



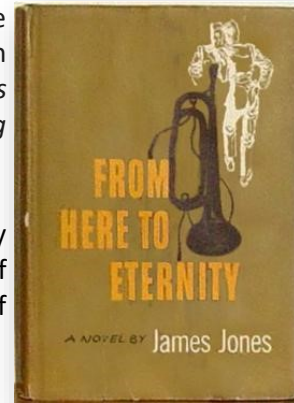
From Here to Eternity: Award Winning Novel to Latest Tim Rice Musical Hit

James Jones's 1951 novel, *From Here to Eternity*, is a landmark of American war literature. Set in the months leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor, it delves into the lives of soldiers stationed in Hawaii, weaving a tale of love, loss, and the harsh realities of military life. The novel's gritty portrayal of masculinity, its exploration of forbidden passions, and its unflinching look at the pressures of military hierarchy resonated deeply with readers, propelling it to bestseller status.

From Novel to Stage: Capturing the Essence

In 2013, the story took a new turn when it was transformed into a musical for the West End stage in London. This new iteration, featured music by Stuart Brayson and lyrics by the legendary Tim Rice, best known for his work on musicals like *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Evita*, *Aida*, *Chess*, *The Lion King*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, among many others.

The musical adaptation stays true to the core themes of the novel. The Academy Award-winning film, incidentally, was not nearly as faithful—much to the dismay of author, James Jones. The looming backdrop of Pearl Harbor adds a layer of suspense and foreshadows the dramatic events to come.



Rice's Lyrical Touch

Rice's lyrics and Brayson's score add a new dimension to the story. Songs allow characters to express their inner turmoil and desires in a way that prose can't fully capture. The musical also delves deeper into the emotional complexities of the characters, particularly the women, who were not as prominently featured in the novel. The production itself pushed boundaries and takes a bold approach aimed to capture the raw authenticity of Jones's vision.

A Legacy of War and Love

From Here to Eternity, both the novel and the musical, offer a poignant exploration of the human condition against the backdrop of war. The characters grapple with love, loss, loyalty, and the fight to maintain individuality within a rigid system. The story serves as a timeless reminder of the sacrifices made by soldiers and the complexities of human relationships.

From Here to Eternity offers a fresh perspective on a timeless story, using the power of music and song to explore the themes of love and loyalty in the face of war. This musical breathes new life into the story, ensuring its themes continue to resonate with audiences for generations to come.

Inside the Creative Process of *From Here to Eternity*

Artistic Director Michael Unger connected with the creative team of *From Here to Eternity*—lyricist Sir Tim Rice, Composer Stuart Brayson, and Bookwriter Donald Rice.

MICHAEL UNGER: My first question for you three gentlemen is, “Why From Here to Eternity? And who started it?”

STUART BRAYSON: Well, that would be me. I just had an idea quite a while ago. Actually, I had it when I was a kid before I even started writing musicals because I loved the movie. It's got to be more than 17 years ago. And then when I gave the stuff to Tim, we kind of developed it after that.

MU: So, Tim, how did you find this Stuart guy?

TIM RICE: Well, the truth of it is, in the street. I was walking along Piccadilly and this interesting character came up to me and said, “Are you Tim Rice?” And I thought, what answer do I give here? I decided to admit I was and he pressed a cassette into my hands. I get sent quite a lot of tapes, but this one was really worth listening to. It was pop songs Stuart had written. I kept in touch with Stuart who very shortly after that announced he was much more interested in writing musicals and he sent me some recordings of shows. The one that really grabbed me was *From Here to Eternity*. The songs were really good and the titles were brilliant, and we took it from there. I remember saying to Stuart, “This is great. Have you got the rights?” And he said something like, “Rights?”



I eventually got the rights, and met James Jones's daughter, Kaylie, who is also a distinguished, book writer, and she was very enthusiastic about it. The tunes were magnificent. I didn't want to lose the rock quality because, after all, the G.I.s in Hawaii in the 40s – blues was their basic music, which eventually merged into rock and roll - or some blues did. So, the score, I felt, was pretty on the nail. But I came in and gradually began writing new songs with Stuart from scratch and touching up some of the older ones. The key to any musical is a great story, and that's what Stuart had done, brilliant, though the tunes are.

MU: Donald, have you written together as a team? Father and son?

DONALD RICE: No, this was a first. I came on board after the London production. Bill Oakes had written the book for the London production. I thought it was fantastic – really exciting and brave. It was a hard hitting, exciting, grown-up story. Finally, after persistent nagging of my dad to allow some of my ideas to get through he said, “Okay, you have a go.”

MU: So what comes first: words, music or lyrics with you three?

