# WYNTON MARSALIS

A Fiddler's Tale



# PART 1

1	Narrator: "It always starts"	2'18
2	Fiddler's March	3'17
3	Scene 1. Narrator: "Her name is	0'29
	Beatrice Connors."	
4	Fiddler's Soul	3'12
5	Narrator: "She's floating on	4'11
	a dream cloud"	
6	Fiddler's March Reprise	1′31
7	Scene 2. Narrator: "Now that he has	3'54
	her going"	
8	Reprise 2 (End of March)	0'34
9	Scene 3. Narrator: "Beatrice Connors	2'37
	is now"	
10	Pastorale	4'18
11	Devil: "More words on fame"*	3'37
12	Fiddler's Soul Reprise	1'10

# PART 2

13	Scene 4. Narrator:	4'09
	"Keeping one hundred dollars"	
14	Happy March	2'21
15	Scene 5. Narrator: "The illness of	2'40
	the land"	
	Little Concert Piece	3'04
17	Narrator: "Musicians, you must play"	0'43

18	Tango, Waltz, Ragtime	7'27
19	Narrator: "The music causes the Savia	<b>r"</b> 1′04
20	Devil's Dance	2'10
21	Narrator: "The music was too strong	." 0'34
22	Little Chorale	0'41
23	The Devil's Song (BZB Speaks)	0'58
24	The Great Chorale	3'49
25	Narrator: "But Beatrice Connors"	4'20
26	The Blues on Top	2'25
	1	Total Time: 65'08

Music and Story by Wynton Marsalis Words by Stanley Crouch Wynton Marsalis, trumpet André De Shields, narrator Musicians from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center David Shifrin, clarinet Milan Turkovic, bassoon David Taylor, trombone Ida Kavafian, violin Edgar Meyer, bass Stefon Harris, percussion

A Fiddler's Tale was commissioned by The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center for MARSALIS/STRAVINSKY: a joint project of The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and Jazz at Lincoln Center. It was premiered on April 23, 1998 at Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The orchestral suite version of A Fiddler's Tale without narration is also available from Sony Classical (SK 60979).

\*"Rock and Roll Is Here To Stay" by Dave White, courtesy of Arc Music Corporation.



n a conversation I had with Wynton Marsalis for a book I was writing, he , J always came back to the fact that musicians in different areas of music have many more similarities than differences. but that we simply have too few opportunities to make music together. But here at last was the ideal opportunity: David Shifrin, the artistic director of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center had the brilliant idea of putting us together with Jazz at Lincoln Center for a month of intense collaboration. The result was a tour that criss-crossed the entire United States, culminating in this recording.

In the first half of the evening we played Stravinsky's L'Histoire du soldat. The second half was devoted to a piece by Wynton Marsalis. The idea was for Wynton to compose a work with the same orchestration as Stravinsky's with a connection to the original text by Ramuz. Wynton's friend Stanley Crouch wrote an American version of Ramuz's typically European "devil's tale," and this became A Fiddler's Tale. It is possible to hear and/or play Wynton's work in two versions, either with the narration or as a concert version. The one heard here includes the brilliant narration performed by André De Shields.

Marsalis's music is always conceived with the intended interpreters in mind. A Fiddler's Tale was written for us. Therefore, even during the rehearsals, the music was being recomposed and reworked, and newly corrected pages of the score were constantly being placed before us. This was an unusual demand to place on "classical" musicians, who are used to working with a completed, finished score. At the same time, under Wynton's instruction, we were becoming familiar with his very specific idiom.

