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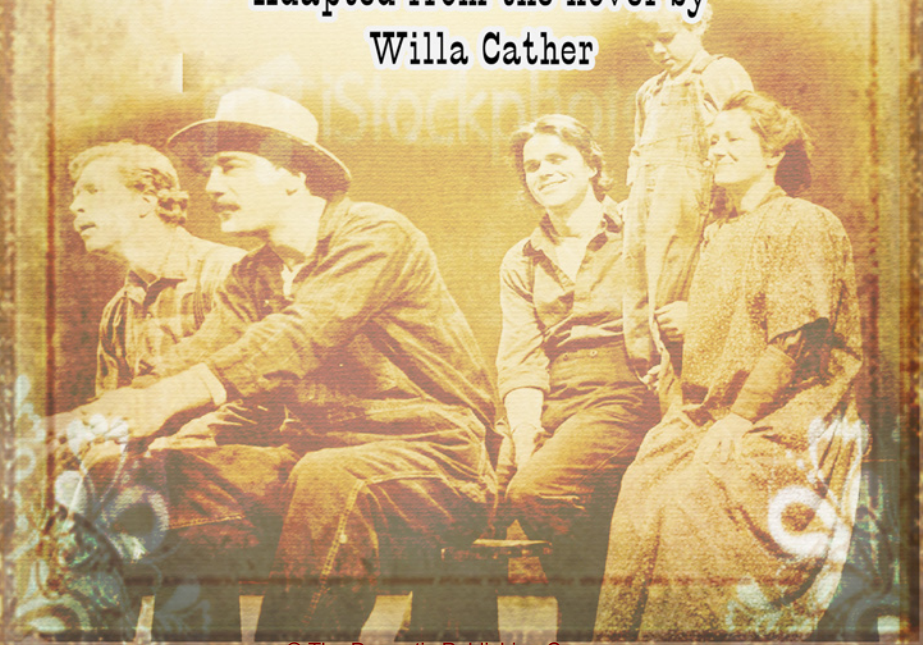
Now for a cast of 12 with new songs added!

O Pioneers!

Book and lyrics by
Darrah Cloud

Music by
Kim D. Sherman

Adapted from the novel by
Willa Cather



O Pioneers!

*Musical drama. Adapted from the novel by Willa Cather. Book and lyrics by Darrah Cloud. Music by Kim D. Sherman. Cast: 6m., 2w., 2 children, 8 singers (4m., 4w.) who also play small roles. "Both the epic sweep and the sharp personal focus of Darrah Cloud's musical drama *O Pioneers!* mirror that of its source, Willa Cather's celebrated 1913 novel about life on the prairie at the end of the last century. *O Pioneers!* tells the story of Alexandra Bergson, who after her father's death takes charge of his Nebraska homestead. Through harvest, drought and poverty, she holds her farm and family of three brothers together until they are ready to stand on their own. Cather wasn't the first writer to 'feminize the Western landscape,' but she remains one of the most enduring because Alexandra's story still has meaning. In taming the land, she neglects part of her emotional life—and only just before it's too late does Alexandra allow the woman in her to respond to the man she loves." (*The Boston Herald*) "*O Pioneers!* is a resounding musical and dramatic exploration of the immigrant experience on the American frontier ... a poignant blend of stirring drama, powerful music and bittersweet romance." (*The Stanford Weekly*) Area staging. Approximate running time: 2 hours.*

Front cover: Huntington Theatre Company, Boston, Mass., production featuring (l-r) Christopher Coucill, Doug Krizner, Randle Mell, Peter Sokol-Hessner, Mary McDonnell. Photo: Richard Feldman.

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KIM D. SHERMAN

Lyrics by
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Music composed by KIM D. SHERMAN
From the novel by WILLA CATHER

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(O PIONEERS!)

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* * * *

O Pioneers!

was commissioned by The Women’s Project, Julia Miles, *Artistic Director*. World premiere production by the Huntington Theatre Company, The Professional Theatre in Residence at Boston University, Boston, Mass. Peter Altman, *Producing Director/Michael Maso, Managing Director*.

