

Soldiers Young and Brave

By Lorraine Thompson

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Soldiers Young and Brave

- 2 -

When this you see... Remember me.

STORY OF THE PLAY

The Civil War was unlike any other war our country has ever endured. It not only severed our nation, it severed our nation's families. Husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters were torn apart by politics, beliefs, distance, and death. Evidence of this bitter separation can be found in the abundant journals, diaries, poetry, songs, and letters of the day. This play, a one act with music, draws from these sources to provide a glimpse into the joys and struggles of "loving" during this turbulent period. The characters are based on real people, the words taken from actual journal entries and letters, the music is the traditional music of the day, and much of the poetry was written on the battlefield. This play is not about the North or the South, but about individual lives and relationships. It is a story of remembrance...and don't we all deserve to be remembered?

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

This play was originally produced at Athens Academy in Athens, Georgia in 2005 under the direction of the playwright Lorraine Thompson. The original cast and crew follows:

SARAH BALLOU: Jenny Leite; SULLIVAN BALLOU: Maxie Price; BILL TUCKER: Houston Mahoney; ALICE WILLIAMSON: Katie Ward; JIMMY WILLIAMSON: Rory Brawner; JENNY: Manisha Reddy; CONSTANCE BELL: Hayley Brown; CONSTANCE'S MOTHER: Montana Perry; RACHEL: Catherine Swanson; ROBERT: Ethan Denny; ANNA BOYER: Claire Coenen; FRANCIS BOYER: Aaron Strand; MCCULLY: Nate Crawshaw; MAGGIE: Carley Moore; GERRY: Scott Baumwald; ORDERLY: Montana Perry; HERBERT CLINE: Matthew Leonard; EZRA KERR: Sarah Schacher; DANCERS: Sarah Schacher, Helena Anderson; HEAD NURSE: Surili Sheth; LOUISA: Caroline Milward; PRISONER 1: Emily Westberry; PRISONER 2: Matthew Leonard; PRISONER 3: Montana Perry; SOLDIERS: Matthew Leonard, Surili Sheth, Helena Anderson, Sarah Schacher, Montana Perry, Manisha Reddy, Emily Westberry; VIOLIN: Laura Keith; FLUTE: Audrey Glasgow. Assistant Director: Jenny Cook; Musical Director: Rachel Townes; Stage Manager: Umesh Patel; Assistant Stage Manager: Anna Fleming; Props: Nick Kalivoda; Crew: Jasmin Patel, Steven Barrow, Meg Winthrop.

Soldiers Young and Brave

- 3 -

CAST (*With doubling, 10 m, 8 w, many extras.*)

- *SARAH BALLOU:** Serves as play's guide and on stage much of the play. Married to Sullivan, becomes a widow.
- *SULLIVAN BALLOU:** Husband of Sarah. Man torn between the love of his family and the love of his country. Union officer.
- UNION RECRUITER/SOLDIER #1/PRISONER #1:** Urges men to enlist for the North; doubles as a Union soldier and later as a prisoner.
- CONFEDERATE RECRUITER/SOLDIER #1/PRISONER #2:** Urges men to enlist for the South; doubles as a Rebel soldier and later as a prisoner.
- *ALICE WILLIAMSON:** Young Southern teen, idealistic.
- JIMMY WILLIAMSON:** Alice's older brother. Confederate soldier.
- BILL TUCKER:** Confederate soldier, likable, fun-loving, kindhearted. Poet. Befriends Constance.
- JENNY/ROSE:** Young friend of Alice. Doubles as Confederate nurse.
- *CONSTANCE BELL:** Determined young woman. Enlists in Confederate Army disguised as a male.
- CONSTANCE'S MOTHER/LOUISA:** Traditional, ashamed of her daughter's behavior; doubles as Union Army nurse Louisa May Alcott.
- *RACHEL:** Spoiled newlywed and soon to be wiser widow.
- *ROBERT:** Rachel's young husband. Grows to appreciate his young bride. Confederate soldier.
- *FRANCIS BOYER:** Devoted husband, father. Union soldier.
- *ANNA BOYER:** Mother of three. Loving wife to Francis.
- *MCCULLY:** High-spirited Irishman. Union soldier. Falls in love with Maggie Shaunessy.
- MAGGIE SHAUNESSY:** Gerry's independent, devoted sister. Cook/laundress for Union. Falls in love with McCully.
- GERRY SHAUNESSY:** Maggie's younger brother. Union soldier.
- ORDERLY/PRISONER #3:** Calls roll after battle. Doubles as a prisoner.

