The Women Of Whitechapel And Jack The Ripper

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Jack the Ripper was an unidentified serial killer generally believed to have been active in the largely impoverished areas in and around the Whitechapel district of London in 1888. In both the criminal case files and contemporary journalistic accounts, the killer was called the Whitechapel Murderer and Leather Apron. Attacks ascribed to Jack the Ripper typically involved female prostitutes who lived and worked in the slums of the East End of London whose throats were cut prior to abdominal mutilations. Although eleven women were murdered around the time of the Ripper's reign, there were five victims that stood apart from the rest. The Canonical Five, as they are known, are believed to have all been murdered by the same hand. All five victims, prostitutes of the East End, shared distinct and similar wounds, as well as postmortem organ removal and mutilations in some cases. Although it's believed that Jack the Ripper was responsible for only five of the eleven Whitechapel Murders, the person or persons that committed these murders evaded capture. Several arrests were made, many witnesses were questioned, inquiries were conducted, as well as efforts by the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee to bring the killer(s) to justice, but no one was ever caught or identified. The world premiere of Iain Bell’s Jack the Ripper: The Women of Whitechapel, following his critically-acclaimed In Parenthesis. A disadvantaged group of working-class women are drawn together in their determination to survive the murderous terror that stalks London’s Whitechapel in 1888. Iain Bell’s new opera, with a libretto by Emma Jenkins, explores powerful themes of community and women struggling against the odds, posing questions about the hypocritical attitudes of “respectable” society. The mythic status of the unidentified serial killer is addressed through a refreshingly modern lens.