Cast:

Alexandra Bergson	Mary McDonnell
Carl Linstrum	Randy Mell
Emil Bergson	Neil Maffin
Marie Tovesky	Jennifer Rohn
Ivar	John Carpenter
Oscar	Douglas Krizner
Lou	Christopher Coucill
Frank	Thomas Schall
Mr. Bergson	Timothy Sawyer
Mrs. Bergson	Taina Elg

Mrs. Lee	Eda Seasongood
Annie Lee	Kate Phelan
Uncle Joe Tovesky	Tad Ingram
Amedee	Scott Rabinowitz
Marcel	Joel Mitchell
Signa	Maggie Simpson
Nelse	Kevin McDermott
Angelique	Kate Coffman
Milly	Jessica Walling, Michelle Pinsley
Dream Man	Scott Rabinowitz
Bishop	Timothy Sawyer
Priest	Tad Ingram
Little Marie	Robin Eldridge, Brooke Richie
Young Emil	Peter Sokol-Hessner, Seth Sole-Robertson
Townspeople, etc.	The Ensemble

Musicians:

Brian Russell, *conductor/piano*; Mary Ashley, *French horn*; Lydia Forbes, *violin*; Diane Heffner, *clarinet*; Katherine Matasy, *accordion*; Daniel Rowe, *cello*.

Directed by Kevin Kuhlke, *Music Director* Brian Russell, *Scenery Design* John Wulp, *Casting Consultant* McCorkle Casting, Inc., *Production Stage Manager* Diane DiVita, *Costume Design* Ann Roth, *Dialect Coach* Nadia Vanesse, *Assistant Stage Manager* C. Renee Alexander, *Lighting Design* Brian Nason, *Sound Design* Ed McDermid, *Assistant Music Director* Catherine Stornetta.

Produced in association with American Playhouse.

SELECTION OF VOCAL CUES

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Act Two

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ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

SETTING: *A bare stage.*

AT RISE: *MUSIC CUE #1: “ALEXANDRA’S THEME.”*
ALEXANDRA stands alone in silhouette, wearing a man’s coat and hat. We’re unsure whether this person is a man or a woman, at first. Lights come up as poor IMMIGRANTS begin arriving at the Hanover Rail Station, bundles at their sides, some in traditional dress. All sorts of countries are represented. To the foreground of the crowd comes the Bergson family: ALEXANDRA, in her late teens; her MOTHER; FATHER; brothers, LOU and OSCAR, in their teens; and EMIL, who is five years old. They, too, are very poor.

**(MUSIC CUE #2: “IMMIGRANTS SONG” or: There’s
Nothing Here”)**

ALL MEN.

**’CROSS THE GREAT ATLANTIC OCEAN
WHERE THE SUNRISE MEETS THE SEA
LIES THE LAND OF MY DEVOTION
AND THE MAN I LONG TO BE**

ALL WOMEN.

**GOLD IN THE RIVERBEDS
SILVER ON THE PLAINS**

**SALT INSIDE THE MOUNTAINS
AND DIAMONDS IN THE RAIN**

ALL MEN.

**GOING ON IN ONE DIRECTION
WEST, I'LL CLAIM A VALLEY MINE
PLACE A BID ON HALF A SECTION
BUILD A CASTLE IN THE SUNSHINE**

ALL WOMEN.

**GOLD IN THE RIVERBEDS
SILVER ON THE PLAINS
SALT INSIDE THE MOUNTAINS
AND DIAMONDS IN THE RAIN**

BASS.

**MARCH 1873
LEFT MY HOME AND WALKED TWO DAYS
BOARDED SHIP AND CROSSED THE SEA
TAKING ONLY WHAT I COULD CARRY—**

TENOR.

THERE'S NOTHING HERE.

ALTO WOMAN.

**AUGUST 1874
LEFT THE SHIP AND TOOK A TRAIN
WHEN THE TRACK RAN OUT I WALKED
TO THE SHORES OF THE PRAIRIE**

SOPRANO WOMAN.

THERE'S NOTHING HERE.

ALTO WOMAN.

APRIL 1875

**THOUGHT COMING HERE WOULD MAKE US
FREE
GOT SO FREE WE NEARLY STARVED
LOST OUR YOUNGEST BABE AND LOST MY
MIND.**

TENOR.

THERE'S NOTHING HERE...

BARITONE.

FOURTH OF JULY

**MADE IT HERE, WE'RE ALL ALIVE
SEND US WHAT YOU CAN AND WRITE.
WHAT WE'D GIVE TO HEAR FROM OUR OWN
KIND.**

ALTO.

