The Remaking of an American Opera: A Detailed Look at Carlisle Floyd's Grand Opera 'The Passion of Jonathan Wade'

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THE REMAKING OF AN AMERICAN OPERA: A DETAILED LOOK AT CARLISLE FLOYD’S GRAND OPERA THE PASSION OF JONATHAN WADE

by

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my friend, Carlisle Floyd, whose unwavering work in the field of American Opera over the past sixty years has defined a true art form for all to enjoy for many generations to come.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Jacob Will for his support in writing this document, as well as committee members Janet Hopkins, Walter Cuttino and Reginald Bain of the University of South Carolina School of Music. Special thanks to Henry Fulmer and Graham Duncan, Manuscripts Division, South Caroliniana Library; Kate Rivers, Music Division, Library of Congress; Ana Dubnjakovic, Music Library, University of South Carolina; San Diego Opera, and Houston Grand Opera archives.

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Finally, gratitude to Leonard Mark Lewis who initially put me in contact with Floyd; Jane Floyd Matheny who assisted in countless ways to help ensure that I had the resources needed for this project, and of course, to the great master Carlisle Floyd for his friendship, support, and generous assistance in writing this document.
ABSTRACT

Carlisle Floyd’s single grand opera, *The Passion of Jonathan Wade*, premiered in 1962 in New York City only to be placed on a shelf for the next twenty-eight years to collect dust. In 1990, David Gockley at Houston Grand Opera commissioned a revival of the work, prompting Floyd to write eighty percent new music and libretto. The two versions are similar in plot but are set very different musically.

This document examines the composer, a historical background of the American landscape at the time of each premiere, and a brief analytical examination of *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* in both published versions of 1962 and 1991. This comparison includes an analysis of the story, including the historical contexts in which the operas were written. Special attention is given to Act II, Scene 2, which serves as the turning point for the opera.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Carlisle Floyd wrote only one grand opera, *The Passion of Jonathan Wade*, in 1962 before putting it on a shelf to collect dust for nearly thirty years. This was only his fourth opera, and he was thirty-six years old at the time of its New York City Opera premiere. His expectations and the level of interest in his work had increased greatly by that point because his triumphant 1955 hit *Susannah* had captivated the United States. Critics had finally found a face to represent American Opera. Hastily, Floyd wrote the show against the backdrop of the racial tensions throughout the South and the tense international political climate leading to the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Space Race with the USSR, and the Vietnam War.

Fortunately for the world, Floyd has lived to see a long career as a teacher and composer. He was given the chance to add his decades of experience to *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* in 1990 when Houston Grand Opera partnered with three other major opera companies to perform a revised version of the epic work. Floyd began rewriting the opera and contributed forty percent new libretto and eighty percent new music to the score, preserving only the themes that he personally liked from the 1962 original.¹ The three-and-a-half hour rewritten version got much better reviews than the first two performances in New York twenty-eight years earlier.

As of 2013, over two decades have passed since the revision, and the show has had several performances, including a European debut in Salzburg in 2010. However, the show is still an endangered species, too big to perform for most companies and too unrecognizable to sell tickets to a general public in the houses that have the resources to produce it. Since there are two versions of this show, it is necessary to do a comparative analysis of each version presenting compositional differences, textual differences, and thematic differences that have shaped the two versions.

This dissertation provides a comparative analysis of the two versions of The Passion of Jonathan Wade and presents qualitative data in the form of interviews and directions from the Carlisle Floyd, David Gockley, the opera administrator responsible for the revival, and Dale Duesing, the baritone who portrayed the character Jonathan Wade in the 1991 re-premiere.

In this dissertation, I have provided a brief comparison of the libretti used in both productions, the musical differences including theoretical analyses where appropriate, and a comparison of the larger political climate of 1962 versus 1991. This paper also explores possible explanations as to why the opera did not succeed in 1962, including issues involving libretto, music, and the socio-political backdrop of the era. Additionally, this paper examines socio-political themes that affected the 1991 version and issues that could affect future productions.

The study is organized into four large sections. The first section is a brief biographical and historical sketch of the composer and his contributions to American Opera. The second section is an overall analysis of the first completed version of 1962,
including a theoretical examination of Floyd’s writing style, reviews of the premiere, and potential reasons for the reviews. The third section focuses on the revision of 1991, including a historical narrative of how the opera came to be remade, the reviews of this production, and effects of the remake on the opera world. The fourth and final section will be a comparison of both versions, specifically Act II, Scene 2. Analytical detail is given to this scene because Floyd considers it to be the turning point in the opera in which the dramatic action reaches its climax.
CHAPTER 2

CARLISLE FLOYD

2.1 – Biography

A native of Latta, South Carolina, Carlisle Floyd is one of the most influential American Opera composers of all time. Floyd was born in 1926 to Carlisle Session “Jack” Floyd, Sr, a Methodist minister, and his bride, Ida Fenegan Floyd. Carlisle Jr. spent his youth in several small South Carolina towns, including Latta, Bethune, Holly Hill, and North (See table 1). He grew up in the thick of traveling preachers, revival meetings, and a close knit religious community and became very aware at a young age of that world’s controversial and hypocritical nature. This rural upbringing would result in many operas in his later life based on Southern themes.

He decided to pursue his undergraduate education in nearby Spartanburg, where he had the opportunity to study piano at Converse College with pianist-composer Ernst Bacon. When Bacon took a position at Syracuse University in New York, Floyd decided to follow him and left South Carolina, never to live there permanently again. It is clear that Floyd was influenced during these formative years by Bacon and likely chose to pursue composing due to his teacher’s ability to capture the American spirit and breathe new life into old folk-like melodies. Floyd was not only impressed with his teacher’s ability to set piano music, but also with the art songs composed by the master during

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these years. Many of Bacon’s songs create a sense of American aesthetic that incorporates American poetry and folk music, particularly that of the Appalachian region. This musical influence on Floyd, paired with his upbringing as a staunch Methodist minister’s son, certainly contributed to the Southern themes found throughout Floyd’s operas.

When Floyd was only twenty-one years old, he was appointed to the piano faculty at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida. There, he began his career as a splendid pedagogue and composer. His first opera, Slow Dusk, composed in 1949, was set in a simple farmhouse in the Sandhills region of an unnamed South Carolina rural town. Six years later, at the height of the McCarthy era, his new opera Susannah, hit home with audiences and critics alike. Like Slow Dusk and many of his later works, Susannah was set in a rural community in the South. This setting was certainly inspired by his youth and his father’s profession. It takes place in the Bible Belt, in a town called “New Hope Valley” during the Depression of the early 1930s.

Floyd recruited two professional singers to debut the roles of Susannah and the Rev. Olin Blitch. They were Phyllis Curtin and Mack Harrell, respectively. Astonishingly, both saw the tremendous potential in the show and quickly agreed to participate. When Susannah premiered at Florida State in 1956, it was a huge success, and soon the trio traveled to New York City to find a premiere location there. Floyd and Curtin’s indefatigable perseverance paid off when New York City Opera’s Erich Leinsdorf decided to give them a chance. On September 27th, 1955, their hard work led to a triumphant City Opera premiere that won the New York Music Critics Circle Award for Best New Opera in 1956.
These first two operas, *Slow Dusk* and *Susannah*, set the framework for yet another opera set in the Deep South, *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* in 1961. The Deep South consists of the first states to secede from the Union during the Civil War of the United States: Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Texas, and of course, Floyd’s home state, South Carolina. The region is known for its Protestant following, political unity, and deep historical pride, which lay the foundation for *The Passion of Jonathan Wade*. More information about this opera is discussed in the subsequent chapters.

After the 1962 New York City Opera premiere of *The Passion of Jonathan Wade*, Floyd continued to write a new opera every three to four years until the early 1980s. He finally achieved another hit in 1970 with his powerfully dramatic score to the opera *Of Mice and Men*. Although Floyd is mostly known as an opera composer, he has written many substantial non-operatic works. In the 1980s, he turned to other compositional venues. He wrote an orchestra song cycle called *Citizen of Paradise* in 1984 and a large-scale work for chorus, bass-baritone, and orchestra in 1993 called *A Time to Dance*.

Floyd has been the recipient of numerous honors and awards including a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1956, the Ten Outstanding Young Men of the Nation Award from the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce in 1959, and the National Opera Institute’s Award for Service to American Opera (1983). As an academic, he has received the distinguished professor of Florida State University Award in 1964, an honorary doctorate from Dickinson College in 1983, and most recently an honorary doctorate from the University of South Carolina in 2013. He has served on the Music Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts and was the first chairman of the Opera/Musical Theater Panel.
Floyd was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2001. Floyd was recently awarded the National Medal of Arts in 2004 in a ceremony at the White House.

In 2008, Floyd was the only composer to be included in the inaugural National Endowment for the Arts Opera Honors. In 2011, he was inducted into the South Carolina Hall of Fame, an honor reserved for the state’s most-accomplished native sons. In 2012, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia presented him with their highest honor, the Man of Music award at their national convention.

As of 2013, Carlisle Floyd remains one of the Top 10 most performed American opera composers. Although his output consists of only eleven operas (see Table 2), his operas Wuthering Heights, Of Mice and Men, and, of course, Susannah have been favorites of American opera houses for decades. Floyd is currently writing a new work based on Jeffrey Hatcher’s Stage Beauty, after having put down the pen for more than a decade.

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Table 2.1 – List of habitations of Carlisle Floyd

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Town/City</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1926-1932</td>
<td>Latta, SC</td>
<td>Born on June 11, 1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-1934</td>
<td>Spartanburg, SC</td>
<td>Father Jack attended Wofford College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934-1934</td>
<td>McClellanville, SC</td>
<td>Short stay for father’s first appointment as Methodist minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934-1936</td>
<td>Jordan, SC</td>
<td>In Clarendon County, SC, Jordan had a population of 95; six miles from Manning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-1939</td>
<td>North, SC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-1943</td>
<td>Bethune, SC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943-1945</td>
<td>Spartanburg, SC</td>
<td>Went to Converse College to study piano with Ernst Bacon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-1947</td>
<td>Syracuse, NY</td>
<td>Followed Bacon to Syracuse University to finish undergraduate degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947-1976</td>
<td>Tallahassee, FL</td>
<td>Becomes adult “home” of Floyd and wife Kay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-1995</td>
<td>Houston, TX</td>
<td>Buys home in Texas and becomes co-director of Houston Opera Studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1992</td>
<td>Columbia, SC</td>
<td>Appointed Robert Evander McNair Visiting Professor of Southern Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-Present</td>
<td>Tallahassee, FL</td>
<td>Retired and currently lives in Tallahassee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.2 – Operas by Carlisle Floyd

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of opera</th>
<th>Premiere location</th>
<th>Year of premiere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Slow Dusk</em></td>
<td>Augustana College; Syracuse, NY</td>
<td>May 2, 1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Susannah</em></td>
<td>Florida State University; Tallahassee, FL</td>
<td>February 24, 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wuthering Heights</em></td>
<td>Santa Fe Opera; Santa Fe, NM</td>
<td>July 16, 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Passion of Jonathan Wade</em></td>
<td>New York City Opera; New York, NY</td>
<td>October 11, 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Houston Grand Opera; Houston, TX</td>
<td>January 18, 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Sojourner and Mollie Sinclair</em></td>
<td>East Carolina Opera Workshop; Raleigh, NC</td>
<td>December 2, 1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Markheim</em></td>
<td>New Orleans Opera; New Orleans, LA</td>
<td>March 31, 1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Of Mice and Men</em></td>
<td>Seattle Opera; Seattle, WA</td>
<td>January 22, 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Flower and Hawk</em></td>
<td>Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra; Jacksonville, FL</td>
<td>May 16, 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bilby’s Doll</em></td>
<td>Houston Grand Opera; Houston, TX</td>
<td>February 27, 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Willie Stark</em></td>
<td>Houston Grand Opera; Houston, TX</td>
<td>April 24, 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cold Sassy Tree</em></td>
<td>Houston Grand Opera; Houston, TX</td>
<td>April 14, 2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 3
THE PASSION OF JONATHAN WADE, 1962

3.1 – The conception of The Passion of Jonathan Wade

The American Civil War was the bloodiest battle of American history. When Southern General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865, a new period of American history began. Reconstruction, one of the most controversial eras in the history of the United States, witnessed America's first experiment in interracial democracy. Northern victory in the Civil War decided the fate of the Union and of slavery, but posed numerous problems. Just as the fate of slavery was central to the meaning of the Civil War, the divisive politics of Reconstruction turned on the status the former slaves would assume in the reunited nation.

The aftermath of the American Civil War was a challenging time for both Southerners and Northerners. Southerners returned to their homes with their heads hung low and their pride hurt, while Northerners were faced with leading the reconstruction of a nation; both sides lost many, many loved ones.

During a long train ride to New York City in 1960, Carlisle Floyd’s wife, Kay, began discussing the idea of a new opera based on Reconstruction in the South. As a South Carolina native, Floyd recalled hearing stories from Civil War Veteran Gilliam
King during his childhood.\textsuperscript{5} In particular, King conveyed to the young Floyd a sense of political tension that was never fully resolved in the South. King vividly recalled the Yankees forcing Southerners to take “loyalty pledges” to the Union, which caused a great deal of animosity, especially in South Carolina where Sherman had so recently decimated the internal structure of the state. The burning of Columbia left the citizens of the capital city in ruins and its economy in shambles. No other city had been affected the same way as Columbia had been and hostilities of the Northerners were high. This is the setting into which Floyd chose to drop his central protagonist, Jonathan Wade.

