

*Florence Nightingale
- Woman at War*



Performed by Agnete G. Haaland

A legend - a life

«In the East I have met two real men only», wrote Lord Stafford in a statement to the House of Commons in 1855, «One of them is Omar Pascha, the Turkish general. The other is Florence Nightingale».

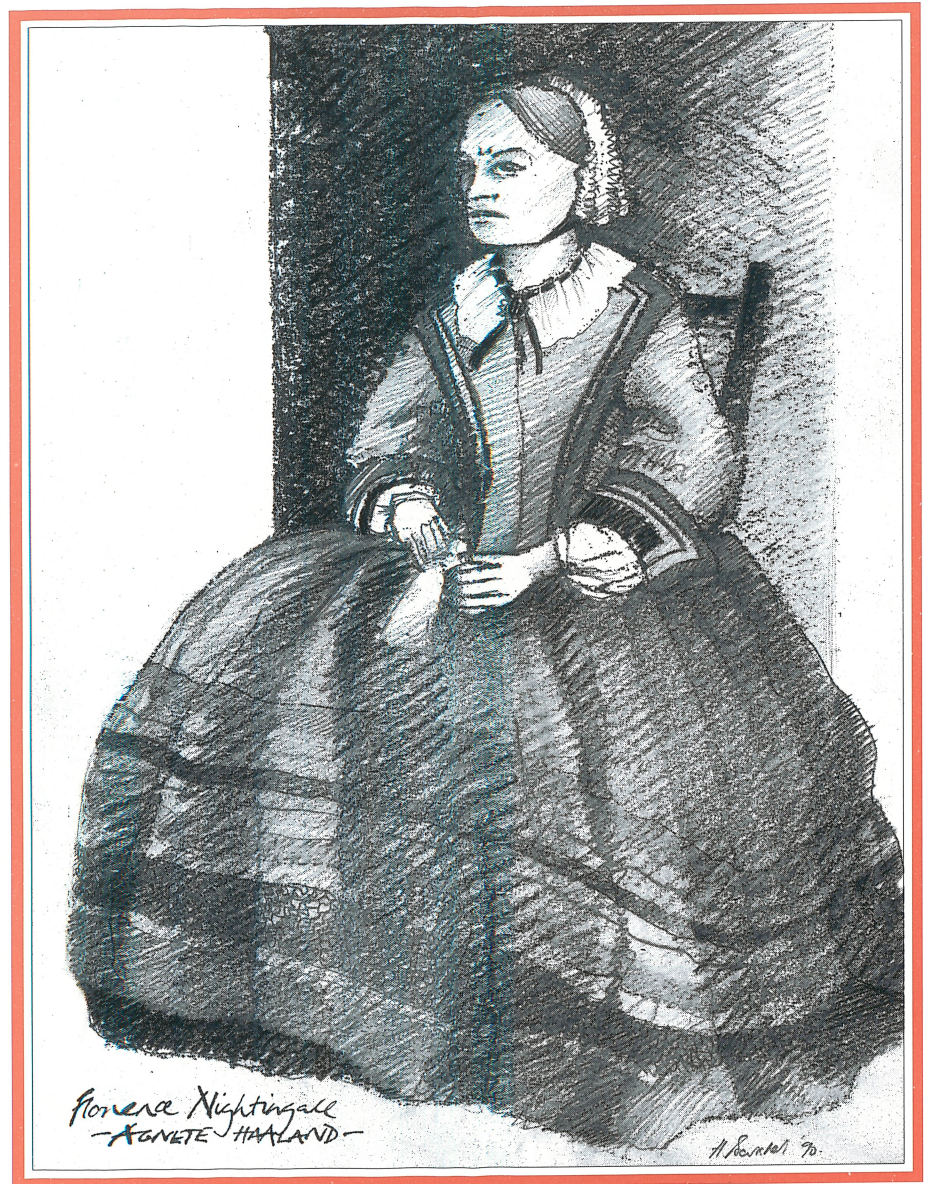
In the eyes of the Victorian upper class, Florence Nightingale must have appeared extremely unwomanly, nevertheless, history books tell the story of a stereotyped woman: the beautiful, self-sacrificing, lady with the lamp. Who will we find if we take a closer look at «The Lady with the Lamp»?

Florence Nightingale was born in Florence in 1820 during her parents' travels in Europe. A woman's success was, at that time, judged according to her marriage. Florence Nightingale, however, didn't follow the expected standards and rejected marriage - even to the man she loved. From her parents' viewpoint, this was a tragedy and in their opinion her life was a scandal: she read too much, worked too much and even worse - she did not care about feminine pursuits at all.

