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A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

When Cavan Hendron, creator of *Borden: The Musical*, approached me about finding a way to workshop their new musical in development, I wanted to do whatever I could to make it happen. My initial drive came from a deep personal and professional appreciation for Cavan as both a visionary artist and a wonderful human being. However, after witnessing the raw emotional power of the story and the incredible score at an earlier presentation, my motivation evolved. I knew immediately that this experience was the perfect fit for Voices HEArD: A Women's Theatre Festival and our core theme of "Reclamation".



This piece is a perfect match for that theme because it brilliantly reframes the infamous 1892 case through the eyes of Lizzie's older sister, Emma Borden. Rather than retelling a sensationalized true-crime mystery, it explores complex sisterhood, the weight of societal expectations, and the heavy price of family loyalty. It actively reclaims Emma's narrative, giving a voice to a woman so often pushed to the footnotes of history.

Furthermore, with so many members of the *Borden* team being Kentucky natives who are currently living and working in New York, bringing them back felt like a vital full-circle moment. I knew this collision of local roots and professional New York theater development would make for a perfect, deeply meaningful collaboration.

I am profoundly grateful for the honor of hosting the *Borden* team as they continue to develop this beautiful, haunting work. I am also incredibly thankful to the Kentucky Foundation for Women and Sue Fossen for providing the funding and support to make this workshop possible. I cannot wait to see how this incredible piece continues to grow, and I am so excited for our community to hear more of Emma and Lizzie's story.

Vanessa Becker Weig

Executive Artistic Director - Voices Amplified





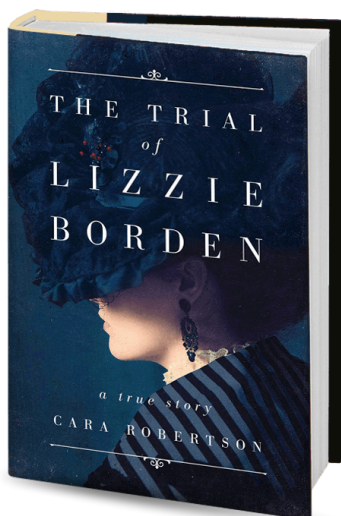
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THE TRIAL OF LIZZIE BORDEN

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The Trial of Lizzie Borden tells the true story of one of the most sensational murder trials in American history. When Andrew and Abby Borden were brutally hacked to death in Fall River, Massachusetts, in August 1892, the arrest of the couple's younger daughter Lizzie turned the case into international news and her trial into a spectacle unparalleled in American history. Reporters flocked to the scene. Well-known columnists took up conspicuous seats in the courtroom. The defendant was relentlessly scrutinized for signs of guilt or innocence. Everyone—rich and poor, suffragists and social conservatives, legal scholars and laypeople—had an opinion about Lizzie Borden's guilt or innocence. Was she a cold-blooded murderess or an unjustly persecuted lady? Did she or didn't she?

The popular fascination with the Borden murders and its central enigmatic character has endured for more than one hundred years.

Immortalized in rhyme, told and retold in every conceivable genre, the murders have secured a place in the American pantheon of mythic horror, but one typically wrenched from its historical moment. In contrast, Cara Robertson explores the stories Lizzie Borden's culture wanted and expected to hear and how those stories influenced the debate inside and outside of the courtroom. Based on transcripts of the Borden legal proceedings, contemporary newspaper accounts, unpublished local accounts, and recently unearthed letters from Lizzie herself, *The Trial of Lizzie Borden* offers a window onto America in the Gilded Age, showcasing its most deeply held convictions and its most troubling social anxieties.

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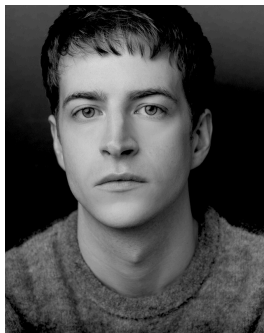
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THE HISTORY

On August 4, 1892, Andrew and Abby Borden were found brutally murdered inside their home at 92 Second Street in Fall River, Massachusetts. Andrew, a wealthy and well-known businessman, was discovered on the sitting room sofa, his face struck repeatedly with a hatchet. Upstairs, Abby lay in the guest bedroom, killed earlier that morning in a similarly violent attack.

Suspicion quickly fell on Andrew's daughter, Lizzie Borden, who was home at the time. Her testimony raised questions. A dress she later burned drew attention. And beneath it all was a strained and complicated relationship within the household, particularly between Lizzie and her stepmother.

Lizzie was arrested and brought to trial in June 1893. The case captivated the nation. Crowds gathered. Newspapers sensationalized every detail. Yet despite the frenzy, the evidence remained circumstantial. There were no eyewitnesses, no weapon conclusively tied to Lizzie, and no blood found on her person.

After just over an hour of deliberation, the jury found her not guilty.

Lizzie and her sister Emma later moved to a new home they named Maplecroft, seeking distance from the house on Second Street. But the shadow of the murders followed them. Over time, the sisters grew apart and ultimately separated.

The killings of Andrew and Abby Borden were never solved.

More than a century later, the case endures as one of America's most enduring mysteries, suspended somewhere between fact and folklore. And the question remains: was Lizzie Borden a murderer, or something far more complicated?



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