Jonathan Wade, a Union Colonel, is assigned with the task of returning to Columbia, South Carolina, with defeated Confederate soldiers to help reestablish the state as a part of the Union. Although the storyline is fictional, it is best represented by the recent genre known as historical fiction; that is, many factors are based on actual events, persons, ideas, and settings. When Floyd initially began researching Reconstruction in the South, he was drawn to the diaries of Mary Boykin Chesnut,\textsuperscript{6} who had expressed detailed views and opinions on the Civil War in the South. She and her husband were connected to the President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, and had an insider’s knowledge of many important factors and decisions that governed the events of the Civil War. Among the men who appeared frequently in her diaries was Major General Wade Hampton III. As a native South Carolinian, Floyd knew this name well and wanted to choose a name that symbolized the Civil War. However, since Hampton was the surname of a Confederate Officer, Floyd chose to use the name Wade as his protagonist’s


\textsuperscript{6} Carlisle Floyd. Personal interview with Joshua Wentz. December 17, 2013.
last name. In fact, the name Jonathan likely came from Mary Chesnut’s diaries as well.\(^7\) She had many Johns and Jonathans spread throughout her family.

For Floyd, the word “passion” was a unique choice to use in the title of this opera. This word evokes in many people a strong feeling of love or any powerful or compelling emotion. Using “passion” in the title of this opera is reminiscent of the story of Jesus Christ in the New Testament of the Bible, but it likely refers to a more generic sense of the term, such as the suffering and death of a martyr. Robert Wilder Blue discovered in his 2001 interview that Floyd views Jonathan Wade as “more active than a Christ-figure” and goes on to explain that he is simply “a human being in an unconscionable situation.”\(^8\)

Other historical components of the opera include the burning of Columbia by Major General William T. Sherman’s Union soldiers. It opens with a Verdi-like chorus in which the citizens of Columbia are heard mourning the loss of the war. Floyd includes in his stage directions, “an atmosphere of total dejection and spiritual desolation.”\(^9\)

Jonathan Wade is welcomed to the home of Judge Gibbes Townsend, a proud Southern gentleman, who was likely based on Colonel James Chesnut, the father-in-law of Mary Boykin Chesnut. The vivid description Mary leaves of her father-in-law is reminiscent of the character traits possessed by Judge Townsend.\(^10\)

“Partly patriarch, partly grand seigneur, this old man is of a species that we will see no more. He is a splendid wreck. His manners are unequalled still, and

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\(^7\) Holliday, 186.


underneath this smooth exterior – the grip of a tyrant whose will has never been crossed.”

Townsend amiably invites Wade to dinner on the night of his arrival, which is where Wade meets Townsend’s beautiful daughter, Celia. The character of Celia Townsend was written and intended for soprano Phyllis Curtin, with whom Floyd had a strongly established relationship. His collaboration with Ms. Curtin began in 1954 when he met her at the Aspen Institute of Music and presented her with the soprano arias of his recently written *Susannah*. She helped recruit the bass-baritone Mack Harrell for the proposed project in Tallahassee, Florida, and they both agreed to sing the roles of Susannah and Blitch, respectively. Their success with *Susannah* blossomed into a professional partnership over the next twenty years, and Curtin went on to debut three more operatic heroines for Floyd. In addition to creating and developing the legendary role of Susannah Polk, she created the roles of Cathy Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights* (1958), Celia Townsend in *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* (1962) and Eleanor of Aquitaine in *Flower and Hawk* (1972).

By the mid-1950s, Curtin had already established a name for herself. As a result, Floyd gained a great deal of bargaining power by aligning himself with a renowned soprano who was excited by his works and always willing to premiere new characters.

3.2 – The 1962 premiere of *The Passion of Jonathan Wade*

Of all the works in Carlisle Floyd’s oeuvre, *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* is his only “grand opera.” According to the Oxford Companion to Music, a *grand opera* is a
serious opera without spoken dialogue that depicts “a serious, epic work on a historical, mythic, or legendary subject, usually (though not exclusively) in five acts, which uses the chorus actively and includes a ballet, and frequently dramatizes the conflict between private emotion and public, religious, or political responsibility.” By this definition, *Jonathan Wade* is an opera of grand proportions. It consists of three acts with five episodes and requires two full choruses and a large orchestra. The manpower required to produce this opera makes it very expensive to stage. Adding to the expense are the set and the costumes required for a historical opera. The costume designer must find several Civil War era military uniforms and various other period pieces.

In 1962, those involved in opera in America were exploring new venues. Gian Carlo Menotti’s *The Consul* had done very well on broadcast television, and it seemed that opera house sales were dwindling, resulting in the closure of NBC Opera Theatre only two years later in 1964. Operas were expensive to produce and an opera of grand proportion, like *Jonathan Wade*, was risky for many opera houses. However, the Ford Foundation wanted to ensure that new works would continue to shape American Opera.

In late 1959, the Ford Foundation made a formal announcement that appropriations of $950,000 would be available to four American opera companies to promote commissions of new American works. New York City Opera was among one of these companies and director/conductor Julius Rudel had confidence that Floyd could

achieve another hit like *Susannah*. The request of a new opera by Floyd was made by Rudel and they were awarded an expense grant of $9,000 by the Ford Foundation. By April of 1960, Floyd had a synopsis completed and in June 1960, Floyd received his first commission check for $4,500. Soon thereafter, *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* grew quickly into an opera of grand proportions, forcing costs to rise to new heights.

The cost of production was only one issue among many that Floyd had to conquer. The first announcement of this world premiere appeared in *The New York Times* on July 23, 1962, which led to much friction between Floyd and one of his contemporaries, composer Dominick Argento, who also had a contract with Floyd’s publishing company Boosey & Hawkes.\(^\text{14}\) The animosity from Argento came mostly from the fact that he wrote a similarly named opera the year before called *Colonel Jonathan the Saint*, which also dealt with American Reconstruction. Argento later claims that he pitched the idea to New York City Opera’s Julius Rudel and renowned soprano Phyllis Curtin, hoping she would sing the leading soprano role in his show. It may have upset him that both artists later produced Floyd’s opera: Rudel as conductor and Curtin as Celia Townsend. John Olon-Scrymgeour, librettist of Argento’s *Colonel Jonathan*, found several similarities in his libretto and threatened Floyd with a lawsuit.\(^\text{15}\) However, Argento convinced Olon-Scrymgeour that Floyd’s score would fail and they should not waste their resources in this way.

Despite these challenges, on October 11, 1962, Carlisle Floyd, along with his close friends and family, watched as his epic grand opera *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* opened to the public, the first of only two performances. The set was brilliantly designed

\(^\text{14}\) Holliday, 185.
\(^\text{15}\) Ibid., 186.
by Will Steven Armstrong (see Figure 3.1), who had just designed *Carnival* on Broadway and the costumes were designed by Ruth Morley. Allen Fletcher directed, and Julius Rudel conducted. Featured in the cast were Phyllis Curtin as Celia Townsend, Norman Treigle as Judge Townsend and Ted Uppman in the title role.

Floyd recalls a “light, but very appreciative audience”\(^\text{16}\) on the evening of the opening. The audience would frequently burst out with wild applause at the end of arias and ensemble pieces, which surprised Floyd greatly. Each act ended with a curtain call, and during the final curtain call, Floyd and Rudel received a warm and excited standing ovation. The next day, the critics reported that the opera was neither warm, nor excited and their negative reviews affected Floyd personally. Carlisle’s wife, Kay, who had given him the idea of this opera just two years earlier, was equally upset. Of course, there was a second performance previously scheduled for two weeks later on October 28\(^\text{th}\). Floyd did little to modify or change anything during this time. Instead, he waited until it was over, only to retire the score to the shelves for the next three decades.

3.3 – Historical Context of 1962

The Civil Rights Movement of the United States was in full swing when *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* premiered at City Opera on October 11, 1962. Regrettably, in 1962, over a hundred years after the Civil War ended, the country was still fighting for the equal rights of African Americans. In fact, the fight was so great during the early 1960s that disturbances frequently prevented large-scale events, such as speeches, or even opera premieres. Fortunately for Floyd, the premiere of *The Passion of Jonathan*

\(^{16}\) Carlisle Floyd. Personal interview with Joshua Wentz. December 17, 2013.
Wade was not interrupted. However, the United States experienced many issues leading up to its premiere, especially in the South. These included numerous incidents with racist groups like the Freedom Riders and the Ku Klux Klan and several riotous desegregation attempts, such as those at the University of Georgia in 1961 and the University of Mississippi in October 1962, just weeks before the New York City premiere of Jonathan Wade.

The subject material presented during this tumultuous time may have been one of the leading causes of Jonathan Wade’s failure. Several reviews from opening night indicated a correlation between current events of 1962 and the opera’s taboo subject matter. In the New York Post review published the day after the opera’s premiere, Harriet Johnson writes, “It is inevitable that the sense of depression induced by what happens would be heightened by the coincidence of the opera’s being launched while there is unheaval [sic] in Mississippi. Though Floyd’s first and third acts are far more powerful than his second, the bitter essence is inescapable, throughout.”17 Another reviewer suggested that the “verbal and emotional sententiousness, is Mr. Floyd’s weakness,”18 and went on to suggest that Floyd’s lyrical style might not have a place in American opera.

New York’s music critics had no doubt been affected by the Civil Rights Movement and other political factors of that era. The United States had recently sent troops to Vietnam, a move that would become one of the most unpopular governmental maneuvers in American history. Newspapers were publishing stories about the war with very little censorship. Politically-driven propaganda frequently made its way to the

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newsstands; so much so, in fact, that the Newspaper Guild decided to strike against the *New York Daily News* less than a month after Floyd’s premiere on December 8th, resulting in a 114 day strike. Interestingly, the Union singled out the *Daily News*, stating that it had “more disputes and more anti-unionism” than other papers. This sentiment, felt almost one hundred years after the Civil War, still resonated with people at the time that *Jonathan Wade* debuted. The conception of the opera during this turbulent era pitted Floyd against the venomously spiteful music critics and the dangerous political issues of the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War.

Furthermore, international affairs with Cuba and the USSR put the country in a fragile condition during the week of the premiere of *Jonathan Wade*. President John F. Kennedy was on television nearly every evening attempting to navigate the country through the Cuban Missile Crisis, which caused civil unrest and turmoil among American citizens. The President was gaining tremendous popularity during his first two years in office due to his agenda which included, among other things, Cuban and Soviet space and missile programs. Surprisingly, the premiere of *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* received a great deal of publicity amidst this tumultuous political environment, and included reviews in *The New York Times*, *The New York Herald Tribune*, and *The New York Post* – three major newspapers of that day. Inopportune for Floyd, these negative reviews took a toll on his self-esteem resulting in his abandoning *Jonathan Wade* for nearly thirty years.
Figure 3.1 Original conception of set design for *The Passion of Jonathan Wade*, 1962 by Will Steven Armstrong
CHAPTER 4

THE PASSION OF JONATHAN WADE, 1991

4.1 – The revision of The Passion of Jonathan Wade

In 1977, Carlisle Floyd and Houston Grand Opera General Director David Gockley co-founded the Houston Opera Studio to develop the talents of young singers. In or around 1986, after many years of a fruitful friendship and working relationship, Floyd and Gockley realized that they needed a new work, as both had recently been suffering from personal and professional struggles. For major opera companies, one of the most prestigious events is commissioning a new work. However, this can be one of the most risky and dangerous moves an opera company can make. A colossal amount of resources is needed for a successful premiere of a new work. Gockley realized that his friend Carlisle could benefit from something new to give him a redirected purpose in his career.

As it turned out, conductor Julius Rudel was in Houston in April of 1986 conducting a Houston Grand Opera production of Strauss’ Ariadne auf Naxos. Rudel, Director of New York City Opera from 1957 to 1979, saw many of Floyd’s operas come

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20 Holliday, 322.
to fruition during that time, including *The Passion of Jonathan Wade*. When Gockley asked the maestro if there were any works from City Opera that he thought worthy of a revival, the answer was fast and decisive: *Jonathan Wade*. This began the long process of convincing the composer to revise and restage the work.

Fortunately for Floyd, Gockley did a lot of the planning for the commission, including raising money and seeking collaborating companies across the United States. Of course Houston would have the honor of the premiere, but then the production would travel to Miami, San Diego, and Seattle, in that order. Houston was operating on a huge budget as it was with an endowment for mainstage works set at $1 million in 1991. An additional $318,500 was secured that year for the support of broadcast projects intended to augment the national opera audience. *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* was featured on the National Public Radio series "World of Opera," which reached more than 600,000 listeners over NPR’s network of independent stations. This was made possible by an endowment-aided consortium of opera companies in Miami, Houston, San Diego and Seattle.

4.2 – The 1991 premiere of *The Passion of Jonathan Wade*

The plans were made to premiere the revised work on January 18, 1991, at Houston Grand Opera’s Wortham Center and then use the same production (set and costumes) in the next three cities. The Greater Miami Opera (now “Florida Grand Opera”) would mount the production March 18th to the 24th, then it would travel to the

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San Diego Opera from April 13th through the 21st, and finally, it would be presented by the Seattle Opera the following year from October 31st through November 11th.

As Floyd continued to revise Jonathan Wade, he and Gockley began searching for a stage director. Their friend, Jack O’Brien, came to Houston for a revival of his powerful Porgy and Bess production, and the three men met to discuss Wade. O’Brien gave many detailed suggestions for improvement, such as developing the characters more fully and improving the flow of relationships between characters. He was, however, unable to take the job as director due to time constraints. Gockley remembered that Floyd directed his premiere of Markheim in 1966 and decided to offer the job of stage director to Floyd. Later that year, Gockley signed the German-Austrian set designer, Günther Scheider-Siemssen, who decided to make projections from old photographs of Columbia in 1865 after the burning of the city. Gockley spared nothing on the sets and lighting and created a very picturesque view of Columbia and the internal home of Judge Townsend.