BOAT ACROSS THE OCEAN DIDN'T KILL ME

BASS.

SLUMS OF CHICAGO DIDN'T KILL ME

BOTH.

**JOURNEY WEST, THE COLD AND NO FOOD
DIDN'T KILL ME**

ALTO.

**SO I SHOULD FEEL NO LITTLE DISAPPOINTMENT
IN DYING NOW WE'RE HERE**

ALL MEN.

**'CAUSE THERE'S GOLD IN THE RIVERBEDS
SILVER ON THE PLAINS
SALT INSIDE THE MOUNTAINS
AND DIAMONDS IN THE RAIN**

ALL MEN.

**ALL THAT POSSIBILITY
RUNNING TO THE SEA
AND NOT ANOTHER
HOMESTEAD
BETWEEN THAT SEA AND ME**

ALL WOMEN.

**GOLD RIVERBEDS
SILVER ON THE PLAINS
DIAMONDS IN THE RAIN**

ALL.

**GOLD IN THE RIVERBEDS
SILVER ON THE PLAINS
SALT INSIDE THE MOUNTAINS
AND DIAMONDS IN THE RAIN
DIAMONDS IN THE RAIN**

BARITONE.

**WHY DOES WINTER COME
WHEN IT'S NOT WANTED HERE AT ALL**

ALTO.

**NO ONE EVER PRAYED FOR ICE
OR NEEDED SNOW TO FALL**

TENOR.

**AND WHY DID I COME HERE
WHEN IT'S TOO HARD TO BE ALIVE?**

SOPRANO.

**BECAUSE I'M JUST AS CRUEL AS WINTER
TOO COLD NOT TO SURVIVE...**

SCENE TWO

AT RISE: *MUSIC CUE #3: "WIND MUSIC"—Under-score. Winter—a drastic change. ALEXANDRA drives the wagon through the lonely cold. CARL appears on the horizon and hails her from a distance.*

CARL. Alexandra! Alexandra! *(She pulls the horses in. WIND MUSIC continues.)*

ALEXANDRA. Carl! What are you doing in town?

CARL. I came in to help my father. But I told him I might ride back with you.

ALEXANDRA. Yes, of course, come on! *(He climbs into the wagon and they take off. They regard each other shyly.)* Cold!

CARL. Yah! *(Pause.)*

ALEXANDRA. Colder tomorrow!

CARL. Yah! *(Pause.)* Not as cold as yesterday, though.

ALEXANDRA. No! *(Pause.)*

CARL. What brought you all this way?

ALEXANDRA. I had to see the doctor.

CARL. About your father?

ALEXANDRA *(with difficulty)*. Yah...

CARL. Is he going to be all right?

ALEXANDRA. No. *(Pause. ALEXANDRA sits up straighter. WIND MUSIC continues.)*

CARL. I'm sorry, Alexandra. (*She nods.*) What are you going to do?

ALEXANDRA. I wish we could all go with him and let the grass grow back over everything.

CARL. Does he know?

ALEXANDRA. I think he does. He lies alone in bed all day and counts what he has...what...he's leaving us...

CARL. Maybe I could come over soon and visit him. Help him take his mind off things.

ALEXANDRA. Would you?

CARL. Why, sure, I...I'll bring my magic lantern.

ALEXANDRA. You got it?

CARL. Right here! And I figured out a way to paint my own pictures for it so I don't have to buy them.

ALEXANDRA. Pictures of what?

CARL. Oh, Germany, near where I grew up, mostly. That's the only way I'll ever be able to see it again. You can let me off right here.

ALEXANDRA (*reins the horse in*). When will you come and see us?

CARL. Whenever you want.

ALEXANDRA. Tomorrow.

CARL. Tomorrow, then. (*He jumps down and lights her lamp for her.*) Whatever happens, Alexandra, you can always count on us. (*He turns and runs off, calling to her as he disappears in the distance and she drives on alone into the dark, lit only by the lamp. WIND MUSIC crescendos and stops abruptly.*)

SCENE THREE

(Out of the utter darkness comes a voice.)

MR. BERGSON. Daughter! Daughter!...

AT RISE: *A shaft of light appears. ALEXANDRA stands as if in a doorway. MRS. BERGSON and EMIL are in background "kitchen."*

MR. BERGSON. What is happening now?

