SINGING HER STORY:
OUR SUFFRAGIST SISTERS

BELLA LUMINA'S 7TH SEASON

featuring Andrea Ramsey's

"Suffrage Cantata"

guest choirs from:
Minnehaha Academy, Minnetonka High School,
and Mound Westonka High School

Mikalia Bradberry *soloist*
Victoria Wilgocki *narrator*

Chris Starr *piano*
Barb Savereide and Suzanne Damberg *violin*
Cassandra Herold *viola* | Andrea Glass *cello*
Jeff Bina and David Birrow *percussion*

"It is very important to share with our younger generation this oftentimes untold story of the 72-year+ struggle to gain the voting rights for women.

We hope that the words, stories, and actions of our ancestral Suffragist sisters will inspire youth to keep carrying the torch of equality and keep marching for justice."

MICHELLE GEHRZ *artistic director*

Saturday, March 8 | 3:30 PM
Westwood Lutheran Church 9001 Cedar Lake Rd S, St. Louis Park
BellaLuminaChoir.org

Bella Lumina
spreading light, hope & joy through song

ROSTER
of singers

BELLA LUMINA

directed by
Michelle Gehrz

Cheri Almquist
Helen Arneson *
Shawna Bartelmehs
Darcy Bodger
Ruth Campbell
Noreen Carlson *^
Angela Carpenter
Caroline Drew
Mari Espeland ^
Gena Gerard
Ally Girard
Gay Gonnerman
Kathleen Grindeland
Monica Healy ^
Julianne Heil
Stephanie Henry
Ruth Hoffman
Paige Kamin*
Barbara Kern-Pieh *
Tanya Kirschenman
Jan Lillemo
Julie Lindstrom
Emma Lohman
Doreen Lorentz
Rhonda Lundgren
Mindy Mennicke ^
Joan Nelson
Kay Netland
Jill Oliveri
Jean Olson *
Sandy Olson
Nancy Pearson
Larissa Penny
Tricia Porter
Sandy Ricci
Cynthia Scherer ^
Jamie Schmidt ^
Cara Schoenberg
Chris Starr ^
Cindy Stauffer
Julie Stauffer
Amy Steffen
Judy Sunderland
Suz Swanson
Shari Tivy
Virve Van Sloun
Karin Vavrichek *
Nancy Verba
Heidi Vickerman
Beth VonEschen
Jodi Washek
Grace Zabel

* Board members
^ Section leaders

MINNETONKA HIGH SCHOOL TREBLE CHOIR

directed by
Aaron Kohrs

Zoya Aghamirzai
Alex Bender
Grace Bielke
Quinn Born
Sydney Brunn
Lexi Burnett
Piper De Zee
Libby Donohue
Sadie Dveris
Isabel Foerster
Blair Gerling
Gwyneth Grage
Elle Grassel
Cece Griggs
Maura Haley
Emma Hollands
Lucy Hermann
Hailey Holm
Anna Janes
Ellyana Johnson
Nola Kleinhans
Emma Massey
Julia Niland
Annika Peters
Evalyn Pitkin
Tessa Putnam
Aila Salmi
Ella Schumacher
Erin Sefton
Sky Smith
Madeleine Stay
Nico Stratton
Tylar Swenson
Maren Unze
Addi Volbrecht
Meara Whittier
Laila Williamson
Addie Winter
Lydia Wolyniec
Kait Woodford
Mia Wray

MINNEHAHA ACADEMY CANTABILE CHOIR

directed by
Karen Lutgen

Bianca Aquirre Millan
Britta Anderson
Addison Bergstrom
Halea Boldt
Frances Brown
Amira Campen
Mae De Haven
Sofia Gjerdahl
Tilla Lindstrom
Camrynn Mann
Larissa Moraga
Taylor Nylin
Liz Olson
Clarissa Ross
Catherine Sime-Mackintosh
Olivia Simmons
Afrata Tegenge
Layla Terfa
Vivian Wang

MOUND WESTONKA HIGH SCHOOL BEL CANTO CHOIR

directed by
Kelly Newell

Zoe Bass
Ida Butterfield
Avery Eaton
Ellie Falkner
Evy Gawtry
Megan Hendrickson
Kaiden Hesse
Izzy Hill
Isla Holzfaster
Addy Johanneck
Kaia Kallestad
Rachel Keller
Netaleah Khamvongsa
Enya Lampinen
Emma Leger
Sophia Martinez Delgado
Kate Miller
Bryn Moch
Maddy Nelson
Lilly Nikolov
Addie Norum
Madeline Olszewski
Sam Parise
Harriet Pettitt
JoJo Schwartz
Savannah Staunton
Mikaela Watson

1848
The fight for women's suffrage begins in the U.S.

1850
First national women's rights convention in Massachusetts. Sojourner Truth gives her famous "Ain't I A Woman" speech.

1872
Susan B. Anthony votes ... illegally.

1873
United States vs. Susan B. Anthony

1884
Ida B. Wells sues the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad, successfully.

1913
Inez Milholland led the Woman Suffrage Procession on horseback in advance of President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration.