As the premiere date approached, Floyd worked hard with the cast to achieve the exact mood and sentiment that he intended the music to convey. Dale Duessing, the baritone who portrayed Jonathan Wade recalls, “Carlisle was a wonderful support and always willing to discuss what he was thinking while writing the opera. Many scenes were emotionally very powerful, and he was the first to tell you if you had captured the mood that he was wanting through the music and text.”22 Julian Patrick, the bass who sang the role of Judge Townsend remembers how Floyd would “talk with you about what

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you want to do at a given moment, why you’re here, and then turns you loose to do what seems to come logically for you, as the person on stage.”23

When the opera opened on January 18th, the tremendous amount of publicity that had been generated paid off. The cast and crew opened to a full house. Neither Theodor Uppman nor Phyllis Curtin was able to attend, though both had been invited. The event was such a success that Floyd was finally able, after twenty-nine years, to find positive reviews in several national newspapers. Among them was a very complimentary review in the Journal American, where Cary Smith described the opera as “passionately lyric” and that “Floyd’s highly literate text was underscored by a richly complex musical tapestry.”24

4.3 – Historical context of 1991

The year 1991 marked the end of the Cold War, the conflict between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The Cold War had been raging for over forty years before the USSR collapsed into fifteen sovereign republics. However, the United States was forced to turn its military to a more pressing region: the Middle East. Iraq invaded Kuwait the year before, and in 1991, the United States, along with thirty-three other countries of the United Nations, intervened to assist Kuwait. This event would come to be known as the Gulf War, and the United States would continue to have a presence in the Middle East until present day.

Similar to that of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, Carlisle Floyd’s opera The Passion of Jonathan Wade was once again affected by a national political disaster. One

23 Holliday, 338.
week before the premiere, the United States government passed a resolution authorizing the use of military force to liberate Kuwait. Then, just like a bad omen, the day before *Jonathan Wade* opened in Houston, President George Bush ordered the bombardment of Baghdad in what was to become known as Operation Desert Storm.\(^{25}\)

In 1991, racial issues were still prevalent throughout the American landscape, and many hate groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan continued to carry out hate crimes. However, the federal government was shaping the future and attempting to eliminate discrimination based on race. The first federal law designed to protect the rights of African-Americans, was passed in 1866, during the time in which *Jonathan Wade* is set. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted only two years after the premiere of *The Passion of Jonathan Wade*, and in 1991, the Civil Rights Act which provided basic rights in employment discrimination cases became law. The length of the time that passed between the enactment of these laws, demonstrates the slow pace of change in improving the rights of all citizens after the end of the Civil War. This was especially the case in dangerous places like Columbia, South Carolina. One hundred and twenty-five years had elapsed, and many people in the United States were still battling for equal rights.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYTICAL COMPARISON

There have been several working editions of *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* throughout the years, including the pre-published version of 1961, the performance version of the 1962 premiere, the working revision of 1989-90, and the final version of 1991 as it exists in its present form. The following discussion will briefly touch on the original version before its first premiere and the revision before its second premiere; however, the main focus of this chapter will be a comparison between the two performed versions.26

The first draft of *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* consisted of nine principle roles, six comprimari, and several enormous choruses of emancipated blacks, citizens of Columbia, party guests, Union soldiers, Confederate soldiers and Ku Klux Klan men. In later versions, they became “Freedom Riders” due to the historical inaccuracy that the KKK had not been formed by April 1865.27 However, Floyd likely was not aware of this at the time, and the first version contained the infamous group. In the first draft of the opera in 1961, the length of the opera would have been four hours. The initial libretto draft for *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* is housed at the Library of Congress.

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Version 1 – the initial libretto draft

In the initial version of the libretto, the opening chorus is heard as a lament by the people of Columbia. This chorus is shortened for later productions but musically remains unchanged throughout the development of the opera’s history. In this opening scene, there is much interaction between Northern soldiers, Confederate prisoners, family members, and citizens. One exchange is reminiscent of Gounod’s stage direction in *Faust* when the soldiers enter and one of the wives is unable to find her husband and realizes he has been lost to the war. When Judge Brooke Townsend (bass-baritone) enters with his daughter Celia (soprano), and Union Colonel Jonathan Wade (baritone), promises the two of them that he will help make an easy transition for Columbia, because he is sympathetic and recognizes the importance of honor in the South.

The first episode includes Jonathan speaking with a wounded Confederate soldier (tenor) about the spoils of war and the ruins of the city. A young black boy then celebrates his freedom in song. In Act I, Scene 2, Celia blames Jonathan and the Union soldiers for all she has lost to the war, and he responds by proclaiming that the war has affected him, too. Jonathan gains fortitude and kisses her before leaving. Celia then sings of the internal conflict she suffers because of this strange love for a Union officer but softens as she realizes how much both of them have suffered.

The second episode introduces the crooked businessman J. Tertius Riddle (bass-baritone), who is found selling pardons to help Southerners make connections in Washington. This offends Judge Townsend and other staunch Southerners like Lucas Wardlaw (tenor), who leads a group of Confederate rebels in song against the Union. At
Judge Townsend’s home, in Act I, Scene 3, the judge directly connects the episode by complaining to Jonathan of the corrupt politics of Northerners. Jonathan promotes the rights of blacks and the racist Wardlaw scoffs at the illiteracy rate among blacks. Jonathan makes a correlation between freed blacks and the area’s white sandhillers, a group of largely illiterate people living in the rural Sand Hills region of Columbia, South Carolina. Nicey Bridges (mezzo-soprano), the servant of the Townsends, welcomes to the party Ely Pratt (tenor) and his wife, Amy (mezzo-soprano). Pratt defends his organization, the Freedman’s Bureau, and attempts to utilize Nicey as an example of lack of education, implying that she cannot read. In good spirit and to the amusement of the other guests, Nicey explains that she has been free for some time, and Judge Townsend taught her to read years ago. Embarrassed, Pratt brags that the North will continue to dominate the South and denounces Lincoln as a lunatic and tyrant.

Act II takes place in the spring of 1866, about a year later. Jonathan continues administering loyalty oaths to locals, but Wardlaw refuses to take the oath, instead demanding lost money from an escaped tenant farmer. Jonathan advises him to treat his workers better, which might prevent them from running away. Poor blacks approach to get help with voting, but Pratt rejects their requests by stating that it is out of the bureau’s jurisdiction. When Jonathan admits that the blacks are the biggest victims of Reconstruction, Wardlaw threatens that the Ku Klux Klan will come.

The third episode features another “hoaxer” (tenor), who is selling worthless land certificates to freed black slaves that promise forty acres and a mule. Another transition into Act II, Scene 2, shows Jonathan chastising the hoaxer. A courier (baritone) enters with the summons that Judge Townsend will be replaced by a black judge, because he has
failed to take the loyalty oath. Jonathan has a conscience dilemma as Pratt threatens him with court-martial if he fails to carry out the order. When Townsend and Celia arrive and hear the news from Pratt, she begs Jonathan to use his authority to overturn the decision. He confesses his love for her which causes Townsend to choose between love and family loyalty. Celia’s father declares that he will never see her again and exits. Jonathan decides that he and Celia should marry immediately and sends for the rector. Nicey collects roses and a piece of mosquito netting for a veil. The rector (bass), conducts the ceremony, as Nicey and friends sing in counterpoint with a distant Ku Klux Klan song as the couple exchanges vows.

In researching the period of American Reconstruction, Floyd came across a particularly pertinent book called *The South During Reconstruction*, which he used as a primary resource. In this book, E. Merton Coulter, a historian and white supremacist captures the racial tension with his inclusion of the poem/song of their initial terrorist campaign. When Floyd read these words, he realized that they would perfectly capture the mood and create a paradigm of hate in *Jonathan Wade*. He uses the KKK chorus to sing offstage the following:

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Thodika Stevika! Radical Plan
Must yield to the coming of the Ku Klux Klan!
Niggers and leaguers, get out of the way;
We’re born of the night and we vanish by day;
No rations have we, but the flesh of man –
And love niggers best—the Ku Klux Klan;
We catch ‘em alive and roast ‘em whole,
Then hand ‘em around on a sharpened pole,
Whole Leagues have been eaten, not leaving a man,
And went away hungry—The Ku Klux Klan;
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Act III takes place in late summer of 1869 in the home of Jonathan, Celia, and their young son. Jonathan lectures the boy on the safety of guns. Nicey complains about the Radicals of the North and carpetbaggers of the South who will continue to effect blacks. Amy and Ely Pratt arrive to invite Jonathan to a League meeting. When he refuses, Pratt rages that he is rallying against Republican values because of his Southern wife’s influence. The Pratts leave, but Ely suspects Jonathan will disobey an order, and he enlists Patrick (tenor) to spy on him.

Act III, Scene 2 begins as Patrick delivers an order to confiscate Judge Townsend’s furniture due to unpaid taxes. In order to save the old man, Jonathan suggests either court-martial or desertion and chooses the latter. He plans to escape with Celia to the West Coast and then flee to South America later that night. In the last episode the order is carried out despite Jonathan’s plan of desertion to save the judge. This short episode depicts Townsend as a disillusioned old man who blames and curses the Union for the removal of his personal belongings.

In the final scene of the opera, Act III, Scene 2, Jonathan and Celia ponder how the order was implemented, as Nicey finishes packing while awaiting the carriage. Amy Pratt comes to warn them of the approaching Klan, and Patrick enters with three Klansmen as prisoners. When Jonathan orders their hoods removed, their leader, Wardlaw, laughs in defiance. When the carriage arrives, Jonathan goes to the door where he is shot. He staggers back into the room, and more Klansmen and Union soldiers enter.

Jonathan dies in Celia’s arms, and Pratt demands to know the identity of the gunman. Judge Townsend stumbles in with his gun, cursing Jonathan for betrayal. When Celia reveals the accurate depiction of the situation, Townsend begs for forgiveness. She calmly tells Ely Pratt to take him away, as if she has never known him. Pratt assures her that Jonathan will receive an honorable funeral. Celia stays behind, kneeling by her dead husband and declaring to her son they will leave this hateful place forever. As the curtain falls, she pulls the mourning veil over her face and sobs.

Version 2 - The first published/performed version of 1962

After completing the initial draft of the libretto, Floyd began to compose the music and score the opera. This method would remain typical of his process for writing operas throughout his career. When music is added, major changes can occur. For Jonathan Wade, the changes were vast. He cut approximately one-third of the overall libretto and even altered the plot and characters. The opera still would be close to three hours in length. Many changes were minute and cuts were intended to minimize plot repetition and excessive character development in order to cut length.

The changes began with renaming Judge Brooks Townsend to Judge Gibbes Townsend. In the first scene, Floyd decreased the dialogue by having a single girl (soprano), ask the judge when the soldiers would return. He also added a reprisal of the opening chorus and reduced by half, Townsend’s explanation of Celia’s hostility. The composer chose to introduce Nicey earlier in this scene as she comments on Wade’s uniform and Jonathan laughs. The courtship between Jonathan and Celia is also reduced
by half and, like so many other operas; the protagonists must fall in love in one short scene.

In the second episode, Floyd actually adds another verse to Riddle’s song. In Scene 3, he trimmed down the argument between Jonathan and Wardlaw. Throughout all the versions, Floyd battled with the use of Pratt and his sermonizing at the party. Floyd states that he was never completely happy with the excessive appearance of Pratt in this scene. In the second version, he reduced the amount of time for Pratt’s rants and added a new *obbligato* as solo lines for Celia, Townsend, Amy Pratt, and Jonathan at the end of the act.

Act II witnessed some substantial cuts including trimming most of the loyalty oath away. Instead of Jonathan presenting the entire loyalty oath as Floyd understood it from his childhood memories with Civil War Veteran Gilliam King, he decided to raise the curtain at the end of the oath in order to save time and preserve the integrity of the situation. Some segments were added here indicating Townsend’s realization that there is a relationship blooming between his daughter and Wade. Floyd cut much of Pratt’s hostility in this scene and reserved it for Act III.

In Act II, Scene 2, the libretto is changed to indicate that Jonathan should give the news of Townsend’s replacement, and the ensuing argument between Jonathan and Townsend is drastically reduced. The wedding portion of the opera seemed to be an additional thought in the first version of the libretto. Floyd decided then that this could be the turning point for the opera and held nothing back as he focused his composing pen on the dramatic music and text. As he added the music, Floyd discovered a way to manipulate the use of the spiritual sung by Nicey throughout the ceremony, including a

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29 Holliday, 196.
double chorus to evoke two different moods: the love of Nicey and her friends through the spiritual and the hate of the Ku Klux Klan members as they marched the streets outside. In order to maintain the focus of the love-hate dichotomy, Floyd cut the majority of the concluding love duet.

Floyd understood in 1962 that an opera in three acts must have a dramatic conclusion that is quickly reached in a short third act. He decided to cut Jonathan’s gun lecture to his son but replaced it with an aria for Celia about the corrupt people of Columbia. Floyd completely changed the first scene in that he deleted Pratt’s dialogue about his wife and shortened the enlistment of Lieutenant Patrick. Floyd decided to add a new episode after Act III, Scene 1, which introduced the judge who would replace Townsend. Judge James C. Bell (baritone) appears after two carpetbaggers are seen trying to bribe a black senator. Bell is already asking to be replaced at the beginning of the second scene when Patrick arrives with the order to seize Judge Townsend’s personal belongings. Floyd keeps the dialogue between Jonathan and Celia when Jonathan decides to desert his station to save his father-in-law.

The next episode becomes very short and only serves to demonstrate Judge Townsend’s rage and his vow of vengeance. Floyd made several cuts in the final scene, including the beginning dialogues between Jonathan, Celia, and Amy Pratt. He also shortened the scene by eliminating the confrontation with Wardlaw and the couple’s preparations to flee. The dramatic conclusion was modified to exclude the identity of the shooter. Holliday reports that Floyd wanted to “preserve sympathy, dignity, and tragic dimension in Judge Townsend, as well as eliminating maudlin and distracting
melodrama, he needed to keep the assassin’s identity ambiguous.” Instead, he wanted to focus on the overall violence in Columbia during that time and not on one specific person. He also chose to conclude with Celia yearning to live in a different time, as opposed to arguing with her father and the others over what has been done. This allowed the opera to end with a positive thought of the future, rather than a negative and dramatic conclusion in the present.


