

**“DAVID T. LITTLE PURSUES MUSICAL
ACTIVISM THROUGH SUPERIOR
FIREPOWER...TO SAY THAT HE IS HAVING A
BANNER SEASON IS SOMETHING OF AN
UNDERSTATEMENT.”**

-- STEVE SMITH, *TIME OUT NEW YORK* (2008)

**“EVERY BAD-ASS NEW-MUSIC ENSEMBLE IN
THE CITY WILL WANT TO PLAY HIM”**

--ALEX ROSS OF *THE NEW YORKER*



Soldier Songs is an evening-length multimedia event from composer David T. Little that combines elements of theater, opera, rock-infused-concert music, and animation to explore the perceptions versus the realities of the Soldier, the exploration of loss and exploitation of innocence, and the difficulty of expressing the truth of war. *Music can be easily co-opted to serve a political or ideological message or it can equally be a vehicle for reflection, engagement, and emotional connection, as is seen in this gripping music-theatre work.*

With performances sold to standing room capacity, Beth Morrison Projects' production (seen in these materials) presented at Le Poisson Rouge in NYC in September 2008 employed the amplified chamber version of the piece, which was directed by Yuval Sharon, conducted by Todd Reynolds, and featured the Newspeak ensemble plus baritone. We are currently seeking presenters for this extraordinary and moving work. Existing in an orchestral scoring as well, *Soldier Songs* had its orchestral concert premier as part of New York City Opera's Vox Festival in May 2008, and was the hit of the festival.

Soldier Songs* “packed the most dramatic punch: it was both thoroughly relevant and profoundly disturbing.” -- *Feast of Music

**“*Soldier Songs* has the force of emotions tossed around, allowed to bruise each other, and then served up raw.”
--*Bruce Hodges of Musicweb-International***



Part I: YOUTH; Boom! Bang! Dead! (Rated "T" for Teen) (Age 13-17)

The Libretto, created by the composer, was adapted from recorded interviews with veterans of 5 wars. *Soldier Songs* traces the shift in perception of war from the age of 6 to the age of 66. We follow the abstract character through the three phases of life: Youth (playing war games) Warrior (time served in the military) and Elder (aged, wise, reflective). It is a chilling and realistic view of our media-crazed, war machine culture, and of the nature of power in war. Multi-media is employed less as a collection of recorded evidence and more as a critique of the media's ability to both glamorize and falsify the truth of combat. *Soldier Songs* asks the tough questions and tells the tough stories through its poignant libretto, driving and devastating music, and surprising visual counterpoint. The tension between the visual and aural experience of our production works to dispel the numbness felt by those of us lucky enough to only experience war through the comfort of our living rooms.



Part II: WARRIOR; Still Life with Tank and iPod (Age 22-24)

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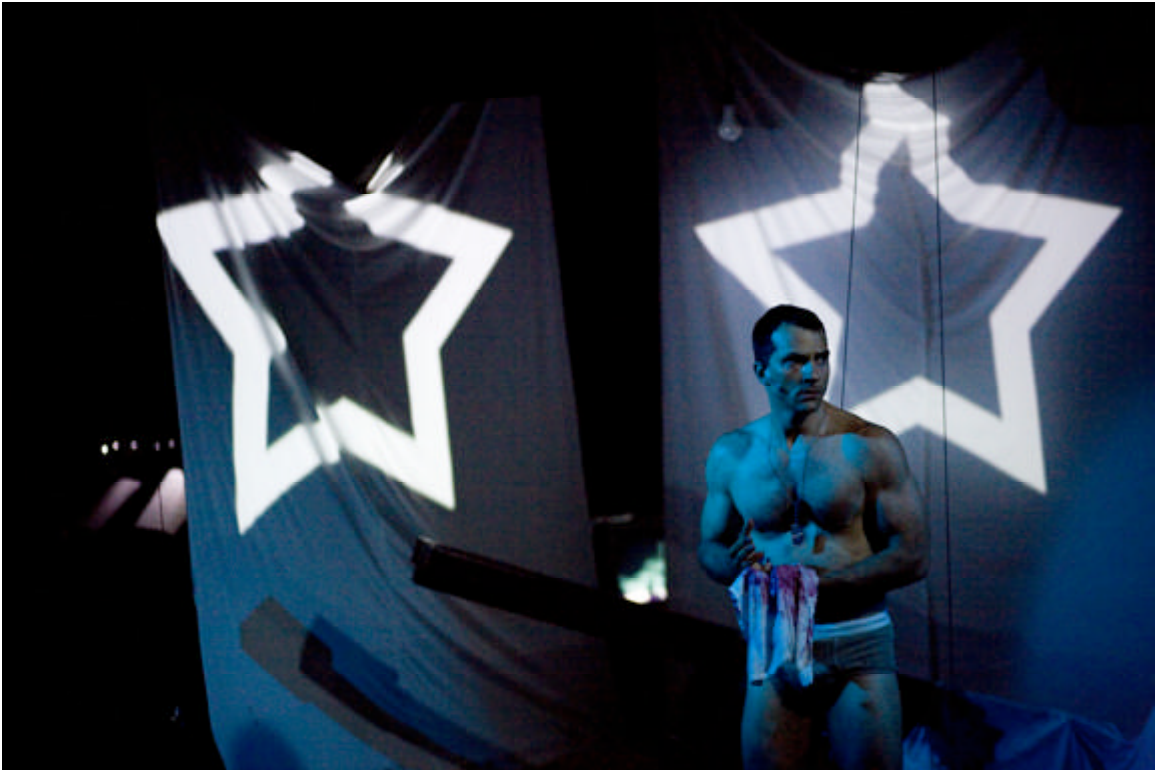
*****All photos by Jane Kung*****



