

land sent a jarringly brief note before her memorial. “I’m not going to be present at the ‘Remembrance’ for Felicia on the 18th,” Copland declared, “because I am under contract to conduct the same day in Virginia (Norfolk).”

Taken as a whole, Bernstein’s correspondence brings the reader up close to his growing celebrity, which increased apace after World War II, as access to air travel made it possible to be a jet-set conductor and the advent of LP recordings opened up a mass market for symphonic works. In the process, Bernstein became the Elvis Presley of classical music.

Time and again, the letters show the intoxication of celebrity. “They say there hasn’t been such a scene in a Budapest concert hall since Toscanini was here,” Bernstein reported to Helen Coates from a European tour in 1948. “The audience stamped & shouted.... The bobby-soxers tonight beat everything I’ve ever seen. I’m exhausted.” A month later, writing from the Netherlands to his friend David Oppenheim: “I live like a king, I have screaming audiences and flowers at my concerts, and even a lover.” At the end of this tour, Bernstein summed up his triumph to yet another friend: “I am swollen with success, lush with living, loving and learning. Germany and Austria were fabulous, filthy, Nazi, exciting. Budapest was grim and gay. Milano was the greatest. Paris a joy, as ever, and Holland a comfort.”

Bernstein’s allegiance to his Jewish heritage resonates throughout the letters. Writing in 1946, he expressed gratitude to Solomon Braslavsky, the organist, choir director, and composer at his family synagogue in Roxbury: “I have come to realize what a debt I really owe to you—personally—for the marvelous music at Mishkan Tefila services.” Their bond remained strong, and a decade later, Braslavsky congratulated Bernstein when he was named principal conductor of the New York Philharmonic, becoming the first American to hold the post. “My prophecy became a reality,” Braslavsky wrote his protégé, congratulating Bernstein for having resisted pressure to de-Semitize his identity. “You reached your goal by your own merits... and with your *own name*. It is neither BERNINI, nor STEINKOVSKY. It is what you always were, what you are, and what you always will be.”

Even in Bernstein’s later years, when the correspondence becomes uneven, notable exchanges turn up. In 1968, for example,

With an outsized musical talent, and an equally extravagant gift in front of a camera, the composer and conductor lived in overdrive.

Jackie Kennedy wrote a loving thank-you after Bernstein conducted the Adagietto from Mahler’s Fifth Symphony at the funeral of her brother-in-law Robert Kennedy. “Will you tell your noble orchestra, drowning in heat and cables when I passed them,” she implored, “...how beautiful you were—how many people cried—people who don’t know music.” A striking letter arrived in 1988 from jazz trumpeter Miles Davis, who congratulated Bernstein on his seventieth birthday. Twenty years earlier, Davis recalled, he had balked at performing music from *West Side Story*, declaring it to be “corny shit.” But his attitude had evolved over time. In the letter, he acknowledged to Bernstein that the show had “turned out to be a classic,” and he placed Bernstein in a pantheon alongside great African-American musicians: “You are one of America’s true geniuses along with Monk, Gillespie, Mingus and Parker.

Time and again, *The Leonard Bernstein Letters* demonstrate how the composer and conductor lived in overdrive. With an outsized musical talent—and an equally extravagant gift in front of a camera—he appeared at a historical moment when a maestro could be both Jewish and American-born. There were no precedents for that particular combination. Yet Bernstein attained artistic authority in an era when the classical-music industry was at its peak, and his life and work continue to captivate music lovers the world over. ▢

Mason professor of music Carol J. Oja also serves on the faculty of the graduate program in American Studies at Harvard. Her most recent book, *Bernstein Meets Broadway: Collaborative Art in a Time of War*, will be published by Oxford University Press this summer. She is currently the New York Philharmonic’s Leonard Bernstein Scholar-in-Residence.

