

Lament and Jig [1941]

Edward Joseph Collins, composer

Notes by Erik Eriksson (1940-2008), the composer's biographer

Submitted by Collins in response to a Chicago Symphony Orchestra commission on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee, *Lament and Jig* was the sixth of a set twelve variations written by a dozen different composers under the collective title, *Variations on an American Folk-song*. The dozen included such luminaries as Lee Sowerby, John Alden Carpenter, and Rudolf Ganz.

The theme was "El-A-Noy," an Illinois pioneer recruitment song, perhaps selected by Frederick Stock, who conducted the premiere concert on 17 April 1941. The tune provided Collins with, at best, a loose starting point. Indeed, a slightly different version of *Lament and Jig* exists, possibly composed by Collins prior to the commission.

The opening of this less-than-two minute composition is bold and hymn-like, moving at a steady *andante*. The jig is short, energetic, and ends with an explosive climax.

El-A-Noy

*'Way down upon the Wabash, sich land was never known;
If Adam had passed over it, the soil he'd surely own;*

*He'd think it was the garden he'd played in when a boy,
And straight pronounce it Eden,
In the state of El-a-noy.*

Refrain:

*Then move your family westward,
Good health you will enjoy, and rise to wealth and honor,
In the State of El-a-noy.*