A LANGUAGE SO TRANSCENDENT

An Analysis of Style and Content in the Songs of Charles Ives

by

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THESIS

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How can there be any bad music? All music is from heaven. If there is anything bad in it, I put it there - by my implications and limitations. Nature builds the mountains and meadows and man puts in the fences and labels.

Charles Edward Ives
(Symphony No. 4, Conductor's note)

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INTRODUCTION

Historical and Philosophical Background

For Charles Edward Ives, art and life were inseparable. Art, he believed, was made better only "if held as a part of life"[1] - and he wrote his music accordingly. The variety of styles and innovative techniques which characterize his music are the result of his effort to create a new language of expanded expressive possibilities, a language fully capable of conveying the complex world of his intellectual and emotional life.

This 'new' language speaks with singular force. Even upon first impression, it strikes our ears with such impact that we cannot remain indifferent to it. It is a vigorous and creative language; alternately startling, amusing, angry, soothing, uplifting, irritating. One moment awash in banal sentimentality, the next it may lift our mind and spirit to contemplation of the infinite. Ives' music transverses the human experience, yet always sounds with the greatest vitality and warmth.

It is also a perplexing language. Where most music is readily

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[1] Charles E. Ives, 114 Songs (privately printed), postface.

comprehensible within the context of the period to which it belongs, Ives' music, while frequently incorporating the sonorities of many styles, remains usually outside the confines of any single style. Where most composers explore and/or develop the musical traditions and materials of their time and culture, Ives freely used all sounds he had heard; and invented those he had not.

To understand the necessity which Ives felt to strike out upon paths unknown, one must realize the enormous impact of, first, his father, and second, the ideas of the New England transcendentalists, on his thinking.

From his father, George White Ives, Charles inherited an inquisitive and scientific mind - a mind willing to listen to and experiment with all types of sound combinations - and a firm belief in the value and beauty of living in accordance with one's own convictions.[2]

From the New England transcendentalists Ives received the raison d'etre of his art. His identification with the ideas and personalities of these spiritual explorers is such that one might think of him as the musical voice of that courageous and optimistic philosophy. Raised in an atmosphere where such ideas were always welcome (Charles' uncle, Joseph Moss Ives, was a friend of the great Emerson), Ives absorbed,

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[2] Ives warmly recalled his father's musical experiments in his Memos (ed. John Kirkpatrick [New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1972], pp. 42-49).

transformed, and gave musical expression to these influences.

A letter from Ralph Waldo Emerson to Mary Moody Emerson, dated September 27, 1830, reveals a theme whose implications, taken in relation to Ives' life and music, are far-reaching.

> Self-Reliance . . . Every man has his own voice, manner, eloquence, and, just as much, his own sort of love and grief and imagination and action. Let him scorn to imitate any being, let him scorn to be a secondary man, let him fully trust his own share of God's goodness, that, correctly used, it will lead him on to perfection which has no type yet in the universe, save only in the Divine Mind.[3]

We first find Ives, throughout his life, constantly struggling to write in accordance with his muse, without being overly affected by the oft-times harsh criticisms of well-known and even brilliant musicians. (Ives' musical isolation was further exacerbated by his intentional avoidance of concerts, in general, and new and unfamiliar music, in particular. His hectic schedule was partly accountable for this, but, by and large, he was simply too preoccupied with his own musical thoughts, feeling he "could work more naturally and with more concentration"[4] without the impact of outside musical impressions.)

Second, the belief in the perfectability of man pervades all of Ives' work, music and prose, extending even to the practical aspects of

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[3] Ralph Waldo Emerson, Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Stephen E. Whicher (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1957), p. 8.

[4] Memos, op. cit., p. 137.

his highly successful insurance business.[5]

Furthermore, we find these same ideas set forth in Ives' own Essays Before a Sonata.

> It may be that when a poet or a whistler becomes conscious that he is in the easy path of any particular idiom - that he is helplessly prejudiced in favor of any particular means of expression - that his manner can be catalogued as modern or classic - that he favors a contrapuntal groove, a sound-coloring one, a sensuous one, a successful one, or a melodious one (whatever that means) - that his interests lie in the French school or the German school, or the school of Saturn - that he is involved in this particular "that" or that particular "this", or in any particular brand of emotional complexes . . . then it may be that the value of his substance is not growing, that it even may have started on its way backwards; it may be that he is reaching fame, permanence, or some other undervalue, and that he is getting farther and farther from a perfect truth.[6]

The same thought, but how different is its manner of exposition! Taken through the labyrinth of Ives' mind, Emerson's succinct statement is transformed into a stream of associations, dry jokes, momentary digressions, odd punctuations and invented words. One might be

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[5] Howard Boatwright comments, "There is no better illustration of the interrelation of Ives' business activities and his philosophical brooding than the opening sections of the 1920 version of 'The Amount to Carry,' in which he draws an analogy between the broad general principles on which progress is based in the business world and those on which it must be based in the political world. Progress has lagged in the political world, he says, but hope can be gained from the better conditions in the business world, where 'fundamental truths and laws . . . come more readily and nearer home to the individual, and can be more readily and widely distributed and known.'" (Charles E. Ives, Essays Before a Sonata, The Majority and Other Writings, ed. Howard Boatwright [New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1961], pp. 232-3.)

[6] Ibid., p. 91.

inclined to call for the services of an editor; or simply sit back and enjoy the long ramble through the countryside. The correlation between Ives' prose and music is evident.

A key point here is Ives' assumption that art is meant to serve a purpose, i.e., to bring its creator, its audience (if any) closer to "perfect truth." In this, he is diametrically opposed to an idea, largely prevalent today, which sets art outside the general current of life and ideas, asserting that it has no connection with ethics, religion, politics, or any of the conceptions which regulate our actions and thoughts. In this view, one of art for art's sake, the end of art is in itself, and is simply "creative expression." There is no distinction of high and low, no preference of one kind above another. Such art is purely subjective in character - the artist alone being the standard.

Ives' own viewpoint is expressed in his Essays Before a Sonata, written as a preface to accompany his second piano sonata, Concord, Mass., 1845. Despite its difficult style, the Essays is a major contribution to the literature on music. It includes a profusion of ideas on the nature of music and the role of the artist in society, as well as Ives' personal impressions of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, the Alcotts, and Henry David Thoreau.

Of main import to this study are the ideas presented in the Prologue and Epilogue of the Essays. There Ives lays the foundation

for a philosophy of art that is both directly analogous to his music, and an explanation of his search for new sound combinations. The Essays present a case for two themes that have long fascinated (and plagued) music theorists and philosophers by virtue of the hopelessness of furnishing them with any scientific proof.

First, a question is raised about the very nature of music in relation to man, a question of greatest concern to Ives for many years and most germane to an understanding of his music.

> How far is anyone justified, be he an authority or a layman, in expressing or trying to express in terms of music (in sounds, if you like) the value of anything, material, moral, intellectual, or spiritual, which is usually expressed in terms other than music?[7]

Fully realizing the difficulty of such an endeavor, "more or less arbitrary to an open mind, more or less impossible to a prejudiced mind,"[8] Ives attempted to capture the essential qualities of the highest human values and paint a portrait of the innermost workings of the human mind and soul. His music is an undertaking worlds removed from the usual idea of program music, for, while not avoiding the portrayal of material events, it seeks to express by musical analogy that which is most abstract in human nature. Should such an aim be unattainable, what of it? It is the effort that counts!

> A man may aim as high as Beethoven, or as high as Richard Strauss. In the former case the shot may go far below the mark . . . but that matters not: the shot will never

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[7] Ibid., p. 3.

[8] Ibid., p. 70.

rebound and destroy the marksman.[9]

The value system expressed in the above statement, that, in music, as in all art, there is a high value and one less so, is essential to an understanding of Ives' work, and the second theme of the Essays. The extremes of this art-dualism Ives named "substance" and "manner." Substance he defines as "something . . . to do with those kinds of unselfish human interests which we call knowledge and morality - knowledge, not in the sense of erudition, but as a kind of creation or creative truth."[10] Substance is the content of an art expression, whereas manner, the "undervalue" of this art-dualism, is the medium through which substance is expressed. Substance is what is said; manner is how it is said. Manner without substance is an empty form (no matter how exquisitely decorated). Substance without manner is the essence itself. "My God!," Ives asks, "what has sound got to do with music! That music must be heard is not essential - what it sounds like may not be what it is."[11]

The language of substance exists independently of instrumental and/or compositional technique. What it is exactly Ives cannot say (nor can anyone), but he has a definite notion as to where to look for it.

> It is not unreasonable to imagine that if he (this poet, composer, and laborer) is open to all the overvalues within his reach - if he stands unprotected from all the showers of the absolute which may beat upon him - if he is willing to use or learn to use (or at least if he is

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[9] Ibid., p. 82. [10] Ibid., p. 75. [11] Ibid., p. 84.

> not afraid of trying to use) whatever he can of any and all lessons of the infinite that humanity has received and thrown to man, that nature has exposed and sacrificed, that life and death have translated - if he accepts all and sympathizes with all, is influenced by all (whether consciously or subconsciously, drastically or humbly, audibly or inaudibly) whether it be all the virtue of Satan or the only evil of Heaven - and all, even at one time, even in one chord - then it may be that the value of his substance, and its value to himself, to his art, to all art, even to the Common Soul, is growing and approaching nearer and nearer to perfect truths - whatever they are and wherever they may be.[12]

There could be no stronger statement than this. Ives' use of "all lessons of the infinite" arose from his sincere desire to approach "perfect truths," and so he employed whatever sound combinations he felt most ably expressed this intention. Growth and progress, whether that of the individual, or of the mass of humanity, is a result of the willingness of man to avoid the "easy path" of imitation and/or habit and take his chances in that undiscovered territory where God and nature alone are the teachers. This again, is reflective of Emersonian thought.

> Suicidal is this distrust of reason; this fear to think; this doctrine that 'tis pious to believe on other's words, impious to trust entirely to yourself . . . To reflect is to receive truth immediately from God without any medium. That is living faith. To take on trust certain facts is a dead faith, inoperative. A trust in yourself is the height, not of pride, but of piety, an unwillingness to learn of any but God himself. It will come only to one who feels that he is nothing. It is by yourself without ambassador that God speaks to you . . .[13]

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[12] Ibid., p. 92.

[13] Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson, op. cit., p. 9.

This could have served as Ives' motto as he charted his way through unexplored musical terrain, banging away at the piano of his 'Poverty Flat' apartment till the 'wee hours,' to the amusement or aggravation of his neighbors and friends.[14]

These two themes - first, the expression of extramusical ideas or events through solely musical means, and second, the obligation by the honest artist to use all the "over-values within his reach" - mutually complement one another. They are the source of Ives' creative process, at the root of the eclecticism and radicalism of his work.

To what extent was the translation of these philosophical principles into actual music a conscious process? The evidence of his prose essays suggests a mutual agreement of emotion and intellect; both of these faculties sitting in judgement and needing to say "Yes!" to each new experiment.

An intriguing example of Ives' approach to composition is provided in his autobiographical notes where he describes a plan for a "Universe" symphony. He calls for a dense orchestral fabric intended to portray a view of earth and sky colored by the consciousness of the viewer whose focus of attention shifts from one to the other.

> The earth part is represented by lines starting at different points and at different intervals--a kind

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[14] Poverty Flat was the fond appellation given the New York apartment Ives shared with a group of young men on West 58th Street between 8th and 9th Avenues.

> of uneven and overlapping counterpoint sometimes reaching nine or ten different lines representing the ledges, rocks, woods, and land formations--lines of trees and forest, meadows, roads, rivers, etc.--and undulating lines of mountains in the distance that you catch in a wide landscape . . . Between the lower group and the upper, there is a vacant space of four whole tones between B natural and E natural. The part of the orchestra representing the Heavens has its own chord system, but its counterpoint is chordal . . . These two main groups come into relation harmonically only in cycles--that is, they go around their own orbit, and come to meet each other only where their circles eclipse.[15]

This description is not atypical of Ives' compositional method. The embodiment of natural phenomena (whether material or psychological) in terms of sound was, for him, a matter of direct analogy. Music is thus empowered to express the entire range of human perceptions, ranging from the simplicity of an abiding religious faith to the complexity of modern life, from the abstractions of an idealistic philosophy to the image of "a stone wall with vines on it."[16] Where Ives' subject is more abstract than material the correlation between idea and tone may be less distinct, but is nevertheless present. Believing the communicative possibilities of music to be bound only by the limitations of man, Ives sought to transcend musical convention and write a music so free in its use of compositional materials as to approach a universal language.

It is the intention of this study to portray Ives' pursuit of

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[15] Memos, op. cit., pp. 106-8.

[16] Essays, op. cit., p. 3.

this visionary and idealistic objective by offering specific examples of the interdependence of thought and sound which characterizes his work. At the same time, it will show the enormous variety of techniques and styles which appear throughout his music to be a logical outgrowth of his own complex, wide-ranging and oftentimes profound nature.

Methodology

The best vehicle for such a study is analysis of the more than two hundred songs composed by Ives for voice and piano.[17] Spanning the entirety of his creative years, the songs contain numerous examples of all the techniques which Ives used, borrowed, or invented. The texts, for his taste in poetry (as in music) was eclectic, include a wide range of ideas, circumstances and styles.

Analysis of the words and music of selected songs clearly reveals the practical application of Ives' theories. Precise compositional techniques are consistently used to portray definite extramusical conceptions.

Immediately, two obstacles arise which obfuscate a presentation of the relationship between sounds and ideas in Ives' music.

First, many of the songs were composed before the full development of Ives' theories on art and music as expressed in Essays Before a

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[17] Philip Edward Newman discusses Ives' complete works for voice and piano in his dissertation, "The Songs of Charles Ives" (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Iowa, 1967).

Sonata. During his Yale years, for instance, Ives was discouraged from radical experimentation. (The conservative influence of his teacher, Horatio Parker, is readily apparent in Ives' works from that period, including his First and Second Symphonies, the First String Quartet, and a cantata, The Celestial Country.)

Ives' one experimental outlet at that time was the composition of sacred works for the choir at New Haven Church, where he served as organist and choir master.[18] These remarkable works presage many of the musical techniques which catapulted other composers to fame, including use of a twelve-tone row, polyrhythms and polytonality, harmonies based on whole-tone scales and more. Despite these examples, Ives felt acutely the limitations imposed by his responsibilities at church.

> And in playing (new music) at a service: - Is one justified in doing something which to him is quite in keeping with his understanding and feelings? How about the congregation, who were unused to the idiom, or rather to some of the sound combinations, and who might naturally misunderstand and be disturbed?[19]

The ideological setting and idiomatic use of a wide range of compositional techniques with which this paper deals was not more or less firmly established until the year following 1902, Ives' final year as organist. No longer bound by outside musical commitments, Ives

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[18] Ives' important sacred works from that period include settings of Psalms Nos. 14, 24, 25, 54, 67, 90, 100, 135, and 150.

[19] Memos, op. cit., p. 128.

exploded in a burst of creative activity that was to last until World War I. But the psychological/emotional impact of the war, coupled with a serious heart ailment in 1918, put a virtual stop to Ives' musical activities.

In the years immediately following the war, Ives turned his attention to the compilation and publication of his works - "cleaning house" he called it. The result of this effort was the publication of the Concord Sonata with its accompanying Essays Before a Sonata, and the privately printed edition of 114 Songs by Charles E. Ives. The latter work includes a number of extraordinary songs composed after 1919. These exist side by side with arrangements for voice and piano of earlier chamber pieces, orchestral works, and numerous examples of the sentimental parlor song of which Ives was so fond.

In order to portray the subject of this study in its clearest light we must concentrate on those late songs which bear the full imprint of Ives' theories, excluding the early songs which fail to meet this standard. (Many of the early songs are, in fact, better left "in the leaf" as Ives was the first to admit. The 114 Songs seem a rather arbitrary collection, compiled by its author without the careful selectivity one might expect.)

The second obstacle to this study arises from the natural blending of ideas and styles occurring in any one song. Ives was not so obliging as to fit his works into the neat categories desired by a

theorist. The difficulties caused by the blurring of various techniques were fully appreciated by the composer.

> The outside characteristics - that is, the points furthest away from the mergings - are obvious to mostly anyone. A child knows a strain of joy from one of sorrow. Those a little older know the dignified from the frivolous . . . But where is the definite expression of late spring against early summer - of happiness against optimism? A painter paints a sunset - can he paint the setting sun?[20]

In order to circumvent this difficulty, this thesis will present a carefully selected group of songs, each representative of some distinct category of Ives' interests. Each of the chosen examples is some extreme, "furthest away from the mergings," of Ives' works.

In summary, the songs selected for study have met the following criteria:

1) the date of composition is late enough to assure the mature development of Ives' theories concerning musical composition and the facility of his musical technique;
2) the text and setting of the song is representative of a distinct category of Ives' intellectual and musical world.

Overview of Ives' Musical Style

Before beginning a detailed analysis of any particular song it is

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[20] Essays, op. cit., p. 71.

necessary to present the broad framework of Ives' musical language.

Rhythm

Despite a reputation for rhythmic complexity, Ives freely employed the simple and traditional alongside the innovative and contemporary, allowing the musical requirements of the moment to dictate his choice of technique.

Ives' various uses of rhythm are quite distinct and may be divided as follows:

Meter

Ives used simple, compound and complex meters, or sometimes no marked meter at all.[21] In the course of a song the meter might remain constant, or change from measure to measure. Within a given meter, the accentuation of beats might be regular or syncopated.

Rhythmic detail

In the foreground of rhythmic activity Ives is equally inventive. Rhythmic activity is sometimes simple (multiplication or division of the beat by units of 2 or 3) or complex (multiplication or division by units other than 2 or 3). Groups of 5, 7, 9 and larger are not

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[21] Simple meters are those in which a basic note value is organized by units of 2, 3, or 4 per measure. Compound meters are those in which a dotted-note value is the unit of pulse, as in $\frac{6}{8}$ (♩.) and $\frac{6}{4}$ (𝅗𝅥.). Complex meters include those in which there is no uniform pulsation (♪♩. or ♩.♪), or the measure is lengthened or shortened by fractions of a beat ($3\frac{1}{2}$).

unusual, these divisions being further complicated by irregular accentuations, ties, and so on.

Density of rhythmic activity

Ives ranged with great freedom from the sparsest of rhythmic textures to the most dense. Sometimes all parts are in the same meter, using similar note values. Other times Ives chose to write extremely thick rhythmic fabrics: differently valued groups and meters placed one against another (polyrhythm and polymeter). Sometimes he gives distinct and independent rhythmic outlines to each of many simultaneous voices, creating "passages so complex in regard to their internal relationships that the ear perceives them as a totality - a single sound event bordering on chaos."[22]

Range and Texture

The songs for voice and piano use the full range of tones available on the piano (A_0 to C_8).[23] In addition, Ives was unrestricted by the half-step limit imposed by the piano. He will, as in Like a Sick Eagle,[24] occasionally require the vocalist to slide through steps,

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[22] Robert P. Morgan, "Spatial Form in Ives," in An Ives Celebration, ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock and Vivian Perlis (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), p. 155.

[23] Registers are numbered according to standard international acoustical terminology. C_1 represents the low C on the piano keyboard; each successive octave adds one number (C_2, C_3, etc.).

[24] Originally composed in 1907 for chamber orchestra (English horn, flute, piano and strings), Like a Sick Eagle was rearranged for voice and piano in 1920 for inclusion in 114 Songs, where it is No. 26.

producing micro-intervals. Certain songs require extreme vocal dexterity, leaping wildly through large intervals and spanning a two-octave range. Others limit the vocal range to within one octave, the melodic motion restricted almost entirely to seconds and thirds.

The accompanying piano parts are equally varied as regards range. Some songs hardly leave the boundaries of the Great Staff; others use the entire keyboard. Registral motion is often used as a principal developmental device, as in A Farewell to Land (1925) where the piano part encompasses the full span of the keyboard from the C_8 in measure 1 to the final A_0.[25]

Density of voices is another important feature. Registers may be used in their entirety, every possible note being struck, or with careful selectivity to highlight portions of the text. The extreme registers are employed with less frequency than the middle registers, but are used with great effectiveness.

Ives' exploration of the expressive possibilities of various textural densities profoundly affected his construction of chords. A brief glance through 114 Songs will reveal examples of chords built on every possible interval combination. Secundal, tertial and quartal arrangements predominate, but Ives uses chords constructed of fifths, sixths, sevenths, ninths and mixed intervals as well. An excellent

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[25] Charles E. Ives, Nineteen Songs (Bryn Mawr: Merion Music, Inc., 1935), p. 10.

example of Ives' systematic exploration of a variety of chord types is the song Soliloquy (see Chapter Four).

Harmony

Ives had an open mind in regard to the possibilities of harmony. With characteristic dry wit, he shrugged off the chief question of the early twentieth century - the value of tonality.

> . . . why tonality as such should be thrown out for good, I can't see. Why it should be always present, I can't see. It depends, it seems to me, a good deal - as clothes depend on the thermometer - on what one is trying to do, and on the state of mind, the time of day or other accidents of life.[26]

However dissonant, Ives rarely abandoned tonality entirely. Within its confines he availed himself of a variety of distinct harmonic systems.

The modal system

A strict use of the medieval modes is rare in Ives' music, and they are nowhere used consistently as the harmonic basis of any given song. Despite this, modes do occasionally provide the predominant sonority.

The major-minor system

The major and minor scale systems serve as the harmonic basis of the majority of Ives' music. Often simplistically diatonic, Ives also

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[26] 114 Songs, op. cit., postface.

employed the techniques of chromatic harmony (with, of course, the addition of at least a few good dissonances).

The chromatic system

A systematic use of twelve tones was pioneered by Ives long before the popularization of this technique, yet more in the nature of an experiment than a consistent practice. More often, Ives would use all members of the chromatic scale in an intuitive manner, straddling between tonality and atonality.

Whole-tone system

The whole-tone scale (and the augmented triads derived from it) is frequently used by Ives. He will often combine whole-tone elements with other tonally vague techniques such as parallel perfect fourth and perfect fifth chords.

Quarter-tone system

As mentioned previously, Ives' use of intervals smaller than the half-step is infrequent in his songs for voice and piano. Like a Sick Eagle is the only example of their consistent use. Yet Ives thought a great deal about the possibilities of a harmonic system based on quarter tones, expressing his ideas in an article titled, "Some Quarter-tone Impressions".[27] These ideas influenced even his piano writing, and explain the otherwise odd enharmonic spellings that appear

[27] First published in the Franco-American Music Society Bulletin (later Pro-Musica Quarterly) in the issue of March 25, 1925.

in some of his most tonal songs.[28]

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The above brief survey of compositional techniques appearing in Ives' music is intended to provide a context within which the individual songs may be better understood. To see the intentionality and precision of Ives' choice of techniques to convey definite images or ideas we must turn to the songs themselves.

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[28] John Kirkpatrick writes, "I got Ives very annoyed one time by supposing that his spelling didn't make all that much difference. For instance, in the song Maple Leaves he has a descending fourth (A sharp to F natural) for the words 'The most are gone now' . . . So I tried to explain that . . . my admiration for it was largely based on the beauty of that perfect fourth, and why didn't he spell it as a perfect fourth? He exploded, . . . 'Why the hell, when something looks as if it might be 'la soh me' - why do you have to spell it 'la soh me'? . . . 'I'd rather DIE than change a note of that!' But much later, after he died, it finally dawned on me that what he had in mind was a suggestion of an interval that wasn't really a perfect fourth. The A sharp would be a little higher than a B flat, and the F natural would be a little lower than an E sharp. So it was really slightly more than a perfect fourth . . ." (Vivian Perlis, ed., Charles Ives Remembered: An Oral History [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974], pp. 220-1.)

Chapter II

SACRED SONGS

The sacred pervades Ives' music, and, reminiscent of St. Thomas Aquinas' famous argument proving the existence of God, is the prime initiator of Ives' manifold artistic output. Ives alludes to this when he writes, "there must be something behind subconsciousness to produce consciousness, and so on,"[1] and resolves the problem by quoting from Emerson's The Rhodora.

> . . . if eyes were made for seeing,
> Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
> Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
> I never thought to ask, I never knew:
> But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
> The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.[2]

Inseparable from his transcendentalist calling, Ives' abiding religious faith remains a central, if unspoken, theme of his prose essays. For him, the ultimate cause of any artistic perception or intuition, or anything else for that matter, is that "self-same Power," the immanent Godhead. William Anson Call writes,

> Religion to the transcendentalist was not basically an institution guided by theological dogma but an underlying idea or sentiment basic to his existence and to

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[1] Essays, op. cit., p. 7.

[2] Ibid.

the understanding of his relationship with nature.[3]

This intuitive comprehension of the divine nature of all sensory phenomena, the interpretation of the physical world as a reflection of some great, unseen reality, led to a value system which, while denying validity to the artificial in art, elevated the commonplace to the realm of the heavenly. Thus Emerson extolled the wisdom of "the porter and the cook,"[4] and Thoreau heard "the vibration of the universal lyre"[5] at Walden Pond - and thus Ives sensed a vitality and sincerity in "the simple but acute Gospel hymns of the New England camp meetin'" that he found lacking in "the Te Deum of the greatest cathedral."[6]

It is this unifying vision which, transcending opposites to realize the interrelatedness of all things, best explains the diverse elements of Ives' sacred style.

Religion

The music for Religion was derived from an anthem, now lost, composed while Ives was still organist at the Central Presbyterian

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[3] William Anson Call, "A Study of the Transcendental Aesthetic Theories of John S. Dwight and Charles E. Ives and the Relationship of These Theories to Their Respective Work as Music Critic and Composer" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1971), p. 19.

[4] Essays, op. cit., p. 32.

[5] Charles E. Ives, Symphony No. 4 (New York: Associated Music Publishers, 1965), p. 13.

[6] Essays, op. cit., p. 80.

Church in New York. The text, a succinct but profound statement about the nature of faith, would have greatly appealed to Ives' religious sensibilities.

> There is no unbelief,
> And day by day and night by night,
> Unconsciously,
> The heart lives by faith the lips deny;
> God knows the why.[7]

Arranged in 1911 for voice and piano, Religion appears in 114 Songs dated 1920.[8]

The manuscript sketch of Religion includes marginalia which provide a clue to Ives' compositional process.

> Rev. Wilton Merle-Smith handed them to me to put to music. Miss Wilson sung it Feb. 16, 1902 (Sunday) & NICE Rev. S. didn't like it. But MADE A NICE SONG (followed by a penciled frowning face).[9]

It is necessary to understand that "NICE", an adjective often used by Ives, is always meant in a pejorative sense. It is his code word for all music "formulae that weaken rather than toughen up the musical-muscles."[10] Ives' sacred music is never "nice", as are the

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[7] "Ives found Lizzie Case's lines quoted by James T. Bixby (1843-1921) in his article 'Modern Dogmatism and the Unbelief of the Age,' in The New World and the New Thought (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1902)." (Philip Edward Newman, "The Songs of Charles Ives (1874-1954)" [Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1967], Volume II, p. 239.)

[8] 1920 is the probable date of Ives' final revision of Religion for inclusion in 114 Songs, where it is No. 16.

[9] Philip Newman, op. cit., Volume II, p. 239.

[10] Essays, op. cit., p. 98.

hymn accompaniments every organist is obliged to play. Rather, as exemplified by Religion, Ives' songs with religious texts maintain a careful balance between conventional hymn settings and the more modern idiom that, for Ives, evoked the higher, more spiritual aspect of man.[11]

Rhythm

A powerful declaration of faith, the initial phrase of Religion is simultaneously suggestive of both modern and Renaissance musical idioms. One wonders whether Ives' decision to notate its starkly simple rhythm in whole notes without bar lines was not a subtle visual reminder of early church music, perhaps to set the performers into an appropriate frame of mind (see Fig. 1).[12]

The following phrase, set in simple $\frac{3}{2}$ meter, is similarly reminiscent. Its overall rhythmic simplicity is only momentarily disturbed (m. 7) by a division of the $\frac{3}{2}$ bar into four equal subdivisions, followed by a single measure of $\frac{2}{2}$. This activity marks the rhythmic climax of Religion, a climax supported by every aspect of the score (see Fig. 2).

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[11] Although deeply religious, Ives found the limitations of his position as organist extremely exasperating, and was quite unable to resist performing the conventional accompaniments without adding dissonances, overtones, or subtle syncopations.

[12] Ives' concern with the thoughts and attitudes of the performer is proved by his numerous "songs with or without voices", in which words were written underneath instrumental parts for the player to think or sing inwardly. (Memos, op. cit., p. 127.)

