



TOM CIPULLO

GLORY DENIED

The true story of America's longest-held POW

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LETTER FROM OUR GENERAL DIRECTOR



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DEAR FRIENDS,

Opera is uniquely suited to bring Tom Philpott's book *Glory Denied*, the true oral history of Colonel Jim Thompson, to life. Combining the power and emotion of the human voice with live music, staging, and costumes, opera tells stories in ways no other art form can.

As you've no doubt heard by now, Col. Thompson had the dubious distinction of having been held captive as a Prisoner of War longer than any other service member in U.S. military history. During the Vietnam War, Thompson was a passenger on a military plane that was shot down. After his capture, he was mentally and physically tortured for almost nine agonizing years.

Memories of his wife Alyce and their children helped Col. Thompson survive his ordeal. When he was finally released, the joyous homecoming and reunion he was hoping for didn't happen. Alyce, thinking for a time that Jim was dead, had relocated and moved in with another man.

For Jim, time had stood still. But for the rest of the world, including for his wife and children, it marched on. The country, and family, Jim fought for had changed dramatically during his imprisonment.

How to express the gut-wrenching emotions Jim and Alyce felt? Their pain and sorrow, heartache, confusion, and anger? In our opinion, there's no better way than through opera. Thank you for joining us today.

Warm regards,

CHRISTOPHER HAHN
General Director

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THE CAST

TOM CIPULLO GLORY DENIED

Music by Tom Cipullo

Libretto by Tom Cipullo, based on the book, *Glory Denied*, by Tom Philpott

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IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE:

Older Thompson	Benjamin Taylor*
Younger Thompson	Terrence Chin-Loy*
Younger Alyce	Ashley Fabian*
Older Alyce	Caitlin Gotimer*

THE ARTISTIC TEAM:


Composer/librettist	Tom Cipullo
Conductor	James Lesniak
Stage Director	Matthew Haney*
Set Designer	Jiahui Shi+
Costume Designer	Jason Bray
Lighting Designer	Todd Nonn
Wig and Makeup Designer	Nicole Pagano
Head of Music	Glenn Lewis
Director of Musical Studies	Mark Trawka
Stage Manager	Alex W. Seidel


These performances mark the first production of *Glory Denied* at Pittsburgh Opera.

Sung in English with English texts projected above the stage.

Estimated performance time: 1 hour and 18 minutes with no intermission.

In consideration of your fellow audience members, please turn off all personal electronic devices.

 **Audio Commentary**, a complimentary service from Pittsburgh Opera, is available to patrons with visual impairments during Tuesday performances. To pick up a Hearing Device, simply present an ID at the Audio Commentary table, in the Lobby.

 **Braille and Large-Print programs** are also available at each performance.

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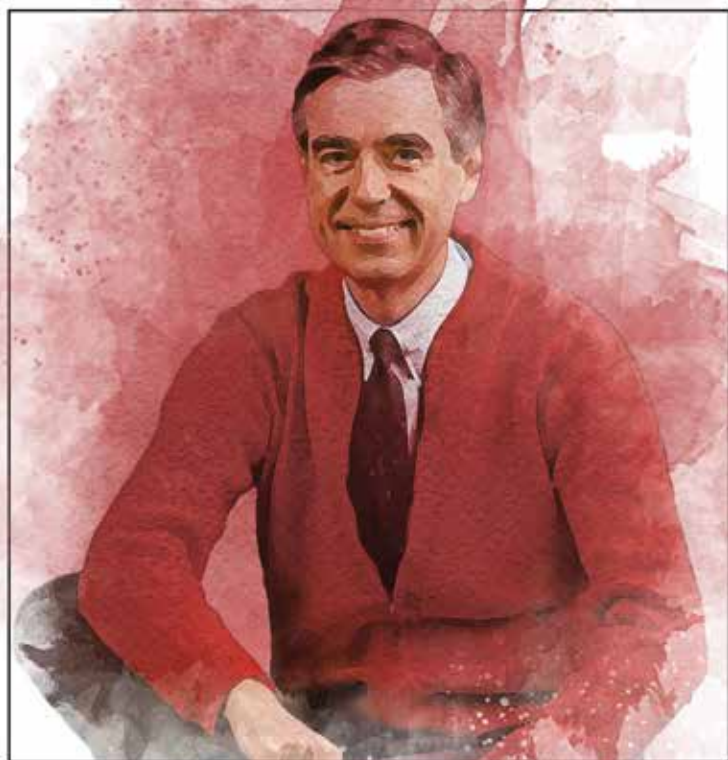
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SYNOPSIS

