

World Premier of Rock Opera Based on Beck's "Song Reader" at the Fringe Festival 2016

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Washington, D.C., June 6, 2016 – This July, the D.C. Fringe Festival will include the world premier of the new rock opera *Song Reader: The Musical* based on the work of the same title by the Grammy Award-winning alternative musician Beck. Rolling Stone named the album, *Song Reader*, as one of the top 50 albums of 2013.

Song Reader was released as 20 songs worth of sheet music and more than 100 pages of art by Beck. *Song Reader* was later made into an album with performances by an all-star group of musicians, each putting their own spin on Beck's work. Collaborators Harvey Droke and Daniel Hornal created a conceptual story to accompany the beautiful music and received a green light from Beck's management company to write a new musical from the material. When director Clare Shaffer read the libretto to the rock opera, she signed on with a vision to help shape the working draft into a sincere exploration of taboo trauma.

The story centers on a conservative, sheltered new Army recruit who meets a jaded stripper—Ziz— at a club the night before his deployment to Iraq. Just as their relationship begins, it is brought to a violent halt when the soldier is beaten and thrown out by the club's jealous owner, Larcen, who rapes Ziz in retaliation for her "betrayal". What follows is a story of missed connections as Ziz works to overcome the trauma of her abuse, just as the soldier starts to experience extreme trauma of his own on the front. The musical is an exploration of how we deal with events that shake us at our very core, and how our personal traumas can re-shape us and our relationships with those we were once close to.

Song Reader: The Musical parallels the characteristics of war trauma and rape trauma using various genres of music, paired with versatile and creative choreography by Patrick Murphy Doneghy. The talented fourteen-person cast compellingly brings these new characters to life for the first time in this world debut feature, accompanied by an eight-person ensemble of top-notch musicians from the Washington D.C. Temple Orchestra.

Song Reader: The Musical premieres at the Sprenger Theatre in the Atlas Performing Arts Center, 1333 H Street NE in Washington, D.C. on July 10th, 12th, 17th, 20th, and 23rd. Performance times vary – please check Fringe Festival Schedule for specific times.