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Soldiers' Chorus of the U.S. Army Field Band and Seattle Opera Veterans Choir premiere new work for Veterans Day

***The Path*, by composer Damien Geter and lyricist Jerre Dye,
draws on interviews with Path with Art's veterans cohort**

**Two performances:
Friday, November 3, at 4:00 & 7:30 PM
Tagney Jones Hall**

SEATTLE—In advance of Veterans Day, Seattle Opera presents a special concert featuring the [Soldiers' Chorus of the U.S. Army Field Band](#) together with Seattle Opera's [Veterans Choir](#). The program of inspirational songs and patriotic tunes includes the world premiere of [The Path](#), a new work by composer **Damien Geter** and lyricist **Jerre Dye** based on interviews conducted with members of [Path with Art](#)'s veterans cohort.

The special joint concert continues a relationship between Seattle Opera and the U.S. Army Field Band that began in 2019, when Seattle Opera presented the Field Band-commissioned chamber opera [The Falling and the Rising](#). Seattle Opera established the Veterans Choir in partnership with Path with Art to perform in that production, and the chorus has continued to meet ever since.

"Watching the development of the Veterans Choir has been a joy and inspiration," said **Dennis Robinson, Jr.**, Seattle Opera's Director of Programs and Partnerships. "This partnership has created an invaluable outlet for the members of the Veterans

Choir, which has led to tremendous musical experiences and lasting friendships. Seeing them perform with the Soldiers' Chorus makes me very proud of what these singers have been able to accomplish."

The performances on November 3 are part of the Soldiers' Chorus's "Portraits of Service" project, a series of commissioned "portrait operas" inspired by interviews with service members and their communities that aims to build community through music and storytelling.

"The U.S. Army Field Band's mission is to connect America with its armed forces and to tell the stories of military veterans," said **Master Sergeant Benjamin Hilgert**, who helped spearhead "Portraits of Service" following the success of *The Falling and the Rising*. "While those stories are most often presented in general terms, this project is an opportunity to ground them instead in specific experiences and specific communities."

As part of this initiative, Seattle Opera commissioned composer **Damien Geter** and lyricist **Jerre Dye**, who both participated in *The Falling and the Rising*, to write a new piece drawing on the experiences of Seattle-area veterans and their families.

"*The Path* captures an intimate exchange between two veterans at very different moments in their lives," said Dye, who based his lyrics on interviews conducted with members of Path with Art's veterans cohort. "My overwhelming takeaway from these interviews was the intense challenge veterans face while trying to reintegrate into civilian life. 'Who am I now?' This is a universal question made even more poignant by the circumstances these veterans face."

In addition to *The Path*, the Soldiers' Chorus and the Veterans Choir will both present separate programs before joining forces for the commissioned work. Highlights include works by Brandi Carlile, Tim Takach, and George M. Cohan, as well as a selection of well-known patriotic and folk songs.

"I am so excited to be back in Seattle working with the Seattle Opera Veterans Choir," added Hilgert. "It has been the privilege of a lifetime to find new meaning in their experiences and to delve more deeply into our shared sense of humanity."

"Portraits of Service" plays at 4:00 PM and 7:30 PM on Friday, November 3, in Tagney Jones Hall. Performances are free with required RSVP, and the 7:30 PM performance is already sold out.

About the Veterans Choir

Through a unique partnership with [Path with Art](#), Seattle Opera's Veterans Choir offers opportunities for music-making and community-building to local veterans, including those recovering from homelessness and other trauma. Initially formed as part of Seattle Opera's production of [The Falling and the Rising](#) in 2019, the choir has evolved into a year-round program. Led in rehearsal by Seattle Opera Chorus Master and Head of Music Staff Michaela Calzaretta, the choir meets each week to warm up, rehearse, and connect.

About the Soldiers' Chorus of the U.S. Army Field Band

The Soldiers' Chorus, founded in 1957, is the vocal complement of the United States Army Field Band of Washington, D.C. The 29-member mixed choral ensemble travels throughout the nation and abroad, performing as a separate component and in joint concerts with the Concert Band of "The Musical Ambassadors of the Army." The chorus has performed in all fifty states, Canada, Mexico, India, the Far East, and throughout Europe, entertaining audiences of all ages.

About Seattle Opera

Established in 1963, Seattle Opera is committed to serving the people of the Pacific Northwest through music, storytelling, and programs for people of all ages. Each year, more than 50,000 people attend the company's performances, and more than 100,000 people are served through school performances, radio broadcasts, and more. The organization brings opera to life in a number of different ways, offering artistic excellence through national and international collaborations. Seattle Opera strives to create an environment where artists, staff, behind-the-scenes workers, and members of the community feel a strong connection to the company, and to the art of opera. Follow Seattle Opera on Facebook, Twitter, SoundCloud, and on Classical KING.

Performance Information

- Music for *The Path* by Damien Geter, with lyrics by Jerre Dye. Other selections by Samuel Ward, John Stafford Smith, Brandi Carlile, Lee Greenwood, Tim Takach, George M. Cohan, and others.
- Featuring the Soldiers' Chorus of The U.S. Army Field Band with the Seattle Opera & Path with Art Veterans Choir
- Run time approx. 90 minutes with intermission
- Tickets are free, RSVP required at seattleopera.org/portraits

Tagney Jones Hall (363 Mercer Street, Seattle, WA 98109)

Friday, November 3, at 4:00 PM

Friday, November 3, at 7:30 PM [SOLD OUT]

Info and RSVP at seattleopera.org/portraits.

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