

More About ELEGY FOR SANDY

When I was young, I had no siblings my own age. I did have a much-older sister and brother, but they were soon off on their own, in effect leaving me an only child. I also had 3 older cousins, and it was my youngest cousin Sandy, 8 years my senior, who was the closest relative I had to my own age in those early years before my nieces and nephews grew old enough to interact with. Sandy was an only child, and whenever we visited her home, I tormented her with my attentions...which I am sure that, as a teen-aged girl, she must have found most annoying.

But Sandy was musically gifted and to me, fascinating. She could play several instruments, including piano, and I loved listening to her on those occasions when I could persuade her to play. Along with another much-older cousin who also played piano, Sandy unwittingly proved to be an important musical inspiration to me in my formative years, contributing in no small way to my growing interest in what would become my life's passion and career.

So it was that many years later, when Sandy passed away shortly after her 60th birthday in 1999, I felt moved to honor her with a short piano solo. I chose a contemporary idiom that I knew she would have appreciated, using an arch form where the second half of the piece exactly mirrors the notes--but not the rhythms--of the first half. The entire composition is built from the opening 5-note motif.