

PRESS RELEASE

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THE ARROWSMITH SAGA RECEIVES AUDIOFILE EARPHONES AWARD



By Dane St. John. Narrated by R.D. Watson, with music by Michael Stephen Decker.

Part one: *The Nectar of Angels*. In the chaos of 14th-century England and France, wine is the nectar of angels—a valuable commodity buttressing kingdoms and vaulting vast fortunes. A mysterious old archer named David Arrowsmith recounts his tale to an eager French chronicler, Jean Créton, when the latter learns that his mission to Scotland seems a failure. The burden of Arrowsmith's story rests with Créton, who suddenly finds himself writing about a seemingly cursed infant that barely escapes the grip of the Black Death in rural Wales when his family dies. Except for a single clue on a note attached to an arrow, Jacques and his wife Sophie do not know the identity of the boy's parents when they decide to adopt him. Taken to Bordeaux, the child they name David becomes caught up in a series of events that exposes the corruption of the wine trade, and soon reveals him to be an unmatched and ambidextrous archer. David is unwittingly flung to Oxford University after a heartrending run-in with a doomed priest sent as a spy to the Avignon papacy, and is ultimately protected by a brilliant scholar named John Wycliffe as renewed conflict between England and France looms, and the Hundred Years' War threatens his new life as a merchant and scholar.

Part two: *The Venom of Serpents*. In the second segment of David Arrowsmith's dramatic narrative, nectar—the wine that flows between England and France during the 14th century—truly turns to venom as Jean Créton continues to record the man's scintillating account. This as they nervously await Hugh Lawrence of Colchester to reveal himself at the Scottish friary and reclaim the panel of saints in David's possession. The story resumes in the year 1370, when David has married the ravishing Eleanor, taken over the Pelican Tavern Inn in London, and recommenced his apprenticeship in the wine trade. Little Jack is now three, and although he is not his natural son, David raises him as his own, even as he longs to learn the identity of Eleanor's wicked attacker. With civil wars brewing in Brittany and Spain, and France and England openly fighting, the truce has ended and the Hundred Years' War is again in full swing, threatening to bring everyone into its fold.



Meticulously researched and written in the pen of literary masters long thought to be extinct, Dane St. John's *Arrowsmith Saga* is recognizable as a modern classic when viewed from any angle. Our great grandchildren will be as familiar with this work as we are today with the past works of Dickens, Twain, and Wells. St. John grew up in Nashville, Tennessee and earned undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in the United States and Great Britain. Dane is not necessarily confined to any one genre and his works defy easy classification, ranging from classic period historical fiction to dystopic, spiritual sci-fi. He tends to rely heavily on his historical background for storytelling devices, even in works of crime fiction. Currently, St. John works as a freelance writer and resides in Seattle, WA.

R.D. Watson's virtuoso performance in this presentation is without equal, and it will be clear to all that the *Arrowsmith Saga* could be brought to life in this manner by no one else. After a distinguished and productive career as a Grammy nominated record producer, R.D. Watson decided to take his turn behind the mic. He has excelled at this too, and British listeners will recognize his voice from the UK launch of many major brands both on radio, TV, and the Internet. In London, Roger provided the promo voice for Jethro Tull, Leo Sayer, and Ten Years After. In Hollywood, he heralded the arrival of the Spandau Ballet, Robin Trower & the Specials, Billy Idol and the iconic Blondie.



AudioFile Magazine awards Earphones to truly exceptional presentations that excel in all the following criteria:

- Narrative voice and style
- Vocal characterizations
- Appropriateness for the audio format
- Enhancement of the text

David Arrowsmith recounts the captivating saga of his life in fourteenth-century England and France to the French chronicler Creton. Beginning with David's miraculous survival as an infant, R.D. Watson's first-rate storytelling elevates the novel to a magnificent experience right to the last syllable. David's childhood begins securely in France until he creates circumstances that propel him to England, where he secures alliances that will influence the highest point of his life. The theme of wine is threaded throughout the novel; wine merchants are the backbone of the economy, and their alliances influence royals. As David encounters interesting and compelling characters, all are expertly brought to life by Watson. — AudioFile Magazine