Part II: WARRIOR; Hollywood Ending (Age 28-29)



Part II: WARRIOR; Hollywood Ending (Age 28-29)
David Adam Moore (Soldier) and Brandon Rakowski (Boy)



Part III: ELDER; Hunting Emmanuel Goldstein (Age 32-43)

SET and COSTUME DESIGN by CHISATO UNO; ANIMATION by COREY MICHAEL SMITHSON; LIGHTING DESIGN by LUCAS BENJAMINH KRECH



Part III: ELDER; Every Town Has a Wall (Age 44-52)



Part III: ELDER; War After War (Age 58-66)

Sounding discord

David T. Little pursues musical activism through superior firepower.

By Steve Smith

To say that composer David T. Little is having a banner season is something of an understatement. So far this year, Newspeak, Little's heavy-metal-infused chamber ensemble, has played the Cornelia Street Café, Symphony Space and Princeton University, and recently closed the MATA Festival at the Brooklyn Lyceum. On Friday 2, again at the Lyceum, the group presents a provocative concert titled "Which Side Are You On? Music By, For and Against Frederic Rzewski at 70." The following weekend, New York City Opera will present Little's *Soldier Songs* during its annual Vox showcase of new operas. The busy composer also somehow managed to turn in the latest chapter of a dissertation on political music, while resuming duties as Newspeak's drummer.



PIECE SELLS...BUT WHO'S BUYING? David T. Little's compositions have figured prominently in major concerts and festivals this season.

"We were having trouble keeping drummers who had both the reading chops and the rock background needed to really sell the material," Little explains. His music combines the influence of his formative years as a heavy-metal drummer with compositional skills acquired at Susquehanna University, the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor and Princeton. And as anyone who regularly attends concerts of rock-inspired contemporary-classical pieces can attest, having the right players is crucial.

"It's like playing Baroque music: If you don't understand the performance practice, it doesn't sound right," Little explains. "[Newspeak] came about as a way for dealing with the frustration I felt trying to write pieces for classical players that brought in the influence of rock, and then having it not come off. I realized that I needed to collect people who understand this performance practice."

Now operating with a crack Newspeak lineup (including violinist-vocalist Caleb Burhans of Alarm Will Sound and keyboardist James Johnson of Electric Kompany), Little will be confronting one of his spiritual forebears on Friday night, in a program inspired by a Carnegie Hall tribute to Frederic Rzewski the previous day. Little was struck by the irony of a May Day concert honoring a notoriously left-wing radical composer at a hall named for industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, whose reputation as a labor champion was tarnished by his union-breaking action during an 1892 strike at his Homestead, PA, steel plant.

"I thought it would be an interesting thing to explore the dialectic between Rzewski's music and this sort of frame," Little says, "and also the issues of potential complicity in all of us: You're a socially engaged artist, yet you apply for NEA grants." Among the pieces Newspeak will play are Rzewski's *The Price of Oil*, Little's *Sweet Light Crude* and Ted Hearne's *My Catalonia*—the last actually inspired by the Homestead Strike. Still, Little insists, the concert is as much a tribute as a challenge: Rzewski will be present, and WNYC-FM *Evening Music* host Terrance McKnight will interview both him and Little.

Another facet of Little's socially conscious art will be revealed when New York City Opera presents his *Soldier Songs*. Inspired by the story of antiwar activist Carlos Arredondo and a violent scene from the Todd Solondz film *Happiness*, Little created a multifaceted

exploration of the process through which a child might become a soldier or a pacifist. The piece digs into sensitive issues, and includes recorded testimony from friends and family members who served in military and intelligence operations from World War II to the current crisis in Iraq.

