

NICKY SOHN

A TALE OF THE BUNNY AND THE TIGER

FOR ORCHESTRA

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(2025)

Instrumentation

Flute 1, 2 (doubling piccolo)

Oboe 1, 2

Clarinet 1, 2

Bassoon 1, 2

Horn in F 1, 2

Trumpet in C 1, 2

Trombone 1, 2

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion (Glockenspiel, drum set,
triangle, woodblock, whip, bass drum, vibraslap, clash cymbal, thundersheet)

Strings

Duration - ca. 12 minutes

Program note —

The stories we are told as children shape our sense of morality, values, and the logic we use to move through the world. I grew up in Korea and came to the US as a teenager, so the stories that influenced me most in childhood were Korean folktales. These are stories that everyone in Korea knows, but are unfamiliar to many outside of it. Through music, I want to share those stories and invite listeners into that world.

Revisiting these tales now as an adult has been surprising. As a child, I understood them in very black and white terms. There was a good side and a bad side, and someone always had to win. But with age, I have started to feel that life does not work like that. I used to love or hate things instantly. I was impatient and intolerant of complexity. Now I try to pause, to notice the other side, even if I do not always succeed.

This story in particular has stayed with me for years. When I was young, I absolutely believed the bunny must live. And of course, he should. But now I also think about the tiger. Hunger is real. Consequences are real. And while the bunny is clever, he also uses cruelty to escape danger. As children, we were told he was witty and quick, and he is. But the story also carries another layer I could not see back then.

The music follows the story closely, like a tone poem, unfolding across twelve narrative sections. I am happy to share this Korean folktale through my music. Whatever meaning or moral you take from it is entirely your own.

A Tale of the Bunny And the Tiger in 11 sections

1. In the deep forest, a clever rabbit encounters a hungry tiger who declares his intent to eat him.
2. The rabbit pleads for his life and promises to bring delicious rice cakes if the tiger spares him.
3. Tempted, the tiger agrees, watching as the rabbit gathers stones, lights a fire, and pretends to cook the promised cakes.
4. Just before they're "ready," the rabbit claims he needs honey and slips away, leaving the tiger alone with the glowing stones.
5. Overcome by hunger, the tiger bites into one and burns his mouth terribly, left roaring in pain and confusion.
6. Later, when the two meet again, the angry tiger once more tries to eat the rabbit. The rabbit proposes a new trick: open your mouth, and birds will fly in themselves.
7. The tiger, hopeful, sits in a forest clearing with his mouth wide open, while the rabbit sets the woods on fire nearby.
8. Mistaking the crackling flames for birds' wings, the tiger is burned once again— fooled and injured, but still alive.
9. In the cold of winter, the rabbit offers one final promise: a river full of fish, ready to catch.
10. The tiger dips his tail into the icy water to wait— only to become frozen in place, powerless against the cold.
11. As the tiger shivers, stuck and defeated, the rabbit hops away through the snow, safe and smiling— for wit, not strength, wins in the end.

Transposed Score

Commissioned and composed for the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra's
9 for 90 project in celebration of their 90th anniversary season

A Tale of the Bunny and the Tiger

Nicky Sohn

♩ = 84 tiger who declares his intent to eat him.

Flute 1

Piccolo

Oboe 1

Oboe 2

Clarinet in Bb 1

Clarinet in Bb 2

Bassoon 1 & 2

French Horn in F 1 & 2

Trumpet in C 1

Trumpet in C 2

Trombone 1 & 2

Tuba

Timpani

Drum Set

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

Vocal Soloist

Tempo: 84

Dynamic markings: *p*, *f*, *ff*, *pizz.*, *Tri.*

Articulation: *acc.*, *stacc.*, *leg.*, *marcato*

Rehearsal Markings: 2, 3, 4

[illegible]

A Tale of the Bunny and the Tiger

1.

3

A Tale of the Bunny and the Tiger

1. 3

Fl. 1 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. in B♭ 1

Cl. in B♭ 2

Bsn 1

Bsn 2

F. Hn in F 1,2

Tpt in C 1

Tpt in C 2

Tbn. 1,2

Tba

Timp.

W. Bl.

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

D. B.

8 9 10

A Tale of the Bunny and the Tiger

1.

The score is for a piece titled "A Tale of the Bunny and the Tiger". It features a variety of instruments including woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Bassoon), brass (French Horn in F, Trumpet in C 1 & 2, Trombone 1 & 2, Tuba), percussion (Tympani, Drums), and strings (Violin I & II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass). The score is divided into measures 11 through 15, with a section labeled "A" in measure 11. The music includes complex rhythms, triplets, and dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *f* (forte). The tempo is marked "Allegretto".