



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Overture Center to host two special events in conjunction with Four Season Theatre's production of 'The Hello Girls: A New American Musical'

Madison, Wis. (Feb. 20, 2024) — Overture Center is pleased to announce two free public events on Saturday, Feb. 24, in collaboration with Four Season Theatre's production of "The Hello Girls: A New American Musical," a captivating musical inspired by the remarkable history of America's first women soldiers.

["The Hello Girls,"](#) running Thursday, Feb. 22 through Sunday, March 3 in The Playhouse, follows the extraordinary journey of bilingual telephone operators who served on the front lines during World War I, aiding in crucial communication efforts that helped shape the course of history. Upon their return home, these pioneering women continued to champion for equality and recognition, leaving an indelible mark on the landscape of women's rights and military service.

The two events serve as an enriching complement to "The Hello Girls," offering audiences a chance to connect with the historical significance of the story and engage in meaningful dialogue about the role of women in the armed forces.

NOTE: "The Hello Girls" performance is sold out on Saturday, Feb. 24 (2 p.m.), but the pre- and post-show events are free and open to the public.

PRE-SHOW EVENT

Saturday, Feb. 24, 12:30 p.m.

Rotunda Studio

Join us for an engaging pre-show event in the Rotunda Studio, where attendees can participate in arts and crafts activities for the "Our Town Everywhere" community art project. Additionally, guests will have the opportunity to view a banner exhibition from the "I Am Not Invisible" national photography exhibit, highlighting the stories of female service members. The event will culminate with a special performance by the [LunART Chamber Music Collective](#) as part of Kids in the Rotunda at 1 p.m.

POST-SHOW EVENT

Saturday, Feb. 24, 4:45 p.m.

Rotunda Studio

Following the afternoon performance of "The Hello Girls," Overture's Community Advisory Council will co-host a free panel discussion in the Rotunda Studio, in collaboration with the Wisconsin Child & Youth Program. This insightful panel will explore and celebrate the contributions of women in the military, as well as the power of art in storytelling. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with panelists and delve deeper into the themes presented in the production.

PANELIST BIOS

Jennifer Chiaverini

Jennifer Chiaverini is a prolific author, known for her captivating historical fiction and the beloved Elm Creek Quilts series, comprising 33 bestselling novels. Her literary prowess has earned her accolades, including the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Wisconsin Library Association in 2020 and recognition as a Notable Wisconsin Author in 2023.

Chiaverini's novel "Switchboard Soldiers" received critical acclaim, garnering starred reviews from Booklist and Library Journal. Her academic journey includes graduating from the University of Notre Dame and earning a master's degree from the University of Chicago.



Currently residing in Madison, Wis., Jennifer shares her life with her husband and two sons, finding inspiration in the vibrant community and scenic surroundings of the Midwest.

Natalie Isensee

Natalie Isensee is a dedicated Marine Corps Logistics Officer who served with distinction, including deployments to Kuwait and Iraq during the US ground invasion in 2003. With a wealth of military experience, she transitioned into a dynamic civilian career as a Program Manager at WPS Health Solutions, where she focuses on enhancing employee experiences and fostering leadership development.

Deeply committed to serving her community, Isensee actively engages in the Veteran community in Madison, Wis., assuming leadership roles in various organizations. Her contributions were recognized with the Milwaukee Business Journal's Veterans in Business award in 2021, and she was appointed to Wisconsin Governor Evers' Blue Ribbon Commission on Veterans Opportunity in 2022.



Isensee is a proud alumna of UW-Madison, UW-Platteville and UW-Green Bay, holding degrees and several certifications. Outside of her professional endeavors, she finds joy in spending quality time with her husband and three daughters, indulging her passion for running and delving into the pages of history books.

Laura McMillan

Laura McMillan is a proud BIPOC queer woman veteran, holding a B.A in theater performance and theater studies from Edgewood College. She served in the US Navy for four years, stationed in Florida and Hawaii, where she showcased her passion for theater through performances at the Pensacola Little Theater and the Army Community Theater on Ft. Shafter in Honolulu.

