



# Letters From the Front

## A Tribute to All Who Serve

*Benefiting Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families*

In celebration of the 250th birthday of the United States, this recording shares new music for four voices and piano by New York-based composer Patrick Zimmerli with libretto by Mirabelle Ordinaire based on letters sent by American service members and their loved ones during wartime, bringing their stories to life through their own words.

Our goal is to honor military members, veterans, and their families, as well as to share this music with them and the public with gratitude for their sacrifice through this recording and future performances.

## Featured Artists



**Ian Gindes**  
*Pianist*

- Solo performer around the US, including Carnegie Hall, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, and Donald W. Nixon Centre for the Visual and Performing Arts
- Received international acclaim for his recordings: Rachmaninoff (Navona, 2023) was lauded by The Whole Note magazine (Canada) for his “illustrious renditions..” of “...Rachmaninoff masterworks.” Gramophone magazine (UK) praised American Visions (Centaur, 2016), for “keyboard brilliance.”
- Heard on SiriusXM Symphony Hall, WFMT Chicago, Jed Distler’s Between The Keys on WWFM, Radio Arts Foundation of St. Louis, and American Veterans Radio; Seen on CBS 2 Chicago and WGN-TV
- Over 21 years of service in the Illinois Army National Guard

- Hailed as “every inch the hero in stature and voice” (Classical Voice North America)
- Released over 85 studio recordings with over 10 million streams on Spotify and Apple Music
- Associate producer, the Grammy-Nominated project The Impossible Dream
- Performed at Carnegie Hall with the New York Oratorio Society, and with Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic, Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, Virginia Symphony, Brevard Music Center Orchestra, Nashville Opera, and Opera Las Vegas
- Seen on NBC’s America’s Got Talent as part of the Finalist group Metaphysic



**John Riesen**  
*Tenor*

- Critically acclaimed for her “rich, clear voice” that is “geared towards storytelling” (Chicagoland Musical Theatre)
- Operatic roles include Marjorie in Fizz and Ginger (Whitney E. George), Lucinda in Dark Sisters (Nico Muhly), Patience in Patience and Sarah (Paula Kimper), the titular role in Princess Ida, and The Witch in Hansel und Gretel
- Recipient of multiple Chicago DCASE grants and 2023 songSLAM winner for the premiere of Michelle Isaac’s “What Every Woman Must Not Say.”
- Performed with Lyric Opera of the North, Loveland Opera Theatre, Ouroboros Opera Company, Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company, and Chicago City Opera



**Angela Born**  
*Mezzo-Soprano*

- Full-time chorus member and role performer, Lyric Opera of Chicago, including roles sung and covered in Four Portraits, Cendrillon, West Side Story, Tannhäuser, Oklahoma!, Manon, Macbeth, Boris Godunov, Show Boat, Elektra, and Der Rosenkavalier.
- With her Lyric Opera of Chicago colleagues, 2022 Emmy Award winner for Outstanding Achievement for Arts/Entertainment—Long Form Content for Pagliacci.



**Desirée Hassler**  
*Soprano*

- Chicago native bass-baritone active as a professional singer for nearly twenty years
- Soloist with numerous local and regional opera companies, including Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, Tulsa Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, and Haymarket Opera Company
- Member, Fourth Coast Ensemble vocal chamber quartet
- Performed with Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Madison Symphony Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and Grant Park Orchestra



**David Govertsen**  
*Bass-Baritone*

This musical tribute celebrates history and honors veterans, service members, and military families. The work will be recorded and released in summer 2026, and submitted for a possible Grammy nomination. We are interested in showcasing this work in the 2026-2027 season and beyond, especially for military families, service members, and veterans in addition to the public.