

An Archive of the musical compositions by Herb Bielawa

Composition: **Piano Rags**

Tenacity Rag 2002
Magnolia Rag 2007
Triangle Rag 2011
I Beam Rag 2011
Ivy Leaf Rag 2011
Cerrito Creek Rag 2012

Duration: 15:00

Recording: *Tenacity Rag* by Herb Bielawa, others computer

Program Notes:

It is in the spirit and style of the piano rag form as created by Scott Joplin and others, continued even into this century by William Bolcom, William Albright, etc., that I composed these rags. All the rags have something specific to do with our house. *Tenacity Rag* was the first one, written for Beverley David Thorne who is the architect of the house where we have lived since 1996. He designed my studio. There is a persistent hammering away at a few limited notes in *Tenacity* that mimics the frustration that accompanied the studio project. I also attached a solo to it that can be sung by a baritone, which briefly outlines the various phases of the construction. (See SONGS.)

The house has only three walls. In *Triangle Rag* the opening treble melodic lines feature open triad arpeggios and the Trio moves into a quick time waltz (triangle).

Because of the placement of the house over a creek it had to have substantial steel supports, hence, many steel I-beams. The chunkiness of the treble part in *I Beam Rag* is meant to give some meaning to this. Because steel beams also contain alloys of iron (fe) and carbon (c) in the periodic table, I used these letters for musical pitches, F, E, and C in melodic lines.

There is a jungle of ivy all around our house. *Ivy Leaf Rag* is an expression of it with leaf-like shapes in the melody. The piece begins very thinly, just as new ivy does. It grows into vibrant fullness, however, just as real ivy does in time.

Finally there is *Magnolia Leaf Rag* which is a musical expression of the grand magnolia tree that we see through our picture windows.

Cerrito Creek runs under the house. Sometimes it is a trickle. In a storm it grows into a frightening roar. One of the melodies in the piece came from a recording made of a calm creek. The recording was electronically slowed down until it appeared to have an actual melody, pitches AND rhythm. The thunderous ending is a depiction of the creek's wildest rush in a storm. As with all storms the gradually calms down until only a few notes are heard at the end.