GLORY DENIED

Tableau I *In Captivity*

Colonel Floyd "Jim" Thompson, America's longest-held prisoner of war (POW), reflects on his years in captivity. He sees himself as a young man and recalls episodes from his nine-year ordeal: his humiliation, torture, solitary confinement, failed escape attempts, and forced propaganda statement. Through it all, he finds the strength to survive in thoughts of his family and his wife, Alyce. He remembers her letters from before his incarceration.

Older Alyce recalls receiving word that Jim's plane was shot down in Vietnam. Assuming the worst, she begins a relationship with another man and tells her children that their father is dead. Alyce refuses to allow inscription of Jim's name onto a POW bracelet and consults a lawyer in an effort to have him declared legally dead. Across the world, Thompsons, Younger and Older, find comfort in the 23rd Psalm. Eventually freed, Jim awaits reunion with his wife.

Tableau II *Welcome Home*

Following the release of POWs, Jim returns home; unfortunately, the Pentagon names another man the longest-held POW, depriving Jim of the recognition. Excerpts from the Paris Peace Accords are read, and, in a letter, President Richard Nixon welcomes Jim home, warning, "Some things about America may appear to have changed since your departure."

Alyce and Jim awkwardly reunite. She confesses what she has done and offers to leave if that is what Jim wishes, only asking that he hear her out first. She describes her loneliness and fear of his death. Jim decides to try for reconciliation. However, he is frantic with the endless changes that have occurred in his absence. Society's new permissiveness, Alyce's infidelity, America's general immorality, and the country's disdain for its veterans alarm him. It is a bitter "welcome home." Jim also realizes that Older Alyce is not the woman he left behind. Alyce asserts her independence, no longer the docile, obedient wife she once was. She describes the hell that she too endured in Jim's absence—the callous behavior of friends and family, the societal hostility, and the malicious treatment at the hands of strangers.

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SYNOPSIS, continued

Jim speaks warmly to the congregation at the church where he and Alyce married. Both Thompsons confess that faith in God and the love of a good woman allowed for his survival. Jim tells Alyce he forgives her, but she coldly claims she has done nothing that calls for forgiveness. Younger Alyce reads another touching letter to Jim. The final scene presents Jim alone in his study. He and Alyce have separated indefinitely, and illness has ended his military career. Jim asks himself repeatedly, "What to do today?" He finds consolation in the phrase, "One day at a time," just as he did while imprisoned. Jim tries to stay positive and confident, but bitter feelings keep intruding. He struggles to forgive, concluding, "Everyone else had a bracelet."

-Adapted from Tom Cipullo for Fort Worth Opera

PITTSBURGH OPERA

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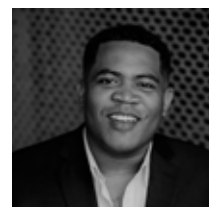
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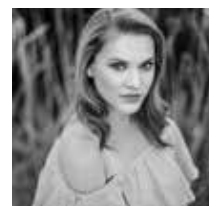


TERRENCE CHIN-LOY: YOUNGER THOMPSON

Terrence Chin-Loy is a first-year Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist in 2018-19. In 2017, he made his Pittsburgh Opera debut as Double Duty Radcliffe/*The Summer King*. This season, he was seen as Idomeneo/*afterWARDS* and is scheduled to perform as Parpignol/*La bohème*. He holds a BA in Musicology from Yale University, an MM Voice from Mannes College of Music, and is a recent graduate from Indiana University with a PD in Voice. While at Indiana University he performed the roles of Edgardo/*Lucia di Lammermoor*,

