

GLORY GLORY

A Historical Tragedy with
Traditional
Civil War Songs

by

Nancy V.A. Hansen

Music arranged

by

Richard Muto

Script:
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by Nancy V.A. Hansen

Musical arrangements
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

<u>Introducer:</u>	Chief Librarian
<u>Julia:</u>	An elderly member of the New England aristocracy
<u>Confederate Woman:</u>	Middle aged, upperclass Southerner
<u>Newsman:</u>	about 20 years old; documents
<u>Religion:</u>	Depending on the context, he is • a New England religious liberal, product of Harvard Divinity School, • an Old Testament prophet, • an Irish Catholic bishop, • a born-again Baptist, • a slave preacher, and • a Marxist
<u>Industrialist:</u>	In his forties or fifties
<u>Black Man:</u>	Aged 20-30, soldier and former slave
<u>Irishman:</u>	Aged 20-30, a man's man
<u>Voices, including one Child</u>	

MUSIC

Singers and actors may double up,
Most of the singing is a capella

<u>Voices:</u>	2 altos, 2 sopranos, 3 tenors, 3 baritones, one bass
<u>Instruments:</u>	(Synthesizer with) violin, trumpet, and piano (voice) Snare drum (or hands on resonant surface)

Julia's Prologue

SETTING: The Providence Athenaeum, 1909.

AT RISE: JULIA and the INTRODUCER are sitting in chairs near the lectern.
(The other characters might be sitting where they could be mistaken for members of the audience.)

INTRODUCER

(rises and stands at lectern)

Tonight we are privileged to have for our guest a woman who has managed to combine the roles of wife, mother, social activist, and professional lecturer – Julia Ward Howe. I regret that in the time available I can only hint at the breadth and number of her talents and accomplishments.

As a writer, Mrs. Howe has reported on Newport society, written philosophical essays, and published three volumes of verse.

She is also a talented organizer. During the war, while caring for her six children and sewing clothes for Union soldiers, she arranged a fair to raise funds for medical supplies that grossed \$140,000.

Since the abolition of slavery, a cause for which both she and her husband had devoted much of their energy, Mrs. Howe has dedicated herself to helping other women – to education, to independence, to the vote; she has been working on behalf of oppressed peoples, and most recently she has been promoting world peace.

In the course of her work, Mrs. Howe has organized conferences, congresses, and expositions. She has founded associations and presided over many of them. She has lectured in Boston's Horticultural Hall, to the Massachusetts legislature, from pulpits, in Europe, on tour through the Midwest, and in her own parlor.

Yesterday Mrs. Howe received an honorary degree from Brown University, and we are fortunate that she has been willing to stay over an extra day to speak here on the work by which she is now best known: her poem, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

(to JULIA)

But first, Mrs. Howe, please tell us a little about your life and especially what led you to write "The Battle Hymn."

JULIA

(Rises and replaces INTRODUCER at the lectern.)

Good evening/afternoon, and thank you.

At the beginning of the war, when I wrote "The Battle Hymn," the line was clearly drawn, and God was on our side, I believed, fighting with us against those on the other side. I didn't stop to consider then that there were actually many sides in that conflict, and many conflicts in that war, nor that each participant believed God was working on their own behalf.

However, in the last fifty years I have slowly come to realize that voices other than my own, with interests of their own, were clamoring to be heard. I am still a Northern, liberal, Protestant, white woman, but I hope that now I am able to hear the voices of those who are not these things. If I had been listening fifty years ago, I would not have been so self-righteous, and I would not have written "The Battle Hymn."

(change of mood)

I was born in New York in 1819, the same year as Queen Victoria. My father, Samuel Ward, was a banker who spent his days making money. My mother wrote poetry, which my father would not read. She was always sickly with consumption, and every year, she was further weakened by the birth of a new baby: First my brother Sam, then Julia, then Henry. . . . Julia died of whooping cough when she was three years old, two weeks before my own birth, so I became the second Julia.

Three more births followed, and with the last baby, my mother contracted puerperal fever and, in spite of all the doctors' bleeding and blistering, she died.

I was five years old. After our mother's death, Father kept us girls at home and hired private tutors to instruct us. As we grew older, my brothers were allowed to come and go as they pleased. Sam went to France, from where he wrote my father asking that I too be given some freedom. I found his letter among Father's papers:

MAN'S VOICE

"She writes all day and half the night . . . she is murdering herself. Yet she is forced to do this. In the tedium of a large solitude her restless mind must be at work."

JULIA

Father had written back to Sam, chiding him for telling me about "too much Paris frippery and froideur."

I daydreamed a lot: I liked to imagine that I was a damsel in the olden days, imprisoned in an enchanted castle. The jailer was my father. I wrote poems and plays, and I read Shakespeare, Byron, and Goethe. Father said Goethe was wicked. And I must say, he treated his lady-loves very badly.

CONFEDERATE WOMAN

Goethe used his mistresses as if they were school books. He studied them from cover to cover, learned all there was to be learned of human nature from them and then threw them aside as of no further account.