Fig. 1. from Religion, m. 1

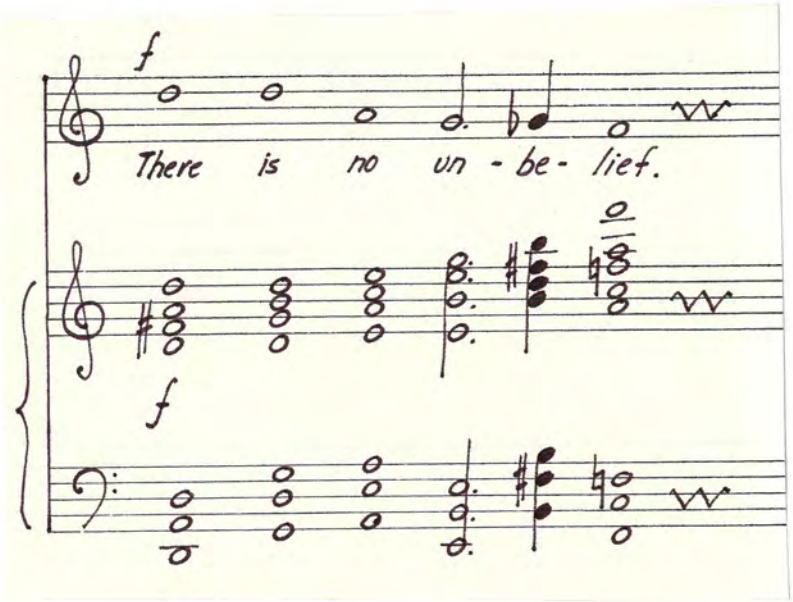
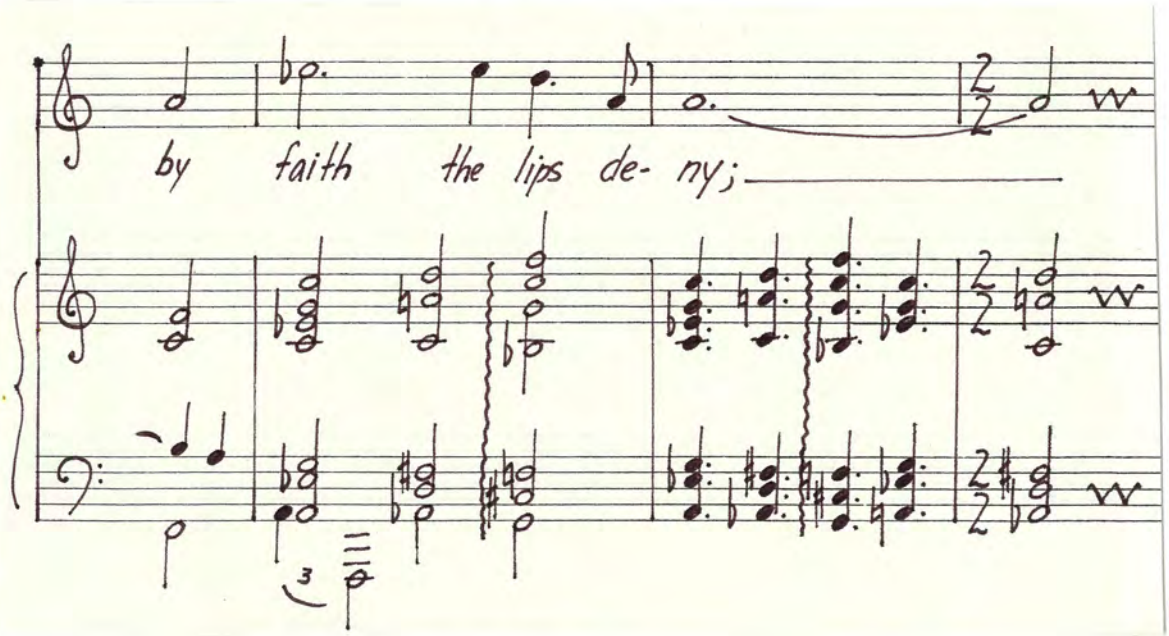


Fig. 2. from Religion, mm. 5-8



The combined rhythm of all the parts (see chart) presents a clear picture of the overall formal design of Religion: three phrases

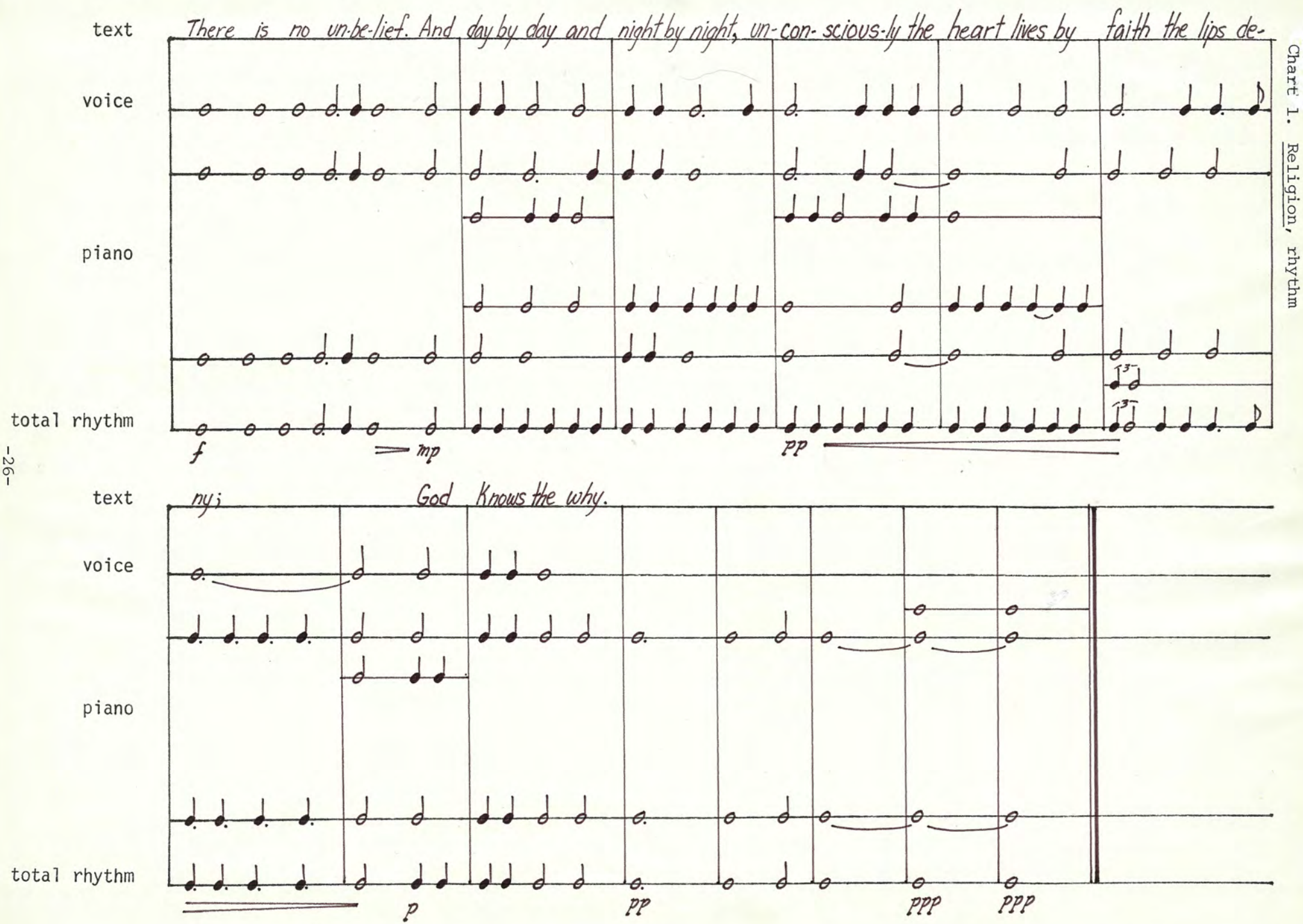


Chart 1. Religion, rhythm

forming a pattern of relative rest/activity/rest. This reflects by analogy the meaning of the text, moving from an expression of unswerving faith (m. 1), to its opposite (mm. 2-7), and returning to faith (mm. 8-14). This design is supported by a careful control of rhythmic density: the more active middle phrase, with its moving inner voices, chord arpeggiations, and syncopations, is surrounded by purely homophonic textures.

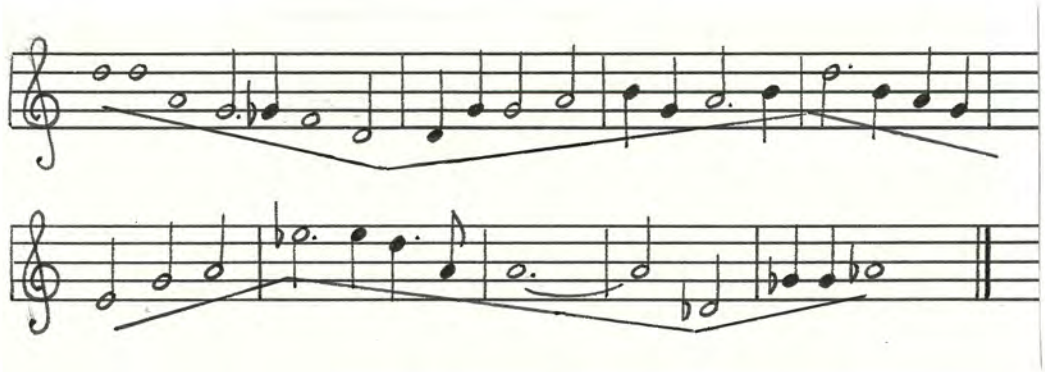
Range and Texture

The stylistic duality observed in Ives' use of rhythm is supported by registral and textural aspects of the score. The simplicity of the traditional hymn is suggested by both the limited tessitura (which remains mostly within the confines of the Great Staff), and the part writing which characterizes most of the middle and all of the final phrases. This is in sharp contrast to the dramatic rise in pitch of the piano set against the vocal descent of a major sixth in the first phrase, and the thickening of texture and expansion of range in the climactic measures of the central phrase (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

The extremes of the range are used with great effectiveness to highlight the polarity of Case's poem. The highest tone (F_6) appears at the peak of the opening declaration of faith (representing the higher inner aspect of man); the lowest tone (F_1) accompanies the expression of spiritual doubt (the lower aspect of man). This subtle use of registration is a further example of analogy as a compositional device.

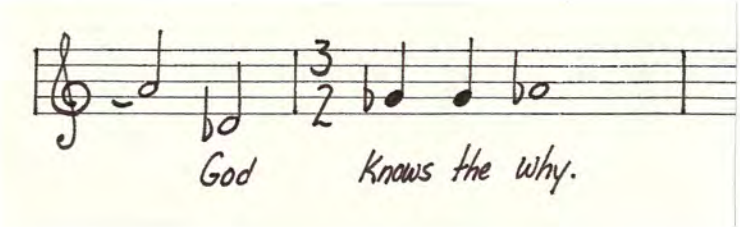
Vocally, the range is limited to a major ninth (Db_4 to Eb_5), and motion by small intervals predominates. The melody proceeds in a series of falling and rising waves, swelling to their highest point of tension at precisely the moment the piano strikes its lowest tone.

Fig. 3. from Religion, melody, mm. 1-9



Taking full advantage of the relationship between register and vocal timbre, Ives counterbalanced this point of strain by sinking to more resonant note to evoke a sense of God's presence (the low Db coinciding with the word "God" in m. 8).

Fig. 4. from Religion, melody, mm. 8-9



Harmony

The juxtaposition of diverse harmonic idioms is quite marked from phrase to phrase, supporting the rhythmic design described above. The triadic but tonally vague beginning sets forth an harmonic progression that would not seem out of place in an Elizabethan lute song. The brief chromatic interplay between F# and F♮ is similarly non-functional, i.e., no tonal dynamism is created by it.

This tonal uncertainty is immediately offset in the central phrase. The vocal ascent, D-G, is harmonized by a dominant/tonic progression, firmly establishing G major as the tonal center. But as the phrase progresses, the level of dissonance gradually increases, the tonality becoming more and more vague. The pure triads of the first phrase give way to seventh chords, chords with added tones, and culminate with a rotating series of three dissonant chords that thoroughly muddy the once clear tonal waters (mm. 6 and 7). Ives' use of increasing dissonance to express spiritual distance from God is as apparent as the medieval "diabolus in musica" (note the tritone, A-Eb, in the vocal part).

Despite the tonal confusion, the chromaticism in these measures, unlike that of the initial phrase, is entirely functional in nature. Each chord creates in turn its own tonal pulls and tugs, albeit contrary to those of the others. This tonal restlessness gives way before the final phrase, as the augmented sixth, Ab-F#, is resolved as an enharmonically misspelled French augmented sixth (Ebb-Gb-Ab-C) in

Gb major.

This abrupt modulation (from G to Gb major) is but a further example of Ives' sometimes literal mind at work. Familiar with the "vagaries of congregational singing, where a hymn is likely to go slower and slower and flatter and flatter in pitch,"[13] he employed this in his sacred music, frequently dropping melodic fragments and/or entire key areas by a semitone.

This and other similar examples of realism in Ives' music arise from his sympathy with philosophical realism, "the theory of the reality of abstract or general terms."[14] Such an outlook led Ives to a dualistic view of artistic creativity, a double arrow pointing from the natural and common to the spiritual (the use of popular melodies, and literal imitation of actual events), and back again (the expression of abstract conceptions by means of musical analogy). Ives' penchant for ambiguous endings, as exemplified by the incomplete plagal cadence in Religion (see Fig. 5), is an example of the latter aspect of realism. Rosalie Perry writes,

> Probability and human nature often leave problems unsolved, so Ives' endings are often confessions of the irresolvable complexities of life.[15]

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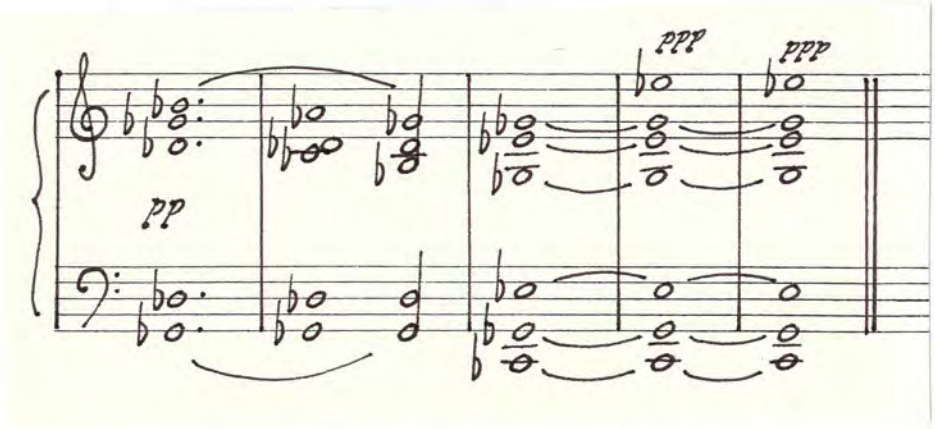
[13] Henry and Sidney Cowell, Charles Ives and His Music (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 79.

[14] Dagobert D. Runes, Dictionary of Philosophy (New York: Philosophical Library, 1942), p. 264.

[15] Rosalie Sandra Perry, Charles Ives and the American Mind (The Kent State University Press, 1974), p. 65.

Fig. 5. from Religion, mm. 10-14



In the context of Lizzie Case's statement about the nature of faith, what is "irresolvable" is man's inability to comprehend the infinite complexity of God. Thus, Ives leaves us hanging, beyond the point of intellectual understanding, "standing on a summit at the door of the infinite."[16]

Borrowed Material

In his desire to arouse in the listener a sense of the immediacy of divinity, Ives turned to the hymn tunes he had heard as a child at the "outdoor Camp Meeting services."[17] There he had heard a "power and exaltation in these great conclaves of sound from humanity"[18] that, belying their simplicity, evoked "something felt, way down and way up - a man's experience of men!"[19]

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[16] Essays, op. cit., p. 16.

[17] Memos, op. cit., p. 132.

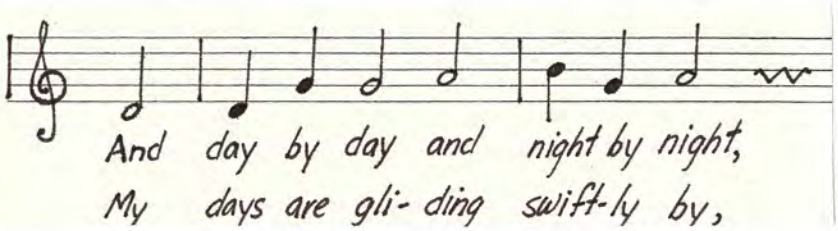
[18] Ibid., p. 133.

[19] Ibid., p. 132.

The thematic material in Religion is largely derived from fragments of three hymns: Shining Shore, by George Frederick Root (noted by Ives in the score), Lowell Mason's Bethany, and Azmon, by Carl G. Glaser. A glance at the texts usually associated with the quoted fragments clearly demonstrates their relationship with the subject matter of Religion.

The passage of our life through time is expressed equally by Ives' chosen text and the opening verse of Shining Shore, "my days are gliding swiftly by . . ."[20]

Fig. 6. from Religion, melody, mm. 2-3



Azmon and Bethany (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5, respectively) begin with, "we bear the strain of earthly care, but bear it not alone,"[21] and, "Nearer, my God, to thee."[22] It is apparent that Ives chose these melodies primarily for their associative value, for their common theme of God as an abiding presence and friend directly relates to and

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[20] Philip Newman, op. cit., Volume I, p. 272.

[21] Clarence Dickinson, ed., The Hymnal (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1933), No. 179.

[22] Ibid., No. 261.

amplifies the meaning of his song.

Is, then, the import of Ives' music lessened if the audience is unfamiliar with the associative implications of his musical quotations? The answer, upon first thought, would seem to be in the affirmative, for certainly the thoughts and images aroused in a listener well versed in hymnody would differ from those of one unacquainted with the genre. Yet, delving a bit deeper, we can see some possibility for another response, one more mystical, more transcendental, but approaching nearer, perhaps, to the very heart of music.

Assume, with Ives, music to be capable of translating, if not the particulars of a given text, then its essential emotional content into terms that may be intuitively understood. The congruence of melody and text in the Protestant hymnal would not, then, be coincidental. Rather, each would be a reflection of the other, the words more in terms of mind, the music in the language of the heart. The perceptive listener, therefore, would lose little by an ignorance of the precise associative content of a melody, for he or she might comprehend that which is beyond the power of words to express. Ives writes,

> No matter how sincere and confidential men are in trying to know or assuming that they do know each other's mood and habits of thought, the net result leaves a feeling that all is left unsaid; for the reason of their incapacity to know each other, though they use the same words . . . But we would rather believe that music is beyond any analogy to word language and that the time is coming, but not in our lifetime, when it will develop possibilities inconceivable now - a language so transcendent that its heights and depths will be common

to all mankind.[23]

Such an extraordinary vision of the possibilities for music freed Ives to use, without self-consciousness, whatever means, borrowed or otherwise, best expressed his social and religious orientation. His view of life was metaphysical, i.e., as all outward phenomena is necessarily recreated inwardly in order for us to perceive it, the use of pre-existing material is but a sharing from that same source, call it what you will, which provided the original inspiration. "All occupations," Ives wrote, "of man's body and soul in their diversity come from but one mind and soul!"[24]

Four Songs Based on Hymntune Themes

In his collection of 114 Songs, Ives included settings of four hymns, all arrangements of music composed for instrumental ensembles in which pre-existing musical material plays a significant role.[25]

The introductory measures of each of the hymns contain material which is in marked contrast to the style of Religion. These sections are, in each case, direct transcriptions of the instrumental music

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[23] Essays, op. cit., p. 8.

[24] Ibid., p. 96.

[25] Numbers 44 through 47 in 114 Songs, they are, respectively, Watchman, At the River, His Exaltation (a setting of Autumn), and The Camp-Meeting (a setting from Woodworth). The instrumental works from which these are derived are the First Violin Sonata, third movement (Watchman); the Fourth Violin Sonata, third movement (At the River); the Second Violin Sonata, first movement (His Exaltation); and, the Third Symphony, "Communion" movement (The Camp-Meeting).

preceding the actual hymn, and understandable only within the context of the larger original work. (This is especially true of The Camp-Meeting, which, strictly speaking, is not a sacred song at all, but rather a symphonic impression of a fervent camp meeting. The actual hymn, Wood-worth by William Bradbury, does not begin until the latter third of the song, and is preceded by a lengthy descriptive text by Ives.)

The settings of the hymns themselves, though, share with Religion its subtle blend of contemporary and traditional style elements.

Rhythm

With Religion, the four hymns share the use of simple rhythmic patterns, tempered by moments of syncopation and other rhythmic nuances. The meter of each composition remains relatively consistent throughout.

The marked polymeter of Lowell Mason's Watchman ($^{6}_{8}/^{3}_{4}$) is the least traditional of the rhythmic techniques used in Ives' songs with sacred texts. Despite this, the overall rhythmic texture of Watchman is stylistically consistent with the other hymn settings, predominated by a simple combinatory pattern of quarter/two eighths/quarter, or quarter/two eighths/two eighths (see Fig. 7).

Ives' sense of humour is at work in the upbeat At the River. It enters in the form of the briefest of syncopations, yet this single fleeting nuance is made evident only in contrast with the rhythmic

simplicity of the preceding measures (see Fig. 8).

Fig. 7. from Watchman, typical rhythms

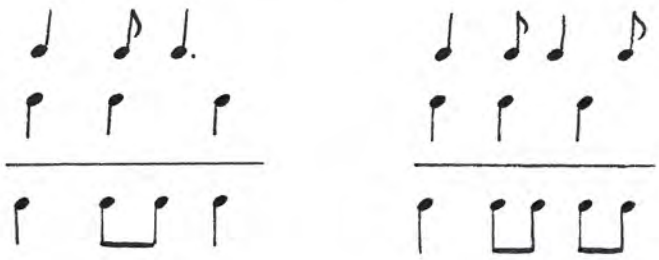
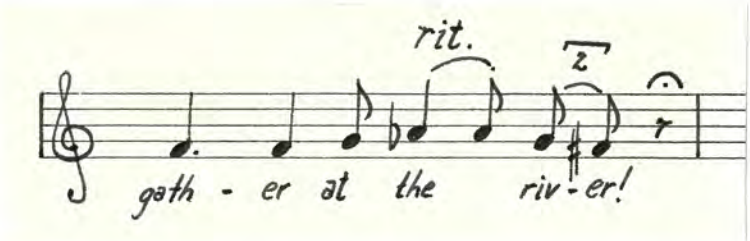


Fig. 8. from At the River, melody, m. 13

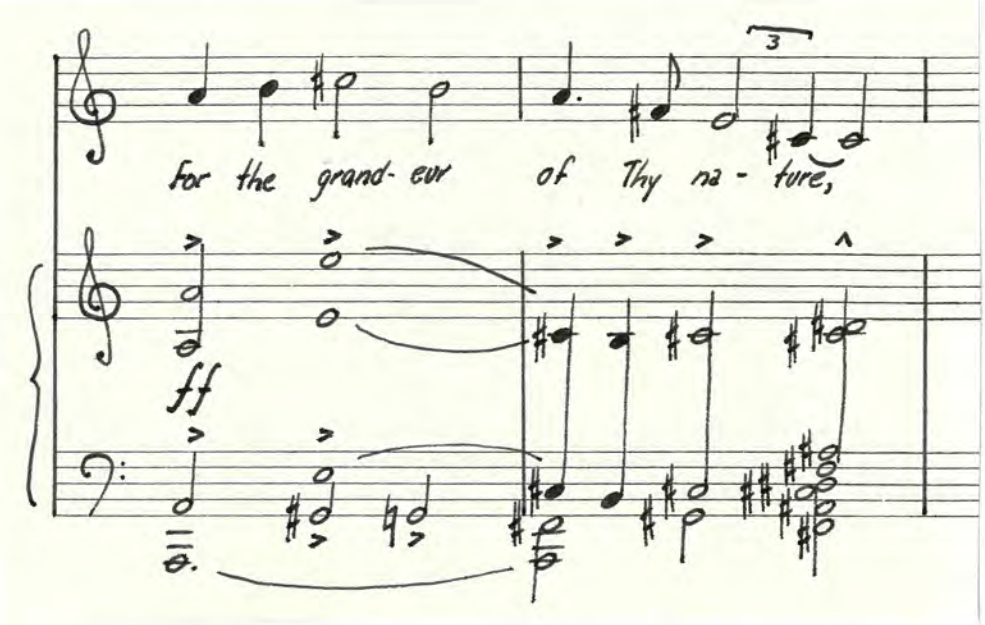


His Exaltation, a setting from the second stanza of Francois Barthelemon's Autumn, includes occasional use of polyrhythms, i.e., triplet against duplet divisions of the half-note beat. The rhythms are otherwise strong chordal movements in half notes or quarter notes, expressive of the sentiment of the hymn's opening words (see Fig. 9).

Further, the additional two note 'ad lib.' incorporated into the firmly established $\frac{3}{2}$ meter (m. 21) is comparable with the single $\frac{2}{2}$ bar in Religion, a similar rhythmic nuance.

In The Camp-Meeting, Ives renotated the original $\frac{3}{4}$ meter of Woodworth as $\frac{6}{8}$, but kept its melodic rhythm and metrical sense intact.

Fig. 9. from His Exaltation, mm. 12-13



In contrast to the other hymn settings, the rhythmic texture is surprisingly complex, each voice maintaining a relatively distinct rhythmic profile. This greater activity, though, is more visual than aural. The quick-moving tenor, for instance, was most likely intended to be played only at the discretion of the performer, and, if played, to be barely audible. (Although Ives offers no performance directions, the evidence of similar passages in other works suggests that it would not be out of place to have the small notes played by a second instrumentalist. Perhaps, guided by the instrumentation used in the Third Symphony, this part could be performed, con sordino, by a violist.)

Comparison of the four hymns brings to light a relationship as regards rhythmic complexity analogous to the three phrases of Religion. The two songs whose texts suggest a movement from separateness, towards

unity with God, are characterized by comparatively greater rhythmic activity (the polymetrical Watchman, with its searching questions, and the independent part writing of Woodworth, an heartfelt depiction of the relationship between sinful man and a benign God). These may be contrasted with the simpler settings of At the River, with its affirming "Yes, we'll gather at the river," and Barthelemon's paean Autumn in His Exaltation.

Range and Texture

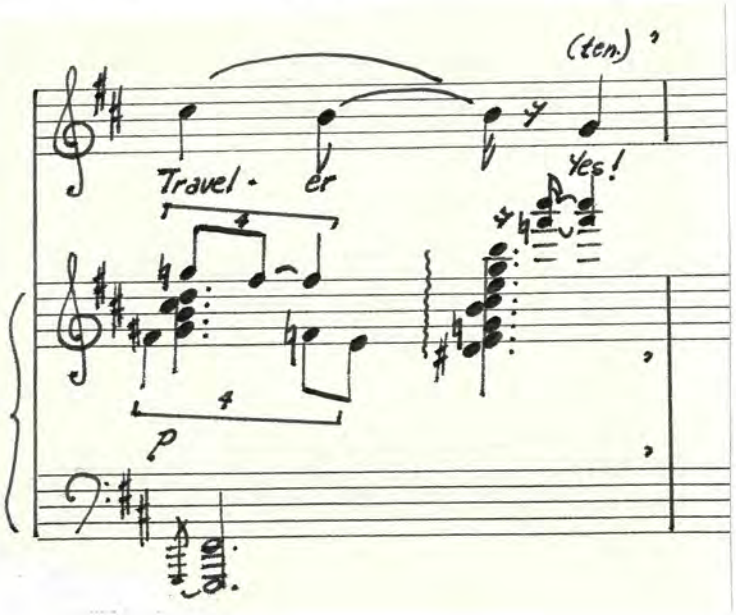
Although each of the four hymns has, of course, its own registral and textural nuances, there are certain general characteristics which they share with one another and with Religion.

First, they maintain a relatively small tessitura, and emphasis of registral extremes, high or low, is the exception rather than the rule. Second, they remain relatively static as regards registral motion, i.e. sudden and large registral leaps occur only rarely in both the vocal and piano parts. Third, the piano textures, as in Religion, are modeled upon typical hymn accompaniment styles. (Again, the greater density of The Camp-Meeting is more apparent than actual. If the tenor part is left out, the texture is reduced to a simple chorale style in closed position, thickening only in the two measures preceding the climactic Eb chord in m. 27. This is not unlike the increase of rhythmic, textural, and harmonic activity that takes place in the central phrase of Religion.)

As in Religion, there are numerous examples of registral and/or textural changes which are used to convey abstract conceptions.

In Watchman, for instance, Ives departed from the text of the original hymn to answer the query, "aught of joy or hope?" with the confident repetition, "Traveler, Yes! Traveler, Yes!" The watchman's hopeful prophesy, a far off vision of promise, is expressed by Ives' use of suddenly expanded range, closely spaced and arpeggiated chords, and the shimmering, dissonant major third which closes the phrase.

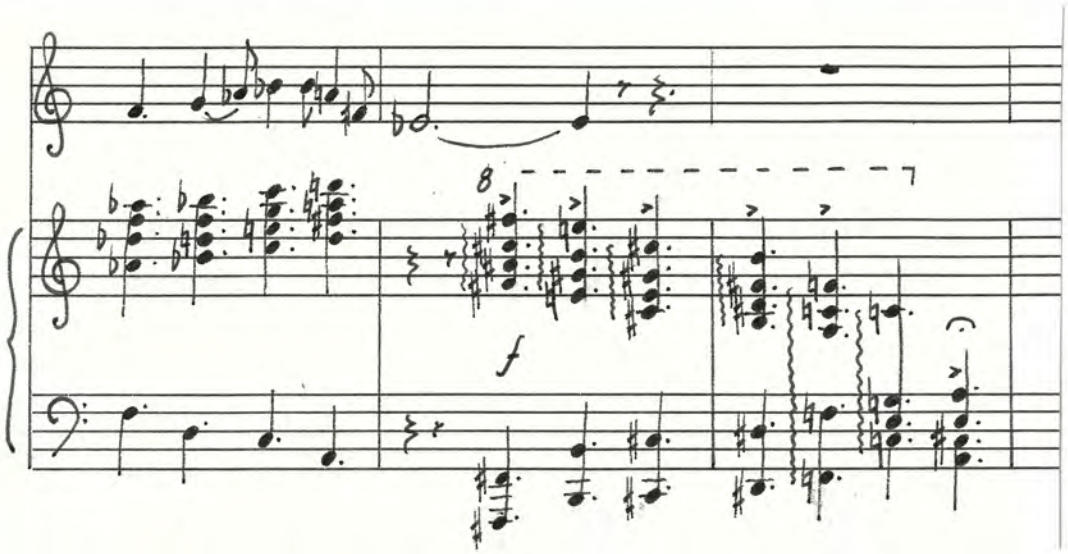
Fig. 10. from Watchman, m. 16



In At the River, registral motion in both the voice and piano coordinate to add a philosophical dimension to the phrase, "throne of God." As in Religion, the word "God" coincides with the lowest melodic tone (Eb_4). At the same moment, the accompaniment expands to its greatest compass, and then contracts to a single, central triad, as if

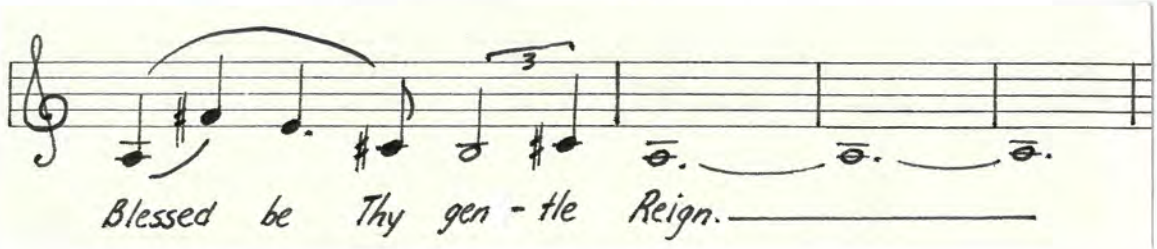
to incorporate all the world into one broad gesture.[26]

Fig. 11. from At the River, mm. 20-22



In His Exaltation, in a departure from the original melody, Ives lowered the concluding phrase by an octave. His intention seems to have

Fig. 12. from His Exaltation, melody, mm. 22-25



been, as in Religion, to take advantage of the increased resonance of the voice in its lower register to create an image-in-sound of God's

[26] Although radically different in style, the songs Soliloquy and On the Antipodes use similar registral gestures (see Chapter Four).

"gentle Reign."

Finally, range is used in Ives' setting of Woodworth (in The Camp-Meeting) to depict the gulf that exists between God and man. The extremes of the range are struck simultaneously on the word "Thee" (Eb_1 to Eb_6 in m. 27), and then wends its way back to within two octaves as man responds, "I come! I come!"

Harmony

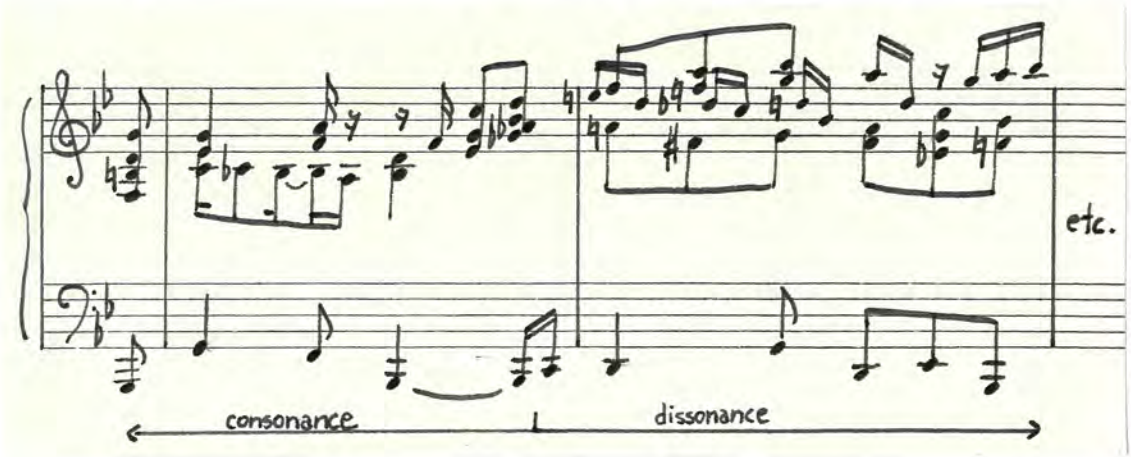
The Four Songs Based on Hymntune Themes and Religion share a common triadic and tonal harmonic idiom. The tertial harmonies (as opposed to secundal, quartal, or other harmonic arrangements) include simple triads, triads with added tones, seventh chords, and, occasionally, chords of the ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth. A comparison of chord types used in Ives' hymn settings reveals a pattern of relative consonance and dissonance which is coincident with the underlying implications of the hymn texts.

Watchman, the most visionary of the four hymns, achieves the greatest relative dissonance. It is the only song in this group in which seventh chords appear with greater frequency than simple triads, and chords with clusters are a substantive part of the overall sonority (see Fig. 10). In addition, Watchman is the only sacred song, including Religion, which is harmonized in other than the major mode. Accompanying the D major melody nearly throughout, the open fifth in the bass, B - F#, creates an Aeolian modality.

Another, although brief, modal reference may be found in His Exaltation. The harmonization of the melody in m. 17, with a G major triad acting as a dominant substitute, creates a Mixolydian effect. This is similar to the role of the F major triads in the G major section of Religion.

