

In 1955, Mandell was appointed the special music assistant to Bernstein for a series of television specials he created for the Ford Foundation's sponsored arts program, Omnibus, on CBS. In 1956, Mandell founded the Ars Nova Ensemble, with whom he began to perform an annual series of concerts at Town Hall and Carnegie Hall in New York City. His Ars Nova 1956 recording of Stravinsky's L'Histoire du Soldat, one of the earliest to employ stereo technology, has been re-released after 50 years by HDTT. That same year he was appointed music director of the York Symphony Orchestra in York, Pennsylvania.

In 1957, Bernstein appointed Mandell to become part of the creative team for his newly planned televised Young People's Concerts. In 1958, Mandell was also named music director of the Philadelphia Little Symphony, both of whom he performed with in Philadelphia and New York, and the Westchester Symphony in Westchester County, New York.

Between 1955 and 1967, Mandell was executive music director of the North Shore Music Theatre in Beverly, Massachusetts. Between 1961 and 1968, he recorded over 50 LP discs in London for Readers Digest Records under a variety of pseudonyms, including Eric Hammerstein, Johnny Gibbs, Ray Thomas, Juan Ramirez, Pablo Mendez, Dick Mahi, The Button-Down Brass, The Romantic Saxophones and Strings, and The Collegians. In 1968 Mandell took up residency with his family in England. He concentrated his career initially in musical theater and then on bringing popular classical concerts to a new audience through his "Concerts for the Family" series.

In 1972, Mandell became the music director for the Anthony Newley and Leslie Bricusse musical The Good Old Bad Old Days, which ran for 309 performances at London's Prince of Wales Theatre. In 1973 Mandell became executive music director at the city of Leicester's newly opened Haymarket Theatre, which launched a number of major international revivals of musicals such as Joseph and The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat and Cameron Mackintosh's tour of Oliver!, prior to its London West End opening. From 1974, Mandell designed musical entertainments for the concert hall.

In 1975, Mandell began what became a regular series of guest tenures with The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra to promote a new series of "Concerts for the Family" and young people's concerts.

After acquiring a major classical theatrical and light entertainment music library of over 1,000 orchestrations in 1976 from the estate of the British composer and arranger George Melachrino, Mandell launched a national family concert program conducting a reestablished Melachrino strings and orchestra ensemble, with whom he toured the UK nationally annually until 2000. In May 2012, Mandell published an extended musical memoir of Bernstein, entitled West Side Maestro.

Robert Mandell died in Leicester in April 2020 at the age of 90. He had been admitted to hospital following a fall and had tested positive for COVID-19



STRAVINSKY

ROBERT MANDELL - ARS NOVA



L'Histoire du Soldat (The Soldier's Tale) was composed by Stravinsky in collaboration with the Swiss novelist C.F. Ramuz in 1917-18 while "down and out" in Switzerland. The Great War in Europe and the Revolution in Russia cut Stravinsky off from his family estates and publishers royalties. Serge Diaghilev's Ballet Russe, for which Stravinsky had composed *The Firebird*, *Petroushka* and *The Rite of Spring*, was similarly stranded in Lisbon without future engagements. Stravinsky, Ramuz and conductor Ernest Ansermet decided to form a "pocket theater" company which would produce pieces requiring just a few players and be easily portable, enabling them to travel a circuit of Swiss villages. Thus was born *L'Histoire du Soldat* "to be read, played and danced". Though scored for only 3 actors, a female dancer and 7 instruments, even this low-budget operation was beyond Stravinsky's means to produce. Financier and amateur clarinetist Werner Reinhardt generously bankrolled the production; " he paid for everybody and everything" recounted the composer. In appreciation for Reinhardt's generosity, Stravinsky gave him the manuscript of *L'Histoire du Soldat* as well as composing for him the *Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo*, and the *L' Histoire du Soldat Concert Suite* in the trio arrangement.

The first performance of *L' Histoire du Soldat* was a success. Open-

ing night was also closing night. Due to the outbreak of the Spanish Influenza epidemic (which would kill almost 20 million people in Europe and 500 thousand in America) every public hall was closed by law. The work was not performed again until 1924.

L' Histoire du Soldat is a variant of the Faust Legend – a poor soldier sells his soul (represented by his violin) to the Devil for youth, wealth, and power. Stravinsky would turn to this theme again some 30 years later in his opera *The Rake's Progress*; joining Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner, Gounod, Mahler, Rachmaninoff, Busoni, and others who were also inspired by the Faust legend. The Germanic tradition through Goethe has Faust redeemed at the end. In keeping with the French tradition, Stravinsky and Ramuz send him to Hell.

The influence of Jazz is discernable in *L'Histoire du Soldat*. Stravinsky describes this influence in the book *Expositions and Developments* co-authored by Robert Kraft as " a wholly new sound in my music, and *L'Histoire* marks my final break with the Russian Orchestral School."

STRAVINSKY

L'HISTOIRE du SOLDAT

Ars Nova, Robert Mandell, conductor
Stanley Drucker, clarinet; Cyrus Segal, bassoon;
David Jandorf, trumpet; James Thompson, trombone
Morris Lanz, percussion;
Herbert Sorkin, violin; and Reuben James, double bass.

- I. Marche du soldat (Soldier's March) 1:47**
- II. Music from Scene 1 2:40**
- III. Music from Scene 2, "Pastorale" 4:02**
- IV. Marche royale (Royal March), "Pasadoble" 3:59**
- V. The Little Concert 2:56**
- VI. 3 Danses (3 Dances) 6:30**
- VII. Danse du diable (Devil's Dance) 2:19**
- VIII. Grand Choral (Great Chorale) 3:26**
- IX. Marche triomphale du diable (The Devil's Triumphant March) 2:09**

Recorded by Westminster Recorded in Carnegie Recital Hall on May 25, 1956
Transferred from a Westminster Sonotape 2-Track



For more info e-mail us:
admin@highdeftapetransfers.com
or visit our website:
www.highdeftapetransfers.com

