

November 20, 2021



Her Story

**A TRIBUTE TO
BETTY FRIEDAN**

Photo: Lynn Gilbert

HerStory: A Tribute to Betty Friedan

Saturday, November 20, 2021 • 7:30PM

Peoria Civic Center Theater

Peoria Symphony Orchestra

George Stelluto • Conductor

Michelle DeYoung • Mezzo-Soprano

Deborah Rutter • Narrator

Sirena Huang • Violin

Opening Remarks • Rita Ali, Mayor of Peoria

Sybil**

Fantasia

Elegia

March

***Stephanie Ann Boyd
(b. 1990)

Sirena Huang • Violin

Sheltering Voices**

A Shade of Hush

Soft Small Gray Pearl

A Shade of Violet

Forage Your Voice

Dawn's Chiffon Light

Stephanie Ann Boyd

Michelle DeYoung • Mezzo-Soprano

INTERMISSION

Everywoman: A Friedan Centennial Memoire*

Stephanie Ann Boyd

Michelle DeYoung • Mezzo-Soprano

Deborah Rutter • Narrator

Sirena Huang • Violin

*World Premiere

**Illinois Premiere

***PSO Composer-in-Residence

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This program is partially supported by a grant
from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.



Photo: Kristin Hoebermann

Michelle DeYoung • Mezzo-Soprano

Mezzo-Soprano Michelle DeYoung continues to be in demand throughout the world, appearing regularly with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic, and the Concertgebouw Orchestra. She has also performed at the prestigious festivals of Ravinia, Tanglewood, Saito Kinen, Edinburgh, and Lucerne. In Australia she has appeared multiple times with the Sydney Symphony and recently sang Kundry in concert performances of *Parsifal* at Opera Australia.

Equally at home on the opera stage, Ms. DeYoung has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Teatro alla Scala, Bayreuth Festival, Berliner Staatsoper, and Paris Opera. Her many roles include Fricka, Sieglinde and Waltraute in *The Ring Cycle*; Kundry in *Parsifal*; Venus in *Tannhäuser*; Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*; Eboli in *Don Carlos*; Amneris in *Aida*; Santuzza in *Cavellaria*

Peoria Symphony Orchestra

November 20, 2021

George Stelluto • Conductor

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Katie Cousins
Michelle Wynton
Susan Oliverius
Ben Kronk
Miguel Aguirre
Ashley Fitzwater
Naomi Schrank

Violin 2

Guest Principal
The Frederick Family Endowment
Rosemary Ardner
Molly Wilson
Hyo-Jung Chun
Faith Burdick
Maya Shiraishi
Owen Ruff
Alex Giger

Viola

Sharon Chung, Guest Principal
Sharon and John Amdall Endowment
Mary Heinemann
Jason Warner
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Sarah Greene
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Cello

Cora Swenson Lee, Guest Principal
Parker Endowment in memory of H. H. Block
Emily Munn-Wood
Calvin Armstrong
Francisco Malespin
Brian Gaona
Christine Cicha

Bass

Austin Vawter, Principal
Peoria Symphony Guild and Friends
Endowment In Memory of Norbert Cieslewicz
Patrick Aubryn, Assistant Principal
Margaret Briskin
Garold Fowler

Flute

Justina Chu, Guest Principal
Augusta Foundation Endowment in the name
of E.C. Heidrich
Denise Cooksey

Oboe

Alex Liedtke, Principal
Mrs. Thomas Foster Endowment
Lindsay Wiley

Clarinet

Roger Garrett, Principal
Eric Ginsberg

Bassoon

Michael Dicker, Principal

Horn

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Renee Vogen

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Sarah Carrillo, Principal
David Nakazono

Trombone

Mark Babbitt, Principal
Corey Sansolo
Chris Darwell

Tuba

Terry Solomonson, Principal

Timpani

David Collier, Principal
Eugene and Donna Sweeney Endowment

Harp

Julia Jamieson, Guest Principal

Percussion

Peggy Bonner, Principal
Ben Stires
Kevin Kosnik

Rusticana, Ježibaba in *Rusalka*, Marguerite in *Le Damnation de Faust*, Dido in *Les Troyens*, Judith in *Bluebeard's Castle*, and Jocaste in *Oedipus Rex*. She also created the role of the Shaman in Tan Dun's *The First Emperor* at the Metropolitan Opera.