Thus began a journey that helped bring together a unique team. Its main characteristics were total artistic dedication combined with delightfully relaxed camaraderie, a camaraderie that even took command of our travel companions. For example, the cook in our hotel was bribed, as a precaution, so that after our long day, which often ended after midnight, we were able to have a hot meal. Of course, the concert didn't always end after the audience left; occasionally Wynton would sit down at the piano in the dressing room and play the blues. He would also sing ironic. affectionate or sometimes even slightly offbeat songs about us, his fellow musicians. The sound checks before the concert often went the same way. Preparations often turned into gleeful improvisation. Wynton, Edgar Meyer and Stefon Harris would suddenly get carried away by an idea. I developed a great admiration for Wynton's ability to improvise, and learned other things, too, from our "native jazzers": Why shouldn't we nod in approval to our fellow musicians after they play a successful solo? And what book of etiquette forbids classical musicians from having a glass of water onstage?

A few hours after the final bar was recorded, I was sitting on the plane returning to my home in Europe. Suddenly, I felt empty. A project, so unusual for all the participants, had just ended. Everyday music life was resuming. And, no matter how wonderful this everyday life might be, I knew that I would miss A Fiddler's Tale. At least I was comforted by the fact that a CD would soon be released....

> Milan Turkovic Translation: Elizabeth L. Uppenbrink

A Fiddler's Tale

#### PART 1

#### I NARRATOR:

It always starts somewhere. In this case, up in the sky. But with the turning of the earth, up in the sky can become down in the sky. Either way, the subject is war. Here it is.

A rather shining individual appears. He beams like Klondike gold. But he is made, part by part, of absolute darkness. Some say he is slick, and sticky. Is he an oil spill standing on two legs and walking like a man? Whatever he is, his clothes are contrived to imitate the contours of light, light so warm and fresh you feel like you could cut off a piece of it, and put it in your pocket. Lock it up. This man made of darkness must say something. He says this:

#### DEVIL (laughing):

Watch me now. I'm that old low down Nicky. Some call me The Kid. I used to be called Sweet Daddy Scratch. But Bubba is who I actually am. Bubba Beals. Oh, yeas. Bubba Z. Beals. The B.Z.B. All right now. I take care of me some pure business. Uh oh. I find myself sniffing. (Inhales and exhales with great pleasure.) Uh oh. I smell a meal marching this way.

#### NARRATOR:

Up down. Up and down the Fiddler's Band travels the road. People love them: they carry the story of the national soul and of the soul in the world. Parks, schools, prisons, churches, small concerts. Parades. They love to play, but they don't really get along. Then there's the drummer. He has a nice groove, and he's happy all the time. The bass man really doesn't say much. Unlike the bassoonist, who talks non-stop and in everyone else's registers. The trombonist is always late and loud. He wants to blow that bassoon right off the bandstand. And the trumpeter is the most arrogant know-it-all. He thinks he should be the leader of the band. Up, down. Up and down. The clarinetist reads books. Perhaps he's an intellectual. He finds the others boring. Ah, but the fiddler. She is wonderful. The integrity of her sound warms the soul. Listening to her taught them how to play together. And that was a beautiful thing. Up, down. Up and down!

# 2 FIDDLER'S MARCH

**3** SCENE ONE

#### NARRATOR:

Her name is Beatrice Connors. She has the power to lift the bandstand, but the burden of her own glow, in conflict with her inky desires, wears her down.

# FIDDLER:

I'm angry at this business. I hate the nature of success, but I'm envious of it. No, no, I just want more people to enjoy things like this tune by the legendary fiddler, Uncle Bud.

# FIDDLER'S SOUL

# 5 NARRATOR:

She's floating on a dream cloud of celestial notes. Bubba Z. Beals approaches. He is almost moved by her softness and her power. But being moved is not his line of engagement. The B.Z.B. begins talking with her.

# DEVIL (to audience):

I'll slip into her soul through the window of need. She wants to be known; I'll tell her I recognize her. She will be surprised.

#### FIDDLER:

I'm surprised you recognize me.

# DEVIL (to audience):

See what I'm saying? You got to watch him. You got to watch that B.Z.B.

#### FIDDLER:

times.

You've heard of me? Now that's unusual.

# DEVIL (to audience): Now I tell her I have heard her many, many

# FIDDLER:

That makes me feel good, but even if you didn't know who I was, we would still be out here playing. We are not giving in.

