

# OTP YOUNG COMPANY PRESENTS



Written by  
**Ric Averill**

**APRIL 17, 18, & 19, 2025**  
**7PM**

**GRAND TRAVERSE EVENT  
CENTER & COMEDY CLUB**

OTP Young Company gratefully acknowledges the generous  
program support from the Worthington Family Foundation  
Old Town Playhouse is supported by the Michigan Council for the  
Arts and Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts



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# ABOUT EMMA EDMONDS

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The man known as Franklin Flint Thompson to his fellow soldiers was really a woman - Sarah Emma Edmonds - one of the few females known to have served during the Civil War. Edmonds was born in Canada in 1841, but desperate to escape an abusive father and forced marriage, moved to Flint, Michigan in 1856, where she discovered that life was easier when she dressed as a man. Compelled to join the military out of sense of duty, she enlisted in the 2nd Michigan Infantry as a male field nurse.

As "Franklin Flint Thompson" Edmonds participated in several battles she took place during the Maryland Campaign of 1862, which included Second Battles of Manassas and Antietam. As a field nurse she would be dealing with mass casualties, especially at Antietam which is known as one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War

She is also said to have served as a Union spy and infiltrated the Confederate army several times, although there is no official record of it. One of her alleged aliases was as a Southern sympathizer named Charles Mayberry. Another was as a black man named Cuff, for which she disguised herself using wigs and silver nitrate to dye her skin. And yet another was as Bridget O'Shea, an Irish peddler selling soap and apples.

Malaria eventually forced Edmonds to give up her military career, since she knew she would be discovered if she went to a military hospital and her being listed as a deserter upon leaving made it impossible for her to return after she recovered. Nevertheless, she still continued serving her new country, again as a nurse, though now as a female one at a hospital for soldiers in Washington, D.C.

In 1865, Edmonds published her experiences in the bestselling *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army*, and went on to marry and have children. But her heroic contributions to the Civil War were not forgotten and she was awarded an honorable discharge from the military, a government pension, and admittance to the Grand Army of the Republic as its only female member.

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"Fine art is that in which the hand, the head,  
and the heart of man go together."

*Jon Ruskin*



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# CAST LIST

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Emma Edmonds

Nellie Shelby

Chaplain Brady

Simpson

Billy

General Poe

Benjamin Franklin Rice

Photographer

James Fairchild

Evelyn Duggar

Sadie Hodges

Mason Kanakis

Brexten Butts

Abigail Lee

Jack Allen

AJ Fewins

Leaf Spaulding

Emma Howerd

Various Characters &

Chorus

Ava Brennan

Fiona Kurth

Cami Miller

Eliott Mulder

Jackie Murdock



# GRECIAN THEATRE

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Ancient Greek acting, a cornerstone of Western theatre, primarily involved actors portraying characters, often with the aid of masks and costumes. Actors were expected to deliver powerful, often exaggerated, performances, and the chorus played a vital role in providing commentary and connecting the audience with the play's themes

Masks were essential for actors to distinguish characters, convey emotions, and be visible to the large audiences in outdoor theater

Each play was told in two different ways at the same time. The story was told out loud by a Greek chorus. The story was acted out by performers who did not speak. These performers, or actors, told story using masks and gestures. The same actor might play several different roles. All they had to do was switch masks. Still, it took talent to be a great actor, just as it does today. Thespis was one of the most famous and successful actors in all of ancient Greece. In his honor, actors today are called thespians.



