songwriter, composer/lyricist, devised theatre creator and teaching artist living in New York City. Brandon has extensive experience in arts education, teaching for the Metropolitan Opera Guild, Lincoln Center Theater and Tectonic Theater Project. Brandon is also the Artistic Director and Dramaturg for NYU's Tisch New Musical Theatre Workshop.



Angela Marroy Boerger is the Schools and Partnerships Manager at Arts Every Day in Baltimore. Boerger was formerly the Education Manager at the New York Metropolitan Opera, where she led the education curriculum for the Met's HD Live in Schools. She holds degrees from Yale in music history and degrees from Rice University in musicology and medieval studies.



Joel Esher is a composer and music educator currently living in New York City. Esher has worked as a teaching artist for the Metropolitan Opera Guild, Carnegie Hall, Disney Theatrical Group, the Metropolitan Opera, Dreamyard and Playwrights Horizons Theater School, among others. His work is grounded in improvisational comedy, which he has taught and/or performed with The Second City and ComedySportz among others.



Stuart Holt oversees all K-12 school and community/adult programming for the Metropolitan Opera Guild. He is an active lecturer, master teacher, stage director and resource in the field of opera education. Recent lecture appearances have included Manhattan School of Music, Opera America and the Met Opera HD in Schools program. He also appears as a cohost on The Metropolitan Opera Guild Podcast.



As founder and artistic director of the award-winning OperaCréole, **Givonna Joseph** has dedicated her career to researching and performing lost or rarely performed works by composers of African descent. Joseph's research has been featured in *The New Yorker*, *Southern Living* magazine and on NPR. In 2018 she created an original opera, *The Lions of Reconstruction: From Black Codes to the Ballot Box*, in honor of New Orleans' tricentennial.



Joe Valone is an opera singer and educator who has led numerous classroom residencies through the New York Metropolitan Opera and the Metropolitan Opera Guild. He was a featured presenter at the Met's National Educators' Conference from 2015-2018. Valone has performed principal roles with Opera North and Ohio Light Opera. Valone is currently the Manager of Major Gifts at the Metropolitan Opera.



Bishop Chantel R. Wright is an internationally celebrated touring artist, choir director, choral conductor, teaching artist and advocate. Committed to youth, Wright established The Songs of Solomon Academy for the Arts serving NYC students and lends her talents to the Steinhardt School of Music at NYU, Carnegie Hall's Musical Connections and the Metropolitan Opera's National Educator Conference.

Pre-Institute Preparation

- ✓ **Start your institute experience with music. Choose at least three to five clips from [Joe and Angela's curated and delightfully annotated list](#)** to familiarize yourself with some of opera's greatest heroines and divas.
- ✓ **Prepare your space for listening, writing, moving and a little bit of artmaking.** Organize your space so that you can have both a seated position in front of your screen and a place for notetaking. Decide how you will take notes. Keep on hand a pair of scissors, tape, blank paper and your choice of coloring utensils: markers, colored pencils or crayons.
- ✓ **For the best viewing experience, ensure you have the [current version of Zoom](#) installed on your preferred desktop or laptop.** *We do not recommend joining by mobile device because some sessions will rely on seeing multiple people at once.*
- ✓ **Session handouts and materials are listed with the session description.** If you registered by July 12, hard copies of handouts and some special supplies were mailed to you.
- ✓ **[We will be using a shared Google Drive \(no Google account is required\) where you can view, copy and download files.](#)** Sometimes you may be asked to contribute to a collaborative document on the Drive, which also does not require a Google account. Please reach out to Emily at emily@musemachine.com with any technology concerns.

EXTRA CREDIT

Enjoy *The Merry Widow* and *Carmen* on [Met Opera on Demand](#).

We will be referencing the 2015 production of *The Merry Widow* and the 2010 production of *Carmen* throughout the institute.

Opera Singer

By Ross Gay

Today my heart is so goddamned fat with grief
that I've begun hauling it in a wheelbarrow. No. It's an anvil
dragging from my neck as I swim
through choppy waters swollen with the putrid corpses of hippos,
which means lurking, somewhere below, is the hungry
snout of a croc waiting to spin me into an oblivion
worse than this run-on simile, which means only to say:
I'm sad. And everyone knows what that means.

And in my sadness I'll walk to a café,
and not see light in the trees, nor finger the bills in my pocket
as I pass the boarded houses on the block. No,
I will be slogging through the obscure country of my sadness
in all its monotone flourish, and so imagine my surprise
when my self-absorption gets usurped
by the sound of opera streaming from an open window,
and the sun peeks ever-so-slightly from behind his shawl,
and this singing is getting closer, so that I can hear the
delicately rolled r's like a hummingbird fluttering the tongue
which means a language more beautiful than my own,
and I don't recognize the song
though I'm jogging toward it and can hear the woman's
breathing through the record's imperfections and above me
two bluebirds dive and dart and a rogue mulberry branch
leaning over an abandoned lot drags itself across my face,
staining it purple and looking, now, like a mad warrior of glee

and relief I run down the street, and I forgot to mention
the fifty or so kids running behind me, some in diapers,
some barefoot, all of them winged and waving their pacifiers
and training wheels and nearly trampling me
when in a doorway I see a woman in slippers and a floral housedress
blowing in the warm breeze who is maybe seventy painting the doorway
and friends, it is not too much to say
it was heaven sailing from her mouth and all the fish in the sea
and giraffe saunter and sugar in my tea and the forgotten angles
of love and every name of the unborn and dead
from this abuelita only glancing at me
before turning back to her earnest work of brushstroke and lullaby
and because we all know the tongue's clumsy thudding
makes of miracles anecdotes let me stop here
and tell you I said thank you.



Day 1 – Monday, July 19

LEARNING GOALS:

1. Participants will understand what makes opera operatic: themes, structure, music, characters and tone.
2. Participants will explore tableaux, pantomime, text and subtext as the building blocks for opera creation.