A multi-Grammy award-winning recording artist, Ms. DeYoung's impressive discography includes *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, and *Götterdämmerung* with the Jaap van Zweden and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (Naxos); *Kindertotenlieder*, Mahler's *Symphony No. 3*, and *Das Klagende Lied* with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony (SFS Media); *Les Troyens* with Sir Colin Davis and the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO Live!); and Mahler's *Symphony No. 3* with both the Chicago

Symphony Orchestra and Bernard Haitink (CSO Resound) and the Pittsburgh Symphony and Manfred Honeck (Challenge Records International). Her most recent recording of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon) was released in July 2021.

This season, Ms. DeYoung appeared in concert with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. This summer she returns to the Ravinia and Aspen Music festivals, and next season her many engagements include appearances with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lille, Belgium National Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, and the Colorado Symphony.



Deborah Rutter • Narrator

In an age marked by social and technological change, Deborah Rutter has emerged as one of the nation's most adroit leaders in the arts, combining artistic daring with fiscal sustainability, inclusivity, and responsiveness to the needs of the community. Ms. Rutter began as president of the John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on September 1, 2014, and serves as curator of the Kennedy presidential memorial, and artistic and administrative director to the world's busiest performing arts center. In an ever-expanding celebration of JFK's legacy, the Center presents theater, contemporary dance, ballet, vocal music, chamber music, hip hop, comedy, international arts, and jazz, alongside dynamic seasons with the Kennedy Center's world-class affiliates: the National Symphony Orchestra and Washington National Opera.

As the work of a living memorial is never finished, Rutter is advancing the Center's commitment to 21st-century programming. After breaking ground in her first year at the Kennedy Center, Ms. Rutter launched a transformative arts facility in 2019, the REACH, which provides flexible indoor and outdoor performance space to nurture new art, community, innovation, arts education, and informal encounters between the artist and the public. Designed by renowned architect Steven Holl, the REACH graces the southern end of the campus and connects the Kennedy Center to the popular pedestrian and bicycle trail along the Potomac River.

Working at the vanguard of community engagement, Ms. Rutter manages one of the nation's most extensive arts education networks, reaching millions of people of all ages across all 50 states with live performances, as well as providing multidisciplinary arts training and support to schools, students, children at risk, teachers, artists, and civic leaders. Today, Ms. Rutter is reshaping Kennedy Center offerings to include more artist-led programming while challenging people across the industry to reimagine creative expression through the lens of cross-disciplinary collaborations.

Prior to her position as the Center's president, Ms. Rutter served as president of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association. She has also served as executive director of the Seattle Symphony, executive director of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and the orchestra manager of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Sirena Huang • Violin

Praised by *The Baltimore Sun* for her "impeccable technique... deeply expressive phrasing... and poetic weight," Sirena Huang is one of her generation's most celebrated violinists. She brings not only technical brilliance and powerful artistry to the stage, but also a profound sense of connection to her audience.

Sirena has been the recipient of numerous accolades and awards. In 2017, she was awarded First Prize at the Elmar Oliveira International Violin Competition and later that year, she was the winner of the New York Concert Artist Worldwide Debut Audition. In 2009, she won First Prize Gold Medalist of the 6th International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. She won First Prize and the Audience Award at the Cooper International Competition in 2011. That same year, she was also named the first Artist-in-Residence of Hartford Symphony Orchestra. In 2013, she was awarded the Hannloser Prize for Violin at the Verbier Music Festival in Switzerland. She is also a top prize winner at Singapore International Violin Competition, as well as the Shanghai Isaac Stern International Violin Competition.