Still, Little says, *Soldier Songs* is not an attempt to preach or convert. "When I was working with William Bolcom at the University of Michigan, I brought in this angry, political orchestral piece, and he said, 'You know, I don't need a piece of music to tell me that war is bad,'" Little recalls. "I think that's an oversimplification, but the point is well taken: Don't just address that issue, address the larger issues. Trying to bring out social structures of power, or certain ironies and inconsistencies: That's where my interest lies."

Newspeak plays the Brooklyn Lyceum **May 2, 2008**. *Soldier Songs* will be performed during New York City Opera's Vox 2008 showcase at the Skirball Center for the Performing Arts May 11, 2008.





SEEN AND HEARD INTERNATIONAL CONCERT REVIEW by Bruce Hodges

As a composition student, David T. Little recalled bringing an angry anti-war work to one of his teachers who counseled, "You know, I don't need a piece of music to tell me that war is bad," and it was good advice. Instead, in *Soldier Songs* Little focuses on the larger issue of what war does to fighters and those who might be, to brothers, fathers, sons and friends, to the bonds that we forge over time. The result can make one squirm.

Among an army of young composers, Little is one with omnivorous influences, including heavy metal, electronics, and musical theater, and *Soldier Songs* exists in two versions: one for orchestra (presented last spring at New York City Opera's Vox series) and the one here [produced by Beth Morrison Projects], for baritone and amplified chamber orchestra—here the Newspeak Ensemble, impressively conducted by Todd Reynolds. The result, in eleven sections, alternates between grinding machine-like noises and more lyric interludes, with taped texts culled from veterans interspersed like numb commentary. Musically, the texture is just as likely to flare up in a wall of sound before dying out in a trail of soft ticking sounds.

Presented at Le Poisson Rouge, one of the New York's newest venues (former site of the Village Gate), the spare production placed the audience surrounding Chisato Uno's set, a sandbox with a brown seesaw in the center. Later in the evening, white sheets rose on all four sides, evoking tents, which director Yuval Sharon effectively transformed into canvases slashed with blood. Uno's costumes for the two characters were simple: the Soldier in sand-colored briefs and t-shirt before donning a dark suit later in the piece, and the Boy in simple pants and shirt, as if he were off to the park to play baseball.

Aside from evoking playground innocence, the seesaw was used in other ways, such as when the Soldier and the Boy, played by David Adam Moore and Brandon Rakowski, are at either end, eyeing each other, often off-balance. Sometimes the plank seemed like a bridge between the two; at others it appeared to highlight their differences. One is trained to fight; the other is trying to learn from what he sees. When the Soldier strangles or shoots, the Boy does the same, his actions mirroring those of his mentor in uneasy symmetry. Moore, singing with discomfiting intimacy, was in powerful voice, his rich sonority capturing pain, regret, and even a bit of surprise, as if he couldn't quite grasp what kind of person he had become. ***Soldier Songs* has the force of emotions tossed around, allowed to bruise each other and then served up raw.**

MUSIC REVIEW: American Operas, Sifted and Sampled

By VIVIEN SCHWEITZER

Published: May 13, 2008

Since 1999 New York City Opera's lively Vox series has offered concert performances of excerpts from new operas by American composers, like fashion designers previewing a new collection on the runway.

Of the 82 works presented at previous Vox concerts, 33 have received full stagings, including Robert Aldridge's "Elmer Gantry," Mark Adamo's "Lysistrata" and Richard Danielpour's "Margaret Garner" (at City Opera last fall). At the Skirball Center for the Performing Arts at New York University last weekend the City Opera Orchestra performed 10 new works, with each excerpt preceded by an insightful video interview with the composer.

The Sunday lineup, ably conducted by Gerald Steichen, David Wroe, George Manahan and Zachary Schwartzman, opened with "Charlie Crosses the Nation," a "jazz opera" by Scott Davenport Richards, who also wrote the lively libretto. The evocative work, a Kurt Weill-like synthesis of jazz, blues and operatic elements, tells the story of Charlie, a mixed-race driver with a desegregated big band in the segregated United States Army during World War II. The excerpt concluded with a soulful gospel number.

"Soldier Songs" — a theatrical cantata for solo baritone composed by David T. Little, who grew up listening to heavy metal, classical music and musical theater — also had a military theme, with driven, slashing figures juxtaposed with moments of melodic calm. The work, based on interviews with soldiers, opens with audio interviews with Vietnam veterans, and the libretto (written by Mr. Little) is based on their recollections. James Bobick vividly illuminated the narrative flow, from a child's war fantasy to a grieving parent's loss.