	
<p>10:00-10:15 Conference Welcome: Setting the Stage Muse Machine Executive Director Mary Campbell Zopf introduces our conference's players and shines a focus on the foundational aims of our time together.</p>	
<p>10:15-10:45 Opening Circle In this high-spirited warmup, Bishop Chantel Wright will help us use our voices as well as movement in our journey towards embodying theatrical characters. Come ready to re-discover the thrill and vulnerability of performing as we learn the anthems of our conference. No previous vocal experience required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?" 	
<p>10:45-11:40 "Who Can Tell What the Hell [Operas] Are?" <i>The scene: A group of teachers meets over the summer, exhausted by the past school year and skeptical of opera as an educational tool. Can they be convinced that opera has something to say to them and their students?</i> Angela Marroy Boerger leads this introductory session which will disrupt your preconceived notions of opera and introduce the resilient women of opera whose voices ring out even today in timeless messages of strength.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text musemachine396 to 22333 once to join our polls 	
<p>11:40-12:40 Tableaux, Pantomime / Text, Subtext How can we use our bodies to communicate emotion? What does it mean to represent a story physically? Presenter Givonna Joseph will lead an exploration of the theatrical techniques of tableau and pantomime as we begin the imaginative work of physicalizing the texts and subtexts of operatic and historic characters.</p>	

12:40-12:50**Rest Break****12:50-1:05****Guided Reflection: Lesson Planning****Moderator: Joel Esher****Materials: Blank paper, pencil or pen, highlighter**

Reflective time to begin making preliminary notes on potential applications of our work in your classroom:

- Make a list of 10 things from this morning that you found interesting.
- Highlight four that you could turn into a lesson.
- Circle two that you want to develop further.

1:05-1:35**Lunch****1:35-2:30****Opera Creation Breakouts****Counselors: Givonna Joseph, Brandon Anderson, Joel Esher, Joe Valone**

In our breakout sessions for Day 1, groups will begin to develop an original operatic moment, inspired by a historic photo and research prompt. Through group discussion and improvised tableaux, groups will work towards developing the emotional world and physical representation of an imagined character.

2:30-2:50**Closing Circle**

Brandon Anderson will lead the group in a reflective and expressive exercise using our new expertise in tableaux. We will round out our circle time with a refrain of our conference anthem.

2:50-3:00**Housekeeping**

Reviews and reminders before we adjourn for the day.

Requested Preparation for Tuesday

1. Fill out [Day 1 Check-in survey](#).
2. (Afternoon groups) [Write two lines of text and two lines of subtext for your character](#). Add your notes to your group's shared Day 1 homework file.
3. Read [The Merry Widow illustrated synopsis](#) (courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera).
4. Read [Women's Suffrage Pro or Con?](#) Highlight lines or moments that tell you something about the speaker or otherwise stand out.
5. Skim Stuart Holt's [libretto handout](#).

DAY 1 SUPPLEMENTS

[The Music Instinct \(PBS\): Music and Human Physiology \(YouTube video\)](#)

[I'm Ida B. Wells's Great-Granddaughter, and I'm Still Fighting Her Fight for the Vote](#) by Michelle Duster for TIME Magazine.

Day 2 – Tuesday, July 20

LEARNING GOALS:

1. Participants can explain connections between opera and societal issues, such as in *The Merry Widow* the representation of women's experience of marriage and marriage laws and customs.
2. Participants will gain the skills to identify opera moments and create an original libretto for an aria.



10:00-10:15

Musical Welcome

Moderator: Angela Marroy Boerger

Materials: Blank paper, colored pencils or markers

Welcome to Day 2! We will begin the day with a brief exercise in musico-visual improvisation.

10:15-10:45

Opening Circle

Bishop Wright will spark our creative energy in today's Opening Circle, which will focus on using articulation and breath to clarify a text using our bodies and voices as vehicles of communication.

- ["Will the Circle Be Unbroken?"](#)
- ["I Need You to Survive"](#)

10:45-11:40

The Libretto Writing Toolbox

Stuart Holt, Director of School Programs and Community Outreach for the Metropolitan Opera Guild, will introduce five literary tools that support the creation of an operatic text, or "libretto." Following a brief study of "The Ladies' Choice" from *The Merry Widow*, we will imagine Hannah's expressive response. The activity will culminate in the creation of an aria in the voice of Hannah.

- [Libretto Toolbox Handout](#)

11:40-11:50

Rest Break

11:50-12:10

Alternative Representations of Learning

Moderator: Angela Marroy Boerger

Materials: sash, construction paper, scissors; tape, glue any craft/art supplies you already have

Participants will internalize the character of Hannah or Valencienne and create a suffragette-style sash that declares their own "sentiments."

12:10-1:00**"Dear Hannah": A Speech Writing Activity**

Brandon will lead the group in a study of two 20th-century women leaders from Dayton and their differing views on women's suffrage. Inspired by these primary source documents, we will then break out into groups and compose a speech in the voice of one of these historical figures, advising Hannah on whether she should consider remarrying.

- [Women's Suffrage Pro or Con? Handout](#)

1:00-1:30**Lunch****1:30-2:25****Opera Creation Breakouts****Counselors: Givonna Joseph, Brandon Anderson, Joel Esher, Joe Valone**

In our work group breakout sessions, groups will create a 4- or 8-line "libretto" using their chosen primary source image and original character development, using lessons learned from the Libretto Writer's Toolbox.

2:25-2:40**Guided Reflection: Lesson Planning****Moderator: Givonna Joseph****Materials: Blank paper, pencil or pen**

In these partner-based small breakouts, participants will reflect on ways that you can mine your curriculum for ways to express learning through opera:

- List 5 primary sources in your curriculum that you could mine for contemporary or historical social issues.
- What are those issues? Identify them next to each source.
- Who are the characters who could have something to say operatically about those issues?
- Share and discuss with your breakout partner.

2:40-2:50**Closing Circle**

Joel will lead us in an exercise in sharing, breathing and singing.

2:50-3:00**Housekeeping**

Reviews and reminders before we adjourn for the day.

Requested Preparation for Wednesday

1. Answer the [Day 2 Check-In survey](#).
2. (Afternoon groups) Come up with five adjectives to describe how your group's piece will sound when set to music. Add your notes to your group's shared Day 2 homework file.
3. Read [Carmen illustrated synopsis](#) & ["The World of the Roma" culture spotlight](#) (courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera).
4. Assemble your 3x3x3 box (included in care package) or find a small cardboard box.
5. Optional: [Watch Joel's 20-minute Band Lab tutorial](#).

Day 3—Wednesday, July 21

LEARNING GOALS:

1. Participants understand how music is used to define a character by examining the music in *Carmen*.
2. Participants see how opera can illuminate societal issues that characterize Carmen's life and status.
3. Participants understand how outsider status can be examined through opera and popular music from both a historic and a contemporary perspective.
4. Participants gain insight into the world of props, sets and visual design for the stage.

SCHEDULE

Photo credit: Met Opera, Ken Howard

10:00-10:15

Musical Welcome

Moderator: Angela Marroy Boerger

Materials: Blank paper, colored pencils or markers

Day 3 will begin with a new exercise in emotive and musical improvisation.