Sirena made her solo debut with the National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra in 2004 at the age of nine and has performed in twenty countries across three continents. She has been featured as a soloist with more than fifty prestigious ensembles, including the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, Russian Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra, and the Staatskapelle Weimar in Germany. She has performed in leading venues, including Berliner Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, the Kravis Center, Esplanade – Theaters on the Bay, Shanghai Concert Hall, and the Taiwan National Concert Hall, among many others. She has appeared as a guest artist at the Verbier Music Festival, Marlboro Music Festival, Ravinia Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival, Newport Music Festival, Music in the Mountains Festival, Eastern Music Festival, Sarasota Arts Series, "The Great Music for a Great City" series in New York City, and many others.

Motivated by a deep wish to inspire peace and harmony with her music, Sirena has performed before world leaders, thinkers and humanitarians. She has appeared at the World Peace Conference held in Petra and at the Opening Ceremony of the "Forum 2000 World Conference" in Prague, among others.

In addition to her TED Talk in 2006, Sirena has been featured on numerous radio and television broadcasts, including WQXR's McGraw-Hill Young Artists Showcase, and NPR's "From the Top" as well as several interviews with WNPR, CNBC, WTNH, WTIC, WB20, and Beethoven Radio.



Photo: Todd Rosenberg

Maestro's Message

Regardless of your age, gender, lifestyle, or politics, Betty Friedan's work has touched your life and your world. Her book, *The Feminine Mystique*, catalyzed modern feminism, establishing it as a vital force for opportunity and equality in homes, professional careers, law, and politics. By challenging the norms of her world in the 1960s, her work—together with the Civil Rights and other movements—began the great debate and transformation of the world of future generations... which continues even today.

Born and raised in Peoria one hundred years ago, Betty Friedan achieved international importance and stature in the cause of women's rights. It is fitting that we celebrate her life and achievements with this concert. To honor Betty, the program features many firsts! The music is created by the PSO's first woman Composer-in-Residence Stephanie Ann Boyd, who was chosen for the beautiful way she tells the stories of women through music. This is the first time all of her works are being performed in Illinois, and you will be the first in the world to hear her work about Betty Friedan, commissioned by the PSO. The soloists are all women who have benefited from Betty's pioneering work sixty years ago: world-famous mezzo-soprano Michelle DeYoung, rising star violinist Sirena Huang, and cultural leader Deborah Rutter as narrator. Deborah Rutter is the first woman president of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC and formerly president and CEO of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. And of course, it is fitting and right that Peoria's first woman and Black Mayor, the Honorable Rita Ali, welcome you to this event. We are graced and honored by the presence of these women on our stage and in our community. The PSO is thankful for their generosity and proud to bring you this program. —G. Stelluto

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Written by Stephanie Ann Boyd, PSO Composer-in-Residence ©2021

Michigan-born, Manhattan-based American composer Stephanie Ann Boyd (b. 1990) writes melodic music about women's memoirs and the natural world for symphonic and chamber ensembles. She is the 2021-2022 PSO Composer-in-Residence. Turn to page 20 to learn more.

Stephanie Ann Boyd (b. 1990)

Sybil, Op. 12, 2010-2015

Sybil is a concerto I began in the spring of 2010 at age 19 after falling in love with a Russian violinist. Though I wrote all of the main melodies within a few days, I felt timid about being able to deftly construct the other components of the piece, so I set it aside. The piece ended up being worked on a few days every summer during my college years, with all components being pieced together (much like making a quilt!) in early 2015. This final part of the process was difficult in an immensely fulfilling way: I had to engage in a dialogue with myself of five years prior, decide which parts of the music made sense to change or manipulate, and know what parts of the original material to keep intact and preserve. And, as an ex-violinist prone to obsessions with Barber, Ysaÿe, and Prokofiev, I suppose it's entirely autobiographical.

