

GIVE THANKS

GIVE THANKS is an exercise in accentuating the positive, as they say, and appreciating what you have. It's a musical expression of gratitude, my response to some of the darkness we see around us. Enough, already. No more dystopias, please. Let's have some hope. This work emphasizes energy, reverence, growth and optimism.

Musically, there are several ideas operating in GIVE THANKS, starting out with a simple tolling of the bells, a sound that keeps returning at critical transition points to set and re-set the feeling of reverence. The main theme is a warm chorale. It first appears with a noble sound in the horns and low brass, and then gets a full-on "joyfully loud" treatment, with a rhythmic ostinato and massive percussion to drive it along. It's colorful, powerful and buoyant, like the chorus of an anthemic pop song as translated into the sonic world of wind ensemble.

The contrasting center section is a bright and active invention that starts from a single tiny sprouting seed and then grows relentlessly. The seed motif is passed around liberally. All of the instruments get a shot at it, and the surroundings get ever brighter, bigger and more complex, weaving and building as we move along.

After the climax of the invention, the main theme recaps itself quietly, with a choir of saxophones and a gentle counter-melody played on the vibes and a single flute. When the final recap appears, it is once again the full-flower giant chorale, leading us forward and then homeward.