Female historical figures were also explored on Sunday with Alice Shield's "Criseyde," a feminist interpretation of Chaucer's "Troilus and Criseyde." Nancy Dean's libretto offers a rare chance to hear Middle English sung, punctuated by critical lines spoken in modern English. The melodic development and ornamentation of the intense, richly scored work reflect Ms. Shield's lengthy study of classical Indian raga. The mostly strong lineup of singers throughout the afternoon here included the bass Eric Jordan as Pandar.

"Jeanne," Justine F. Chen's lyrical, atmospheric adaptation of Joan of Arc, was inspired by a painting by Jules Bastien-Lepage and Ms. Chen's study of witness testimony at the trials. The opera alternates between scenes focusing on Joan alone in her prison with interludes from witnesses, opening with a striking a cappella aria for Joan followed by a peasant woman's monologue. Throughout, Ms. Chen balances despair and humor.

Robert Manno's "Dylan and Caitlin" draws on the turbulent romance between the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas and his wife, with Gwynne Edwards's libretto based on letters and eyewitness accounts. The lyrical score was somewhat bland given the turbulence of the relationship it evoked, although the soprano Emily Pulley aptly conveyed the turmoil of Caitlin's life.

Vox and Run

Peter Matthews

Opera is not the sort of art form that lends itself to easy experimentation. Typically, you need sets, costumes, an orchestra - not to mention singers who are usually booked 3-4 years in advance. So, nine years ago, City Opera hit upon the idea of giving American composers the chance to have their works heard in a workshop format, using the full City Opera orchestra and professional singers from their regular roster, as opposed to synthesizers and amateur friends. They called it: VOX.

Now in its tenth year, VOX is still going strong and has produced several notable American operas, including Richard Danielpour and Toni Morrison's *Margaret Garner*, which played at City Opera this past season to sold-out houses. Clearly, this is a win-win situation for all concerned.

VOX had its most recent installment this past weekend at NYU's Skirball Center. Tickets were free, and easy to get through the advance reservation system (though I think most standbys managed to get in as well.) The theater, which sat 850, felt intimate yet formal. Each composer was allotted half-an-hour to present an excerpt of their work in concert format; many felt finished enough to stage. Without the benefit of an orchestra pit, all the singers were mic'd: a necessary and reasonable compromise.

(...)

David T. Little's *Soldier Songs* is not an opera, but a cycle of songs culled from interviews he made with relatives and friends who experienced the horrors of war firsthand. Nevertheless, it packed the most dramatic punch of any of the works on the bill: it was both thoroughly relevant and profoundly disturbing. This is opera as political activism, the sort that Beethoven embraced in *Fidelio* but has been rarely seen in rep houses since. As Little says in the program:

"Opera is an art form in which the political and the artistic can be fused in a way that expresses the desires - the need - for social change through empathy, not preaching. Empathy fuels the expression of the social, the political, and makes it real. This is the essence of what I call 'socially engaged music.'"

Speaking of the music, the orchestra (led by City Opera music director George Manahan) was driving and propulsive, full of heavy percussion and shrill, piercing strings. James Bobick delivered an astonishing solo performance, his voice ranging from bass to countertenor while running the gamut of emotions familiar to many soldiers: angry, stoic, scared.

In the final section, Little tells the story of a father who receives a home visit from two Marines, to tell him his son has been killed in combat. The music grows heroic as the father torches the Marines' van in protest, then plaintive as he pleads, "Bring back my son!" to anyone who might listen. There was hardly a dry eye in the house as the final notes faded away. (...)

VOX will return for its 10th anniversary next season, despite the arrival of Gerard Mortier as general manager and his many planned changes for City Opera. One would hope he knows enough to leave well enough alone.

Monday, July 31, 2006

**Concert Review: 'Soldier Songs' packs heartrending wallop
By Eric Haines**

Composer David Little is not yet 30 and is still working on his Ph.D., yet his list of classical works is as long as your arm. If his latest, "Soldier Songs," premiered on Friday by Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble at City Theatre on the South Side, is any indication, quality equals quantity in a big way.

Commissioned by PNME and composed over a span of 18 months, the work explores the dichotomous relationship of war and our society. "We live in a culture where violence thrives," Little writes, "where our children play war games and pretend to kill one another for fun." The 50-minute cycle is a semi-theatrical piece that follows the experience of war from the consequence-less age of a child through the age of a warrior, where the consequences are real and severe, on to the reflective stage of a veteran.

Little wrote the texts based on interviews with some half-dozen military personnel. To add impact, although the music was powerful enough, slides and videos were projected onto a large upstage screen.

