

Uncommon Waltzes: A Handful of Tunes by Andrew Levin

Stories of the waltzes

Each of these tunes has a story. In case you are interested I've given explanations below, where I felt I could do so without embarrassing myself or revealing some private memories.

1. **Return to County Clare.** A former partner of mine took a trip to Ireland, the home of her ancestors. I wrote this tune as a send-off for her.
2. **Gypsy Waltz.** In 1998 I took an 8400-mile road trip across the country. While driving through Utah a tune came to mind, so I sang and sang until I had worked it out and memorized it. Good thing, as I wouldn't have a piano or music paper for another few days. I later found out from David DiGiuseppe that I had written a tune in the style of a French musette, not a gypsy tune, but by that time the title had stuck. Thank you David and Joe Sobol for your wonderful recording this tune.
3. **A Mother's Sorrow.** A dear friend of mine became estranged from her daughter for a time. I tried to convey the sorrow she must have felt, but also the hope that eventually led to their reuniting.
4. **LEAF Waltz.** In May 2010 my band Waxwing played at the Lake Eden Arts Festival (LEAF) for two shows, one of which was an hour of my waltzes. I wrote this tune specially for this event.
5. **After the Hike.** This tune reflects the tender feelings one experiences at the start of a relationship.
6. **Shosty's Waltz.** Driving to school one day I heard a snazzy tune on the radio by Shostakovich. By the time I got to my office only the first five notes remained in my mind, but it was enough to inspire a new waltz!
7. **Black Mountain Farewell.** In much the same way Jay Ungar wrote his "Ashokan's Farewell" as a remembrance of a fine dance weekend, this tune came at the end of a wonderful weekend dancing in Black Mountain, NC. Many thanks for a lovely recording of this work by Kate Steinbeck (who lives close to Black Mountain!) and Bryon Hedgepeth.
8. **Loss.** This tune expresses feelings I had following a deep and rather personal loss.
9. **Moving On.** A companion piece on the CD to "Loss," this tune was written a few years later in response to another difficult time in my life, with the conviction that one must consciously "move on" in life after hardship.
10. **Second Anniversary Waltz.** I wrote this piece as a surprise second anniversary gift to a special person in my life at the time.
11. **September 11, 2001.** The tragedy of 9/11 came a few days before the annual English dance weekend in Atlanta. The musicians were not able to fly from the northeast and some dancers thought it inappropriate to dance in light of our national tragedy. But it was decided the dance was necessary, an opportunity to be with fellow human beings during those trying times. While not able to attend myself, I wrote the tune and sent it electronically to Atlanta. Jacqueline Schwab, Earl Gaddis and Daron Douglas played it as the final dance that weekend. I am honored that Daron and pianist Paul Moore recorded so touching a rendition of this tune.
12. **Sleepy Z Waltz.** My son, who never naps, fell asleep in the car on the way to his young friend's birthday party. I composed the first half of this tune in the car, singing it into my phone for later transcription. "Z" stands for Zander, my son's name.
13. **Wayne and Donna's Waltz.** I wrote this tune as a wedding gift for my dear friends Wayne and Donna Hitt. They and their friends danced to it at their backyard wedding reception.
14. **Menagerie Waltz.** My friend and colleague Alec Harrington directed Glass Menagerie at Clemson University. He asked me to write some music for the production, something that would sound circus-like and somewhat demented. This was the result!
15. **We Knew.** My dear friend Ginger Pyron and I wanted to collaborate on a waltz song for some time. By her request I wrote the tune first, to which she wrote wonderful lyrics. To top it off she wrote the choreography of a lovely English dance that so nicely fit the tune and lyrics. We performed the dance and tune together once in Atlanta; hopefully we'll have another opportunity to present them together again some day. Many heartfelt thanks to my dear friends Ginger (for her lovely lyrics) and Cindie and Jon Rothe (for her beautiful singing and his guitar playing and lifelong friendship).