1920
19th amendment ratified: The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. But, it did not address other kinds of discrimination: women from marginalized communities were excluded on the basis of gender and race.

Composer's NOTES

BY ANDREA RAMSEY

Suffrage Cantata represents well over a year of research, planning, and composing. The journey took me places I never imagined. I explored multiple suffrage exhibits in Washington, D.C., visited Susan B. Anthony's home, stood in the parlor where she was arrested for illegal voting, and held the handwritten letters of Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and Carrie Chapman Catt while at the University of Rochester archives. When I began this, I had no idea the 19th amendment represented seventy-two years of struggle. I didn't know any of these women's names, save Susan B. Anthony, who only received passing mention in my history books growing up. Walking through a bookstore, have you ever noticed how little of the history section is comprised of women? In working through this project, I have dwelled with women who were American heroes, but in many cases dismissed or outright silenced by the major authors of history. Even within the women's suffrage movement, women silenced other women. Leading white suffragists were dismissive of and in some instances intentionally omitted the efforts of suffragists of color from historical records.

My personal commitment to include diverse perspectives from the movement intensified the process in ways I hadn't anticipated. For every scrap of information I could find on Mary Church Terrell or Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, I could find 50 to 100 more documents on Susan B. Anthony or Alice Paul. Instances like this challenge us to critically examine the history we are presented. Who is telling the story? How do their experiences impact the story? And, if we are fortunate enough to write a story ourselves, are we sharing all the voices we can? ...

To read Andrea Ramsey's complete notes, scan QR code.

Suffrage Cantata Movements

I
It is Coming
Early Women's Rights Perspectives

II
Failure is Impossible
Illegal Voting, Arrest and Trial of Susan B. Anthony

III
A Woman's Place
Ida B. Wells-Barnett and the 1913 Women's Suffrage Procession in Washington, D.C.

IV
Shall Not be Denied
The Silent Sentinels, Arrest, Imprisonment and Abuse

V
Forward Into Light
Ratification and the Journey Forward

1965
Voting Rights Act is passed, outlawing discriminatory voting practices. ALL women can vote!

1971
26th amendment ratified: lowering the voting age to 18 from 21.

1982
Voters with disabilities were given special protections.

2014
Voting Rights Amendment Act introduced by Congress.

Although we have made significant gains in voting rights, discrimination at the polls persists today and cannot be dismissed as a relic of the past. - ACLU

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR – MICHELLE GEHRZ is a passionate music educator, choral conductor, pianist and organist who loves working with musicians of all ages! She directs community choirs ranging in age from 5 to 95. In addition to her being the Artistic Director of Bella Lumina, she is on staff with Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs based in Bloomington as well as the Music Association of Minnetonka. Michelle serves as piano accompanist for MN All-State Choirs as well as ACDA-MN Honor Choirs. Her music degrees and training are from St. Olaf College, University of Notre Dame and University of St. Thomas. Michelle was honored with the *Choral Director of the Year* award in November 2024 through the MN State American Choral Directors Association.

SOLOIST – MIKALIA BRADBERRY is a mezzo-soprano currently based out of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Niagara Falls natives, she received her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Abilene Christian University and her Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. Ms. Bradberry's operatic highlights include Carmen in *La Tragedie de Carmen*, and Madame de Croissy in *Poulenc's Les Dialogues de Carmélites*, among others. Ms. Bradberry recently performed as a soloist in Mahler's Symphony No. 2 *Resurrection* with Mississippi Valley Orchestra. She will perform *Mozart's Requiem* with Mississippi Valley in April of 2025. She is on voice faculty at MacPhail Center for Music and is a former student of Dr. Julie Pruett.

NARRATOR – VICTORIA WILGOCKI serves as the Pastor of St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ, St. Paul. She earned a B.A. in Music from St. Olaf College, a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Hamline University, and a Master of Divinity from United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. Victoria is a proud mom of two young men, and she lives in the Powderhorn Park neighborhood of south Minneapolis.

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Jeff Bina, percussion, maintains an active performing schedule as an orchestral percussionist, a pianist, and a drummer. He performs regularly with Brio Brass, Rochester Symphony Orchestra, Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Angelica Cantanti, and ACDA-MN. He also works as a clinician for Rochester middle school and junior high music students. Jeff attended St. Olaf College, studying piano and percussion, majoring in Music and Management Studies. He works for VocalEssence as Director of Finance and Operations.

David Birrow, percussion, is as also an educator with over eighteen years of teaching K-12 general music and percussion in both public and private schools. As a freelance percussionist, he regularly performs with a wide range of ensembles in the Twin Cities. David is a Master Teacher at Breck School where he covers a diverse curriculum including music theory, electronic music, world music, and bucket drumming, and directs the school's marimba ensemble, BATO BATO!

Suzanne Damberg, violin, loves the many musical opportunities the Twin Cities offers. She is a member of the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra; and plays with the Roseville String Ensemble, the Exultate Chamber Choir and Orchaestra, and several tango groups. She has a BA in musicology and performance from Mt. Holyoke College, and a Masters in Organizational Leadership and Dispute Resolution from St. Catherine University.

