

Remember the Women Institute

Presents

Women, Theater, and the Holocaust

April 8, 2021 – 4:00 PM EDT



This program is presented via Zoom and then available as a video recording at www.rememberwomen.org.

PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Rochelle G. Saidel, Founder and Executive Director of Remember the Women Institute

ETTY

Excerpts, adapted and performed by Susan Stein from the diary of Dutch Holocaust victim Etty Hillesum. Stein has performed versions of this one-woman play internationally. Etty's words, insights, and beliefs reach out from the Holocaust and allow us to see the power of hope and individual thought in the most extreme circumstances.

Directed by Austin Pendleton.

Photographs: Ricardo Barros, Jewish Historical Museum/Amsterdam

Adapted from *An Interrupted Life and Letters from Westerbork*, Henry Holt & Co., 1996.

<http://www.ettyplay.org>

RENIA & ARIANKA

This one-act-play-in-progress is based on *Renia's Diary: A Holocaust Journal* by Renia Spiegel with her sister, Elizabeth Bellak (Arianka Spiegel). The presentation is adapted and directed by Dr. Meghan Brodie, Associate Professor of Theater at Ursinus College, and performed as a concert reading by Ursinus Theater majors Emily Bradigan, Zara Tabackin, and Ali Wolf.

HERE LIVED (Hier wohnte)

This is a new short one-woman play written by Cynthia L. Cooper. The play tells the story of a New Jersey woman searching for her family roots in Germany. She finds unexpected results from the Stolperstein project and the people there doing remembrance work. The reading is presented by professional actor Ginger Grace, with directorial consulting by Lisa Pelikan.

TALK BACK

Dr. Meghan Brodie
Cynthia L. Cooper
Dr. Rochelle G. Saidel
Susan Stein

BIOGRAPHIES OF PARTICIPANTS

ETTY

Susan Stein

Susan Stein is an actor, playwright, and teaching artist based in New York City. For the past nine years she has been bringing her original play, *Etty*, directed by Austin Pendleton, to theaters, universities, schools, and prisons throughout the United States and parts of Europe. Stein is also an Artist/Scholar in Residence at Classrooms Without Borders. She has been an Artist/Scholar in residence at Cambridge University, Duquesne, Boston College, Vanderbilt, and Chapman University. Stein leads workshops in playwrighting, writing, and acting throughout the United States and the United Kingdom. She studied acting at NYU Graduate School and SUNY Purchase. She was on the faculty of Princeton Day School for thirteen years. See <http://www.ettyplay.org/about.html>.

Austin Pendleton:

Austin Pendleton has been involved with this project since 2006. He helped adapt the script as well as directing it. Pendleton has an extensive career that spans over forty years. He is an American film, television, and stage actor, as well as a playwright, theater director, and teacher. Pendleton wrote the book for *A Minister's Wife*, which opened at the Mitzie E. Newhouse Theater at Lincoln Center. Selected New York directing credits include: *Between Riverside and Crazy* at the Atlantic Theater Company; *Three Sisters*, and *Uncle Vanya* at Classic Stage Company. He is an ensemble member of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company. He is the author of *Orson's Shadow*, *Uncle Bob*, and *Booth*.

RENIA & ARIANKA

Dr. Meghan Brodie

Dr. Meghan Brodie, Director/Adaptor, is Associate Professor of Theater and a faculty member in the Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies program at Ursinus College. She is also a director, dramaturg, and playwright. She directed the English-language world premiere of *In the Underworld*, a darkly comic operetta written by Germaine Tillion while Tillion was imprisoned in Ravensbrück women's concentration camp during World War II. She has partnered with the Remember the Women Institute on several projects about women, theater, and the Holocaust

and is currently writing a play, *Claude & Marcel*, about lesbian surrealist artists and resistance fighters Lucy Schwob and Suzanne Malherbe. See <https://www.meghanbrodie.com/>.

Emily Bradigan

Emily Bradigan, who plays Renia Spiegel, is a current sophomore double majoring in Theater Design & Technology and English at Ursinus College.. Some of her previous Ursinus College performance credits include *Kissing the Witch*, *Rumors*, *9 to 5*, and *The Company of Wolves/Puss in Boots*.

Zara Tabackin

Zara Tabackin, who plays Arianka Spiegel, is a sophomore Biochemistry and Theater double major. Her Ursinus College credits include Beast/Donkeyskin in *Kissing the Witch*, Doralee in *9 to 5* and Cassie in *Rumors*. Zara's previous acting experiences include Annie Who in Broadway's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* at Madison Square Garden, voiceover work with Vox City, and commercial work with Nickelodeon.

Ali Wolf

Ali Wolf, with the role of Narrator/Zygmunt Schwarzer, is a sophomore Theater and History double major. Ali's previous Ursinus College theater credits include roles in *Kissing the Witch*, *The Company of Wolves/Puss in Boots*, and *The Complete History of Ursinus College (Abridged)*.

Special thanks to Jessica Celli for her Polish language assistance and to Shannon Zura and Cassie Mazza for their lighting/technological assistance for the reading of *Renia & Arianka*.