George Bailey/*It's a Wonderful Life*, and Tonio/*La fille du régiment*. He performed with Mannes Opera in the roles of Laurie/*Little Women* and Bill/*Flight*. During his time at Yale, he performed the roles of Ferrando/*Così fan tutte*, Pane/*La Calisto*, Eurimaco and Amfimono/*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, and Count Alberto/*L'occasione fa il ladro*. He also sang as an Apprentice Artist with Santa Fe Opera, where he covered the role of Astrologer/*The Golden Cockerel* in his first summer and sang the role of Brighella/*Ariadne auf Naxos* in his second. Mr. Chin-Loy has also been seen at Central City Opera as a 2015-16 Studio Artist, performing the role of Dandy/*The Ballad of Baby Doe*. In addition to his extensive experience with opera performance, Mr. Chin-Loy has performed in multiple concert works, most recently his Carnegie Hall Debut in Handel's *Messiah* (Masterwork Chorale). He made his Lincoln Center debut in 2016 singing Ricky Ian Gordon's *A Coffin in Egypt*. Other concert credits include *The Diary of One Who Vanished* (Brooklyn New Music Collective), Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* (Yale Symphony Orchestra), and Mozart's *Requiem* (New Haven Symphony Orchestra). Along with being awarded the Barbara and David Jacobs Fellowship in 2016, Mr. Chin-Loy has received the Michael Sisca Opera Award from Mannes College of Music, and was a Finalist in 2015 for the Gerda Lissner Art Song/Lieder Competition. Mr. Chin-Loy was a 2018 Semifinalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

Mr. Chin-Loy's residency is generously sponsored by John and Nancy Traina.



ASHLEY FABIAN: YOUNGER ALYCE

Ashley Fabian is a second-year Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist in 2018-19. Earlier this season, she performed as Gretel/*Hansel & Gretel* and Ilia/*afterWARDS*. In 2017-18, she performed Yogini/*Iraqi Woman*/*The Long Walk*, Shepherd Boy/*Tosca*, Barbarina/*The Marriage of Figaro*, and Adina in the student matinee of *The Elixir of Love*. Other significant roles include the title character in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Rosina/*Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and Mme. Silberklang/*The Impresario*. She has bowed with

companies such as Cincinnati Opera, Central City Opera, Virginia Arts Festival, and Asheville Lyric Opera. Equally at home on the concert stage, she has appeared as a soloist in works such as Faure's *Requiem*, Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and *Messiah*, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, and Charpentier's *Te Deum*. She holds awards from The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (Chicago), FAVA Grand Concours Competition, Orpheus Vocal Competition, and Central City Opera. Ms. Fabian received her B.A. and A.D. from The College of Charleston, and her M.M. at The University of Cincinnati-CCM.

Ms. Fabian's residency is generously sponsored by Michele and Pat Atkins.

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CAITLIN GOTIMER: OLDER ALYCE

Caitlin Gotimer is a first-year Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist in 2018-19. Earlier this season, she performed as Sandman and Dew Fairy/**Hansel & Gretel** and Elettra/**afterWARDS**. She received a Masters of Music from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music in 2017 and was part of CCM's Artist Diploma in Opera program during the 2017-18 season. While attending CCM, Ms. Gotimer sang Dalinda/**Ariodante**, the title role in **Suor Angelica**, and Anne Sexton in Conrad Sousa's **Transformations**. Ms.