Floyd continued to shorten this epic work to drive the dramatic story without lengthy explanation or repetition. He reduced the time of the story to about seven or eight months, as opposed to roughly four years. When he examined the depth of each character, he decided they were too vague and two-dimensional and lacked motivation for their actions. He especially wanted to develop Jonathan, Celia, and Townsend. He eliminated two characters: Amy Pratt and Jonathan’s son, Johnny; while adding a minor character named Sergeant Branch.

In Act I, Scene 1, very few changes occurred. The people of Columbia continue to lament, and Floyd makes a few modifications of the instrumentation. However, in the next scene, many changes develop the characters. When Townsend sings the aria about his beautiful home, Floyd adds new music to represent the longing for the past. During the arguments between Jonathan and Celia, Jonathan discloses his brother’s execution much sooner, and Floyd lowered the overall pitch levels of the two characters to imply

30 Holliday, 197.
that the argument was civil and not as heated. At the conclusion of the act, Floyd decided to end Celia’s aria with a series of questions to better transition into the next scene.

Act I, Scene 3, uses a lot of the same dialogue but goes through some major musical transformations. Floyd chose to fill the space left behind by Amy Pratt with an additional focus on the Freedman’s Bureau. Ely Pratt gives another speech about the Bureau, causing Floyd some frustration about what to do with this character. Wardlaw also chastises Wade during this scene about the Bureau. He believes that the army should not interfere with these political issues. At the end of the scene, Floyd decides not to mention Lincoln and writes all new music and libretto for the finale of Act I.

Floyd takes the opportunity to further develop Lucas Wardlaw at the beginning of Act II, Scene 1. Wardlaw sings a short aria in which he discloses that he only wants his old life back. Pratt’s character is also developed in the revision of the opera. He becomes harsher and more menacing without his wife’s softer touches. He delivers a more ominous threat if Wade continues to question the commands of his superiors. Celia takes the loyalty oath and Floyd makes the audience aware that she, as a woman, was not required to take the oath but does it to be closer to Jonathan. Floyd changes the Ku Klux Klan to the Guardian Knights in this version.

In the third episode, Riddle’s soliloquy is replaced by a section of duet with the Union League officer. Figure 5.1 presents the 1962 version of Act II, Scene 2. In the first few measures, Floyd changes the original music to better capture the urgency of the situation. Jonathan is interrogating the corrupt Riddle and sentencing him to ninety days in jail. In the third measure, Floyd originally used the word “identified” as it is usually spoken in iambic meter. By adding the dotted eighth note on the strong syllable “den,” a
naturally spoken English line is represented. This was something that Floyd always strove for in his operas. In Figure 5.2, the same measure changes the strong syllable to “fied” in which the urgent text now sounds syncopated; “i-den-ti-fied” leading into the next phrase. When Jonathan finally gives Riddle his sentence of ninety days, it is pure syncopation with no orchestration underneath. Floyd had this section a cappella in the original as well (Figure 5.1); however, he used strict duples which lost any sense of hemiola that had been set up in previous measures. This did not create the sense of urgency that his new frustrated rhythm achieved.

Figure 5.1 – Act II, Scene 2, m. 13-21, 1962.
Additionally, Floyd decided to remove the four measures in which Jonathan states that he will jail everyone he can find. In the 1962 piano score, Floyd set up a harmonic sense of dissonance by pairing the word “locusts” with a chord in mode mixture of A-Major in the right hand and a-minor in the left hand. Jonathan’s C-natural is the highest note of the texture. Because the tones are so low, the music doesn’t resonate as a frustrated sense of dissonance. When Floyd gets to the word “jail,” the dissonance becomes greater as he uses the octave A-sharps in the top with the octave Bs in the bottom – both in treble clef. The frequency is at a higher pitch level and sounds much more dissonant. This harmony fits the situation well since Jonathan is so coldly announcing that he wants to jail everyone like Riddle. Floyd decided that this side of Jonathan poorly represented his passionate character and decided to cut these measures from the 1991 version.\(^\text{31}\)

\(^{31}\) Carlisle Floyd. Personal interview with Joshua Wentz. December 17, 2013.
Conversely, Floyd chose to make Riddle more of an evil character in the 1991 version by repeating his words “you’ll regret this” three times and quite possibly making him the character who puts the curse on Jonathan. In Example 5.3, when Riddle says this line once, it is amidst great dissonance of a D-Major 7 with an F-natural and C-natural in the bass. This makes it extremely difficult for the singer to sing a D# and B# with the lack of harmonic support. Floyd not only adds the repetition of the words in the ’91 version (Example 5.4), but he also adds an extended descending phrase that ends on a menacing low G.

![Music Sheet Image](image.png)

Figure 5.3 – Act II, Scene 2, m. 19-27, 1962.
The aria “Sleep, conscience sleep” remains largely unchanged from its original form. A few examples worth mentioning include the cut of a substantial section in the middle of the aria regarding “martyrdom” and the dramatic change at the ending. Floyd’s initial libretto included several additional lines of text for Jonathan to sing, which elongated the aria. This excessive banter negatively affected the aria, because it was too long and not focused enough. Floyd also wanted to avoid the reference to Jonathan as a martyr in order to preserve the unexpected ending of the opera. Figure 5.5 shows the music that was cut for the 1991 version. Musically, it does nothing different than the rest of the aria. The baritone simply continues to sing in 6/8 with an occasional duple.
Figure 5.5 – Act II, Scene 2, m.96-107, 1962.
The text for the two arias is demonstrated by the following table, in which the reader can see Floyd cuts out a major portion in order to repeat the text “I have a duty I must perform.”

Table 5.1 – Comparison of text in “Sleep, conscience, sleep,” Act II, Scene 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Sleep, conscience, sleep,” 1962</th>
<th>“Sleep, conscience, sleep,” 1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sleep, conscience, sleep</td>
<td>Sleep, conscience, sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While sightless duty obeys its commands.</td>
<td>While sightless duty obeys its commands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep, conscience, slumber deeply</td>
<td>Sleep, conscience, slumber deeply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For you are the eyes of my mind and heart</td>
<td>For you are the eyes of my mind and heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And what duty must do now</td>
<td>And what duty must do now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You cannot see.</td>
<td>You cannot see.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep, conscience, sleep</td>
<td>Sleep, conscience, sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For duty is sightless, deaf, and mute</td>
<td>For duty is sightless, deaf, and mute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And without your eyes,</td>
<td>And without your eyes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It will dumbly obey.</td>
<td>It will dumbly obey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep, conscience, I beg you to sleep.</td>
<td>Sleep, conscience, I beg you to sleep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close your fierce unblinking eyes.</td>
<td>Close your fierce unblinking eyes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t torment me, leave me in peace.</td>
<td>Don’t torment me, leave me in peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a duty I must perform.</td>
<td>I have a duty I must perform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just this once I beg you, God,</td>
<td>Please stop tormenting me,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dull my spirit, blur my eyes.</td>
<td>Leave me in peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a weak, imperfect man,</td>
<td>I have a duty I must perform,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With no claims of nobility,</td>
<td>I must perform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With no yearning for martyrdom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant me the refuge of self-deceit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let me deceive myself.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let me be deceived!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep, conscience, sleep.</td>
<td>Sleep, conscience, sleep!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close your fierce, protesting eyes –</td>
<td>Close your fierce, protesting eyes –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t torture me more, leave me in peace!</td>
<td>Don’t torture me more, leave me in peace!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep, conscience, sleep.</td>
<td>Sleep, conscience, sleep!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep, conscience, I beg you, sleep.</td>
<td>Sleep, conscience, I beg you, sleep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close your fierce, protesting eyes.</td>
<td>Close your fierce, protesting eyes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep deeply now and leave me in peace.</td>
<td>Sleep, I beg you to sleep, beg you to sleep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep, sleep, I beg you to sleep. Sleep.</td>
<td>Sleep. Sleep. SLEEP!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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In the initial ending of the aria, Jonathan concludes in what sounds like a half cadence in the key of F Major (Figure 5.6). The orchestra diminuendos to a soft cadence and the piece ends in F Major. In the newer version, Floyd decides to end the aria by adding a subito forte after the slow diminuendo. Jonathan throws back his head in exasperation and loudly sings the final “sleep” in the high baritone register. This is followed by an orchestral cadence on forte staccato notes signifying the end of the aria (Figure 5.7). This more dramatic ending allows the audience an opportunity for applause. In the 1991 archival recording of the premiere at Houston Grand Opera, the audience applauded graciously at this point.32

![Image of musical notation]

Figure 5.6 – Act II, Scene 2, m. 120-121, 1962.

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During this scene, Floyd eliminated many empty measures originally included to serve dramatic purposes. When Jonathan tells Townsend that he has been replaced, the music becomes more hurried and dissonant. Floyd cuts full phrases, such as Judge Townsend’s self-reference to being a Southern gentleman (Figure 5.8). He also adds more music for Celia and changes the duet to a trio.
When Townsend disowns his daughter, Floyd increases the dramatic tension by setting the line at a higher pitch level, indicating the anger in Townsend about Celia’s decision to stay with Jonathan. Figure 5.9 depicts the 1962 version of the disownment of Celia. The judge is singing a fifth lower on a low A which does not satisfy the ire that Floyd was trying to achieve. Additionally, the rhythm is very basic. Floyd does not change time signatures as he does in the later version (Figure 5.10). Instead, he simply sets the text to a basic rhythm of quarter notes and eighth notes. The most complex rhythmic tool that Floyd used in this example was a set of eighth-note triplets. The harmonic structure is a constant C-sharp diminished chord leading to G-Major. The presence of a D would give the feeling of a stable dominant-tonic relationship; however, the composer leaves out the D to set up more dissonance. In 1991, Floyd decides to keep this underlying harmony, but he modifies the rhythm and meter to give a more speech-like delivery of the line. Also, the syncopation in the final measure over the dissonant
chord gives a sense of unrest. In Example 5.9, the last measure is a C-Major chord over an F pedal. This does little to create a sense of unrest in the judge’s final statement. However, by using a cluster chord of two minor seconds paired with a Bb minor in second inversion, a new sense of dramatic unrest is achieved. Additionally, Floyd has Townsend descend to the low G, which is a note that is not doubled in any instrument in the orchestra. Lastly, the choice to descend on a more syncopated rhythm creates a weeping motive, as if the judge is definite in his decision but still sad about what he has to do. In the 1962 version, the sol-do cadence demonstrated finality without remorse.

Figure 5.9 – Act II, Scene 2, m. 308-311, 1962.

Figure 5.10 – Act II, Scene 2, m.219-222, 1991.
In the original version, Floyd included ten measures of interlude to allow Townsend to exit while Celia stood with a steadfast, rigid expression demonstrating her strength in the decision to choose life with Jonathan. However, Floyd didn’t see this as a dramatic point and didn’t want to lose the energy. He decided that Townsend should exit quickly and replaced this interlude with three measures of transition music to lead into the wedding. The next set of music is brand new and, instead of a soldier bringing flowers to Celia, Nicey presents her with a veil made of mosquito netting. This moment is also present in the earlier version but it is with different, shorter music. Floyd expands the music of the spiritual to include another verse but cut the Guardian Knights chorus. After the vows are made between Jonathan and Celia, the act is ended in the 1991 version with a reprisal of the spiritual presented by offstage humming before Jonathan declares, “I adore you,” as Celia sings “I worship you.”

In the final act, Floyd wanted the time frame to be shorter, so instead of setting the scene three years later, he decides to make it November 1865, only a few short months later. This eliminated Jonathan’s and Celia’s child and therefore, eliminated the lullaby Celia sings at the beginning of the act. When the curtain rises, Pratt is talking more aggressively with Wade about joining the Radical party. When Wade refuses, Pratt accuses Celia of turning him towards the Southern cause. When she intervenes, Pratt sings a newly composed aria about taking vengeance on Wade before leaving to recruit Lieutenant Patrick to spy on him. This interaction is completely new in the 1991 version.

The following episode is shorter and more concise. Much of the music in this episode remains the same because it efficiently leads into Act III, Scene 2. Floyd composes new music allowing an opportunity for Judge Bell to sing an aria about his
wish to withdraw. Patrick has a change in volition and decides to be more supportive of the Union cause. This surprises Jonathan that his Lieutenant has become involved in the crooked political practices. When Jonathan reads the order, he decides that he will not carry it out. This further develops Patrick’s confusion about the character of his superior. Patrick gets a short aria-like passage about obeying orders. When he is dismissed, Jonathan quickly tells Celia about the orders. She blames Jonathan for her family’s disaster, and an argument ensues about their lives together. Floyd chooses to focus on the overall theme of the opera here and focuses their duet on the desire to live in a better future and not in the present time and place. The lyrics that had been cut from the “Sleep, conscience, sleep” aria (See Table 5.1), resurface during this duet, as Jonathan is now feeling more and more like a martyr.

In the last scene, Floyd maintains the direction of the dramatic action but cuts everything he can to make it short and concise. The music is mostly new and refocused to create tension. In this version, Wardlaw actually tells Wade that the Guardian Knights are out to kill him. Additionally, Patrick and Pratt disclose their intent to arrest Wade for court martial. When Jonathan is shot, the pandemonium dies away and Celia orders everyone out. The opera still ends with the wish to live with a better and brighter future, but Floyd wants to augment that sentiment by including a strong visual climax. This is achieved by using Nicey to bring the funeral uniform and the mourning veil. As she places it on the weeping Celia’s head, she ends the opera with her spiritual prayer for Jonathan’s soul.
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APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS, CARLISLE FLOYD 2014

In a personal interview between composer Carlisle Floyd and Joshua Wentz on March 15, 2014, the following questions were asked:

1. Although Mr. Holliday gives a very brief account of the conception of this show in the early 1960s, could you describe how the idea was conceived and how the opera began to take shape?