Andrea Glass, cello, teaches at MacPhail Center for Music. She is the founder and instructor for Cello Rock at MacPhail, a cello ensemble that performs rock and pop music. She has collaborated and performed with various groups around the Twin Cities such as Exultate and Bella Lumina, and is also a member of the Minneapolis-based Nirvana tribute band, NIVRANA. Andrea received her Master's degree from the University of Northern Colorado and her Bachelor's degree from Bowling Green State University, both in cello performance.

Cassandra Herold, viola, is a 5th grade orchestra teacher in Stillwater, MN. She also has a small studio of violin and viola students, and plays viola with the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra. In her spare time, Cassandra loves being outside in nature gardening and enjoying outdoor activities in all seasons.

Barb Savereide, violin, has been concertmaster of the Metropolitan Symphony since 2002. She is also an active freelance musician and is a regular sub with the South Dakota Symphony. Barb directs the youth choir at her church and enjoys teaching private violin and viola in her home studio in Eden Prairie.

Chris Starr, piano, is a retired high school choir teacher and is currently teaching voice lessons at Waconia High School. She plays for church services in Glencoe and Norwood Young America as well as directing a children's church choir. This is her third season singing with Bella Lumina.

I. It is Coming

– Content warning: partner abuse –

CHOIR:
Deeply have I felt the degradation of being a woman.

NARRATOR:
1830. Of the 24 United States, half were slave states. Of the 2 million enslaved, half were women. For those women not enslaved, voting, speaking in public, preaching in church, and a formal education were not permitted. When a woman married–usually at a young age, her property became her husband's. Her body was not hers to control. She was expected to bear many children and raise them while tending to the labors of a 19th century household . . .

CHOIR:
Deeply have I felt the degradation of being a woman.
Not the degradation of being what God made woman,
but what man has made her.

NARRATOR:
If a woman wanted to work, there were few options. She could be a teacher, seamstress, housekeeper, or mill worker, but she would be paid one-third what men in the same positions were paid, yet expected to pay taxes in full. Even what she earned was not her own, as her husband could collect her wages from her employer at any time.

CHOIR:
Deeply have I felt the degradation of being a woman.

NARRATOR:
Legally, she was her husband's property. If he beat her, she had no recourse. If he abused her, she could not divorce him. If he wanted a divorce, he could take her children and leave her destitute.

CHOIR:
It will be said that the husband provides for the wife
feeds, clothes, and shelters her,
Yes, he keeps her . . . as he keeps a favorite horse
and by law they are both his property.
Oh, the degradation,
I ask no favors for my sex,
Just take your feet from off our necks,
Permit us to stand up right,
Oh, the degradation.
It is time we gave man faith in woman,
And still more,
time we gave woman faith in herself!

NARRATOR:
The United States women's rights movement of the 1800s came to life in the ancestral home of the Haudenosaunee (dubbed "Iroquois" by French and English settlers). This land – called the state of New York after colonization – was home to a variety of women's lived experiences.

Middle class white women aired the frustration of their constrained realities to one another. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who would go on to be a leader in the women's rights movement, described attending a small tea party of disgruntled women, where in addition to serving tea, she also "poured out the torrent" of her "long accumulating discontent."

Meanwhile, Black women were living in a state that had just ended slavery. Full emancipation arrived in 1827 for New Yorkers. Women like Harriet Jacobs and Sojourner Truth had both endured the torture of slavery, and were now sharing their personal stories as activists for abolition and supporters of women's rights.

And the women of the six Indigenous nations of the Haudenosaunee were living in communities that modeled women's equality to men. They owned property, had a voice in religious life, nominated leaders, and removed them if necessary.

Some early women's rights leaders had interactions with the Haudenosaunee, including Matilda Joslyn Gage, who was adopted into the Wolf clan of the Mohawk nation and given a name meaning "she who holds the sky."

CHOIR:
One day, the women got tired enough to move.

NARRATOR:
Charlotte Woodward, 19 years old: "At first, we traveled quite alone, but before we had gone many miles, we came on other wagon loads of women, bound in the same direction. At different crossroads, we saw wagons coming from every part of the country, and before we reached Seneca Falls, we were a procession."

CHOIR:
One day, the women got tired enough to move.

NARRATOR:
When Charlotte's wagon reached the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, over 300 people were there including 40 men who were permitted inside, but not allowed to speak for the first day. When Elizabeth Cady Stanton presented the Declaration

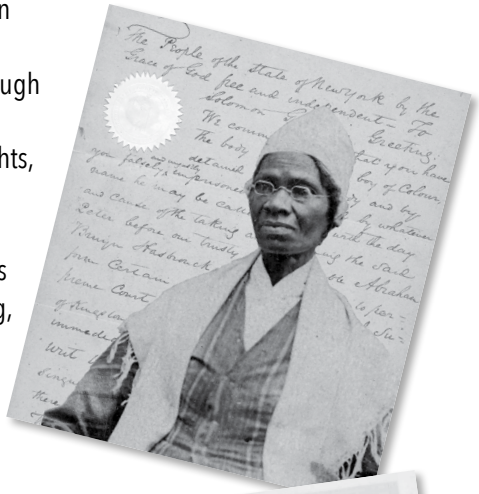
of Rights and Sentiments, her voice was so quiet that many struggled to hear her. The document, modeled after the Declaration of Independence, contained 11 resolutions to be voted upon the following day.