HERE LIVED (Hier wohnte)

Cynthia L. Cooper

Cynthia L Cooper's works in "*Women, Theatre and the Holocaust*" include *Gretel Bergmann* about a Jewish athlete and the 1936 Olympics, *Silence Not, A Love Story* about a Nazi resister, *The Spoken and the Unspoken* about investigating sexual abuse of Jewish women in the Holocaust, *The Box* about care packages to a Polish rescuer, and *At the Train Station in Munich* (to be published, Applause Books Fall 2021). A new play, *I Was A Stranger Too*, is about asylum seekers and people that help them. Her plays have been performed in New York at Primary Stages, The Women's Project, Wings, Lincoln Center's Clark Studio, Museum of Tolerance, Anne Frank Center, in cooperation with Remember the Women Institute, and more, and in cities across the country. She is a two-time Jerome Fellow and her plays are included in 17 publications. Special thanks for *Here Lived* to Anita Geismar; Michael Simonson, Leo Baeck Institute; and Evelyn Fine, Center for Holocaust Family Research and Memorials. See www.cyncooperwriter.net.

Ginger Grace

Credits for Ginger Grace, performer in *Here Lived*, include: Recent Film: *WEDDING MARCH* (Winner, PBS Reel 13 Competition). National Tour: *The Presidents* (opposite Rich Little). Off-Broadway: *The Glass Menagerie* (Top Ten Revivals 2019, *TheatreScene.net*, directors Austin Pendleton & Peter Bloch,); *The Saintliness of Margery Kempe*; *Miss Julie* (The Pearl); *Faust*, (CSC). Regional: *The First Ladies Coalition* (written by Ms. Grace; director Austin Pendleton); *Eleanor Roosevelt: Her Secret Journey*, and *The Color of Light* (Schoolhouse Theater, director Bram Lewis); *Inside Emily Dickinson: Her Poetry & Her Life* (written by Ms. Grace); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (Penobscot); *Doubt* (WSCC). Other Films: *6-minute Mom*, *Frat Star*, *SHEER*.

Lisa Pelikan

The Directorial Consultant for *Here Lived* has been an actor/director/educator in film, theater, television, and the internet for her entire adult life. She has performed before for Remember the Women Institute and is always grateful to be working with the talented Cindy Cooper.

www.lisapelikan.com

Special thanks to Anita Geismar for sharing her personal story; Michael Simonson, head of public outreach and archivist at the Leo Baeck Institute, and Evelyn Fine, founder of the Center for Holocaust Family Research and Memorials.

MODERATOR

Dr. Rochelle G. Saidel

Dr. Rochelle G. Saidel is the founder and executive director of Remember the Women Institute, which since 1997 has conducted research and cultural activities that contribute to including women in history. Her focus is on Jewish women, especially women during the Holocaust and sexual violence. She is the author, editor, or co-editor of eight books including *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp*, *Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the Holocaust*, and *Women, Theater, and the Holocaust: A Resource Handbook*. She was the exhibition coordinator and catalog co-editor for the *VIOLATED! Women in Holocaust and Genocide* international art exhibition, shown in spring 2018 at the Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York City. She has organized conference panels, curated museum exhibitions, presented papers, contributed to anthologies, consulted for films, and lectured internationally for more than forty years. She received her PhD in Political Science from The Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York.

REMEMBER THE WOMEN INSTITUTE

Founded in 1997 and based in New York City, Remember the Women Institute (501c3) conducts and encourages research and cultural activities that contribute to including women in history. Special emphasis is on women in the Holocaust and its aftermath, with domestic violence a more recent additional focus. Through research and related activities, the stories of women -- from the point of view of women -- are made available to be integrated into history and collective memory. The work of the Institute has influenced academic research and publications, as well as popular culture, by encouraging the inclusion of all of humanity in historical and commemorative representations. Projects include research on women and the Holocaust, co-publishing books, creating exhibits, organizing panels at conferences, and cooperating with individuals and other institutes and organizations for programs, films, and exhibits.

Remember the Women Institute has organized panels on women and the Holocaust that include: the groundbreaking workshop, "Beyond Anne Frank: Teaching about Women and the Holocaust," at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem (2006); panels at the Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust; sessions on women and the Holocaust (2005) and sexual violence during the Holocaust (2009) at the World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem; and the first session dealing with sexual violence during the Holocaust, the Association for Jewish Studies (2010).

Women, Theater, and the Holocaust is a project of Remember the Women Institute, which thanks all of the talented participants listed above for making this presentation possible. Special thanks also go to Daniel Glassman, Karen Shulman, Daniel Wolk, and National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene for promotion, to Cynthia L. Cooper for production guidance, and to Declan C. Zhang, Zoom producer. ***Women, Theater, and the Holocaust: A Resource Handbook*** was written and edited by Rochelle G. Saidel and Karen Shulman, and designed by Bonnie Greenfield as an on-line publication. It is available at www.rememberwomen.org.