Ives' use of relative consonance and dissonance as an interpretative device is also readily apparent within individual songs. In The Camp-Meeting, for instance, mild dissonances in the concluding phrase dissolve to a harmonic texture of simple triads, fading away on a final, tranquil, Bb major triad.[27] This parallels the serene resolution implied by man's affirmative response to the "Lamb of God." Also, as in Religion, the central climactic phrase is replete with dissonances expressive of man's simultaneous yearning for and distance from God. These measures contrast sharply with the simple triadic harmonies that surround them.

Fig. 13. from The Camp-Meeting, accompaniment, mm. 25-26



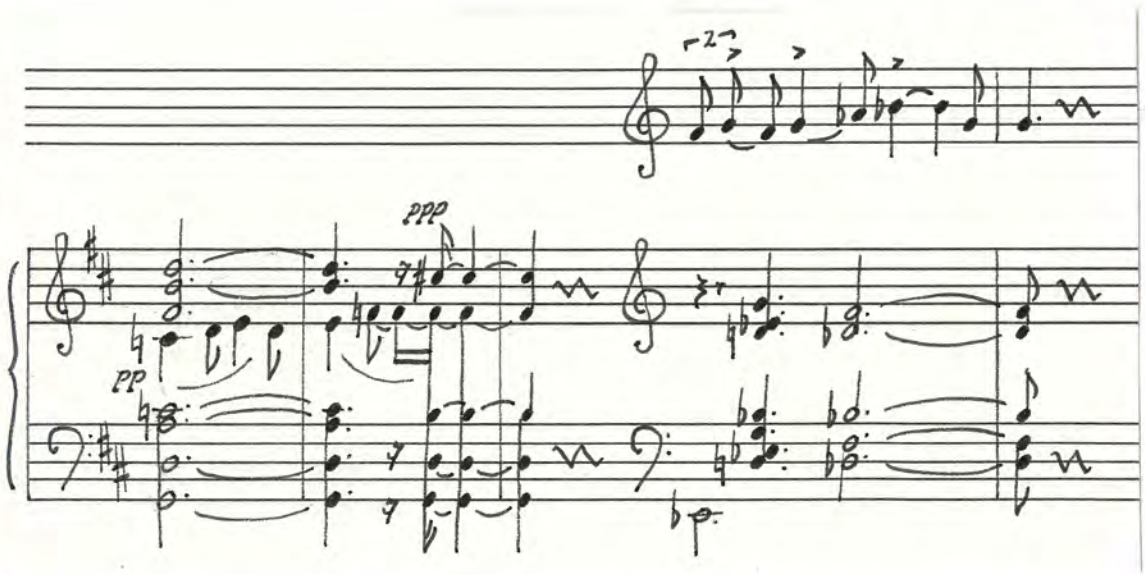
[27] In the orchestral version, this final harmony is overlaid by a dissonant shimmer of bells, pianissimo - a remarkable effect.

In At the River, the phrase, "throne of God," is accompanied entirely by triads, in obvious contrast to the chords with sevenths and/or added tones which precede it. This harmonic setting is similar in style and effect to the opening phrase of Religion (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 11), and points out a relationship in Ives' music between the concept of a loving God, and the simple, unadorned triad.[28]

Two important harmonic features of Religion are also found in some of the hymn settings. First, the ongoing nature of spiritual search is suggested by the inconclusive endings of both Watchman and At the River.

Fig. 14a. from Watchman, final cadence

Fig. 14b. from At the River, final cadence



[28] This relationship is even clearer in more dissonant songs, where triads accompany the words "God," or "love." Examples of this can be found in At Sea, Immortality, and Paracelsus (Nos. 4, 5, and 30 in 114 Songs).

Second, there are brief intonational "errors" in At the River and His Exaltation. Although on a smaller scale than the modulation that occurs in Religion, they are further examples of the realism that is a characteristic of Ives' music.

Fig. 15a. from At the River, melody, mm. 20-21

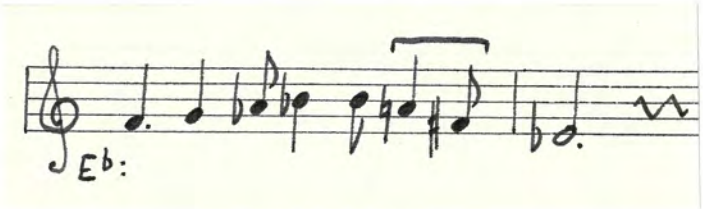
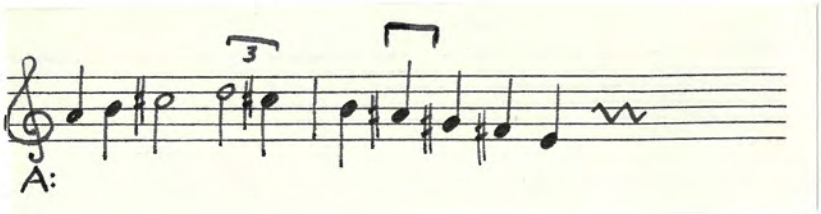


Fig. 15b. from His Exaltation, melody, mm. 20-21



Conclusion

Both the practical and mystical aspects of Ives' religious belief were translated by him into the language of tone, the former by means of realistic imitations of the religious music with which he was so familiar, the latter by the use of more experimental techniques to suggest the abstract, philosophical implications of his chosen texts. Ives' sacred style is characterized by:

Rhythm

1) predominantly consistent meter;
2) relatively simple rhythmic patterns;
3) slow to moderate tempos;

Range and Texture

4) tessitura limited to approximately the four octave span of the Great Staff;
5) frequent use of chorale style part writing;
6) melodic motion characterized by small intervals;

Harmony

7) a tonal and diatonic harmonic idiom;
8) a predominance of triadic chord types, i.e., simple triads, and triads with sevenths and/or added tones;
9) frequent use of major key and chord sonorities, tempered by hints of modality;
10) the realistic portrayal of the inaccuracies of amateur

choral singing;

11) the use of chromaticism and relative dissonance to represent, by analogy, spiritual distance from God; and

Borrowed Material

12) quotation from hymn tunes with related texts.

Having established the above style elements as being characteristic of Ives' sacred music, it becomes necessary to discuss Hymn,[29] a setting from a poem by the Prussian mystic Gerhardt Tersteegen, which seemingly contradicts these conclusions.

The principal difference between this "supreme hymn,"[30] and Ives' other settings of religious texts is in its use of harmony. Drawing upon the whole-tone scale as the main source of both its harmonic and melodic dimensions, Hymn argues against the notion of a unified musical language that, for Ives, best expressed his feelings and ideas about religion.

Viewed, however, in the context of Religion and the Four Songs Based on Hymntune Themes, Ives' use of relative dissonance and tonal tension to express spiritual distance from God emerges as a compositional principle which incorporates this apparently contradictory work.

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[29] No. 20 in 114 Songs.

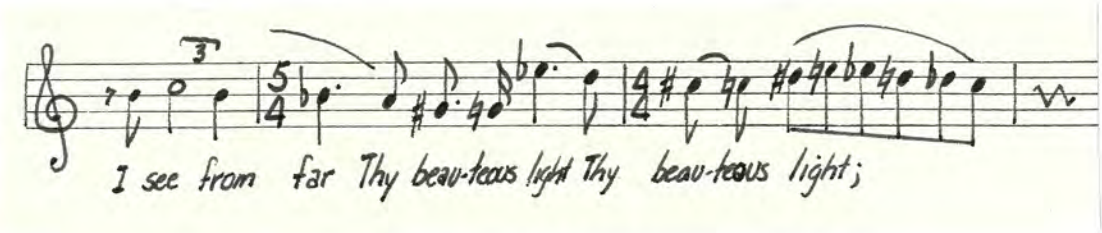
[30] 114 Songs, op. cit., p. 47.

The text of Hymn, to a greater extent than either Watchman or Woodworth, is concerned with the yearning of man for unity with God, a desire constantly at odds with the complex reality of man's actual nature. Hence, Ives chose an harmonic fabric of unbroken tonal tension, replete with unresolved whole-tone dominants and whole-tone melodies, to capture the quality of serious search into the realm of the unseen suggested by Tersteegen's poem - a setting entirely in keeping with the same compositional procedure which inspired the dissonances in both Watchman and The Camp-Meeting. The extramusical implications of Hymn's dissonances are further clarified by its concluding Bb major triad, similar to the final cadence of The Camp-Meeting, and carrying the sense of "rest" so earnestly sought after. Thus, an ordinary authentic cadence, in the music of other composers but a technical convention, becomes, in the context of Ives' psycho-musical language, rich with philosophical nuance.

Further, Hymn employs frequent melodic half-steps, a feature not found in any of Ives' other religious songs (where whole tones are the melodic interval of greatest frequency). Such chromatic passages are used specifically to convey a sense of loss at the separation between man and God (see Fig. 16).

As regards other style elements, though, Hymn shares much in common with Ives' other sacred songs. These include simplicity of rhythm and meter (Hymn has a combined rhythmic pattern of nearly uninterrupted eighth notes, and is in common time in all but a single

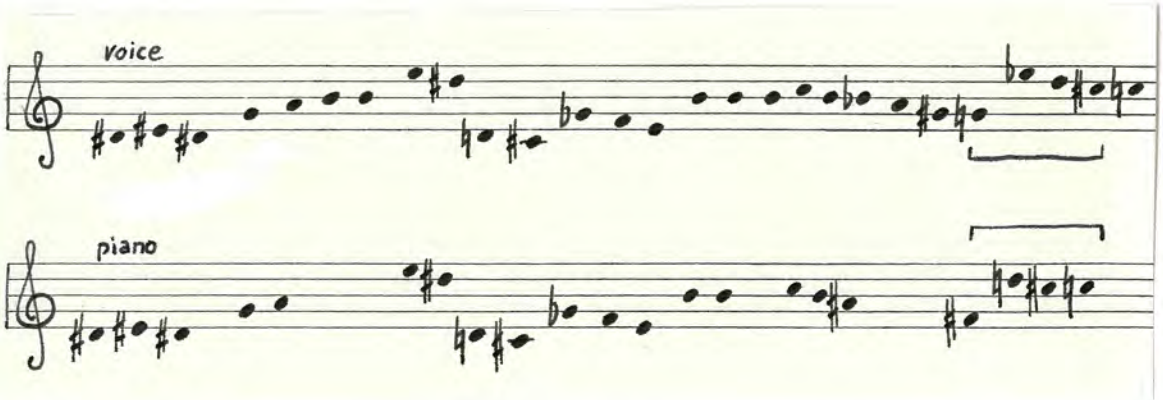
Fig. 16. from Hymn, melody, mm. 12-14



measure); slow tempo; limited registral span; regularity of texture; and, a tonal, if chromatic, harmonic idiom.

Hymn is also an excellent example of Ives' use of modulation in imitation of the "vagaries of congregational singing." First, the repetition of the opening vocal phrase in the piano accompaniment concludes a semitone lower than the original. Second, the

Fig. 17. from Hymn, melodic extract, voice (mm. 8-14), piano (mm. 15-19)

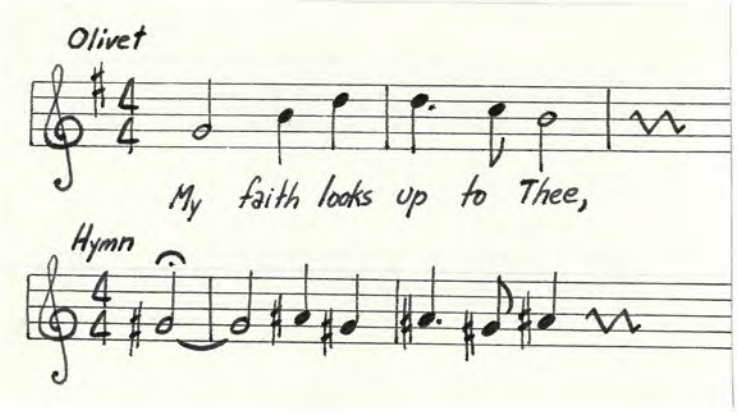


dominant/tonic relationship between the F# major triad in the introduction (m. 2) and the B rooted whole-tone chord harmonizing the vocal entrance (m. 8), is echoed by the relationship between the F major seventh on the word "rest" (m. 20), and the concluding Bb major triad

six measures later. Thus, as in Religion, the overall motion of a downward minor second is emphasized.

Finally, use of pre-existing musical material is an important feature of Hymn. Although Lowell Mason's Olivet[31] is quoted directly only in the final phrase, it serves as the underlying thematic source for the entire composition, its rhythmic profile appearing from the first measure. The associative relationship of its text is equally

Fig. 18. from Olivet, mm. 1-2, and Hymn, mm. 1-2



evident, closely paralleling the sentiment of Tersteegen's poem. (Compare Palmer's, "my faith looks up to Thee," with Tersteegen's, "I see from far Thy beauteous light.")

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[31] The Hymnal, op. cit., No. 285.

Chapter III

SONGS OF SOCIAL COMMENTARY

Ives was not one to philosophize in the abstract. His views were valuable to him only in so far as they might be practically applied to life. This is most evident as regards his views on politics. Ives' religious and transcendental beliefs shaped and transformed his social outlook - and out of this arose much impassioned prose.[1]

Ives believed in the innate good sense of the common man, and strove to find a way for that good sense to be registered upon the national and international political arena - overcoming the barriers of nationalism, political opportunism, and big business interests. To these ends he penned a plea for a twentieth amendment allowing for the direct expression of the will of the electorate, bypassing the party system which Ives felt "emasculated (the) voice of the people."[2] He proposed that a property ownership limit be imposed on those who would

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[1] Howard Boatwright's edition of the Essays Before a Sonata contains a broad sampling of Ives' political writings. Included are The Majority, a work summarizing Ives' principal social and political views, as well as Stand by the President and the People, Concerning a Twentieth Amendment, Letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt and Memoranda, and A Peoples' World Nation.

[2] Nineteen Songs, op. cit., p. 32.

hold government positions.[3] He favored the League of Nations.

An Election

These views found their way into Ives' musical consciousness. In a review of Ives' works, Henry Bellamann wrote:

> Mr. Ives would not exclude any phase of life that happened to seize upon his attention. He even takes a "crack" at politics. There is a unison-chorus song which is an invective against the "old ladies (male and female)" who wouldn't stand by Woodrow Wilson and his League of Nations . . .[4]

The "unison-chorus" song is An Election. It is subtitled, "Soliloquy of an old man whose son lies in Flanders Fields. It is the day after election; he is sitting by the roadside, looking down the valley towards the station."[5]

Ives' opinion of the election results is firmly expressed by his text.

> It strikes me that . . .
> Some men and women got tired of a big job;
> but, over there our men did not quit.

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[3] Limitation of the property rights of individuals is a principal theme of The Majority, particularly for those who would hold government office. In Stand by the President and the People, written in 1917 in response to the establishment of the War Industries Board, Ives wrote, "The time has almost come when no man who has personal property in the amount of, say, $100,000, should have any active part in a government by the people." (Essays, op. cit., p. 137.)

[4] Henry Bellamann, "Charles Ives, The Man and His Music," The Musical Quarterly, January 1933, p. 51.

[5] 114 Songs, op. cit., p. 50.

They fought and died that better things might be!
Perhaps some who stayed at home are beginning
to forget and to quit.
The pocketbook and certain little things talked
loud and "noble,"
And got in the way;
Too many readers go by the headlines,
party men will muddle up the facts,
So a good many citizens voted the way they
always did,
or thought a change back to the reg'lar thing
seemed natural enough.
'It's raining, lets throw out the weather man,
Kick him out! Kick him out, Kick him!'
Prejudice and politics, and the stand-patters
came in strong, and yelled,
'Slide back! Now you're safe, that's the easy
way!'
Then the timid smiled and looked relieved,
'We've got enough to eat, to hell with ideals!'
Some old women, male and female, had their day
today,
and the "ole mole came out of his hole";
But he won't stay out long,
God always drives him back!
Oh Captain, my Captain!
a heritage we've thrown away;
But we'll find it again,
my Captain, Captain, oh my Captain![6]

Ives formulated a musical style that underscored perfectly the biting sarcasm of his text. He wrote quickly - the score for male chorus and orchestra was completed within a month of the election. Arranged in 1921 for voice and piano, An Election was included in 114 Songs titled Nov. 2, 1920. It is also included, with some minor revisions, in Nineteen Songs.

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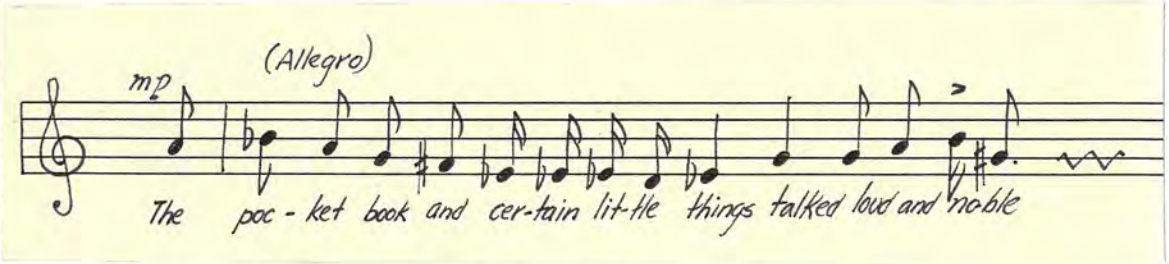
[6] The text given here is from Nineteen Songs and is a slight variant of the 1920 version appearing as No. 22 in 114 Songs.

Rhythm

The most striking rhythmic feature of An Election is the dependency of its rhythms upon the text. Ives' quick moving prose sets its own meterless, improvisatory rhythmic patterns, the occasional bar-lines acting only to assist the eye in recognizing phrase endings and formal divisions.

The piano and voice are often in rhythmic unison, and nowhere attain the polyrhythmical complexity that characterizes some of Ives' other works. Imitative of speech, the rhythmic patterns primarily consist of simple combinations of quarters, eighths, and sixteenth notes.

Fig. 19. from An Election, melody, m. 8



The prose character of An Election is further emphasized by tempo changes expressive of the speaker's mood. As the "old man" warms to his subject, the tempo accelerates. The initial "Adagio" increases in speed until the climactic "Presto (very hard and fast)." We feel him become lost in the vehemence of his own argument - "Kick him out! Kick him out! Kick him!" Then, as if suddenly recalling his original thought and mood, he returns to the opening tempo to forcefully declare his visionary intention:

Oh Captain, my Captain!
a heritage we've thrown away;
But we'll find it again . . .

Range and Texture

The piano range is over six octaves (C_1 to E_7); the vocal range, one-and-one-half octaves (C_4 to $F\#_5$). This falls between the extremes of the songs with religious texts and those songs descriptive of nature. Yet the large range is deceptive, for it is used only sparingly to express the grander notions, as in "they fought and died that better things might be," or, "Oh Captain! my Captain!" The rest of the dialogue is presented with a far smaller tessitura, one more reflective of actual speech.[7]

Ives' use of melodic intervals is analogous to his use of range. Although a wide variety of intervals are used, the larger intervals appear most frequently in the opening and closing sections where the piano range is also large. The longer middle section is characterized by a smaller range and predominant use of small intervals.

Major and minor seconds are the most frequently used intervals in the vocal part, and are often associated with motives which emphasize their distinctive qualities, i.e., the descending chromatic scale or the ascending whole-tone scale (see Fig. 20).

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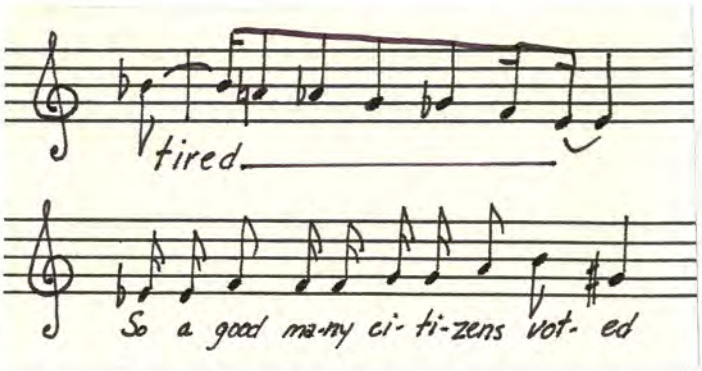
[7] The performance directions "half-spoken" and "spoken" clearly indicate the declamatory nature of the vocal part. An Election makes great theatre, and should be performed accordingly.

Fig. 20. from An Election, melody, mm. 5 and 9

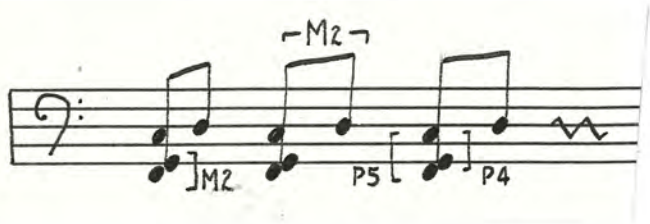


These smaller intervals play an important role in the piano accompaniment as well, forming both linear and vertical structures. The step-wise motives of the vocal part appear in the piano in the introductory descending chromatic bass line, and in fragments throughout much of the middle section.

The percussive nature of the piano is exploited to great advantage, rendering in sound that part of man which is passionate, angry, and vitally alive. The direct expression of righteous anger is characterized by a bass ostinato in steady eighth notes, consisting of major seconds and perfect fifths, the seconds appearing both melodically and harmonically (see Fig. 21).

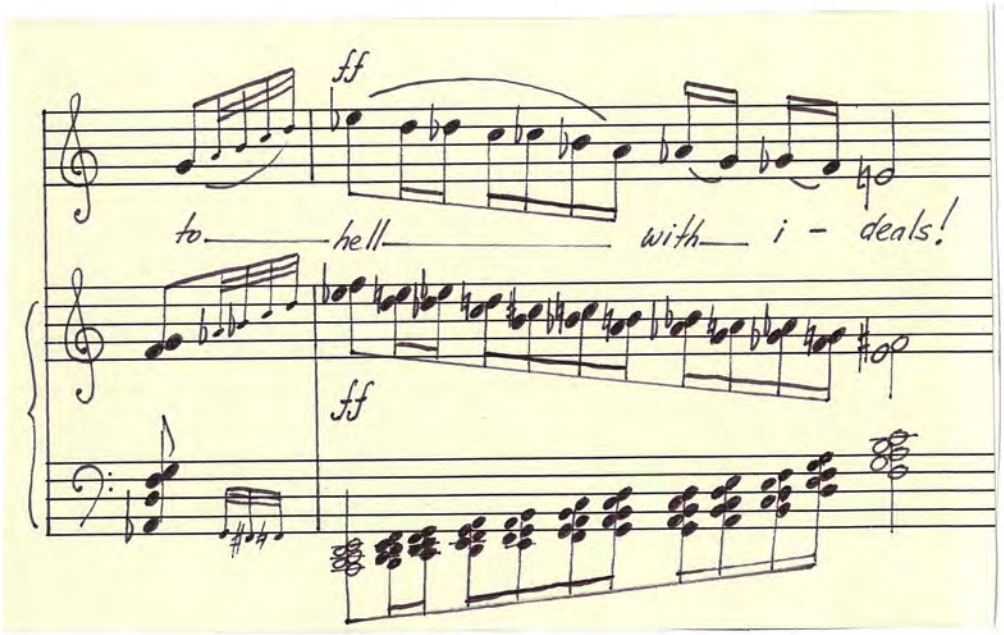
This combination of major seconds and perfect fifths are a principal texture throughout An Election. The openness of the fifth (and its inversion, the perfect fourth) is used by Ives to express boldness of feeling and directness of action. This strength is

Fig. 21. from An Election, accompaniment, m. 9



fortified by the dissonance of the second, entering more and more as the emotional impact of Ives' message reaches its peak. The ebb and flow of emotion is graphically portrayed by the contrasting textures of open-sounding fifths and fourths against the harsher seconds.

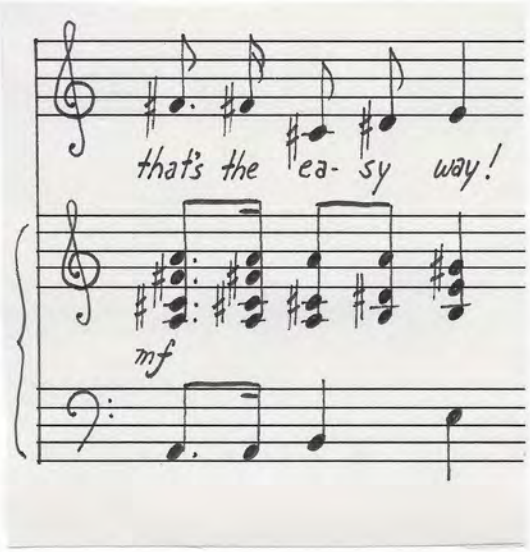
Fig. 22. from An Election, m. 16



The impact of these dissonances is accented by Ives' introduction of simplistic triadic textures. Within such a dissonant milieu, these progressions sound flaccid and weak. The text confirms what is apparent to the ear - triads are used to represent the lack of moral fibre

which Ives held responsible for the rejection of Woodrow Wilson's idealistic policies. Where Ives wished to make a stronger statement, and add

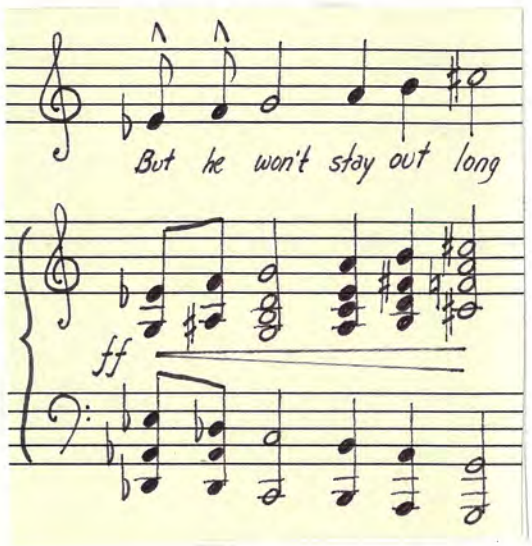
Fig. 23. from An Election, m. 12



some muscle to a triadic sonority, he used either dissonant added tones, or pitted chords against opposing bass notes (see Fig. 24).

Thus, two opposing chordal textures are set up to represent opposing aspects of man. The tension of strong thinking, the effort to stand by one's convictions and be counted, is represented by thick textures and interval and/or chord structures made up of perfect fifths and major seconds. These appear as either cluster chords, triads with added tones, or parallel fourths and fifths. The weakness of the "old women, male and female" and their idle acceptance of the easy way out, is expressed by relatively insipid harmonies of triads and seventh chords with "correct" voice leading.

Fig. 24. from An Election, m. 20



Harmony

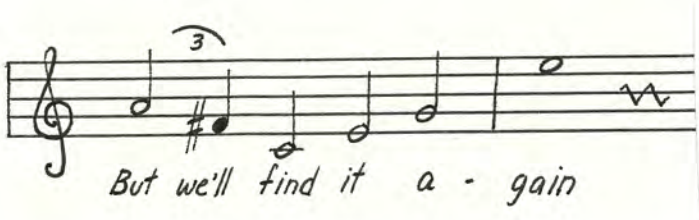
Ives chose a harshly dissonant yet tonal harmonic setting for An Election. Coinciding with the various uses of range and chordal textures are equally various harmonic sonorities.

To express powerful sentiment Ives uses a strongly tonal idiom crowded with dissonant added tones. Such an harmonic texture serves as both introduction and coda. The key is A Dorian, the mode established by an extended A minor triad with an added F# in the piano right hand. This is set against a descending chromatic bass line beginning on A.

In the coda, Ives creates an interplay between major and minor chord qualities that provides new and rich emotional overtones lacking

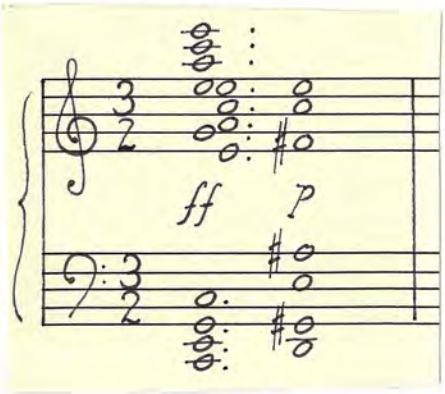
in the introductory statement. A C major harmony is introduced by the voice in an altered rendition of The Star-Spangled Banner.

Fig. 25. from An Election, melody, m. 25



The linear C major is supported in the final bars by an harmonic setting which lends itself to dual interpretation. C major sounds strongly due to the C triad in the bass, over which the octave A's sound as added tones. But, the role of A as tonic is strongly supported by the following chord, an E_2^4 with added tones (sharp 4, sharp 9, and 13).[8]

Fig. 26. from An Election, accompaniment, m. 26



This modal duality depicts vividly the simultaneous anguish and hope expressed by the final lines of text. With great subtlety, Ives

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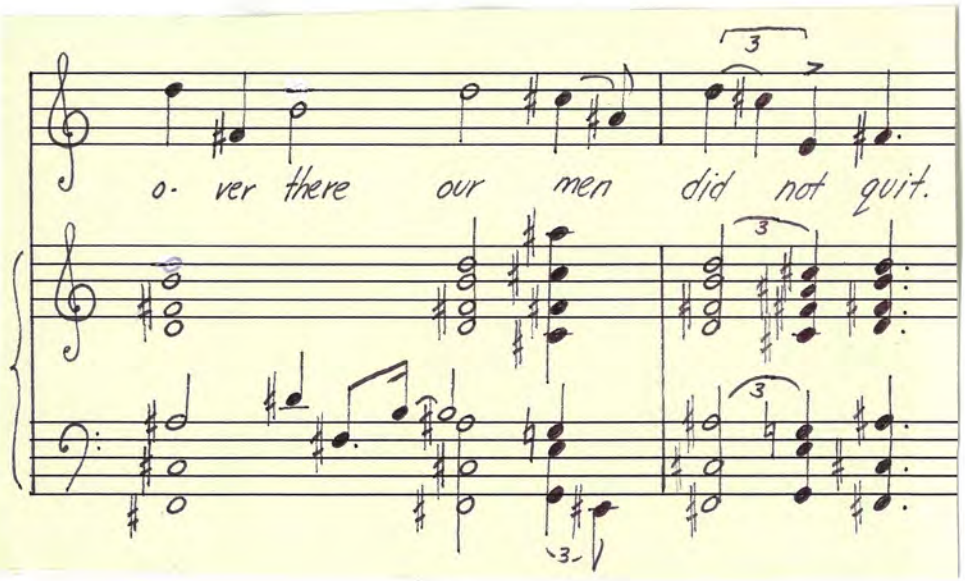
[8] These concluding measures appear also in Lincoln, the Great Commoner (No. 11 in 114 Songs).

used the connections between modal quality and mood to capture a complex psychological gestalt.

A minor sonority also supports the melodic quotation from George M. Cohan's Over There, a passionate cry that so many lives should not have been lost in vain. The agony of war is brought to mind through Ives' stress of dissonance - the consistent juxtaposition of the tonic B minor triad against its dominant, and of the dominant against the lowered sixth degree of the scale.

Fig. 27. from An Election, mm. 6-7



A second harmonic fabric is used in the recitative sections. The bass ostinato pattern (see Fig. 21) firmly establishes tonality, while allowing the voice to wander freely through the chromatic scale. This procedure occurs through much of An Election, first on D, then on F.

A third, distinctive although brief, tonal sonority is the trite cadential formula satirically representative of the "easy way out" (see Fig. 23).

The only sections of An Election where tonality is avoided are those brief percussive phrases in which we hear the speaker at his most angry and bitter moments.

Summary

An Election epitomizes the stream-of-consciousness technique, one of Ives' principal compositional developments. Rosalie Perry writes,

> Ives employed devices . . . analogous to the rhetorical means used by stream-of-consciousness authors. These include . . . ellipsis (the omission of one or more words, or parts of a tune phrase, obviously understood, necessary to make the expression complete), and anacoluthon (the abandonment in the midst of a sentence of one type of construction in favor of one grammatically or musically different.[9]

These, along with free association, aptly describe An Election. Ives' rambling "soliloquy" is chiefly characterized by:

1) abrupt changes of tempo and textures;

2) the juxtaposition of disparate harmonic elements; and

3) fragmentary entrances of familiar tunes (Over There and The Star-Spangled Banner).