All resolutions passed easily, except the one Stanton had authored alone, which called for the enfranchisement of women. One man stood to defend the resolution. His name was Frederick Douglass, and after he spoke, it passed by two votes.

NARRATOR:
1853. Broadway Tabernacle, New York.

Sojourner Truth had endured much in her life, but she refused to let her life's light be determined by the darkness that surrounded her.

SOLOIST (Sojourner Truth):
We have all been thrown
down so low,
We have been long enough
trodden now,
But we will have our rights,
See if we don't!
See if you can!
You may hiss as much as
you like, but it is coming,
It is coming one day.



CHOIR:
So low
Long trodden
But we will have our rights,
And you can't keep us from them,
See if you can!
One day, oh one day,
the women got tired,
One day the women got
tired enough to move.
It is coming,
One day.

II. Failure is Impossible

NARRATOR:
Three years after Seneca Falls, Elizabeth Cady Stanton became friends with a woman whose name would one day be synonymous with women's suffrage: Susan B. Anthony. Susan was unmarried and able to travel and lecture while Elizabeth was busy tending to many children at home. A partnership was formed, or as Elizabeth put it, "I forged the thunderbolts and Susan fired them."

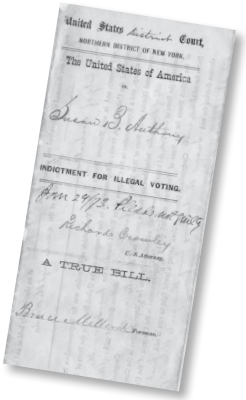
On November 5, 1872, Anthony voted–illegally–setting into motion a plan she hoped would eventually gain the women's vote. The 14th Amendment contained ambiguous language. Stanton and Anthony hoped it could be exploited for the cause of women's suffrage. If all persons born in the United States were citizens, didn't that include women? Weren't women citizens?

Seeing an ad in a Rochester paper that encouraged registration for the upcoming election, Susan took her three sisters and 11 other women down to the local barbershop. At first, they were ignored, and then asked to leave, but when Susan read the 14th Amendment to the registrars and threatened to sue, the men surprisingly agreed. They were convinced by Susan's promise that she would pay their fines if the government ever came after them. Her act of voting became a national story, yet 13 days later, a federal marshal knocked at her door. Seeming embarrassed, he indicated Susan was to be arrested and should come downtown, but no rush. Susan insisted that if he believed her to be a criminal, he should arrest her just as he would any man. She went to change, and upon returning, presented her wrists to the officer for handcuffing. He would not cuff her but did accompany her. As they boarded the trolley, the driver asked for her fare, and she announced–loudly enough for every passenger to hear–that she was traveling at the expense of the federal government. Pointing at the marshal, she said . . .

CHOIR:
Ask him for my fare!

NARRATOR:
After her lawyer bailed her out of jail, Susan B. Anthony spent the months before her trial delivering a lecture titled: "Is it a crime for a citizen of the United States to vote?" She gave this lecture in all 29 towns of Monroe County and convinced so many people of her reasoning that the prosecution had to move the case to a neighboring county.

CHOIR:
We the people, formed this Union.
Women as well as men.
It is mockery to talk of the blessings of liberty while we are denied the ballot!



NARRATOR:
United States vs. Susan B. Anthony took place in June of 1873, and lasted two days. With an all-white, all-male jury, and a judge who had written his decision before any of the evidence was presented, it was hardly a fair trial.
Susan had not been allowed to speak until the final day when the judge ordered her to stand and asked: "Has the prisoner anything to say why sentence shall not be pronounced?"

CHOIR:
Yes, your honor, I have many things to say, for in your verdict of guilty you have trampled every vital principle of government! Robbed of citizenship, I am degraded to the status of a subject under this so-called form of government!

NARRATOR:
The judge ordered Susan B. Anthony to sit down (something he would have to do six separate times before she was finished) and he sentenced her to pay a fine of $100 plus the costs of prosecution, but Susan had thoughts on that . . .

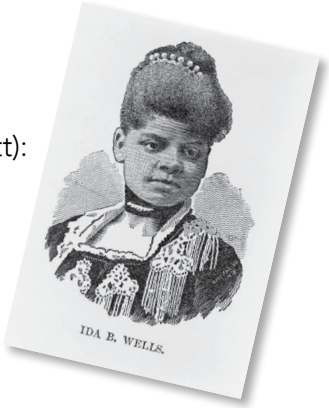
CHOIR:
I rebel against your man-made, unjust forms of law that tax, fine, imprison, and hang women while they deny them representation in government, I shall urge all women: "Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God!"