# DEVIL:

Now I drop the payload. I tell her she is, oh, man, just so great. Then I tell her, I wish she made recordings. That I am in the music business myself and even I can't find her sound anywhere. I would just love the opportunity to sit alone with a recording and sink down into the invisible glory of her sound.

# FIDDLER:

You know how to say it, don't you? But there's no invisible glory to our music in the business world. We sound too good, but they say we sound too old.

#### DEVIL:

Learn to share, my dear, learn to share. Don't be a snob.

# FIDDLER:

This is the way it is. I just want to play.

# DEVIL:

Everyone wants to play. But the question is not who plays but who pays. No one ever pays quite enough. They never, ever, pay enough. And dealing with the public can be tricky. You could *share* by giving the people what they *want*.

# FIDDLER:

The glow and the soul of my music is totally the opposite of the empty darkness the public wants.

# DEVIL:

That's where you're wrong. They want *light* because they produce none of their own. They want to be *full*, not empty. The people just want to *participale*, not disappear when the lordly sun comes up. Like all the stars of the Milky Way, they don't want to become anonymous at *every* dictatorial sunrise. People want to rule something. Even if that something is a hole under the ground itself.

#### FIDDLER:

You're right. I used to play in the subway. Even with all the noise and filth, when I picked up my instrument, I felt like I ruled that world.

#### DEVIL:

There you go. (*snaps his finger*) That's the connect. (*snaps finger*) You and the public. (*snaps fingers in both hands*) They *participate* as they reflect your light. The moon, ah, the full moon is a complete circle of absolute appreciation.

#### FIDDLER:

There you go again. I bet you you don't know how good that sounds.

#### DEVIL: Oh vegh I do I'm th

Oh, yeah I do. I'm the B.Z.B.

# FIDDLER:

Who?

# DEVIL:

We'll scratch our way back to that later. This is about you. Now what did you just say?

# FIDDLER:

I'll say what I was really thinking. Well look, I used to be ashamed of wanting to be appreciated, but now I know that's stupid.

# DEVIL:

Let me tell you what's not stupid. When you step from a limousine made of gold records. When you hear them screaming your name. When you feel you are in a house of human mirrors. Then you will know the glory of fame and the power of sharing. Everything will march to your beat, my dear, your beat!

#### NARRATOR:

Ah, but the fiddler, she is still wonderful. The integrity of her sound builds wings for the soul. Up down. Up and down.

# 6 FIDDLER'S MARCH REPRISE

8

#### NARRATOR:

Now that he has her going, the B.Z.B. has to crush all of her misgivings. Stubborn, the fiddler doesn't really accept the idea that she should have to change.

# DEVIL:

All you need to do, my dear young lady, is listen to Bubba Z. Beals.

# FIDDLER:

Why would I listen to somebody with a name like that? What does the Z stand for, Zephyr?

DEVIL: No. Zero, baby.

#### FIDDLER:

Oh no, negative.

# DEVIL:

Oh no, positive. In business, nobody argues about anything except my middle name. Any number, from one to nine, is defined by how many copies of *my* middle name are lined up behind it and in front of the period! We're talking about jamming in all the zeros you can *before* the period. Pure business, baby.

# FIDDLER:

Interesting, but what does change have to do with becoming popular?

#### DEVIL:

Change is an expression of humility. The seasons do it. You need to drop that elitist sneer and lift the public with simple music from the heart. There is power in simple things. Wouldn't you like some power over your audience?

#### FIDDLER:

In my circle we don't care about the love of the public. Actually we do. I hate to admit it, but I would definitely like to have that power. Who wouldn't?

#### DEVIL:

Admission, my dear, is very good for the soul. I know where there is power to be plucked like a violin string. Give me that old violin. I will give you the power to be born again. Millions will love you. Come on now. The violin. Good.

#### FIDDLER:

Hey, I feel the sun coming up so suddenly.