   The first version of WADE was in the early ’60’s...the new version in ’91. The idea was conceived from an idea suggested to me by my wife, Kay, of a Union officer stationed in the South during the early Reconstruction and his struggle between his own moral code and the severity of the orders that came down from Washington. It deals with the classic conflict of a man of moderate and balanced convictions caught in an era of extreme views.

2. Was it intended to be such a “grand” opera? If not, how did it become so large?

   It was not intended to be a grand opera, but, given the number of characters and events the opera deals with, it quickly acquired the dramatic scope and breadth and emotional range of the standard grand opera,.the only one I've ever attempted.

3. What do you remember about the premiere in ’62? Who was there? What were your expectations of the show?

   I chiefly remember the beautiful production of the premiere, sets and costumes, designed by a fine Broadway scenic artist of the day, but, perhaps even more, I
remember the huge and prolonged ovation of the audience. Given the response of
the audience I expected there to be more productions of the opera, but there were
so few opera companies in those days, and the production demands were too great
for the few university companies who might have undertaken it.

4. Did you think about trying to produce *Jonathan Wade* again, either in revision or its
original form, before Houston Grand approached you about it in 1990?

   I always intended to do a re-working of the opera and finally got around to that
   when commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera to do that for its 90-91 season.

5. What was your involvement beyond the music and libretto in the 1991 remake?

   I was involved in the revised version in the same way I'm involved in the
   premiere of a new opera...I had the assistance of the Broadway and Shakesperean
   stage director, Jack O'Brien, who provided insights into what needed work in the
   first libretto so that the second libretto was virtually a new libretto. That of course
   necessitated re-writing the music as well. Also, I read a volume on the
   Reconstruction by Eric Foner which provided more detailed information on the
   period.

6. What were some of the important changes you made to the score or libretto for the
revised edition? Why did you felt these changes were necessary?

   I couldn't begin to remember all the alterations which I made, but I know I added
   completely new scenes (such as the final scene in Act One) and added character
   dimensions to Lucas Wardlaw and Enoch Pratt.

7. What is the most dramatic scene in the show? Where is its “turning point”? 
The scene in which Jonathan is sent the final order affecting Judge Townsend. Almost all the scenes have their dramatic moments, but perhaps the single most dramatic scene would be either the wedding scene and Ku Klux raid at the end of the second act, or the final scene of the attempted escape and murder of Jonathan.

8. Particular to Act II, Scene 2 (Jonathan’s aria, the confrontation of Townsend, and the wedding scene), what is the challenge in presenting this material?

Staging the scene is the challenge since it involves a great deal of action, climaxing with the stillness of the wedding followed by the hysteria of the raid. It is difficult to stage convincingly but, done well, it can be hair-raising as it was first done in Houston.

9. In all your operas, do you have a favorite? How does Jonathan Wade rank in your list of favorites?

I am asked so often my favorite opera of mine and my standard answer is "the one I’m working on at the moment". I am pleased that the second version of Wade had such an enthusiastic reception everywhere it was performed and I feel that is overdue for a revival. I don’t know where Jonathan Wade ranks in terms of my favorite operas but it has a special place in my heart since, like Susannah, it was my own libretto.
APPENDIX B – PRODUCTION DETAILS

DETAILS OF *THE PASSION OF JONATHAN WADE*, 1962

PREMIERE

New York City Opera, October 11, 1962

PRODUCTION

Director – Allen Fletcher
Set Designer – Will Steven Armstrong
Costume Designer – Ruth Morley
Conductor – Julius Rudel

CAST

Jonathan Wade, Union Colonel  Baritone
Brooks Townsend, Southern Judge  Bass-Baritone
Celia Townsend, his daughter, Southern debutante  Soprano
Nicey Bridges, servant to the Townsends  Mezzo-Soprano
Lieutenant Patrick, Union Officer  Tenor
Lucas Wardlow  Tenor
Enoch Pratt  Tenor
Amy Pratt  Mezzo-Soprano
J. Tertius Riddle  Bass-Baritone
Young Girl  Soprano
<table>
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<td>Boy Soprano</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Baritone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union League Orator</td>
<td>Tenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Soldiers</td>
<td>Tenor &amp; Bass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Black Senators</td>
<td>Tenor &amp; Baritone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Carpetbaggers</td>
<td>Tenor &amp; Baritone</td>
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<td>Non-speaking role</td>
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<td>Caucasian SATB Chorus</td>
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<td>TB Chorus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicey’s Friends</td>
<td>African-American Chorus</td>
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**SETTING**

American Reconstruction (post-Civil War)

April 1865- June 1869

Columbia, South Carolina
SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Scene One

It is May 1865 and the residents of Columbia, South Carolina are found amidst their city, which has been recently burned by General Sherman of the Union forces. They sing a litany of the destruction of their city following the Civil War. The war has ended, but their hearts and homes have not recovered from the devastation and they state their status as survivors. Northern officers lead Confederate prisoners onstage and many discuss the harshness of the war. Soldiers reunited with loved ones as Judge Brooks Townsend and his daughter, Celia, greet Colonel Jonathan Wade. Wade proclaims that he knows southern honor and will work to preserve it as they rebuild Columbia together and bring justice for the long-suffering citizens. Thanking him, Townsend introduces him to his daughter, Celia. She is clad in black, and her face is covered by a veil. When Wade addresses her, Celia ignores him and turns to leave. The judge apologizes, explaining that Celia’s fiancé was killed in battle, and her mother died only one month ago. Before leaving, Townsend invites Wade to visit his home for a brandy.

Episode 1

Later the same day, in a junction of city streets, a Confederate soldier surveys the remains of the city. He has lost an arm in the war and uses a crutch. A young black boy celebrates his new-found freedom by dancing and singing “Free as a Frog”. Wade sees the Confederate soldier and offers to help him. Stunned, the soldier remarks that his home has been burned and his wife and child have fled. Wade mentions that there are
conflicting reports about which side burned Columbia. The soldier replies, as he leaves, that sides are immaterial; the war burned the city.

Scene Two

Judge Townsend, Wade, and Celia are assembled in the drawing room of the Townsend home. Jonathan inquires as to who burned the city. Judge Townsend replies that it does not matter who started the fire. He reveals that his home was saved because Sherman housed his officers there. He excuses himself, saying that Celia will entertain Wade. Celia’s southern pride gives way to hostility towards the Northern cause and she lashes into Jonathan. To his dismay, Wade says he knows that Celia has suffered during the war. He brashly maintains that the war has affected him also. The two of them become enamored in one another by the passionate argument and since Jonathan has not been this close to a young woman for a long time, he decides to kiss her. Celia melts into his passionate embrace. They agree to meet again and Jonathan leaves. Celia sings alone of her internal conflict for feeling so passionately for an enemy. However, she softens as she realizes both of them have suffered

Episode

Episode 2 focuses on the corruption that blossomed during Reconstruction. J. Tertius Riddle has arrived from Boston, and he attempts to swindle the townspeople by selling illegitimate Presidential pardons. Riddle offers Townsend a pardon but Townsend is offended and he reprimands Riddle for taking advantage of vulnerable people. Lucas Wardlaw, a Southern aristocrat, and three of his friends mock Riddle.

Scene Three
A party is in progress in the drawing room of the Townsend home. There are men in Confederate uniforms, girls in simple dresses, and a few Union soldiers present. Townsend complains to Jonathan about the corruption that has come to his city in the form of pardon-sellers and blames Washington for this political corruption. Jonathan defends the rights of blacks to vote and Lucas Wardlaw becomes angry. Wardlaw scorns the illiteracy of the former slaves but Wade rebuts, comparing the newly freed slaves to the ignorant and illiterate sandhillers that found near Columbia. Townsend toasts the discipline and good nature of Wade’s men. Judge Townsend’s black servant Nicey answers the door to find Ely Pratt and his wife Amy. Pratt is introduced as the Freedmen’s Bureau commissioner and is immediately engaged in the ongoing conversation. Wardlaw instigates arguments about the rights of freed slaves. Pratt defends the bureau and asks Nicey if she would like to learn how to read. Incredulous, Nicey explains that the judge taught her how to read years ago and now she is too old to learn anything new. Since she has been free for over two years, the guests laugh at Pratt’s pompous question. He becomes upset and curses the Southern hosts by saying the Yankees will crush rebellion in peace as they did in war. Pratt asks Wade where he stands and the colonel reaffirms his agenda. His priorities in Columbia are justice and freedom. Pratt presses the subject more and Wade responds that he is a soldier, not a politician. Pratt is upset and the final tableau begins as Ely Pratt offends Wade when he denounces President Lincoln as a lunatic and tyrant.

ACT II

Scene One
It is spring of 1866 and several men are gathered in Jonathan’s office of the Army Occupation Headquarters. Wade administers the loyalty oath to a group of sandhillers and merchants. Lucas watches with disdain as he waits to speak with Wade. Wardlaw complains that he wants compensation from the Bureau for an escaped black tenant farmer. When Jonathan advises him to treat his workers better, Wardlaw threatens him by telling him that rich people do not like losing privileges and that revenge is appealing to oppressed people. Wardlaw leaves as Pratt arrives to report that the rector refuses to pray for the president during his services. Jonathan agrees to investigate and begins to leave. On his porch are several newly freed slaves. They are confused over voting practices and have come to seek guidance. As Jonathan begins to advise them, Pratt intervenes, claiming this is not a military matter. Jonathan sympathizes with the blacks and proclaims them as the true victims of the war. Wardlaw reemerges and again threatens Wade with Ku Klux Klan activities.

Episode

A week later, a group of black men sits near an industrial street listening to a “hoaxter”. He offers forty acres and a mule to any freed man who joins the Radical party. He promises that the Radical party will confiscate plantations and redistribute them in forty-acre plots to the freedmen. Some former slaves give the man money in exchange for the certificates.

Scene Two

Wade begins the next scene by chastising the hoaxter and sentencing him to ninety days in prison. A courier interrupts with an order from the military government. Jonathan reads it dubiously and informs Lieutenant Patrick that Judge Townsend, who is too proud
to take the loyalty oath, is being replaced, by a black judge. Jonathan doubts he can serve this order to Townsend but Pratt reminds him that he will be court-martialed if he refuses to execute a national order. Jonathan orders Patrick to go find Judge Townsend and he is left alone on stage. Jonathan asks his conscience to sleep so that he will not feel guilty as he fulfills his duty. When Townsend arrives, Jonathan realizes he has brought Celia and he finds it even more difficult to deliver the devastating news. Nonetheless, Jonathan delivers the news, and explains the denial of his appeals. Judge Townsend is doubly insulted when he learns that his replacement is a black judge from Pennsylvania. Celia begs Jonathan to use his authority to appeal to Washington. Jonathan recognizes a deep love and compassion for Celia and confesses his love. He has long wanted to ask for her hand in marriage. She accepts the proposal and pleads with her father for his blessing. Townsend implacability forces her to make her choose between the two of them. Celia chooses Jonathan and Townsend declares that he will never see his daughter or Wade again and exits.

Celia and Wade agree to marry right away and send for the rector. They confirm their independence by putting their vows into the love they share for one another. Nicey begins preparing Celia for the wedding by gathering roses for a bridal bouquet and a piece of mosquito netting for a veil. Patrick summons the minister. When the rector arrives, the wedding begins immediately and Nicey and her friends sing the spiritual “Down in Galilee” as the Ku Klux Klan sings a racist rant offstage.

ACT III

Scene One

59
In a beautiful summer evening of 1869, Jonathan and Celia are spending time with their young son. Jonathan lectures the boy on the safety of guns. Nicey complains about the Radicals of the North and carpetbaggers of the South who will continue to effect blacks. Amy and Ely Pratt arrive to invite Jonathan to a League meeting. When he refuses, Pratt rages that he is rallying against Republican values because of his Southern wife’s influence. The Pratts leave, but Ely suspects Jonathan will disobey an order. He tells Lieutenant Patrick that they have reason to doubt Wade’s loyalty. Patrick is stunned by the allegation and defends Wade. Pratt turns his suspicion on Patrick, and entices him to spy on his behalf.

Scene Two

The same evening, Jonathan is working at his desk when Patrick delivers another order from Washington. This time, Wade is supposed to execute the confiscation of Judge Townsend’s furniture and personal belongings to settle unpaid taxes. Realizing that this will further devastate Townsend, Jonathan explains the orders to Celia. She forbids Wade from carrying out his orders. He explains to her that if he doesn’t carry out the orders, he will be court-martialed. The only other option is desertion. Jonathan hears the Klan in the distance and remembers Wardlaw’s threat. He sends Patrick out to pursue the outlaws. Jonathan decides that he will desert the army and flee to South America with Celia. They plan to leave that evening and request that Nicey prepare the carriage. Celia agrees that this option is best and she mourns that the time and place they live in is awful and she yearns to be in a different time and place.

Episode
In the last episode, the unkempt Townsend leads a rally of several townspeople who have assembled in a city square near the capitol. They are gathered for the unveiling of a Confederate tableau that depicts the former Confederate States in progressive stages of their history. Townsend appears disheveled and seems mentally unstable as he leads the rally. Townsend announces the removal of his bedroom furniture and his late wife’s piano from his home. He blames the Union officer for removing it without cause and his anger builds to threats of vengeance.