JULIA

Oh! we have a Southern guest this evening/afternoon. I hope she will give us her perspectives on the war. And I hope we will hear from others of you [the audience] as well.

NEWSMAN

I'm a newspaper reporter. The Journal hired me as a war correspondent because I'm fast with the telegraph key. My assignment:

SECOND MAN'S VOICE (news editor)

"Get all the news you can, and if there's no news . . . send rumors."

NEWSMAN

But some of my rumors embarrassed the generals, so now we reporters are required to sign our dispatches, which has had the desired effect: I check my facts, and you may rely on the objectivity and truthfulness of everything I write.

JULIA

Thank you.

My father died when I was twenty. In my grief, I renounced my ambition to become a writer. I put away my Balzac, my Byron, my Goethe, and I turned to religion. But the religion I knew then was a Christianity of sin and damnation, which only fed my despair – although I did rather enjoy the Old Testament prophets. Listen to the words of Isaiah:

RELIGION

Isaiah, Chapter sixty-three: "I have trodden the winepress alone and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger and trample them in my fury."

JULIA

We speak through our religion, so our religion speaks for us.

RELIGION

I am here to speak for God! . . .
Except that God does not always tell me what he wants me to say – at least not as loudly as my parishioners do.

JULIA

Slowly, Religion and time healed me of my melancholy. . . . But sometimes I felt so lost. . . . I missed the clarity of the old restrictions.

But I found that clarity when I was twenty-three while staying with friends in Boston. We had ridden out to Dorchester Heights one day to visit the Perkins Institute for the Blind, of which the famous Doctor Samuel Gridley Howe was the Director. He had been a surgeon in the Greek army and had known Lord Byron!

The doctor was away when we arrived, but just as we were about to leave, we saw him out the window, riding toward us on a black stallion. Horse and rider looked so noble, I felt as if I was seeing Lord Byron himself.

CONFEDERATE WOMAN

Lord Byron had a problem in that he could not forget Lord Byron. He must have been a trial to his paramours, as he always seems to have been occupied with watching himself in the looking glass.

JULIA

I saw Dr. Howe a year later at an afternoon party on a country estate.

No. 1

VIOLIN

(Begin "Endearing Young Charms," underscoring JULIA through "seemed to look right through me.")

JULIA

(Begin on the fourth note.)

We spent the afternoon together – walking, talking, and eating strawberries. He was so adventurous and idealistic! His friends called him "the Chevalier," which suited his stern, soldierly bearing.

Later, that evening, he came to call on me. Oh, what the other ladies would have given to be in my place! He was seventeen years older than I, slender, with black hair and blue eyes that seemed to look right through me.

I wrote how he looked to me then:

(JULIA gets out poem.)

(VIOLIN ends "Endearing Young Charms")

JULIA (reads)

"A great grieved heart, an iron will,
As fearless blood as ever ran;
A form elate with nervous strength
And fibrous vigor, – all a man."

We married in 1843. He wanted a wife who would live only for him, and I was happy to sacrifice the daydreams of my youth to one so heroic, so godlike.

(Up to this point she is positive,
but now a slide.)

Chev ordered me to give up writing, which I did . . . for a while. You know, back in the 1840s a husband had the right to do as he pleased with his wife's possessions and her person. But I was alone so much, and with no one to talk to but the children, I gave in to the urge to express my feelings . . . in writing. Chev would make fun of my "silly little papers," as he called them, and threw them into the fire along with my acceptance letters from magazine editors.

My anxiety over Chev's displeasure emptied my brain of all vitality. I wrote about that too.

(reads)

"I feel my varied powers all departed
With scarce a hope they may be born anew.
And naught is left, save one poor loving heart
Of what I was - and that may perish too."

CONFEDERATE WOMAN

Does a man ever speak to his wife except to find fault?
Does a woman ever address a remark to her husband that does
not begin with an excuse or an apology?

JULIA (Brightening)

Oh, but Chev and I were in accord in our opposition to
slavery, and when Chev acquired an abolitionist newspaper,
he was happy to have me write for that. Although he did not
allow me to sign my articles, he often complimented me on
them.

INDUSTRIALIST

There is no slave like a wife! But seriously, Scripture
tells us that a wife must submit to her husband just as a
slave must submit to his master.

Yes, I know, many of you are uncomfortable with
slavery. But remember, throughout history, slavery has been
a common solution to labor shortages. What's more, the
ancient Greeks and Romans demonstrated how slavery provides
a necessary foundation for the highest achievements of
civilization!

And I am glad to say that slavery in the eighteen
sixties, also benefits the slaves. We remove them from
barbarity and introduce them to civilization where they are
cared for under the benign protection of an enlightened
master.

BLACK MAN

Don't know why nobody volunteers to become one.

RELIGION

Slavery entombs the godlike mind of man. Who among us would
not support the slave in his desire to be free?