ALEXANDRA. Mama is fixing a rabbit for dinner. The boys are outside, cutting wood. A window has cracked.

MR. BERGSON. Come here. *(She wipes her hands and moves to him. Light comes up a little.)* You will have to do the best you can for your brothers. It will all fall on you now.

ALEXANDRA. Don't talk like this, Papa.

MR. BERGSON. Teach your brothers. They are not as smart as you. Don't let them get discouraged and go off. You have to keep this land.

ALEXANDRA. You need another blanket.

MR. BERGSON. Listen to me. You are old enough now to understand. My father, your grandfather, was not an honest man. We had to leave Stockholm and come here. We had no choice. You can't go back.

ALEXANDRA. I understand.

MR. BERGSON. Alexandra...don't let all this have been for nothing. In eleven long years I have made not one solid mark on this land. Only mistakes. But they are a kind of soil too. You can make things grow from them.

(LOU and OSCAR enter the house, stomping their boots, cold.)

MR. BERGSON. What is happening now?

ALEXANDRA. Lou and Oscar are coming in from the barn.

MR. BERGSON. Call them in here. Call them. *(She goes to the light, beckons them in. They shuffle in solemnly, stand stiffly by.)*

OSCAR. You want something, Papa?

MR. BERGSON. I want you all to listen to me now. So long as there is one house there must be one head. Alexandra is the oldest. She knows my wishes. I want you to be guided by her. *(BOYS look at each other for a moment.)* The next few years you will have it hard. Alexandra will manage the best she can. But you must all keep together. And you promise me one thing: you will never give up this land.

LOU. But, Papa—

OSCAR. We promise, Father. It would be so without your asking.

MR. BERGSON. Alexandra?...Alexandra?

ALEXANDRA. I promise.

MR. BERGSON. Good. That is good. You boys, go and get your supper. *(They move off.)* What is happening now? *(MUSIC CUE #4: "FATHER'S THEME"—Under-score.)*

ALEXANDRA. Water is coming to a boil on the stove. The cattle are moving up close to the house.

MR. BERGSON. How many head of cattle?

ALEXANDRA. Two.

MR. BERGSON. How many hogs in the pen?

ALEXANDRA. Three hogs.

MR. BERGSON. Five hens—

ALEXANDRA. —and seven chicks—

MR. BERGSON. Go on.

ALEXANDRA. Three cherry trees, two pear...

MR. BERGSON. Go on... Blackberries,

ALEXANDRA & MR. BERGSON. Chokecherries, dandelion, milkweed, cattails, buffalo-grass... *(He stops. She goes on. FATHER'S THEME continues.)*

ALEXANDRA. Linden, cedar, cottonwood, oak—

(ALEXANDRA looks at MR. BERGSON. He's gone. FAMILY gathers around a grave.)

PREACHER. Only through death can heaven be attained. This hard and sorrowful life is the trial we stand that will determine our places there. And so we consecrate this body to the cruel earth which is the stuff of this body, ashes and dust, ashes and dust. *(ALL disperse except ALEXANDRA. She stoops, fingers the earth, throws it down with hate. Leaves. CUE #4 ends.)*

SCENE FOUR

AT RISE: *ALEXANDRA works earth with hoe. Sun grows gradually bigger in the sky. LITTLE EMIL plays in the dust with his friend, LITTLE MARIE. OSCAR and LOU work in a field U.*

(MUSIC CUE #5: “THE DROUGHT SONG”)

IMMIGRANT ONE (TENOR).

APRIL ONE: NO RAIN

IMMIGRANT TWO (ALTO).

SUNRISE COMES

IMMIGRANT THREE (SOPRANO).

**AND THE STARVING EARTH LIES DRY
AND THE CORN IS**

IMMIGRANT TWO.

**TOO WEAK TO FEED
ALL OF US.**

IMMIGRANT THREE.

ALL OF US

IMMIGRANT ONE.

APRIL SEVEN: NO RAIN AGAIN.

IMMIGRANT THREE.

DAYLIGHT COMES

IMMIGRANT TWO.

**AND THE DRYING RIVERBED CRACKS ALL
ACROSS.**

IMMIGRANT THREE.

AND, LIKE MY HANDS, BLEEDS RED