Scene Three

Shocked that his orders have been executed, Wade realizes that he has been trapped. The orders were secret, and yet they have been completed. He asks Celia how the order could have been executed without his command. He was the only one who has seen the order. Celia and Nicey begin to rush in order to pack everything before the carriage arrives. Amy Pratt comes to warn them of the Ku Klux Klan activities and plans that are being discussed at that moment. Patrick arrives announcing that the leader of the KKK and several Klansmen have been captured. Jonathan removes the hood of the leader and finds Lucas Wardlaw who laughs defiantly. Celia and Nicey are ready to leave and Jonathan goes to the door to pack the carriage. A shot is fired and Jonathan staggers back into the room, holding his chest. Union soldiers enter with more captured Klansmen as Celia screeches for a doctor. Jonathan dies in her arms as her father, Judge Townsend, enters the house carrying the smoking gun that has just killed Jonathan Wade. After he curses Wade’s dishonor, Celia informs him that Jonathan chose to desert his command instead of carrying out the executive order. Townsend’s demeanor changes and he tries to apologize for what he has done. However, Celia will not listen and calmly responds that
she has never known him. Patrick escorts the heartbroken Judge away. Celia clutches
Jonathan and holds her son’s hand. As people disperse, Nicey places a mourning veil on
Celia’s head. When everyone is gone, Celia tells her son that they will leave this hateful
place in the morning and will never return. She kneels by Jonathan’s body, pulls the veil
down, and weeps.
DETAILS OF THE PASSION OF JONATHAN WADE, 1991

PREMIERE

Houston Grand Opera, January 18, 1991

PRODUCTION

Director – Carlisle Floyd
Set Designer – Günther Schneider-Siemssen
Costume Designer – Günther Schneider-Siemssen
Conductor – John DeMain

CAST

Jonathan Wade, Union Colonel Baritone
Gibbes Townsend, Southern Judge Bass-Baritone
Celia Townsend, his daughter, Southern debutante Soprano
Nicey Bridges, servant to the Townsends Mezzo-Soprano
Lieutenant Patrick, Union Officer Tenor
Lucas Wardlow Tenor
Enoch Pratt Tenor
J. Tertius Riddle Bass-Baritone
James C. Bell, Judge Baritone
Sargeant Branch Baritone
Young Girl  Soprano
Four Black Boys  Boy Soprano & Baritone Quartet
Wounded Confederate Soldier  Baritone
Union League Orator  Tenor
Two Soldiers  Tenor & Bass
Two Black Senators  Tenor & Baritone
Two Carpetbaggers  Tenor & Baritone
Judge McBride  Non-speaking role
Carriage Driver  Speaking role
People of Columbia  Mixed SATB Chorus
Guardian Knights  Caucasian TB Chorus
Lucas’ Friends  Caucasian SATB Chorus
Union Soldiers  TB Chorus
Nicey’s Friends  African-American Chorus

SETTING

American Reconstruction (post-Civil War)

April 1865 - November 1865

Columbia, South Carolina

SYNOPSIS

Bethany Kiral, “Character Analyses of the Soprano Roles Created by Phyllis Curtin in the Operas of Carlisle Floyd.” (Diss., Florida State University, 2010), pp. 81-86.
ACT I

Scene One

The residents of Columbia, South Carolina, discuss the destruction of their city following the Civil War. The war has ended, but their hearts and homes have not recovered from the devastation. In the distance, local soldiers are dismissed by Lieutenant Patrick, a Union soldier. Led by Colonel Jonathan Wade, Union soldiers have escorted the Confederate troops to Columbia. Greeted by Judge Townsend, Wade declares his objective to rebuild Columbia and bring justice for the long-suffering citizens. Thanking him, Townsend introduces him to his daughter, Celia. She is clad in black, and her face is covered by a veil. When Wade addresses her, Celia ignores him and turns to leave. The judge apologizes, explaining that Celia’s fiancé was killed in battle, and her mother died only one month ago. Before leaving, Townsend invites Wade to visit his home. Wade accepts the invitation and sets out to explore the city with Lieutenant Patrick. A man, disgusted by the presence of Union soldiers, spits at them after they leave.

Episode 1

Later the same day, in a junction of city streets, a Confederate soldier surveys the remains of the city. He has lost an arm in the war and uses a crutch. A quartet of young black boys celebrates their new-found freedom by dancing and singing. Wade enters as the quartet leaves. Seeing the Confederate soldier, he offers to help him. Stunned, the soldier remarks that his home has been burned and his wife and child have fled. Wade mentions that there are conflicting reports about which side burned Columbia. The soldier replies, as he leaves, that sides are immaterial; the war burned the city.
Scene Two

Judge Townsend, Wade, and Celia are assembled in the drawing room of the Townsend home. Although the home was spared from the fire, the once resplendent furnishings are now in disrepair. Jonathan inquires as to who burned the city. Judge Townsend replies that it does not matter who started the fire. He reveals that his home was saved because Sherman housed his officers there. Townsend conveys stories of Sherman’s troops to his guests. He lists several sentimental belongings that were ruined by the drunken soldiers. Nicey Bridges, the middle-aged housekeeper, heralds the arrival of townspeople who wish to speak with Judge Townsend. He excuses himself, saying that Celia will entertain Wade. Wade says he knows that Celia has suffered during the war. She bitterly interrupts Jonathan, saying that he understands nothing of her struggles or the loss of loved ones. Offended by her rudeness, Jonathan exclaims that the Confederacy was not the only side that suffered, and then he exits quickly. Celia is surprised by his anger and sends Nicey after him. Celia regrets having raised her voice at him, and she is confused by her feelings for him. Wade reappears in the doorway, apologizing for his rudeness. He understands the losses that accompany war. Wade recalls witnessing the execution of his nineteen-year-old brother. He explains that he witnessed and committed many atrocities, and he has vowed never to fight again. Celia, deeply moved by his story, begs his forgiveness for her poor manners. He accepts her apology, asking her to remove her mourning veil. She complies, and Wade is shocked by her beauty. Jonathan hurriedly bids her goodbye and agrees to visit again. Alone, Celia ponders the feelings stirring within her. She wonders if the mourning veil has also been
removed from her heart. She wonders if Wade has come to bring her joy. Convinced that she no longer needs the veil, she carefully folds it to put it away.

**Episode**

In June, 1865, a group of business owners stands outside their partially burned-out stores. J. Tertius Riddle has arrived from Boston, and he attempts to swindle the townspeople by selling illegitimate Presidential pardons. Lucas Wardlaw, a Southern aristocrat, and three of his friends mock Riddle. The con man ignores the jeering group and soon finds himself alone, except for Judge Townsend. Riddle offers Townsend a pardon but is reprimanded for taking advantage of vulnerable people.

**Scene Three**

A party is in progress in the drawing room of the Townsend home. There are men in Confederate uniforms, girls in simple dresses, and a few Union soldiers present. Much to the delight of the young ladies, Lucas can be heard singing in the distance. Wade arrives with Enoch Pratt, a friend from Washington who will establish the Freedman’s Bureau in Columbia. The men are greeted warmly by their host, and Celia rushes to welcome Wade. Judge Townsend introduces Pratt to his guests. Almost immediately, Lucas instigates arguments about the rights of freed slaves. Pratt vows to help the freed slaves begin better lives by teaching them life skills and allowing them freedoms. The tension escalates, prompting Pratt to retire for the night. Lucas antagonizes Wade, accusing the Union of destroying the Southern way of life. Lucas’s outburst riles the partygoers, who join him in a pledge to overcome the oppression of occupation. Jonathan swears that he wants to maintain peace. Wade and his soldiers leave abruptly. The partygoers shout that they will never submit to the Union.
ACT II
Scene One

In August of 1865, several men are gathered in the Army Occupation Headquarters. Wade leads them in the Oath of Allegiance to the United States. Lucas watches with disdain as he waits to speak with Wade. When they are alone, Lucas demands to know how a white man can work without slaves. Wade angrily suggests that Lucas support himself rather than relying on others to provide for him. Lucas warns him that people do not appreciate losing privileges and that revenge is appealing to oppressed people. Lucas leaves as Lieutenant Patrick and Pratt arrive.

Patrick brings orders that Judge Townsend must be replaced. Pratt explains that Townsend has never taken the oath or requested a pardon. He is, therefore, not an American citizen and is ineligible for his position as a judge. Wade argues that the order is invalid because it is politically motivated. Before leaving, Pratt threatens to close the local church if the clergy fail to incorporate a prayer for the safety of the President of the United States. Jonathan assures him that a prayer will be added for upcoming services. As soon as Pratt leaves, Jonathan sends Lieutenant Patrick to Charleston with an appeal on Townsend’s behalf.

Accompanied by Nicey, Celia enters the office and asks to take the oath. Stunned by her request, Wade questions her motivation. He reminds her that taking the oath is purely symbolic for women because they have no voting rights. He continues, saying that she risks alienating herself from her friends and family. Celia replies that her love for him requires loyalty to him and the Union. Deeply moved by her selflessness, he pledges his love for Celia, and they kiss passionately. The moment is ruined when Lucas,
who has been hiding nearby, reemerges. Amused by the scandalous nature of their relationship, Lucas insinuates that their relationship has already been consummated. Wade is unable to contain his rage and punches Lucas, causing him to fall to the floor. Furious, Lucas promises that he and the Guardian Knights of White Men’s Rights will exact revenge.

Episode

A week later, a group of black men sits near an industrial street listening to the Union League spokesman. He offers forty acres and a mule to any freed man who joins the Radical party. Riddle arrives with fraudulent certificates offering the same deal. The audience is split between the two men. Some give Riddle money in exchange for the certificates.

Scene Two

Later that day, Wade and Riddle argue inside the headquarters building. Wade sentences Riddle to ninety days in jail for selling fraudulent certificates. Lieutenant Patrick returns with news that the appeal on Townsend’s behalf has been denied. Disappointed, Jonathan tells Patrick to summon Judge Townsend. When he is alone, Jonathan asks his conscience to sleep so that he will not feel guilty as he fulfills his obligation. Townsend and Celia are escorted to Wade’s office. Jonathan delivers the news, and explains the denial of his appeals. Judge Townsend is doubly insulted when he learns that his replacement is a black judge from Pennsylvania. He fears losing the respect of his friends and neighbors. Feeling betrayed, Townsend forbids Wade from visiting his home and seeing his daughter. Wade fears losing her, and asks Celia to marry him. She accepts the proposal, but pleads with her father not to make her choose between
them. Deaf to Celia’s request, her father disowns her. She is no longer welcome in the only home she has ever known.

Celia and Wade agree to marry the same day. Nicey begins preparing Celia for the wedding while Patrick summons the minister. Three Union soldiers arrive and present Celia with a bouquet of flowers. The wedding ceremony proceeds, and Nicey quietly tells the Biblical story of Jesus at the wedding in Cana. Nicey’s friends join, and everyone sings the Bible story. The ominous chant of the Guardian Knights can be heard in the distance. As they approach, Jonathan and Celia encourage their friends to remain calm. The Knights burst in and threaten violence against the Northerners and blacks. They terrorize the guests until the Union soldiers chase them away. Celia believes that Lucas is responsible for the attack and fears that the worst is yet to come, but Jonathan swears that they are safe. Eventually, Celia and Wade are left alone. Jonathan removes Celia’s wedding veil and his belt with its scabbard and sword, and leads her to their bedroom.

ACT III

Scene One

In November, 1865, Celia is listening as Wade and Pratt argue outside. She waits in the Army headquarters, which is now her home. Political tensions mount as Wade refuses to promote a political party. As the men enter the foyer, Pratt warns that Wade’s unwillingness to support the Radical party will not be tolerated. Pratt demands that Wade attend rallies for the party. He says that Wade refuses to endorse the party because of his marriage to Celia. Furious, Celia bursts in and explains that she and Wade cannot possibly satisfy everyone. She is unwelcome among her people because of her marriage
to a Union officer, and Wade is accused of supporting the Rebels. She demands that Pratt leave her home. Celia runs from the room, and Wade follows, trying to comfort her.

Pratt, now alone, vows to end Wade’s work in Columbia. He calls for Lieutenant Patrick and tells him that they have reason to doubt Wade’s loyalty. Patrick is stunned by the allegation and defends Wade. Pratt turns his suspicion on Patrick, and entices him to spy on his behalf. Pratt explains that a special order from Washington will arrive in one week. He instructs Patrick to observe Wade’s reaction and report to Pratt if he fails to respond within the appointed amount of time. Patrick agrees and the men leave, going separate directions.

Episode

Two weeks later, a group of men can be seen near the steps of the half-completed capitol building. Two carpetbaggers ask two senators whether their bill has passed. The senators say there has not been a vote. The senators ask the carpetbaggers how much money they can pay. A nicely dressed black man steps forward and chastises both groups for their indecency. When questioned, he identifies himself as Judge James Bell, the Federal Judge.

Scene Two

The same evening, Judge Bell tells Wade that he will be leaving Columbia. He explains that the court system in Columbia is a farce. Disappointed, Wade bids his friend farewell. As Bell leaves, Patrick arrives with the special orders from Washington. Jonathan reads them and becomes enraged. When he refuses to carry out his orders, Patrick accuses him of being a traitor and storms out. Astonished by Patrick’s reaction, Wade explains the orders to Celia. He must confiscate everything her father owns. The
items will be used to satisfy a tax lien against him. Heartbroken, Celia forbids Wade from carrying out his orders. They argue passionately; she in support of her father, he in defense of his obligation. Ultimately, Celia vows to support Wade in any decision he makes. He promises not to complete the order and reveals that he has twelve hours to complete the task. Wade knows that he faces court martial and imprisonment if he fails to carry out his duty. He decides to desert the Army and flee with Celia the next night. Patrick, who has been hiding, hears the entire discussion and reports to Pratt.

Episode

The next day, several townspeople have assembled in a city square near the capitol. They are gathered for the unveiling of a Confederate memorial. Townsend appears disheveled and seems mentally unstable as he leads the rally. Celia quietly joins the crowd and notices the unnerving change in her father. Townsend reveals that Union soldiers have confiscated most of his belongings and calls for an end to the occupation. People are heard singing “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” in the distance. A parade of black townspeople enters, welcoming the new black judge, Judge McBride. When the parade has passed, the memorial is revealed and the remaining people disperse. Townsend sees Celia but ignores her.

