

STRING ALTERNATIVES SERIES

1812 – A Fiddler’s Overture

Andrew H. Dabczynski (ASCAP)

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score	1
Violin I	8
Violin II	8
Viola	5
Cello	5
String Bass	5

The War of 1812 in America gave birth to some of the country’s most beloved folk melodies and fiddle tunes. Here’s an original overture where all the sections get a chance to explore those tunes, cleverly combined with famous melodic quotes, in both traditional and contemporary settings. “The 8th of January,” “The Constitution Hornpipe,” and “The Constitution and Guerriere” appear with distinctive old-time, bluegrass, country, and even Latin flavors. Optional opportunities for solo improvisation are also included.



Program Notes

The importance of the War of 1812 in America—sometimes called the “Second War of Independence”—cannot be understated as it secured the place of the United States on the world scene. Many folk songs and fiddle tunes were inspired by events related to the conflict (the fiddle being the predominant folk instrument of the day), and provide the melodies for *1812 – A Fiddler’s Overture*. And while the piece begins with a nod to the “other” *1812 Overture* by Tchaikovsky, here it merely provides a fiddler with a chance to improvise. After a driving introduction with a contemporary sound, the folk song “The Constitution and Guerriere” is heard, depicting the story of the critical naval battle between those two great warships. In counterpoint to this ballad, the most famous melody from the War of 1812 is heard—“To Anacreon in Heaven,” the popular drinking song that, with new words by Frances Scott Key, would become the national anthem. “The Constitution Hornpipe” is then played, a fiddle tune that has been popular at New England dances since around the time that ship was launched in 1797. The final tune in the overture is “The Eighth of January” (also known as “The Battle of New Orleans”). This standard of the fiddle repertoire commemorated the improbable victory of an American army under General Andrew Jackson over the British on January 8, 1815. This triumph secured the Mississippi corridor for the United States, made Jackson a national hero, and was celebrated for years afterward throughout the young country. The long-lasting impact of this victory—and the tune—is suggested in the overture by its presentation with typical old-time, bluegrass, contemporary, and even Latin musical features.

Notes to the Conductor

1812 – A Fiddler’s Overture presents some of the most famous fiddle and folk melodies, in both traditional and contemporary settings, to come out of the American War of 1812. The piece begins with a familiar quote from the “other” *1812 Overture*, which humorously morphs into a bluesy violin solo, and then into a driving introduction to “The Constitution and the Guerriere” (m. 18). Care should be taken that the traditional first violin shuffle accompaniment in this tune does not over-balance the main melody played by second violins, violas, and celli. A famous musical quote, “To Anacreon in Heaven” (the drinking song that would become the national anthem), becomes a countermelody in the first violins (m. 34). A change of key marks “The Constitution Hornpipe” (m. 42), in a typical old-time setting, with off-beats in the first violins giving way to this tune’s signature arpeggiated “B” section (m. 50). A return to the driving, modal introductory material (m. 66) yields to a ritard and a new, more relaxed tempo for “The Eighth of January” (m. 73) in a traditional, old-time setting. The introductory theme sets up a new presentation of the tune (m. 97) with lots of typical bluegrass-style syncopations and accompanying accents. This is followed by an optional modal ostinato section (mm. 113–120) which can be played as written, repeated ad lib to accompany improvised solos (Dmi7), or cut entirely. The following ritard (mm. 121–122) sets up a slightly slower, more deliberate final setting of “The Eighth of January” (m. 123), now with a more contemporary, Latin feel. Care should be taken here to play correct syncopations and accents in all voices. The piece closes with a return to the introductory material (m. 139), driving with an accelerando to the end of the piece.

1812 - A Fiddler's Overture

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CONDUCTOR SCORE

Duration - 5:00

Andrew H. Dabczynski (ASCAP)

Violins

Viola

Cello

String Bass

Andante (♩ = 55)

Solo - ad lib.

f *fp*

1 2 3 4

Vlins.

