

**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 at measure 17, followed by a decrescendo to mezzo-forte (*mf*) at measure 18. The Vla. part features a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic at measure 17, followed by a decrescendo to mezzo-forte (*mf*) at measure 18. The Cello part features a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic at measure 17, followed by a decrescendo to mezzo-forte (*mf*) at measure 18. The Str. Bass part features a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic at measure 17, followed by a decrescendo to mezzo-forte (*mf*) at measure 18, and a pizzicato (*pizz.*) marking at measure 19.

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 feature a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic at measure 21, followed by a decrescendo to mezzo-forte (*mf*) at measure 22. The Vla. part features a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic at measure 21, followed by a decrescendo to mezzo-forte (*mf*) at measure 22. The Cello part features a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic at measure 21, followed by a decrescendo to mezzo-forte (*mf*) at measure 22. The Str. Bass part features a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic at measure 21, followed by a decrescendo to mezzo-forte (*mf*) at measure 22, and a pizzicato (*pizz.*) marking at measure 23.

I Vlns.

II Vlns.

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

23 24 25

*mf*

*mp*

*mp*

I Vlns.

II Vlns.

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

26 27 28 29

*simile*

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*

*To Anacreon in Heaven*

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

*p* *arco* *p* *simile*

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.* *cresc.* *cresc.* *cresc.* *cresc.*

*arco*

musical score for Violins I and II, Viola, Cello, and String Bass. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It includes measures 69 through 72. The tempo is marked *rit.* (ritardando) and the dynamics are *ff* (fortissimo). The score is marked with a large red watermark "Preview Use Requires Purchase".



musical score for Violins I and II, Viola, Cello, and String Bass. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It includes measures 73 through 76. The tempo is marked *More Relaxed* ( $\text{♩} = 100$ ). The dynamics are *f* (forte) for Violins I, *mf* (mezzo-forte) for Violins II, Viola, and Cello, and *mf* (mezzo-forte) *pizz.* (pizzicato) for String Bass. The score is marked with a large red watermark "Preview Use Requires Purchase".

**"The Eighth of January"**  
**More Relaxed** ( $\text{♩} = 100$ )



**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

Score for measures 95-98, featuring Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass).

Measures 95-98 show a transition from *ff* (fortissimo) to *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamics. The Violins (Vlns.) and Viola (Vla.) parts include a repeat sign at measure 97. The Cello and Str. Bass parts also show a dynamic shift at measure 97.

Measures 95, 96, 97, and 98 are marked with measure numbers below the staff.

Score for measures 99-102, featuring Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass).

Measures 99-102 continue the musical progression. The Violins (Vlns.) and Viola (Vla.) parts show a transition from *ff* to *mf* dynamics. The Cello and Str. Bass parts also show a dynamic shift at measure 100.

Measures 99, 100, 101, and 102 are marked with measure numbers below the staff.

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.*

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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