

Violet

Music by Jeanine Tesori, Book and Lyrics by Brian Crawley

December 8-10, 2022

Who?

Producers: Beza Tessema and Hank Graham

Director: Claire Donnellan

Music Director: Nicole Lam

Stage Manager: Maya Li

Theater and Performance Studies Senior Project in Acting for Rebecca Salzhauer

What?

When Violet was a young teenager, an accident with her father's axe blade left her with a scar across her face. Years later, with enough money finally saved, she boards a Greyhound bus across the Deep South in 1964 to travel towards a miracle – the healing touch of a TV evangelist who will make her beautiful. Alongside soldiers Monty and Flick, as well as the ensemble of characters she encounters on the journey, Violet begins to heal the scars that lie beneath the skin.

When?

Tech Week Dates: November 13-December 8

Performance Dates: December 8-10

Time Commitment

Approximately 4-8 hours per week prior to tech, 15-20 hours per week during tech

Content Warnings

Use of a racial slur, violence not depicted on stage, moments of intimacy (details below)

Audition Expectations

Perform 32-bar cut (1-2 min) of a musical theater song and a monologue from options below

Audition Location

WLH (William L. Harkness Hall) 207

VIOLET AUDITION PACKET

Thank you so much for your interest in auditioning for *Violet*. This packet has information about the show, the process for our production, and what to expect at auditions. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to TAPS senior Rebecca Salzhauer (rebecca.salzhauer@yale.edu) or director Claire Donnellan (claire.donnellan@yale.edu). If you're interested in working on *Violet* in a technical capacity, please reach out to producers Beza Tessema (beza.tessema@yale.edu) and Hank Graham (hank.graham@yale.edu). We're really looking forward to seeing you in auditions!



Music by Jeanine Tesori
Book and Lyrics by Brian Crawley
Based on "The Ugliest Pilgrim" by Doris Betts

December 8-10, 2022
Theater and Performance Studies Black Box

ABOUT THE SHOW:

When Violet was a young teenager, an accident with her father's axe blade left her with a scar across her face. Years later, with enough money finally saved, she boards a Greyhound bus across the Deep South in 1964 to travel towards a miracle – the healing touch of a TV evangelist who will make her beautiful. Alongside soldiers Monty and Flick, as well as the ensemble of characters she encounters on the journey, Violet begins to heal the scars that lie beneath the skin.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION:

Violet is a Theater and Performance Studies senior project in acting for Rebecca Salzhauer. The show will be directed by Claire Donnellan, music directed by Nicole Lam, stage managed by Maya Li, and produced by Hank Graham and Beza Tessema. The production will go up December 8-10. Here is a brief breakdown of our production timeline:

- August 31-September 6: Auditions and Callbacks
- Early fall 2022: Music rehearsals, ensemble work, and world-building, likely 4-6 hours per actor per week
- Mid-fall 2022: More intensive music and staging rehearsals, likely 6-8 hours per actor per week
- November 13 - December 10: Three weeks of intensive rehearsals with technical elements in the TAPS Black Box theater, followed by four performances.

We ask that **actors who accept roles make *Violet* their primary theater commitment for the Fall 2022 semester**, which would preclude them from acting in the Dramat Fall Mainstage (*Rent*) as well as other shows that go up within a few weeks of *Violet*. As a general rule, actors who accept roles in *Violet* should not plan to act in a show that goes up after October Recess. Please think about your commitments ahead of time, and don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions that you may have.

ABOUT AUDITIONS:

We'll be holding auditions Wednesday, 8/31 from 7-9 p.m., Thursday 9/1 from 7-10 p.m., and Friday 9/2 from 3-6 p.m. You can sign up for an audition slot on our [Yale College Arts page](#). If there isn't an audition slot on our page that works for you, please reach out to Hank and Beza about the possibility of finding another time or submitting a taped audition.

For your audition, please prepare a 32-bar cut (about 1-2 minutes) of a musical theater song and bring printed or digital sheet music for our accompanist to play as you sing. The score of *Violet* ranges from folk to gospel to blues to more traditional musical theater style. Don't stress too much about finding a song – just pick something you're excited to share with us! If you're looking for a place to start, songs from shows like *Bright Star*, *The Color Purple*, or *Bonnie and Clyde* or anything by Jeanine Tesori, the composer of *Violet*, are some great options. You're also welcome to sing an excerpt from *Violet*, if you're most comfortable with that. Here is the [sheet music](#), [vocal practice track](#), and [accompaniment track](#).

In addition to your song, please select one of the following sides to read during your audition. The lines do not have to be memorized, but you should familiarize yourself with the text. You can choose to read for [Monty](#), [Preacher](#), [Young Violet](#), [Old Lady](#), or [Father](#). If your chosen side includes another character, you will read with someone on our team. Pick whichever sides you

think best highlight your strengths as an actor. You do *not* have to choose a character who has your gender identity or who has a gender identity that you feel comfortable portraying during the show (we will ask you about that on the audition form).