10:15-10:45

Opening Circle

Bishop Wright will help us to confront our internal and external "noise," and discover that our gifts can be put into service through music.

- ["Will the Circle Be Unbroken?"](#)
- ["I Need You to Survive"](#)
- "This Little Light of Mine"

10:45-11:35

The Musical Character of Freedom

In opera, the music tells the audience what the characters are feeling more than the text. **Joe Valone** will guide us through the musical language in *Carmen*, examining the musical anatomy that comprises the opera and sets the titular character apart from her counterparts on stage. We will also trace Bizet's use of musical motifs as Carmen's fate taunts her from the opening prelude to the final scene. We will conclude by applying our musical analysis tools to dive into a current musical example that brings operatic language to popular culture, highlighting our current societal struggles.

- [Musical Anatomy worksheets](#)
- [Fate Motif Score](#)

11:35-11:45**Rest Break****11:45-12:35****Composition LIVE**

Joel Esher will introduce participants to easy tools that every teacher can use to compose original music. Using accessible resources such as Zoom Whiteboard and Band Lab, as well as non-standard notation, Joel will break down composition into a series of approachable elements (Rhythm, Pitch, Dynamics, Articulation, Emotive word-sounds, and/or repetition) to capture expressive moments in song.

- [Composer's Toolbox](#)

12:35-1:10**Conversation with Buist Bickley**

Angela interviews Broadway props supervisor Buist Bickley, about his design work and how he uses visual storytelling to amplify theatrical narratives. One of Broadway's most in-demand props supervisors, Buist brings a wealth of experience on shows ranging from *Dear Evan Hansen* to *SpongeBob SquarePants*.

1:10-1:40**Lunch****1:40-2:35****Opera Creation Breakouts****Counselors: Givonna Joseph, Brandon Anderson, Joel Esher, Joe Valone**

In our group sessions for Day 3, groups will apply Joel's composition toolbox to add musical flavor to their libretto-in-development. Participants will continue to refine their choices of characterization through tableaux, visual elements, and possible musical accompaniment.

2:35-2:50**Alternative Representations of Learning****Moderator: Angela Marroy Boerger****Materials: Box, household items**

This fast-paced creative response begins with a household scavenger hunt and culminates in the design of a "touch box" inspired by participants' understanding of the character of Carmen.

2:50-3:00**Closing Circle & Housekeeping**

Joe will lead us in an exercise in sharing, breathing and singing.

Requested Preparation for Thursday

1. Answer the [Day 3 Check-In survey](#).
2. Find or make at least one prop and costume piece.
3. Finish recording in Band Lab if necessary.
4. Complete your sash.
5. Complete your touch box.

Day 4 – Thursday, July 22

LEARNING GOALS:

1. Participants are prepared to draft a lesson and bring it to life in their classrooms.
2. Participants understand how there are diverse contributors to opera in America.
3. Participants understand the contemporary forces that shape opera today.



10:00-10:15

Musical Welcome

Moderator: Angela Marroy Boerger

Materials: Blank paper, colored pencils or markers

Our final musical welcome will bring together the skills and sensitivities we have developed during our time together in a musically inspired production design.

- [Proscenium Stage Handout](#)

10:15-10:45

Opening Circle

In our final opening circle, Bishop Wright will bring together our work and model intentionality. She will teach us how to empower our students to be their best selves, both as individuals and as music makers.

10:45-11:30

The Work of OperaCréole with Givonna Joseph

Opera and classical music in New Orleans and around the world have always included the contributions of persons of color. Since the 19th century, Creoles of New Orleans have made contributions to the music and culture of New Orleans. It is their participation in opera, as well as the music of Africa, Spain, and Haiti that contributed to the birth of jazz.

The non-profit, award-winning company OperaCréole, founded in 2011 by the mother and daughter team of Givonna Joseph and Aria Mason, is dedicated to researching and performing lost or rarely performed works by composers of African descent. The company focuses in particular on works by 19th-century New Orleans free composers of color, and toward preserving and promoting Creole language and culture.

11:30-1:00

Opera Creation Group Rehearsal

Counselors: Givonna Joseph, Brandon Anderson, Joel Esher, Joe Valone

Our final group breakout sessions will focus on refining our opera creations and making strong decisions about how to perform or present them later this afternoon. Our teaching artists will guide the groups' work and affirm participants for everything they have accomplished in our short time together.

<p>1:00-1:30 Lunch</p>
<p>1:30-2:15 Group Shares Moderator: Joe Valone</p> <p>Joe will refocus our energy following lunch and set the stage for our Group Shares. We will acknowledge our vulnerability as new opera performers and affirm our conference as a safe space for developing new skills.</p>
<p>2:15-3:00 Closing Circle</p> <p>Bishop Wright will lead us in a closing circle. Our voices and minds will ring with our conference refrain as we draw our creative spirits together and reflect on our operatic journey while setting intentions for the work to come.</p>
<p>3:00-4:00 Happy Hour</p> <p>Join us for an optional after-hours virtual gathering to share camaraderie, anecdotes, observations and final thoughts.</p>
<p>8:30-10:00 (90 min.) Road trip to Cincinnati Opera's <i>Carmen</i></p> <p>This outdoor performance at Summit Park in Blue Ash, Ohio, features an all-star cast including J'Nai Brugger as Carmen, Stephen Costello as Don José, Janai Bridges as Micaëla, and Christian Pursell as Escamillo. (Participants who RSVPed for this trip will receive their tickets and bus information by email.)</p>

DAY 4 SUPPLEMENTS

[The Redoing of Women](#) by Heidi Waleson for OPERA America.

[Women Are Making Opera. And It's Not Easy.](#) by William Robin for The New York Times.

Met HD Live in Schools Program



Muse Machine is the first nonprofit organization in the country to partner with the Metropolitan Opera in New York City for the HD Live in Schools program. Muse Machine student members and their advisors can experience an interactive pre-opera workshop and then attend a live-streamed Met Opera performance at a local Miami Valley movie theater. From workshops to snacks to tickets, this program is entirely FREE to Muse members and schools!

Workshops occur at Muse Machine on the morning of the opera or may be scheduled at a school during the preceding week. These workshops make the elements of opera and theater accessible and compelling and give students and teachers the opportunity to socialize in a Muse community. Middle school Muse members called their first HD Live in Schools opera experience “beautiful and inspiring” and “amazingly awesome!”

