

# American Dances

## for Violin and Piano

January 21—March 30, 2008; revised Sept. 9—Nov. 24, 2024  
Duration: ~24 minutes      *for Eric Pritchard*

*American Dances* is one of a series of pieces written for Eric Pritchard, first violinist of the Ciompi Quartet of Duke University, originally as a string quartet. At Eric's request, I arranged this work for violin and piano. This is very much an arrangement and not a simple transcription, so any comparison with the quartet will find significant variance.

After the premiere performance of the string quartet in 2013, I was not satisfied with the first movement, and recomposed it in 2024, during the presidential election. This motivated me to give it a new title, *Harris Waltz*, in honor of Kamala Harris and Tim Walz, in their failed attempt to stop Donald Trump from having a second term as president. The second movement, *Texas Two Step*, pays at least nominal tribute to the state of my birth and home for many years. I can't claim much authenticity in its two-stepness but at least it's fairly up-tempo and in 4/4, and appropriate for a formal and rather crazed square dance. The third movement was originally written just before the birth of Aaron Pritchard, son of Eric and Laura; during the revisions of 2024, Aaron was quite sick and undergoing difficult treatments, thus the new title to this movement, *Dance for the seriously ill*. The last movement stems from the inspired fiddling and great musicianship of the Roma people, as well as barn dances.

In 2024, I made major revisions in the piece, and orchestrated it to become *Symphony No. 4: American Dances*.

This piece requires the sostenuto pedal in several places, which should be clear by the context. I have used three staves instead of two for the piano in brief passages in the middle two movements, as this makes the score much more legible.

**Bill Robinson**

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