

## Basics for writing a fiddle tune

- Choose from fiddle tune regional and historical styles
- Learn guitar or piano, and study harmony. Train your ear!
- Derive patterns & segments from practicing scales, arpeggios, tunes, bowing
- Use compositional elements to help mold the tune:

### I. Structure

AA BB part structure for simple and predictable tunes  
Sections (or phrases) within those parts  
Variety in sound between A & B parts is clue for dancers

### II. Melody

Can come from a motif you hear or invent  
Use these elements to help construct a melody:

#### A. Scales (major, minor, dominant, pentatonic, chromatic, specialized modes)

Examples

Devil's Dream (ascending scale in ending)  
Arkansas Traveler (descending scale in ending)  
Soldier's Joy (descending scale in B part)

#### B. Arpeggios (major, minor, dominant, etc.)

Examples

Soldier's Joy (A part)  
Miller's Reel (Monroe's Hornpipe) A part; scales also

#### C. Repetition (Within sections or from section to section)

Examples

Soldier's Joy, (A part); Devil's Dream (A & B parts)

#### D. Variation (Melodic variation and rhythmic variation)

##### 1. Melodic

Go higher or lower in the scale  
Modify to fit over another chord  
Modulate to another key

Examples

Miller's Reel (in A part and in B part)  
Sailor's Hornpipe (descending scale sections in ending)

## 2. Rhythmic

Half or double, etc

Syncopation/placing differently on the beat

use phrase as intro; don't always start on beat one

### Examples

Spotted Pony (A part)

Temperance Reel (B part)

## III. Tricks and techniques based on the instrument

Open strings (alternate or at same time, making a chord)

Double stops, pizzicato

Bowing patterns (slur 2, bow 2; slur 3, bow 1; saw stroke; etc.)

### Examples

Devil's Dream (A part) Open strings and bowing pattern

(B part) Open strings and bowing pattern

Soldier's Joy (A part) Open string repeated

## IV. Tricks and techniques based on the style

Famous ending

Phrases within sections

### Examples

Sailor's Hornpipe (famous ending is half of each part!)

Arkansas Traveler (famous ending)

St. Anne's Reel (internal phrases in A part; also happens in B part)