ALUMNI

Duty Calls

An alumna chooses “the harder right.”

by NELL PORTER BROWN

ELEVEN YEARS after she was kicked out of the military under Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, veteran aviator Lissa Young has returned to West Point. Armed with a 2013 Harvard doctorate, at the age of 52, Young is finishing her first semester as an assistant professor teaching general psychology. In March, as a civilian, she stood before a class of freshman cadets, called “plebes,” who seemed as nervously excited as she was about the day’s touchy topics: love and sexuality.

“Lu-uv,” Young began, drawling out the word in her Southern accent for laughs. “The class you’ve all been waiting for.”

She covered attraction and romance, dating and rejection. Then she flashed on

screen photos of celebrity couples. Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt. The less pretty pair from the TV sitcom *The King of Queens*. And then Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi. “So,” Young said, pausing. “Let’s talk about sexual orientation.”

Enter the Kinsey Scale. Alfred Kinsey’s research showed that sexuality is a complex phenomenon that flows along a continuum, rather than typing people as gay or straight, man or woman. “In the United States, we like our norms and are uncomfortable with ambiguity. But there’s a huge spectrum, y’all,” added Young, who was raised in Florida. “Here at the academy you’ve got beefy dudes, you’ve got more effeminate guys, and you have super-feminine women and more

masculine girls.” Many people “try and combine what they feel is an attraction with what their culture is telling them is OK to do,” she continued. “Ultimately, you’ve got to make a decision to act on who you think you are.”

The cadets, dressed in uniform grays with matching black backpacks, took it all in. It was hard to tell what they really thought.

That lecture was not given when Young was a cadet in the early 1980s. “We just tamped all that stuff down,” she says later, during an interview in her office. “No public displays of affection. Dating was discouraged. Nobody talked about it much.” She dated males while at West Point. But with classes, drills, sports, inspections, sleep-deprivation, and combat-training missions in the scenic hills overlooking the Hudson River campus, there was no time or energy left over, she recalls, for exploring love—or anything else. Yet she thrived on that rigor, having deliberately applied to West Point not that long after women were first admitted (in 1976), seeking “a transformative experience,” reports Young, a wiry athlete who still runs 25 miles a week. “I thought it would be the hardest thing I could ever do.”

About two-thirds of the 149 women in her class (of 1,006) made it to their 1986 graduation. (Today, women constitute 16 percent of the 4,400 cadets, a percentage likely to rise given the recent decision to allow combat service for women and West Point’s continuing efforts to recruit them.) Young became the first woman not only to serve as West Point’s deputy brigade commander (the second-highest cadet leader on campus) but to command rising sophomores during the critical eight-week field training that introduces them to combat soldiering. Never did she feel that her gender, or what would become her relatively left-leaning politics, was an issue at the academy or on active duty: “We weren’t sitting around talking about erudite ideas.”

She became an aviator, like her father, a fighter pilot from the class of 1956. “His father had forced him to go to West Point, and he hated it,” Young says. At the end of his military service, he went to medical school, became a surgeon, and married a Southern belle. Young’s sister is a retired Oakland, California, police officer.

Young chose to stay, thrilled by flying Chinooks and other helicopters. For 16



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Lissa Young fosters open discussions about love and sexuality during a psychology class for freshmen cadets at West Point.

years she commanded drug interdictions in Thailand, artillery gun-team “insertions and extractions,” and search-and-rescue missions in the Alaska-Saint Elias Range, including Denali, and western Canada. By the time she came out to her family, at 30, she was a captain. “I was in love with the military and my life as a leader,” she says. “It wasn’t what I did. It was who I was. Being homosexual didn’t seem to matter.”

THE DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL (DADT) policy ended in 2011. Since then, West Point has seen three same-sex weddings on campus and some cadets and faculty members, already active within their own closed Facebook group, have formed the academy’s first public gay-straight alliance, Spectrum.

