

CHORALE AND FIDDLE TUNE

CHORALE AND FIDDLE TUNE is a meeting of musical ideas from disparate worlds - part Americana, part classical and part pop. My original objective was to compose a piece that would take the listener on a journey, starting from a simple beginning, moving through different moods and scenarios and then arriving at a satisfying conclusion.

The beginning is basically a groove - very gentle and slightly mystical, but a groove nonetheless. Flute, clarinet and pizzicato strings lay out the first sparsely syncopated rhythms, rising from a mysterious opening. Solo brass and bassoon soon enter to reinforce and grow the feel, playing riffs that might be at home in a pop song. Those rhythm figures are then passed to the winds as two solo violins introduce the first statement of the chorale.

At the end of that chorale, the full first violin section breaks out exuberantly with the fiddle tune, repeating it again and again in increasingly louder and more rowdy variations, recruiting the other sections of the orchestra as they go.

At the climax of the piece, the chorale and the fiddle tune run simultaneously – a collision of styles that hits an uplifting note and hopefully leaves behind an after-glow of optimism. First the winds and strings fly high over the brass' weighty version of the chorale, and then in the next statement, broad and lyrical strings take over the chorale duties. It all winds down to a very quiet, humble and tranquil end, almost completely settling before an energetic and hyperactive coda crops up unexpectedly to bring it all home.

CHORALE AND FIDDLE TUNE was named the winner of the Pittsburgh Symphony's 2014 H. J. Heinz Company Audience of the Future Composition Competition. The competition was judged by a panel of high school students from the greater Pittsburgh area. The PSO under conductor Fawzi Haimor performed the work at the Audience of the Future concert in April of 2014.