# DEVIL:

That is your choice. Up there.

#### FIDDLER:

The sun? What am I supposed to do?

## DEVIL:

Not much. Just reach up, stick your thumb in, and twist it out like a light bulb. Make the world black. And then we will make the moon rise. Uh oh. There it is. I knew you could do it.

# FIDDLER:

Hey! Wow! I snatched the sun down in one pull. Yes! Oh, this feels good. And strange.

# DEVIL:

You have blinded the Cyclops of the sky. Hear that sweet screaming? The stars are free.

#### FIDDLER:

Right here, right now I'm holding the light and the blood closed between my hands. Whew. I just lost my breath. Now I feel pain in my chest. I feel like I'm praying.

# DEVIL:

But you are not praying. You are gloating. And glowing. Up and up and up, you will easily float. I knew you had it all the way down there in your heart. It's time to start marching on them. We got some zeros to jam. We got some zeros to jam. We are going to jam us some zeros, baby.

8 REPRISE 2 (END OF MARCH)

# SCENE THREE

#### NARRATOR:

Beatrice Connors is now a success. Five years running. But she is not satisfied. She is not Beatrice Connors either. The B.Z.B. changed her name to The Beacon. Then, to emphasize her instrument, he called her The Beacon with the Bow. In the promotion, he wanted things to read more snappy. So the advertisements said: B.Z.B. presents B.W.B. Badness with Beauty. The Beacon with a Bow.

# DEVIL:

I thought that gave an appropriate level of fraudulent sophistication. It pulled them in. I'm not a snob, you know what I'm saying? So we accepted the whole mob.

#### NARRATOR:

From country to country. Everybody loved the Beacon with the Bow. They loved The Beautifulwith the Bad. Enthusiasm. Hysteria. Worship, actually. You would have thought that she was the savior. She even...

#### DEVIL: That's enough. Let *me* break it down.

3

NARRATOR:

But I was going to...

# DEVIL:

Did I stutter? What did I say? Let me break it down. This is not your story. Let me break it down. (Begins clearing his throat.)

#### NARRATOR (to audience):

The devil always hated narration, so he humiliates me like this. Like *this!* I'm going to get him *good*. My time will come.

# DEVIL:

I told her corruption is a job just like everything else. But she started crying and carrying too much nasty mouth for me.

#### FIDDLER:

Now I can't finger the fiddle. When I pulled down the sun, the corrupted blood and light stuck my fingers together. I have scraped my heart out and mutilated myself.

# DEVIL:

You didn't say that when all of those stadiums started filling up and all you had to do was play a few notes here and there. You sat on your famous rusty dusty in the candy store until you got a big fat stomach ache and now you want...

#### NARRATOR:

The argument is always the same. She longs for the days when she was respected and admired as a musician, not just a sex symbol who toys with an instrument on stage. She is now so sick of herself and of the mansion of gold records. Her soul aches for something she once knew, the heaven of being with her old band.



Her soul wobbles. She has been played, had, and used, from root to snoot.

# D PASTORALE

DEVIL (finishing clearing throat): More words on fame: So much gratitude. So much glory. So much goodness. People in gratitude. P.I.G. People in glory. P.I.G. People in goodness. P.I.G. Hmmm. Think about that. What does all the wealth of fame add up to? This: Our international notion of knowledge. One more time: Our international notion of knowledge. O.I.N.K. Weigh that in your mind. But how, dear audience, do you weigh darkness? Do you have a scale? Do you? I thought not.

# FIDDLER:

Bubba, you bubble-headed liar, you used me!

# DEVIL:

Here we go. Use or get used, that's the story of the blues. You're doing all right. For somebody who pimped herself.

# FIDDLER:

Oh no, I got duped. I was kidnapped from my audience, from my students, from all the talented, young kids who look up to me. I'm just a prisoner of your lies. Everybody knows I'm just doing your program.