Soldiers Young and Brave

- 4 -

EXTRAS: Townspeople, Herbert Cline, Ezra Kerr, Head Nurse, Soldiers, Prisoners, Camp Musicians and Followers.

*CAST NOTE: * indicates the characters are based on actual people of the period. See "Background Notes" at the end of the script.*

THE SET

Four platforms of varying heights with small step between the two larger platforms
Small bench SR
3 short stools
Moveable clothesline SL
2 tall stools, DSR and DSL, for Sarah to watch the play

PROP LIST

Confederate and Union uniforms to hand out; small portrait of Alice; needlework for Rachel and Constance's mother; 2-3 handkerchiefs, tin cups, coffee pot, fire stand, rifles/guns, letters, papers, locket (Rachel), baskets, 2 crates, , 2-3 clipboards, laundry basket with clothes (Anna, Maggie), knife (to cut Constance's hair), hair piece (Constance), sock to darn (Constance), playing cards, drum , clothes pins, sack of potatoes (Maggie), bandages (some clean, some bloody), slings, crutches, canes, blankets, canteens, fan and parasol (Rachel), flask (Tucker), bowls and rags for Nurses.

COSTUMES

All actors wear Civil War era costumes. See complete notes at the end of the script.

MUSIC

Civil War era songs enhance the mood and provide background and transition music. This period music can be found easily. Although live musicians were used in the original production (violin/fiddle and flute) it is not required. Please see music suggestions at the end of the script.

Soldiers Young and Brave

(AT RISE: SARAH, dressed in black, is seated downstage reading a letter. Her husband SULLIVAN stands US of her wearing a Union officer's uniform. THEY do not look at each other during the following scene. Sarah seldom leaves the stage. She watches and facilitates the stories being told.)

SARAH: July 14, 1861.

SULLIVAN: My very dear Sarah, Indications are strong that we shall move in a few days. And lest I should not be able to write you again, I feel impelled to put down a few lines that may...

SARAH and SULLIVAN: ...fall under your eyes when I am gone.

SARAH: I, suspicious, that Death is creeping behind me...

SARAH and SULLIVAN: ...am communing with God, my country

SULLIVAN: ...and thee. I have no misgivings about the cause...

SARAH and SULLIVAN: ...I am engaged in.

SULLIVAN: And my courage...

SARAH and SULLIVAN: ...does not falter.

SARAH: I am perfectly willing to...

SARAH and SULLIVAN: ...lay down all my joys in this life...

SULLIVAN: ...to help maintain this government.

SARAH: Sullivan.

(SHE closes the letter gently. HE exits. SHE looks up and speaks to audience, moving to stand center stage. A CROWD enters as a busy town forms behind her as she speaks.)

SARAH: *(Cont'd.)* So many words passed between us, so many hearts were forever changed, so many moments worth remembering lest we should forget...

Soldiers Young and Brave

- 6 -

(SARAH understands all too well what is to come as she announces the next scene.)

SARAH: The call to arms.

(Two recruiting RECRUITERS jump onto the stage and call out like barkers. During the following poem, "No More Words" by Franklin Lushington in 1861, the CROWD separates into two distinct groups, Confederate and Union.)

CONFEDERATE RECRUITER: No more words; Try it with your swords!

UNION RECRUITER: Try it with the arms of your bravest and your best!

CONF. RECRUITER: You are proud of your manhood, now put it to the test.

UNION RECRUITER: Not another word!

BOTH: Try it by the sword!

UNION RECRUITER: You, my lads abroad, "Steady" be your word.

CONF. RECRUITER: You at home, be the anchor of your soldiers young and brave.

UNION RECRUITER: Spare no cost!

CONF. RECRUITER: None is lost!

UNION RECRUITER: That your redemption might not save!

BOTH: For love of all you guard, Stand. And strike hard!

(There is much excitement. Some MEN move forward to enlist and be issued their uniforms. A young man, JIMMY, is holding his newly issued Rebel uniform. HE is being followed by his younger sister, ALICE.)

ALICE: Oh, Jimmy! It is so pretty! *(HE is trying to get away from her.)* Well at least let me look at it!

JIMMY: Alice, go on! *(HE turns HER around and pushes her away from him.)* Go home! *(HE turns his back to her and begins to walk away putting on his hat.)* The last thing I need is you following me to war.

End of Freeview

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