EVELYN DUGGAR

AS

EMMA EDMONDS/FRANK THOMPSON

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT DESIGNS ON MY MASK FOR A REASON. MUCH OF IT MAY LOOK JUMBLED, BUT THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT OF MY CHARACTER. EMMA EDMONDS IS A YOUNG WOMAN WHO IS DETERMINED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND FIGHT IN THE WAR NO MATTER WHAT MAY BE LIMITING HER. AT THE BASE OF MY MASK YOU WILL SEE NAVY BLUE WHICH RESEMBLES HER FIGHTING FOR THE UNION. THEN THERE ARE LINE AND SWIRL DESIGNS ON THE MASK THAT ARE COLORED VERY DIFFERENTLY AND FADED INTO EACH OTHER. THIS ARTISTIC CHOICE IS TO EMPHASIZE THE MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE SHE PORTRAYS WHILE ALSO TRYING TO HIDE THE TRUTH FROM EVERYONE AROUND HER. THERE ARE AREAS OF SPLOTCHED PAINT ON THE MASK TO RESEMBLE THE DIFFERENT DIFFICULTIES THAT EMMA IS EXPERIENCING AND HOW THESE EVENTS IN HER LIFE HAVE ALL JUMBLED INTO ONE BIG DISARRAY. THE MASK REPRESENTS HOW STRONG EMMA WAS TO CONTINUE ON EVEN IN THE SURREAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SHE FACED.





SADIE HODGES

AS

NELLIE SHELBY

NELLIE SHELBY IS NOT A SOLDIER, BUT LOST FAMILY TO THE WAR. THE GRAY BASE COLOR REPRESENTS WHICH SIDE OF THE WAR SHE IS ON. THE PHOENIX IS A REPRESENTATION OF HER STORY ARC, AND HOW SHE GROWS BEYOND WHAT SHE INITIALLY THINKS IS RIGHT AND WRONG.



MASON KANAKIS

AS

CHAPLAIN BRADY

MY MASK IS SUPPOSED TO REPRESENT THE SAINTHOOD OF THE ROLE OF CHAPLIN BRADY. THE EYES ARE SUPPOSED TO BE IN AN ALMOST BIBLICALLY ANGEL LIKE WAY.

AFTER ALL HE IS THE CHAPLIN OR RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF THE SHOW.





BREXTEN BUTTS

AS

SIMPSON

I PLAY THE ROLE OF SIMPSON IN THE HISTORICAL FICTION PLAY *The Man She Was*. TO FULLY EMBODY THE COMPLEXITY AND DARKNESS OF THIS CHARACTER, I DREW DEEP INSPIRATION FROM THE CONCEPT OF BEING “FLAWED”. SIMPSON IS NOT JUST A MAN WITH ISSUES - HE IS SOMEONE WHOSE INNER TURMOIL IS WRITTEN ALL OVER HIS FACE, A WALKING REFLECTION OF HIS MORAL DECAY AND BROKENNESS.

IN DESIGNING THE MASK, I DELIBERATELY CHOSE TO CRUMBLE THE OUTER SURFACE, CREATING A VISUAL METAPHOR FOR THE CHARACTER’S INTERNAL COLLAPSE. THE MASK APPEARS CRACKED AND WEATHERED, ALMOST AS IF IT’S FALLING APART, REPRESENTING HOW SIMPSON IS EMOTIONALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY DETERIORATING.



## ABIGAIL LEE AS BILLY

BILLY IS A SUPPORTING SIDE IN FRANK (EMMA)'S STORY, SINCE HE IS FRANK'S TENTMATE AND PRESUMABLY CLOSE/BEST FRIEND. OUR DIRECTOR GAVE US EACH A WORD TO DESCRIBE OUR CHARACTERS WHEN WE WERE MAKING OUR MASKS. MY WORD WAS "FRIEND". HOW DO I MAKE A MASK MAKE SOMEONE THINK OF A "FRIEND"?