To participate or for more information, visit www.musemachine.com

Participant Directory

Christy Barker
Huber Heights City Schools
Grades: 9-12
Subjects: Drama

Robin Blathers
Miamisburg Middle School
Grades: 8th
Subjects: ELA/Social Studies

Angela Bruno
Trotwood-Madison City Schools
Grades: 9-12
Subjects: Choir, piano

Becky Davis
Northmont High School
Grades: 7-12
Subjects: Language Arts

Lula Elzy
Muse Machine
Resident Choreographer

Emily Fink
Chaminade Julianne High School
Grades: 9-12
Subjects: French

Willie Freeman
Continuing Education
Grades: PreK-12
Subjects: Social Studies, Language Arts

Claire Greene
Music Academy of Centerville
Grades: Birth - Adults
Subjects: Harp, Piano, Music Theory, Music History

Jacquelyn Jenkinson
Fairlawn Local Schools
Grades: K-12
Subjects: Music and Band

Jaime Blair
Wogaman Middle School
Grades: 7-8
Subjects: ELA/Math

Robin Brown
Muse Machine
Secondary Schools Scheduler

Mary Campbell Zopf
Muse Machine
Executive Director

Michael Doll
Northridge Local Schools
Grades: 9-12
Subjects: Math/Gen ed

Janet Ferguson
Northmont Middle School
Grades: 7-8
Subjects: School Counselor

Tamar Fishbein
Ponitz Career Technology Center
Grades: 9-12
Subjects: English Language Arts

Emily Gray
Muse Machine
Secondary Schools Program Director

Pamela Jacobs
West Carrollton High School
Grades: 9-12
Subjects: English

Shannon Kernan
Wayne High School
Grades: 9-12
Subjects: English/Drama

Rachel Kline
Winton Hills Academy ES / Bond Hill Academy
ES
Grades: K-6
Subjects: General Music

Michael Lippert
Muse Machine
Preschool & Elementary Program Director

April Malone
Wogaman Middle School
Grades: 6-8
Subjects: ELA

Audrey Miller
Archbishop Alter High School
Grades: 10-12
Subjects: English, Speech

Eric Neuenschwander
Reynoldsburg City Schools
Grades: 5-8
Subjects: Music

Michael Sikes
Evaluation Consultant

Lorrie Sparrow-Knapp
Yellow Springs High School / McKinney Middle
School
Grades: 7-12
Subjects: Middle School Performance, Acting
and Text Analysis, Stage Crafts, Choir

Becky Suhr
Incarnation School
Grades: Pre-K, K, 5-8
Subjects: General Music & Band

Milena Treer
Dayton Performing Arts Alliance
Artistic Administrator - Opera

Lauren Komorowski
Miamisburg High School
Grades: 9-12
Subjects: English, Public Speaking,
Theater, Film

Marjorie Loyacano
Dixie Middle School
Grades: 4-8
Subjects: Gifted/ELA-based

Elizabeth Maxson
Fairlawn High School
Grades: 9-12
Subjects: English

Erin Mullarkey-Curliss
Trebein Elementary School
Grades: 2nd
Subjects: all academic content areas

Ruth Reveal
Dayton Performing Arts Alliance
Director of Education

Hannah Snow
Mad River Local Schools
Grades: 5-6
Subjects: Special Education

Ida Stevenson
Northridge Local Schools
Grades: 2nd
Subjects: Reading

Christina Suppo
Northridge Local Schools
Grades: 5-12
Subjects: Music/Choir/Drama

Carolyn Wheeler
Former Muse Consultant (Retired)

Karen Wilson
Montgomery County Educational Service Center
(MCESC)

Grades: K-8

Subjects: Social and Emotional Learning

Jolene Young
Edwin Joel Brown Middle School

Grades: 7-8

Subjects: Counselor

Lara Wolford
Bethel Local Schools

Grades: 6-12

Subjects: Choir, World Music, Musical
Theatre/Drama

Opera, Music, & Dynamic Women who Challenged Conventions

Suggested Reading for Children Pre-K - Grade 5



Nothing Stopped Sophie by Cheryl Bardoe

Sophie Germain, who grew up during the French Revolution, followed her dream of studying mathematics, and would go on to change the world with her discoveries and be the first woman to win a grand prize from the Royal Academy of Sciences.

The Haunted Opera: A Marie-Grace Mystery by Sarah Buckey

Marie-Grace is excited about her aunt getting a role and meeting opera stars when a well-known English opera company comes to perform at the same theater she takes singing lessons at, but thrills turn to chills as she makes disturbing discoveries.

Shirley Chisholm is a Verb! by Veronica Chambers

A picture book biography celebrating the life and contributions of Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman in Congress, who sought the Democratic nomination for President of the United States.

Ruth Bader Ginsberg by Rose Davidson

Only the second woman to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States, Ginsberg was famous for her opinions on gender discrimination and equality, her strong work ethic, and her love of opera.

Dancing Hands: How Teresa Carreño Played the Piano for President Lincoln by Margarita Engle

Looks at the life and accomplishments of Teresa Carreño, one of the most famous pianist who, by age nine, performed for President Abraham Lincoln at the White House.

Mama Africa! How Miriam Makeba Spread Hope with her Song by Kathryn Erskine

A biography of civil rights activist and Grammy Award winning South African singer Miriam Makeba.

Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls: 100 Tales of Extraordinary Women by Elena Favilli

One hundred inspiring stories of heroic women, from Elizabeth I to Serena Williams.

Strange Fruit: Billie Holiday and the Power of a Protest Song by Gary Golio

A book that speaks to the power that art and music have to address injustice, it puts the challenges Billie Holiday faced and the racial tensions of the era into historical context for a 3rd to 5th grade audience.

Ada's Violin: The Story of the Recycled Orchestra of Paraguay by Susan Hood

A true tale of a children's orchestra with instruments built from recycled trash. Ada Ríos grew up in Cateura, a small Paraguayan town built on a landfill. When Favio Chávez, an engineer and amateur musician, came to town and offered free music lessons to the children, the children and their families had to get creative and make their own homemade instruments from what they could find.

Saving American Beach: The Biography of African American Environmentalist MaVynee Betsch
by Heidi Tyline King

This biography is about MaVynee Betsch, a Black opera singer and environmentalist who devoted herself to protecting and maintaining American Beach in Florida, which her great-grandfather bought during the Jim Crow era to make open to everyone.

Who was Maya Angelou? by Ellen Labrecque

Maya Angelou was a professional opera star and calypso dancer in her twenties before becoming an internationally acclaimed poet.