NARRATOR:
Susan B. Anthony kept her word to the judge. She never paid the $100 fine for as long as she lived. Traveling in frozen railcars, bone-jarring carriages, and often being refused hotel rooms because she was alone, she tirelessly lectured, lobbied and petitioned–devoting her entire life to the cause of women's rights. She encouraged younger women to "try their wings," as she put it, by cultivating their writing and speaking abilities, and though she did not live to see the day women could vote, she knew that day would come. In the year of her passing, at age 86, she was still inspiring those who would carry her banner forward:

CHOIR:
I am here for a little time only, and then my place will be filled.
The fight must not cease, you must see that it does not stop.
With such women consecrating their lives, failure is impossible.

III. A Woman's Place

– Content warning: racism, violence –



SOLOIST (Ida B. Wells-Barnett):
I stayed in Susan B. Anthony's house, had a speaking engagement in Rochester. The next morning she had some errands in town, so she said I could use her stenographer.

NARRATOR:
Ida B. Wells-Barnett was born in Mississippi, six months before the Emancipation Proclamation. After losing both parents and a sibling to yellow fever, she convinced the school board in Memphis that she was 18 years old so she could be hired as a teacher and provide for her younger siblings. Eight years later, Ida was fired from teaching for writing about school corruption in a newspaper column. A talented writer, Ida decided to start her own newspaper. Ida's paper grew to be a successful endeavor. She boldly called out white supremacy and shined the light of truth on the horrors of lynching in the South. But when her friends who owned a grocery business were lynched, and she published that their lynchings were because they were economically successful black men, an angry white mob destroyed her newspaper building while she was away was on a trip. Armed men waited outside her home to kill her, and friends warned her that she could not return to Memphis . . .So Ida fled to Chicago.

SOLOIST:
The stenographer never ventured upstairs, I simply assumed she was occupied, but when Susan B. Anthony got back from town, the mood intensified, and downstairs she went swiftly, to ask the stenographer why she did not show . . .

NARRATOR:
The stenographer told Susan B. Anthony that she would not take dictation from a woman of color.

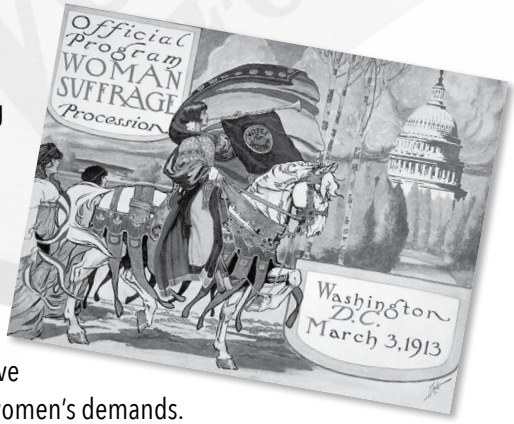
SOLOIST:
Susan B. Anthony steeled her gaze, and she spoke calm and low: "An insult to my guest is an insult to me, come get your bonnet, and go!"

NARRATOR:
An activist on multiple fronts, Ida fought to help women gain the right to vote in Illinois, and confronted white women who ignored women of color in the movement. A founding member of the NAACP, she established the Alpha Suffrage Club, and lectured internationally. Taking on injustice was a lifelong pursuit for Ida. Even as a teacher in the South, she sued the railroad when they forcibly removed her from her car . . .

SOLOIST:
A woman's place is a clean train car,
I paid 30 cents for my ticket,
when the conductor tried to put me in the smoking car,
I told him "Sir, I won't go in it."
And when he tried to move me, I bit his hand,
bit it hard enough he had to get another man.
And after the two of them took me to the smoke
and squalor I sued the railroad, and won $500.
Yes, white women need the ballot, but my women even more,
I'd like to buy a railroad ticket and choose my own car.
When the men try to put you where you don't belong,
You square your jaw and fix your gaze,
'Cause a woman's seat is the seat she bought,
when a woman knows her place.

NARRATOR:
March 1913, the staging grounds near the Capitol filled with women finding their places. Washington, D.C. was about to experience a parade like no other. Horses neighed, wagons creaked, and musicians warmed up . . .

Women marching was a radical idea. Men marched–not women; but parade organizers, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns wanted to show how power did not rest only with men. They also knew this was the perfect day, given Woodrow Wilson's inauguration was the next day and there would be lots of press in town.



Inez Milholland led the charge. Riding a white horse, wearing a gold tiara–she would forever be known as the Joan of Arc of suffrage. Behind her, the first wagon of the parade bore a massive banner stating the women's demands.

CHOIR:
We demand an amendment to the United States Constitution enfranchising the women of this country.
We march to give evidence of our determination that this simple act of justice be done.

NARRATOR:
There were 8,000 women on Pennsylvania Avenue in academic gowns and work uniforms. There were banners from almost every state–including a delegation from Illinois, the state that Ida B. Wells had traveled from Chicago to join. Unfortunately, Illinois, like many states, wanted only white women in their delegation. These states worried that southern voters would not support suffrage if Black women were seen marching alongside. Ida was asked to march at the back of the parade with the rest of the Black women. At 52 years old, and having done more for suffrage than most of white Illinois delegates, she was incensed. Wounded, but determined to take her rightful place, she did not go to the back, but instead waited on the sidelines. And when Illinois marched by, Ida stepped out of the crowd, linked arms with two allies near the front and marched the entire rest of the parade.