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Stephanie Ann Boyd

Sheltering Voices, Op. 42, 2018

For *Sheltering Voices*, the Eureka Ensemble and I decided that I should compose a work that would raise awareness of the issue of domestic violence in Boston. We worked with local women's shelters to build a choir made of anyone who wished to join, and we provided these women with stipends and food, and rehearsals carried out with joy, love, and respect. And we listened to their stories. We decided that I should work with poet and women's rights activist Jessica Lynn Suchon to create a piece of music in five movements that would correspond to the five steps of recovery from abuse. The marvelous soprano Angel Azzarra was brought in to sing the first three movements: the places where the text wasn't yet joyful and instead told hard truths.

Jessica Lynn Suchon's poetry (here, a crown of sonnets) is as painful as it is beautiful, and it was a pleasure to set it while my eyes constantly brimmed with tears—this experience, this process of writing sound alongside her words dove straight into my heart from the very beginning. These moments at times stark, at times unfurling with bouquet upon bouquet of blooming, erupting flora... I'm blessed and honored to be able to bring this piece forth to Jessica, to the Eureka Ensemble, and most importantly, to the women whose voices brought these "songs" and these words to life.

During the week of final rehearsals and the performance in May 2018, donations poured in to the women's shelters we worked with, and in-kind donations were also made in dramatic amounts. *Now This News* released a documentary on our project just a few months after the premiere, and it went viral, amassing more than a million views in just three days. You can see the video and learn more about this work at tinyurl.com/2mp3xv86.

Stephanie Ann Boyd

Everywoman: A Friedan Centennial Memoire, Op. 80, 2021

I have been using a highlighter with great gusto since reading the very first paragraph of *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan's powerful tome about the "problem with no name" affecting women of all ages and backgrounds. After all, I want to return again and again to these moments of pithy distillation: Betty took that which couldn't be fully described or named and pulled it out of the darkness into the motivated glare of women everywhere with not only this book, but in the tremendous amounts of material she wrote and spoke into being during her lifetime.

In this musical work, I wish to take you on a journey through her life (a path that Peoria, Illinois is an important part of). I want to

**BORN AND RAISED IN
PEORIA ONE HUNDRED
YEARS AGO, BETTY FRIEDAN
ACHIEVED INTERNATIONAL
IMPORTANCE AND STATURE
IN THE CAUSE OF WOMEN'S
RIGHTS. IT IS FITTING THAT
WE CELEBRATE HER LIFE
AND ACHIEVEMENTS WITH
THIS CONCERT.**

take you to these poignant moments where Betty wrote sentences of data and opinion that had never before existed in the public eye until she put them there, and I hope to take you on an adventure full of turning points in how we as a nation understood the myriad cultural, psychological, and practical factors at play in the lives of nearly every woman. Our quest for self-fulfillment, how we value our contributions to our communities, what we can, should, or should not inherit from the way our mothers and grandmothers went through these very moments of reckoning themselves only a few decades before we stumbled into it...

The Feminine Mystique was published in early 1963 and nearly 60 years later, Betty's words continue to ring with a vast truth that still finds resonance in many hearts. I'm so grateful to the musicians of the Peoria Symphony Orchestra, its music director George Stelluto, and its incredible staff and community for giving the space for this music to be made and to exist.



Libretto for Sheltering Voices

By Jessica Lynn Suchon

i.

How I was draped in every shade of hush
and still. How darkness was a friend who filled
each night with an impossible empty—
Winter: cruel, cold-tipped. Excuse me, please, I
wanted another life and got this one.
Winter: where nothing was given and yet
everything bare and silently vicious,
absence of violence somehow threatened me
more than a fist, a knife under the bed—
all of that festered in quiet, blossomed
in my gut—a virus turning over.
Something was trapped inside me, a little
ghost in tantrum. Dear violent memory,
how'd I ever shuck you from my center?

ii.