Ignoring the dictates of common decency, Florence visited hospitals in Europe to learn how to care for the sick. After a prolonged stay in Europe, she made up her mind to commit her life to nursing. Shortly after, in 1853, she was appointed to her first post, as leader for «The Institution for the Care of Sick Gentlewomen in Distressed Circumstances». For Florence, who was somewhat weary of the upper class, this was not the ideal position, it was, however, a starting-point.

The Crimean War broke out in 1854 and for the first time in history, newspapers sent war correspondents to the battlefield. Reporters from the Times and the London Daily News revealed that treatment of the sick and wounded on the front was a national scandal. France had their «Sisters of Charity», but all England had was a handful of exhausted doctors and no medical equipment. In an open letter to the women of England, the Times wrote, «Why has our nation no Sisters of Charity?». Florence Nightingale looked upon this outburst as a personal challenge.

Florence Nightingale was commissioned by the government to select women of «nursing material» and to take them with her to the hospital in Skutari where the wounded and sick soldiers were brought from the Crimea. In Skutari, they found a tragedy of mud and dirt - and eight kilometers of beds! Florence Nightingale walked those eight kilo-



meters every night... the lady with the lamp.

During the day, Florence was herself a warrior. She waged war against the chief surgeon who opposed the upper class women from England. She waged war against a bureaucracy which wasted valuable time transporting goods to Skutari. She waged war against the hygienic standards at the hospital. Florence was a leader who put things in order. She wrote down all her experiences and at the same time kept statistics over the diseased and dying. She waged war against alcohol and worked day and night waging war against disease. Florence Nightingale founded modern nursing on thorough routines and systematic treatment.

When Florence returned to England after almost two years in Skutari, she was ill and for a greater part of her time confined to

bed. However, she didn't give up her fight for English soldiers. She was in close contact with Queen Victoria and had considerable influence on decisions made by the War Office. She wrote several books of which «Notes on Nursing, what it is and what it is not» is the most famous. In 1860 she founded a nurses' training institution at St. Thomas's Hospital...being a nurse was no longer a shame. Florence Nightingale worked energetically to establish a professorship in statistics at Oxford. She struggled for a marriage settlement statute and also brought up the idea of cheap housing loans for workers.

Florence Nightingale was a living legend but first and foremost she was a woman at war - before, during and after the Crimean. She wanted no word of praise. All that is written on her tombstone is; F.N. Born 1820. Died 1910.

Florence Nightingale *- Woman at War*

Compiled and Written by Agnete G. Haaland
Adapted and Directed by Anne-Karen Hytten