An Election is also notable for its precise control of dissonance

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[9] Rosalie Sandra Perry, op. cit., p. 51.

to capture the emotional nuances of an old man's bitter commentary on the sorry state of world affairs.

Other Songs of Social Commentary

Ives' active interest in social affairs is evidenced by a number of major vocal works in this genre. Besides An Election, Ives composed settings of Vachel Lindsay's famous General William Booth Enters Into Heaven,[10] Matthew Arnold's sonnet West London,[11] and from Lincoln, the Great Commoner[12] by Edwin Markham. All of these were either derived from or transcribed to large orchestral settings.

Despite their apparent differences, each of these works evokes a common sentiment, stressed by Ives in his essay The Majority,[13] of hope for the eventual redemption of mankind. They share too a common musical expression, powerful yet sublime, to communicate Ives' idealism and vision - a message for all we "sharers in a common human fate."[14]

It is the essential humanism of these songs which explains Ives' choice of musical techniques. Each of them suggests the rhythms and voices of people, sometimes awkward, sometimes saddened by the struggle of life, yet always hopeful and pointing "to a better time than ours."[15]

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[10] Nineteen Songs, op. cit., pp. 2-7.

[11] No. 105 in 114 Songs.

[12] No. 11 in 114 Songs.

[13] Essays, op. cit., pp. 139-199.

[14] 114 Songs, op. cit., p. 246.

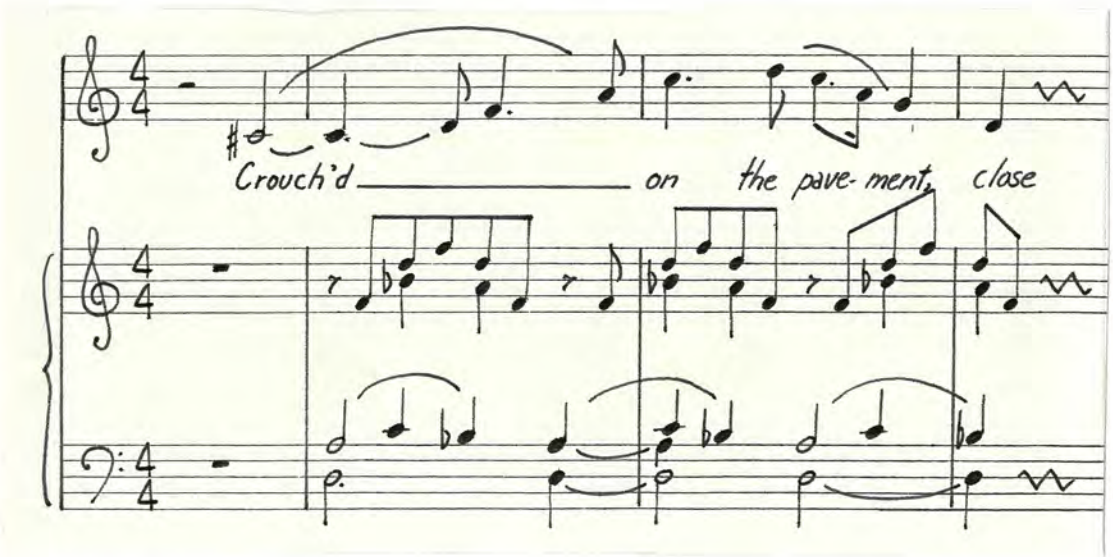
[15] Ibid.

Rhythm

Through a variety of means, a meterless, improvisational flow is achieved in each of the songs of social commentary. In Lincoln, Ives chose to eliminate bar lines altogether, leaving the performer to resolve the problems of phrasing and accentuation for himself. A similar effect is arrived at in General Booth through the use of constantly changing meters, including complex meters of $\frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{4}$ and $\frac{3\frac{1}{2}}{4}$.

Only West London remains in simple meter throughout. Yet the marked time signature is deceptive, for Ives occasionally avoided the downbeat or added syncopated accents to negate any sensation of common time.

Fig. 28. from West London, mm. 1-2



Despite the metrical sophistication of these songs, they are generally simple as regards rhythmic detail. Polyrhythms are

infrequent, the rhythmic texture consisting usually of the basic note values: half, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes. The solitary exception is Lincoln, in its setting for chorus and orchestra. (The adaptation for voice and piano eliminates the "whirlwind" effect of the many-voiced orchestral part and chorus sounding cluster chords like the voice of a nation.)

As in An Election, the rhythms of the vocal parts are more natural than stylized, evolving from patterns of accentuation inherent to the text.

Fig. 29a. from Lincoln, melody, system 5

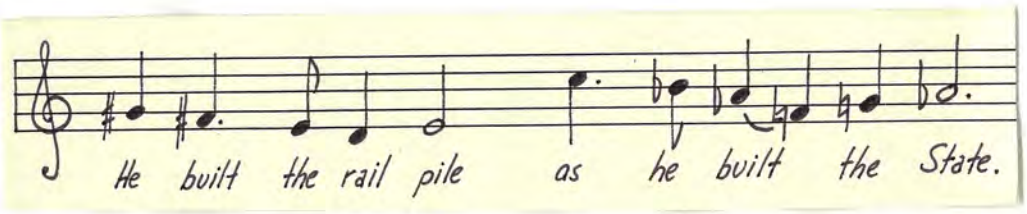
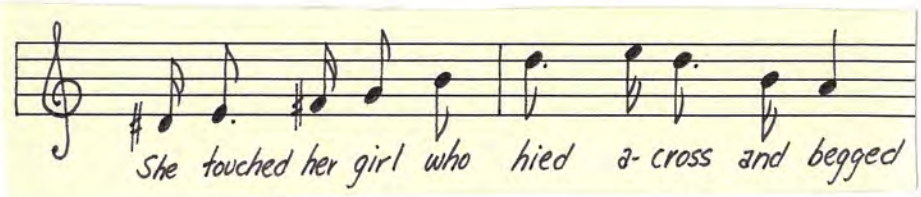


Fig. 29b. from West London, melody, mm. 14-15



Finally, Ives frequently employed radical changes of tempo within each song, always with the aim of bringing human qualities to the fore. This is especially true of General Booth, a flamboyant and theatrical work which well merited Dr. Griggs' gentle criticism, "It's a good song

- but not a song."[16]

Range and Texture

The absolute range of each of the songs of social commentary is nearly identical. The vocal parts encompass from a major tenth (C_4 to E_5 in Lincoln) to a diminished twelfth (B_3 to F_5 in West London). The piano accompaniments span the same six octave range, from a low of C_1 in all but General Booth, to highs within register 6.

The songs vary widely as regards tessitura, but remain obedient to a principle maintained in An Election, i.e., the wider range serves to express the grander notions and occurs at the points of greatest impact.

Lincoln, for example, has a consistently broad tessitura, spanning four to five octaves throughout most of its length. This is appropriate, for Markham's poem maintains a constant level of hyperbole unmatched by any of the other songs.

Certain piano textures appear again and again, lending weight to the proposition that Ives intended to create a musical language with a precise vocabulary.

The most frequent of these is a pattern of alternating densities.

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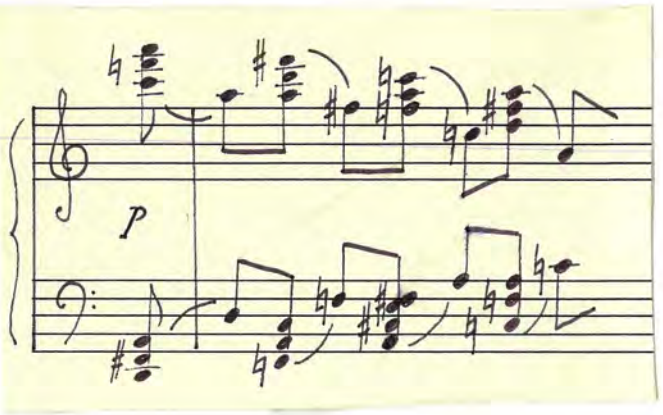
[16] John Cornelius Griggs, choirmaster and baritone soloist at Center Church, New Haven, was "the only musician friend . . . that showed any interest, toleration, or tried to understand the way (Ives) felt about . . . music." (Memos, op. cit., p. 116.)

This occurred in An Election in the left hand only, with the alternation of a three-note chord with a single note (see Fig. 21). This texture appears also in West London and General Booth, but in both hands simultaneously.

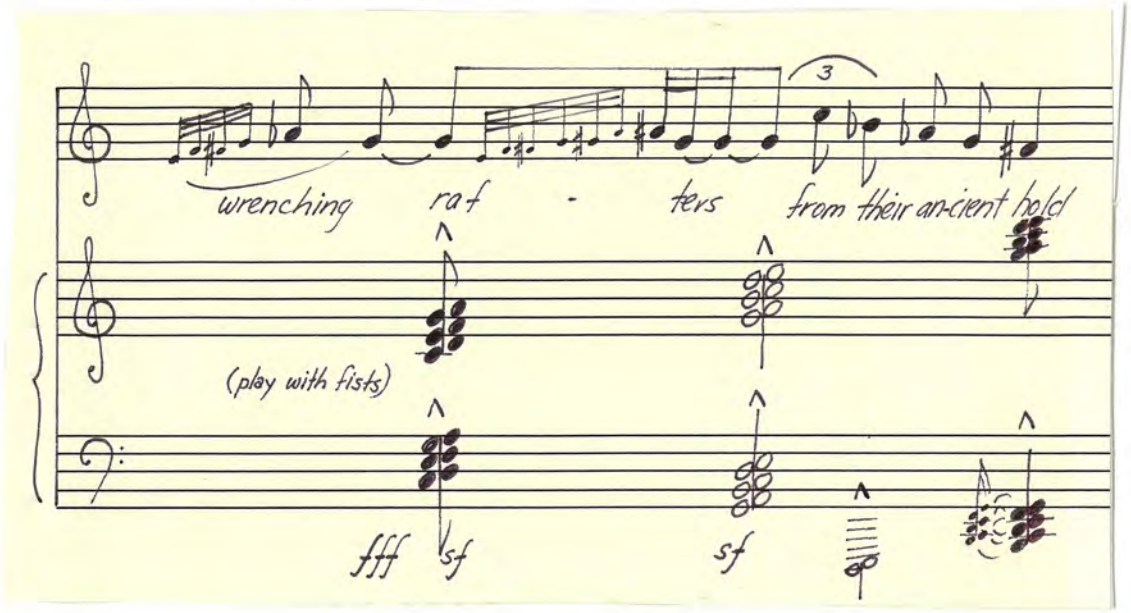
Fig. 30. from General Booth, accompaniment, mm. 39-40



The firm resolution expressed by the strong-weak accents created by this repetitive pattern is contrasted with the fierce dissonance of pounding clusters. These accompany General Booth's army of "lurching bravoes" and "drabs from the alley ways." In Lincoln, they are used to suggest the shock of war "wrenching rafters from their ancient hold" (see Fig. 31).

Accompaniment of the vocal line by parallel fourths and fifths was a predominant texture of An Election, and also occurs in General Booth and West London. They are a reminder of Ives' sensitivity to the different timbrel qualities of the various intervals. The use of open fifths and fourths appears early on in Ives' music, the result of his quest for a sound more capable of evoking the sterner, more Puritan

Fig. 31. from Lincoln, system 9



side of man's nature than continuous triads and seventh chords.

Harmony

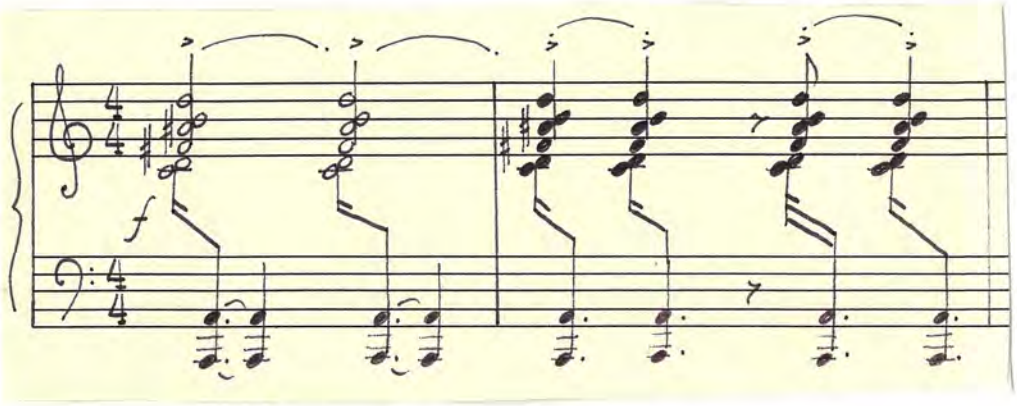
In an overview of the harmonic characteristics of these songs, unity of key stands out as a striking feature. All but West London emphasize A as a principal tonal area.

In Lincoln, the most dissonant, chromatic and tonally vague of the social songs, A and E are tonal focal points. (It must be remembered, of course, that Ives used the concluding material of Lincoln as a basis for An Election. The coincidence of keys between these two works is, therefore, to be expected.)

The principal key area of General Booth, though, is also A -

hammered at by the piano in imitation of army marching drums.

Fig. 32. from General Booth, mm. 1-2



West London remains the odd-song out. Yet its principal tonal centers, D and F, are conspicuous in both An Election and General Booth. This coincidence of keys suggests the possibility that Ives had definite feelings about the expressive qualities of certain keys - but if this is so, he does not seem to have mentioned it.

West London is also the most tonal and diatonic of the songs. Its final section, entirely diatonic in F major, renders literally Lowell Mason's hymn-tune "Fountain" (see Fig. 33).[17]

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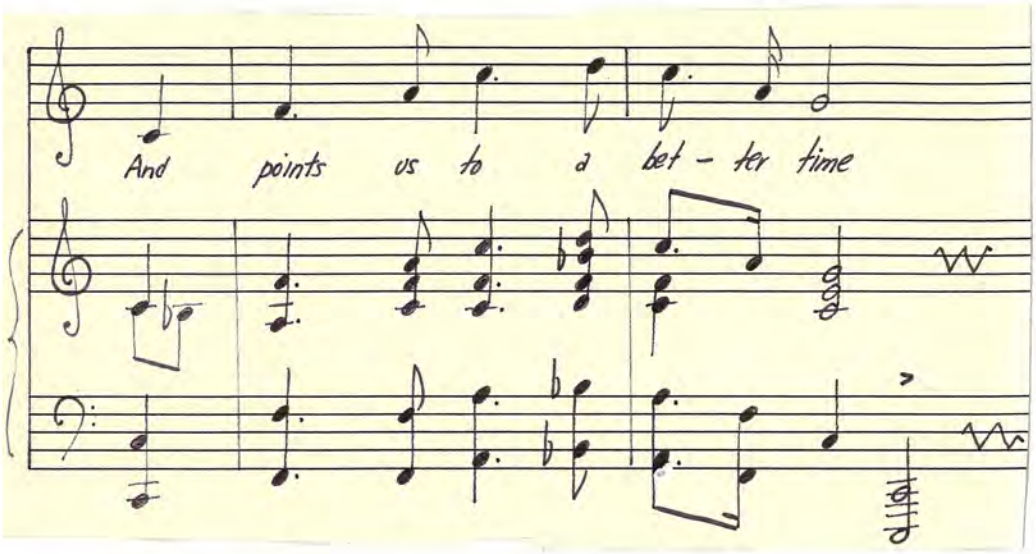
[17] This hymn, usually sung to words by William Cowper, has redemption as its theme.

> There is a fountain filled with blood
> Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
> And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
> Lose all their guilty stains.

(The Hymnal, op. cit., No. 241.)

Fig. 33. from West London, mm. 35-37



Such a setting following hard upon a much more dissonant harmonic fabric brings into sharp focus Ives' 'linguistic' use of musical style. Ives clearly meant Arnold's final line of text to be understood within the framework of religious redemption. He expressed this intention by a sudden shift to a style more characteristic of his sacred songs, combining this with the associative symbolism of a musical quotation.

This identical "merger of text, musical material, and the symbolism of the quoted tune"[18] is the compositional basis of General Booth. The oft-repeated refrain of Lindsay's poem - "Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?" - is also set to the tune of "Fountain," but within an harmonic setting of such dissonance that it becomes satiric of

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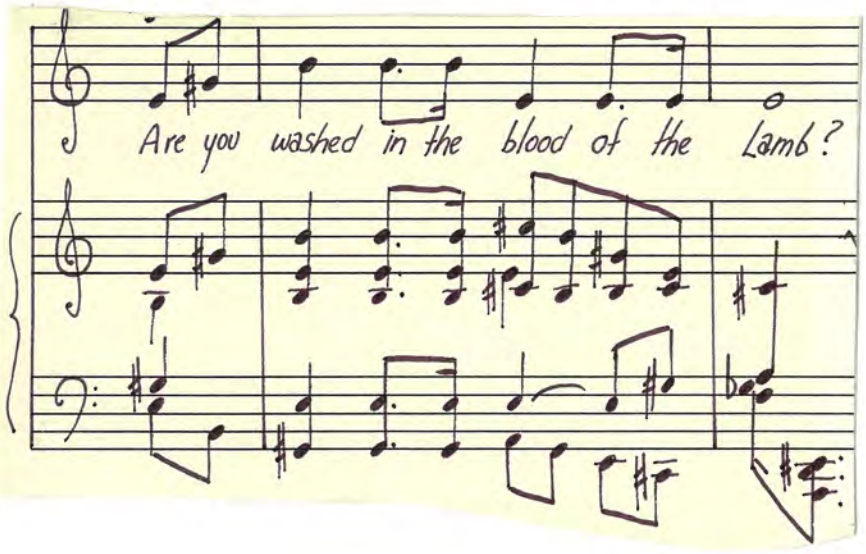
[18] Charles Wilson Ward, "Charles Ives: The Relationship Between Aesthetic Theories and Compositional Processes" (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Austin, 1974), p. 168.

Booth's revivalist fervor. It is only as Jesus, "stretching his hands above the passing poor," heals all "in an instant," that the reality of redemption is brought home with great harmonic simplicity.

Fig. 34. from General Booth, mm. 107-109



Conclusion

Ives' fervent social vision (and occasionally hot temper) found their ideal musical expression in a number of unusual and complex songs. Practically demonstrating his "willing(ness) to use or learn to use . . . whatever he (could) of any and all lessons of the infinite,"[19] Ives blended together diverse stylistic elements into a single, forceful musical idiom. Features common to Ives' songs of social commentary are:

Rhythm

1) an impression of meterlessness created by a lack of bar lines and/or time signatures, constantly changing meters, or extensive use of ties and syncopated accents within a metrical context;
2) rhythmic patterns arising from accents inherent to the text;
3) a conspicuous lack of complex rhythmic groupings and/or polyrhythms;
4) frequent changes of tempo;

Range and Texture

5) careful control of registral motion within an overall large range;
6) abrupt changes of textural densities and patterns;

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[19] Essays, op. cit., p. 92.

Harmony

7) an overall dissonant yet tonal harmonic idiom;

8) frequent and abrupt changes of harmonic styles; and,

Borrowed Material

9) the fragmentary use of various popular and religious tunes with associative implications.

Chapter IV

TWO SONGS ABOUT NATURE

Two of Ives' most experimental songs, Soliloquy and On the Antipodes, are settings of similar texts authored by the composer.

Soliloquy

Soliloquy was composed in 1907 (assuming the date given by Ives in 34 Songs to be correct). With characteristic humour Ives describes the great dualism of nature.

> When a man is sitting before the fire on the hearth, he says,
> "Nature is a simple affair."
> Then he looks out of the window and sees a hail storm, and
> he begins to think that "Nature can't be so easily disposed of!"[1]

The initial stanza, appropriately enough, is set with great simplicity. The voice, to be "chanted or half-spoken and somewhat drawling,"[2] is an intonation on the third of the initial Db major triad. The accompaniment consists of three slowly revolving chords, notated so that the sound of each is held through those that follow, producing a sense of relaxed timelessness. The dissonance is tempered by the gentle shimmer of overtones, the clear Db tonality set against an A^{9}_{7} and D^{13}.

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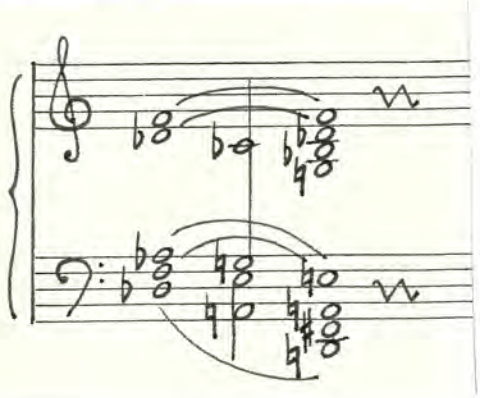
[1] Charles Ives, Thirty-four Songs (Bryn Mawr: Merion Music, Inc., 1933), p. 16.

[2] Ibid.

Fig. 35. from Soliloquy, accompaniment, m. 1



A more experimental aspect of Soliloquy begins with the second phrase. The aura of self-satisfied contentment is abruptly broken by an explosion of activity - rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic. It was this wild outburst of sound that induced Ives, for fear of a "few old ladies," to delete Soliloquy from his privately printed edition of 114 Songs.[3]

Rhythm

The rhythm of the "Allegro" section is a model of careful organization. The time signatures are as follows:

$$\frac{5}{16}\ \frac{6}{16}\ \frac{7}{16}\ \frac{8}{16}\ \frac{5}{16} - \frac{5}{16}\ \frac{8}{16}\ \frac{7}{16}\ \frac{6}{16}\ \frac{5}{16}$$

(Note the metric retrograde.)

On the foreground level, the rhythm divides into two distinct patterns. The piano accompaniment consists of continuous sixteenths,

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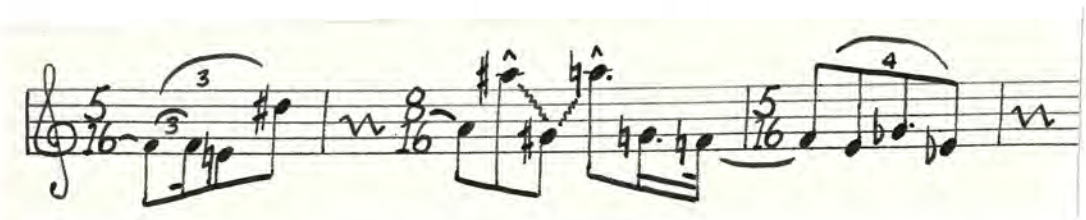
[3] Memos, op. cit., p. 127.

with the momentary exception of the thirty-second note syncopation marking the point of retrograde (see Fig. 37). It clearly maintains the meter through an alternation of arpeggiated and vertical chords; this is notated in the piano score by a subdivision of each measure so as to include a $\frac{1}{16}$ measure.[4]

This precision of rhythm serves to support the great rhythmic freedom of the vocal part. Notes tied over the bar, off-beat accents and odd metric divisions tug against the strict motor rhythm of the piano. In a context of constantly changing meters, the vocalist is required to subdivide a $\frac{5}{16}$ bar into unequal triplets, and, only three measures later, into an unequal quadruplet. An intervening $\frac{8}{16}$ measure contains an unequal sextuplet division. It is no wonder Ives had such difficulty finding singers capable of performing up to his expectations!

Fig. 36. from Soliloquy, melody, mm. 5 and 8-9



Range and Texture

Soliloquy uses nearly the full range of tones available on the

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[4] Ives' directions for the performance of the large vertical chords are contained in a footnote in Thirty-four Songs: "If there be two players, all the chord in each measure may be struck; and other chords need not be rolled."

piano, spanning six-and-one-half octaves (A_0 to E_7). The vocal range is relatively as extensive, encompassing nearly two octaves (Db_4 to B_5). The large vocal range is in marked contrast to that found in other songs by Ives.

Equally unusual are the large leaps in the vocal melody. Exclusive of the opening recitative, the most frequently occurring intervals are minor seconds and major sevenths. Leaps of both major and minor ninths also appear. Conspicuous by their absence are perfect fifths and octaves.

The chord structures which accompany this angular melody obey a precise organizational plan hinted at in the song's subtitle, "Or a Study in 7ths and Other Things." It could just have easily been called, "Why Must Every Chord Be A Triad?," for Ives was led to such experiments by an ear that rebelled against the time-worn harmonies of 'nice' music.

Of particular interest is the progression of chords in the central measures. The implications of this series of contracting and expanding harmonies are great. Robert P. Morgan writes,

> Ives . . . creates a specifically spatial effect by the manipulation of registral relationships. Particularly suggestive are the wedge techniques . . . where the musical idea essentially consists of a registral expansion in both directions from a central axis . . .[5]

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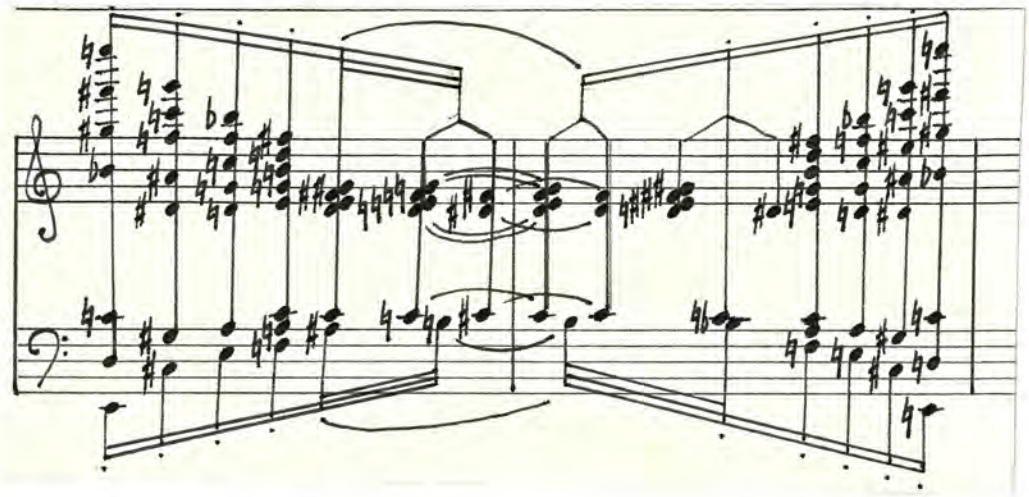
[5] Robert P. Morgan, "Spatial Form in Ives," in An Ives Celebration, ed. by H. Wiley Hitchcock and Vivian Perlis (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), p. 155.

Fig. 37. from Soliloquy, accompaniment, mm. 6-7



The transference of an essentially visual image to an aural medium is a particularly Ivesian conception, and elevates the spatial aspect of music to a level rarely heard in this most temporal of arts. Further,

> . . . the inclination to use material that has in some sense been predetermined or preordered . . . reflects a radically new attitude toward material - a desire to objectify it, to take it as something given. To the extent that this attitude prevails, the entire compositional process is transformed from one of evolving a work out of the implications of a germ idea to one of placing given materials (objects) in juxtaposition to one another in various combinations and permutations.[6]

These and similar compositional innovations are the result of Ives' concept of music's philosophical dimension. His use of "predetermined" material (as opposed to development of a motive), and spatially oriented registral shifts translates, "in terms of music,"[7] the

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[6] Ibid., p. 154.

[7] Essays, op. cit., p. 3.

transcendentalist's ability to perceive unity in diversity, to sense the reality of spirit underlying nature's vast multitude of manifest forms.

Harmony

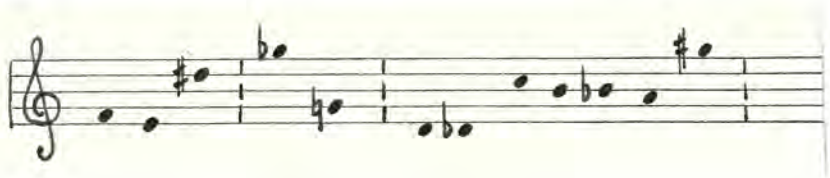
Ives' use of different chords consisting of single intervals creates a complex and atonal web of sound. (See Fig. 37 in which an harmonic progression is organized in accord with a principle of diminishing intervals, i.e., chords built strictly of sevenths, fifths, fourths, thirds, and so on. This is followed by its exact retrograde.)

Certain of these chords (those constructed of major sevenths, perfect fifths, or their inversions), if fully extended, include the entire chromatic scale without duplication. Chords of minor sevenths (and major seconds) replicate after only six tones, i.e., they consist of one of the two whole-tone scales. Another chord type, commonly used by Ives, is a series of alternating major and minor thirds. This chord, formed by a continuation of the intervallic pattern of a root position major seventh chord, includes up to eight tones without duplication.

The use of such chords creates an harmonic fabric in which twelve chromatic tones are consistently present. This "dodecaphonic" texture, though, should not be interpreted as Ives' premonition of serial technique, for his use of it remains always more intuitive than rule-bound. In Soliloquy, for instance, the initial twelve pitches of the vocal part reproduce the entire chromatic scale, but, nevertheless,

is not a tone-row. The tones enter in a series of chromatic scales disguised by octave displacement. The remainder of the melody is

Fig. 38. from Soliloquy, melody, mm. 2-4



freely chromatic, using all twelve tones, but with no consistent pattern controlling their order.

Taken together, the various stylistic aspects of Soliloquy are precisely gauged to express the text. A view of nature is implied that incorporates both the simple and the complex. Nature, awesome in its diversity, is founded upon order. Ives' vision is, in essence, Pythagorean: the variety of nature is produced by permutations of orderly and mathematical relationships. The sound impression of the "Allegro" in Soliloquy is one of chaos. The principles which produce that sound are precise and harmonious.

If Soliloquy were an anomaly then this judgement of Ives' intention would be subject to dispute. But this is not the case - the song On the Antipodes is cast in a similar mold.

On the Antipodes

Composed between 1915 and 1923 (although some extant sketches

date back to 1904), On the Antipodes is arranged for two pianos and voice(s).[8] As in Soliloquy, the text expresses the opposing forces of nature.

> Nature's relentless; Nature is kind.
> Nature is Eternity; Nature's today.
> Nature is geometry; Nature is mystery.
> Nature's man's master; Nature's man's slave.
> Sometimes Nature's nice and sweet, as a little pansy;
> and sometimes "it ain't."
>
> Nature is man's enemy; Nature is man's friend.
> Nature shows us part of life; Nature shows us all the grave.
> Does Nature know the beginning of Time or the end of Space?
> Man! we ask you! Is Nature nothing but atomic cosmic cycles
> around the perennial antipodes?[9]

The setting of this text demonstrates the identical compositional principles observed in Soliloquy: first, sharply contrasting sections depict the duality of nature, and, second, a dissonant, chaotic sound fabric is produced from a precise, mathematical plan.

Rhythm

At every level of rhythmic activity On the Antipodes expresses the fantastic variety of nature. Most apparent, are the numerous, often startling changes of tempo (there are altogether sixteen different tempo indications within thirty-four measures). These tempo fluctuations are the principal means by which Ives portrays the series of opposites described by his text, and parallel the tempo change which divides the

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[8] Ives' footnote in Nineteen Songs reads, "The smaller notes in the voice part are for lower voice, or voices, if there be a chorus." (Nineteen Songs, op. cit., p. 44.)

[9] Ibid., pp. 44-47.

two stanzas of Soliloquy.

Fig. 39a. from On the Antipodes, melody, m. 22

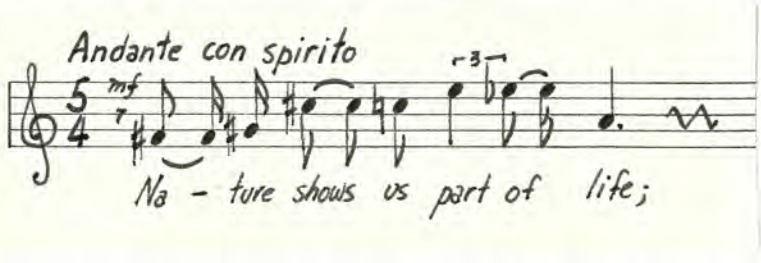
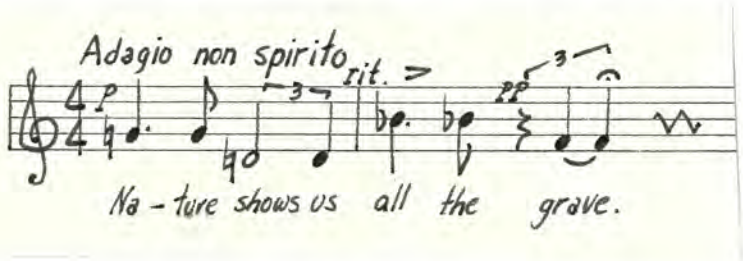


Fig. 39b. from On the Antipodes, melody, mm. 23-24



Henry Bellamann succinctly and accurately described the extraordinary rhythmic density of On the Antipodes.