Gotimer has previously been seen with the Crested Butte Opera Studio, where she sang the role of Lauretta/**Gianni Schicchi** in the summer of 2017. She debuted with the company in 2016 singing Musetta/**La bohème**. Ms. Gotimer has been the recipient of several awards and honors. Most recently she received the Marianne Cornetti award at the Pittsburgh District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and was chosen to advance to the Great Lakes Regionals where she won Third Prize. In 2017, Ms. Gotimer was awarded one of the top prizes in CCM's annual Corbett Competition, the Italo Tajo Award, and she won the Audience Favorite Award and Second Prize in the Opera Guild of Dayton Competition. In 2016, she was a recipient of an Encouragement Award at the Cincinnati District MONC Auditions. In 2015, Ms. Gotimer won First Prize in the NFMCC National Biennial Collegiate Voice Competition and was selected to be a Binghamton University Summer Scholar and Artist before attending the first of two summers at the Chautauqua Institute School of Music.

Ms. Gotimer's residency is generously sponsored by Bob and Sheri Sclabassi.



BENJAMIN TAYLOR: OLDER THOMPSON

Benjamin Taylor is a second-year Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist. In the 2018-19 season, he was seen earlier as Prince Yamadori/**Madama Butterfly** and is scheduled to perform as Schaunard/**La bohème**. In 2017-18 he performed Sciarrone/**Tosca**, Brian/**The Long Walk**, and Captain Gardiner/**Moby-Dick**. Mr. Taylor received his Master of Music from Boston University, where he also earned his Performer's Certificate with Boston University's Opera Institute. While at BU, He performed the roles

of Demetrius/**A Midsummer Night's Dream**, Guglielmo/**Così fan tutte**, Escamillo/**La Tragédie de Carmen**, Prior Walter/**Angels in America**, Alvaro/**Florencia en el Amazonas**, Coyle/**Owen Wingrave**, and Des Grieux/**Le Portrait de Manon**. For the past three summers Mr. Taylor has been a Gerdine Young Artist (2015, 2016) and Richard Gaddes Festival Artist (2017) at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where he performed Fiorello/**The Barber of Seville**, Cowardly Giant/**Shalimar the Clown**, Yamadori/**Madama Butterfly**, and covered Figaro/**The Barber of Seville**, Marcello/**La bohème**, Musik Teacher/**Ariadne auf Naxos**, Sharpless/**Madama Butterfly**, and Lawyer Huld and various roles/**The Trial**. In 2016, Mr. Taylor also performed as Marcello with Crested Butte Festival, and Yamadori in Berkshire Opera Festival's inaugural season. Mr. Taylor received his Bachelor's of the Arts at Morgan State University where he sang Tom/**Blue Monday** with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, as well as various roles around the Maryland area.

Mr. Taylor's residency is generously sponsored by Dr. Jean Anne Hattler.



JAMES LESNIAK: CONDUCTOR

A native of Kenosha, Wisconsin, James Lesniak joined the Pittsburgh Opera music staff in 2006. After initial studies with Sheila Wiesztort, he received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at Indiana University, where he studied with pianists Menahem Pressler, Karen Shaw, and Evelyne Brancart. His university credits include music staff work for Mississippi State University and the Indiana University Opera Theatre. Further studies included an apprenticeship with the Domingo-Cafritz

Young Artist Program at Washington National Opera for two seasons, where he gave his stage debut in the non-singing/piano playing role of Lazinski in **Fedora** at the Kennedy Center, accompanying Plácido Domingo in the opera. In addition, Mr. Lesniak has served on the coaching staff of Brevard Music Center, Glimmerglass Opera, Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center, and the National Symphony. He has been an official pianist for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and also made his conducting debut in 2017 with Pittsburgh Opera's production of composer Laura Kaminsky's **As One**. For the summer months, he frequently returns to the music staff of the prestigious Santa Fe Opera, where recently, he served as Musical Director for their Winter Concert Tour.