Selena: Queen of Tejano Music by Silva Lopez

Selena Quintanilla's music career began at the age of nine, when she started singing in her family's band. And although people said she'd never make it in Tejano music, which was dominated by male performers, Selena was determined to prove them wrong.

Operatic by Kyo Maclear

It's almost the end of middle school and Charlie has to find her perfect song for a music class assignment. She learns about opera and is inspired by Maria Callas and her ability to express herself fully through her music. Can she follow Maria Callas' example?

Marian Anderson: A Great Singer by Pat McKissack

In a much-admired career that began with her church choir, Anderson went on to sing in many places, both in the United States and abroad, breaking new ground for African Americans who came after her.

Brave Ballerina: The Story of Janet Collins by Michelle Meadows

The story of the first African American prima ballerina in the Metropolitan Opera, during a time when racial segregation was widespread in the United States.

Born to Swing: Lil Hardin Armstrong's Life in Jazz by Mara Rockliff

At a time when women's only place in jazz was in front of a microphone, Lil played piano in Chicago's hottest band. She went on to be an acclaimed composer and bandleader alongside many of the great early jazz musicians.

Lights! Camera! Alice! The Thrilling True Adventures of the First Woman Filmmaker
by Mara Rockliff

Alice Guy-Blache made some of the very first (and most exciting) movies. She saw a potential in film that others had not, allowing her to develop new narratives, camera angles, and techniques, surprising her audiences again and again.

When Marian Sang. The True Recital of Marian Anderson
by Pam Munoz Ryan

This picture book biography of Marian Anderson, the first African American to perform at the Metropolitan Opera, emphasizes the impact her voice had on her audiences and her determination to follow her dreams in the face of racism that often closed doors before her and denied her opportunities during the Jim Crow era.

Trailblazer: The Story of Ballerina Raven Wilkinson
by Leda Schubert

Raven Wilkinson was the first African American ballerina to dance with a major American troupe, performed regularly with the New York City Opera until age fifty, and became an inspiration to Misty Copeland.

***The Girl Who Drew Butterflies* by Joyce Sidman**

A biography of Maria Merian, who discovered the truth about metamorphosis and documented the science in beautiful original paintings.

***Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race* by Margot Lee Shetterly**

Explores the pivotal contributions four black women mathematicians made to NASA's space program in spite of Jim Crow era injustices.

***Ella Fitzgerald: A Twentieth-Century Life* by Tanya Lee Stone**

Called the First Lady of Song, Ella Fitzgerald was an intensely-private person who often seemed more comfortable on stage than off. This biography delivers some never-before-published details about her life, sharing Fitzgerald's strong work ethic and interesting details about her life and career with readers.

***Danza! Amalia Hernández and el Ballet Folklórico de México* by Duncan Tonatiuh**

A famous dancer and choreographer, Amalia Hernández founded her own dance company, where she integrated her own knowledge of ballet and modern dance with folkloric dance.

***First Girl Scout: The Life of Juliette Gordon Low* by Ginger Wadsworth**

Juliette Gordon Low founded the first national organization to bring girls of all backgrounds into the outdoors. At a time when most girls were seen as having futures as homemakers, Low encouraged them to prepare for professional roles in the sciences, arts, business and more.

***The Legendary Miss Lena Horne* by Carole Boston Weatherford**

A biography of actress and civil rights activist Lena Horne, chronicling her childhood, early years in vaudeville, and her achievements as the first African American actress to be offered a studio contract.

***Leontyne Price: Voice of a Century* by Carole Boston Weatherford**

Inspired by her school trip to hear Marian Anderson sing a recital in Jackson, Mississippi, Leontyne Price decided that she wanted to, in her words, "walk like that, look like that, and if possible, sound something near that." She went on to become an acclaimed opera star in the 1950's and 60's.

***Elizabeth Warren: Nevertheless, She Persisted* by Susan Wood**

A biography of Elizabeth Warren, the first female senator from Massachusetts, this book highlights the importance of being outspoken, and of fighting with words for both yourself and those who need your help.

***In One Ear and Out the Other: Antonia Bruckner & Her Amazingly Musical Life* by Diane Worthey**

The story of one woman's fight to gain recognition as a conductor in an era when men dominated classical music. Her contributions paved the way for the many women conductors to follow.



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Opera, Music, & Dynamic Women who Challenged Conventions

Suggested Reading for Teens



Amazing Women of the Middle East: 25 Stories from Ancient Times to Present Day

by Tarnowska Wafa'

Discover Sheherazade, the famous storyteller, dive into the musical world of the beautiful singer Fairuz and meet Amal Clooney, an outstanding international lawyer. Feel inspired by twenty-five amazing women from the Middle East, who have created a legacy through strength of vision, leadership, courage, and determination.

Bessie Stringfield: Tales of the Talented Tenth

by Joel Christian Gill

Bessie Stringfield, the woman known today as The Motorcycle Queen of Miami and the first black woman to be inducted into the American Motorcyclist Association Hall of Fame and the Harley Davidson Hall of Fame. Stringfield was a pioneer in motorcycling during her lifetime; she rode as a civilian courier for the US military and founded the Iron Horse Motorcycle Club in Miami, all while confronting and overcoming Jim Crow in every ride.

Coco Chanel: Pearls, Perfume, and the Little Black Dress

by Susan Goldman Rubin

Beginning with the difficult years Chanel spent in an orphanage, Goldman Rubin traces Coco's development as a designer and demonstrates how her determination to be independent helped her gain worldwide recognition. Coco Chanel focuses on the obstacles Chanel faced as a financially independent woman in an era when women were expected to marry.

Finish The Fight!: The Brave and Revolutionary Women Who Fought for the Right To Vote

by Veronica Chambers

Tells the untold story of the diverse women who helped lead the fight for women's right to vote.

High Note by Jeff Ross

When Crissy, an aspiring singer, talks Hailey into joining her choir so that they can spend more time together, Crissy has no idea that Hailey will be so good. But that skill becomes a problem when they find themselves facing off in an audition for the role of a lifetime: a starring soloist piece in a reputable local opera production of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World

by Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai was only ten years old when the Taliban took control of her region. They said music was a crime. They said women weren't allowed to go to the market. They said girls couldn't go to school. Raised in a once-peaceful area of Pakistan transformed by terrorism, Malala was taught to stand up for what she believes. So she fought for her right to be educated. And on October 9, 2012, she nearly lost her life for the cause: She was shot point-blank while riding the bus on her way home from school. No one expected her to survive. Now Malala is an international symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest ever Nobel Peace Prize winner.

***Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina* by Misty Copeland**

When Misty Copeland first placed her hands on the ballet barre at an after-school community centre, no one expected the undersized, underprivileged and anxious thirteen-year-old to become one of America's most groundbreaking dancers. A true prodigy, she was attempting in months roles that take most dancers years to master. But when Misty became caught between the control and comfort she found in the world of ballet and the harsh realities of her own life, she had to choose to embrace both her identity and her dreams, and find the courage to be one of a kind.

***Make Trouble: Standing Up, Speaking Out, and Finding He Courage To Lead*
by Cecile Richards**

The former Planned Parenthood president and life-long activist presents a kid-friendly adaptation of her best-selling memoir, describing her upbringing in a fiercely conservative community where her parents encouraged her to speak out.

***Meet Cindy Sherman: Artist, Photographer, Chameleon* by Jan Greenberg**

How does someone become a ground-breaking artist? Does it start when you're very little and discover that you like to play dress up? Does it happen when you're ten years old and someone gives you a Polaroid camera for Christmas? Maybe it begins in college, when you're finally on your own to discover the world as you see it for the first time.

***The Mozart Season* by Virginia Euwer Wolff**

Allegra spends the entire summer after seventh grade preparing to be the youngest finalist in a statewide violin concerto competition. Along the way, she learns about music, her heritage, and the people around her. Filled with excellent musical explanations and written like a seventh grader talks, this engaging story has music woven throughout. The book realistically presents learning a concerto from the first read-through to the final performance with an orchestra on stage.

***Operatic* by Kyo Maclear**

It's almost the end of middle school, and Charlie has to find her perfect song for a music class assignment. Then, the class learns about opera, and Charlie discovers the music of Maria Callas. The more she learns about Maria's life, the more Charlie admires her passion for singing and her ability to express herself fully through her music. Can Charlie follow the example of the ultimate diva, Maria Callas, when it comes to her own life?

***Rad Girls Can: Stories of Bold, Brave, and Brilliant Young Women* by Kate Schatz**

A collection of stories and art about inspiring and accomplished girls who have made positive impacts on the world before the age of 20. In *Rad Girls Can*, you'll learn about a diverse group of young women who are living rad lives, whether excelling in male-dominated sports like boxing, rock climbing, or skateboarding; speaking out against injustice and discrimination; expressing themselves through dance, writing, and music; or advocating for girls around the world. Features both contemporary and historical figures.

***Reaching for the Moon: The Autobiography of NASA Mathematician Katherine Johnson*
by Katherine Johnson**

As an African American and a girl growing up in an era of brutal racism and sexism, Katherine faced daily challenges. Still, she lived her life with her father's words in mind: "You are no better than anyone else, and nobody else is better than you." In the early 1950s, Katherine was thrilled to join the organization that would become NASA. She worked on many of NASA's biggest projects including the Apollo 11 mission that landed the first men on the moon.

***Stella Rising* by Nancy Belgue**

Stella Connors has spent her whole life bouncing around from one town to the next, following the latest musician her mother has fallen in love with. She has always vowed she will never become a pathetic groupie like her mother, Viv. But then her best friend uploads a video of Stella singing a cover of her favorite band's biggest hit. It goes viral, and suddenly Stella's ideas about who she is and what she wants take a real hit.

***To Dance: A Memoir* by Siena Cherson Siegel**

A nonfiction graphic novel memoir about Siena Siegel who "after being diagnosed with flat feet, decided to take ballet classes at the age of six and was accepted to the School of American Ballet when she was eleven." Her "dream carried her from her home in Puerto Rico to dance class in Boston to performing with the New York City Ballet."

The Voice that Challenged a Nation: Marian Anderson and the Struggle for Equal Rights

by Russell Freedman

"In the mid-1930s, Marian Anderson was a famed vocalist who had been applauded by European royalty and welcomed at the White House. But, because of her race, she was denied the right to sing at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. This is the story of her resulting involvement in the civil rights movement of the time."

***Amazons, Abolitionists, and Activists: A Graphic History of Women's Fight for Their Rights* by Kendall Mikki**

A bold and gripping graphic history of the fight for women's rights

***Because I Was A Girl: True Stories for Girls of All Ages* by Melissa de la Cruz**

The collection includes writings from an impressive array of girls and women who are trailblazers in their fields, including bestselling authors Victoria Aveyard, Libba Bray, and Margaret Stohl; Hollywood heavy-hitters such as Quvenzhané Wallis; renowned chef Katie Button; aerospace and mechanical engineer Emily Calandrelli; and many more.

***Black Canary: Breaking Silence* by Alexandra Monir**

Dinah Lance was seven years old when she overheard the impossible: the sound of a girl singing. It was something she was never meant to hear—not in her lifetime, and not in Gotham City, taken over by the Court of Owls. The sinister organization rules Gotham as a patriarchal dictatorship, all the while spreading their influence like a virus across the globe. Now seventeen, Dinah can't forget that haunting sound, and she's beginning to discover that her own voice is just as powerful.

***Dissenter on the Bench: Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Life and Work* by Victoria Ortiz**

Dramatically narrated case histories from Justice Ginsburg's stellar career are interwoven with an account of RBG's life — childhood, family, beliefs, education, marriage, legal and judicial career, children, and achievements — and her many-faceted personality is captured.

***The Downstairs Girl* by Stacey Lee**

1890, Atlanta. Jo Kuan works as a lady's maid for the cruel daughter of one of the wealthiest men in Atlanta. But by night she moonlights as the pseudonymous author of a newspaper advice column for the genteel Southern lady, "Dear Miss Sweetie." When her column becomes wildly popular, she uses the power of the pen to address some of society's ills, but she's not prepared for the backlash that follows when her column challenges fixed ideas about race and gender.

***Ella Fitzgerald* by Tanya Lee Stone**

Presents the life and accomplishments of the world-revered jazz singer. Explores both her impact on music and race relations.

***Girl Code: Gaming, Going Viral, and Getting It Done* by Andrea Gonzales and Sophie Houser**

The teens behind the web video game "Tampon Run" tell how they got started in programming.

***I'll Be the One* by Lyla Lee**

Skye Shin has heard it all. Fat girls shouldn't dance. Wear bright colors. Shouldn't call attention to themselves. But Skye dreams of joining the glittering world of K-Pop, and to do that, she's about to break all the rules that society, the media, and even her own mother, have set for girls like her. She'll challenge thousands of other performers in an internationally televised competition looking for the next K-pop star, and she'll do it better than anyone else. When Skye nails her audition, she's immediately swept into a whirlwind of countless practices, shocking performances, and the drama that comes with reality TV. What she doesn't count on are the highly fat-phobic beauty standards of the Korean pop entertainment industry, her sudden media fame and scrutiny, or the sparks that soon fly with her fellow competitor, Henry Cho. But Skye has her sights on becoming the world's first plus-sized K-pop star, and that means winning the competition — without losing herself.