Wells-Barnett marching with other women suffragists in a parade in Washington, D.C., 1913

CHOIR:
A woman's place is the ballot box, and we're marching steady to win it,
And when the people try to tell us we belong in the house, we say "Yes, the House and the Senate!"
8,000 women marching to take a stand for the right to vote afforded every other man,
A woman needs a ballot far more than a petticoat,
Standing tall, we are marching steady for the right to vote.

CHOIR AND SOLOIST:
When the world tries to put you where you don't belong,
you square your jaw and fix your gaze,
'cause a woman's place is wherever she walks
when a woman knows her place.

IV. Shall Not Be Denied

– Content warning: violence –

NARRATOR:
"We all believe in the idea of democracy . . . woman suffrage is the application of democracy to women." – Mable Ping-Hua Lee, suffragist, and the first Chinese woman to earn a doctorate in the United States.

CHOIR:
It is our turn.
What are we going to do in answer to the call of duty?
When men are denied justice they go to war,
This is our war.
We fight with banners instead of guns.
Liberty must be fought for,
You cannot be neutral,
You must join with us who believe in the bright future,
Or be destroyed by those who would return us to the dark past.

CHOIR AND SOLOIST:
Women of the nation, this is the time to fight!

NARRATOR:
When the doorkeeper got up to let Mabel Vernon sit down, her friend joked it was because she looked pregnant. Indeed, Mabel had secretly pinned a large banner under her skirts. President Woodrow Wilson was giving his December address to Congress, and at the opportune moment, Mabel unfurled the yellow sateen, dropping it over the balcony with the help of her friends.

CHOIR AND SOLOIST:
Mister President, What will you do for woman suffrage?

NARRATOR:
A murmur rustled through the floor, but in this moment, and in subsequent meetings, Woodrow Wilson remained unmoved.

Harriet Stanton Blatch floated a new idea: the silent sentinels–an unceasing presence of women at the White House gates with messaged banners in the suffrage colors of purple, yellow, and white. This would be radical. Labor pickets were one thing, but to take up a grievance with the President? No one had ever picketed the White House like this before. The first line of sentinels arrived in January of 1917.

CHOIR:
Mister President, What will you do for woman suffrage?
How long must women wait for liberty?

NARRATOR:
The sentinels kept watch through all of winter and apart from the occasional insult, things had been fairly calm. But when the U.S. entered World War I in April, picketing a wartime president was seen as unpatriotic. The banners were sharply worded–calling out the President and envoys from other countries. Angry mobs threw rocks and eggs. Banners were torn, and women were shoved, kicked, and dragged across the pavement.

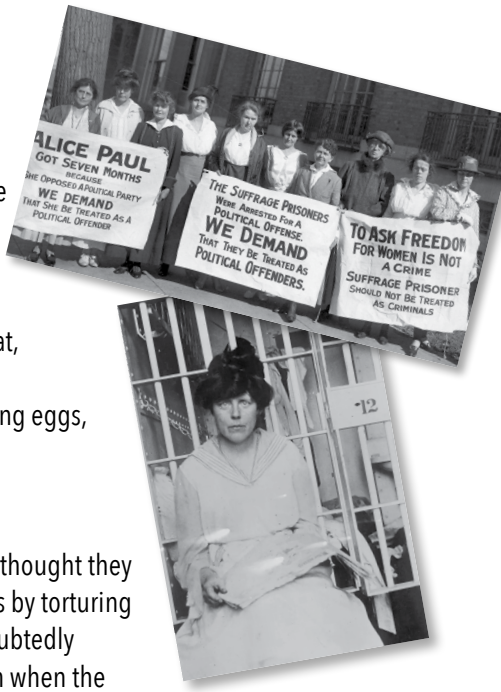
For the next two years, almost 500 women would be arrested on ludicrous charges such as "obstructing traffic" or "meeting on public grounds." And as the women persisted, the prison sentences grew even longer.

CHOIR:
Democracy should begin at home.
We demand justice and self-government
To the Russian envoys, help us make this nation really free . . .
Kaiser Wilson! 20,000,000 American women are
denied self-government.
Take the beam out of your own eye.

SOLOIST:
Mister President, how long must women be denied a voice?

NARRATOR:
When the leader of the National Woman's Party, Alice Paul, was sentenced to seven months in the district jail, she wrote her mother not to worry–reassuring her it would merely be a "delightful rest"–but Alice's reality in prison would be far from delightful. Before her sentence was over, Alice would be subjected to a foul-smelling cell, meals of worm-ridden pork, placed in solitary confinement, deprived of sleep, and ultimately moved to the psychopathic ward, having her mental fitness questioned . . .

Alice went on hunger strike to protest the horrible conditions. Three times a day, she was strapped down, a tube shoved up her nose, and milk and raw eggs funneled down her throat. Fellow suffragist, Rose Winslow endured the same treatment, smuggling out details of their conditions on scraps of paper.



