

March On!

The Strange Case of the Sole Surviving Suffragist

(a full-length one act in ninety minutes)

TIME: 2020 **PLACE:** Atlanta, Georgia: an assembly hall, a hospital, a parlor, an office

CHARACTERS: (a minimum ensemble of five women and one man)

DOCTOR ELIZA STRIDER, a podiatrist, age 40s or older

OLIVIA WALKER, a high school music teacher, age 30s or older

DOREEN WALKER, Olivia's sister, a gallerist, age 30s or older

WILMA MAY RHODES, a public librarian, age 50s

LILY PEARL RHODES, Wilma's daughter, a museum guide, age mid 20s

LYDIA MORGAN MILES, Lily's former self, a British born suffragist (played by Lily)

TREVOR AMBERLY, an African American author and professor, age late 20s

DOCTOR BEATRICE TREADWELL, a neurologist, age 30s or older

DOCTOR ANNA LOPER, a German born psychologist, age 30s or older

ESSENTIAL and SUGGESTED DOUBLING:

Lily Pearl Rhodes/Lydia Morgan Miles (essential doubling)

Olivia Walker/Doctor Anna Loper

Doreen Walker/Doctor Beatrice Treadwell

PLOT SYNOPSIS:

In an assembly hall in Atlanta, Georgia, marchers have gathered for the Centennial Suffrage Parade. A raffle is being held to select a grand marshal to lead the procession, and a young woman named Lily Pearl Rhodes is chosen. She mounts the stage to join the organizers who are teaching the parade anthem. Soon they are all singing with heartfelt harmony until a bomb explodes, maiming Lily who is hospitalized in a coma. When she awakens, Lily claims to be Lydia Morgan Miles, a pioneer suffragist and clandestine abortionist from Boston who died in a similar explosion in the year 1850. Lily's mother and fiancé are appalled at the surfacing of Lydia whose attitudes reflect opposing racial, religious and cultural assumptions and whose life appears to have been a wretched tale of illness, marital discord, and thwarted ambitions. A therapist hypnotizes Lily, and is convinced that her soul has inhabited multiple mortal lives, all of them women, all having marched many miles for many causes. Lydia attempts to adjust to the technological advances of today's world and is the subject of much speculation until she disappears and becomes the focus of a citywide search. *MARCH ON!* attempts to explore issues of gender parity, the presumptions of privilege, and recent social, scientific, and political progress since the early days of the suffragist movement.

