

Roger Waters and Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival – A New Recording of Stravinsky’s *The Soldier’s Tale* Features a New Version of the English Narration by the Rock Legend

“Roger has adapted the *Soldier’s Tale* English text into a version that is quite poetic, and so vivid.”

–Marya Martin, BCMF Founder and Artistic Director



The Soldier’s Tale CD cover; Marya Martin, bassist Donald Palma, and Roger Waters in recording session

On Friday, October 26, 2018 – shortly before the centenary of the Armistice of WWI on November 11 – Sony Masterworks releases **Igor Stravinsky’s *The Soldier’s Tale* with New Narration Adapted and Performed by Roger Waters**, a recording of Stravinsky’s theatrical chamber work by rock legend Waters and seven musicians from the **Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival**. This release (available on CD and vinyl LP as well as on download platforms) not only also marks the centenary of the composition of this generally-acknowledged masterpiece, but offers a vibrant new version of the narration by Roger Waters – one that began more ten years ago with a collaboration between Waters and Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival Founder and Artistic Director Marya Martin.

The Soldier’s Tale, or *L’Histoire du Soldat*, is a 1918 work by Igor Stravinsky with text by Swiss poet Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz originally written to be “read, played, and danced” by actors,

one or more dancers, and seven musicians. Based on Russian folk tales, it tells the story – both through the characters of the soldier, the Devil, and others, and through narration – of a soldier who gives his violin to the Devil in exchange for unlimited wealth, a pact that eventually leads to tragedy for the soldier. While the work has been performed by varying complements of performers in the century since its premiere, it is often presented by a septet of musicians with a narrator, and, when performed in English, using a standard translation by Michael Flanders and Kitty Black.

A friendship leads to a decade-long journey

Marya Martin, her husband and BCMF Board Chairman Ken Davidson, and Pink Floyd founder Roger Waters met in the Hamptons and became friends in the early 2000s. When Marya decided to program *The Soldier's Tale* as part of the 2008 BCMF, she came up with the idea of asking Waters to narrate it. “In addition to being a musical innovator, Roger loves words,” she said. “I knew that his would be a fantastic, and convincing, voice to tell the story.”

For that event, Waters’s first performance of the work, he used the Flanders/Black translation. But he was captivated by the story of the doomed soldier; his grandfather had perished in WWI, and his father had died in combat in WWII when Waters was six months old. He began to adapt the text himself, and in 2014 he and Marya Martin committed to recording the work with his adapted words, with some of the finest musicians performing today: **Stephen Williamson**, clarinet; **Peter Kolkay**, bassoon; **David Krauss**, trumpet; **Demian Austin**, trombone; **Colin Jacobsen**, violin; **Donald Palma**, bass; and **Ian David Rosenbaum**, percussion. Six of the same musicians (with Amy Schwartz Moretti replacing Colin Jacobsen) performed the work with Waters at BCMF in 2015.

“Roger has adapted the English text into a version that is quite poetic, and so vivid,” says Marya Martin. His version adds almost 20 minutes, but as Martin says, “he updates the narration into a cohesive story, incorporating the stage directions and using some sound effects, so that he is painting a picture for you. And Roger is a wordsmith; he understands the phrasing of music through words, so his new text is at the same time poetic and musical.” While the main recording took place in 2014, Waters has been updating the text and re-recording fragments of it up until this year.

Waters views the work as Stravinsky, in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution and WWI, asking, “how can we encourage the possibility of *homo sapiens* stumbling towards some way of organizing our civilization that doesn’t allow this amount of pain for this number of people?”

Here is a segment comparing the English texts of Flanders and Black, and Roger Waters:

PART II

THE SOLDIER’S MARCH, (2nd reprise)

Standard English version by Michael Flanders and Kitty Black:

Where’s he heading?

He doesn’t know himself, he only knows he must get out,

*Go somewhere else, because
He can't go on the way he was.
Nothing remains of all his fine belongings,
He's thrown them out—without a word to say
To anyone, he's run away;
And things are just the way they were,
Except of course he has no pack to bear.*

Version by Roger Waters:

*Where's he heading?
No one knows.
He doesn't even know himself, he's rudderless upon the sea.
No bearings now, no guiding star, no promise of a welcome fire.
And all the trappings of his wealth?
Gone! Discarded with disdain. Not one bauble left,
He is, to all intents and purposes, an ordinary man again.
But what now?
Unencumbered by the things he had before
He's free to wander, free to knock on any door.
To make a new life, if he can,
To become, a better man.
So things are pretty much the same.
Nothing much has really changed,
Except of course he has no pack, no past, no burden on his back.*

Founded in 1983, the **Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival** continues to showcase the mix of renowned and emerging artists performing classic and new music that has made it one of the most noteworthy summer music festivals in the country. Programmed by BCMF founder and Artistic Director Marya Martin, BCMF is also Long Island's longest-running classical music festival, taking place in one of the most beautiful seaside settings the East Coast has to offer. www.bcmf.org

BCMF *The Soldier's Tale* recording page: http://www.bcmf.org/media/Soldiers_tale/
Press release and CD booklet: http://www.bcmf.org/pdfs/Press_Release_and_CD_book.pdf

Roger Waters talks about adapting *The Soldier's*

***Tale*:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTVuZpgDVA0>

Sony Masterworks *The Soldier's Tale* recording

page: <https://www.sonymusicmasterworks.com/artist/roger-waters/>

BCMF video promotion for 2015

performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sviTSO8LZ3U&feature=youtu.be>

Available for purchase on:

Amazon - <https://amzn.to/2J4MGXe>

iTunes - <https://bit.ly/2RYVmCH>

Spotify - <https://bit.ly/2RYVmCH>

October 25, 2018