THE BACKGROUND OF THE MASK IS A DARKISH BLUE COLOR TO SYMBOLIZE THAT BILLY IS A SOLDIER OF THE UNION. I DECIDED TO MAKE BILLY'S CHEEKS LARGER AND TO ADD DIMPLES TO REPLICATE A SMILE. I DECIDED TO MAKE HIS NOSE A LITTLE PLUMP AND ROUND-ISH, TO GIVE A MILD JOLLY FEELING. I ALSO PAINTED HIS CHEEKS AND NOSE YELLOW TO LIGHTEN UP THE MASK AND REMIND EVERYONE THAT HE IS A HAPPY AND CHEERFUL PERSON, EVEN IN THE DARKEST TIMES, KIND OF LIKE SUNLIGHT. I ADDED BLACK TO THE SMILE CREASES TO EMPHASIZE THAT THEY EXISTED. THEN I SCULPTED THE EYEBROWS AND PAINTED THEM RED TO MAKE SURE THE EYEBROWS ARE DISTINCT AND VISIBLE. NEXT I DECIDED THAT THE MASK SHOULD SEEM LESS HUMAN AND MORE ABSTRACT SO I DECIDED TO ADD SOME YELLOW LINES IN BETWEEN THE EYES AND EYEBROWS. AFTER I DECIDED TO EXTEND THOSE LINES PAST THE EYEBROWS, OTHER CAST MEMBERS BEGAN COMPARING THOSE YELLOW LINES TO SUNRAYS, WHICH IS VERY FITTING FOR BILLY SINCE HE RADIATES POSITIVITY AND IS A RAY OF SUNSHINE. FINALLY I DECIDED TO LIGHTEN UP THE MASK WITH LIGHTER BLUE SPLOTCHES ON THE DARK BLUE, BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH BILLY IS A PART OF THE WAR, HE STILL IS ABLE TO FIND TIME TO LAUGH, PLAY, AND BOND WITH THOSE CLOSEST TO HIM.





JACK ALLEN  
AS  
GENERAL POE

IN *THE MAN SHE WAS*, GENERAL POE IS A POWERFUL CHARACTER, EVOKING RESPECT AMONGST HIS DIVISION, AND THAT IS WHAT I WANTED TO CONVEY THIS THROUGH MY MASK. GENERAL POE IS A UNION GENERAL, THE MAJORITY OF THE MASK IS PAINTED BLUE. USING YELLOW, RED, AND WHITE PAINT, I ADDED SCARS TO EMPHASIZE HIS HARD WORK AND DEDICATION TO THE CAUSE. I ALSO ADDED A BRUISE TO HIS LEFT EYE BECAUSE I THOUGHT IT HELPED TO ENHANCE HIS TOUGH DEMEANOR.



AJ FEWINS  
AS  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN RICE

THIS MASK HAS RED BANDS ATTACHING EACH PIECES OF MASK BACK TOGETHER. THIS REPRESENTS THAT THIS PERSON HAS BEEN BROKEN AND HAS TRIED TO PUT THEMSELVES BACK TOGETHER. IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY THIS MASK HAS A DIFFERENT EMOTION FOR EACH PIECE, SO WHEN THEY PUT THEMSELF BACK TOGETHER THEY USED OTHER PIECES OF MASKS TO DO SO. THE GREY COLOR SYMBOLIZES THAT THIS PERSON WAS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE CIVIL WAR. WHEN YOU SEE BLUE THEY ARE ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE WAR.





LEAF SPAULDING  
AS  
PHOTOGRAPHER & CHORUS

THE MASK OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER IS SPLIT IN TWO HALVES SYMBOLIZING THE PHOTOGRAPHER PERSONA AND HIS TRUE IDENTITY. THE GREEN SIDE IS THE PHOTOGRAPHER, SIMPLE AND NEUTRAL ON THE SURFACE. THE GRAY SIDE IS HIS TRUE IDENTITY, A CONFEDERATE SPY, THE GREEN MELTS AWAY REVEALING GRAY AND THE FEATURES ARE MORE SINISTER, AN ANGRY EYEBROW AND GRIN HIGHLIGHTED WITH RED, REPRESENTING HIS ANGER. I HAVE ALSO MIXED THE CONFEDERATE GRAY INTO PARTS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER SIDE, SUBTLE ENOUGH MOST WON'T NOTICE, THE SUBTLE GRAY REPRESENTS HIS HIDDEN IDENTITY.



EMMA HOWERD  
AS  
JAMES FAIRCHILD & CHORUS

I PUT FLOWERS ON THE MASK BECAUSE THEY CAN REPRESENT ROMANCE AND JAMES WAS/IS IN LOVE WITH EMMA. THE BASE OF THE MASK IS BLUE BECAUSE JAMES FOUGHT FOR THE UNION, WHO HAD BLUE UNIFORMS, AND REBELS WORE GRAY. THE MASKS ARE MEANT TO BE KIND OF LIKE GREEK MASKS IN TRADITIONAL GREEK THEATRE PERFORMANCES. THEY WORE MASKS TO AMPLIFY THEIR PRESENCE AND TO SHOW EMOTION AND CHARACTER.