> Here . . . appears that complexity which one observes in a forest of trees moving under the impact of varied winds, but a complexity that does in performance melt into unity.[10]

This "forest" of rhythms begins immediately upon the entrance of the voice (m. 5). The final two beats of the $\frac{3}{4}$ bar are subdivided into units of 3, 4, and 5. These simultaneous but independent rhythmic strands tend to minimize the temporal aspect of the music in favor of the spatial aspect (see Fig. 40). The usual sequential concept of musical composition is replaced here by one of simultaneity, i.e., Ives'

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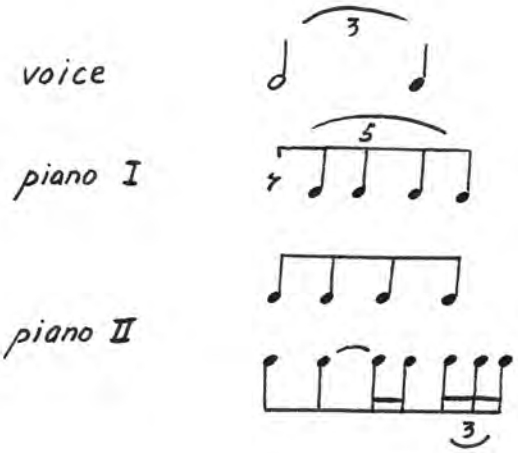
[10] Henry Bellamann, op. cit., p. 58.

Fig. 40. from On the Antipodes, rhythm, m. 5



preference for simultaneous over successive musical structures creates a texture which allows the ear to wander from one aural image to another, much as does the eye in the visual arts.

As in Soliloquy, the vocal line often displays a rhythmic freedom which offsets any sense of meter established by the accompanying piano parts. Although the downbeat of each phrase is clearly marked, the sense of pulse within the phrase is disturbed by the use of ties and syncopated patterns (see Fig. 39).

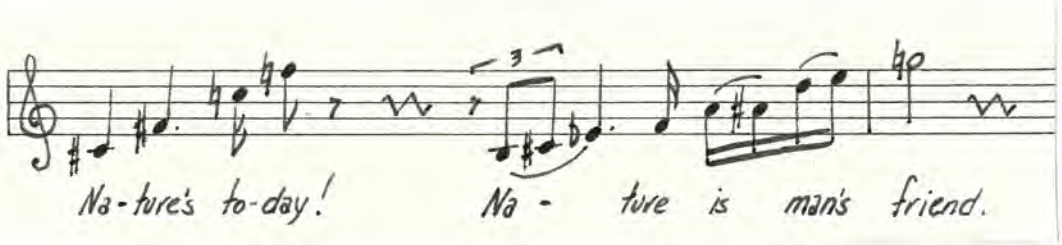
Range and Texture

The large range which characterized Soliloquy is also a feature of On the Antipodes. The instrumental range is a full seven octaves (C_1 to C_8). The vocal range is two octaves (A_3 to A_5). The tessitura is also quite wide. The arrangement for two pianos allows for chords

which span nearly the entire keyboard. The grandness of this all-encompassing sound is further amplified in the coda ("largo-maestoso") by the addition of an organ pedal to sustain the low C.[11]

The wide tessitura of the vocal part is maintained by the use of either large intervals or series of small intervals in a single direction.

Fig. 41. from On the Antipodes, melody, mm. 9 and 20



The variety of intervals in the vocal line establishes a melodic profile similar to that of Soliloquy. Thirteen different intervals are used, ranging from the unison to the major ninth. Octaves and minor sevenths are excluded. The absence of the octave is again similar to Soliloquy.

The chordal textures in On the Antipodes are organized in accord with a precise plan. The harmonies of the introductory phrase consist of a progression of eleven different chords, proceeding from large intervals to small. This is followed by a somewhat inexact retrograde,

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[11] The final phrase includes an additional staff sustaining the low C. It is marked, "(Org. ad lib) (16' and 32' only) (Org. Ped.)."

creating a "wedge" formation, as in the central two bars of Soliloquy. The chords are as follows:

1. P5ths
2. P5ths and tritones
3. Tritones and P4ths
4. P4ths
5. P4ths and M3rds
6. M3rds and m3rds
7. m7th - °5th - M2nd
8. m3rds and M2nds
9. m3rds and m2nds
10. m2nds and M2nds
11. m2nds

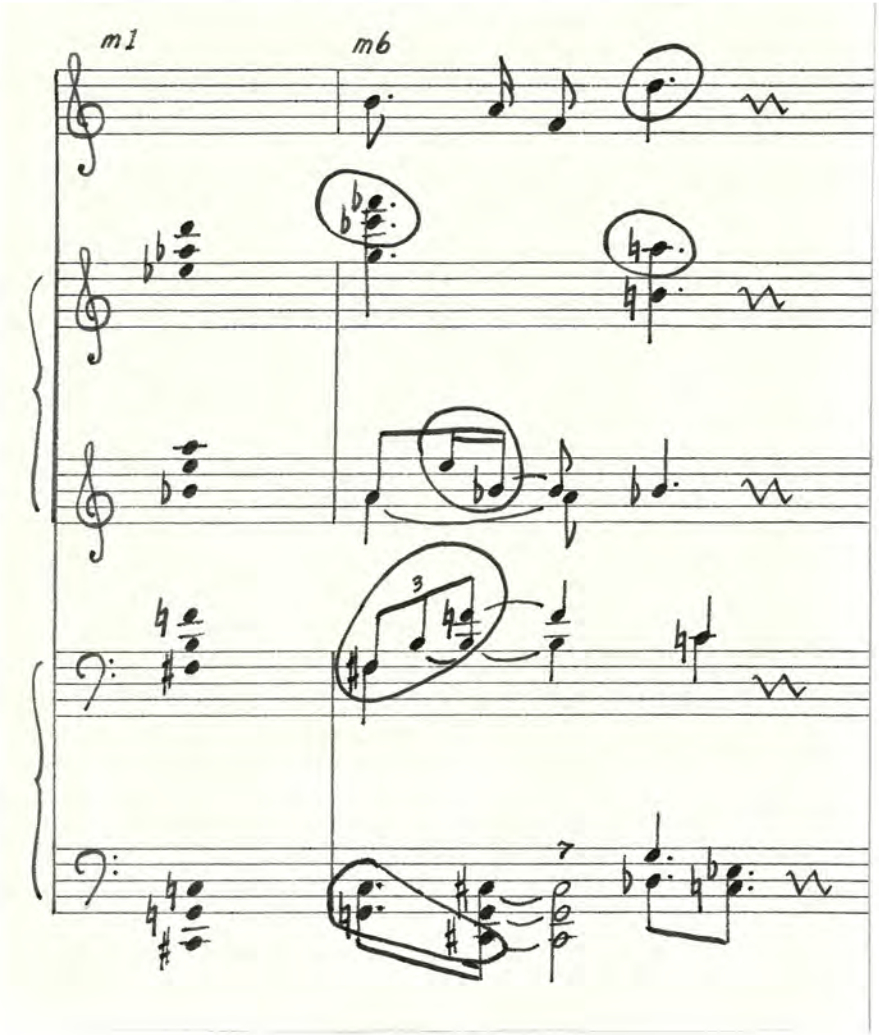
Slowing down the harmonic rhythm, Ives repeats these same chord structures, albeit with the addition of numerous 'non-harmonic' tones (see Fig. 42).

The introductory progression and retrograde is repeated exactly in the "Presto or allegro" and transposed in the concluding "Largo-Maestoso."

Harmony

The use of large expanded chords made up of definite interval types produces a nearly constant texture of twelve simultaneously sounding tones. The initial chord, for example, is built of perfect fifths and contains ten different tones (see Fig. 43). The two missing tones (C and G) appear in the top of the chord following. This second chord, built of alternating perfect fifths and tritones, contains eleven different tones, and the final chord in the measure, built of alternating tritones and perfect fourths, includes the entire chromatic

Fig. 42. from On the Antipodes, from mm. 1 and 6



scale.

The vocal melody is freely chromatic. Although the entire chromatic scale is never reproduced without duplication (as in the opening phrase of Soliloquy), each phrase does include a sufficient number of independent tones to render the effect, if not the reality, of a dodecaphonic melody (see Fig. 44).

Fig. 43. from On the Antipodes, m. 1

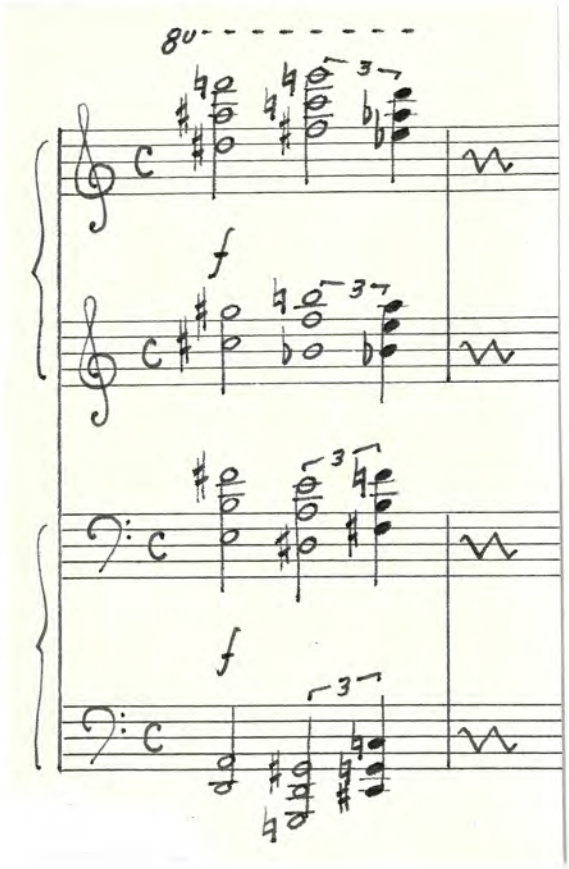
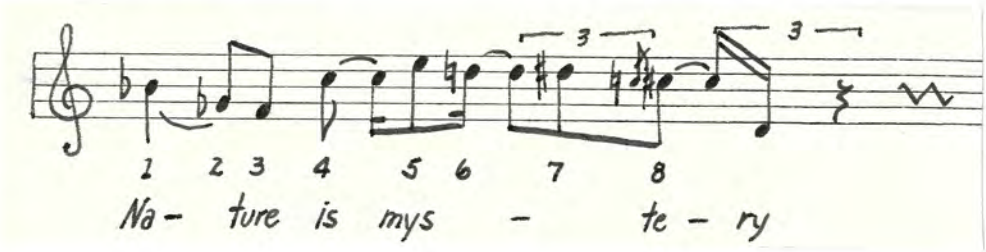


Fig. 44. from On the Antipodes, melody, m. 11



Conclusion

Ives invented a well-conceived and remarkable style with which to portray his view of nature. The music is designed to convey an aural impression of awesome variety, yet the intellect easily perceives its underlying order. The principal features of this style are:

Rhythm

1) constantly changing meter, including simple, compound, and complex meters;
2) dense rhythmic textures and polyrhythmic techniques;
3) abrupt changes of tempo;

Range and Texture

4) exceptionally large vocal and instrumental ranges;
5) abrupt changes of pianistic textures;
6) angular and wide-leaping chromatic melodies;

Harmony

7) chord construction (and registral manipulation) based upon an intellectually conceived plan;
8) atonality bordering upon dodecaphonic techniques;

Other

9) a formal design of sharply contrasting sections depicting the duality of nature; and,
10) an avoidance of pre-existing musical material.

Chapter V

TRANSCENDENTAL SONGS

The direction of Ives' musical experimentation was guided largely by the dictates of his transcendentalist principles. Sound and thought were, for him, not separate phenomena, but different expressions of a single, incorporeal entity. To understand this unifying perception, though, it is first necessary to define the basic tenets of the transcendentalist movement.

First, transcendentalism posits the "immanence of the divine in finite existence,"[1] elevating the intuitive faculty above the empirical and intellectual. In this view, nature becomes, not the final arbiter of existence, but the physical expression of an underlying spiritual power. The transcendentalist "was not concerned with the independent reality of (nature's) physical substance but with the spiritual message it bore,"[2] and realized the futility of quantitative science as a means of attaining a genuine understanding of the world.

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[1] Dagobert D. Runes, Dictionary of Philosophy (New York: Philosophical Library, 1942), p. 320.

[2] William Anson Call, "A Study of the Transcendental Aesthetic Theories of John S. Dwight and Charles E. Ives and the Relationship of These Theories to Their Respective Work as Music Critic and Composer" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1971), p. 21.

Second, the transcendentalists had hope in the "inherent goodness of mankind and man's intuitive knowledge of moral principles."[3] Theirs was an optimistic philosophy, and sought always to support and assert the integral dignity of human beings.

These beliefs are predicated upon an acceptance of the realism of consciousness, and an understanding of the variability of consciousness. Though there exists matter apart from us, it is not possible to perceive it directly, but only through the intermediary of consciousness, i.e., our impressions of the world around us are not the world itself, but recreations of that world within us, structured by the physiological limitations of our sense organs, and the psychological limitations of our preconceptions. Our minds, then, act as "colored lenses in the wall of nature, admitting light from the super-solar source, but at the same time tingeing and restricting it,"[4] a perceptual screen with the unlimited power of God on the one side, and our own limitations on the other. "We see the world piece by piece," writes Emerson, "as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul."[5]

Consciousness, therefore, may vary from one individual to another,

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[3] Ibid., p. 11.

[4] William James, "Human Immortality," in Philosophies of Religion, ed. William S. Sahakian, Ph.D. (Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc., 1965), p. 316.

[5] Ralph Waldo Emerson, Selected Writings of Emerson, ed. Donald McQuade (New York: The Modern Library, 1981), p. 246.

and from one moment to another, dependent upon our receptivity to the "flowing surges of the sea of life,"[6] our ability to see beyond the surface-veil of phenomena and touch the God within, "that Unity, that Over-soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other."[7] Our duty (and hope) is to try to grow in the direction of expanded awareness of the spiritual foundation of existence, for man to "learn the revelation of all nature and all thoughts to his heart; this, namely; that the Highest dwells with him; that the sources of nature are in his own mind . . ."[8]

It is this aim which guided Ives, for it is at the heart of the transcendentalist aesthetic, and bears directly upon his choice of musical material for his settings of transcendentalist themes.

The primary function of Ives' transcendentalist music is "revelation," through the physical medium of sound relationships, of the spiritual basis of experience. In his search for a suitable musical language, Ives turned first to nature, acknowledging Emerson's dictum that, "only as far as the masters of the world have called in nature to their aid, can they reach the height of magnificence."[9]

Experimentalism became essential, for "nature is limitless, and music when approached from a natural point of view is also limitless."[10]

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[6] Ibid., p. 253. [7] Ibid., p. 246.

[8] Ibid., p. 260 [9] Ibid., p. 393.

[10] Call, op. cit., p. 72.

The accepted musical forms had also to be discarded, for the idea of repetition countered the transcendentalist view of nature as a ceaseless, flowing continuum, or as Ives put it, "nature loves analogy and hates repetition."[11]

Further, the transcendentalist emphasis on consciousness is well-served by the ability of music to mimic its processes. Rosalie Perry writes,

> Consciousness has two parts: first the association, and second, the flow. The association is a private activity that has as its essence the simple fact that people endure. This qualitative process of enduring is what identifies real or lived time from the artificial quantitative time of the mathematician. It is an awareness of what goes on in ourselves. Memory is its basis, yet the quality is that of being sustained, of being able to pass from one level to another. The second part, the flow, deals with the fact that the mind can focus on any one thing but momentarily, for one thing suggests another through the association of common qualities or mental links between totally separate ideas that at some past time were linked in some way in the private conscious or experience.[12]

Both these aspects of consciousness (association and flow) have their musical counterparts: the former represented by the simultaneous, vertical dimension of music, the latter by the continuous, horizontal dimension of music. The concept of flow is particularly evident as an influence on structure in Ives' songs, for they are "largely additive,

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[11] Essays, op. cit., p. 22.

[12] Rosalie Sandra Perry, Charles Ives and the American Mind (The Kent State University Press, 1974), p. 44.

one musical idea provoking another . . . until the end of the song is reached."[13]

Considering the enormous impact of Emerson upon the formation and growth of transcendentalist thought (he more than any other served as a spokesman for the transcendentalist movement), it is surprising that Ives did not find in his poetry a source of musical inspiration.[14] Perhaps Emerson was too definite in what he wrote, for Ives seemed drawn to the poetry of lesser lights (himself included),[15] to texts more vague and open to interpretation, and therefore more susceptible to the transforming power of his music.

One such poet was Robert Underwood Johnson, editor of Century Magazine, secretary of the American Copyright League, and political and environmental activist. The author of six books of poems, his Saint-Gaudens: An Ode and Other Verse has the odd distinction of being one of the largest single sources of poems set by Ives.[16] A moralist and lover

---

[13] Ibid., p. 33.

[14] Ives composed only one brief setting of Emerson's verse: the final quatrain of "In an age of fops and toys," called by Ives Duty (No. 9 in 114 Songs).

[15] Ives wrote his own texts for forty or more songs. Philip Newman writes, "These cover the subjects . . . most commonly associated with him: wistful melancholy, humorous observations of human nature, transcendentalism, God, love, satire, children, patriotism, political problems, and others." (Philip Newman, "The Songs of Charles Ives," Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Iowa, 1967, Vol. I, p. 203.)

[16] The only more frequent sources are texts by Ives himself, and poems by his wife Harmony Twitchell Ives. There are also four settings of poems by Heinrich Heine, composed by Ives while a student at Yale.

of nature, Johnson's imagist poetry is suggestive of that definite but ephemeral part of life towards which the transcendentalists (and Ives) set their aim.

Premonitions

Composed in 1917, Premonitions was included in Ives' Set No. 3 (along with At Sea and Luck and Work, two other settings of poetry by Johnson), and scored for a small chamber ensemble.[17]

Johnson's poem closely parallels a sentiment succinctly stated by Emerson in his essay The Over-soul - "I am constrained every moment to acknowledge a higher origin for events than the will I call mine."[18] The text captures the sense of mystery connected with the idea of invisible powers at work in the world, and concludes on the same brave and optimistic note that so much characterized the writings of the transcendentalists.

> There's a shadow on the grass
> that was never there before;
> and the ripples as they pass
> whisper of an unseen oar;
> And the song we knew by rote,
> seems to falter in the throat,
> a footfall, scarcely noted,
> lingers near the open door.
>
> Omens that were once but jest,
> Now are messengers of Fate;
> and the blessing held the best

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[17] Ives' footnote in 34 Songs reads, "From pieces for Basset Horn, Flute, Strings and Piano, February, 1917. Arranged for Voice and Piano, 1921." (Premonitions may also be found in 114 Songs, pp. 57-58.)

[18] Emerson, op. cit., p. 246.

cometh not or comes too late.
Yet what ever life may lack,
not a blown leaf beckons back,
Forward! Forward! is the summons.
Forward! Where new horizons wait.

Rhythm

The most striking rhythmic feature of Premonitions is its sense of nearly unbroken continuity. This is created by a number of factors including a lack of regular metric pulse, time signatures, or bar lines. More importantly, it is not until the second verse that the piano accompaniment at all supports the unavoidably strong phrase structure of the vocal line, the use of ties acting to carry the ear past each cadence point. The effect is not unlike the contrapuntal technique of overlapping vocal entrances and exits to maintain a continuous rhythmic texture.

The flow of rhythm in Premonitions is supported also by the rhythmic detail of both the piano and voice parts, each constructed of non-repetitive permutations of brief rhythmic cells. The vocal line, for instance, is declamatory in style, following closely the accentuations of the text. Its rhythms conform to the weak/weak/strong/weak pattern which dominates the meter of the poem, resulting in a high frequency of dotted rhythms followed by longer valued notes (see Fig. 45). This metrical pattern is also an important element in the piano accompaniment, taking the form of two eighth notes followed by a quarter note, as well as dotted rhythms (see Fig. 46).

Fig. 45. from Premonitions, melody, system 1

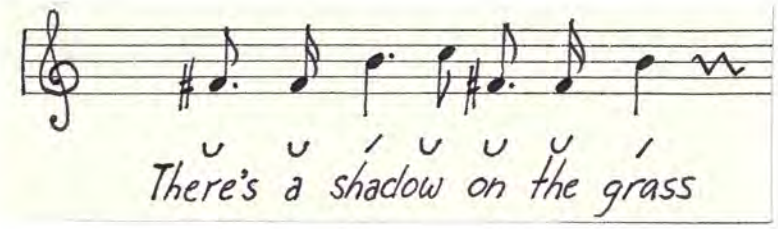
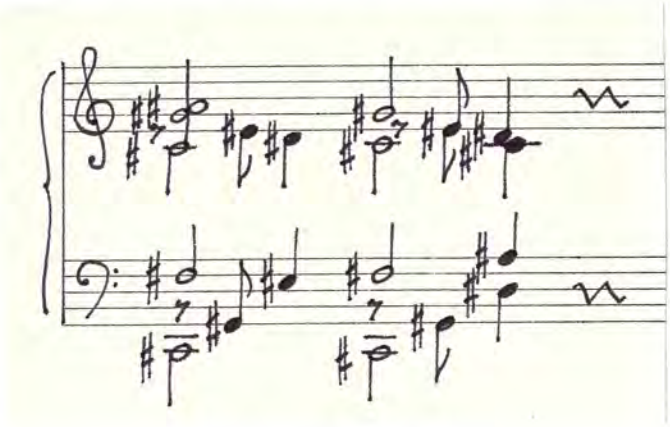


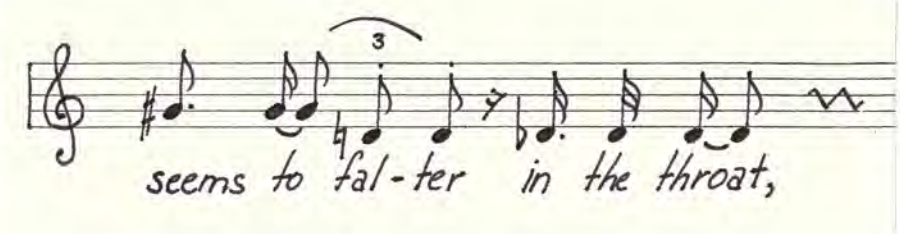
Fig. 46. from Premonitions, accompaniment, system 3



Although both the piano and voice parts are non-metrical, they do conform to a common quarter-note pulse. This uniform pulsation is only rarely broken. Examples of this are the vocal setting of "seems to falter in the throat," a clear instance of word painting, and the ties in the piano part which occur at the end of each vocal phrase in the first section (see Fig. 47).

Finally, Premonitions employs two distinct tempo indications. The poem's dreamy, sensitive beginning is sung slowly and quietly, a mood which is shattered by the crashing accelerando which sets its bold

Fig. 47. from Premonitions, melody, system 3



conclusion - "Forward! Where new horizons wait."

Range and Texture

While the absolute range of Premonitions (G_0 to $A\#_6$)[19] is not so large as to be an identifying stylistic element (as in Soliloquy and On the Antipodes), the manner in which Ives employed registration for musical effect is both significant and particular to his songs with transcendental texts.

First, the upper register of the piano is used frequently. This is especially true in the initial phrases (systems 1 and 2), where tones in register 6 sound nearly constantly. Such a relatively sustained use of the higher part of the piano range is rare in Ives' other styles, for he usually reserved the registral extremes in order to highlight portions of text. (The sustained ringing of the upper registers is greatly

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[19] The low G, below the range of the piano, is an excellent example of an aspect of Ives' attitude towards music which is frequently misunderstood. Far from being disdainful of the practicalities of musical performance, it was meant, perhaps, to sound in the imaginations of the performers, or to await the day when the piano has expanded its present compass.

reinforced by the generous pedaling required for Ives' transcendental style, which acts both to sustain tones for long periods of time, as well as creating a shimmering cloud of overtones. Ives made his desire for near continuous use of the damper pedal known in an unusually graphic manner. By notating attacks at the quarter note level, for instance, as half or whole notes, he made clear his intention that the sound of each chord is to be held through those that follow. Examples of this can be found in So may it be![m. 12], Paracelsus [m. 15], Afterglow [systems 3 and 4], as well as in Premonitions [p. 58, systems 2 and 4].[20] His pedal indications are more straightforward in other transcendental songs, including Afterglow, The Innate, and Thoreau, where the performer is instructed to use the pedals almost constantly.)

Second, both the piano and voice parts are marked by frequent ascending registral gestures. These take the form, in the piano, of either large arpeggiated chords, or gradually ascending harmonic progressions (see Fig. 48). Vocal ascents are used to express a sense of buoyant optimism, as in the final rise to the voice's upper limit (F_5), a triumphant concluding shout (see Fig. 49).

A third feature is the rather abrupt registral shifts that occur throughout Premonitions. These registral leaps are an integral part of his transcendental style, and are rarely used in direct relationship to the text (as in the black key cluster that accompanies "an unseen oar").

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[20] As there are no bar lines, these references refer to page and system numbers in 114 Songs.

Fig. 48. from Premonitions, accompaniment, p. 58, system 3

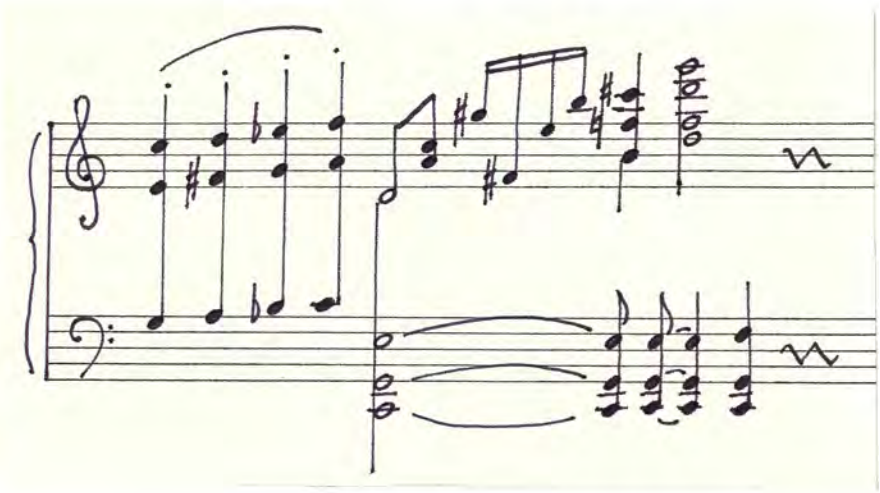
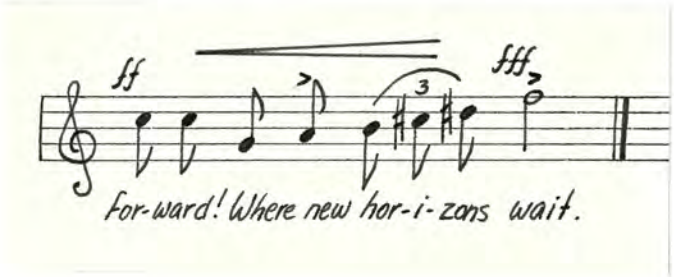


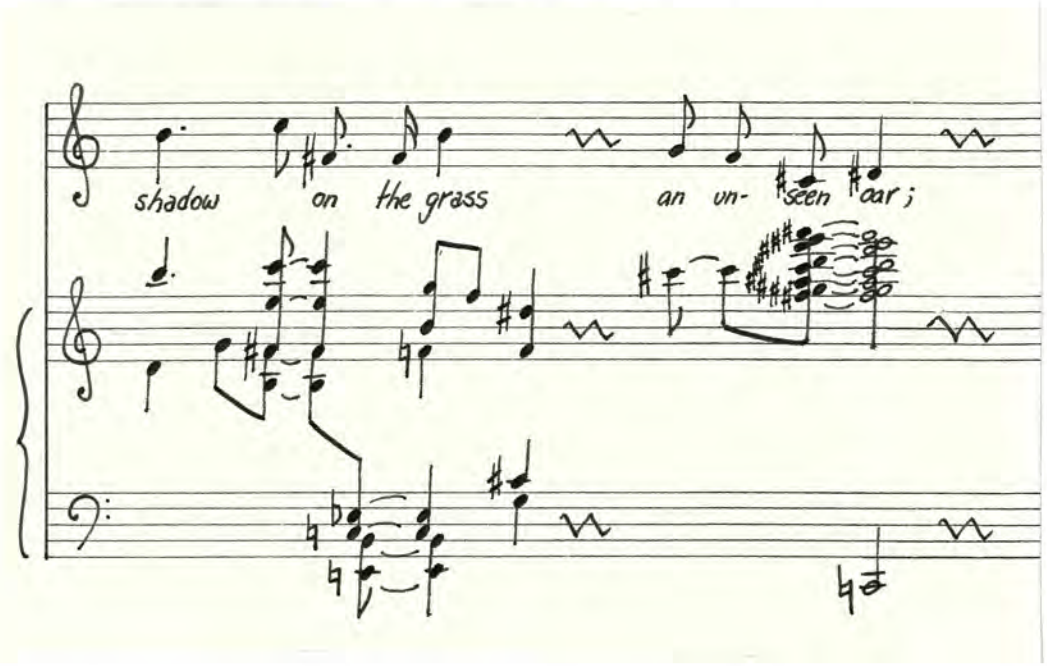
Fig. 49. from Premonitions, melody, final cadence



(See Fig. 50.) This is in contrast to Ives' use of register in other songs, where sharp registral changes are infrequent and nearly always clearly associated with some verbal image.

Finally, as a sort of counterbalance to the registral activity described above, an element of stability is introduced by means of short passages with pedal tones. These occur in four separate phrases: first, on G_2 (p. 57, system 2); then, on $C\#_2$ (p. 57, system 3); again, on G_1

Fig. 50. from Premonitions, systems 1 and 2



(p. 58, systems 1 and 2); and, finally, on C_1 in the penultimate phrase (p. 58, system 3). These sections offer moments of relative registral quietude within a context of otherwise rapid fluctuations of register and textures.

The variety of registral effects is matched by a corresponding variety of musical textures. These include frequent and abrupt changes of density, with the general number of voices in the various phrases ranging from three to nine; a dense texture in which chords, as well as tones, are "set against each other in polyphonic movement"[21] (p. 57, system 2); pure homophony, in which the piano progresses in single vertical structures (p. 58, system 4); and, melody and accompaniment, in

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[21] Henry and Sidney Cowell, Charles Ives and His Music (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1955), p. 150.

which the voice moves faster than the accompanying piano part, or in which a single treble voice in the piano is accompanied by longer held tones in the bass (p. 57, system 2).

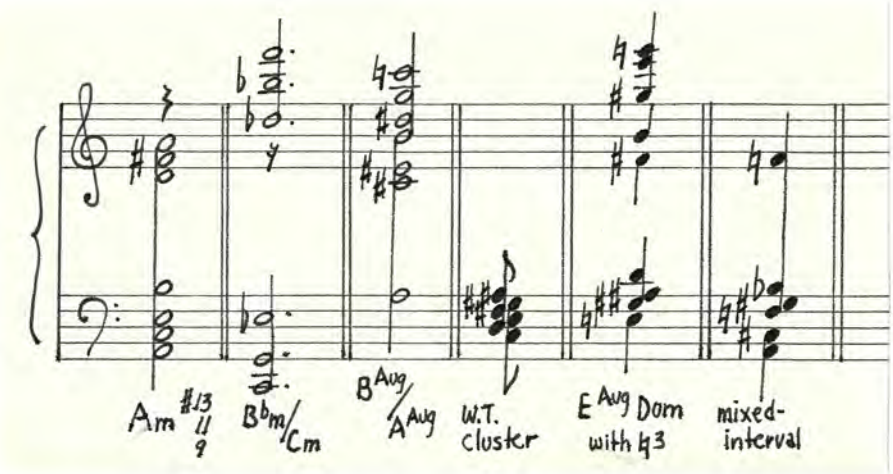
Harmony

The harmonic idiom of Premonitions is dissonant, freely chromatic, and largely atonal. Ives' chromatic style creates an harmonic blur of sound - lacking the tension of tonal chromaticism, it floats from one sound impression to another, its dissonances free of the directional dynamism imparted by a more tonal milieu.

