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## **Joe Weed's Tune-Writing Workshop**

Some 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:

### **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

### **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)

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

## Melodic variation

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)

## Rhythmic variation

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)

## 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

## 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)