AVA BRENNAN

AS

CHORUS

MY MASK WAS INSPIRED BY THE GREEK ARTS, SPECIFICALLY GREEK SCULPTURE AS THE SCULPTURES WERE OFTEN CHARACTERIZED BY THEIR STRAIGHT AND NARROW SHAPE OF THE NOSE. THE GREEKS LIKELY SCULPTED WHAT THEY SAW AS THEIR IDEAL IMAGE. IN THIS PERFORMANCE OF THE MAN SHE WAS, WE CHOSE TO USE MASKS NOT TO SHOW WHAT THE CHARACTERS LOOKED LIKE BUT HOW OTHERS SEE THEM. OVERALL I WANTED MY MASK TO SHOWCASE TRADITIONAL GREEK CULTURE AS THE ARTISTS SAW IT WHILE STILL KEEPING WITH THE SPIRIT OF AMERICAN LIFE IN 1861.



FIONA KURTH

AS

CHORUS

THE MASK I'VE CREATED HAS CUTS, BANDAIDS, AND A LONG NOSE LIKE THE ONES PLAGUE DOCTORS USED TO WEAR. IT REMINDS ME OF SOMETHING A SURGEON MIGHT HAVE WORN DURING THE CIVIL WAR. BACK THEN, SURGERIES WERE MESSY AND REALLY DANGEROUS, AND DOCTORS DIDN'T HAVE THE SAME TOOLS OR MEDICINE WE HAVE NOW. THE CUTS AND BANDAIDS ON THE MASK MAKE IT SEEM LIKE EVEN THE SURGEON HAD BEEN THROUGH A LOT. IT SHOWS HOW TOUGH AND SCARY THEIR JOB WAS, TRYING TO HELP PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE OF A WAR.





CAMI MILLER

AS

CHORUS

THE FLOWERS ON MY MASK ARE THERE TO SHOW A NEW BEGINNING AND HOPE. THEY'RE ON THE BLUE SIDE BECAUSE THAT SIDE FOUGHT FOR A NEW BEGINNING, AND THEY BROUGHT LOTS OF HOPE WITH IT. THE GREY SIDE IS BROKEN, WHICH SHOWS HOW THE PEOPLE ON THAT SIDE WERE BROKEN TOO. THE MIDDLE PART IS THERE TO SHOW THAT BOTH SIDES HAD GOOD TIMES AND BAD TIMES. THE WHOLE MASK SHOWS BOTH SIDES OF THE WAR AND WHAT THEY WERE FIGHTING FOR.



## ELLIOTT MULDER AS CHORUS

I PLAY SEVERAL BACKGROUND CHARACTERS, INCLUDING WARREN, THE WOUNDED SOLDIER, AND GENERAL POE'S ORDERLY. BECAUSE OF THAT, I MADE TWO SEPARATE MASKS, MY MASK FOR WARREN, AND MY MASK FOR UNNAMED BACKGROUND CHARACTERS, EACH WITH THEIR OWN UNIQUE PROCESS. THE FIRST ONE, FOR WARREN, I HAD THE IDEA FOR SINCE SOON AFTER BEING GIVEN MY BLANK MASK. WE WERE TOLD TO EXPRESS AN EMOTION WITH OUR MASK, AND I DECIDED THAT THE MOST FITTING ONE WOULD BE SADNESS. I SHOWED THIS USING GREY TEARS UNDER THE EYES, UPTURNED EYEBROWS, AND LUMPS UNDER THE EYES. I ALSO WANTED TO USE MY MASK TO SHOW THE WOUNDED AND BROKEN NATURE OF WARREN, SO I ADDED RED DROPLETS OF BLOOD COMING UP FROM UNDER WARREN'S FACE, CONTRASTING WITH THE TEARS. FINALLY I PAINTED A LARGE CRACK RUNNING DOWN THE CENTER OF HIS FACE, TO SHOW HE WAS RIGHT ON THE EDGE OF BREAKING. I ALSO CREATED A MASK FOR THE ORDERLY AND OTHER BACKGROUND CHARACTERS, THIS ONE HAD TO BE MORE SIMPLE, BEING THAT IT WOULD NEVER BE THE FOCUS OF THE AUDIENCE, AND WASN'T REPRESENTING ANY INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER. THIS ONE WAS CUT DOWN THE MIDDLE, AND THEN MOLDED BACK TOGETHER WITH CLAY, AS WITH ALL OTHER CHORUS MASKS, AND I PAINTED EACH SIDE OF THE MASK A DIFFERENT COLOR, BLUE OR GREY.