***The Kingdom of Back* by Marie Lu**

Born with a gift for music, Nannerl Mozart has just one wish: to be remembered forever. But even as she delights audiences with her masterful playing, she has little hope she'll ever become the acclaimed composer she longs to be. She is a young woman in eighteenth-century Europe, and that means composing is forbidden to her. She will perform only until she reaches a marriageable age—her tyrannical father has made that much clear. As Nannerl's hope grows dimmer with each passing year, the talents of her beloved younger brother, Wolfgang, only seem to shine brighter. His brilliance begins to eclipse her own, until one day a mysterious stranger from a magical land appears with an irresistible offer. He has the power to make her wish come true—but his help may cost her everything.

***Language of Fire* by Stephanie Hemphill**

A free-verse novel about the life of Joan of Arc, a peasant girl who felt called upon by God to save France during the Hundred Years' War, defying gender convention in the process.

***The Many Faces of Josephine Baker: Dancer, Singer, Activist, Spy*
by Peggy Caravantes**

A book following “Josephine Baker's life from her childhood in the depths of poverty to her comedic rise in vaudeville and fame in Europe, covering her outspoken participation in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, espionage work for the French Resistance during World War II, and adoption of 12 children -- her ‘rainbow tribe.’”

***Mary Shelley: The Strange True Tale of Frankenstein's Creator*
by Catherine Reef**

“Mary ran away to Lake Geneva with the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley when she was just sixteen. It was there, during a cold and wet summer, that she first imagined her story about a mad scientist who brought a corpse back to life. Success soon followed for Mary, but also great tragedy and misfortune. Catherine Reef brings this passionate woman, brilliant writer, and forgotten feminist into crisp focus, detailing a life that was remarkable both before and after the publication of her iconic masterpiece. “

***Rad Women Worldwide: Artists and Athletes, Pirates and Punks, and Other Revolutionaries Who Shaped History* by Kate Schatz**

Rad Women Worldwide tells fresh, engaging, and amazing tales of perseverance and radical success by pairing well-researched and riveting biographies with powerful and expressive cut-paper portraits. The book features an array of diverse figures from 430 BCE to 2016, spanning 31 countries around the world.

***Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom*
by Lynda Blackmon Lowery**

Shares the story of the youngest person to complete the Selma to Montgomery March, describing her frequent imprisonments for her participation in nonviolent demonstrations and how she felt about her involvement in Civil Rights events.

***Blood Water Paint* by Joy McCullough High**

Her mother died when she was twelve, and suddenly Artemisia Gentileschi had a stark choice: a life as a nun in a convent or a life grinding pigment for her father's paint. She chose paint. At 17 she became one of the most talented painters in Rome. But the aftermath of rape Artemisia faced another terrible choice: a life of silence or a life of truth, no matter the cost.

Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World

by Penelope Bagieu

Nonfiction graphic novel which highlights women throughout history (and across professions) who made an impact on society by daring to be different.

***Bright Burning Stars* by A. K. Small**

Best friends Marine Duval and Kate Sanders have trained at the Paris Opera Ballet School since childhood, where they've formed an inseparable bond forged by respective family tragedies and a fierce love for dance. When the body of a student is found in the dorms just before the start of their final year, Marine and Kate begin to ask themselves what they would do to win the ultimate prize: to be the one girl selected to join the Opera's prestigious corps de ballet. Would they die? Cheat? Seduce the most talented boy in the school, dubbed the Demigod, hoping his magic would make them shine, too? Neither girl is sure.

California Dreamin': Cass Elliot Before the Mama @ the Papas

by Penelope Bagieu

At her size, Cass was never going to be the kind of girl that record producers wanted on album covers. But she found an unlikely group of co-conspirators, and in their short time together this bizarre and dysfunctional band recorded some of the most memorable songs of their era. Through the whirlwind of drugs, war, love, and music, Cass struggled to keep sight of her dreams, of who she loved, and—most importantly—who she was.

***Furia* by Yamile Saied Méndez**

Camila, a teen girl in Rosario, Argentina, lives a double life. At home, she is a quiet, rule following girl in a household that does not support her dreams. On the soccer field, she is La Furia, a fierce competitor, with dreams of catching the eye of scouts in the US.

***Ghost Wood Song* by Erica Waters**

Shady Grove inherited her father's ability to call ghosts from the grave with his fiddle, but she also knows the fiddle's tunes bring nothing but trouble and darkness. But when her brother is accused of murder, she can't let the dead keep their secrets. In order to clear his name, she's going to have to make those ghosts sing.

***Janis Joplin: Rise Up Singing* by Ann Angel**

Joplin's husky, passionate singing voice was appreciated by other musicians and by her audiences. She loved to sing the blues with the misery and pain that dominated the lyrics. Bessie Smith and Odetta were her heroines. The author points out that despite the fame and fortune that she achieved, Joplin was basically insecure and in need of acceptance. This book is well researched with more than 100 notes referring to specific quotes from friends, family, and magazines.

***Ms. Gloria Steinem: A Life* by Winifred Conkling**

Gloria Steinem was no stranger to injustice even from a young age. Her mother, Ruth, having suffered a nervous breakdown at only 34, spent much of Gloria's childhood in and out of mental health facilities. And when Gloria was only 10 years old, her father divorced her mother and left for California, unable to bear the stress of caring for Ruth any longer. Gloria never blamed her mother for being unable to hold down a job to support them both after that, but rather blamed society's intrinsic hostility toward women, and working women in particular. This was the spark that lit a fire in her that would burn for decades, and continues to burn brightly today.

***Music From Another World* by Robin Talley**

It's summer 1977 and closeted lesbian Tammy Larson can't be herself anywhere. Not at her strict Christian high school, not at her conservative Orange County church and certainly not at home, where her ultrareligious aunt relentlessly organizes antigay political campaigns. Tammy's only outlet is writing secret letters in her diary to gay civil rights activist Harvey Milk... until she's matched with a real-life pen pal who changes everything. Sharon Hawkins bonds with Tammy over punk music and carefully shared secrets, and soon their letters become the one place she can be honest. The rest of her life in San Francisco is full of lies. The kind she tells for others—like helping her gay brother hide the truth from their mom—and the kind she tells herself. But as antigay fervor in America reaches a frightening new pitch, Sharon and Tammy must rely on their long-distance friendship to discover their deeply personal truths, what they'll stand for...and who they'll rise against.