# DEVIL:

Right, less than less is always worth more. Learning to whore might be a chore, but if you do it, you will never be poor. You were exquisite.

#### FIDDLER:

I have enough bitterness in me to turn my blood • to poison.

DEVIL:

Calm down. Take pride in yourself. I did.

#### FIDDLER:

I'll never be proud of that.

# DEVIL:

You should. You were as good as they get. Remember your relaxed willingness to corrupt the young when they were in the first bloom of romance. You gave them a little bit of music and a whole heap of mmm hmmm hmmm. They were young suckling pigs at the breast of spiritual pollution. So that's the mechanical pace. Don't whimper about the race.

# FIDDLER:

I find you disgusting as a steaming pile of waste, and I find myself even more disgusting for ever letting you use me until I stopped *enjoying* being used.

# DEVIL:

Everybody's got to find something. I find myself smelling a very huge meal. The little piggies will line right up, gleefully slaughter themselves, and dive, swine that they are, right into the oiled and shining moon of the stainless steel skillet. The crackling fire will turn into gold records, floating like circular sparks right up the black wall of the charts. All will be brought by B.Z.B. to the universal trough, where you will feed them slop. What can I say? Another pucker of joy in the dark cloud of my absolute happiness. (*chuckles to himself*) Oh, B.Z.B., how dare you be so good at what you do.

12 FIDDLER'S SOUL REPRISE

PART 2

# SCENE FOUR

# NARRATOR:

Keeping one hundred dollars, the fiddler anonymously donates everything she owns to charity. Stripped of all celebrity, she runs away to the South, where there is talk of a savior. There is no savior on her mind. She is trying to save herself. Somewhere, down there, her old band is playing, and she intends to rejoin them. When she finds them in a little roadhouse, they pretend not to know her.

# FIDDLER:

What could I play anyway? I haven't put my heart on my instrument in years. My soul has be

come ash. I never thought I could feel this empty and dark. I feel like dying.

#### NARRATOR:

After the band leaves, an old musician catches her praying and crying on a bus stop at sunrise. His name is Uncle Bud.

# FIDDLER:

The Uncle Bud? The great fiddler?

#### UNCLE BUD:

I expect so. Why are you crying, darling?

#### NARRATOR:

She tells him everything. Sometimes each word is interrupted by a guttural sob. The legendary fiddler whose tune she used to play offers his help.

#### UNCLE BUD:

Oh, you can still play. That never leaves. All you have to do is one thing. You have to remember. Then *be* what you remember.

#### FIDDLER:

I can't go back because I'm tortured by my shame.

#### UNCLE BUD:

You've done so little for so long you think hating yourself is a mark of moral distinction. I speak of the Great Memory that is so perfect *it* is always dreaming of *you*.

# FIDDLER:

So that's what gives you a chill when you play something beautiful. Oh, God. I just have to remember myself before I was a whore.

#### UNCLE BUD:

The savior who is very ill says that The Great Memory has to recall the world as it was before Bubba Z. Beals got so strong.

#### FIDDLER:

I didn't think the savior was real. But I know we all need salvation.

#### UNCLE BUD:

As you talk, the glow is coming back, the dark smoke is rising off your soul. You buried the light of your heart on the dark side of the moon when you pulled down the sun and lived with the devil for five years.

#### NARRATOR:

The fiddler cries out in rage and pain. Now she knows she was with the devil. Uncle Bud tells her the fight with the devil will never stop.

#### FIDDLER:

Uncle Bud, I can move my fingers.

#### NARRATOR:

Uncle Bud asks her to close her eyes and get on her knees. He gives her a sip from an ancient

bottle. It has the most beautiful taste she has ever known.

# UNCLE BUD:

That is the liquid of your soul returned as a timeless river. Open your eyes.

#### NARRATOR:

Her band is gathered there. Uncle Bud takes her hand, and she stands. He gives her an old, old violin as the band begins kissing her loudly and melodramatically because there is too much feeling to avoid the sentimental.

