

American Heritage Lyceum Philharmonic Honors Veterans with "The Price of Freedom"

Posted by [Betsy Hijazi](#) • November 9, 2010 • [Printer-friendly](#)

Veterans Day is a time of remembrance and honor. We remember those who have served our country, and we honor those who today spend each breath they take protecting our nation.

When we remember our veterans, we tend to think about the “major” wars and conflicts, World Wars I and II, Korea and Vietnam, often forgetting that in the past 20 years, American service men and women have fought or are currently in conflicts or wars in the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Yugoslavia, the Philippines, Afghanistan and Iraq.

For those of us who were born after Vietnam but before the Gulf War, we’ve lived our lives hearing about the wars from our grandparents, being told stories of how and what they sacrificed daily, and how during those times our nation was unified as a family. Our generation didn’t have to serve, we weren’t called for the Draft, and when the Gulf War started, most of us had already begun to build our own lives with our own families. For nearly 25 years, our lives were untouched by war, and we largely only identified with the past through schoolbooks and old movies.

In remembrance of those who fought in World War II, [Rob Gardner](#) and McKane Davis composed [The Price of Freedom](#). Combining orchestra, song and archival video footage, **The Price of Freedom** shares the stories of 4 soldiers and their loved ones back home. Told through actual correspondence between the soldiers and their family members, we are taken into the lives of each person, feeling the impact of the War on the soldier and his wife, brother, mother or girlfriend.

Under the baton of [Kayson Brown](#), the [American Heritage Lyceum Philharmonic](#) brought **The Price of Freedom** to Utah for its second year and delivered a compelling performance. With student musicians as young as 7th grade, the Lyceum Philharmonic showed us precisely why they are considered one of the nation’s premier youth orchestras. Looking and performing like professional musicians, the orchestra synchronized well with the video, reading of letters and singers. It was impressive and Kayson Brown (as well as the orchestra) are to be congratulated.

[The Price of Freedom](#) is an amazing program. From the opening video footage of bombings paired with the tam-tam to the heart wrenching letters from a dying son to his mother, The Price of Freedom pulls you in as you sit at the kitchen table and in the foxhole, reading each letter, sharing the love and pain with each person. Before the end of the first half, I was already in tears, and by the end of the program I wondered how it was that I could cry so much in 90 minutes. It was rough and it was a necessary education.

As I sat in the audience, veterans were asked to stand. It was clear that many had served in World War II, but veterans of all ages stood and were recognized. An overwhelming tide of

emotions washed over me as I thought about the price of my freedom. From the bombings at Pearl Harbor to the men and women now fighting in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, I can't help but think of the experiences and sacrifices made by our veterans and their families, and I am ever thankful.

After the program ended, I talked with **Rob Gardner** for a few moments and a woman came up to him and was introduced as the widow of one of the original flag bearers at Iwo Jima. Not one of the flag bearers on the hill, he was asked to bring a larger flag to replace the smaller flag that had been placed on the hill a few hours earlier. Who would think that at a high school in American Fork, Utah, the wife of a man who played such a memorable role in our nation's history would be present for this program? To see and hear a recounting of the suffering and subsequent victory at Mount Suribachi was emotional, but standing next to this veteran's wife made it all so very real.

Seventy years have passed since World War II began, and most veterans who fought in the war have passed away. Those who are still with us are now in their late 80s and 90s. Their numbers are few and they sacrificed much. Our service men and women today also sacrifice, but they also have opportunities to connect with family through emails, instant messaging, texts, phone calls, and video. It doesn't make the sacrifice or experience any easier, but it does make it a little more bearable.

As the years pass, it's important to acknowledge our veterans, all of our veterans, and remember that now, more than ever, our freedom is no longer a given. Since the Revolutionary War we have paid a high price for our freedom and in 2010, the price continues to rise.

Take a few moments and watch the [video clips](#) for [The Price of Freedom](#) on YouTube. You will be moved, and watching is actually free.

Donations to support the continuing needs of the Lyceum Philharmonic can be sent to [American Heritage School](#), 736 N. 1100 E., American Fork, UT 84003.