

More About HILL COUNTRY RHAPSODY

Had I grown up in a city or gone to a larger school where orchestra was available, I probably would have become a string player instead of brass. But coming from a very small mountain town far from any city (where I was lucky to find even band offered), that was not an option, and I started out on trumpet. I was switched to horn in 9th grade, and that is the instrument I still play today.

So, being (as I always call myself) a life-long inhabitant of the band world, when I moved my primary focus from playing to writing, I naturally concentrated on what I knew best and where I would have the most performance opportunities: wind instruments and concert band. But when I was offered a commission in 1976 from the orchestra at Trinity University in San Antonio to arrange a medley of traditional fiddle tunes for them, I jumped at the chance. The result was **Hill Country Rhapsody**. Even though the source tunes are of Appalachian origin, I named it after the Texas Hill Country in honor of the commissioning organization: San Antonio is right on the edge of the Hill Country, and many fine fiddlers do live and play these tunes there.

Since it was written for a grade 5 level college ensemble, **Hill Country Rhapsody** is pretty difficult for the average secondary school orchestra, but very good ones can certainly handle it. It served as my orchestra conducting debut with the Lake Oswego (OR) High School Orchestra in 2003.