#### UNCLE BUD:

You must go now to see the savior. Play for him. You and your musicians might be the ones who can save him. Hurry. Make a joyful noise unto God.

14 HAPPY MARCH

# 15 SCENE FIVE

#### NARRATOR:

The illness of the land, the pollution of the times have sickened the savior. He is too pure for the job. He cannot be cured by medicine. Only the celestial sound of sacred notes can cool his fever. Humbly carrying Uncle Bud's violin, the fiddler gets in line to see the savior. Who stands there in front of her but the B.Z.B.!

# FIDDLER:

Why are you here?

# DEVIL:

To see the savior. I'm a spiritual man.

# FIDDLER:

You smear filth on the meaning of every word you speak, and you know you can't play that violin.

# DEVIL:

But I can play that one sweet song you taught me so long ago. It will make me known as a wheeler and a dealer who was also a first class healer. As I raise him from the mouth of death, my power will pull the soul of the world all the way down to the bottom of my coal mine.

# NARRATOR:

Now the narrator gives some payback. I didn't forget when B.Z.B. humiliated me. The fiddler and I hatch a plot. Mmm Hmm. You see, Bubba once ran off screaming and disappeared for three days because he forgot to *specially* prepare his drinking water. All the fiddler has to do is act drunk.

# DEVIL:

You drinking?

FIDDLER (pretending tipsiness): I got something good.

# DEVIL:

You are nothing, and own nothing. You have *my* bottle.

# FIDDLER: No! Give it back, Give it back, It's mine

# DEVIL:

Down the booby hatch in one chug-a-lug, my demented dove. (*Laughs and then coughs*.) Unpolluted water. Unpolluted water. Oh, you've poisoned me. You've poisoned me. I'll be back. I'll be back.

NARRATOR (*laughing*): He runs faster than he vomits. Well, here's your violin.

# FIDDLER:

I guess he doesn't need it where he's going.

# NARRATOR:

Ladies and gentlemen of the audience, I think this moment of triumph calls for a little bit of a concert. A return performance of the Fiddler's Band. Let the band play.

# II LITTLE CONCERT PIECE

# DINARRATOR:

Musicians, you must play for the savior. Take your time. The crowd will part for you. Fiddler, you have that glow again. Everyone will know that you must see him.

#### FIDDLER:

You are sleeping. You seem to barely, barely

breathe. I'm...no, we're going to give you a private party. We are. The band. A party. We're going to play three dances. We hope they will make your spirit tap its toes.

## IB TANGO, WALTZ, RAGTIME

# INARRATOR:

The music causes the savior to levitate, and the sweat from his fever dries away. The fiddler sees that he has been renewed. He has the same look of impenetrable concentration possessed by B.Z.B., but there is no bestial quality to his gaze. The savior is about to embrace the fiddler as Bubba Z. Beals returns, his clothes stained with vomit and his face a kaleidoscope of rage.

# DEVIL:

Give me that violin, you thief. I own you and everything you touch. Now I own the soul of the savior.

# FIDDLER:

This is a spiritual party. You'll have to *dance* your way out of this.

# DEVIL:

I don't dance. I gloat. For one who steps on souls, gloating is like boating.

# FIDDLER:

Brace yourself, Bubba, you're going to have to break down and dance.

# 20 DEVIL'S DANCE

#### 21 NARRATOR:

The music was too strong this time. The notorious B.Z.B. wobbles, tap dances, hot foots, twists, turns and streaks out of there, his tail rising and falling like a machete in a killing field. Then the savior embraces the fiddler, the beacon of the spirit and the beacon of the sound making one perfect pattern of light. They become the rosy fingers of dawn.