Dear violent memory, how can I shuck you
from my center when you were all I had
for so long? I don't want to remember,
but I shuck the memory from my center.
My whimpers, how I cradled love's phantom
in my palms like a fragile bird and held
it to my chest so it couldn't leave me.
I don't want to remember, but I shuck

the memory from my center and I feel
that there is still a pulse in scar tissue,
life in its thick twisted skin. I slip grief's
needle from my tongue, I shuck violence from
my center, take inventory: soft, small
gray pearl, ghost from inside the husk of me.

iii.

No longer a gray ghost inside the husk
of me, I take inventory. I praise
the unbruised skin, say grace to the flexing
jaw. In this new world, I open windows,
slather my body with honey and oil.
Lilacs: a shade of violet I do not
fear. There is a garden now, where once there
was a mouth and the garden is sprouting
flushed blossoms and on my tongue, blush chorus
of hydrangeas and each is singing. Am I
singing? Isn't this how it sounded? Praise
the mouth, praise the tongue, the lips, both before
and after. Look, here I am nightingale.
Here, a song from my lyred, unbridled throat.

iv.

You pull a song from your lyred, unbridled
throat. You unravel this way, and become
so large no one could possibly touch all
of you. We rework the tapestry, thread

one story with another, pull loose knots,
reconcile, smooth threads beneath our soft palms.
We sing. You grow a garden and enshrine
each tender bud. We understand how to
nourish saplings as the flex toward the light,
fledglings spreading wings. Can anything be
feeble that grows or sings or flies?
You forage your voice and all the voices
of women like you and braid them into
a robin's throat, into a garnet tongue.

v.

Forage robins' feathers from the grass, braid
them into a garnet tongue. Call this home.
All of these gleaming windows, call them lungs
and they dance. Call them eyes and they let light
inside. Clemency, we wrote you a sad
letter and it came back so we added
more postage. Mercy, thank you for your card.
We've been saving spaces for each of you,
feel that? The sheets are still warm. Radiant,
all of it. Dear, sparkling hum of bees— Dear,
Hope— Dear, bustling leaves with your nimble, thin
yawns slipping through dawn's chiffon
light— thank you
for waiting on us, for still shining on
every ravaged body brimming with light. ♦

Jessica Lynn Suchon is a widely-published writer who has received fellowships and honors from the Aspen Institute, the Academy of American Poets, and the Tennessee Playwrights Studio. Her book *scavenger* was published in 2020 by yesyes books. Jessica's full-length play *shopgirls* made its debut at the Darkhorse Theater in Nashville, Tennessee in December 2019. She has collaborated with composer Stephanie Ann Boyd in many works, including *Sheltering Voices* (2018), *Every Shadow Takes the Place of a Daughter* (2019), *Even a Woman* (2019), *Undressing for a Personal Apocalypse* (2019), *Flower Catalog* (2020), and a new work premiering in Boston in September 2021, commissioned by the Juventas New Music Ensemble.

The poster features a dark, textured background with a large, circular, light-colored area on the left. Inside this circle, the word "Whiskey" is written in a large, elegant, red cursive script. Below it, "at the" is in a small, dark blue sans-serif font, and "Warehouse" is in a large, bold, gold-colored sans-serif font. At the bottom of the circle, the date and venue are listed: "Friday, January 28, 2022" and "The Warehouse on State" in a dark blue sans-serif font. To the right of the circle, there is a dark rectangular box with a gold border. Inside this box, the text "SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE" is written in a gold-colored sans-serif font. Below this, the contact information is listed in a white sans-serif font: "Contact Priscilla Slaughter, Director of Development and Patron Engagement, at pslaughter@peoriasymphony.org or call the PSO office at 309.671.1096 for more information." A glass of whiskey is partially visible on the right side of the poster.

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