This effect is achieved primarily by the juxtaposition of disparate harmonic elements which have either no tonal function themselves, or a tonality conflicting with that of their surrounding harmonies. Types of chords used by Ives in Premonitions include triadic chords with higher extensions; triadic polychords; augmented chords and whole-tone clusters; triadic chords with double inflections; mixed-interval chords; a pentatonic cluster; and, a single, albeit brief, triad (see Fig. 51).

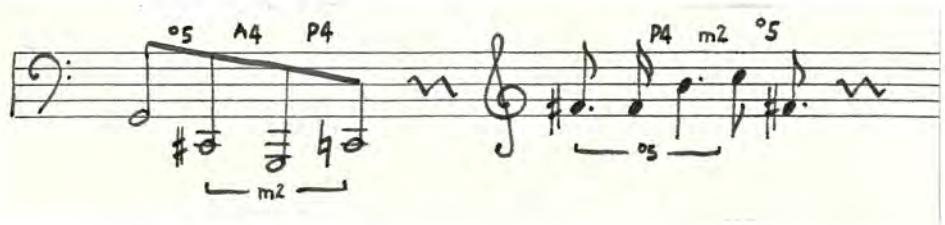
The vocal melody is equally a mixed-bag. The tonal implications of the occasional perfect fourths are immediately contradicted, and often by tritones, an important interval in the setting of the initial verse. Consecutive perfect fourths, melodic fragments derived from both chromatic and whole-tone scales, and changing chromatic inflections also add to the tonal uncertainty.

Fig. 51. from Premonitions, accompaniment, various places



Further, an important harmonic feature of Premonitions is its emphasis of the semitone, often in conjunction with the tritone and the perfect fourth. For example, the phrases in which the predominance of a pedal tone asserts a momentary tonality are related to one another by these three intervals. This reproduces, over the length of the piece, a permutation of the intervallic relationships of the opening vocal motive.

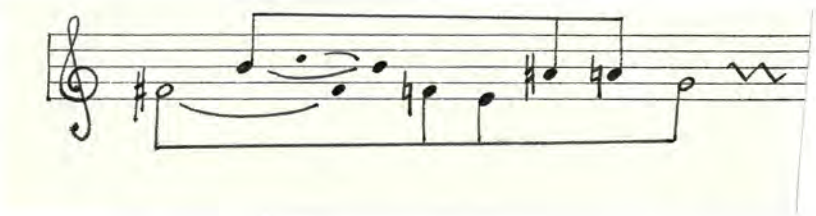
Fig. 52. from Premonitions, pedal tones and initial vocal motive



This relationship is also maintained on the middle-ground level of the melody in the first phrase - a series of descending semitones:

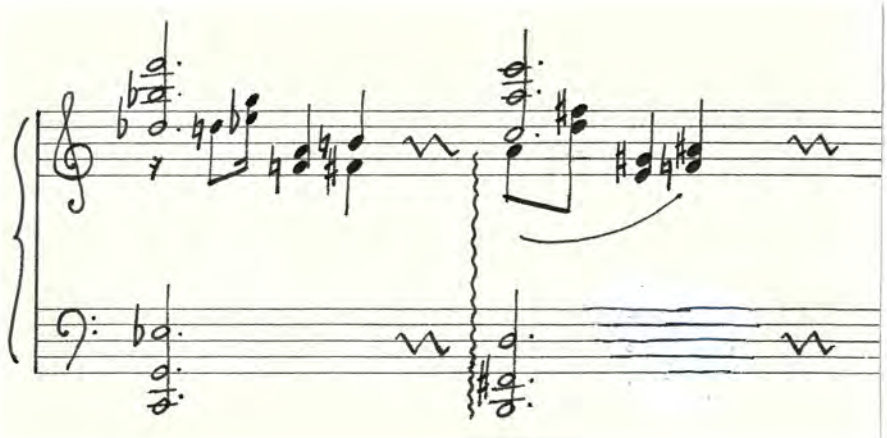
arise from the interaction of sequential fourths and tritones, and the first and last notes of the phrase are related to one another by an ascending half-step.

Fig. 53. from Premonitions, melody, system 1, graphic analysis



Also, the transposed and modified return of the introductory harmonies (p. 58, system 2) gives added emphasis to the long-term role of the descending semitone, as well as exemplifying Ives' preference for analogy and avoidance of exact reiteration.

Fig. 54. from Premonitions, accompaniment, systems 1 and 5

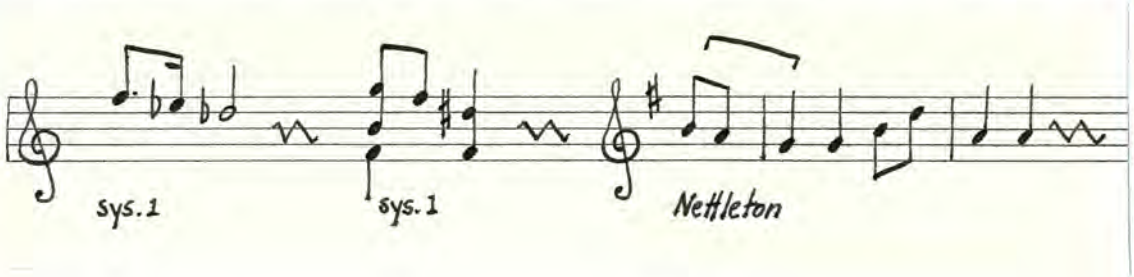


Borrowed Material

Although extensive musical quotation is not a feature of

Premonitions, it is possible that certain melodic fragments have been derived from pre-existing melodies. Within such a freely chromatic idiom, brief tonal and diatonic motives stand out to the ear, vaguely reminiscent of folk and/or hymn tunes. The descending major tri-chord, for instance, which sounds frequently in the piano accompaniment (and is developed more fully in the phrase, "cometh not or comes too late"), might be a modification of Nettleton, a hymn often used by Ives that begins with the same melodic figure.

Fig. 55. from Premonitions, melody, system 1; Nettleton, mm. 1-2



Usually associated with a text by the Rev. Robert Robinson beginning, "Come, Thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing Thy grace,"[22] Nettleton is quoted at length by Ives in The Innate, another song setting of a transcendental text which closely parallels the sentiment expressed in Premonitions.

A second tonal fragment, diatonic in linear A major, may be found in the treble of the piano part in system 2, and is identical or similar to the openings of a number of hymn-tunes.

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[22] The Hymnal, op. cit., No. 235.

The Housatonic at Stockbridge

As might be expected, in addition to Premonitions, Ives set a large number of texts which express transcendental themes or ideas. These include At Sea, Immortality, Disclosure, So may it be!, Duty, Paracelsus, Walt Whitman, La Fede, Afterglow, The Innate, and Thoreau.[23] Although analysis of this group of songs reveals some stylistic variation, they all share many important characteristics with each other and with Premonitions. For example, At Sea, while employing harmonies and registral gestures similar to those of Premonitions, is relatively conservative in its use of rhythm.

While a comparison of the above songs with Premonitions would offer additional examples of the distinct features which characterize Ives' transcendental style, it would do little in the way of an explanation of the extra-musical implications of that style. This purpose would be far better served by an analysis of a work whose text is less obviously linked to transcendental themes, yet still employs many of the techniques observed in Premonitions. An example of this is The Housatonic at Stockbridge, a setting from Robert Underwood Johnson's descriptive poem of the same title.[24]

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[23] These songs are, respectively, Nos. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9a, 30, 31, 34, 39, 40, and 48 in 114 Songs.

[24] One of Ives' better known works, The Housatonic at Stockbridge was composed originally for orchestra, the concluding movement of his 1st Orchestral Set. Arranged for voice and piano in 1921, it is No. 15 in 114 Songs.

From Ives' Memos and marginalia in his sketch of the original orchestral version, we know The Housatonic to have been "suggested by a Sunday morning walk,"[25] taken by the composer and Mrs. Ives near Stockbridge in 1908, and that the work was intended to "picture the colors one sees, sounds one hears, feelings one has, of a summer day near a wide river."[26]

The impression created by these remarks is that The Housatonic is but a simple tone-picture of a peaceful country scene. Analysis of the words and music, however, points to a deeper revelation - a more profound interpretation of Johnson's poem in light of transcendental imagery.

First, it is necessary to discuss the philosophical implications of the text, implications so basic to transcendentalist thought that Ives must necessarily have been aware of them.

As excerpted by Ives, The Housatonic at Stockbridge describes the slow windings of that river amidst the "dreamy" Massachusetts hills to its eventual "fall . . . to the adventurous sea!," a transition which accounts for the division of Ives' score into two distinct sections.

Such water-imagery abounds in the writings of the transcendentalists, expressive of their view of nature and human consciousness.

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[25] Memos, op. cit., p. 87.

[26] Philip Newman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 365.

Rosalie Perry writes,

> The use of water-imagery . . . indicates a change in the prevailing concepts of the mind. While men of the eighteenth century spoke of the mind as a passive receptacle, a mirror, a tabula rasa, or a wax plate on which impressions stamp themselves, men of the nineteenth century spoke of it as an active agent - as a wind-harp, a stream, a lamp, or a growing plant. The sharp transitions between various states of objectivity had given way to a transitionless subjectivity . . . a shift to the inner man.[27]

A similar emphasis on water-imagery is readily apparent throughout Ives' music - references to streams, lakes, seas and other related themes occur numerous times in his song texts, and many of his musical quotations are associated with water images.[28]

The Housatonic at Stockbridge is, also, particularly suggestive of Emerson's conception of the Over-soul and the nature of thought. In one instance, for example, Emerson describes consciousness as "that flowing river, which, out of regions I see not, pours for a season its streams into me,"[29] a clear reference to both the transitory nature of thought, and to the transcendental belief that the source of consciousness lies outside the individual consciousness.

This latter belief is implied by the conclusion of Johnson's

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[27] Rosalie Perry, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

[28] In her chapter on the "Transcendental Tradition," Rosalie Perry cites "Columbia the Gem of the Ocean," "Throw Out the Life Line," and "Shall we Gather at the River?," among others, as tunes with watery references. (Rosalie Perry, op. cit., pp. 27-28.)

[29] Selected Writings of Emerson, op. cit., p. 246.

poem, which imputes a sense of joyous urgency to the final merger of river and sea. The watery escape from the river's confining channels into the wide expanse of ocean is a common allegorical image in mystical literature, used to represent the relationship of the individual soul or consciousness, to the greater whole, or Over-soul.

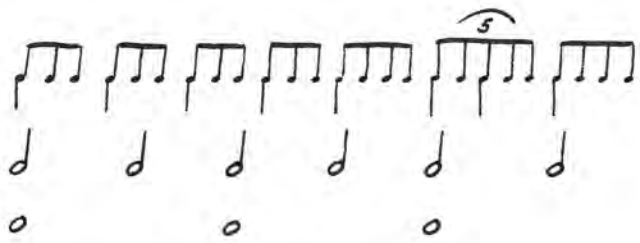
Such a transcendentalist interpretation of The Housatonic is supported by Ives' score, which, despite its differences with Premonitions, is equally gauged to suggest the movement and idea of flow, and to mimic characteristics of human thought and consciousness.

Rhythm

Rhythmically, this is achieved in a number of ways. First, in the section marked "slowly and quietly" (mm. 1 to 30), the polyrhythmic layering of voices is a texture which arises directly from Ives' conception of music as analogous to consciousness, i.e., the separate but simultaneous levels of human consciousness are represented by distinct melodic strands, each with its own rhythmic patterns, and moving within its own registral stratum (see Fig. 56).

Second, the use of a largely consistent metric pulse ($\binom{4}{4}$) in the first section is dropped in favor of frequently changing metric units in the concluding section (mm. 31 to end). Although bar lines are used, the overall effect of these measures is similar to the steady but metrically unorganized pulsation that was a characteristic of Premonitions. This latter use of meter is more characteristic of Ives'

Fig. 56. from The Housatonic at Stockbridge, rhythm, mm. 1-3



transcendental style as a whole, as demonstrated by Disclosure, So may it be!, Duty, Paracelsus, and Walt Whitman, all of which change meter frequently; and Afterglow, The Innate, and Thoreau, which songs use bar lines only rarely if at all.

Third, the latter section of The Housatonic also employs non-repetitive rhythms in an improvisatory fashion, and overlapping of the voice and piano phrases. Both these techniques, also found in Premonitions, help create the sense of unbroken rhythmic continuity which is an essential feature of Ives' transcendental style.

Finally, the tempo markings of The Housatonic are exactly commensurate with those of Premonitions. Both works are marked "slowly" for much of their length, and "faster" in their concluding measures. These two tempos serve different musical purposes, the former more expressive of the dreamy, mystical aspect of transcendentalist thought, the latter of a quality of almost brazen assertiveness which marked the writings and actions of many of the New England transcendentalists. This bold

facet of transcendentalism is particularly evident in Walt Whitman, which Ives directed to be performed "fast and in a challenging way,"[30] and in the frenetic exposition of Paracelsus. Yet, Ives' preference for the more serene, more visionary world which Thoreau, for one, knew at Walden Pond, is clearly felt in his more numerous meditative songs. The subtlety, and intensity, of his mystical outlook is expressed most beautifully in the slow-moving At Sea, Afterglow, The Innate, and Thoreau, as well as in the dreamy first section of The Housatonic at Stockbridge.

Range and Texture

While the polyphonic "sound-web"[31] which sounds throughout the first section of The Housatonic, with its separate lines flowing each within their own narrow band of tones, is quite different from any of the textures found in Premonitions, nevertheless, it has certain comparable elements. First, while the absolute range of tones is not markedly wide ($C\#_2$ to $D\#_7$), the registral extremes sound frequently. Such an emphasis, especially of the higher part of the range, is found in Ives' other transcendental songs as well, although the registrally static introduction of Thoreau comes closest in style to the polyphonic texture which predominates The Housatonic. (It should be noted, however, that the above discussion of Ives' use of register refers only to the piano accompaniments. The vocal lines of the transcendental songs are all moderate in range, and, with the single exception of Paracelsus,

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[30] 114 Songs, p. 74.

[31] Henry and Sidney Cowell, op. cit., p. 155.

avoid the use of large intervals.)

Fig. 57a. from Thoreau, system 1

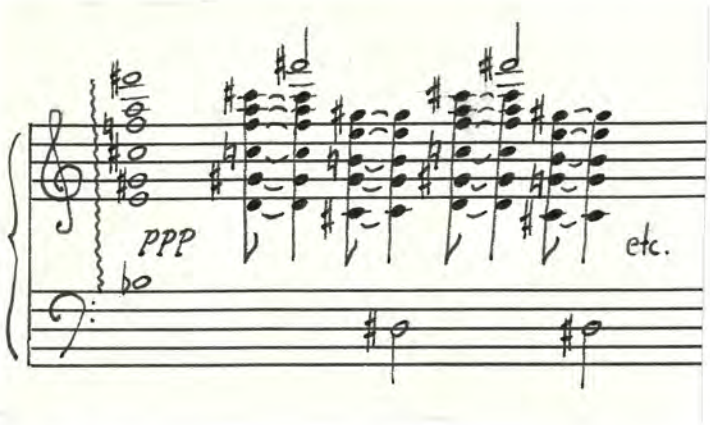
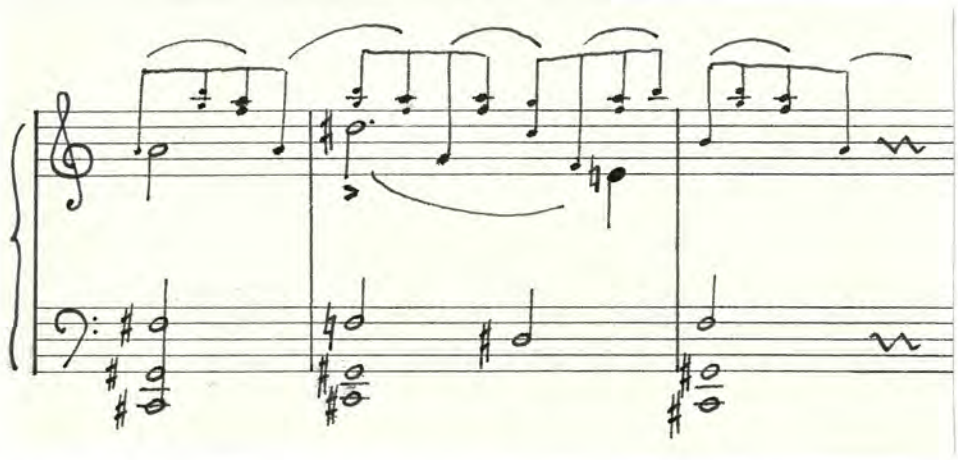


Fig. 57b. from The Housatonic, accompaniment, mm. 14-16



A second comparable element in The Housatonic's horizontal tapestry of voices is its punctuation by large arpeggiated chords. This occurs with far greater frequency than Ives' notation would suggest, for much of the left-hand part contains harmonies which encompass a major tenth or more while the right hand is busy elsewhere.

Third, the use of a pedal tone, an outstanding feature in The

Housatonic, is comparable to similar, although briefer, passages in Premonitions. This technique is common in Ives' transcendental songs, and may be found, to a greater or lesser extent, in At Sea, Immortality, Disclosure, So may it be!, Afterglow, The Innate, and Thoreau. In The Housatonic, however, its extended use is instrumental in conveying the sense of wonderful serenity which marks the inner correspondence to the outer reality of that gently flowing river.

Other important registral features of Premonitions, not found in the main section of The Housatonic, enter in the closing measures of the latter work. First, the frequent use of ascending registral gestures occurs in the form of large arpeggiated chords, rising harmonic progressions, as well as ascending scalar melodies in the vocal part.

Fig. 58. from The Housatonic, melody, mm. 32-33

The similarity of the final cadences of these two compositions is especially notable.[32]

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[32] In a review of final cadences found in Ives' songs, Philip Newman writes, " . . . Premonitions shows a cadence in which the song's climax is reached on the final chord. This characteristic, generally achieved through scale-wise motion, occurs as well in the final cadence of . . . The Housatonic at Stockbridge. The Housatonic, however, has an abrupt momentary dynamic drop after the climax - an effect common to several of Ives' orchestral works including the instrumental

Second, the concluding measures of The Housatonic also contain examples of the abrupt shift of registers (again, in the piano part only) that were an important feature of Premonitions. Generally unrelated to specifics of a given text, these characteristic leaps are also found in Disclosure, Paracelsus, Walt Whitman, La Fede, and Afterglow.

Although speculative, it may be suggested that the registral activity which marks many of Ives' transcendental songs has an inner, psychological correspondence - the free motion of tones through registral space being akin to the unconstricted motion of the creative imagination through inner space, obedient only to the whims of inspiration and the intuitive faculty.

Harmony

While, like Premonitions, the harmonic idiom of The Housatonic is dissonant and freely chromatic, it is also far more tonal. Largely the result of the extended C# pedal tone which sounds throughout much of the initial section, the tonality is also supported by the vocal melody, written enharmonically in Db major (mm. 6-19), and, again, in E Mixolydian (mm. 22-29). (See Fig. 59a and Fig. 59b.)

The simplicity of these tunes contrasts greatly with the chromatically wandering melody of Premonitions. An examination of Ives' other transcendental songs reveals his use of melodic styles to be

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antecedent to Premonitions." (Philip Newman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 197.)

Fig. 59a. from The Housatonic, melody, mm. 7-10

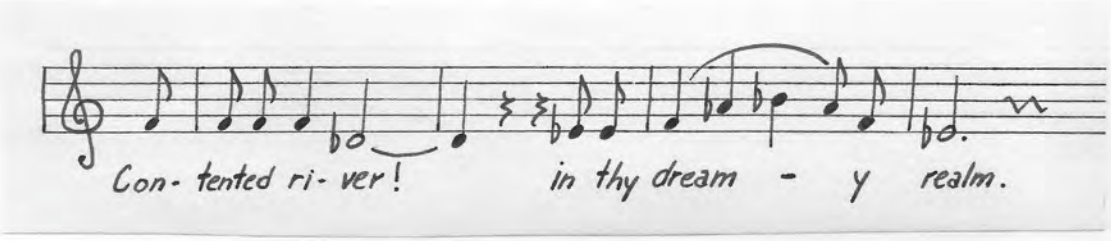
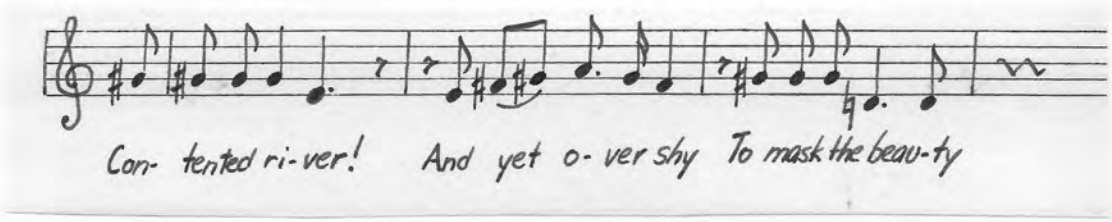


Fig. 59b. from The Housatonic, melody, mm. 22-24



correspondingly wide-ranging, encompassing both the extraordinary difficulties of the vocally acrobatic Paracelsus, and the surprising ease of the descending major scale which concludes Immortality.

Fig. 60a. from Paracelsus, melody, mm. 9-10

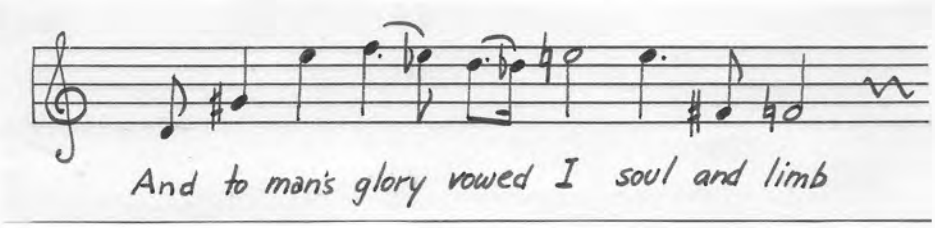
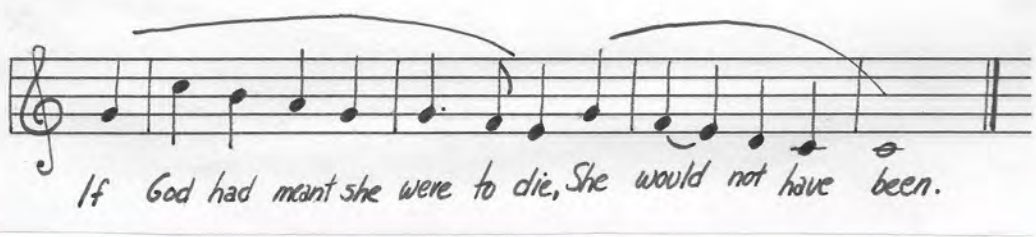


Fig. 60b. from Immortality, melody, final phrase



The type of melodic idiom used by Ives in any given transcendental song is largely dependent upon the extent to which he derived his theme from pre-existing hymn-tunes, a correlation which will be discussed at greater length in the following pages.

The particular emphasis of tonality in The Housatonic, however, is partly explained in a footnote, as follows:

> The small notes in the right hand may be omitted, but if played should be scarcely audible. This song was originally written as a movement in a set of pieces for orchestra, in which it was intended that the upper strings, muted, be listened to separately or sub-consciously - as a kind of distant background of mists seen through the trees or over a river valley, - their parts bearing little or no relation to the tonality, etc. of the tune.[33]

The strong tonality, then, is set up only to oppose it with conflicting harmonies, the result bearing the same relationship to the multi-dimensionality of consciousness as does Ives' use of polyrhythms and polyphonic textures in the same passage (see Fig. 57b).

The firm C# tonal center disappears, however, in the concluding section, replaced by the free use of chromatic tones that stress no particular key for more than a moment. Like Premonitions, these measures include a great variety of chord types, a mixture of triads, triads with double-inflections and/or added tones, perfect fourth chords, polychords, and clusters. Further, the melody is here stylistically similar to that of Premonitions, and adds to the tonal

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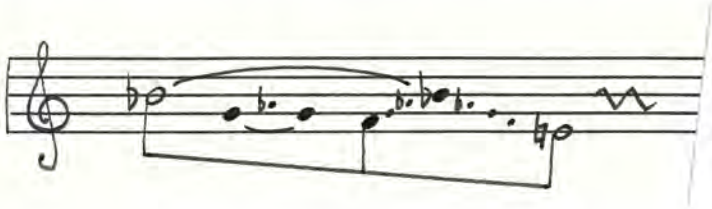
[33] 114 Songs, p. 31.

instability by its use of chromatic and whole-tone scales.

This increased chromaticism brings into play a number of intervals which were far less prominent in the opening section of The Housatonic, particularly the tritone and semitone. This calls to mind the important interaction of the tritone, perfect fourth, and semitone, which served as both the melodic and harmonic basis of Premonitions. Although the use of these intervals in The Housatonic is not nearly as essential, nevertheless, they do appear together, sometimes in positions of rhythmic prominence. An example is the phrase, "Come whisper near! I also of much resting have a fear," which in its rise and fall outlines the tones Bb-F-Bb-E.

Fig. 61. from The Housatonic, melody, mm. 35-36, graphic analysis



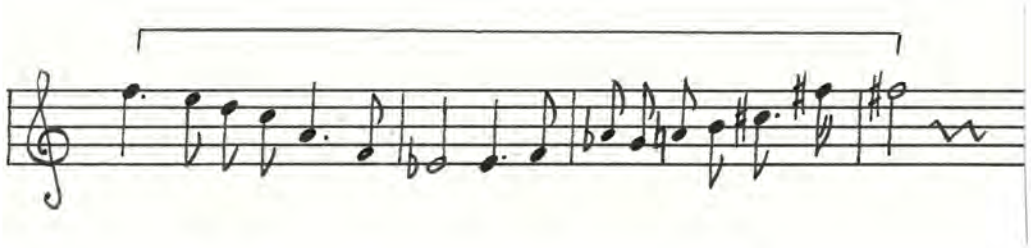
These intervals appear together with sufficient regularity in Ives' other transcendental songs to merit their inclusion as an important element of this style. For instance, in an harmonic analysis of Disclosure, Philip Newman points out this relationship, while failing to associate it with other related songs.

> Two chords lead to F major at the entrance of the voice . . . The second phrase is securely in C major. The third phrase begins in the same key (on a IV^{6}_{4}) but moves away chromatically, arriving, at the climax, on G-flat major.

This key is sustained to the end of the song . . .[34]

The correspondence of this harmonic relationship with that of Premonitions is both evident and extraordinary (see Fig. 52). Further, the ascending semitone created by the interlocking perfect fourth and tritone is also melodically prominent. This relationship marks both the first and final notes of the initial vocal phrase, as well as the first and final tones of the entire song.

Fig. 62. from Disclosure, melody, mm. 2-5



Similar intervallic relationships occur in So may it be!, where a descending sequential series of perfect fourths produces intervals strongly reminiscent of the opening motive of Premonitions; in the final cadence of Duty; in Walt Whitman, whose primary motivic figure stresses the descending semitone; in the concluding phrase of Afterglow, which repeatedly outlines the tones C-F#-B (a long-term ascending half-step is also emphasized in Afterglow when the initial Eb pedal tone resolves to E♮); and, finally, in Thoreau, where the initial bass tone, Bb, moves, by way of D#, to F in the following phrase, and eventually settles on the B♮ pedal tone with which the song concludes.

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[34] Philip Newman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 393.

Fig. 63a. from So may it be!, melody, mm. 6-8

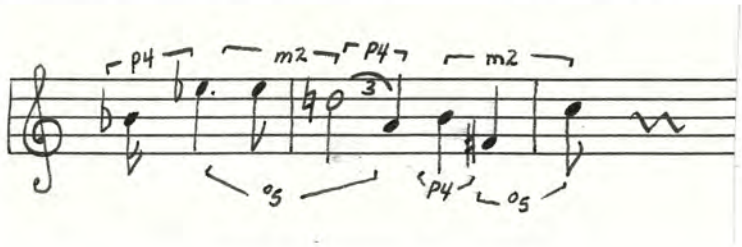


Fig. 63b. from Duty, final cadence

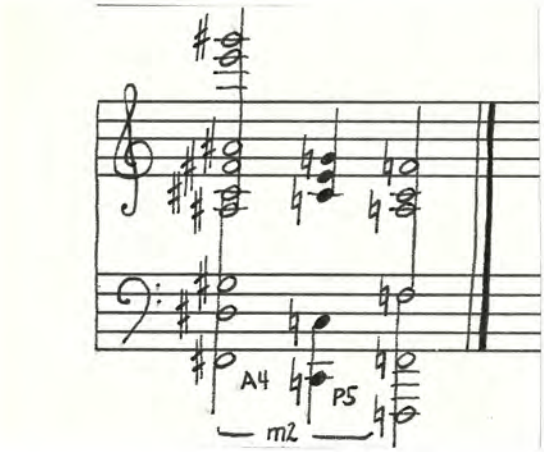


Fig. 63c. from Walt Whitman, melody, mm. 1 and 9

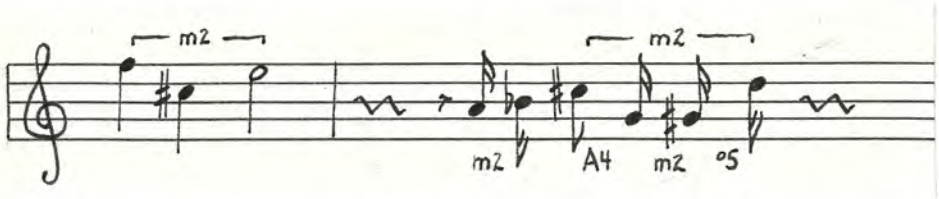


Fig. 63d. from Afterglow, melody, system 3, graphic analysis

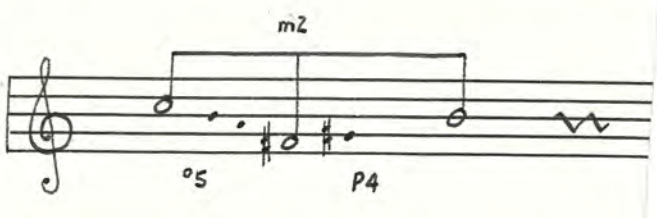
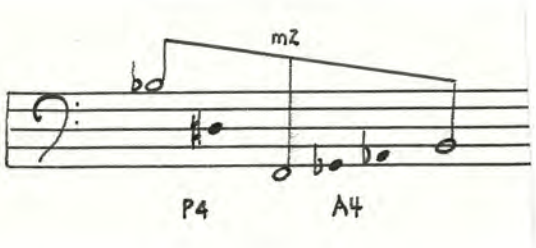


Fig. 63e. from Thoreau, bass line, graphic analysis



Borrowed Material

Melodically, The Housatonic combines two phrases from different hymn-tunes for its primary motivic material. These are taken from Missionary Chant by Heinrich Zeuner,[35] and Talmar by Isaac Woodbury (also called Dorrnance).[36]

Fig. 64a. from Missionary Chant, melody

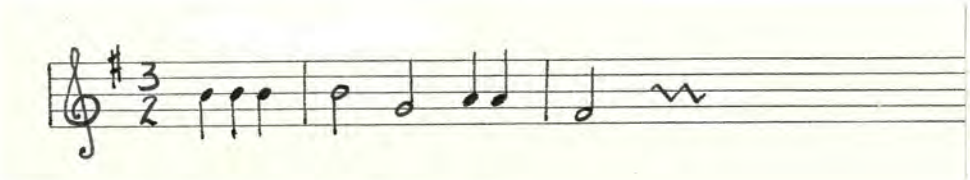
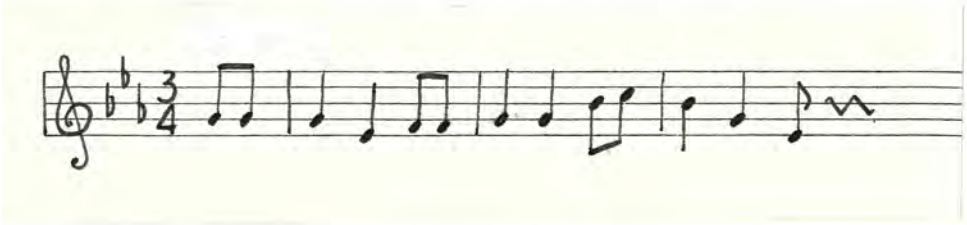


Fig. 64b. from Talmar, melody



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[35] The Hymnal, op. cit., No. 385.

