



# Interlochen

## ARTS ACADEMY

Interlochen, Michigan  
143rd Program of the 61st Year

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### **FACULTY CHAMBER MUSIC RECITAL**

Ara Sarkissian, violin  
Tom Riccobono, trombone  
Derek Weller, double bass  
Eric Stomberg, bassoon  
Bryan Conger, clarinet  
Ken Larson, trumpet  
Keith Aleo, percussion  
Matthew Schlomer, conductor

Keith Brown, narrator  
Laura Mittelstaedt, soldier  
Gulshirin Dubash, devil

Sunday, February 5, 2023  
4:00pm, Dendrinos Chapel/Recital Hall

## PROGRAM

L'Histoire du soldat ("The Soldier's Tale") ..... Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)  
Original Text by Charles Ferdinand Ramuz  
English version translated by Michael Flanders and Kitty Black

### Part I

Marche du soldat ("The Soldier's March")  
Petits airs au bord du ruisseau ("Airs by a Stream")  
(reprise) Marche du soldat ("The Soldier's March")  
Pastorale  
(reprise) Petits airs au bord du ruisseau ("Airs by a Stream")

### Part II

Marche royale ("The Royal March")  
Petit concert ("The Little Concert")  
Trois danses ("Three Dances"): Tango, Valse, Ragtime  
Danse du diable ("The Devil's Dance")  
Petit choral ("Little Chorale")  
Couplets du diable ("The Devil's Song")  
Grand choral ("Great Chorale")  
March triomphale du diable ("Triumphal March of the Devil")

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## PROGRAM NOTES

### ***L'Histoire du soldat***

**Igor Stravinsky**

World War I in Switzerland was a challenging time for Stravinsky and the war conditions prevented his works from being performed. At this same time, Stravinsky met and befriended the Swiss novelist, C.F. Ramuz. They decided to create a new work based on Russian folktales about the devil and a soldier and thus was born *L'Histoire du soldat* (The Soldier's Tale). The work was completed in 1918 and, due to the challenge of war times, scored for a small ensemble of seven musicians and three actors. The ensemble consists of two instruments from each instrumental family: violin and double bass (strings), clarinet and bassoon (woodwinds); trumpet and trombone (brass); and one percussionist playing a small battery of instruments (bass drum, three snare drums, cymbals, tambourine, and triangle). The plan was to tour and perform in the small villages and towns throughout Switzerland with this small group of artists. Unfortunately, after the first successful performance on September 28, 1918, the tour was cancelled due to a flu epidemic affecting several of the performers.

The Story is as follows:

### **Part I**

As the work opens, Joseph, a Russian soldier, marches toward his hometown on leave, his pack in tow. ("Marche du soldat"/"The Soldier's March") He rests by a stream and rummages through his pack. First, he takes out his lucky St. Joseph

medallion, then a mirror, then a photograph of his girlfriend. Finally, he finds what he was searching for: his fiddle. He begins to play. ("Petits airs au bord du ruisseau"/"Airs by a Stream") The devil appears disguised as an old man carrying a butterfly net, but Joseph does not notice him and continues to play. The devil sneaks up on Joseph from behind and startles him.

The devil asks Joseph to sell him his fiddle, and when Joseph refuses, he offers him a book that he says contains untold wealth. Joseph does not understand the book, but the devil convinces him that it's worth more than his cheap fiddle. Joseph then realizes the book contains events that happen in the future. The devil asks Joseph to come to his home for three days to teach him about the book and Joseph will teach the devil to play the fiddle. After the devil describes the life of luxury he lives, Joseph accepts. After three days pass, the devil takes Joseph home. (Reprise: "Marche du soldat")

As Joseph walks the path towards his town, he notices something strange: everyone runs away as they see him. Finally, he arrives at his fiancée's house only to see her with her husband and children. Finally, he realizes that three years—not three days—have passed, and that the residents of the town think he's a ghost. ("Pastorale")

Joseph sees the devil in disguise as a cattle merchant and confronts him. The devil tries to calm Joseph by reminding him of the power of the book. Joseph started off as a peddler. With the knowledge he gained from the book, he quickly amassed great wealth. Soon, he realizes this material wealth means nothing, and all he wants is the things he had before—the things everyone else has. ("Petite airs au bord du ruisseau (reprise)") He realizes the poor have nothing in terms of material wealth, yet they have it all when it comes to happiness. He gets agitated and starts looking through the book for the solution, yet cannot find anything.

The devil arrives disguised as an old female peddler. He takes some things out to sell to Joseph: first, a lucky medallion; next, a mirror; then, a photograph of a woman; finally, a fiddle. Joseph immediately perks up and tries to buy the fiddle from the devil. The devil hands Joseph the violin, but he can no longer play: the violin makes no sound. ("Petite airs au bord du ruisseau (reprise)") Joseph hurls the violin away and tears the book up.

## **Part II**

Joseph leaves his home with nothing. He marches past his old hometown. ("Marche du soldat (reprise)") He arrives at an inn where he hears the news that the king's daughter is sick, and whoever can raise her from her bed will be given her hand in marriage. He makes his way to the Palace gates. ("Marche Royale"/The Royal March")

When he arrives at the palace, the devil is already there disguised as a virtuoso violinist. Joseph turns over some cards and gets an air of confidence when they are all hearts. Suddenly, the devil makes his presence known, clutching the violin to his chest, and taunts Joseph. The narrator tells Joseph the reason the devil controls him is because Joseph still has the devil's money, and if Joseph loses all his money to the devil in a card game, he will finally be free.

The plan works: the devil falls, and Joseph is free. He takes the violin and plays. ("Petit concert"/"The Little Concert") He triumphantly marches into the princess's

chambers and starts to play another tune. The princess is miraculously resurrected by the music, and begins to dance. ("Trois danses"/"Three Dances" "1. Tango; 2. Valse; 3. Ragtime")

Joseph and the princess embrace. The devil arrives, and for the first time he is not disguised. As Joseph protects the princess from the devil, he realizes he can defeat the devil by playing his violin. ("Danse du diable"/"The Devil's Dance") The devil cannot resist the music and begins to contort. Exhausted, he falls to the ground. The soldier takes the princess's hand, and together they drag the devil away, then fall into each other's arms. ("Petit choral"/"Little Chorale")

The devil pops his head in and begins to torment the couple, warning them that Joseph may not leave the castle or the devil will regain control of him. ("Couplets du diable"/"The Devil's Song")

Over the "Grand Choral" ("Great Chorale"), the narrator tells the moral of the story:

You must not seek to add  
To what you have, what you once had;  
You have no right to share  
What you are with what you were.  
No one can have it all,  
That is forbidden.  
You must learn to choose between.  
One happy thing is every happy thing:  
Two, is as if they had never been.

The work ends with Joseph crossing the frontier post—a boundary not to be crossed—after being tempted by the ideal of both having his wife and his mother. The devil is found waiting as Joseph turns back to find his bride, now gone. The final piece is "Marche triomphale du diable"/"The triumphal march of the devil" and features violin and percussion entwined in a rhythmic duel with the final measures played solely by the percussionist.

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