



Willie Marschner

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Willie Marschner

Patuxent Records

The wizardry of this 13-year-old fiddler and mandolin player from Fairfax, Virginia is nothing short of astounding. Granted, he’s already spent quite a few years learning his chops in the Marschner family band, along with his father Pearse (also a multi-instrumentalist) and his bass-playing mom Catherine.

Even so, he’s obviously a natural when it comes to his chosen instruments. Backed by a formidable line-up—the elder Marschner on banjo, guitar and vocals; Danny Knicely on guitar and mandolin; Brennen Ernest on banjo, guitar and piano; Mark Schatz on bass and Patuxent Music’s own Tom Mindte on mandolin – he holds his own and then some.

Young Marschner excels when it comes pouring it on full-throttle and making sparks fly on tunes like “Under The Double Eagle,” “Brown County Breakdown,” “Sugar Tree Stomp” and a particularly boisterous outing on “Wild Fiddler’s Rag.”

But just when you begin to suspect that he's all flash and pyrotechnics, he taps the brakes and shifts into a mellower and more soulful Celtic groove on a song suite called "Irish Slow Set."

"Autumn Leaves" is a particular poignant and contemplative exploration, which he embellishes with some impressive jazz-like subtleties.

Likewise, on "Queen Of The Delta Waltz" (sweetened with some super-cool piano accompaniment from Brennen Ernest) he really tugs at listeners' heartstrings and lets us feel the feelings.

The word "prodigy" is perhaps an over-used and loosely applied descriptor, but it sure fits with Willie Marschner.