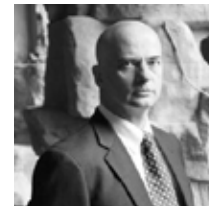


MATTHEW HANEY: STAGE DIRECTOR

Matthew Haney is a first-year Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist in 2018-19. Earlier this season, he served as assistant director for **Madama Butterfly**, **Hansel & Gretel**, and **afterWARDS-Mozart's Idomeneo Reimagined**. Later this season, he will assistant direct **La bohème** and **Don Pasquale**. He directed the **Hansel & Gretel** Student Matinee Performance. Most recently Mr. Haney was seen at Marble City Opera where he directed both Verdi's **La traviata** and the world premiere of **Follow Suit**. Haney has

also stage directed for Winter Opera St. Louis, working on productions of **La traviata**, **Carmen**, **La cenerentola**, and **L'amico Fritz**. Prior to his time in St. Louis, Mr. Haney served as the Rimrock Opera principal stage director for three seasons. During his time with Rimrock Opera, he directed productions of **Turandot**, **La traviata**, **The Crucible**, **Rigoletto**, and **Tosca**. For his production of **Aida** with Rimrock Opera, he received acclaim for his "cleverly designed and visually fresh productions." Other directing engagements for Mr. Haney have included productions with University of Kansas, University of Central Missouri, William Jewel College, and Lawrence Opera Theater. Mr. Haney has been an assistant director for San Antonio Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Central City Opera, Opera Omaha, Tulsa Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Mobile Opera, and University of Kansas. Mr. Haney has also directed several world premieres, including **Sweets by Kate** at Midwest Institute of Opera, **Picnic** (scenes) at Lawrence Opera Theater, **The Nightingale and the Rosebush** at Helianthus Opera Project, **White Horizon** at Helianthus Opera Project, and **The Hour Glass** at Butler University.

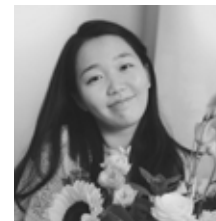
Mr. Haney's residency is generously sponsored by John and Virginia DiPucci.



TOM CIPULLO: COMPOSER/LIBRETTIST

Tom Cipullo is an award-winning American composer and librettist. His works are performed regularly throughout the US and with increasing frequency internationally. The winner of a 2012 Guggenheim Fellowship, the 2013 Sylvia Goldstein Award from Copland House, and the 2013 Arts & Letters Award from the American Academy, Mr. Cipullo has received commissions from Music of Remembrance, SongFest, Joy in Singing, the

Cecilia Chorus, the New York Festival of Song, the Mirror Visions Ensemble, Sequitur, Cantori New York, tenor Paul Sperry, mezzo-soprano Mary Ann Hart, the Five Boroughs Music Festival, pianist Jeanne Golan, soprano Martha Guth, soprano Hope Hudson, the Walt Whitman Project, baritone Jesse Blumberg, and many others. He has received multiple fellowships from Yaddo, the MacDowell Colony, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and awards from the Liguria Study Center (Bogliasco, Italy), the Fundacion Valparaiso (Spain), the Oberpfaelzer Kuenstlerhaus (Bavaria), and ASCAP. Other honors include the Minneapolis Pops New Orchestral Repertoire Award (2009) for **Sparkler**, the National Association of Teachers of Singing Art Song Award (2008) for the song-cycle **Of a Certain Age**, and the Phyllis Wattis Prize for song composition from the San Francisco Song Festival for **Drifts & Shadows** (2006). He is the composer of four operas. The most recent, **Mayo**, was the recipient of the Domenic J. Pellicciotti Prize from the Crane School of Music at the State University of New York at Potsdam in 2018. Others include **Josephine**, **After Life**, and **Glory Denied**. Upcoming productions in 2019 include Union Avenue Opera (St. Louis). His music is published by E.C. Schirmer, Oxford University Press, and Classical Vocal Reprints. His music has been recorded on the Naxos, Albany, CRI, PGM, MSR Classics, GPR, Centaur, and Capstone labels. He received his Master's degree in composition from Boston University and his B.S. from Hofstra University, Phi Beta Kappa with highest honors in music. He studied composition and orchestration with David Del Tredici, Elie Siegmeister, and Albert Tepper. Mr. Cipullo is a founding member of the Friends & Enemies of New Music, an organization that has presented more than 80 concerts featuring the music of more than 200 different American composers.