CHOIR:
No fresh air,
Raw salt pork,
One feels so forsaken,
Electric light sharp in my face
Unremitting intimidation,
Investigation of my sanity,
Gasping, the agony,
Forced a tube down my throat,
Forced a tube up my nose,
We hear them outside cracking eggs,
everything turned black.

NARRATOR:
If the Wilson administration thought they would weaken the suffragists by torturing their leader, they were undoubtedly surprised on November 10th when the longest picket line yet appeared outside the White House. Over 30 women were arrested, including Lucy Burns, who helped form the National Woman's Party with Alice Paul. All of them were sent to the Occoquan workhouse, away from Alice in the District Jail.

The women were greeted upon arrival by the workhouse superintendent and up to 40 angry men wielding clubs. Women were beaten, choked, and violently thrown into cells–some knocked unconscious. Lucy Burns's hands were tied over her head. Her clothes stripped off, she was left only with a blanket. Calling out to the others, she was threatened with a gag and straight-jacket.

CHOIR:
The warden threatened,
Men picked me up bodily,
They lifted her up and banged her down,
I heard the cries and blows,

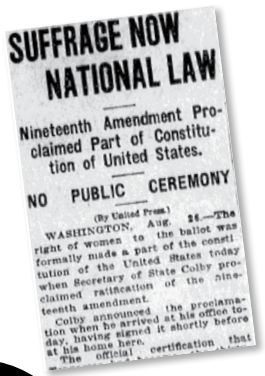
We thought she was dead,
She didn't move,
Banged her down twice,
Over an iron bench,
the brace and the bit in our mouths,
the straight-jacket on our bodies,
We were so terrified,
A cold wind blew,
We kept very still.

NARRATOR:
One woman had a heart attack. When the others cried for help, the guards ignored their pleas. This evening would be known as "The Night of Terror." As many as 30 women would go on hunger strikes in protest of their horrible treatment in prison—many enduring forced feedings just as Alice Paul had. The administration—faced with negative press, and women who could not be broken, released all the suffrage prisoners by the end of November. Upon their release, Alice Paul proclaimed: "We are put out of jail as we were put in—at the whim of government. They tried to terrorize us . . . they could not, so they freed us." The Susan B. Anthony amendment passed the House in 1918, but failed to clear the Senate. So the suffragists continued their protests. The "watchfires" involved burning copies of Woodrow Wilson's speeches as the empty words that they were, and in February of 1919 a trainload of former suffrage prisoners went on a cross-country speaking tour telling of their experiences.

By May, a newly elected, pro-suffrage majority of Congress would ensure the Susan B. Anthony amendment passed both the House and the Senate with relative ease.

NARRATOR:
The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. From here, the amendment would need to be ratified by 36 states. Though public sentiment on suffrage was shifting, there was much work left to be done.

CHOIR AND SOLOIST:
Shout the revolution of women,
Shout the revolution of liberty,
Rise, glorious women of the earth
the voiceless and the free.
Shout the revolution of women,
Shout the revolution of liberty,
Rise, glorious women of the earth, the voiceless and the free, all shout!
Shout the revolution of women,
Shout the revolution of liberty.


SUFFRAGE NOW NATIONAL LAW

Nineteenth Amendment Proclaimed Part of Constitution of United States.

NO PUBLIC CEREMONY

(By United Press)
WASHINGTON, Aug. 26.—The right of women to the ballot was formally made a part of the constitution of the United States today when Secretary of State Colby proclaimed ratification of the nineteenth amendment.
Colby announced the proclamation when he arrived at his office today, having signed it shortly before at his home here.
The official certification that

V. Forward Into Light

SOLOIST (Mary Church Terrell):
By a miracle, the 19th amendment has been ratified.
We women now have a weapon we have never possessed before.
It will be a shame and reproach if we do not use it.

CHOIR AND SOLOIST:
Woman is no longer a servant, but equal to man.
In her hands are possibilities,
The hour of degradation is past,
Woman is no longer a servant, but equal to man.

NARRATOR:
Alice Paul raised a toast and unfurled a celebratory banner outside headquarters. She'd been quietly sewing a new star on the banner for each state that ratified the 19th amendment, and now it was finished. 36 stars. 36 states. In August of 1920, all eyes were on Tennessee, the final state to ratify.

In Nashville, freshman legislator Harry Burn had an anti-suffrage red rose on his lapel, but the letter in his pocket weighed more heavily on his mind . . .

CHOIR:
Dear Son,
Hurrah and vote for suffrage!
Don't keep them in doubt . . .
I have been watching to see how you stood,
I have not noticed anything yet
Don't forget, don't forget to be a good boy
. . .
Your Mother.

NARRATOR:
Mrs. J. L. Burn was a widowed, tax-paying landowner and when her son, Harry, cast his vote of "aye," the room gave way to confused gasps. Had it really happened? Had women actually won the vote? The room exploded. There was weeping, screaming, and singing.

CHOIR:
Women, be glad today!
Let your voices ring out!
Though morning seems to linger,
O'er hilltops far away,
The shadow bears the promise of a brighter coming day.