SB: We've worked in lots of ways because, obviously, I had bits and bobs written and Tim came in and changed the lyrics and improved them, honestly. Also, Tim's given me lyrics that I've put some tunes to. We've done it in lots of different ways. And it's always been, “What do we need for this scene, what do we need for this part of the story?” It's been amazing for me because it's that moment where you get a ping and email and you've got a lyric from Tim Rice. You think of all the great hit shows he's written. But when you actually receive those lyrics before anybody else in the world, it's quite daunting, but very exciting.

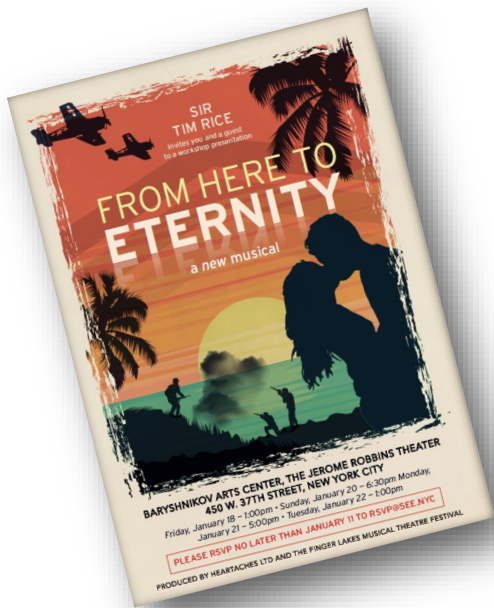
MU: Can you explain what is new for the Skylight version?

DR: We have introduced a new framing device to structure the story. One of the challenges I think about writing absolutely anything is to how to get across exposition without taking too long to do it. Otherwise, you spend a lot of time having characters talking about their past, which is not nearly as interesting as actually seeing that past. So, the device we've used is to have a senior officer investigating what has gone wrong in this company. It cuts much more rapidly to the excitement of the story than we had in previous productions.

MU: There's a lot of strife in the world today. How does this musical speak to our world today?

TR: Well, there's always strife in the world, really. But it seems closer to us now than it did in previous generations simply because of social media. You can't get away from it. And I always felt that a musical, or a show, or a play isn't





primarily about the situation that's going on in the real world. It's about human nature. It's about characters and what they feel and how they react to very small, personal situations. If you can make the characters believable, whatever situation they are in, be it in the army or if it's a domestic story; if the characters are believable, then it will have relevance to whatever's going on in the world.

These are tragic events, serious events, that took place in 1941, which, ironically, led to the certainty of the defeat of the evil regimes that were threatening to take over the world. So, in a way, for all the ghastly things that happened at Pearl Harbor, it was the pivotal moment that swayed the war a different way. It's a huge bit of history. But to make it believable in any format, the people have to be real. You can't just say, "This is history, this is relevant to today," unless the people are people that you can identify with today. And I think we've got that.

SB: We have to remember that all of the characters are so young. It's a generation that was just picked up and [told], "Okay, you were going to do

this with your life, now you're doing that." And obviously a lot didn't return. It's a great show for young people to come and see and actually think, "What would I do in that situation if I was just called up?"

TR: The thing is that however bad the world is today, and it's not great, the crises that our parents and grandparents faced were just as serious.

SB: My dad was in the military and he came back from overseas and he met my mom and basically proposed to her instantly and then went back, because he could have died. You don't have time. You have to remember when you're 18 and 19 that a day is a lifetime. It's a valuable lesson.

MU: You are three Brits writing a very American musical that feels absolutely authentic. How did you achieve that? Was that mostly through musical styling or Jones' book?

TR: I think sometimes the outside observer can see things that somebody who identifies more strongly with it might miss.

DR: I think the obvious point to make is the novel is extraordinarily real and authentic and it's written from the perspective of man who's done it. James Jones was there. Where you really get the authentic dirt under the fingernails, is reading James Jones's novel. Some of the best bits of reading I

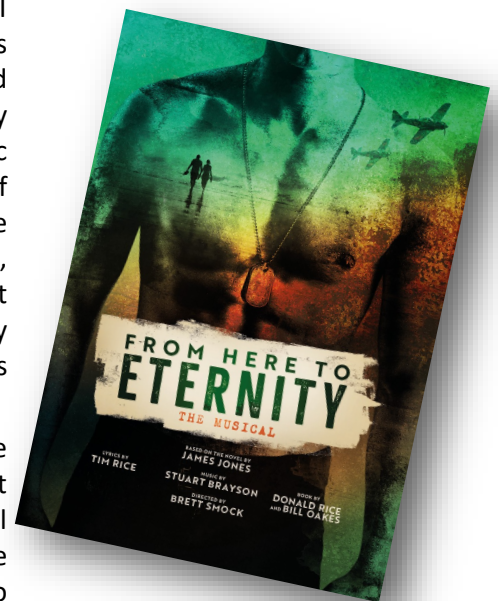


did around *From Here to Eternity* was reading the letters James Jones exchanged with his publisher where he's passionately arguing in favor of the real, authentic language that they used – which was full of expletives and four letter words. The publisher was trying to take lots of them out, and [Jones] was saying, "Look, this is how it was. And if we don't tell this story

authentically, someone else is going to come along and do it." And, Jones fought very, very hard for that. And it's there in the book.

