



SHE CAME / SHE FOUGHT / THEY VOTED

The Suffragist

The Suffragist is a new musical by Nancy Hill Cobb and Cavan Hallman, chronicling the lives and accomplishments of Alice Paul, Carrie Chapman Catt, Ida B. Wells, Lucy Burns, Inez Milholland, and Anna Howard Shaw, centering on the story of Alice Paul, the Quaker pacifist who started a silent revolution.

This project had a developmental production, directed by Rachel Klein, starring Broadway's Nancy Opel, Cathryn Wake, and Joel Waggoner, which performed in July of 2021 at the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

“This is a triumphant launch for this new show — one that deserves more productions, more interpretations and more audiences to experience an artistic view of a chapter of history that needs to be remembered and honored.”

-The Gazette





Above (from left): MaKayla McDonald as "Ida B. Wells"; Archive copy of *The Suffragist* newspaper

“The harrowing moments of *The Suffragist* will suck away viewers’ breath. The hilarious moments mercifully will let them breathe. The drama in between is captivating.”

–*The Gazette*



Above (from left): Cathryn Wake as "Alice Paul" and Nancy Opel as "Carrie Chapman Catt"; Ensemble in Iowa production of *The Suffragist*

About Alice Paul

Alice Paul was a vocal leader of the twentieth century women's suffrage movement. Alice Paul advocated for and helped secure passage of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution, granting women the right to vote. Paul next authored the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923, which has yet to be ratified.

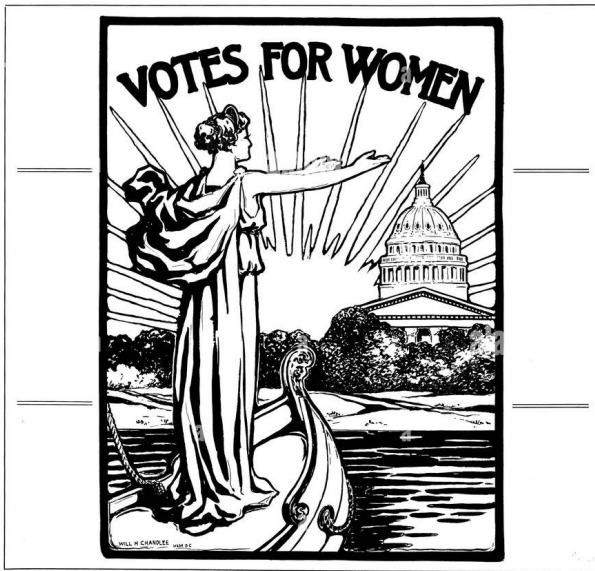
The Suffragist

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OFFICIAL WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE
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On April 7, Paul organized a demonstration and founded the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage to focus specifically on lobbying Congress. In January 1917, Paul and over 1,000 "Silent Sentinels" began eighteen months of picketing the White House, standing at the gates with such signs as, "Mr. President, how long must women wait for liberty?" Paul was sentenced to jail for seven months, where she organized a hunger strike in protest. By 1918, Wilson announced his support for suffrage. It took two more years for the Senate, House, and the required 36 states to ratify the amendment.



Paul organized parades and pickets in support of suffrage. Her first—and the largest—was in Washington, DC, on March 3, 1913, the day before President-elect Woodrow Wilson's inauguration. Approximately eight thousand women marched down Pennsylvania Avenue from the Capitol to the White House, while a half million spectators watched, supported and harassed the marchers. On March 17, Paul met with Wilson, who said it was not yet time for an amendment to the Constitution.



How It Started



Company of *The Suffragist*

Composer Nancy Hill Cobb had a bolt of inspiration in 2015, after learning for the first time about the violence inflicted on American women who protested peacefully as they pursued the right to vote. History courses she had taken never covered the length of the battle, and these women's stories of persistence and courage seemed all-too-forgotten by modern Americans. Particularly shocking were stories of women being tortured in an American jail for their peaceful protesting. Already an internationally acclaimed composer of works for choirs and orchestras, Cobb was inspired to try a new avenue to bring these powerful stories to a contemporary audience: musical theatre.

After seeing Cavan Hallman's celebrated historical musical, *Pictures of Marilyn*, Cobb invited Hallman in 2017 to join the team as librettist and lyricist, and the creative process began. Hallman was immediately struck by the classic conflict between Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt, and their dueling political strategies. The tension between factions trying to effect change through radical means, and those who prefer to change a system from within became increasingly relevant as the United States entered a new era of protest in 2020, and as women's hard-won rights continued to be eroded. As Cobb and Hallman worked toward their Iowa workshop production, it became clear that the story of *The Suffragist*, and these freedom fighters, demanded to be heard now so the lessons of the past are not forgotten.



From left: Cathryn Wake as "Alice Paul" and Marjorie Gast as "Inez Milholland"

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ROLES

ENSEMBLE 9+

**ORCHESTRATIONS
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2 / 7 / 15

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RATED**

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