We'll be holding callbacks the following week on Sunday 9/4, Monday 9/5, and potentially Tuesday 9/6. You'll get more information following your audition, but we'll be asking people to prepare part of a song from the show and/or a side from the script for particular roles. Since *Violet* is such an ensemble-heavy show, we'll also be holding a workshop-style group callback to get a sense of some of the ensemble work that will be central to our rehearsal process.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:

NOTE: *Violet* takes place across the American south in 1964, in the midst of the Civil Rights movement. Given the show's historical context, conversations about race will be central to our production process. We've indicated the show's Black characters, and intend to cast Black actors in those roles. Although other roles have been largely played by white actors, that casting does not reflect the historical diversity of the cities, buses, and public spaces that make up the world of the show. We've indicated characters who are written as white, but for those roles, as well as all other roles, we are seeking actors of any race or ethnicity.

Similarly, we encourage actors of all genders, including transgender and non-binary actors, to audition for the roles they feel most excited about playing. Throughout the rehearsal process, we'll discuss and explore the ways in which the demographics of our cast shape the relationships and power dynamics of the story. For now, we're looking for the best performers for each role.

You'll also see that we've marked certain roles that involve moments of violence or intimacy. That said, the staging of those moments will be flexible, depending on the comfort of the actors involved. If you'd like to know more about the context of a given moment, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Please note that the roles of Violet and Flick have been pre-cast.

VIOLET, mid-late 20's, a young white woman from North Carolina whose face was scarred in a childhood accident. Stubborn and prickly, Violet is filled with equal parts hope and obsession that she may heal and be made beautiful. Mezzo with mix/belt. *[Role has been cast]*

FLICK, mid-late 20's, a Black soldier; a dreamer and go-getter. He doesn't enjoy the army, but enjoys the respect it garners him. Gentle and good, but not without strength and authority. Tenor. *[Role has been cast]*

MONTY, mid-late 20's, a white paratrooper and Flick's friend from basic training. Scrappy, crass, and somewhat self-consumed, Monty knows what being pretty gets him. Tenor. *[This role includes moments of intimacy with Violet.]*

YOUNG VIOLET, mid-teens, not quite as guarded or prickly as her older self, but still tough and stubborn. She has a keen curiosity and the rough edges of being brought up solely by her father. Mezzo or soprano with mix/belt. *[Does not need to look like the actor playing Violet. This role includes depictions of gore and violence not portrayed onstage.]*

FATHER, mid-30's to mid-40's, white, a simple widowed man who raises his daughter alone doing the best he can with the limited knowledge and resources he has to do so. Stern but friendly, smart but uneducated. Accidentally scars Violet's face while chopping wood. Baritone. *[This role includes depictions of gore and violence not portrayed onstage.]*

OLD LADY/HOTEL HOOKER, 50's, a former beauty past her prime, sits next to Violet on the bus, Staunch and frustrated with life. Actor doubles as Hotel Hooker. Mezzo or alto with a belt.

PREACHER/RADIO SINGER/BUS DRIVER 1, BUS DRIVER 4, 40's, an impassioned, theatrical man who preaches with all the bravado he can muster. More of a showman than a man truly dedicated to his faith and healing. Dismissive and egotistical. Actor doubles as Radio Singer, Bus Driver 1, and Bus Driver 4. Baritone or Tenor.

VIRGIL/BILLY DEAN/BUS DRIVER 2/RADIO SINGER/BUS PASSENGER, mid-20's, the preacher's assistant. Knows the smoke and mirrors of the show and must begrudgingly deal with anyone who might derail it. Actor doubles as Billy Dean (a boy in Violet's class at school), Bus Driver 2, Radio Singer and Bus Passenger. Tenor.

LULA BUFFINGTON/ALMETA/BUS PASSENGER, 50's, a Black woman and member of the volunteer choir that sings for the Preacher's telecast. Devout, but a captivating and passionate performer. Actor doubles as Almeta (the landlady of an inn in Memphis) and Bus Passenger. Mezzo with a strong gospel sound.

LEROY EVANS/WAITER/RADIO SOLOIST/BUS DRIVER 3/BUS PASSENGER, 40's or 50's, a small-minded man from Violet's hometown. Actor doubles as Waiter, Radio Soloist, Bus Driver 3, and Bus Passenger. Baritone or Tenor. *[This role includes the use of a racial slur.]*

MUSIC HALL SINGER/BUS PASSENGER, 30's or 40's, the singer at a dance hall in Memphis. Actor doubles as a Bus Passenger. Mezzo with blues sound.