Little's compositional language is eclectic and diverse, encompassing 19th-century Romanticism and polytonality, percussive counterpoint and musical theatre lyricism, semi-tone tuning and diatonic harmonies. The only selection on the program, "Soldier Songs" is a challenging work in both musical material and subject matter. "In all honesty I can say that this is not a piece that many professional ensembles would have the courage to tackle," says Little. Led by artistic director Kevin Noe, the PNME handled it masterfully.

"Part One: Child," begins with "Real American Hero" in which a child gleefully sings of "killing all the bad guys with the funny names" while playing with action figures. "Boom! Bang! Dead!" depicts a teenager playing a violent video game, with the actual, rapid-paced game on the projection screen. The frenetic tempo is interrupted by a Sondheim-like passage in which the teen muses about not really being harmed if he loses. The work continues with such titles as "Counting the Days," "Every Town Has a Wall" and "Old Friends with Large Weapons."

"Soldier Songs" is not a loosely connected cycle, but a dramatic, theatrical solo cantata that builds to a heartrending climax with the third and fourth songs of "Part Two: Warrior." In "Hollywood Ending," a soldier bewails his helplessness in the aftermath of a car bombing. It is one of the more troubling scenes of the show, accompanied by photos from the actual event: graphically gruesome shots of the death and destruction.

"Hollywood Ending" segues into "Steel Rain," a military term for incoming ordnance. The text is a spoken, verbatim monologue from the soldier who described the car bombing. The musicians crawl off the smoke-filled stage, as though escaping a fearsome barrage. Jagged, dissonant recorded music builds to a thunderous level and a protracted, brilliantly conceived light show left no doubt as to dramatic content.

With each of the 11 songs as gripping as the last, the cycle was a signature vehicle for bass-baritone Timothy Jones. He adroitly adapted his masterful technique and flawless diction to the core of each tune. He conveyed the brashness of "Boom! Bang! Dead!," the roboticism of "Still Life with Tank and iPod" and the angst of "Two Marines," which began as a painful lament and morphed into a glowing paean to peace activism.

Composer explores meaning of war
By Mark Kanny
Thursday, July 27, 2006

When composer David T. Little won the Harvey Gaul Competition, he decided on a particularly imaginative approach to fulfilling the commission that was his prize. Written over a period two years, "Soldier Songs" will receive its world premiere this weekend at the final concerts of the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble's summer season.

Although daily reports from the war in Iraq would have provided an easy topicality, Little instead sought longer perspectives. Inspired by a dream he remembered, the 27-year old composer decided to explore what war means at different stages of life -- from a child's war play, to the experiences of the young adults who actually fight wars, to the reflections of older people. It was a macabre dream that set Little to composing "Soldier Songs."

The morning after learning he had won the competition, he says he "woke up with a vision of a little boy playing war, running around and really into it, who goes into his mother's room, really aggressively yelling 'die,' and shoots his mother." Little had been "a big war-toy kid. I played with guns a lot," he says. His family lore includes generations of honorable military service, and Little is not a pacifist. But the dream triggered his imagination to examine what war means to people at different stages of their lives, setting up the arching form of "Soldier Songs" that contrasts perceptions and realities from ages 6 to 66. He drew upon the experiences of his ...(uncle)...and grandfather, who fought in Vietnam and World War II, and interviewed others who served during the Cold War, before 9/11 and in Iraq.

The composer grew up in a family of amateur performers. His mother, a dancer, and father, a drummer and guitarist, met in college during a production of "West Side Story." Musicals have been a continuing presence in Little's life, including seeing "Cats" when he was 8. Although the composer studied classical percussion in college, most of his performing work has been on drum set in the rock idiom. He describes his New York group Newspeak as an "amplified rock chamber ensemble."

Little, who is working toward a doctorate in composition at Princeton University, says writing "Soldier Songs" has been "an interesting process because, in a lot of ways, I could follow my muse with the music. Contemporary music can be of ways, I could follow my muse with the music. Contemporary music can be potentially alienating, but I'm not really interested in that. I have a background in musical theater, rock and classic and this piece more than any other I have written uses all three. I let the dramatic context guide my decisions."

He says the whole ensemble will be amplified, with strings using distortion pedals that are but one influence of rock techniques. A more specific rock reference occurs in a song about a contemporary American soldier who goes into battle listening to the heavy metal band Metallica on his iPod because it keeps him in a rage. "Soldier Songs" also features photos that will be projected onto a screen and an audio track that is "mostly a 'sound design' but not computer-generated electronic music." He mentions an audio metaphor he creates at one point by blending the sounds of a clock ticking with marching feet that sound like a huge machine -- which is what an army is in a certain sense.

Little says he could easily have made "Soldier Songs" about Iraq, but knows how quickly pieces about Vietnam lost relevance. "Certainly there is a war going on but this is an abstract piece," he said. "People are going to have to make their own connections."