NARRATOR:
Dr. Mary Walker was the first woman to win the Congressional Medal of Honor. A surgeon and a spy in the Civil War, she wrote

"Nothing but the ballot in woman's hand will right these wrongs." But for women of color, the struggle was more complex than this." Having picketed with the Silent Sentinels Mary Church Terrell wrote: "A white woman has only one handicap to overcome: that of sex. I have two, both sex and race."

Black suffragists worked hard in their churches and communities, often being ignored by white suffragists and written out of historical records.

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper remarked: "I do not believe that giving woman the ballot is going to cure all the ills of life. I do not believe that white women are dewdrops just exhaled from the skies I think that like men, they may be divided into the good, the bad and the indifferent. The good would vote according to their convictions and principles; the bad as dictated by prejudice or malice; and the indifferent will vote on the strongest side of the question with the winning party."

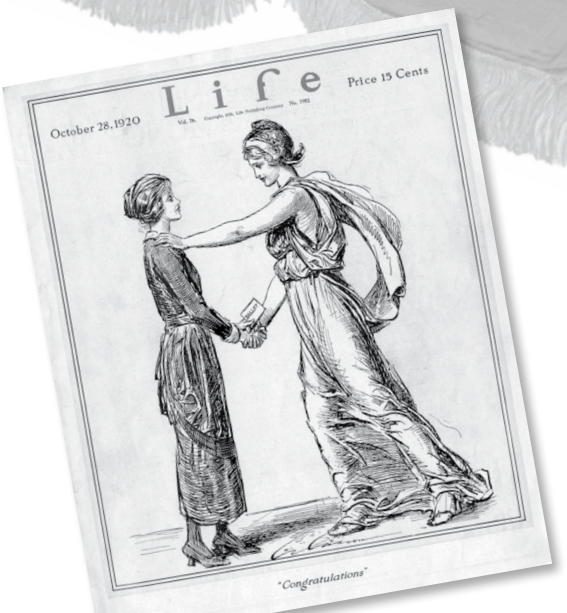
SOLOIST, then all choirs:
Lifting as we climb, onward and upward we go,
struggling and striving and hoping,
we knock at the bar of justice, asking an equal chance.

NARRATOR:
The 19th amendment was a 72-year struggle, but for women of color, the struggle would continue. Zitkala-Ša, of Yankton Sioux heritage, fought for Indigenous Americans to gain citizenship in 1924. Their right to vote, however, was decided state by state with New Mexico and Arizona being the last in 1948. Chinese immigrants would vote in 1943, and for Black women repeatedly suppressed at the polls . . . the poll tax was ended in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act created in 1965. Voters with disabilities were given special protections in 1982.

As Carrie Chapman Catt said: "Women have suffered agony of soul which you can never comprehend, that you and your daughters might inherit political freedom. That vote has been costly. Prize it."

CHOIR:
Lifting as we climb, onward and upward we go,
struggling and striving and hoping, we knock at the bar of justice, asking an equal chance.
Forward out of darkness,
Leave behind the night,
Forward out of error forward into light,
Forward out of darkness,
Forward into light.

SOLOIST:
Forward out of darkness,
Leave behind the night,
Forward out of error
Forward into light,
Forward out of darkness,
Forward into light.
Lifting as we climb.



Images from Library of Congress, National Archives NYC, National Park Service, National Women's History Museum.

Join us for our final concert of the seventh season:

SINGING HER STORY

WOMEN'S VOICES FROM BROADWAY

from the unique perspective of female stories, characters & composers

Saturday, May 10 | 4 pm & 7 pm

Minnetonka United Methodist Church
17611 Lake Street Extension, Minnetonka

With gratitude to our audience members and volunteers as well as ...

Phillip Shoultz and Westwood Lutheran Church – for their hospitality and support of this concert.

Aaron Kohrs, Karen Lutgen and Kelly Newell (directors of guest choirs) – for jumping at the chance to have your singers be part of this cantata and for the extra time you gave.

Parents of guest singers – for transporting your kids and supporting their musical talents and involvement with this event.

Gethsemane Lutheran Church and staff – for supporting Bella Lumina on a weekly basis for our rehearsals.

Our extraordinarily talented instrumentalists, narrator, and soloist – thank you for saying *yes* to this event and for your sublime artistry!

Julie Lindstrom Design – for our lovely promotional materials, social media content, and program design.

Contemporary Images – for accomodating our print deadlines with quality work.

Mitchell VonEschen - for his technical skills with our concert visuals.

... and to our 2024-2025 Sustaining Sponsor:

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3. **SHOP!** Indicate your Bella seller at checkout.

– Plant pick up is on Monday, May 5 | 3-6 pm –
Gethsemane Lutheran Church south parking lot

Bella Lumina spreads light, hope, and joy through the power of song. We present repertoire of high artistic quality that delivers a powerful message through illuminating texts and inspirational arrangements, showcasing the extraordinary beauty of treble voices. **BellaLuminaChoir.org**

Bella Lumina
spreading light, hope & joy through song