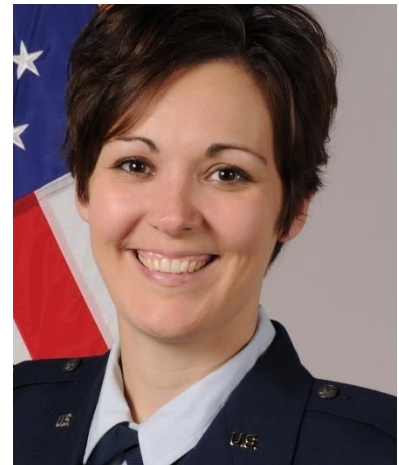


Currently serving as the education manager for Children's Theater of Madison (CTM), McMillan plays a pivotal role in shaping the creative and educational experiences for young minds. With almost 30 years of experience in theater, she has graced both on and off stages across the country, earning notable credits in a variety of productions, including "A Christmas Carol," "The Revolutionists," "Little Shop of Horrors" and "The Crucible."

Beyond her artistic pursuits, McMillan finds fulfillment as a panelist, contributing to meaningful discussions and sharing her diverse perspectives. Her journey, marked by dedication to both her country and the arts, reflects a rich tapestry of experiences that she continues to weave with pride and enthusiasm. McMillan is honored to be a part of this amazing selection of panelists, bringing her unique voice and experiences to the forefront.

Lt. Col. Penny Ripperger

Lt. Col. Ripperger brings over 27 years of invaluable military experience, primarily within the North Dakota and Wisconsin Air National Guard. Throughout her distinguished career, she has held a spectrum of pivotal roles, including Finance Budget Officer, Services Commander and Wing Public Affairs Officer for the 119th Wing based in Fargo, N.D.



In recent years, Lt. Col. Ripperger has served in influential capacities such as Chief of Public Affairs, Director of Personnel and Force Support Squadron Commander at the 115th Fighter Wing stationed in Madison, Wis. Her dedication and leadership led to her transfer to the Department of Military Affairs in Madison in 2020, assuming the crucial role of State Director of Public Affairs.

Currently, Lt. Col. Ripperger serves as the director of the joint wellness and resiliency directorate for the Wisconsin Air and Army National Guard, where she spearheads initiatives aimed at enhancing the well-being and resilience of service members.

Her academic background includes a bachelor's degree in business management from North Dakota State University and a master's degree in strategic leadership from the University of Mary, underscoring her commitment to continuous growth and leadership excellence.

Beyond her professional achievements, Lt. Col. Ripperger finds fulfillment in her family life, residing in Dousman, Wis. with her husband, Jeremy, and their two children, Jordyn and Jarret. Her unwavering dedication to service and leadership serves as an inspiration to colleagues and community members alike.

Maureen (Mo) Schuelke

Mo Schuelke enlisted in the Army in March 1982 and underwent basic training at Ft. Jackson, S.C., followed by advanced training at Ft. Gordon, Ga. Graduating top of her class as a wire systems installer, she received additional training on the Switch Board. Her military career saw her stationed at Ft. Gordon until September 1983, with temporary duty at Sheppard Air Force Base for Key Telephone installation training from October 1983 to March 1984.



She was then assigned to C Co. 122nd Signal BN, Camp Casey, Korea, from March 1983 to March 1984. Returning to Ft. Lewis, Wash., until May 1986, she reenlisted to serve in Germany at Nuernberg, William O. Darby Kaserne, from June 1986 to June 1989, where she changed her MOS to TAMMS/PLL.

During her service, Maureen married her husband in November 1987 and had three sons. To alleviate financial strain, she joined the reserves in 1991, served in a Supply Unit in Utah until 1992, then relocated to Wisconsin and served in the 84th Division as a Supply Sergeant until her retirement in September 2005.

Married for 36 years, Maureen enjoys her family life, including three sons and four step-grandchildren.

Commissioned and premiered by NYC's Prospect Theater Company, "The Hello Girls" celebrated the centennial of these groundbreaking women in its Off Broadway debut in Fall 2018, and was nominated for both Drama Desk and Outer Critic Circle Awards.

OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS in Madison, Wis., is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization that features seven state-of-the-art performance spaces and four galleries where national and international touring artists, nine resident companies and hundreds of local artists engage people in nearly 700,000 educational and artistic experiences each year. Overture's mission is to support and elevate our community's creative culture, economy and quality of life through the arts. overture.org

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