[36] Clayton Wilson Henderson, "Quotation as a Style Element in the Music of Charles Ives" (Ph.D. dissertation, Washington University, 1969), p. 217.

This disparity with Premonitions makes it difficult to draw any definite conclusion regarding the use of quotation in Ives' transcendental songs - some, like The Housatonic, use quotation extensively, others do not. One general observation, though, is that where pre-existing material is used, it is drawn from the repertory of Protestant hymns. Examples of this, in addition to The Housatonic, are the quote of William Wallace's Serenity[37] in the final phrase of So may it be!; the quotation of numerous fragments from St. Peter[38] by Alexander Reinagle in Immortality; and, as mentioned previously, the extended references to Nettleton in The Innate.

Despite the inconsistent use of quotation in Ives' transcendental songs, its restriction, when used, to liturgical music points out an essential aspect of transcendentalist thought - a firm belief in the existence of a loving and benign God. It is no coincidence that many of the "personalities associated with the transcendental movement were . . . graduates of the Harvard Divinity School" and began "their careers as ministers of the Unitarian churches of the region."[39] Yet, like Emerson, they also felt ill at ease with the rigidity of church doctrine, and, by and large, decided eventually to abandon their ministries.

This attitude can be felt in those of Ives' transcendental songs which employ quotation, for their melodies strongly evoke the sense of

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[37] The Hymnal, op. cit., No. 178.

[38] Ibid., Nos. 81, 310, and 341.

[39] William Anson Call, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

religious faith which was such an essential part of his inner life. Yet, at the same time, the other aspects of the transcendental style demonstrate, with no uncertainty, the independence of his way of thinking!

Further, the use of quotation has a direct bearing upon the various melodic idioms which are found in Ives' transcendental songs. In order for a quotation to be recognizable, or to partake of the same feeling as the original, it must, of course, share the same tonal and diatonic idiom which characterizes the majority of tunes in the Protestant hymnal. Therefore, the melodic chromaticism which is a feature of Ives' transcendental style, is most prominent in those songs which employ little or no pre-existing musical material.

Conclusion

Ives created a highly idiosyncratic musical style to convey his transcendentalist beliefs. Analysis of his transcendentalist compositions reveals the great variety of stylistic elements - rhythmic, registral, textural, and harmonic - to be derived from but a few common theoretical principles, these producing various results when applied to each particular musical facet.

First, Ives' intention to reveal the spiritual, as opposed to physical, aspect of existence, led him to employ techniques which avoid the consistency and definition we hear in tonal and metrical music. He much preferred, as he tells us in his song At Sea, "things . . .

vague to the mind, but real to the heart."[40]

Second, the transcendentalist belief in the unlimited nature of man and the universe led Ives to explore a wide range of musical materials, and to organize these in a free and intuitive manner. Ives' compositional procedure, as regards the transcendental songs, is best described by his own words about Emerson at work -

> His habit, often, in lecturing was to compile his ideas as they came to him on a general subject in scattered notes, and, when on the platform, to trust to the mood of the occasion to assemble them.[41]

Ives' application of these general procedures led to a musical style which, even in its details, has far-reaching philosophical implications. This aspect of the music cannot be over-emphasized. In The Housatonic at Stockbridge, for example, an even rudimentary awareness of this dimension of the score will provide a listener with an experience worlds beyond the simple pleasure of a sunny, pastoral excursion.

In summary, Ives' transcendental style is characterized by:

Rhythm

1) a lack of metric organization, or, where bar lines are present, frequent metric changes;

2) a frequent use of non-repetitive permutations of rhythmic

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[40] 114 Songs, p. 10.

[41] Essays, op. cit., p. 22.

cells;

3) the occasional use of polyrhythms;

4) the use of either of two tempo indications - one, very slow, and expressive of the dreamy, mystical aspect of transcendentalism, and another, moderately fast, to convey a feeling of bold optimism;

Range and Texture

5) a wide tessitura, with special emphasis on the high registers;

6) frequent ascending registral gestures, and abrupt registral shifts;

7) the use of pedal tones;

8) frequent changes of texture and density, though a thick polyphonic setting is prominent;

9) the near constant use of the damper pedal;

Harmony

10) a largely atonal and chromatic harmonic idiom, although elements of tonality are occasionally significant;

11) the mixing of different chord types in a free and intuitive manner;

12) frequent use of tritones, semitones, and/or perfect fourths as a basis for both harmonic and melodic relationships;

13) the occasional use of quotation from the Protestant liturgy.

Chapter VI

AMERICAN SONGS

Ives' universalist outlook is belied by his reputation as a distinctly "American" composer. An even cursory examination of his volume of 114 Songs, for instance, reveals his great indebtedness to the popular and religious music of late nineteenth-century America. Yet, we find Ives, throughout his Essays and other prose writings, expressing unequivocal distaste for this "easy entertainment and silk cushions."[1] Neely Bruce writes,

> Ives presents us with the paradox of a major composer who denounced a kind of music which he himself composed in considerable quantity and even published and distributed at his own expense.[2]

Ample evidence of this lies within the pages of the privately printed edition of 114 Songs, where a number of songs are accompanied by Ives' severely critical, if humorous, commentary. For example, a footnote to On the Counter expresses Ives' hope that "this song will not be taken seriously, or sung, at least, in public."[3] Of In the Alley, one

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[1] Memos, op. cit., p. 133.

[2] Neely Bruce, "Ives and Nineteenth-Century American Music," in An Ives Celebration, edited by H. Wiley Hitchcock and Vivian Perlis (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), p. 30.

[3] 114 Songs, op. cit., p. 68.

of a group of "Five Street Songs," Ives writes, "This song (and the same may be said of others) is inserted for association's sake - on the ground that that will excuse anything; also, to help clear up a long disputed point, namely; - which is worse? the music or the words?"[4]

Ives' self-deprecating attitude arose partly from his belief that, in writing certain songs, he had betrayed his musical instincts in order to appease his critics. In his Memos, Ives referred eloquently to the periods of self-doubt which followed occasions when his music was harshly received.

> These instances . . . had something of the effect on me of a kind of periodic deterrent, something approaching a result of a sedative . . . And often that would get me thinking that there must be something wrong with me, for, with the exception of Mrs. Ives, no one seemed to like anything that I happened to be working on when these incidents came up. "Why is it that I like to use these different things and try out other ways etc. which nobody else evidently has any pleasure in hearing, seeing, or thinking about? Why do I like to do it? Is there some peculiar defect in me, or something worse that I'm afflicted with?" So I'd have periods of being good and nice, and getting back to the usual ways of writing, sometimes for several months, until I got so tired of it that I decided I'd either have to stop music or stop this.[5]

Included on Ives' list of what he called his "slump" songs is Old Home Day,[6] a sentimental reminiscence of the simpler America of Ives' childhood, of "base hits" and "white picket fences," of "daisies almost everywhere," and of the excited "march down Main street, behind

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[4] Ibid., p. 119.

[5] Memos, op. cit., p. 126.

[6] No. 52 in 114 Songs.

the village band."[7] Old Home Day typifies a style of writing, which, while having a bit more punch than some of the more sugary "parlor entertainments"[8] which Ives abhorred (though he composed a great many of them, some in jest, others not), is nevertheless a product of some of the composer's "weak-minded and retrogressive moments."[9]

Other of Ives' late songs which share many of the distinct features which mark Old Home Day are the oft-performed Charlie Rutlage, The Greatest Man, He is there!, the second of a group of "Three Songs of the War," and Down East, a gentle companion song to Old Home Day.[10] These songs are all characteristically "American" in that they paint a musical portrait of some typical American scene or scenes. Further, the fact that Ives composed so many of them, so late in his career, attests to his genuine fondness for this genre.

Yet, his feeling that Old Home Day and songs of similar ilk were somewhat "weak-minded" is readily understandable, especially in light of the profound merger of sound and ideas which is his principal artistic contribution. First, analysis of Ives' American songs reveals their conformity, to a great extent, to the characteristics of mainstream late nineteenth-century American popular music. Second, these

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[7] 114 Songs, op. cit., pp. 116-117.

[8] Memos, op. cit., p. 134.

[9] Ibid., p. 126.

[10] These songs are, respectively, Nos. 10, 19, 50, and 55 in 114 Songs.

compositions demonstrate little, if any, connection to the aesthetic principles stated by Ives in his Essays Before a Sonata and other writings.

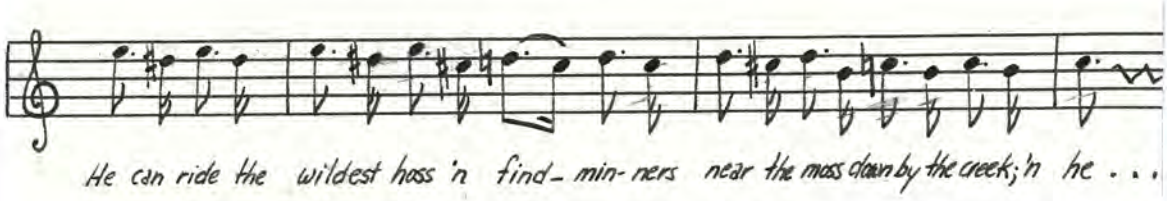
Overview of Ives' American Style

Form

The most outstanding feature of Ives' American songs is their adherence to repetitive formal designs, especially the common strophic song form. The structural foundation of Old Home Day, for example, is that of a verse and repeated chorus, which unit is itself entirely repeated (introduction / A B B A B B / Coda). A similar design is found in He is there!, with its rollicking medley of Civil War times (introduction //: A B :// Coda).

Other repetitive forms are found in Charlie Rutlage (A B A), and Down East (introduction / A / interlude / A'). Even in The Greatest Man, with its continuous string of phrases, repetition plays a prominent role. Melodic figures are spun out in a stream of repetitions and sequences, and the work closes with a shortened return of the initial phrase.

Fig. 65. from The Greatest Man, melody, mm. 10-13



One might argue, perhaps, that Ives' use of repetitive forms is

analogous to memory, a theme common to a majority of his American songs, and similar to the temporal review suggested by exact musical recapitulation. But, first, this argument fails to account for the use of repetition in works like Charlie Rutlage and The Greatest Man, in which a return to past events plays no part. Second, exact reiteration of a musical idea is not at all analogous to the actual function of memory, which reproduces the past only under the influence of the present, and links together, through association, many separate events into an interweaving, complex tapestry.

These latter attributes of memory are far better expressed, for instance, by the introductory measures of both Old Home Day and Down East, than by the music that follows them. These dreamy, free-flowing preludes, so at odds with their musical surroundings, are composed in Ives' transcendental style, and demonstrate the mixing of radically contrasting styles which is a feature more of his lengthier instrumental works than of his songs (see Fig. 66). (A more serious song which captures perfectly the plastic, more elusive quality of memory is Ives' The Things Our Fathers Loved,[11] which combines elements of both his transcendental and American styles.)

Rhythm

Ives' memories of "tunes of long ago,"[12] particularly the village band music with which he was so familiar, greatly influenced the choice

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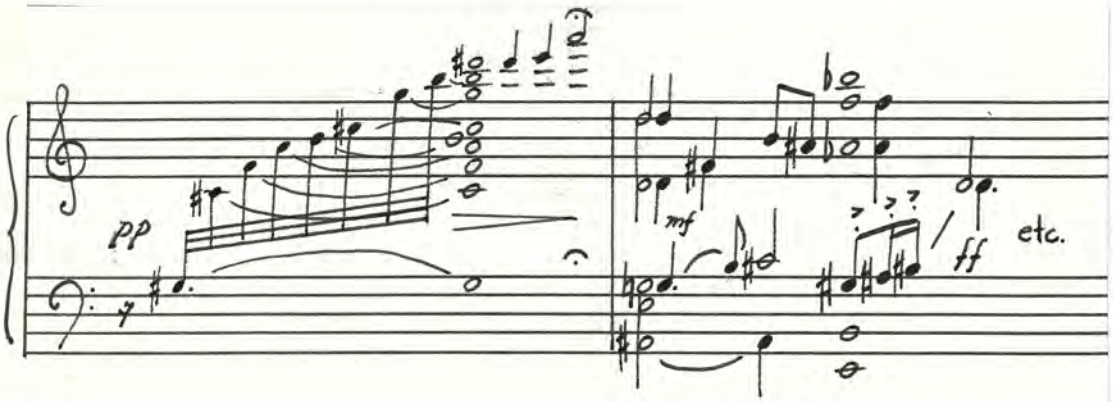
[11] No. 43 in 114 Songs.

[12] 114 Songs, op. cit., p. 91.

Fig. 66. from Old Home Day, mm. 4-5



of rhythmic elements in his American songs. The importance of these aural recollections is borne out by the large number of major works which recall the noisy, excited holiday parades which sparked his youthful imagination, of which Decoration Day and The Fourth of July are typical examples. Further, of the late American songs which are settings of Ives' personal reminiscences, all but Down East include references to village or marching bands (see Fig. 67a, Fig. 67b, and Fig. 67c).

As demonstrated by the above examples, the principal rhythmic features of these compositions include 1) the use of common or march time (of the American songs, only Down East is in other than $\frac{4}{4}$ time); 2) the combination of two rhythmic strands, one moving in steady quarters, the other in eighth notes - this takes the form of either on-beat octaves alternating with off-beat chords, or a skipping pattern in the bass which repeats every quarter beat; 3) a frequent use of syncopation

Fig. 67a. from Old Home Day, mm. 22-24

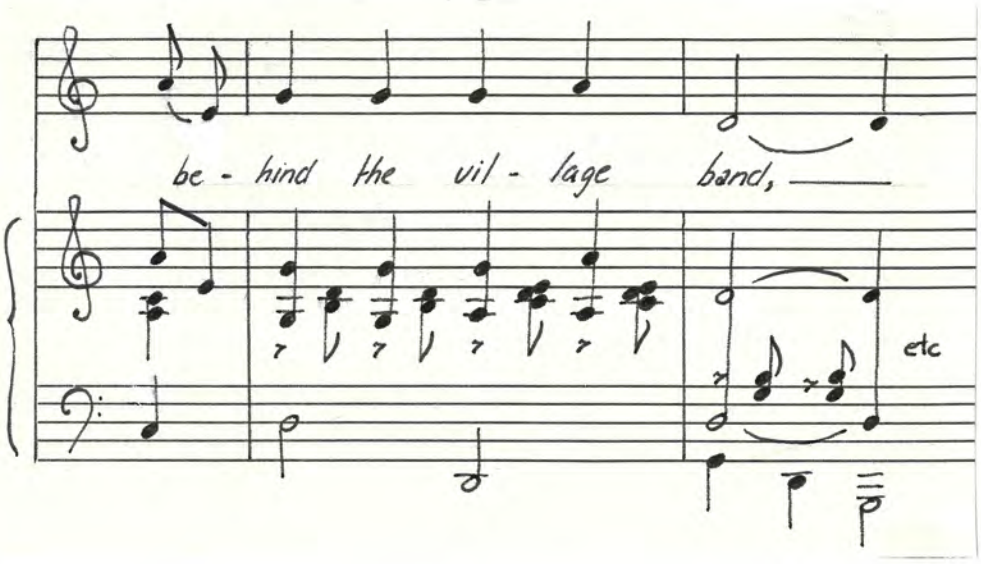


Fig. 67b. from He is there!, mm. 8-9

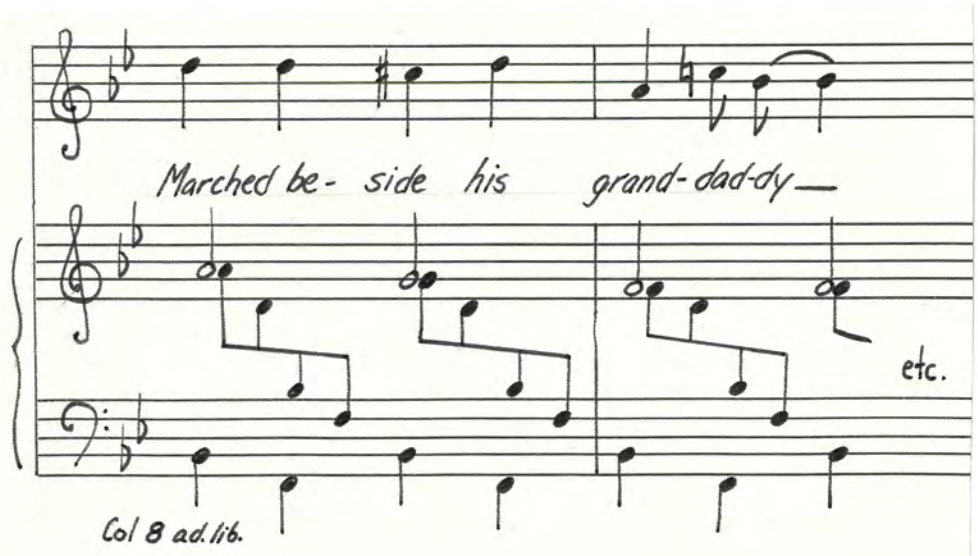
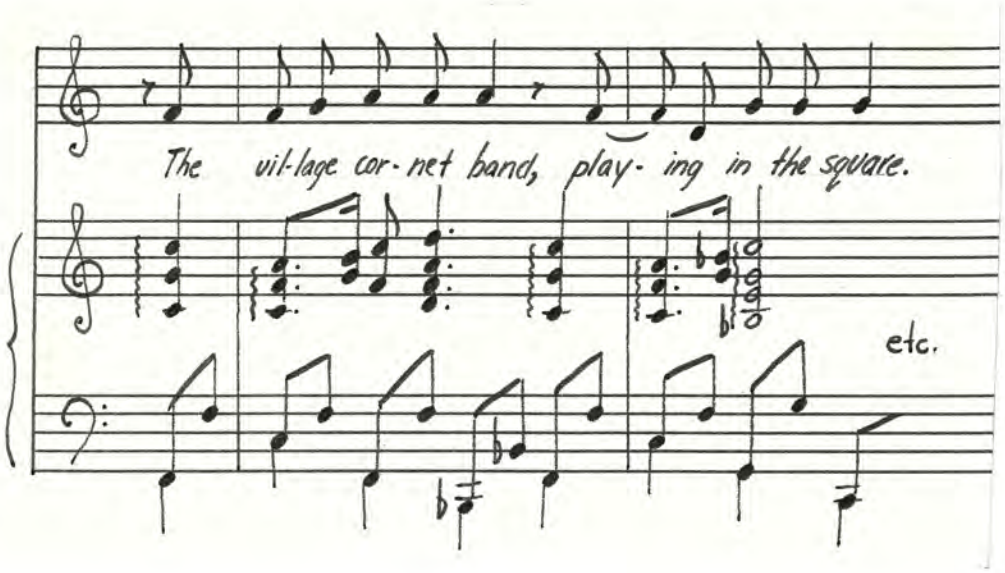
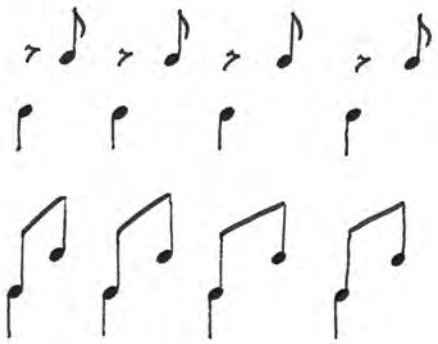


Fig. 67c. from The Things Our Fathers Loved, mm. 11-12



(a rhythmic technique for which Ives is famous, yet which occurs, for obvious reasons, only in his more conservative, strongly metrical music); 4) melodic rhythms which consist primarily of various combinations of quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, and generally avoid triplet or other subdivisions of the quarter-note beat (♪♩♪, ♫ , ♫. , ♬, ♬, etc.); and, 5) a restriction to moderate "marching" tempos.

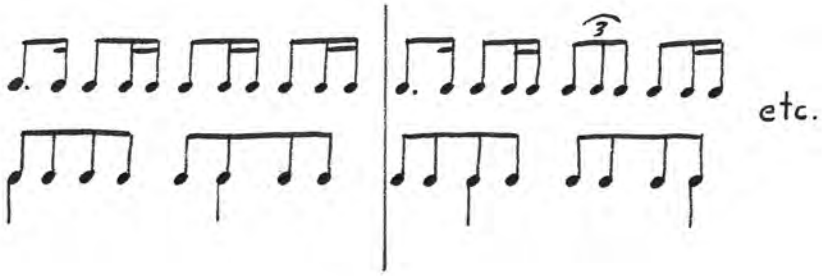
Fig. 68. Typical march rhythms



Most of the above characteristics are found in Down East as well, although adjusted to its lilting $\frac{6}{8}$ meter. The lack of even triplet divisions of the dotted quarter-note beat is especially notable, the predominant subdivisions being either a skipping quarter-eighth pattern, or its syncopated retrograde. Further, the temporal relationship of a steady bass against its faster moving chordal or melodic counterparts is, as in the march pieces, generally maintained.

The sole exception to the essentially simplistic rhythms of Ives' American style is found in the polyrhythmical central section of Charlie Rutlage. This sudden complexity arises, of course, from the song's subject matter - a rather humorous, if sentimental, account of poor Charlie's demise while "on the spring round up."[13] The awkward, erratic movements of Charlie's "cutting horse" are captured marvelously by the cross-accents set up by a bass ostinato in $\frac{5}{8}$ time moving simultaneously with a measure-long repetitive rhythm in $\frac{4}{4}$.

Fig. 69. from Charlie Rutlage, rhythm, mm. 24-25



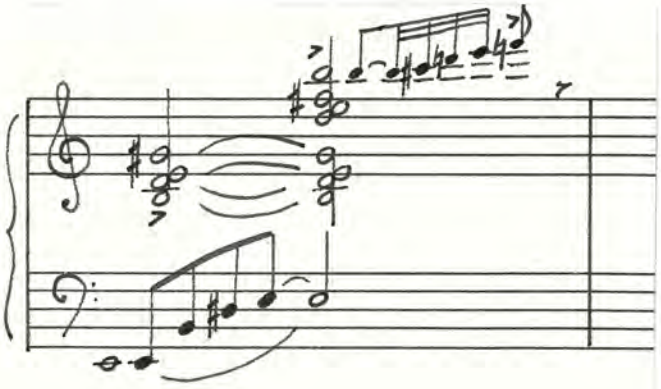
[13] 114 Songs, op. cit., p. 20.

Range and Texture

Ives' many memories, associated as they are with vivid aural images, bear directly upon the use of range and texture in his American songs - a procedure of stylistic mimicry which is a far cry from the psychological/philosophical basis of his other mature compositions.

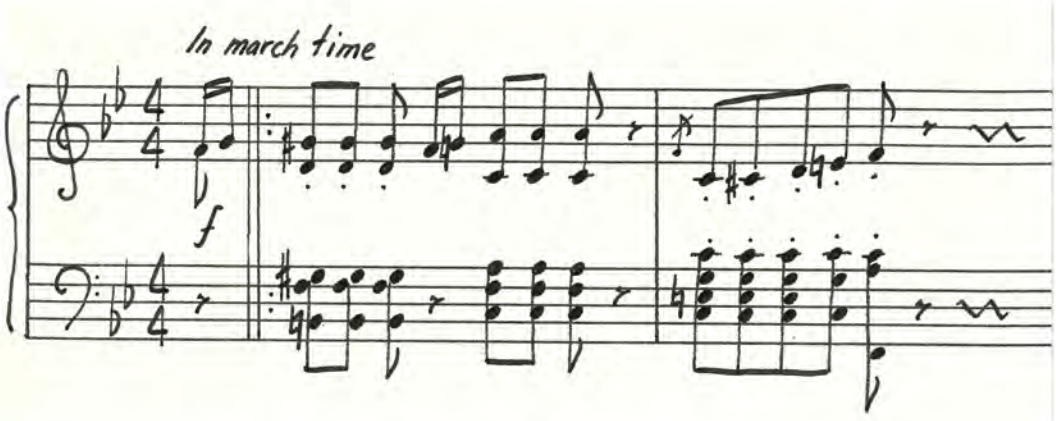
The instrumental nature of his recollections is made unquestionably clear in Old Home Day and He is there!, for both of these songs employ an "obligato (ad. lib.)" melody for violin, flute, or fife in their choruses. Furthermore, one can practically hear the band blaring throughout He is there!, the oompah of the tubas in the single bass notes in register 1,[14] the squeal of a piccolo as it cadences with an out-of-tune flourish, the band cranking up in an introduction that parodies marching band music to perfection.

Fig. 70. from He is there!, accompaniment, m. 15



[14] The bass throughout the first page of He is there! is written in register 2 and marked "Col 8 ad lib."

Fig. 71. from He is there!, introduction



Instrumental effects of range and texture are found as well in Charlie Rutlage, where steady closed position chords in registers 3 to 4 are strongly suggestive of the strumming of a guitar; in the "piano-drum"[15] chords of Old Home Day (mm. 19-20); and, in Down East, where an uncluttered melody and accompaniment imitates the "sounds (of) the old melodeon"[16] (see Fig. 72).

In short, the derivation of Ives' American songs from popular instrumental models resulted in his use of simple melody/accompaniment figures as a primary texture - a feature far more characteristic of the composer's early and/or "slump" compositions than of any other of his mature works. Further, the essential conservatism and popular basis of these songs is borne out by their unusual (for Ives, that is)

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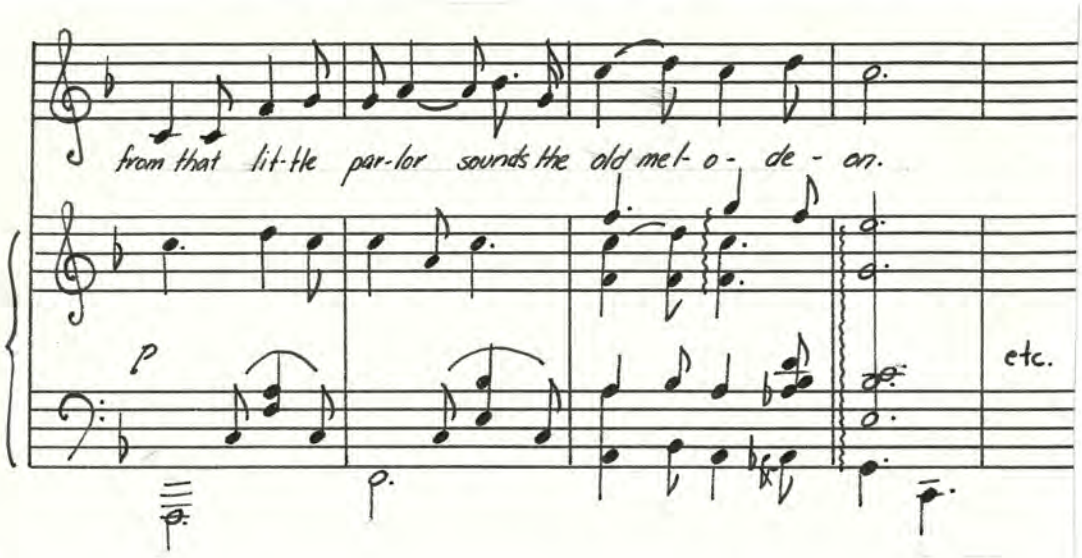
[15] Similar chords and rhythms occur in General Booth to represent the drums of the Salvation Army band (see Fig. 32).

[16] 114 Songs, op. cit., p. 127.

Fig. 72. from Down East, mm. 31-34



accessibility. The medium range and moderate tessitura of the vocal melodies, coupled with largely simple melody/accompaniment patterns in the piano, place these works within the technical capacity of most amateur musicians. (The obvious exception to this is the central section of Charlie Rutlage, whose highly theatrical "picture-in-sounds" requires exceptionally tight ensemble work, and just the right mixture of seriousness and "high-camp" on the part of its performers.)[17]

Harmony

The harmonic idiom of Ives' American style may be generally

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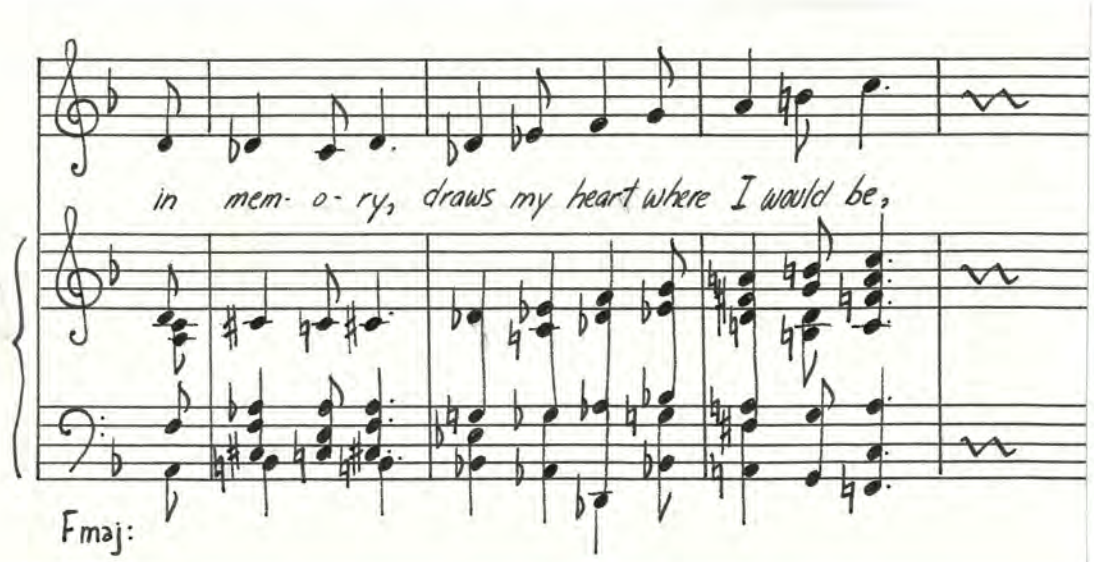
[17] Those of Ives' songs which are real "theatre-pieces," such as Charlie Rutlage, An Election, and General Booth, generally receive more successful performances at the hands of singers whose training and experience is in the popular theatre, rather than in the classical repertoire.

described as tonal, functional, and triadic. Such a restriction to nineteenth-century harmonic practice is not found in any of Ives' other mature styles - in fact, his American songs are unique in that they may be analyzed in their entirety (or nearly so) using the tools of functional harmonic analysis, i.e., identification of chordal functions, inversions, and qualities.

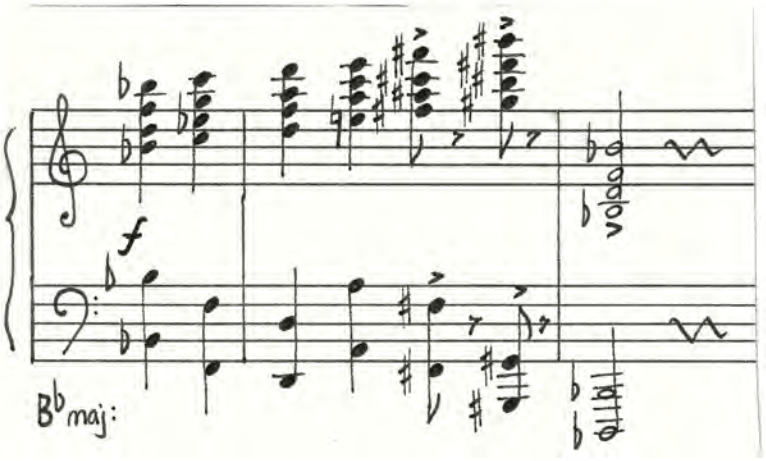
Lest a wrong impression be given, it must be stated that, despite their overall harmonic conservatism, the American songs do contain some tonal excursions which are particularly Ivesian in character. For example, in He is there!, a song which is largely diatonic in Bb major, Ives throws a surprising twist into the Coda by modulating chromatically to a rousing conclusion in Db major. A similar passage in Down East produces an even greater shock on the ear, for the measures that precede Ives' chromatic harmonization of a melodic whole-tone scale are cloyingly simplistic.