Changes, at least superficially, have come fast. One Spectrum adviser is Major Howard Titzel, a physics instructor and 2001 West Point graduate who has served in Iraq. Even after DADT had been repealed, he reports, slurs were still commonly heard—“Dude, quit being a fag”—but now, “There is an established culture where that will not be tolerated. I am impressed with that. Am I comfortable being open and honest about who I really am, with everyone I meet? No. But I’ve opened up a little more this year, after 15 years of hiding it.”

More decisive, Titzel believes, is a generational shift in perspective: Spectrum’s most active members are also its youngest. Last fall at a meeting, he recounts, “we were playing a movie about DADT’s repeal and the speakers were loud and the windows were wide open and I was sweating and shaking and nervous because people were going to know there was ‘gay stuff being talked about in here,’” he says, laughing at himself in hindsight. “But the younger cadets had already put up slides in the mess hall saying, ‘Hey, everybody! Come to the gay club!’ They have no problem with it at all.” Still, only about 30 people attend club meetings, even though another 120 are on the listserv, suggesting that not everyone, including straight allies, feels free to be open, he adds.

Behavioral changes often happen faster in hierarchical cultures governed by rules and punishments, Young says. “We now have recourse if someone says something outrageous. If you are brave, you can whistle-blow. We still have our pockets of Neanderthals. This is not over yet.”

The U.S. Army’s definition of leadership is “to provide purpose, direction, and motivation in order to accomplish a mission—and improve the organization,” according to Colonel Bernard Banks, M.P.A. ’02, B’06, a former combat pilot. He has led the department of behavioral sciences and leadership since 2012, and hired Young,

for her “sharp intellect,” to help advance the organization. That requires “improving the people therein,” he says. “To improve their skills, knowledge, and attitudes, you have to improve who they are, and how they view the world.”

Young was identified early on, even as a cadet, as a candidate for future leadership roles, Banks reports: “She embodies all of the Army’s core ideals.” This winter, when a cadet needed a ride from the train station to campus, at least a 20-minute trip, she was quick to volunteer. “Can you think of a professor at any college who would use their free time, on a weekend, to pick up a student whom she did not even know, and basically provide a taxi service?” he asks. “This highlights the kind of person Lissa is—and why she wanted to come back. She wanted to be surrounded

by people who all believe that that is exactly what you should have done in that situation.”

Moreover, precisely because of her personal and professional experiences, “Lissa brings empathy,” he adds. “You can’t lead unless you have someone to follow you, and their propensity to follow is commensurate with the extent to which they believe you understand how they feel. She can engage in the deep, serious conversations in a way that students will open up themselves.”

Young also intends to open up the faculty. She is pushing the whole department to do interdisciplinary research on leadership and transformation, get published, and take part in on-campus colloquia. “My mission is to get us on the map,” she explains, “because we are the premier institution practicing this art and science, every day. We can’t grow as teachers or scholars if we don’t engage with the academic community outside these walls.” She is the self-appointed “guinea pig” this spring and presented her dissertation research, on how stereotyping affects the performance of military teams during international competitions.

This is Young’s second go-around as an assistant professor at West Point. After the army sent her to get a master’s degree in social psychology at the University of Kansas, she served on the faculty from 1996 to 1999, then was chosen for a year-

long program at the Command and General Staff College—"a big nod that I was doing well," she says. She then returned to active duty, and led the high-altitude search-and-rescue unit in Alaska from 2000 until 2002.

That June, she was hired for a permanent position in West Point's department of behavioral science and leadership, and was notified of a pending promotion to lieutenant colonel. Days later, she also learned she was being investigated under

DADT. Forced to resign in August, she says, "I turned in my flight gear and started on that lonely ALCAN highway all the way home, although I didn't actually have a home." She had just turned 40.

Young refuses to blame the academy or the military. "I don't feel like a victim. They enforced a policy I knew existed and I was responsible for taking the risk." The hardest part, which is also what she respects most about the organization, she says, was "the dispassionate adjudication of policy.