# 22 LITTLE CHORALE

 THE DEVIL'S SONG (The B.Z.B. Speaks): Well, Well.
These fools think they are so slick.
Yet my sins always stick.
Uh oh. Uh oh. He, he, he.
You should not mess with the B.Z.B.
In church, don't pray all day down on your knees
In no time, your soul will be the B.Z.B.'s Your savior who missed death first
Will sniff your fiddler's dreams in hell's hot

> Will sniff your fiddler's dreams in hell's hot hearse. Foolish girl just one step out-of-line I swear your sweet sweet cakes will be all mine. You should not mess, You should not mess.

You should not mess, With the B.Z.B. You should not mess, You should not mess, You should not mess, With the B.Z.B.

THE GREAT CHORALE

# SAVIOR:

I was lost because the *world* was so, so sick. Through the perpetual flame of faith the savior is saved.

My child, you have learned the source of your soulfullness, which is the willingness to give. You have been illuminated by humility.

When you live in the great memory, there is no old, there is no new; there is only the eternity of the moment.

There is no god greater than the "I am" of pure intent. We can sell nothing to time; we can buy nothing from time; we can only listen for the celestial whispers that never forget, that never forget, that always remember.

# DI NARRATOR:

But Beatrice Connors is Beatrice Connors. With the savior going from sickness to sickness, lifting spirit after spirit, the work of pure intent wears her down. At a mass saving, with soul after soul lighting like endless candles in the night, the fiddler realizes that she is back to where she started, small and loved, but outside of the big action. Trapped again, she screams. She runs away to the South looking for Uncle Bud. She breaks her fiddle and is about to lose her mind. She sobs and sobs at the bank of a river. Then Uncle Bud appears. Uncle Bud sheds tears, too. He is disappointed. He weeps more loudly than she does. He cannot say anything. But he will try something. One last attem on the straight and narrow. He removes a bottle from an ancient case.

#### UNCLE BUD:

Drink this. It is a potion that may return you to the true faith.

# FIDDLER:

Oh. Oh. This is the worst thing I have ever swallowed. Oh, I feel so sick! Uncle Bud! Oh, my god!

# UNCLE BUD/DEVIL:

Uncle Bud, Uncle Fud. This is me. This is the B.Z.B. Ha. Ha. I just used you to keep the game from going dull. It's your time now. So I can put my foot on your skull. Little girl, you are drawing your last breath, free

breath. This is the taste of B.Z.B. manufactured death. FIDDLER:

No, please, Uncle Bud...Uncle Bud... Unc... (deep, deep desperate breaths, then a final gasp).

UNCLE BUD/DEVIL (laughing):

Yes! I'm coming up smoke stack tall up out of my hole.

And you, audience member, had better keep a good, good, good lock on your soul. Watch me now. You see what I just did with this indignant sow

You got to watch that Bubba Z. Beals.

The grand master of all celestial deals.

Old low down dirty Nicky. Sweet Daddy Scratch.

They call me all kinds of names in the cotton patch.

But as for me, I'm going for the B.Z.B. Come on to life, girl, you must die again. Every time much slower. And every time you suckle this bottle, your pain,

your pain must sink you lower and lower.

Fiddlers of the world, as for using the human soul like a jagged plow, It all gets down to one ongoing get down: This, *forever*, is my band *now!* 

26 THE BLUES ON TOP

Photo: Gil Gilbert



André De Shields and Stanley Crouch recording A Fiddler's Tale, January 1999.



Frank St

Producer: Steven Epstein Engineer: Richard King Technical Supervisor: Jeff B. Francis Editing Engineer: Robert F. Wolff Recorded at Giandomenico Studios. Collingswood, NJ on May 11–13, 1998. Narration recorded at Clinton Recording Studios, New York City on January 4, 1999. Text: © 1999 Stanley Crouch

# THE

Santa Fe, NM + Princeton, NJ Edward C. Arrendell II + Vernon H. Hammond III

Product Manager: Lisa Stevens Editorial Direction: Richard Haney-Jardine A & R Coordination: Peter Cho Art Direction: Josephine DiDonato Paintings: Drue Katoaka

60765 For this recording, 24-bit technology was used to maximize sound quality. DDD

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