JIAHUI SHI: SET DESIGNER

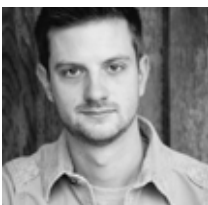
Jiahui Shi makes her Pittsburgh Opera debut with these performances of **Glory Denied**. After graduating from Shanghai Theatre Academy in 2016, she is now pursuing a master's degree at Carnegie Mellon University for scenic design. While in China, she served as set and prop designer for **Uncle Vanya**, **Alceste**, and **Flowers in Time**. Since starting at CMU, she's served in various roles, including paint charge and set designer for **Dutchman** and **ToNES**.



JASON BRAY: COSTUME DESIGNER

This is Mr. Bray's second season with Pittsburgh Opera. This season, he also served as costume designer for the recent **afterWARDS**. He began his costume studies and career at University of Hawaii Manoa and has a Bachelor's in Apparel Design from The Art Institute of Portland. He has worked as Assistant Costume Shop Manager and Assistant Costume Designer for Portland Opera. Before coming to Pittsburgh Opera to assume the role of Costume Shop Manager, he was working for Theatrical

Designer Michael Curry as a Project Manager and Fabricator of costume and puppetry—most notably working on the opening gala concert for the new Shanghai Disney theme park and shows for The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Studios in Osaka, Japan. Mr. Bray made his independent design debut in 2008 designing and creating puppets for Boxcar Children's Theatre in San Francisco (**Where the Sidewalk Ends**). Other credits include costumes for Quintessence Language and Imagination Theatre (**Jane Austen's Persuasion**, 2012), Oregon Children's Theatre (**James and the Giant Peach**, 2016), and In Sequins Productions (**a la Liberace**). In his spare time he designs and creates custom costumes and clothing for private clientele.



TODD NONN: LIGHTING DESIGNER

Todd Nonn is a designer and technician from Pittsburgh. His Pittsburgh Opera designs include **afterWARDS** (2019), **As One** (2017), **27** (2016), and **Sumeida's Song** (2015). He also has worked as the Assistant Lighting Designer for most of the mainstage productions since 2012. Mr. Nonn designs many shows for Pittsburgh Musical Theater, Robert Morris University, Attack Theatre, Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center, CLO, and Bodiography Contemporary Ballet. He also is the Technical Director for

Squonk Opera, having built and traveled with 4 national touring productions with them, and is working on his 5th. Mr. Nonn is the principal designer at BOLD Design inc., his latest endeavor. He has worked and designed shows in many places across the country including NYC, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and countless other companies and venues around the country. When not designing shows he is backstage making the show happen as a proud member of IATSE Local #3.



NICOLE PAGANO: WIG & MAKE-UP DESIGNER

Nicole Pagano returns to Pittsburgh Opera, this time as Wig and Makeup Artist, after having worked ten seasons here as Assistant to the Wig and Makeup Designer. A native of Southwest Pennsylvania, Ms. Pagano has also been the Wig and Makeup Supervisor at The McCarter Theatre of Princeton University for five years. Ms. Pagano is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where she received her BFA in Wig and Makeup Design.



GLENN LEWIS: HEAD OF MUSIC

Glenn Lewis, a native of Rochester, New York, has worked as Pittsburgh Opera Head of Music since January 2008. He has served as pianist, vocal coach, and assistant conductor primarily to Music Director Antony Walker on most of the main stage productions of the past several seasons. These include **Tosca**, **Eugene Onegin**, **Samson & Dalila**, **Rigoletto**, **Don Giovanni**, **The Grapes of Wrath**, **Orphée**, and **Aida**. Mr. Lewis made his conducting debut in 2009 with the Resident Artist production of **Don**