It didn't 'come after me.' It just did what it does and it didn't give a hoot who I was or how I had served." At moments, it does hurt to be back at West Point *not* in uniform. Many of her one-time peers or mentors are now in leadership roles, or even retired with full pensions. In uniform, they command respect that cadets just don't award civilians. (Young tried to get re-appointed last year, but says she was rejected because of her age.)

Disorientation and grief hit hard but

Vote Now

THIS SPRING, alumni can vote for new Harvard Overseers and elected directors of the Harvard Alumni Association (HAA).

Ballots, already mailed out, must be received back in Cambridge by noon on May 23. The results will be announced on the afternoon of Commencement day, May 29. All holders of Harvard degrees, except Corporation members and officers of instruction and government, are entitled to vote for Overseer candidates. The election for HAA directors is open to all Harvard degree-holders.

For Overseer (six-year term):

Nicole S. Arnaboldi '80, M.B.A. '84, New York City. Vice chairman, Credit Suisse Asset Management.

Michael Brown '83, J.D. '88, Boston. CEO and co-founder, City Year.

James E. K. Hildreth '79, Davis, California. Dean, College of Biological Sciences, University of California, Davis.

David W. Leebron '77, J.D. '79, Houston. President, Rice University.

Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D. '75, Corvallis, Oregon. Valley professor of marine biology and Distinguished Professor of zoology, Oregon State University.

Michael M. Lynton '82, M.B.A. '87, Los Angeles. CEO, Sony Entertainment.

Sunshik Min, D.B.A. '89, Seoul, Korea. President, YBM, Inc.

Lesley Friedman Rosenthal '86, J.D. '89, New York City. Vice president, general counsel and secretary, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

For elected director (three-year term):

Henry Parkman Biggs '86, Saint Louis, Missouri. Associate director, McDonnell International Academy, Washington

University in St. Louis.

Raphael W. Bostic '87, Los Angeles. Bedrosian chair in governance and the public enterprise; director, Bedrosian Center on Governance, Price School of Public Policy, University of Southern California.

Peter Andrew Boyce II '13, New York City. Associate, General Catalyst Partners; co-founder, Rough Draft Ventures.

Margaret Jay Braatz, Ed.M. '93, Ed.D. '99, Chicago. Vice president for planning and presidential administration, DePaul University.

Lea Nash Bridgeman '00, M.B.A. '05, Louisville, Kentucky. Executive director

and trustee, Bridgeman Family Foundation.

Jessica Gelman '97, M.B.A. '02, Wellesley, Massachusetts. Vice president, customer marketing and strategy, The Kraft Sports Group (New England Patriots); co-founder, MIT Sloan Sports Analytics Conference.

Jay H. Hebert, J.D. '86, Fort Worth, Texas. General counsel, Keystone Group L.P.

Vanessa W. Liu '96, J.D. '03, New York City. COO, Trigger Media Group.

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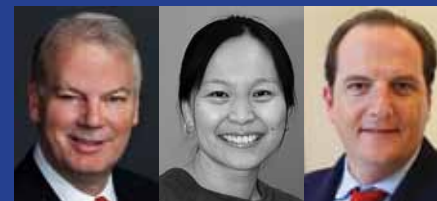
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Arregui

Young stayed “in motion.” After applying for more than a hundred jobs, she got one selling air-traffic-control systems in the Middle East for Raytheon Corporation. “I had a blast traveling all over, opening up my sales jacket, going, ‘Here’s an air-traffic-control system, do you want one?’” she says with a laugh. The job gave her the financial security and time to heal. “I realized I still believed in the mission at West Point and in teaching,” she says. “Nothing else felt as real or as important.”

To recapture the academy’s attention, Young in 2005 applied to graduate programs at the most prestigious universities, only to be turned down by all of them, twice. In early 2007, former West Point colleague Scott A. Snook, by then at Harvard Business School, had her speak at the Kennedy School’s Center for Public Leadership, which led center director David Gergen to ask her to help integrate aspects of military leadership into its curriculum. That spring, the Harvard Graduate School of Education accepted her for its doctoral program in education policy, leadership, and instructional practice, with a full scholarship.