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



photo: Stephen Taylor

Composer/Librettist David T. Little, (b. 1978, New Jersey), is committed to music of dramatic intensity and direct expression. A composer of great diversity, Little's music has been concurrently praised as "smoothly euphonious" (American Record Guide), and "clanking, almost industrial" (The Stage). Alex Ross of *The New Yorker* was "completely gripped" by Little's work, proclaiming: "every bad-ass new-music ensemble in the city will want to play him." He has been performed and commissioned by such musicians and groups as eighth blackbird, So Percussion, Newspeak, The Formalist Quartet, The Grand Rapids Symphony, The Albany Symphony, The New York City Opera, Carnegie Hall, and conductor Marin Alsop.

Holding a Bachelor's degree in Percussion Performance, Little holds a Master of Music degree in Composition from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and a Master of

Fine Arts degree from Princeton University, where he is currently PhD Candidate (ABD). He has received grants, fellowships and awards from BMI, ASCAP, the Aspen Music Festival, Tanglewood Music Center, American Academy of Arts and Letters, the American Music Center, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Meet The Composer, the University of Michigan, and Princeton, and most recently was named a 2008 Artist Fellow by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. He is the founder, artistic director and drummer for the band / ensemble Newspeak. For more information, please see www.davidtlittle.com

The Newspeak Ensemble

Newspeak is a flexible five-to-eight-piece amplified ensemble working under the artistic direction of composer David T. Little. Ironically named after George Orwell's thought-limiting language in *Nineteen Eighty-four*, Newspeak reclaims and redefines the notion of socially-engaged music and its place in con-temporary society. Embedding elements of a rock band into a classical new music ensemble, Newspeak obscures the boundaries between the classical and the rock traditions.



Newspeak is the only group in New York City dedicated to presenting socially engaged music. They are utterly committed to the music of living composers, having so far premiered 25 works by emerging composers. They have garnered financial support from The Puffin Foundation, Meet The Composer/JP Morgan, and others. They have performed throughout the Northeastern United States, including performances at Merkin Hall, Le Poisson Rouge, the MATA Festival, Brooklyn Lyceum, Tonic, and at Princeton University, and MIT. <http://www.newspeakmusic.org>

PRODUCTION TEAM

Producer **Beth Morrison Projects** seeks to invigorate the traditions of opera and music-theatre by nurturing new works by emerging and established artists that re-imagine these forms in a contemporary context. Beth Morrison Projects has already amassed a strong record of achievement producing three new operas, a new musical, a theatrical chamber music piece, and a street-spectacle piece in Orvieto, Italy. In addition, BMP has commissioned four new works including a new musical and three other innovative music-theatre works, all by award-winning composers, song-writers, and playwrights. BMP's critically-acclaimed work has been seen at Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival (BAM), Performance Space 122 (PS122), the New York Public Library Live, The New York Musical Theater Festival in 2005/2007, and Le Poisson Rouge in NYC's Greenwich Village. Remaining up-coming shows in 2008/2009 will be seen at the Seoul Performing Arts Festival in Korea, and The Kitchen in New York. www.bethmorrisonprojects.org

Director **Yuval Sharon's** most recent work includes a chamber production of *Aida, The Magic Flute for Families* for San Francisco Opera, a Shakespeare mash-up entitled *Celebrate Good Times (Macbeth)*, a three-hour adaptation of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and a collaborative riff on Schönberg's *Erwartung*. He has worked at the San Francisco Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Komische Oper Berlin, New York City Opera, Berkeley Opera, the Asia Society of New York, the Deitch Projects, the New York Hip Hop Theater Festival, and is co-founder of the New York-based group Theater Faction. He has worked with directors Graham Vick and Hans Neuenfels, and he is currently assisting Achim Freyer on a new production of Wagner's *Ring* at Los Angeles Opera. A passionate advocate for new music, Yuval is Project Director for New York City Opera's VOX, an annual showcase of new American opera. More information at www.yuvalsharon.com.

Music Director/Conductor **Todd Reynolds** is known for his commitment to contemporary music in New York City and around the globe, including long-time collaborations with Steve Reich, Bang on a Can, and his former string quartet, Ethel. He has conducted the music of Steve Reich both in performance and on the Nonesuch recording of *The Hindenburg*, and was music director and conductor of Giovanni Sollima's *Ellis Island*, which received its premiere at Palermo, Sicily's Teatro Massimo in 2003. Current collaborations include Meredith Monk's new work, *Songs of Ascension*, recent work as composer for Stephen Koplowitz's *TaskForce* in site-specific touring in Los Angeles, Philadelphia collaborations with Ridge Theater and continuing development of his own "Still Life with Microphone", featuring films of Bill Morrison and the video of Luke DuBois.

