

FIRENZE

(Melody for Richard and Mimi)

This is the one tune most responsible for our style. Not only was it written when we first began playing together, but it set for us a standard reference from which to discuss and communicate our rhythmic interchanges and velocities. Each phrase comes with its own tailored rhythm “chop” that establishes the next transition. Because we regard this tune as a set piece, we seldom introduce any variation to it. Often we use it to check our timing and sensitivity to each other before performances. Any inattention or lack of synchronization readily shows up in bobbled rhythms or blown transitions. The double-stop chords provide plenty of action for the fingers as they pass through the changes. The forefinger gets a steady workout adding the short sliding embellishments at the phrase endings. In the bridge, one instrument establishes a chordal support to the other dulcimer’s solo break. A flatpicked final measure played upon the harmonics follows the Fariña tag ending (coda). Using all these techniques helped us understand our mutual musical interreactions.

Firenze is the Italian name for the city of Florence, which is where this song was written. It was three days before Christmas. We had lost track of each other while traveling through Southern Europe only to run into each other again right in front of a music store displaying a particularly beautiful hurdy gurdy which had managed to attract both of us. The tune was born out of the joy of running into each other again in one of the world’s greatest cities of art.

SEQUENCE: A — REFRAIN
B — REFRAIN
B + DUET — REFRAIN
CODA.