Fig. 73. from Down East, mm. 18-21



This sense of the composer's harmonic playfulness is also apparent in the shifting tonal implications of Charlie Rutlage, a "diatonic waywardness . . . suggesting the folk singer's naive use of fundamental harmonies."[18] The tonality of the opening phrase is F major, although somewhat suggestive of D minor. Ives then touches upon C major, only to modulate, by way of an extended A dominant seventh, to Bb major - all in the course of ten measures, concluding with a chromatic foray, from Bb and back again, in a single bar. A similar use of "a few parallel

Fig. 74. from Charlie Rutlage, accompaniment, mm. 12-14



non-diatonic triads inserted before the . . . tonic"[19] is found in Old Home Day as well. Further, the derivation of this cadential formula from the music of Ives' college days is borne out by its appearance at the close of In the Alley, composed twenty-four years earlier in 1896 (see Fig. 75a and Fig. 75b).

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[18] Philip Newman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 282.

[19] Ibid., Vol. I, p. 189.

Fig. 75a. from Old Home Day, final cadence

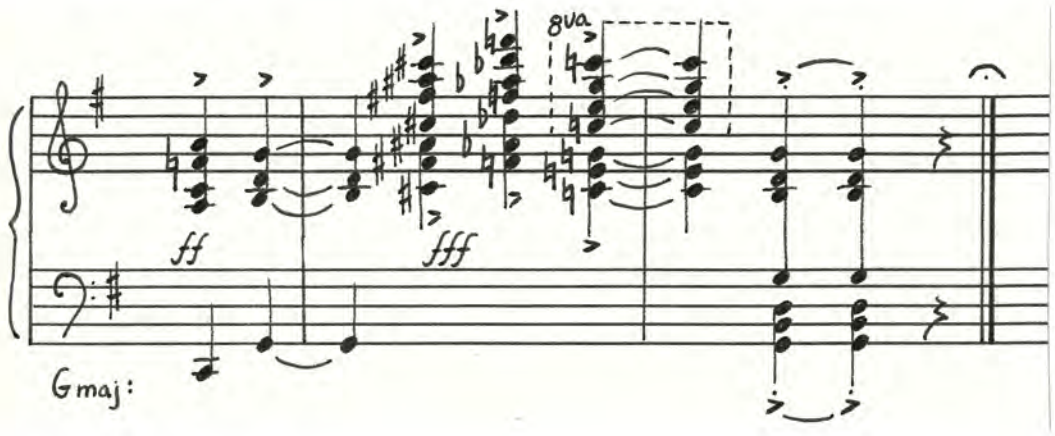
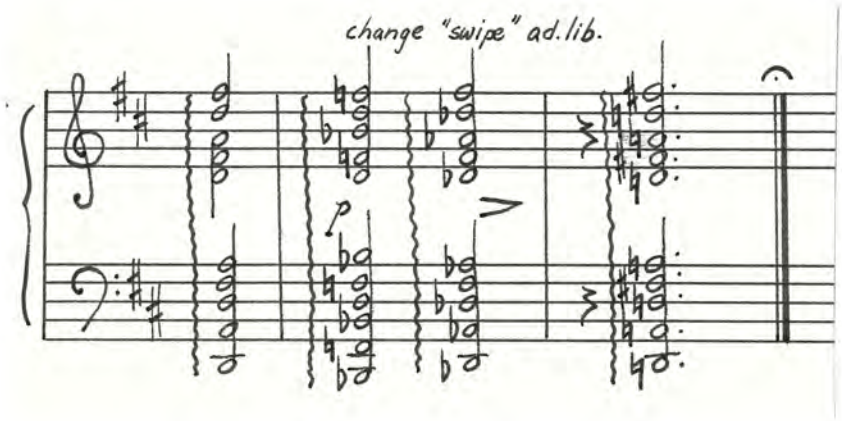


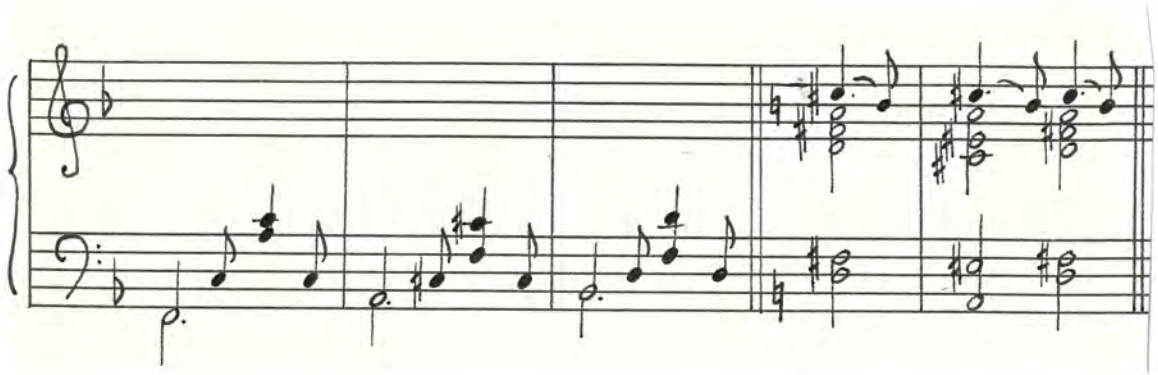
Fig. 75b. from In the Alley, final cadence



Another important harmonic characteristic of Ives' American style is an extensive use of chromatic embellishing tones and chords. These are quite distinctive, and appear with sufficient regularity to render Ives' imitation of American popular music just short of burlesque. Instances of such chromatic banalities abound - as decorative augmented chords in Down East and Charlie Rutlage; as chromatic neighboring tones

Fig. 76a. from Down East, accompaniment, mm. 8-10

Fig. 76b. from Charlie Rutlage, accompaniment, mm. 15-16

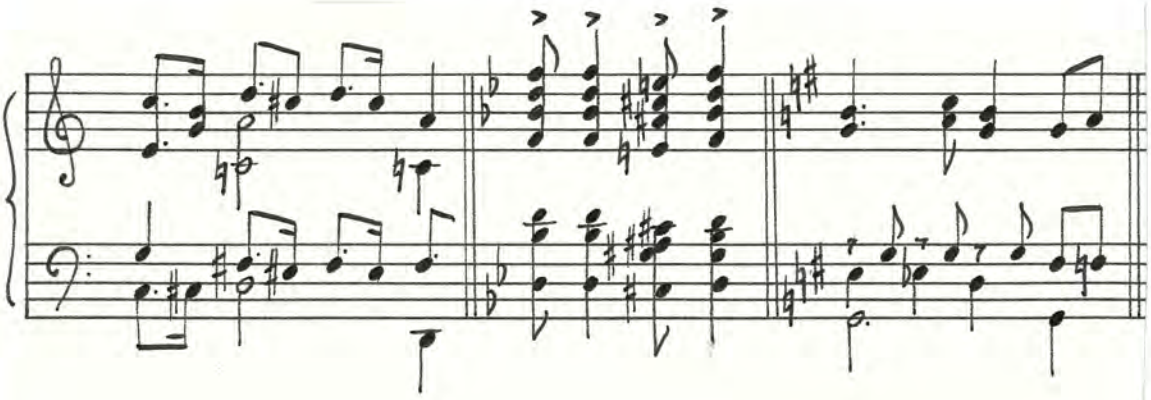


and chords in The Greatest Man (also see Fig. 66), He is there!, and Old Home Day; and, as passing chromatic decorations in the chorus of Old Home Day.

Fig. 77a. from The Greatest Man, accompaniment, m. 27

Fig. 77b. from He is there!, accompaniment, m. 16

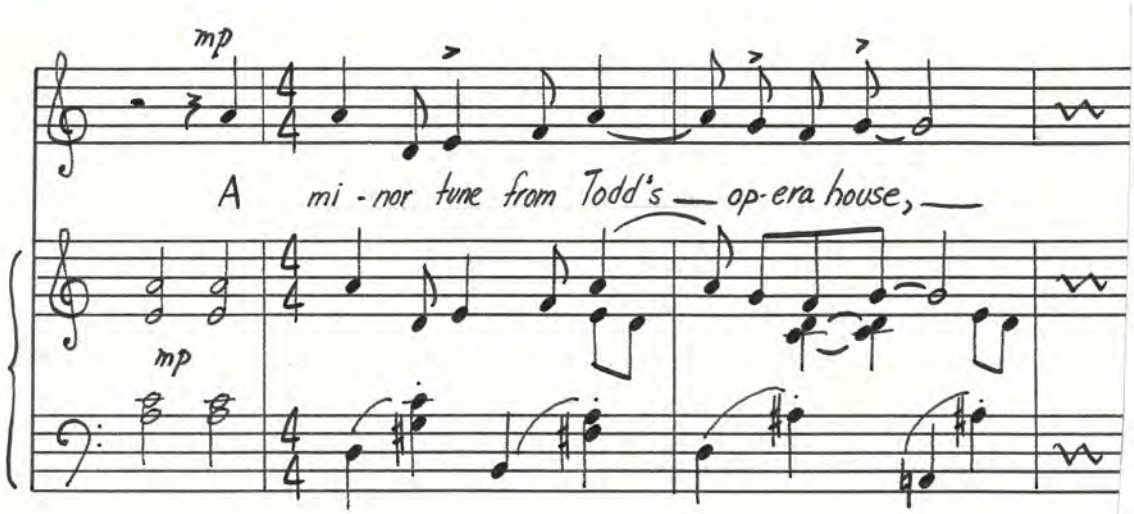
Fig. 77c. from Old Home Day, accompaniment, m. 25



Ives' use of chromaticism is more sophisticated in the delightfully bluesy verse-section of Old Home Day. There, the decorative and added chromatic tones, combined with rhythmic syncopation, help create

a musical atmosphere right out of Broadway theatre - a style not unlike that of Kurt Weill. (This section is also exceptional in that it is in

Fig. 78. from Old Home Day, mm. 9-11



a minor mode. The rest of Old Home Day, as well as most of the other American songs, are in major keys: Charlie Rutlage - F major, C major, Bb major; The Greatest Man - G major; He is there! - F major, Bb major, Db major; Old Home Day - D minor, G major; and, Down East - F major.)

Finally, the American songs frequently employ commonplace harmonic progressions and cadential patterns. In other words, Ives is guilty of moments when "every phrase, line, and chord, and beat went over and over the way you'd exactly expect them to go - trite, tiresome awnings of platitudes."[20] Examples of this, including chromatic dominants appropriately placed and resolved, circle of fifth progressions, ii-V_7-I

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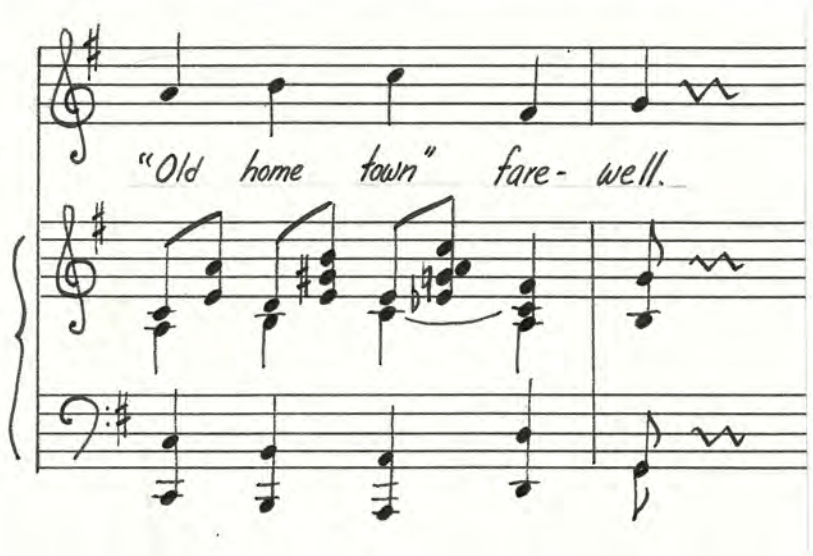
[20] Memos, op. cit., p. 136.

cadences, and their like, are found in all of the American songs.

Fig. 79. from Old Home Day, mm. 35-36



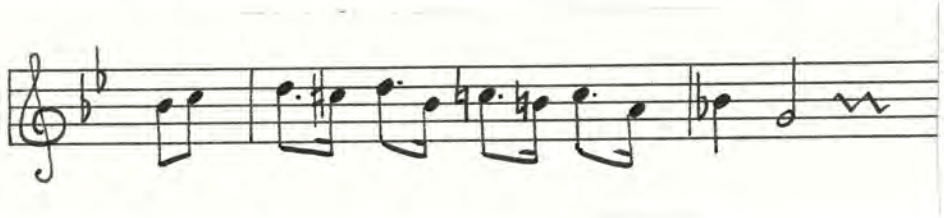
Borrowed Material

In their use of pre-existing musical material, Ives' American songs may be divided into two categories; first, those songs which use quotation in a continuous, fragmented stream; and, second, those in which direct quotation is either minimal, unidentified, or restricted to a single source.

Of the latter group, Charlie Rutlage and The Greatest Man are of particular interest. Despite their minimal use of known quotations, the melodies of these two songs ring of the familiar, producing in a listener the rather strange sensation of having heard the tunes before, but being unable to recall them precisely. This is due, perhaps, to the

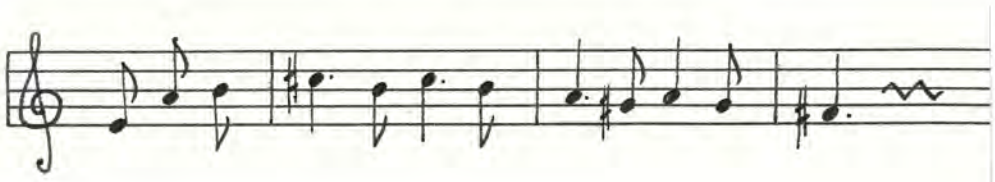
possibility that the thematic material of these compositions is derived from pre-existing melodies as yet unidentified. Another explanation, and one equally likely, is that their undistinguished melodic profiles are simply of a kind with the many banal tunes we have all heard at one time or another - and immediately forgotten. For instance, the melodic fragment shown in Fig. 66 (from The Greatest Man) is an extension of a motive from On the Banks of the Wabash, Far Away, a popular song by Paul Dresser (1857-1911) quoted more directly in Ives' The Things Our Fathers

Fig. 80. from On the Banks of the Wabash, Far Away, refrain



Loved.[21] Or, again, despite researchers' claims to the contrary, the melody harmonized in mm. 14-17 of Charlie Rutlage is so tonal, diatonic, and simple of outline, that one suspects it, too, to be a quote.

Fig. 81. from Charlie Rutlage, melody, mm. 14-17



Also, in this category is Down East, a song whose restriction to a single pre-existing melodic source is directly related to the demands of

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[21] Philip Newman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 307.

its text. In this case, Ives' verbal reference to the familiar, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," is musically supported by extensive quotation from Lowell Mason's Bethany, the usual setting of this hymn-text.

In contrast are those songs whose reliance on quotation is so extensive that their melodies are as beads strung on a wire, each bead a fragment from some tune or tunes. In none other of Ives' mature styles do we find quotation used in such a manner - a disjointed medley of tunes tumbled together, some stated clearly, others barely recognizable, all flickering, like phantoms, in and out of the range of perception.

In a study on quotation in the music of Ives, Clayton Henderson brings home the particular importance of pre-existing melodies in the composer's American songs. There, he cites six different sources for the melody of The Things Our Fathers Loved, eight sources for Old Home Day, and no less than fourteen separate melodies in He is there![22] Further, Henderson's research only skims the surface, for in the chorus of Old Home Day alone, there are numerous melodies which remain unidentified, but which, considering their context, are most likely also quotations.

Finally, the use of quotation from the Protestant liturgy, an important feature of both Ives' transcendental and religious styles, is minimal in his American songs. The overwhelming majority of tunes are

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[22] Clayton Wilson Henderson, "Quotation as a Style Element in the Music of Charles Ives" (Ph.D. dissertation, Washington University, 1969), p. 216.

popular in nature, some by known composers, others of folk origin. For instance, the melodic fragments which have been identified in Old Home Day include The Arkansas Traveler, by Sandford C. Faulkner; George F. Root's The Battle Cry of Freedom; The Girl I Left Behind, an Irish song; two jigs, Garryowen and St. Patrick's Day; Annie Lisle, by H.S. Thompson; the well-known Scottish tune, Auld Lang Syne; and Assembly, the U.S. bugle call.[23]

Conclusion

Ives' American songs are characterized by a distinctive yet derivative style, and demonstrate the degree to which the composer's attitudes, beliefs, and artistic direction were shaped and guided by his childhood experiences. Echoing the sounds of a world long past, the principal features of Ives' American style are:

Rhythm

1) a consistent use of duple meters, especially $\frac{4}{4}$ march time;
2) rhythmic patterns common to marching band music, including syncopation, and various combinations of quarter-, eighth-, and sixteenth-note values;
3) moderate "marching" tempos;

Range and Texture

4) registers and textures designed to imitate the instrumentation of late nineteenth-century band and

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[23] Philip Newman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 273.

popular music;

5) a predominant use of melody/accompaniment textures;

Harmony

6) a tonal and triadic harmonic idiom;

7) a use of surprising harmonic modulations within an otherwise stable tonal context;

8) an idiomatic use of chromatic embellishing tones and chords;

9) a predominant use of the major mode;

Borrowed Material

10) extensive use of pre-existing melodies, particularly from the repertoire of popular folk and/or war tunes; or,

11) melodies which either quote tunes as yet unidentified, or capture perfectly the essence of late nineteenth-century American popular style; and,

Form

12) the use of repetitive, commonly practiced formal designs.

As presented in the above overview of Ives' American songs, it is apparent that their style of composition fails to meet the aesthetic standards achieved by his other mature works. Their dependence, to a great extent, on formulae common to late nineteenth-century popular

music, is an example of the preference for "manner" over "substance" which Ives professedly disdained.

The principal merit, then, of these songs lies in the fact that they are extremely entertaining. High-spirited and frequently humorous, the American songs evoke a sense of heartfelt appreciation for a time of simpler and more strongly held values than presently exists, yet lack the depth of meaning and expression which marks Ives' more serious musical statements.

Why, then, in light of his supposed aesthetic principles, did Ives compose these songs? or, having composed them, why did he go to the bother and expense of publishing them?

One possible explanation was suggested by Neely Bruce in a presentation before the participants of the Ives Centennial Festival-Conference in 1974. There, he said,

> Ives refused to renounce his past, or himself; in fact, he was careful to affirm his past and clearly state his acceptance of it in every aspect of his life. As a result, he wrote songs and much other music which reflect even those aspects of his past which he thought to be questionable, for the same reason that John Cage wrote Imaginary Landscapes #4 for twelve radios: to come to grips with them. Ives published and distributed the music to demonstrate that he was not denying this aspect of himself, but he was able to state categorically that he didn't think that the music was very good because he was an honest man.[24]

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[24] Neely Bruce, op. cit., p. 40.

This attitude on Ives' part cannot be underestimated, for it influenced many of his actions which are otherwise difficult to understand. The search for truth, he believed, must not be marred by a dogmatic adherence to theory, but strive to remain impartial, and open to "what is." Ives alludes to this when, in his inimitable style, he wrote,

> . . . a man never knows his vices and virtues until that great and solemn event, that first sunny day in spring when he wants to go fishing, but stays home and helps his wife clean house. As he lies on his back under the bed,-under all the beds,-with nothing beneath him but tacks and his past life,-with his soul (to say nothing of his vision), full of that glorious dust of mortals and carpets,-with his finger-tips rosy with the caresses of his mother-in-law's hammer . . . -as he lies there taking orders from the hired girl, a sudden and tremendous vocabulary comes to him . . . Wedged in between the sewing machine and the future he examines himself, as every man in his position should do;-"What has brought me to this?-Where am I? Why do I do this?"-these are natural inquiries. They have assailed thousands before our day; they will afflict thousands in years to come . . . Various authors have various reasons for bringing out a book, and this reason may or may not be the reason they give to the world; I know not and care not . . . Some have written a book for money; I have not. Some for fame; I have not. Some for love; I have not. Some for kindlings; I have not. I have not written a book for any of these reasons or for all of them together. In fact, gentle borrower, I have not written a book at all-I have merely cleaned house. All that is left is out on the clothes line,-but it's good for a man's vanity to have the neighbors see him-on the clothes line.[25]

The implications of this statement are profound. Ives, like the rest of us, had many, often contradictory, sides to his nature - his music attests to this. He also, unlike most of us, had a sincere wish to know himself, to answer the "natural inquiries" of what, where, and

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[25] 114 Songs, op. cit., postface.

why am I. His songs, spanning so many years and styles, were a highly personal record of his inner life, a diary in sound, so to speak. His purpose in gathering them together, if his words are to be taken at their face value, was to reveal himself, not so much to others, but to himself - a task which required him to include the "vices" along with the "virtues" if his self-portrait were to be an honest one. Given this intention, the uneven quality of the writing in his collection of 114 Songs makes perfect sense. Ives felt obligated to present the whole of his output, warts and all. Amongst his "vices," though, are many immensely likable and amusing songs, of which his nostalgic American portraits have received the greatest attention and acclaim. These works, despite their failings, represent an important focal point of Ives' inner life, and are thus essential to an assessment of the relative values of the composer's widely varying compositional efforts.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis has been twofold: first, to present the philosophical principles which lie at the heart of Ives' compositional procedures; and, second, to demonstrate, by analysis of the words and music of selected songs, the particular correlations that exist between Ives' philosophical ideas and the musical gestures which are their expression.

Overview of Ives' Compositional Principles

That Ives approached his work "as a philosopher as well as an artist,"[1] is well known. This aspect of his art has undergone much scrutiny in the years since his death in 1954, yet always in a general, non-specific manner. The result of this failure to examine the exact correlations between sound and idea in many of Ives' mature compositions has been to miss the substantial difference between Ives' method of composition and that of a majority of Western composers, past and present - a difference so great as to nearly defy comparison of one in terms of the other.

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[1] Bentley Layton, "An Introduction to the 114 Songs of Charles Ives" (B.A. in Music thesis, Harvard University, 1963), p. v.

This crucial difference may be summed up as follows: the considerations affecting the musical decisions of most Western composers are, and have been, primarily musical ones, i.e., the "manner" of the music is generally held to be of equal or greater importance than its "substance." Thus, individual composers have, by and large, kept within the stylistic framework of the period to which they belong, regardless of the origin of any particular musical inspiration. For instance, linear developmental techniques are commonly applied to all musical situations, whether it be programmatic, occasional, operatic, or otherwise. Further, many musicians and writers about music adhere strongly to a view that the "manner" of music is its "substance," and that any suggestion to the contrary is but the sheerest fantasy.

Such a valuation of the function and intent of music is entirely at odds with Ives' aesthetic philosophy, which asserted that "an interest in any art-activity, from poetry to baseball is better, broadly speaking, if held as a part of life, or of a life, than if it sets itself up as a whole."[2] That "substance" should always be the guide and underlying cause of "manner" was, for Ives, a given, for he believed the requirements of life to be of far greater consequence than the requirements of music.

Ives' musical "manner," with its unusual blending of distinct styles, was, therefore, a direct outgrowth of the philosophical principles which guided him. As applied to his work as a composer,

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[2] 114 Songs, op. cit., postface.

these may be summarized as follows:

1) music has the inherent power to "proclaim any part of the human experience"[3];

2) music (and all art) must "parallel or approve . . . the highest attributes, moral and spiritual, one sees in life"[4]; and,

3) it is the obligation of the sincere artist to strive to transcend limitations and use "all lessons of the infinite" in an effort to approach "perfect truths,"[5] i.e., the artist-composer must be willing to step outside the confines of accepted practice.

As a result of these principles, Ives' compositional decisions were often dictated by conceptions not usually thought of in terms of music. For this reason, the usual tools of harmonic and motivic analysis are, alone, inadequate as a means for describing his work. Writing about Emerson, Ives uses a musical analogy that touches precisely upon this point:

> Jadassohn, if Emerson were literally a composer, could no more analyze his harmony than a Guide-to-Boston could. A microscope might show that he uses chords of the ninth, eleventh, or the ninety-ninth, but a lens far different tells us they are used with different aims from those of Debussy.[6]

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[3] Memos, op. cit., p. 61.

[4] Essays, op. cit., p. 100.

[5] Ibid., p. 92.

[6] Salomon Jadassohn (1831-1902), German music theorist. (Ibid., p. 24.)

In light of this, it is not surprising that the average audience is unprepared to fully appreciate the multi-dimensional nature of Ives' compositions. This is not to suggest that his music is so esoteric as to be unapproachable by any except the initiated. To the contrary, all that is required on the part of the listener is, first, an awareness that there is more to Ives' music than simply sound, and, second, a willingness to actively feel and think about what he hears.

Style and Content

The most striking feature of Ives' music, as demonstrated in the preceding chapters, is that a world of definite ideas and beliefs is suggested by its variety of harmonic, rhythmic, and other sound relationships. Further, analysis of the words and music of Ives' mature songs, reveals consistent correlations of style and content that have gone unnoticed in previous studies of his life and work.

The intention of the preceding analyses was to point out certain general trends which suggest the well-conceived ideas which underlie Ives' compositional procedures. Initial comparison of his late songs, for instance, made it clear that many of them could be grouped into distinct stylistic categories by virtue of their musical and topical similarities. Once such groupings had been made, the remarkable expressiveness and precision of Ives' musical language became even more evident. Contributing to this impression was the fact that, when viewed in their entirety, several patterns emerged which proved Ives' use of a variety of contrasting styles to be an essential part of his attempt to

create a viable, comprehensible language in tones.

First, the several styles discussed in this paper utilize experimental musical techniques to widely different extents and purposes. In fact, their distinction is such that they may be ranked by order of increasing experimentalism as follows:

1) American songs;

2) sacred songs;

3) songs of social comment;

4) transcendental songs; and,

5) nature songs.

That such an arrangement is possible strongly supports the contention that, far from applying the many compositional techniques available to him indiscriminately, Ives carefully balanced conservative and experimental musical elements in a manner gauged to most fully realize their extramusical implications.

A second, equally important, trend may be observed in regard to Ives' use of quotation. Contrary to an impression, created by many studies of his music, that Ives employed borrowed musical material widely and in a scatter-shot fashion, this thesis shows its use to have been discreet and highly purposeful. Thus, musical quotation is limited, in Ives' sacred and transcendental songs, to melodies from the Protestant liturgy; it is avoided entirely in his nature songs; largely restricted to American popular tunes in the composer's American songs;

and, finally, it is drawn equally from sacred and secular sources in his songs of social commentary.

Lastly, an overall pattern exists which sheds much light on the intent behind Ives' use of dissonance. Also the subject of much commentary, dissonance in his music is generally related to the requirements of his extramusical intentions. Relatively little dissonance appears in the American songs, for instance, for the use of such sounds would spoil Ives' intended imitation of popular styles. At the opposite extreme, however, are the composer's transcendental songs, whose high level of dissonance is often so evenly maintained that the ear soon adjusts and ceases to hear it as disturbing. Further, the relativity of our perception of dissonance is used to great advantage by Ives when he mixes consonance and dissonance together. This produces one distinct effect when he contrasts harsh clusters with trite triadic progressions, as in his songs of social commentary; another, when higher added tones are inserted into a basically triadic setting, as in his sacred songs; and, yet another, as when he pits a veritable deluge of tones against far simpler settings in his nature songs.

The correspondence of sound and idea is even more exact on the level of the individual musical elements which make up each general style. For instance, one is led to the transcendentalist view of nature as a fantastically varying manifestation of an underlying unity by the organized chaos which characterizes the songs Soliloquy and On the Antipodes. Or, again, Ives' careful control of relative consonance

and dissonance in the song Religion suggests his belief that faith, in a religious sense, is an essential ingredient of human growth and well-being - an attitude which is affirmed in his other sacred songs as well. Other similar examples abound: the use of soaring registral gestures to intimate the yearning of man for that which is higher and more perfect, the layering of simultaneous musical events to suggest the more complex associative nature of consciousness (as opposed to its linear and temporal aspects), an emphasis on overtones to deepen the impression of the invisible underlying reality of existence.

That some of Ives' works favor "manner" over "substance" was admitted by the composer himself - but he made it clear that he considered them to be somewhat "weak-minded." In those works, though, in which the idea of composition by musical analogy plays a significant role, Ives did achieve a remarkable art-form that lends credence to his seemingly egoistic response when accused of implying that his music was "greater . . . than any of the so-called great masters," - that is, "I don't imply any such thing-I don't have to- I state (that) it is better!"[7]

Such an audacious statement is, perhaps, better warranted than one might be willing to grant, given that the basis of Ives' compositional technique is of an entirely different nature than that of the "great masters." This is not to say that his music is more beautiful - it was not intended to be so (at least not always). "Beauty," Ives

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[7] Memos, op. cit., p. 135.

wrote, "is too often confused with something that lets the ears lie back in an easy chair."[8] Rather, Ives' intention, often, was to create a musical situation which would necessitate, or, in the least, allow for the active participation of all a listener's faculties - intellectual, emotional, and physical - and to plant within that fertile soil a vision of something as yet unknown, but noble, clean-spirited, and yearning to be born within each of us.

A Look Forward

Granting the transcendentalist credo that truth is not final, it would be presumptuous to assert that the conclusions of this thesis are other than a beginning. It is hoped that, like much of Ives' music, which seems to begin and end indefinitely as if part of some larger whole, this study will be viewed as an ongoing process, whose conclusion points out new possibilities and further directions of study.

First, the analytical scope of this thesis has remained limited to Ives' music for voice and piano. Hopefully, though, the ideas presented will lead to a greater understanding of the composer's larger instrumental works as well, helping to reveal the extramusical content concealed within their shifting styles.

To demonstrate briefly how an awareness of the sound/idea relationship in Ives' music could change one's view of a major instrumental work, let us look at Henry Cowell's analysis of the Symphony No. 4.

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[8] Essays, op. cit., p. 97.

There, he criticizes the third movement fugue as being "far too cramped, as though he did not really wish to stay within the confines of a fugue but was for some reason forced to keep his wings tied."[9] A valid musical criticism, perhaps, but viewed in light of the philosophical correspondence which dictated Ives' musical choices, an inaccurate one. The "reason" Cowell seeks for Ives' confinement to a rule-bound fugue is clearly stated in Henry Bellamann's program-note of 1927, which describes the fugue as "an expression of the reaction of life into formalism and ritualism"[10] - a theme which necessitated the very sense of confinement with which Cowell finds fault!

Ives' conviction that "substance" must come before "manner" points, also, to a second direction of study - the placing of such an outlook within a larger historical perspective. Despite his reputation as a musical maverick, Ives' use of music as a vehicle for philosophical inquiry is, as the saying goes, as old as the hills. Similar and/or related ideas are as prominent in the writings of such men as Plato and Boethius, as in the composer's own Essays Before a Sonata. Further, the linguistic dimension of Ives' music is also far from new, for many artists before him have approached their work in such a way as to enable them to be read, in a sense, like books. This was common, for instance, in the sacred paintings and illuminated manuscripts of the Renaissance and High Middle Ages, which employed a highly sophisticated

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[9] Henry Cowell and Sidney Cowell, op. cit., p. 151.

[10] Symphony No. 4., op. cit., p. viii.

and complex symbolic language to convey information in a largely illiterate world. A lost art, such a linguistic use of visual images had its musical counterparts, as in, for example, the later "Affectenlehre" of the Baroque composers.

Finally, the most important value of Ives' musical contribution is that, in this age of cynicism in which we live, his is a voice crying in the wilderness. Simultaneously an admonishment and a call, his music speaks of the highest aspirations and attainments of man, and demands that we strive towards them. In this sense, Ives is revealing of our time, and of all times, and "points us to a better time than ours."[11]

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[11] 114 Songs, op. cit., p. 246.

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