Set designer **Chisato Uno** is based in New York City. Originally hailing from Tokyo, Japan, she has designed a variety of dance, opera, and theatre, including *AIDA* (Berkeley Opera), *INTER* (Ulua Theatre, Hawaii), *THE GOLEM* (Columbia Stages), and *ARCADIA* (NYU). She has been assistant designer to George Tsypin (*THE LITTLE MERMAID*, Broadway), Thomas Lynch (*SEE WHAT I WANNA SEE*, The Public Theater), and Robert Pyzocha (*LIVE FROM LINCOLN CENTER*, television broadcasts). She also worked in the Art Department on the film *MY BLUEBERRY NIGHTS* (director, Wong Kar Wai). Chisato has an MFA from New York University. Website: www.chisatouno.com

Animation and Video Designer **Corey Michael Smithson** is a multi-media artist currently living in Brooklyn. He works in several disciplines, including painting, photography, film, video, computer design, animation, printmaking, drag, drawing, installation, sculpture, and writing. He has earned a BFA in Painting from the

Memphis College of Art, and an MFA in Interrelated Media from the Massachusetts College of Art. His films include HUMOURESQUE (1993-2004), THE FIGHT TRILOGY (2004-2006), and SHOWBLOAT (2005). His work has been featured in the Ann Arbor Film Festival, the Boston Underground Film Festival, and in private art collections across America.

Lighting Designer **Lucas Benjaminh Krech** designs for theater, dance, opera, installations and performance. Off-Broadway credits include: *Fate's Imagination*, *Becoming Adele*, *Sake with the Haiku Geisha* and *The Last Word*. Regional Theater: The Barter Theatre, Marin Theater Company, The Magic, Berkeley Opera, Emerald Rain Productions and Impact Theatre. Site specific works: *Antigone* (Sibiu, Romania); *The Seven Deadly Sins: A Fire Opera* (Oakland, CA); *Medea* (San Juan, PR); and *Foucault's Pendulum* (Nevada Desert). Dance Collaborations include the work of Nicolo Fonte, Sean Curran, Matthew Neenan, Johannes Weiland, Gemze De Lappe, Donald Mahler, Sallie Wilson, Paul Sutherland, Trebien Pollard, Keith Michael and others. MFA from New York University. www.LucasKrech.com



Composer **David T. Little** at rehearsal with Newspeak Ensemble

LIBRETTO

by David T. Little (except where indicated)

Part One: Child

I. Real American Heroes (Age 6-12)

The Soldier:

I wanna be a "Real American Hero"
I wanna be just like my toy soldiers
Killing All the Bad Guys with the Funny Names.

I'm gonna grow up and be a toy soldier.
Big bad machine guns makin' big bad noise.
Killing all the bad guys with the funny names

Good Guys, Bad Guys,
Get to Choose, Who will die

II. Boom! Bang! Dead! (Rated "T" for Teen) (Age 13-17)

Boom! Bang! Dead!
I shot you motherfucker!
Boom! Bang! Dead!
I shot you in the head!

I shot you in the face,
so your mother will not recognize you
put a gun in to your mouth and
blew your brains out the back of your head.

If I get shot, I'll just start over,
if I get shot, if doesn't really hurt any,
if I get shot, I'll play the game again

Boom! Bang! Dead!
I shot that evil-doer...
Boom! Bang! Dead!
and earned ten thousand points...

III. Counting the Days (Age 18-21)

I turned eighteen the other day.
I had to sign a paper,
That should my country ask me to,
I'd go and fight and maybe die.

I signed a paper yesterday,
that 'til I'm twenty six years old,
I could belong to the government,
If they call me.

Now that I'm in, I count the days again.
But differently, down from the top.
Hoping that I make it to one.

Part Two: Warrior

IV. Still Life with Tank and iPod (Age 22-24)

When I enter combat, in my Abrams Tank,
I like to bring my iPod. to keep me entertained.
When I enter combat, in my Abrams Tank,
I listen to Metallica to keep me in a rage

It cooks my blood, and makes me feel, like I can conquer any
thing.

It brings me back to when I was a boy ...
"A week ago, I was in Jersey."

Push the button, aim on-screen.
Shoot the moving Pixels (not a man)
Shoot the moving Pixels (kill 'em all)

V. Old Friends with Large Weapons (Age 25-27)

Old Friends,
High School Friends
In fatigues
Marching.

Marching in,
Mile rows, behind
Giant Flags,
Waving.

Old Friends
with Large Weapons
Marching in
Mile Rows

Death Machines on their shoulders,
these soldiers,
Black Metal,
Heavy Black Machines.

Flat
Black Metal
Death Metal,
on their backs,
my friends.