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

unison

f *mf*

5 6 7 8

rit. **Allegro** (♩ = 120)

I Vlns. II Vlns. Vla. Cello Str. Bass

9 10 11

f *mf*

I Vlns. II Vlns. Vla. Cello Str. Bass

12 13 14 15

mf *cresc.*

[18] "The Constitution and the Guerriere"

musical score for measures 16-19, featuring Vlns. I, Vlns. II, Vla., Cello, and Str. Bass. The score includes dynamic markings (*ff*, *mp*, *mf*, *pizz.*) and a tempo marking (*simile*).

Measures 16-19 are shown. The Vlns. I and II parts feature a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The Vla., Cello, and Str. Bass parts provide harmonic support, with the Str. Bass playing a pizzicato (*pizz.*) line. The tempo marking *simile* is indicated above the Vlns. I staff.

musical score for measures 20-22, featuring Vlns. I, Vlns. II, Vla., Cello, and Str. Bass. The score includes dynamic markings (*ff*, *mf*, *pizz.*) and a tempo marking (*simile*).

Measures 20-22 are shown. The Vlns. I and II parts continue the melodic line, with the Vlns. II part featuring a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The Vla., Cello, and Str. Bass parts provide harmonic support, with the Str. Bass playing a pizzicato (*pizz.*) line. The tempo marking *simile* is indicated above the Vlns. I staff.

Score for measures 23-25, featuring Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass).

Measures 23-25 show a rhythmic pattern in the Violins and Viola, with the Cello and String Bass providing a steady bass line. The Viola part includes a *mf* dynamic marking.

Measures 23 24 25

Score for measures 26-29, featuring Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass).

Measures 26-29 show a rhythmic pattern in the Violins and Viola, with the Cello and String Bass providing a steady bass line. The Viola part includes a *simile* marking.

Measures 26 27 28 29

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

30 31 32 33

mf

f

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

34 35 36 37

simile

mf

f

mf

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

38 39 40 41

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

42 "The Constitution Hornpipe" 43 44

f-p *pizz.* *f-p*

simile *simile* *simile*

Vlns. I Vlns. II Vla. Cello Str. Bass

simile

45 46 47 48

Vlns. I Vlns. II Vla. Cello Str. Bass

simile

p *arco* *p*

49 50 51 52

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

53 54 55 *cresc.* 56

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

f

mf

f

mf

mf

simile

simile

simile

57 *mf* 58 59 60

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

61 62 63 64

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

65 66 67 68

fp *cresc.* *p* *cresc.*

fp *cresc.* *arco* *cresc.*

musical score for Violins I and II, Viola, Cello, and String Bass. The score is in 2/4 time, key of D major (two sharps), and includes a *rit.* (ritardando) marking. The measures shown are 69, 70, 71, and 72. The dynamics range from *ff* (fortissimo) to *ff* (fortissimo). The score includes a large red watermark reading "Preview Only Requires Purchase".

musical score for Violins I and II, Viola, Cello, and String Bass. The score is in 2/4 time, key of D major (two sharps), and includes a tempo marking of *More Relaxed* ($\text{♩} = 100$). The measures shown are 73, 74, 75, and 76. The dynamics range from *f* (forte) to *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score includes a large red watermark reading "Preview Only Requires Purchase".

Vlns.

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

(2nd x)

77 78 79 80



Vlns.

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

81 82 83 84 85



89

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

86 87 88 89 90

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

91 92 93 94

arco

f

fp

cresc.

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

95

96

97

98

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

99

100

101

102

105

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

pizz.

103 104 105 106

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

mp

mp

mp

mp

107 108 109 110

Repeat as many times as necessary
Section or solo improvisation on Dm7

113

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

f

fp

fp

fp arco

sim.

fp

111 112 113 114

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

cresc. last time

cresc. last time

cresc. last time

sim.

115 116 117 118

119 120 121 122

Slower and deliberate ($\text{♩} = 80$)

123

I

Vlns.

II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

pizz.

123

124

125

126

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

127 128 129 130

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

131 132 133

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

134 135 136 137

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

138 139 140 141 142

mp

mp

mp

mp
arco

opt. div. -1

Vlns. I *cresc. and accel.*

Vlns. II *cresc. and accel.*

Vla. *cresc. and accel.*

Cello *cresc. and accel.*

Str. Bass *cresc. and accel.*

143 144 145 146

Vlns. I *ff*

Vlns. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Cello *ff*

Str. Bass *ff*

147 148 149 150

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