



The Canterbury Commemoration Society is fundraising for a statue of

APHRA BEHN

*All women together ought to let flowers fall on the
tomb of Aphra Behn . . . For it was she who earned
them the right to speak their minds.*

Virginia Woolf

WHO WAS APHRA BEHN?

Aphra Behn was the first professional woman writer of literature and drama in the English language. One of the most prolific playwrights of her generation, she dared to earn a living 'by the pen' at a time when for a woman to do so was considered indecent.

Canterbury-born Aphra wrote poetry, over 20 plays and her *Love-letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* has been hailed as the first novel in English. Another of her best-selling prose works, *Oroonoko*, candidly exposed the horrors of slavery.

In the centuries that followed her death in 1689, her works were condemned as improper. While those of her male contemporaries, including John Dryden and William Wycherley, remained widely available, hers were censured on account of her gender. They were neither published nor read by any but a few broad-minded admirers until she was rediscovered in the 20th century.

The Canterbury Commemoration Society is commissioning the first ever statue of Aphra, finally giving her the recognition she deserves in the city of her birth. Please help the Aphra Statue Campaign by turning to the back page and donating as much as you are able.

- 1640 Born Aphra Johnson in Harbledown, near Canterbury, Kent
- 1643 The Johnson family move in to Canterbury
- 1657 The family relocate to Aldgate, London
- 1663 Aphra and her family sail for Surinam around this time
- 1665 Aphra marries a 'Johan Behn' on her return to London
- 1666 Aphra, now widowed, is sent to Antwerp by Charles II as a spy
- 1670 Back in London, Aphra's first play *The Forc'd Marriage* is staged, launching a remarkable, two-decade literary career
- 1689 Aphra dies and is buried in Westminster Abbey



THE STATUE

In January 2022, the Canterbury Commemoration Society asked for designs for an Aphra statue. Forty-seven proposals were submitted from around the world. From these we selected four and commissioned each artist to work up their ideas into a 50-cm bronze maquette.



ABOVE: The four shortlisted 'sketch maquette' proposals for the Aphra Behn statue that are now commissioned to be made as bronze maquettes. The winning maquette will be chosen in Autumn 2022 and commissioned as a life-and-a-quarter size bronze for Canterbury.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: 'Aphra Behn: Playwright, Poet, Pioneer' by Christine Charlesworth; 'Mind over Matter' by Maurice Blik; 'Astrea' by Victoria Atkinson; 'The Untamed Heart' by Meredith Bergmann

In June and July 2022, the four bronze maquettes will be unveiled and toured around key Aphra Behn sites in the UK. The public will be urged to vote for their favourite.

The winning design will be announced and the statue commissioned in autumn 2022. It will be unveiled - we hope - in 2023.

We believe that the City of Canterbury should be as proud of its famous daughters as it is of its famous sons. Aphra is doubly inspiring: a lode star for all women, writers, poets, fathers-of-daughters, wits, entertainers, teachers everywhere, and a vibrant example of how someone from the humblest origins can find a place among the stars.

FUNDRAISING

The Canterbury Commemoration Society (charity no. 1057977) has a tried and tested record of providing the city with first-class commemorative public art and information.



Please will you help us raise £100,000 for the Aphra Behn statue?

Donation categories named after Aphra's most popular plays!

The Emperor of the Moon (1687)

Donate £5000 or more to become an Emperor (or Empress) of the Moon.

- A name (or two) of your choice in pride of place on a bronze plaque near the statue
- Six VIP tickets to the statue unveiling
- A pair of tickets to our grand Aphra Behn dinner, 16 July 2022
- Our most sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude

The City-Heiress (1682)

Donate £2500 to become a City-Heiress (or City-Heir)

- A name (or two) of your choice on a bronze plaque near the statue
- Four VIP tickets to the statue unveiling
- A pair of tickets to our grand Aphra Behn dinner, 16 July 2022
- Our most sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude

The Rover (1677)

Donate £1000 to become a Rover

- A pair of VIP tickets to the statue unveiling
- Our most sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude

The Widow Ranter (1689)

Donate £500 to become a Ranter

- An invitation to the statue unveiling
- Our most sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude

The Roundheads (1682)

Donate any sum to become a Roundhead

- Our most sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude

HOW TO DONATE

ONLINE Via our website www.cantcommsoc.co.uk

BANK The Canterbury Commemoration Society
TRANSFER CAF Bank

40-52-40
00090467

CHEQUE Payable to 'Canterbury Commemoration Society'
& posted to the Society's address below