

C67  
1987  
6-4

MUSAP 479

L'histoire du Soldat.....Igor Stravinsky

- ✓ The Soldier's March
- ✓ Scene I
- ✓ Scene II
- ✓ The Royal March
- ✓ The Little Concert
- ✓ Three Dances: Tango, Waltz, Ragtime
- ✓ The Devil's Dance
- ✓ The Great Chorale
- ✓ The Devil's Triumphal March

28.08

The Ensemble

Jennifer Adams, *violin*  
Bruce Daugherty, *trumpet*  
Terry Ewell, *bassoon*  
Kris Falk, *doublebass*  
Andy Hillaker, *trombone*  
Dan Oie, *percussion*  
Marko Velikonja, *clarinet*  
Joseph Pollard White, *conductor*

Thursday 4 June, 1987 University of Washington School of Music Auditorium

*L'histoire du Soldat* was given its premiere in Lausanne on September 28, 1918. Stravinsky was living at the time in neutral Switzerland while the Great War raged about the rest of the continent. The idea seems to have been to make *L'histoire du Soldat* a simple and portable theatre piece: only a few actors (all non singing), a small musical ensemble, virtually no sets, props or costumes. As it turns out, the work has had limited success on the stage. Because although the construction is sparse, the work is anything but simple.

The story, somewhat loosely based on Russian folklore concerns that of a Soldier on leave from the War. On his way home, he meets the Devil who bargains with him for his soul. In exchange for teaching the Devil how to play the violin, the Devil will instruct the Soldier how to read. But not just any book- a special book that tells the future, including such things as stock market prices. The process is supposed to take three days, but the Devil tricks the Soldier and three years pass, during which time he has been given up for dead. His girl back home has married someone else, his mother mourns and people who see him in the street take him for a ghost. He leaves in despair. He ends up in a neighboring kingdom where the Princess lies near death. He is again accosted by the Devil, this time wanting to play cards, a kind of double or nothing. But the Soldier is not so easily taken in this time. Realizing that all that comes from the Devil is evil, he intentionally loses, including the magic book which had made him wealthy. Finally, he wins back the violin and, being back where he started, he is free from the Devil.