My Dear Old Friends,
with Large Weapons.

VI. Hollywood Ending (Age 28-29)

Outside our base,
Car bomb blasted,
Thirty-five dead or wounded,
Moaning.

**A ghastly movie scene,
with out the action hero.
Just Blood and Smoke,
from the bodies blown to pieces.**

**Outside our base,
Car bomb blasted,
Crater making shells,
Inside a nice new Mercedes.**

**I ran out...
Grabbed my Gun.
What can I do,
To help the bleeding, the dying?**

**When I saw the carnage there.
I was held with grief
and Shock and Awe.**

**Bodies writhing
with missing parts
Blood-soaked ground.
Smoke filled air.**

I didn't know what to do.

**These People are dying right here at my feet.
I feel as a if there is just nothing to do.
This is not what I wanted.
Never what I imagined.**

Someone yell "cut!"

**Someone yell "cut!"
This has all gone terribly wrong
Some one yell "cut!"
This movie's out of control!**

**This movie's out of control!
Where's the Director?
Someone yell "cut!"
This whole thing has got to stop.**

VII. Steel Rain (Age 30-31)

In the military we call incoming ordnance Steel Rain.

"The first thing you feel is non-belief. This can't be what I am hearing. You break out in gooseflesh immediately, and without thinking, you start running. Technically, you are supposed to drop, face down, to the ground, in an effort to get below flying shrapnel. But when you hear that whistle, with a slight vibration beneath it, you can't help but try to run from it. You can feel your heartbeat in your head, and your breathing and footsteps become all you can hear. You run as fast as you can, waiting to hear that explosion, knowing that if you hear it, it means you are still alive... because if it lands close enough to kill you, you wouldn't even hear it go off. When it does impact, you feel the percussion in your back and legs, and for a second you stop breathing. Your legs go numb and you begin to run faster, or maybe it just seems that

way. When you reach safety, you immediately turn to watch, and look for others that might still be caught out there. Finally when the whistling stops, and the last explosion has rocked, and the sirens wale [sic] out the all clear, your heart returns to a normal cadence, and you return to work... business as usual." (Sgt. Justen Bennett)

In the military we call incoming ordnance "Steel Rain." And believe me, when it rains, it pours.

Part Three: Elder

VIII. Hunting Emmanuel Goldstein (Age 32-43)

They say we've got to catch him,
The man who can't be caught.
They say that he's a threat,
A danger to our liberty.

They show him on TV,
For the two-minute hate.
We never see that all this hunting
Is what keeps us down.

IX. Every Town Has a Wall (Age 44-52)

They say that good fences make good neighbors,
I guess you could say the same thing about strong walls.

In medieval Days every town had a wall.
A wall for keeping certain people out, and protecting
those inside

A wall from which they dropped hot Oil
Through things called "murder holes".

Hot Oil

Now we use the wall
For listing the names
Of the dead when they fall,
Protecting the wall.

X. Two Marines (Age 53-57)

Two Marines
Came to my house
To tell me that
My son...

A Letter from
the President,
"Regretfully..."
My son...

I did not
answer the door
I knew the speech,
heard it before.

**"Bravely fought...
In combat fell...
For Liberty...
My son...**

**I took my grief
Out to the yard and
While they knocked,
I doused their car
With gasoline**

**I lit a match
Set it a blaze
My grief to see
as burning flames.**

**Take this to
The President, and
Tell him that,
His letter can't,**

**Not even signed
By human hand,
Not even written
By a person,**

**This letter won't,
Nor uniforms,
Not folded flags,
Nor victories won,**

**Your practiced words,
From scripts well learned,
Cannot bring back
My son...**

***"Ten million soldiers to the war have gone
who may never return turn again.
Ten millions mothers' hearts must break,
For the ones who died in vain.***

***Head bowed down in sorrow in her lonely years
I heard a mother murmur through her tears:***

***I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier,
I brought him up to be my pride and joy.
Who dares to put a musket on his shoulder.
To shoot some other mother's darling boy?"***

***(Al Pianadosi and Alfred Bryan – "I Didn't Raise My Boy
to be a Soldier" - 1915)****

Bring me back my son.

XI. War After War (Age 58-66)

**King Fighting King
Defending a Queen
Using the Bishops to
Rally the Pawns.**

**(Rally the pawns and
Send them to Die.)
When will the king
fight his own fight?**

The Boy:

**I wish I could tell you,
that everything will be alright.**

**Text in italics was initially set, but in some cases did not make the final cut for this composition. The melodies either created for the text or connected with quoted material remains present in the instrumental parts, however, and it is my hope that the spirit of the text may be conveyed by the music alone. For this reason, I have included the text in this section.*



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