Pasquale and has since conducted **Little Women**, **Dark Sisters**, **Hänsel und Gretel**, among others. In April 2018, he made his debut with Syracuse Opera conducting **Madama Butterfly**. In February 2017 he conducted **The Abduction from the Seraglio** with Dayton Opera. In the spring of 2016, he was in Washington, D.C. at the Kennedy Center working as an assistant conductor for the **Wagner Ring Cycle** at the Washington National Opera. For 17 seasons he has been on the staff of the Santa Fe Opera. There he has worked on productions including **Wozzeck** and **Salome** with Maestro David Robertson and **Peter Grimes** with Maestro Alan Gilbert. Mr. Lewis worked for 11 years in the opera houses in Cologne and Düsseldorf, Germany, where he conducted productions of **La cenerentola**, **Orpheus in the Underworld**, **Zar und Zimmermann**, and **My Fair Lady**. While there, he assisted Maestri James Conlon, John Fiore, Donald Runnicles, among others, on works including **Elektra**, **The Makropulos Case**, **Der Rosenkavalier**, and **Meistersinger von Nürnberg**. Past engagements include the Metropolitan Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago. He is a frequent recitalist in solo, chamber, and vocal repertoire. He holds degrees in piano performance from Ithaca College, Northwestern University, and an Artist Diploma in Opera Coaching and Conducting from Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.



MARK TRAWKA: DIRECTOR OF MUSICAL STUDIES

Mark Trawka joined Pittsburgh Opera as Director of Musical Studies for the prestigious Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist Training Program in the 2003-04 season. In the 2006-07 season, he also took on the position of Chorus Master. Mr. Trawka coaches and performs with the Resident Artists and has also accompanied renowned mezzo-soprano Marianne Cornetti in her Pittsburgh recital appearances. He has been a member of the music staff at Houston Grand Opera, Dallas Opera, and Portland Opera (Oregon), where he was principal pianist and assistant chorus master. Mr. Trawka served as coach/accompanist at Chautauqua Opera and at Glimmerglass Festival for many summer seasons. In the summer of 2006, he was director of the resident artist program at Berkshire Opera. He was a music director at Tyrolean Opera Program in the summer of 2014. Mr. Trawka has been a member of the coaching faculty at the renowned Songfest for the last four summer seasons, where he has also conducted choral performances. He made his opera conducting debut at Pittsburgh Opera with the Resident Artist production of Ricky Ian Gordon's **27**. Educated at the Eastman School of Music and the University of Southern California, Mr. Trawka began his operatic career in the Houston Opera Studio and in San Francisco Opera's Merola Program.

PITTSBURGH OPERA



TOM PHILPOTT : AUTHOR

Tom Philpott is a syndicated columnist, freelance writer, and contributing editor at *Military Officer*; he has covered the military for more than 30 years. His weekly news column, "Military Update," reaches two million readers and has appeared daily in US and international newspapers since 1994. He writes monthly for moaa.org and *American Legion Magazine*, regularly contributing to *Military Officer's Magazine*. Mr. Philpott's freelance articles have appeared in magazines including *The New Yorker* and *Readers' Digest*. He was a reporter and editor for *Army Times Publishing Co.* from 1977–1993. Philpott, a Pittsburgh native and graduate of St. Vincent College, served a tour in the US Coast Guard as an information officer.

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We are deeply grateful to Peter Cooke and the Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama for collaborating with us on providing the services of set designer Jiahui Shi, one of the school's talented young designers.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

TIME PASSES SO SLOWLY

By Matthew Haney

In this beautiful and poignant opera, time plays a leading role. The opera spans over a decade and 9,000 miles, yet the characters are linked together in suspended moments of time. The fragmented nature of time in this piece led me to the idea of intersections. The timeline of two characters, and their younger selves, spanning two locations inspired the X-shaped stage. This shape allows the characters to interact with their older/younger selves to physicalize memory or allow for reflection. Time is also illustrated in the art installation that serves as our backdrop, showing the journey of the main character from the jungle to suburban America. The everyday items of two different worlds juxtaposed in time.

