



Gary Miller Songs & Whippet Records

29 The Green, Swinton, Duns, Berwickshire TD11 3JQ, Scotland

Tel: +44 (0)1890 860675 / Mob: 07710 761845

Email: info@garymillersongs.com

Web: www.garymillersongs.com



GARY MILLER: Reflections on War WPTCD22 - Whippet Records

Press Release:

Internationally acclaimed songwriter, performer and recording artist Gary Miller steps out of the shadows and returns from the wilderness with the release in 2010 of 'Reflections on War', his ground-breaking debut solo album and first CD of all new material in 10 years.

"As a song poet there are few in the world today to match him" (Green Man Review, USA)

Following a self-imposed sabbatical due to long-term illness and intense personal reasons, during which time he continued working professionally in the music industry as a commissioned songwriter, worldwide artist booking agent (at Adastra), music industry college tutor and lecturer (throughout Europe), musical director for theatre, freelance community musician, and more, he is looking forward to relaunching his professional recording and performing career at an international level with the release of his new CD 'Reflections on War' and a return to international touring (both solo and with his new band 'Gary Miller & The Volunteers').

Produced by award-winning producer, songwriter and musician Iain Petrie, the 10-track CD (catalogue number WPTCD22) is the 22nd release on Miller's own international label Whippet Records and features songs commissioned as part of a major exhibition at York Art Gallery on the theme of war entitled 'Reflections on War'.

Gary Miller first rose to international prominence during the mid eighties and throughout the nineties as principle songwriter, lead singer, guitarist & mandolin player with The Whisky Priests (1985-2002), the internationally renowned folk-rock band with a worldwide cult following that he founded and fronted with his twin brother Glenn (*"the Jimi Hendrix of the accordion"*) - *"the Joe Strummer and Mick Jones of the Folk World"*. The Whisky Priests released a string of internationally acclaimed albums but were particularly renowned worldwide for their incredible live shows: *"A Whisky Priests show is the sort of stuff to make your hair curl; honest, earthy, loud, raucous and tremendously uplifting"* (Folk Roots, UK)

Due to be officially released and promoted with an exciting and unique live touring show by 'Gary Miller & The Volunteers' in autumn/winter 2010 and throughout 2011, as a first step towards setting him back on the road to a fulltime recording and performing career, Gary Miller's highly anticipated 'Reflections on War' is a landmark release for this persevering and innovative artist.

GARY MILLER: Reflections on War (WPTCD22 - Whippet Records)

"This CD grew out of my involvement in the community arts project *Reflections on War* at York Art Gallery as part of the Territories Project for York Museums Trust where I facilitated a series of poetry workshops in April-June 2009. I worked with a wonderful group of people in developing an exhibition and two books of poetry and stories based on war-themed art and memorabilia from the Museum's collection, as well as personal tales and recollections on the subject of war. In addition, I was inspired to create a series of songs of my own, often inspired through direct involvement with the participants themselves. I was particularly interested in focusing on the personal impact of war through its effect on individuals. The opportunity to record these songs arose, developed, grew and took on a life of its own – here are the results for all to hear!" Gary Miller

The Songs:

1. **Twa Scots Soldiers** (Lyrics: Gary Miller / Music: Traditional - adapted & arranged by Gary Miller)

Inspired by 'Two Soldiers in Kilts' 1914, a charcoal drawing by Eugene Alluard (1866-1947). The tune has been adapted and reworked from the traditional Scots folksong 'Twa Recruiting Sergeants'.

2. **Bold as Brass** (Gary Miller)

This song and 'Grandpa Mill' (track 5) were inspired by writings by and conversations with Susan Elizabeth Elliot and are based on the true story of her Grandfather Archibald Frederick Harold Mill (1890-1985), who played cornet in a military band in Battersea prior to the outbreak of the First World War. When war was declared, he signed on at Woolwich Barracks and was sent to France as a Gunner in the Royal Field Artillery. He fought at Ypres and suffered two attacks of mustard gas.

3. **Sister of Mercy** (Gary Miller)

Inspired by the War Diary of Miss Gwyneth Thomas S.R.N., R.F.N., S.C.M. (1908-2001) ("a simple, straightforward and immediate account of her experiences in London during the war years of 1939-45. During those years, she was first a ward sister at Highgate Hospital and then, later, an administrative sister at Lewisham Hospital") and the writings of Susan Elizabeth Elliot (her niece).

4. **Somewhere at the Front, Somewhere** (Gary Miller)

Inspired by 'Somewhere at the Front (Links with the Past)' 1916, a notepad filled with cartoon sketches of trench life made during the First World War by A. Richards of the 10th Hussars, from York Museums Trust collections.

5. **Grandpa Mill** (Gary Miller)

(See track 2 above). Featuring lead vocals by Barbara Petrie, the song is written from the point of view of Susan Elizabeth Elliot (see track 2 above) both as a young girl and as an old woman looking back.

6. **Battleships** (Lyrics: Gary Miller & adapted from phrases by workshop participants / Music: Gary Miller)

Inspired by 'Battleships', a painting (artist unknown) and the power of propaganda during wartime.

7. **A Hospital Ship at Tobruk** (Gary Miller)

Inspired by 'A Hospital Ship at Tobruk', the memoirs of Effie Townend, a nurse from Selby, awarded the Royal Red Cross for her duty aboard HMHS Somersetshire and 'Nurse Effie', a painting by Beryl Trist.

8. **Yellow Bird** (Gary Miller)

Inspired by 'Shells Fillers' (from 'The Filling Factory') 1918, an ink drawing by Charles Ginner (1878-1952) and dedicated to the women, nicknamed canaries, who worked in the munitions factories during both World Wars and who would often sing while they worked.

9. **Soldiers of The Lord** (Gary Miller)

Inspired by 'The Spirit of War', 'The Dazzling Light', 'The Angel of Mons' and 'The Apparition of Saint George', part of a series of paintings by Alfred Pearse (1856-1933) depicting the story of 'The Angel of Mons', "the first urban myth" of the 20th Century, which developed as a result of Arthur Machen's first person 'false document' fictional short story *The Bowman*. It is also a deliberate parody of such overtly jingoistic war hymns as 'Onward Christian Soldiers'.

10. **One Soldier's Thoughts** (Gary Miller)

Inspired by the true story of a soldier's visit to his aunt (a dear personal friend of Gary's) to tell her he was about to embark on a 6-month tour of Afghanistan and the thoughts and feelings he expressed to her about it.