SB: When we put the show on initially in London a few years ago, a guy came up to me in the foyer, a dapper American, old soldier. He had been at Schofield Barracks with James Jones. He held my hand, and I felt a real electricity go right through my body. And he said, "James Jones came to me with the first three chapters of *From Here to Eternity*." And I said, "What do you think he would have thought of this?" And he said, "He would have loved it." I love that we do pay homage to this incredible generation.

MU: Thank you, gentlemen. We here at Skylight are honored to be on the path of *From Here to Eternity* with you.



Historical Perspective: Key Highlights Surrounding December 7, 1941

Tensions Rise and A Surprise Attack: The Path to Pearl Harbor Before December 7, 1941:

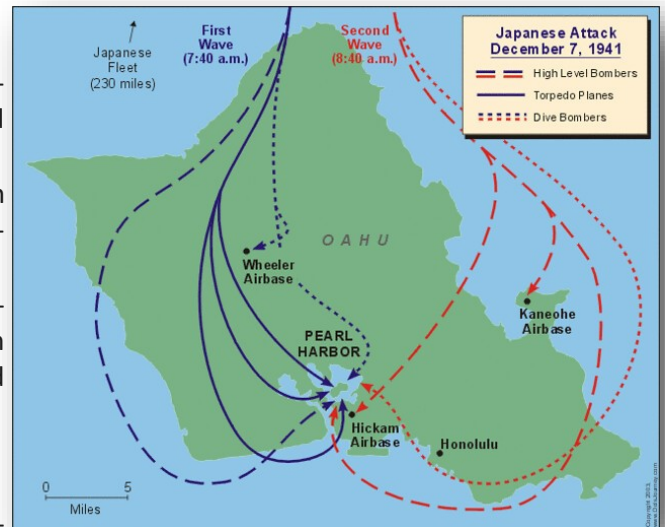
- **Japan's Expansion:** Throughout the 1930s, Japan aggressively expanded its empire in Asia, invading Manchuria and starting a full-blown war with China.
- **The US Pushes Back:** The US disapproved of this aggression and imposed economic sanctions, particularly on oil, hindering Japan's war machine.
- **Stalemated Talks:** Diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation fizzled out. The US demanded Japan withdraw from China, while Japan wanted the US to back off sanctions and acknowledge their conquests.

The Attack (December 7, 1941):

- **A Gamble for Japan:** In a devastating surprise attack shortly before 8:00 a.m. on December 7, 1941, hundreds of Japanese fighter planes swarmed Pearl Harbor. This aimed to cripple the US Pacific Fleet and force them out of the way for further Japanese expansion.
- **Devastating Loss:** The attack inflicted heavy losses, destroying or damaging nearly 20 American ships, including eight battleships, and over 300 aircraft. Tragically, more than 2,400 Americans, including civilians, lost their lives, with another 1,000 wounded.

America Enters the War:

- **From Isolation to War:** The Pearl Harbor attack shattered the US's isolationist stance. Public outrage soared, uniting the country behind President Roosevelt's call to war. On December 8th, the US declared war on Japan, officially entering World War II.



Facts about Pearl Harbor—By the Numbers

- The attack on Pearl Harbor lasted for only one hour and fifteen minutes. The attack began at **7:55 a.m. HST** on Sunday morning.
- Japanese aircraft were launched from the Japanese fleet north of Hawaii, consisting of:
 - **67 Ships** – 6 heavy aircraft carriers, two heavy cruisers, 35 submarines, **two** light cruisers, **nine** oilers, **two** battleships, **11** destroyers
 - **353 Aircraft** – **40** torpedo planes, **103** level bombers, **131** dive-bombers, **79** fighters
- The attack on Pearl Harbor killed **2,403** U.S. personnel, including sailors, soldiers and civilians.
 - Additionally, **1,178** people were wounded.
 - **129** Japanese soldiers were killed.
 - **Half** of the dead at Pearl Harbor were on the *USS Arizona*. Today the sunken battleship serves as a memorial to all Americans who died in the attack.
- **30** days after the Pearl Harbor attack, **134,000** Americans enlisted in the military.
- At its peak during the war, the US military swelled to a staggering total, with over **8 million** in the Army and an additional **3.4 million** serving in the Navy. These weren't just soldiers and sailors by profession; they were young Americans who put their lives on hold - jobs, education, families - to answer the call to duty.

Sources: History.com; The National WWI Museum; Pearl Harbor Tours