Scene Three

Shocked that his orders have been executed, Wade realizes that he has been trapped. The orders were secret, and yet they have been completed. He sends Nicey for the driver. From outside, a soldier reports that three Knights have been captured while attempting to burn the yard. The prisoners are brought forward, and Lucas is among them. Lucas laughs and repeats his promise that Wade will know the violence of the
Knights. Nicey returns with the driver, and Wade sends Celia to the carriage. Two distinctly separate groups of men wait outside. Patrick and Pratt are with the Union soldiers, and Townsend and the Knights prepare to attack the house. Anarchy ensues when the groups see each other. Both groups rush toward the house, trying to reach Wade first. As he comes into view, a gunshot rings out. Wade stumbles and falls to the floor. Celia runs to him, cradling him as he dies. She screams that they are all murderers. Celia sees her father among the White Knights and rejects his attempt to comfort her. Nicey prays that Wade’s soul will be delivered to heaven. After his body has been removed, Celia scrubs the bloodstained floor. Nicey asks Celia to stop cleaning and allow herself to rest. Celia responds by asking for her mourning veil. She declares that she intends to flaunt her pain so that all the guilty may see.
APPENDIX C – NEWSPAPER REVIEWS

1962

FSU Composer Will Write Opera For NYC Company

One of the composer's operas, Susannah, first performed in 1955, won the New York Music Critics Award following its first performance in New York in 1957 and it has been performed numerous times. Since then he has written another, Wuthering Heights, on commission for the Santa Fe Opera Company. This was performed by the Opera Guild here last spring.

Also on a Ford Foundation commission Floyd wrote a series of five songs on motherhood called "The Mystery," on a text by the Chilean Nobel prize winning poet, Gabriela Mistral, and this was first performed by the San Antonio Symphony with Phyllis Curtin last November.
Premier Tonight
Floyd’s Wife Suggested Idea For His New Opera

A dramatic idea suggested by his wife and centered around what he considered the most dramatic period in American history were the ingredients used in Florida State University’s Carlisle Floyd began work on his new opera "The Passion of Jonathan Wade," to be world premiered in New York City tonight.

In an article in last Sunday’s New York Times the professor of piano and opera composition said his wife’s suggestion produced a story about an era he had never known to be covered by opera.

"It excited me, and I immediately began to develop a story around the theme of a Northern occupation officer caught up in a terrible conflict of conscience and duty during the early Reconstruction in the South.

"As far as I knew, the period had never really been exploited in the theatre or in films, and certainly not in opera. Writers who wished to deal with the historical South seemed always to have been more attracted to the war itself, or to the more romantic and romanticized ante-bellum period.

"I felt instinctively, how ever, that the Reconstruction was the most dramatically dramatic period in Southern history, if not in all American history."

Floyd spent months of background preparation on the Reconstruction period before writing his opera. Although both characters and story are fictitious, "many of the incidents are deliberate paraphrases of historical occurrences," he said.

"My enthusiasm for the Reconstruction as a background for an opera increased as I studied it and corrected some of my misconceptions concerning it... I found in the period even more food for dramatic and operatic treatment than I had hoped for."
FSU Prof Has Hit N. Y. Opera

By JOY MILLER

NEW YORK — The Passion of Jonathan Wade, a new work of opera and music by the young American composer Carlisle Floyd, only to date the opera hit of the season.

Carlisle Floyd

Only 36, Floyd is a South Carolinian who was graduated from Syracuse University in New York and now is teaching piano and composition at Florida State University.

At its world premiere last night the powerful musical drama received a rousing reception at a packed City Center. And it couldn't have been performed better, with superb singing and the kind of inspired acting you don't always get in opera.

Theodor Uppman — that rare creature, a handsome, white-haired tenor — brought a human kind of dignity and believability to the title role.

At his wife, a southern girl despised by her people for her faith in the newcomer she married, Phyliss Garrel gave the same caliber performance that won her over-

The Passion of Jonathan Wade is a title with many implications that become clearer as the somewhat Christ-like figure of Col. Wade, the occupying governor for the North and a man of sweet reason, approaches his martyrdom.

Was he killed by the reactionary Ku Klux Klan or the radical northern politicians? Who fired the fatal shot is never disclosed, but it surely...
"Passion of Jonathan Wade" Opens

When Celia sang according to the wrangling crowd, "You all killed him," she reveals the core of the tragedy in Carlyle Floyd's opera "The Passion of Jonathan Wade," that had its world premiere last night at City Center.

Julius Rudel led the New York City Opera in an admirable, fitting performance of the work which was commissioned by the company through a grant from the Ford Foundation.

Having set his plot in the Reconstruction Era in Columbia, South Carolina, immediately after the Civil War, Floyd pits the story of misguided passion, violence and corruption against those of reason, dramatizing the error of both North and South.

And long before Colonel Wade, who leads the Union Occupation troops in that by a band of Negroes of the Ku Klux Klan, we know who will lose. As wise, Negro Judge Bell, also played by Andrew Prine, who says to Wade before the former leaves for Washington, "I should wish you well but it would be futile."

It is inevitable that the sense of depression induced by what happens would be heightened by the coincidence of the opera being launched while there is none in Washington. Though Floyd's first and third acts are far more powerful than his second, the latter essence is its escapable, throughout.

President Kennedy in Profiles

President Kennedy's description in "Profiles in Courage" of Daniel Webster during his crisis prior to the Civil War, can unfortunately apply not only to a man but to a community. In 1963, 1863 and today, and its bitter significance is Floyd's theme: "The flaw in the granite was the failure of his moral sense to develop an acutely as his other faculties."

In probing his idea, the com
Among the principals who will sing in "The Passion of Jonathan Wade" are, left to right, Norman Kelley, Theodor Uppman, Phyllis Curtin, Frank Porcare, and Miranda Burton.

It Might Be Set at Ole Miss

By Ronaldoyer
Music Editor

Recent events at the University of Mississippi has provided inspiration to Robert Ford's new opera, "The Passion of Jonathan Wade," which will be premiered at the New York City Opera Thursday night.

The story of the opera revolves around the occupation of Columbia, S. C., during the Reconstruction period following the Civil War. The occupation and the post-Civil War period are not just incidental to the opera; they are its very theme and central theme.

Jonathan Wade is a controversial character; the composer has shown no compunction in representing the south in Columbia. He is a man of compassion and peace who has come to the war-torn Reconstruction town determined to make us justice with an even hand. But he eventually is caught in the middle between the carpet-baggers from the North and the组成们 of the South among whom hate, bribery and corruption are rife.

Jury vs. Conscience

Two by army, one hand and conscience on the other. Wade finally is destroyed by both sides who turn on him in all their anger, frustration and ugly intolerance.

Mr. Ford, who is a native of South Carolina, wrote this opera after much research into actual events of the period, and the opera throws in little vignettes—such as the cat who parades about proclaiming "I sell postcards"—which will make the

The passage discusses the political climate and the role of newspapers. It mentions the Kennedy-Johnson debate and the ploy to win votes. The text also describes the political landscape of the time, noting the dichotomy between the two major parties. The article concludes by addressing the impact of the debate on the election results.

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**Opera, ‘Jonathan Wade,' Applauded**

**The Birmingham News**

**Friday, October 12, 1962**

**Passage of Jonathan Wade,** a new work of vigorous and honest art, was sung this past week by the young American composer, Edward, at the opera house. The opera was well received by the audience, who appreciated its bold and imaginative musical style. The opera, based on the historical figure of Col. Wade, depicts the political intrigue and social upheaval of the time. The performance was well received, with enthusiastic applause from the audience.
‘Jonathan Wade’
At City Center

By JOHN KANE

Civil War buffs and opera buffs were finally brought together under one roof at the City Center last night.

Here, before a gay and attractive setting, the local company staged the recent production of Carlisle Floyd’s opera, ‘The Passion of Jonathan Wade.’

The opera was a triumph. The music, the libretto, the acting, all were superb. The audience was captivated from the first note to the last. And they demanded an encore.

The story is simple. It is the story of a young country boy, Jonathan Wade, who is taken to the city and forced to face the harsh realities of war. He is torn between his love for his family and his desire to fight for his country.

The music is powerful and moving. The orchestrations are masterful. The singing is superb. The acting is convincing. The whole production is a masterpiece.

This is a must-see opera. It is a story that will resonate with anyone who has ever loved someone who has gone to war. It is a story that will make you think.

Don’t miss this opportunity to see one of the best operas of the year. It is a treasure that will be remembered for years to come.

Thank you to the cast and crew for bringing this wonderful production to life. You have done an incredible job.

And thank you to the audience for your support. Your passion for opera is what makes productions like this possible.

See you next time.

John Kane
"THE PASSION OF JONATHAN WADE"—A tense moment in the new opera by Carlisle Floyd, set in South Carolina during the strife-torn Reconstruction Era after the Civil War. Commissioned by the New York City Opera, the work will have its premiere at City Center on Thursday. Above, Ethel M. Curtiss as Celice; Eulensig Upham, who sings the title role; Frank Porcella as Lucas Warlick; Mitzi Barton as Nessa.
"Jonathan Wade"

By Paul Henry Lassalle

Carrie Flode's third opera, "The Passion of Jonathan Wade," was presented last night at the City Center with an excellent cast and with the imaginative care we always expect from this company. It was a pleasant evening. The work has the virtues of lucidity and sensibility. The plot is linear, the characters drawn with a certain delicacy, but both text and music suffer from professional weaknesses.

Virtually all composers of a stature sufficient to interest the public are conscious of their shortcomings, and are careful to avoid them. Mr. Floyd avoids the pernicious trite, the Civil War, and has used his resources competently and sympathetically, but too often the singers in his scenes are the symbols of moral and spiritual deterioration. The figures of the drama, like other characters in the opera, are not sufficiently real to be convincing. Words are used to create an atmosphere which is not always consistent with the music.

All the rich characters of the Civil War are present. The noble Union officer, the uncompromising rebel, the stern and upright Northern lawyer, the devoted government agent, the vagabond, the Ku Klux Klansman, the faithful Negro minstrel, and of course the personage in the Southern black. But the plot derives largely from the reminiscences of the artist's life, and less from the text's conscious dramatic construction.

Mr. Floyd has neither a poetic nor a specifically musical sense of the words. Words are used to create an impression of atmosphere and do not serve as a dramatic tool. The music is melodious but lacks depth.

The setting of the drama is not sufficiently developed. Most of the time it is slow, there are interruptions of the pace, and the text seems to be overdeveloped. In this way, the music is not sufficiently developed.

The terms of the drama are not sufficiently defined. Most of the time it is slow, there are interruptions of pace, and the text seems to be overdeveloped. In this way, the music is not sufficiently developed.

The opera is by no means lacking in the grace of immediacy and style which many of the audience find admirable, but the technique is immature, the music is simple, and at times sentimental. It is a simple plot, however, that has not resolved the complexity of opera, but rather has overlooked it, and in consequence is more apt to reflect some isolated numbers than an organic drama.

Several of those isolated pieces are exciting and in them the composer achieves something much finer than the usual run. Indeed, the feeling of dissatisfaction at the end may be due to the listener's hope that these promises might have been fulfilled. It is quite likely that they will be in another work, but in the meantime Mr. Floyd will have to undertake serious studies to improve his professional deficiencies.

Normal Trigle (Judge) must be recorded with as one of the best basses on the American scene. Theodore Uppman (Jonathan), was dignified, ardent, and sympathetic; Norman Woolsey (Commissary), was precise and melodious, a fine character actor; and Phyllis Curtin drew a deft and effective line. The opera also sparked a bit.

Phyllis Curtin never disappoints us; she was her usual delightful voice well and acted very credibly. A good sense must be given to the last scene (Act IV), and if the work is too large for Mr. Floyd's purposes, it will take an even deeper bow. All the numerous other characters did well, and Julius Schotz, the conductor, kept everything in excellent order, while Allen Fields managed the stage business to every one's satisfaction. This is an entertaining show if one accepts its musical and dramatic limitations.
CITY CENTER: SOMETHING OLD

The New York City Opera season, which began October 4, concentrated on establishing Chopin's legacy and giving birth to Carlisle Floyd's "America," a new opera on the Reconstruction South commissioned by the company through another Ford Foundation grant. The contrast of antagonist subject matter was fresh and edifying.

Louise must have been a real shocker in 1900 and still manages to be nonetheless. In accounts of Massenet, Charpentier's teacher, its length, orchestral resource and innovation recall the Wagner of Meisterstücke. The title role demands as much acting as singing, and there are thirty-six other roles besides the chorus. If free love is no longer a burning issue, the clash between generations will always be one. But this is a distinctive work that raises major drawbacks: the most interesting scenes are those of Louise with her parents, which have true genre dignity. The heroine's idyll with Julien, in spite of "Enjambre le jour," strikes one as an escape to胡ridia rather than Bohemia, and the company's tepidizing over Paris is like a man's endless description of his mistress. We cannot quite accept his conviction.

Intentionally or not, the City Center production encountered this fault of skepticism. It was all of a piece--Jean Monet's simple conducting, Christopher Wordsworth's well-staged direction, Gordon Michael's flawlessly sung and costumed Admeto. Saunders made an excellent Louise in every respect, but John Aldrich's strong voiced Julien seemed restored for solid, authoritative singing instead of mere social roles. Hennesey's Louise was not merely engaging but passionately went to those skills of which Clarence Tinker and Norman Treigle are as the parents. They had a problem child on hand.

The Proven of Jonathan Waide, conducted by Julian Rudel on October 11, suggests that there are two Gods. Fords. One singing play, the other wants to compose stirring opera. If their differences can ever be resolved, act will be the garter, for Ford the composer showed it as early as 1889, that he has a strong talent for innovative dramatic characterization. Curiously, the uneasy truce between him and his alter ego parallels the story line of his latest opera, in which a noble ideal falls prey to smothering antagonism.