At Harvard, Young focused her research on how social perceptions and stereotypes form and how those views influence education, learning, and performance, especially in a military context. She also studied gender and women’s roles, and was a teaching fellow for “Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Learning,” a course she designed with professor of education Monica Higgins, her doctoral adviser. Young reveled in the intellectual freedom, but ultimately longed for the graver responsibility of shaping cadets. “The Ed School is trying to save the nation’s children,” she explains, “but it’s a different kind of commitment. The mission is not to ask people to die, or kill others, to save them.”

WEST POINT is the nation’s oldest continuously occupied military post. Neo-gothic granite structures, such as the Cadet Chapel, loom on cliffs above the river, staunch signs of both a timeless and an implacable traditionalism. The chapel’s solitude allows her to “hear the voices that really matter.” While showing a visitor around, she points out the Cadet Prayer, on a plaque near the entrance. “Strengthen and increase our admiration for honest dealing and clean thinking,” she reads. “Make us to choose the

harder right instead of the easier wrong, and never be content with the half truth when the whole can be won.... Help us maintain and honor the Corps untarnished and unsullied and to show forth the ideals of West Point in doing our duty to Thee and to our Country....” Young chokes up. “This place, as flawed as it is, is about trying to be better *all the time*, and about what lasts,” she says, wiping away a tear. “I guess all we can ask of ourselves is that we matter, that we make a difference.”

She has no interest in being the “lesbian professor,” having never overvalued her sexuality. Even under DADT, she says, “I didn’t yearn for this ‘out life’ I felt I was having to give up.” But in this time of institutional transition, she does feel some pressure to stand up—and out. With Titzel leaving in June for his next assignment, Spectrum members chose Young as their new faculty adviser. And if she receives the equivalent of a tenure-track position as an assistant professor of organizational behavior (a decision pending at press time), she would create “a web of people, gay and straight, to catch cadets who are floundering and help the prejudiced straight kids who, quite frankly, most need to see military competence and homosexuality working together, because it is so important for this institution to grow.” In enabling Young to return, West Point appears to want her guidance in teaching about and even remedying the very problems that led to her dismissal. Taking this “new opportunity of service” could be the ultimate correction.

“I can do my best, by setting the best example, to change one mind at a time, but it’s unrealistic to say I want all 71 of my students to accept homosexuality,” Young asserts. “It’s the drivers of hatred that I want to address.” When the core mission is to teach people to excel at “the art of *controlled aggression*” (as Banks put it in an interview), perhaps that distinction between thought and behavior is



Having walked the same halls and marched on the same greens as a West Point cadet, Young knows the demands on her students, especially on women in male-dominated culture.

enough. “You don’t have the resources to ‘therapize’ every individual,” she notes. “You need them to pick up a weapon and move on.”

One of the best lessons she internalized as a cadet came two weeks before graduation, when she was caught skinny-dipping in the campus’s Luke Reservoir. “A friend and I had just been through so much over those years, we just wanted to let loose,” she reports. They were swimming and giggling when the commandant, the academy’s prime role model and disciplinarian, appeared. “Get your clothes on and meet me in my office,” he ordered. With wet hair dripping onto her rumpled uniform, Young appeared, expecting to “get slammed”—suspended or expelled. “He told me he was impressed with my spirit, my *carpe diem*,” she recalls. Then he warned her about carefully choosing to take the right risks, to avoid jeopardizing what is most important. “I know who you are,” Young says he added, “and my decision not to punish you has everything to do with what I believe is the value you will add to the Army. Now, get out of my office.”

He knew, she says now, that writing up a cadet who had done nearly everything just right would have taught her nothing. “By granting me that reprieve, he taught me that generosity, judiciousness, and courage are a big part of being an *effective leader*. After that,” she adds, “I would have run through withering fire for him.” ▽