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## A Fiddler's Tale By Wynton Marsalis, February 1, 2018 [program]

University of Northern Iowa

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**A FIDDLER'S TALE**  
**BY WYNTON MARSALIS**

**UNI FACULTY SEPTET**

**WITH**  
**MATTHEW WEEDMAN,**  
**NARRATOR**

# PROGRAM

A Fiddler's Tale  
By Wynton Marsalis  
UNI Faculty Septet

## Part 1

Narrator: "It Always Starts..."

### Fiddler's March

Scene 1. Narrator: "Her Name Is Beatrice Connors."

### Fiddler's Soul

Narrator: "She's Floating On A Dream Cloud..."

### Fiddler's March Reprise

Scene 2. Narrator: "Now That He Has Her Going..."

### Reprise 2: Fiddler's March

Scene 3. Narrator: "Beatrice Connors Is Now..."

### Pastorale

Devil: "More Words On Fame"

### Fiddler's Soul Reprise

## Part 2

Scene 4. Narrator: "Keeping One Hundred Dollars..."

### Happy March

Scene 5. Narrator: "The Illness Of The Land..."

### Little Concert Piece

Narrator: "Musicians, You Must Play..."

### Tango, Waltz, Ragtime

Narrator: "The Music Causes The Savior..."

### Devil's Dance

Narrator: "The Music Was Too Strong..."

### Little Chorale

The Devil's Song (BZB Speaks)

### The Great Chorale

Narrator: "But Beatrice Connors..."

### The Blues On Top

### UNI Faculty Septet:

Ross Winter, violin  
Amanda McCandless, clarinet  
Cayla Bellamy, bassoon  
Randy Grabowski, trumpet  
Anthony Williams, trombone  
Ryan Frost, percussion  
Alexander Pershounin, bass  
Danny Galyen, conductor

with Matthew Weedman, UNI Department of Theater

# PROGRAM NOTES

The story and layout of musical sections of *A Fiddler's Tale* (1999) are shaped with obvious reference to *The Soldier's Tale* by Stravinsky, the everyman version of *Faust* written by C.M. Ramuz. While Marsalis employs some musical motives and gestures from Stravinsky's work, *A Fiddler's Tale* is very much Marsalis' own composition.

In the Ramuz tale, written during World War I, a soldier on his way by foot to his hometown on leave encounters the devil and trades his violin (representing his soul) to the Devil for earthly riches. In this version, adapted by Stanley Crouch, a woman jazz fiddle player is seduced into commercialism by the Devil, a record producer named Bubba Z. Beals. The Fiddler's life becomes miserable without her true creativity. A man whose love can redeem her, is thrown into a coma by Bubba. The Fiddler can save him -- and open the possibility of her own redemption -- only by breaking the Devil's commercial hold and creating music of genuine beauty in a pivotal series of three dances.

*A Fiddler's Tale* uses the same instrumentation as the Stravinsky work: clarinet and bassoon, trumpet and trombone, violin and double bass, and percussion. The suite follows the outline of Stravinsky's suite exactly, sometimes with exactly the same title: (1) "The Fiddler's March," (2) "A Fiddler's Soul," (3) "Pastorale," (4) "Happy March," (5) "Concert Piece," (6) "Tango, Waltz, Ragtime," (7) "The Devil's Dance," (8) "Big Chorale," and (9) "The Blues on Top."

Marsalis announces the jazz element of this work immediately with the drum playing a jazz cadence. Intriguingly, the fiddle is the last instrument to enter "The Fiddler's March," which is a straight-ahead jazz march that gives all the instruments at least one solo moment. "A Fiddler's Soul" is a happy number with a relaxed swing, seemingly based on a prominent three-note double stop motive from the Stravinsky work's "Scene by a Brook." The following "Pastorale" is a lonely piece; the contrasting "Happy March" seems to be ironic in its title -- there are bitter moments and an unsettled feeling overall. "Concert Piece" has, as its main section, rather trite commercial jazz, perhaps portraying the compromised concerts the Fiddler plays.

The three redemptive dances swing a lot more than Stravinsky's originals, and "The Devil's Dance" wails in frustration. "Big Chorale" is blues-tinged, and in the concluding "The Blues on Top," a modern blues emerges, ultimately leading to a raucous conclusion.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

IOWA FLUTE FESTIVAL  
SATURDAY-SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3-4, ALL DAY  
GBPAC & RUSSELL HALL

ALEXANDER PERSHOUNIN, DOUBLE BASS  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5 AT 8 P.M.  
DAVIS HALL, GBPAC

ANN BRADFIELD, SAXOPHONE  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 8 P.M.  
DAVIS HALL, GBPAC

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