JACKIE MURDOCK

AS

CHORUS

THE CIVIL WAR WAS BETWEEN TWO SIDES, THE SOUTH AND THE NORTH. WE AS AN  
ENSEMBLE DON'T HAVE HAVE A SIDE, WE REPRESENT YOU AS AUDIENCE. THIS MASK SHOWS  
NOT ONLY ME AS A CHARACTER BUT YOU - RED FOR REBELS, BLUE FOR THE UNION AND  
THE CONTRAST FOR THE TWIST AND TURNS IN WAR.

WAR ISN'T JUST TWO SIDES FIGHTING  
IT'S THE BLOODSHED  
THE TEARS  
AND THE GUILT  
SPILLED ON THE VIRGINIA SOIL



## CONTRABAND / ENSLAVED PEOPLE

AS STORYTELLERS WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO WEAR A MASK AND PRESENT OURSELVES AS OTHER PEOPLE - THIS LED US TO OUR GRECIAN THEATRICAL TAKE ON THE PRODUCTION. IN ANCIENT GREECE MASKS WERE USED AS AN EASY VISUAL FOR THE AUDIENCE TO SEE INSTANTLY WHO A CHARACTER WAS, AND THE PLACE THEY HAD IN THE STORY.

WE BELIEVE THAT WITH USING THE PLAIN WHITE MASK IN KEY SCENES, THE ABSENCE OF DEFINING COLORS, FACIAL RECOGNITION AND DISTINGUISHING FEATURES, JUXTAPOSING THE BRIGHTLY COLORED MASKS WAS A WAY FOR US TO SUCCINCTLY REPRESENT THE SENSITIVE PORTRAYAL OF ENSLAVED PEOPLE IN AMERICA.





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# PRODUCTION TEAM

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Program Manager.....Melissa May  
Director.....Aaron Wineman  
Associate Director.....Leo Bevington  
Costumes.....Melissa May  
Sets.....Aaron Wineman  
Props.....Melissa May & Aaron Wineman  
Sound Operator.....Lucy Lessner  
Lights.....Bill Fishburn

*Produced by special arrangement with The Dramatic  
Publishing Company, INC., of Woodstock, Illinois.*

## SPECIAL THANKS

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Angela Brennan  
Sarah Mulder  
Isaac Bannasch



# A NOTE FROM THE TEAM

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When we began working on this educational production, the team knew that we didn't want to cast based on gender or race - especially because the central focus of this show is Emma defying all expectations of her gender at that time. This caused us to have many discussions about how to approach this material and the issues it shines a light on.

As storytellers we have the opportunity to wear a mask and present ourselves as other people - this led us to our Grecian theatrical take on the production. In ancient Greece masks were used as an easy visual for the audience to see instantly who a character was, and the place they had in the story. We believe that with using the plain white mask in key scenes, the absence of defining colors, facial recognition and distinguishing features, juxtaposing the brightly colored masks worn by the actors, was a way for us to succinctly represent the sensitive portrayal of enslaved people in America.

We understand and recognize the derogatory language used in this show is offensive, as it should be through the lens of hindsight, but it was commonplace in the seventeenth century.

The story of Emma Edmonds, and her unique view of the American Civil War was an incredible educational opportunity to discuss a historical figure from Michigan, and their role in the American Civil War as well as the history of Greek and American Theatre.

# HOUSE RULES

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**The play runs about 70 minutes and  
has no intermission.**

**Photos and video of this performance  
are NOT permitted.**

**Silence ALL devices.**

**Emergency Exits**  
located at back of the house

**Restrooms**  
located at the back of the house

Bar Service is available throughout the  
performance



# OTPYC SUMMER 2025



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