Another idea that interested me in this opera was the idea of control. A line that is repeated twice, "When they control your environment so completely, they can manipulate your morale at will." The symbolism of the jungle and army controlling the lives of these two people so completely is manifested in the color scheme of this show. The color green invades every aspect of this production showing us that, yet again, a single moment in time can control our whole lives.

It has been humbling to work on this piece about real people, a rarity in this art form. I had the opportunity to meet Vets and hear their testimony about what it was like, not only to be in Vietnam, but their controversial homecoming experiences. The war was a polarizing event in this country. I believe this piece does not exist as a commentary about the correctness of the war itself, but rather shines a light on the effect it had on regular people's lives. It is easy to idealize the romantic notion that Love can span any distance or time; in this story, that notion is also true of Pain.

Thank you for your continued support of Pittsburgh Opera and modern opera projects. Both are near and dear to my heart.

-Matt

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COMPOSER'S NOTES

By Tom Cipullo

Glory Denied may be the first opera adapted from an oral history. As such, it presents no linear narrative. Virtually all of the dialogue in the opera is taken literally from actual statements by the real people involved. On those few occasions where, for dramatic purposes, words have been changed or statements conflated, the composer has taken care not to alter the intent of the speaker.

Glory Denied has four singing roles. Jim and Alyce Thompson are each played by two singers. Thus, young Alyce presents the character as Jim remembers her from letters written long ago. Older Alyce is the person she has become since his capture. Likewise, the older Jim reflects back on his imprisonment while the younger represents his character during the ordeal. On occasion, the singers may assume the voices of other figures as well (i.e. Pentagon spokesman, Army General, Vietnamese guard, etc.).

In 2001, while in residence at the MacDowell Colony, I came across the *New York Times* review of Tom Philpott's **Glory Denied**. Immediately, I was intrigued. "Indeed, it is not too much to say," the review by Richard Bernstein stated, "that **Glory Denied**...encapsulate[s] something of the moral essence of the Vietnam War and the imperishable bitterness of the war's legacy."

For years, I had wanted to create a music drama that would address contemporary issues, one that would take ordinary people and place them in an extraordinary situation. This story, with all its suffering, heroism, selfishness, and dignity, struck me as completely and overwhelmingly operatic. Of course, crafting the libretto would present a huge number of challenges. How might I reflect the difference between Alyce and Jim's memories of her? I settled on having two singers play twin versions of the character. One would represent Jim's idealized vision, while the other would show what Alyce was actually doing and thinking while Jim was a prisoner. Two versions of Alyce led me to consider having Colonel Thompson portrayed by two singers. Young Jim would live through these events, while the older character would recall them from a distance. Perhaps the biggest challenge in writing the work was how to make Alyce a real, comprehensible, three-

dimensional person. Some of her actions during Jim's ordeal were nothing short of shocking. Still, when Alyce sings, her music must be so beautiful and persuasive that people will say, "Yes, if I had been alone with four children—the last born the day my husband was captured—perhaps I could have done that too." I am no moral relativist. I believe strongly that behavior can be right or wrong. But my own memories of the time remind me that many good people did things they regret during the Vietnam era. It was as if there was a great madness in the land, and everyone, it seems, simply did the best they could.

Glory Denied is, above all, the story of an American family during one of our nation's most turbulent eras. My hope is that those new to opera will find in the work's ensembles and arias a bridge to a fascinating, complex, and formative time for our country.

The opera **Glory Denied** is dedicated to my dear friend Steven Burke. Finally, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Tom Philpott. His generosity of spirit is truly an inspiration.

-Tom Cipullo, February 13, 2019



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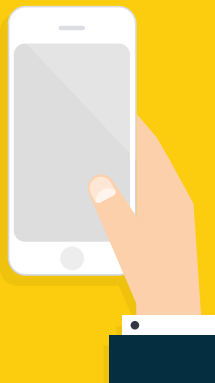
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