Colonel Wade comes out of the North, conquers the homesteads of the vanquished gentility, and the heart of a Caroline belle, but is marooned in the crossfire of extremists on both sides. Theodore Younner portrayed this Billy Budd role, whose length and subjectivity make singing it a "passion" indeed. Phyllis Curtin did her best with a character basically less interesting than Treigle as his father, Norman Treigle as a rabid abolitionist and Frank Furtwangler as a satirical Klemperer, she was made to undergo changes of motivation that bracketed none of the study that the stage. Ford the composer got the upper hand, however, in two "episodes" to make scenes changes--swift vignettes that detached in the background and developed neatly with what followed--and in an improvised wedding that punished a visitor's happy matrimonial with phrases from the ceremony. Here one felt music too many words not too much orchestra, only the essence of opera.

The City Opera's efforts on behalf of the standard repertoire seem to fall short of its accomplishments with moderns, and this season's new Carmen proved no exception. While designer Gordon McGuire's second act setting achieved some sense of atmosphere, the other three gave a hasty, low-budget impression that robbed music and drama of their effect. Nor did Roger Enghud's stage direction appear fully pinned out, with choristers and supers colliding on a small stage further shortchanged by McGuire's complex of platforms, tunnels and stairs.

Musically, Ross fared better. Bass Norman Treigle took first honors for his vividly phrased, soundly sung tenor; Doris Yandell, if the conventional Micaela, used her small voice with artistry. A major casting miscalculation was Camille Turner's tough, mature Carmen, which quite lacked allure, but the contralto showed vocal taste and style. Giovanni Cibrini offered a bland, soul-voiced José. In the pit, Julian Rudel's thin-sounding orchestra made one long for the day he and his hard-working musicians will move into a house with better acoustics.

B.P.
Carisue Flood on the Blue and the Grey

As my composition with so good a start opens as Carisue Flood's in "The Blue and the Grey," let us not be too quick to admire the "brilliant" success which George Washington's anxious mornings in the snows of the North have given us.

But let us remember that the snows are not the absence of life in the North, but the presence of the man who has left his home to face the hardships of the North for the sake of his country. And let us not forget that the North is the land of opportunity, where the brave and the true can find a home.

The music of Carisue Flood's composition is full of the spirit of the North, and the words are full of the courage and the determination of the men who fought in the war. The music is a tribute to the heroism of the North, and the words are a tribute to the sacrifice of the men who gave their lives for their country.

There are many who say that the North is a land of cold and barren skies, but Carisue Flood's music proves that the North is a land of beauty and strength. Her music is a reminder of the courage and the spirit of the North, and her words are a reminder of the sacrifices that were made for our country.

Let us remember that the North is not a land of cold and barren skies, but a land of beauty and strength, where the brave and the true can find a home.

Music to My Ears

By Carisue Flood

9-27-62

Many of the values in the music of the North are derived from the life of the North. The music is full of the spirit of the North, and the words are full of the courage and the determination of the men who fought in the war.

The music of Carisue Flood's composition is a tribute to the heroism of the North, and the words are a tribute to the sacrifice of the men who gave their lives for our country.

Let us remember that the North is not a land of cold and barren skies, but a land of beauty and strength, where the brave and the true can find a home.
Union Officer’s Dilemma

BY CHARLES BROCK

Opera from Florida:
I called composer Carlisle Floyd at Florida State University to ask him about his new opera, “The Passion of Jonathan Wade.”

The opera will have a setting in South Carolina during the early days of Reconstruction.

“Wade is a Union officer,” Floyd said. “He is based on the annals of war and is wrought with increasing difficulty in coming out the landmarks of some problems from Washington. The war thrusts his struggle between his military duty and his conscience on a man; adding to his burden, the fact that he falls in love with a Southern girl and marries her.

“The work, of course, suffers with a similar struggle of conflict. If we have two people of reason and decency caught in a period in which they cannot live apart, destroyed by the war because they will endure together without either. It is a situation that hasn’t changed too much in the past 150 years, really.”

I asked him if he had any particular source material.

“Nothing but general reading. It seemed to be a highly dramatic period of our history that had never been told, and I wanted to see what I could do with it. Too, it was a very melodramatic period. Writing with it, you don’t have to invent melodrama—it’s already there.”

And Jonathan Wade, is he based on some particular character from that period?

“No, He’s fictional, entirely fictional, though I’m sure there probably were many very much like him.”

Floyd said he hadn’t started composing the music yet, that he still was working on the text, or libretto. He expects to have the entire opera wrapped up by the spring of 1963.

“As a musician could you explain to me, a non-musician, how you create the music for such a work?”

“I’m afraid that as a musician I couldn’t even explain it to a musician,” Floyd said. Then he thought it over and mused. “How can I say this... I try to compose music which captures the quality of a scene and also amplifies it. Music adds a tremendous emotional dimension, and that is what is the main reason for writing an opera or musical drama.”
STORY OF ‘JONATHAN’

By CARLISLE FLOYD

WHO was Jonathan Wade? Was Jonathan Wade an actual person? How did you come to write an opera set in the Reconstruction era? Was this opera written with the Civil War Centennial in mind? These are some of the questions that have been put to me repeatedly about my new opera, “The Passion of Jonathan Wade.” The answer to the first question is that Jonathan Wade is a character wholly of my own invention, as are all the other characters in the opera. The story as well is entirely fictitious, although several of the incidents are deliberate paraphrases of historical occurrences.

“Jonathan Wade” began as a germinal dramatic idea which was suggested to me by my wife. It excited me, and I immediately began to develop a story around the theme of a Northern occupation officer caught in a terrible conflict of conscience and duty during the early Reconstruction in the South. As far as I knew, the period had never really been exploited in the theater or in films, and certainly not in opera. Writers who wished to deal with the historical South seemed always to have been more attracted to the war itself, or to the more romantic and romanticized antebellum period.

Dramatic Times

I felt instinctively, however, that the Reconstruction was the conflicts of belief and feeling I found the basic materials for a drama, and I merely had to invent characters to realize a plot which the period naturally suggested.

My enthusiasm for the Reconstruction as a background for an opera increased as I studied it and corrected some of my misconceptions concerning it. Eventually I found in the period even more food for dramatic and operatic treatment than I had hoped for. I knew that the South was actually the “prostrate South,” but not the extent of its desolation, and I knew generally of the corruption which came with the Reconstruction, although not the degree. I had not known, however, that most Southerners had accepted the occupation with considerable equanimity and that many of them even invited Union soldiers into their homes, as I have in my opera.

Developing Resistance

As the power of the Radical Party in the National Congress grew and the Reconstruction became more punitive, Southern resistance developed until ultimately there was no contact between the Southern people and the soldiers from the North. Lincoln’s vision of a peaceful reunification and an unembittered rehabilitation was rendered futile for the better part of a hundred years. The period also supplies an interesting conflict of cultures, that of the agrarian society of the South, a conflict...
Music: ‘Passion of Jonathan Wade’

City Opera Offers New Carlisle Floyd Work

By ROSS PARMENTER

City Opera’s New York City Opera Thursday night offered the world premiere of the new opera, ‘The Passion of Jonathan Wade’, a work based on the novel by Carlisle Floyd.

The production, directed by John Cacavas, was well-received by the audience. The music, composed by Carlisle Floyd, is innovative and engaging. The libretto, written by Mark Eden, is compelling and thought-provoking.

The cast, led by Theodora Upman, showcased exceptional vocal talent. The costumes, designed by Robert Jones, were visually striking and added to the overall atmosphere of the performance.

The setting, designed by William Aronson, was impressive and helped to create a sense of place. The lighting, by Alan Fletcher, was effective and helped to highlight key moments in the story.

Overall, ‘The Passion of Jonathan Wade’ was a memorable performance that left a lasting impression on the audience. The production was well-executed and should not be missed.
Good Opera—With Reservations

By MILES KASTENDIECK

PLENTY OF PASSION seethed through the first performance anywhere of Carlisle Floyd's "The Passion of Jonathan Wade" at the City Center last night.

It surged through the intensity with which the New York City Opera presented the work. It poured out through the words of Floyd's text, expressing his powerful feelings about conditions in South Carolina as North and South grappled through the reconstruction years immediately after the Civil War.

It became identified with the vocal lines spun almost hypnotically to convey the human anguish aroused. It personified Wade's idealism, Celie's unyielding love for him, and her father's concept of honor which created a civil war within the family.

Floyd has strong convictions. They reflect intense hatred of war, of corruption, of evil. They also express despair at the mortgaged Wade must suffer and the failure of his goodness in a world of men constantly engaged to destroy everything fine.

He has ventured nobly and

...dramatically but self-consciously. The result is a series of mixed impressions about the intimate merit of his opera.

Too Much Emotion

Quite possibly too much emotion suffuses this work: simplicity and understatement, and a bit more musical eloquence might impart the ideas more convincingly.

A synopsis of the story becomes almost as involved in words as the opera itself.

Some slight editing might help an alleviated final act for the curtain falls too late to sustain the impact of the tragedy, even almost from the start.

Floyd's sense of conflict is better than his timing, for his play frequently overrides his score. Indeed the music seems more as background than as foreground.

His melodic sense judges him severely, but sometimes the impression persists that the member of Floyd opera seems musical speech might sound better as spoken dialogue. At this point self-consciousness shows itself.

...thirteen may be an unkind number as the eight scenes and five episodes total the division into three acts.

...They reflect an attempt to place the story within a framework of didactic commentary that tends to diffuse the nature of the passion itself. Wherever the reservations, Floyd shows growth as an opera composer.

Suddenly cast, the performance carried the City Opera to new heights of achievement.

To be sure Theodore Uppman in the title role and Paul Cottin as Celie have been borrowed from the Metropolitan, but they are City Opera alums.

Norman Treep as Judge Townsend, Celie's father, underpins the present company's status at its finest.

All three gave superb performances. It was good to hear Uppman in this kind of a role.

Miles Cottin is a familiar
New American Opera
By Floyd a Major Work

By Frederick M. Winsley

NEW YORK, Oct. 12 (UPI) Doe and "The Crucible" are a major work was added to the growing body of operatic literature by American composers last night with the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd's "The Passion of Jonathan Wade" by the New York City Opera.

The 36-year-old Floyd, a member of the music faculty at Florida State University, got a standing ovation when he joined the cast for its final curtain call. The three-act, three-hour work, commissioned under a Ford Foundation grant, fulfilled to a large extent the promise shown in Floyd's two earlier operas, "Susannah" and "Wuthering Heights."

It is Floyd's lasting credit that he drew his theme from one of the most controversial eras of American history, the memory of which still ranked in the composer's native Southland.

"The Passion of Jonathan Wade" portrays the spiritual crucifixion of a compassionate Northern occupation officer whose job it is to bring "justice and order" to Columbia, S. C., in 1866.

The opera takes its place beside "The Ballad of Baby".
Taking off from the idea that opera should be essayed from the point of view of serious drama, Miss Curtis, the director of the N.Y. City Opera, has chosen for her first production the opera "The Passion of Jonathan Wade." The opera is a dramatic and musical adaptation of the play by the late Charles Menotti, and it is a story of racial prejudice and discrimination. The opera is scheduled to open on November 10th at the Met, and it promises to be a powerful statement on the need for racial equality.

The opera is set in the post-Civil War South, where a young man named Jonathan Wade is falsely accused of murder. He is condemned to death by an all-white jury, and his trial becomes a symbol of the racial injustice that pervaded the South at that time. The opera's libretto was written by Menotti, who also composed the music, and it is a work that is both powerful and moving. The conductor of the opera is James Levine, who is known for his ability to bring out the best in the performers and the orchestra.

The leading角色 are played by a group of talented performers, including soprano Claudia Zibelman as the victim's sister, mezzo-soprano Mary Ann Martin as the judge, and baritone Mark Lash as the victim's brother. The cast also includes a number of other notable performers, including tenor John Rastelli as the victim's father and bass-baritone Richard Crooks as the victim's brother.

The opera's sets and costumes are designed by the renowned costume designer, Anna Zimpel, and they create a vivid and authentic setting for the story. The opera's orchestra is conducted by Leonard Bernstein, who is known for his ability to bring out the best in the musicians.

The opera is a powerful and moving work that is sure to be a hit with audiences. It is a story of racial injustice that is still relevant today, and it is a testament to the power of opera as a medium for social commentary. The opera is scheduled to run for three performances, on November 10th, 11th, and 12th, and it is sure to be a highlight of the season. The opera is a work that is both powerful and moving, and it is sure to leave a lasting impression on all who see it.
1991-1992
‘The Passion of Jonathan Wade’

**A big success for Seattle Opera**

**THE PASSION OF JONATHAN WADE**

By Gary Smith

The Seattle Opera presented a substantial work in its Halloween-season opener last Saturday. 

The opera, which was described as a “grand, operatic achievement,” had its world premiere earlier this month at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts. 

**JUDGE TOWNSEND AND THE PASSION**

The opera’s opening night was marked by a sell-out crowd, with tickets going on sale weeks in advance. 

**THE CRUCIBLE AND THE PASSION**

The opera is a searing, intense drama of the crucible, set against the backdrop of the American Civil War. 

**THE PASSION AND THE CRUCIBLE**

In the passion of Jonathan Wade, the central figure, Jonathan Wade, is accused of treason. The opera’s libretto, written by Richard Stilgoe, is based on the real-life figure of Judge Townsend. 

**THE PASSION OF JONATHAN WADE**

The opera was received with critical acclaim. 

**THE PASSION OF JONATHAN WADE**

The Seattle Opera’s next production is “Turandot,” which will open on October 30th.
New ‘Jonathan Wade’ Proves Potent

By Jennifer Garabedian

SAN DIEGO—“It is a work and we have fait,” Union

4000 of the 4000 members in the local union’s

presentation of “The Passion of Jonathan Wade.” Cords and red taffeta—trumpet and trombone; it is a story of...
Columbia stars in
The Passion of Jonathan Wade

Set design for the Houston Grand Opera's production of the new version of 'The Passion of Jonathan Wade'
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BOOSEY & HAWKES

March 6, 2014

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