INDUSTRIALIST

I support my friend, the planter. His sons come north to
attend college with my sons; our families spend the summers
together in Newport, and he supplies the cotton for my
mills.

You see, I'm in the textile industry . . . cloth,
thread . . .

BLACK MAN

Here is the Lord of the Loom . . .

INDUSTRIALIST

. . . and now we're expanding into bleaching and dying. So, my relationship with the planters is profitable . . .

BLACK MAN

working with the Lord of the Lash.

INDUSTRIALIST

. . . profitable not only to me and the men, women, and children employed in my factories, but to the prosperity of all New England!

IRISHMAN

When we came to your prosperous country, after the British pulled down our homes and left us to starve, you packed us into tenements, where rats come after our little ones, and sickness rises from the shi [shy] . . . , from the sewage that stands in blocked drains, and where we are always hungry . . . for your prosperity.

INDUSTRIALIST

(Includes audience)

You micks! you Papists! you can eat your potatoes, and all you immigrant radicals, I'm sick of your agitation. And you! You abolitionists with your uninformed Christian charity. Oh you are well-meaning all right, but you don't understand historical process, and you are without economic wisdom.

Keep in mind when you offend the southern planters, you endanger a vital national interest, not to mention the Union itself! Your fanatical exaggerations will ignite the flames that threaten the entire social order!

(Picks up newspaper, opens it, and reads:)

NEWSMAN

Twenty-five ladies provoked a disturbance last night when they held an anti-slavery meeting in one of their houses. In an attempt to curtail the discussion, a group of gentlemen stood outside the house shouting and beating pans for the duration of the meeting.

INDUSTRIALIST

(Slides spoons and pans out of sight.)

That kind of unconsidered reform could ruin me!

RELIGION (to audience)

Challenge a single wrong, and you will find every vested interest arrayed against you.

INDUSTRIALIST (to minister)

The minister is hired to preach piety, not meddle in politics!

I underwrite the insurance on every boatload of cotton, . . . and not only that, I have loaned the planter the cash to put in his next crop. It is all I can do to keep him in business, so, I must have that cotton at that price!

RELIGION

Slavery's vested interests have authorized Southern slave hunters to apprehend any Black they identify as a fugitive right off Northern city streets.

JULIA

Slavery's vested interests sent Missouri ruffians into the Kansas Territory to vote it into the Union as a slave state.

NEWSMAN

Today, on the floor of the Senate Chamber, the Senator from South Carolina used his cane to beat the Senator from Massachusetts into unconsciousness for speaking against migration into Kansas. Partisans of the Senator from South Carolina applauded his defense of Southern honor.

JULIA

Each incident marked a step along the road to civil war, and war came before my sons were old enough to fight. With my husband being too old, I could only give to the cause by organizing women to do handwork and by arranging fairs to raise money.

It was then, one morning, before dawn, I wrote the only poem for which I am still known. To explain how I came to write "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," I must turn to the spring of 1861, when the war began.

President Lincoln had appointed Chev to inspect the army camps around Washington for their medical services.

NEWSMAN

According to Dr. Howe, what the camps need most is washerwomen and soap.

JULIA

That fall I took the train down to Washington to be with Chev. The war became real to me, when, as our train approached the city, I saw soldiers sitting around their campfires, their camps circling our capitol.

That November the army held a grand review of its forces, and a large company of us drove out across the Potomac to watch. It was to be a gay occasion – we ladies had on our crinolines, and the gentlemen wore high silk hats.

But no sooner had the review started when we saw a detachment of soldiers galloping over the field, going to fight off some Confederates who were surrounding a small body of our men. We quickly climbed back into our carriages, and our coachmen set out for Washington at a gallop. However, all the troops who were to have taken part in the review were ordered back along the same, narrow road, so the carriages were quickly slowed to the pace of the walking men.

I had no sense that we were in any danger, but the long drive was tedious, and to beguile the time, we sang popular army songs . . .

MEN'S VOICES incl. IRISHMAN,
(sing)

No. 2

John Brown's body lies a-mouldring in the grave,
(underscore)
John Brown's body lies a-mouldring in the grave,

JULIA

When we sang "John Brown's Body," The soldiers nearby joined in.

MEN'S VOICES and IRISHMAN (sing)

John Brown's body lies a-mouldring in the grave
But his soul goes marching on.

(underscore through JULIA: "had
formed in my mind.")

John Brown's body lies a-mouldring in the grave,
John Brown's body lies a-mouldring in the grave,
John Brown's body lies a-mouldring in the grave,

JULIA (slight pause)

At that, our minister, who had come with us, leaned forward and said to me,

RELIGION

Julia, why don't you write some good words for that stirring tune?

JULIA

When I woke early the next morning, the words of the "The Battle Hymn" had formed in my mind.

MEN'S VOICES and IRISHMAN (sing)

. . . but his soul goes marching on.

JULIA

I got up very quietly, and, in the darkness, I quickly wrote it down.

END OF JULIA'S PROLOGUE