***Muted* by Tami Charles**

For seventeen-year-old Denver, music is everything. Writing, performing, and her ultimate goal: escaping her very small, very white hometown. So Denver is more than ready on the day she and her best friends Dali and Shak sing their way into the orbit of the biggest R&B star in the world, Sean "Mercury" Ellis. Merc gives them everything: parties, perks, wild nights -- plus hours and hours in the recording studio. Even the painful sacrifices and the lies the girls have to tell are all worth it. Until they're not. Denver begins to realize that she's trapped in Merc's world, struggling to hold on to her own voice. As the dream turns into a nightmare, she must make a choice: lose her big break, or get broken.

***My Riot* by Rick Spears, and Emmett Helen**

The story follows Val, a teenage ballerina from a conservative family in early '90s Virginia, as she falls in love with punk rock and forms a Riot Grrrl band.

***On the Come Up* by Angie Thomas**

The story of Bri, a sixteen-year old rapper hoping to fill the shoes of her father and 'make it' as an underground hip-hop legend. Overnight, Bri becomes an internet sensation after posting a rap hit which sparks controversy. As Bri defeats the odds to 'make it' she battles controversy to achieve her dreams.

***Roman and Jewel* by Dana L. Davis**

Jerzie Jhames will do anything to land the lead role in Broadway's hottest new show, Roman and Jewel, a Romeo and Juliet inspired hip-hopera featuring a diverse cast and modern twists on the play. But her hopes are crushed when she learns mega-star Cinny won the lead... and Jerzie is her understudy. Falling for male lead Zeppelin Reid is a terrible idea -- especially once Jerzie learns Cinny wants him for herself. Star-crossed love always ends badly. But when a video of Jerzie and Zepp practicing goes viral and the entire world weighs in on who should play Jewel.

***Taking Flight: From War Orphan to Star Ballerina* by Michaela DePrince**

The extraordinary memoir of an orphan who danced her way from war-torn Sierra Leone to ballet stardom.

***A Tender Thing* by Emily Neuberger**

Running away to New York City for an open-call Broadway audition, an aspiring musical actress lands a major role in a controversial new production that tests the cultural boundaries of the late 1950s.



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Opera, Music, & Dynamic Women who Challenged Conventions

Suggested Reading for Adults



Sounds and Sweet Aairs: The Forgotten Women of Classical Music by Anna Beer

Stories of 8 female composers ranging from Renaissance Florence to 21st century London.

Romantic Outlaws: The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecroft and her Daughter Mary Shelley by Charlotte Gordon

Dual biography of early feminist Mary Wollstonecroft and her daughter, Mary Shelley.

Jane Crow: the Life of Pauli Murray by Rosalind Rosenberg

The life of an activist, lawyer, and first African American woman ordained by the Episcopal Church.

Sisters in Law by Linda Hirshman

Dual biography of Supreme Court Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Lady Sings the Blues by Billie Holiday

Autobiography of jazz singer and activist Billie Holliday

Shout, Sister, Shout!: The Untold Story of Rock-and-Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe
by Gayle F. Wald

Biography of the influential singer, guitarist, and songwriter known as The Godmother of Rock and Roll.

Sophia: Princess, Suffragette, Revolutionary by Anita Anand

The Indian goddaughter of Queen Victoria who dedicated her life to independence and women's suffrage.

The Only Woman in the Room by Marie Benedict

A novel based on the life of Heddy Lamarr, star of the screen and groundbreaking inventor

Odetta: A Life in Music and Protest by Ian Zack

Biography of pioneering folk musician and Civil Rights activist Odetta.

The Mercies by Kiran Millwood Hargrave

Set in 17th century Norway, a town is run entirely by women after a shipping accident kills most of the adult men. Tensions arise when a man arrives to set order back in the town.

Half the Sky: [Turning Oppression Into Opportunity For Women Worldwide] by Nicholas Kristof

Travel through Africa and Asia and meet women struggling to survive and thrive, despite persistent human rights violations.

Wow, No Thank You by Samantha Irby

Nothing is off limits for Samantha Irby as she discusses her relationships, body, and illnesses in this laugh out loud memoir.

There are more beautiful things than Beyonce by Morgan Parker

This poetry collection is a paean to black womanhood.

***Black Diamond Queens: African American Women and Rock and Roll* by Maureen Mahon**

Documents the history of black women in rock and roll from the 1950S-1980s and the significant cultural impact they had on future music.

***The Daughters of Kobani: A Story of Rebellion, Courage, and Justice* by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon**

Tells the story of the all female militia who took on ISIS and were determined to spread women's equality along the way.

***Nobody Ever Asked Me About the Girls: Women, Music, and Fame* by Lisa Robinson**

Based on the author's interviews with more than 40 female artists about how they handle fame, age, love, motherhood, and more.

***Unbowed: A Memoir* by Wangari Maathai**

Memoir from Wangari Maathai tracing her life in rural Kenya to her work founding the Green Belt Movement, an environmental movement focused on empowering women.

***Fairest* by Meredith Talusan**

Meredith Talusan dicusses her journey as a trans Filipino immigrant living with albinism.

***An Unkindness of Ghosts* by Rivers Solomon**

Aster lives on the low-decks of the space vessel HSS Matilda, a vessel carrying people to a supposed promised land. However, the ship is more reminiscent of the antebellum South. Aster must decide to fight if they want to make it off the ship.

***Little Fish* by Casey Plett**

Wendy is a trans woman who comes across evidence that her devout grandfather may have been trans as well.

***Respect: The Life of Aretha Franklin* by David Ritz**

The life of the singer, songwriter, and Civil Rights activist known as The Queen of Soul.

***Unbought and Unbossed* by Shirley Chisholm**

Chisolm shares her journey to become the first African-American Congresswoman.

***Kindred* by Octavia Butler**

In the first science fiction title written by a black woman, Dana is a black woman living in 1970s California when she is suddenly transported back in time to anetebellum Maryland. She must save the son of a slaveholder, who turns out to be her ancestor.

Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of their Runaway Slave Ona Judge

by Erica Armstrong Dunbar

The true account of Ona Judge who risked everything to escape the Washingtons and live free.

***Mr. President, How Long Must We Wait?* by Tina Cassidy**

Traces the work of suffragist and feminist Alice Paul as she organized initiatives to forwad the women's suffrage movement.



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