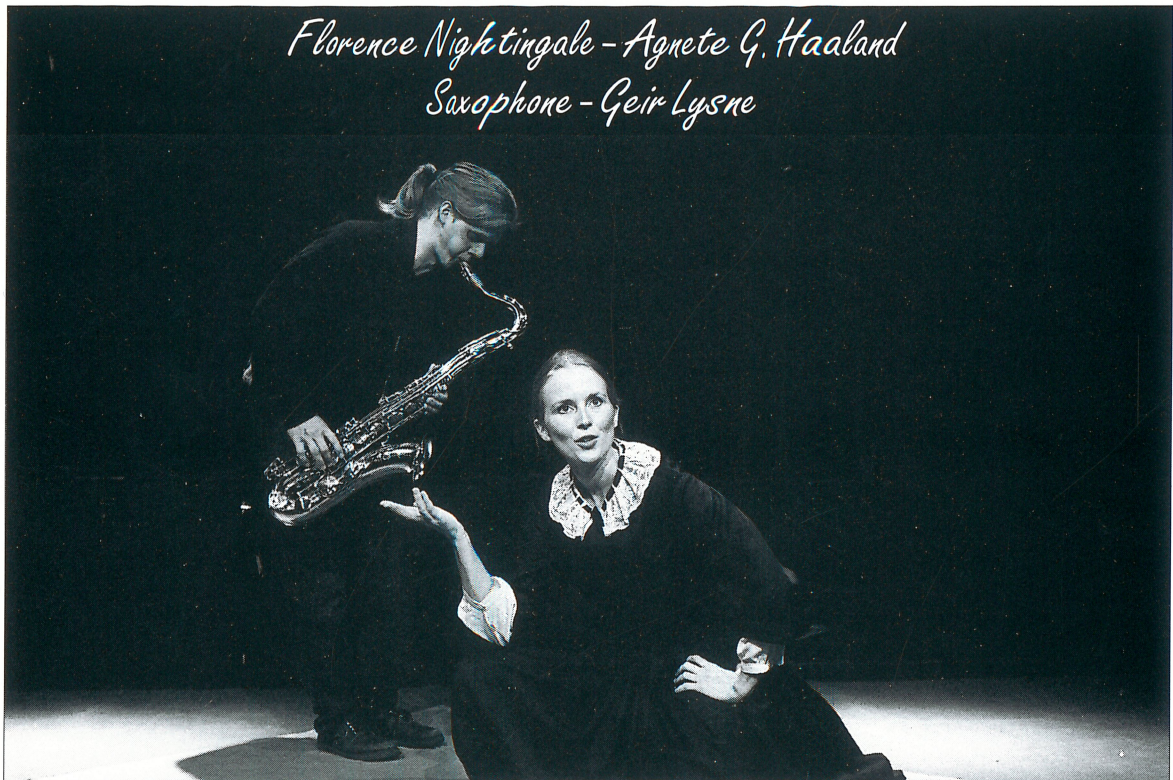
Costume Design: Hilary Baxter

Music: Geir Lysne

Lighting: Arne Kambestad

Language Consultant: Jill Martin Schau

Florence Nightingale - Agnete G. Haaland
Saxophone - Geir Lysne



First performed: 10th May 1990 at Haukeland Hospital, Bergen, Norway to mark the 170th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale.

«Florence Nightingale - Woman at War» has toured Sweden, Finland and Denmark and all over Norway. It has also been performed at the Norwegian embassy in Chile.

First performance in England: 19th November 1991 at University of Oxford.

Duration: Approx. one hour. No break.

The taking of photos and/or recording is not permitted during the performance.

The manuscript is based on Florence Nightingale's original texts and diaries.

In her own words

For Florence Nightingale, writing was a way of living. She wrote all her life and her diaries reveal a woman with humour and acumen.

An upper class woman..

- There is nothing that can compare to the tyranny of a good English family.

- I could write a comedy in 50 acts just about the headaches in my family.

- Now if I were to write a book out of my experience, I should begin: Women have no sympathy..

to Crimea...

- What the horrors of war are, no one can imagine, they are not wounds and blood and fever (...). They are intoxication, drunken brutality, demoralization and disorder on the part of the inferior - jealousy, meanness, indifference, selfish brutality on the part of the superior.

- I have more and more reason to believe that this is the kingdom of hell - but I as much believe that it is to be made the kingdom of heaven.

- Their heads are so flattened between the boards of Army discipline that they remain old children all their life.

...and home again.

- I am fit to blow you all to pieces with

an infernal machine of my own invention.

- My life now is as unlike my Hospital life when I was concerned with the souls and bodies of men as reading a cookery book is unlike a good dinner.

- I am becoming quite a tame beast - fit for a lady to ride or drive - as horse dealers say of their most vicious brutes.



Quotations from:

Cecil Woodham Smith: «Florence Nightingale», Constable 1982.

Vicinus and Nergaard (eds): «Ever yours, Florence Nightingale. Selected Letters», Virago Press 1989.

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Agnete G. Haaland

has, during her acting career, portrayed several strong characters and has played leading roles in many different theatre companies in Norway. Among the roles she has played are: Solveig in Ibsen's «Peer Gynt», Anne Frank in «The Diary of Anne Frank», Dorothy in «The Wizard of Oz» and Pippi in «Pippi Longstocking». Agnete has also filmed in an American thriller and played one of the main characters in two well-known Norwegian films for children («Kamilla and the Thief»). She received very good reviews for her monologue about human rights in Latin-America, «Eleven Days», where she is accompanied by Geir Lysne and three other jazz-musicians. She is now working with the national touring company of Norway, Riksteatret.

Anne-Karen Hytten

is a freelance director who started her career in 1980 when she directed «The Thief and the Maiden» by Knut Faldbakken. From 1980-86 she worked full-time as director at Oslo Nye Teater. Anne-Karen Hytten has directed approximately 30 plays for various theatres in Norway including: «The Glass Menagerie» by Tennessee Williams, «Shirley Valentine» by Willy Russell, «Duet for One» by Tom Kempinski, «Daughters» and «The Winter Garden» by Bjørg Vik and «The Tinderbox» by Hans Christian Andersen.

Geir Øystein Lysne

is educated at the Norwegian State Academy of Music with the saxophone as his main instrument. Today he works with several jazzbands in Norway, both composing and performing. He is a member of «Fri Fot», the jazz-quartet which has composed the music for «Eleven Days». He won the Norwegian Grammy Award with Oslo Groove Company in 1990.





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