

1. Bélának a Blues-a (to Bartok)
2. Lachrymae Caeruleae (to Liszt)
3. Stride Rite (to Stravinsky)

Bela Bartok transmuted the diverse folk musics of his native Southeastern Europe, and even beyond, into his own distinctive style. Tragically, in his final years of self-imposed and unhappy exile from Nazi Hungary, he was not inclined to absorb the music of his new surroundings, even though he worked at Columbia University, close to the heart of Harlem's vibrant music scene. "Bélának a Blues-a" (Bela's Blues) is my fantasy of what might have taken shape had he been more open to his American environment.

Conversely, "Stride Rite" is what might have resulted if American ragtimers had called in their chips from Stravinsky, who in several pieces borrowed liberally (if mysteriously and decidedly un-swingingly) from ragtime music. As you listen, I hope you will keep in mind Stravinsky's own dictum: "Talent borrows, Genius steals" (in which case I am some kind of brilliant).

"Lachrymae Caeruleae" (Blue Tears), is inspired not by Liszt's more famous virtuosic music, but by his intimate, experimental late works for solo piano. It forms a slow and serious interlude between the lighthearted outer numbers.