

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2011, 8 P.M.



Strathmore and
PostClassical Ensemble

present

Charles Ives: A Life in Music

William Sharp, baritone

Jeremy Denk, piano

Carolyn Goelzer, actor

Floyd King, actor

PostClassical Ensemble conducted by Angel Gil-Ordóñez

Written and produced by Joseph Horowitz

The Unanswered Question (1906) Charles Ives
(1874-1954)

"The Circus Band" (1894) Charles Ives

"Memories" (1897) Charles Ives

In the Inn (1906-11) Charles Ives

"Feldeinsamkeit" (1878) Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

"Feldeinsamkeit" (1897) Charles Ives

"Remembrance" (1921) Charles Ives

"The Housatonic at Stockbridge" (1921) Charles Ives

Largo Cantabile (1904) Charles Ives

INTERMISSION

"Majority" (1921) Charles Ives

Over the Pavements (1906-13) Charles Ives

"General Booth Enters into Heaven"
(1914; accompaniment orchestrated
by John Becker [1886-1961]) Charles Ives

"The Alcotts," from the *Concord
Piano Sonata* (1912-14) Charles Ives

Five Ives songs with orchestra,
with accompaniments orchestrated by
John Adams

"Thoreau" (1915)

"Down East" (1919)

"Cradle Song" (1919)

"At the River" (1916)

"Serenity" (1919)

The Unanswered Question Charles Ives

Post-concert discussion with the artists
The Music Center at Strathmore
Marriott Concert Stage

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2011, 8 P.M.



Strathmore and
PostClassical Ensemble

present

Beethoven and Ives

Jeremy Denk, piano

William Sharp, reader

With readings for the *Concord Sonata* culled by Joseph
Horowitz from Ives' *Essays Before a Sonata*,
Emerson's essay "Circles" and Thoreau's *Journal* and *Walden*

Second Piano Sonata Charles Ives
"Concord, Mass., 1840-60" (1874-1954)

Emerson (1911-12)

Hawthorne (1911)

The Alcotts (1912-14)

Thoreau (1910-15)

INTERMISSION

Sonata No. 29 in Ludwig van
B-flat major, Op. 106 Beethoven
(*Hammerklavier*) (1917-18) (1770-1827)

Allegro

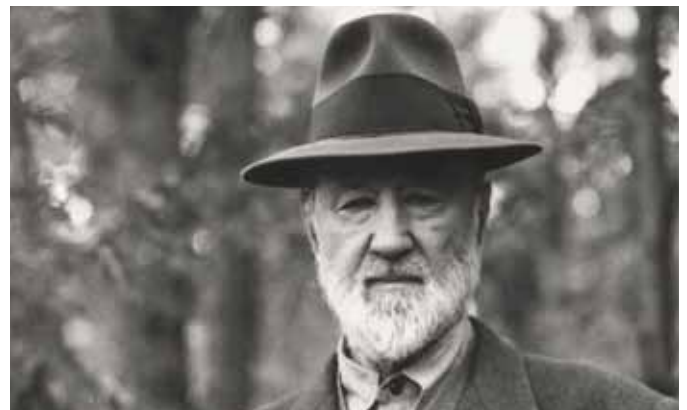
Scherzo: Assai vivace

Adagio sostenuto

Introduzione: Largo; Fuga:

Allegro risoluto

Post-concert discussion with the artists
The Music Center at Strathmore
Marriott Concert Stage



THE IVES PROJECT

presented by Strathmore and PostClassical Ensemble

PostClassical Ensemble

Angel Gil-Ordóñez, *Music Director*

Joseph Horowitz, *Artistic Director*

Strathmore

Shelley Brown, *Vice President of Programming*

Georgina Javor, *Director of Programming*

Made possible through the support of the Strathmore Artistic Initiatives Fund, Charles Ives Society, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts

The Ives Project

THURSDAY, NOV. 3, 2011, 4 P.M.

Ives Master class with Jeremy Denk

The Mansion at Strathmore,
Shapiro Music Room

Jeremy Denk will guide piano students in the intricacies of performing Ives' music and mainstays of the American repertoire.

THURSDAY, NOV. 3, 2011, 5:30 P.M.

Ives Plays Ives

The Mansion at Strathmore,
Shapiro Music Room

Jeremy Denk and Joseph Horowitz present and discuss rare recordings of Ives playing and singing his own music.

SATURDAY, NOV. 5, 2011, 3:30 P.M.

Interpreting Ives

The Music Center at Strathmore, Education Wing Room 402

Immerse yourself in the multifaceted music and explore the life and letters of this great American composer in an afternoon of lectures and performances.

3:30-4:30 p.m.: Joseph Horowitz on Ives and the *21st Century*;
Jeremy Denk on Ives and Beethoven (lecture/performance)

4:30-5:15 p.m.: Mingle with artists and music lovers

5:15-6:30 p.m.: Tom Owens on Ives' letters; William Sharp on the parlor sources of Ives' songs (lecture/performance)

SATURDAY, NOV. 5, 2011, 7:30 P.M.

Ives and Other Innovators

The Mansion at Strathmore

The JACK Quartet, an intrepid young ensemble dedicated to performing new music, is breaking ground with "viscerally exciting performances" (*The New York Times*). Hear them perform the music of Ives juxtaposed with works by such contemporary composers as Philip Glass, Julia Wolfe and Caleb Burghans.

About the Ives Project

By Joseph Horowitz

In 1942, Edith Ives, age 28, wrote her father a 1,700-word letter for his 68th birthday—decades after Charles Ives had ceased composing. It read in part:

"Dear Daddy,

"You are so very modest and sweet Daddy, that I don't think you realize the full import of the words people use about you, 'A great man.'

"Daddy, I have had a chance to see so many men lately—fine fellows, and no doubt the cream of our generation. But I have never in all my life come across one who could measure up to the fine standard of life and living and you believe in, and that I have always seen you put into action no matter how many counts were against you. You have fire and imagination that is truly a divine speak, but to me the great thing is that never once have you tried to turn your gift to your own ends. Instead you have continually given to humanity right from your heart, asking nothing in return—and all too often getting nothing. The thing that makes me happiest about your recognition today is to see the bread you have so generously cast upon most ungrateful waters, finally beginning to return to you. All that great love is flowing back to you at least. Don't refuse it because it comes so late, Daddy."

When I first encountered Edie's letter, in Tom Owens' *Selected Correspondence of Charles Ives* (2007), I knew it had to become part of a public presentation. I realized, in an instant, that Ives—himself a writer of distinction—was a prime candidate for a concert with actors that would mutually illuminate Ives the man and Ives the composer. The result is "Charles Ives: A Life in Music," which launches the present three-day "Ives Project."

With George Gershwin, Ives is arguably the supreme creative genius to grace the narrative of American classical music. But, as with Gershwin, his impact is glancing at best. And, as not with Gershwin, his music remains

little known to the musical public at large. “The Ives Project,” hosted by Strathmore, engages the pianist Jeremy Denk and the baritone William Sharp—both supreme Ives advocates—in a strategy for better acquainting American audiences with the cranky Ives idiom: for penetrating its assaultive exterior and forbidding crankiness, for connecting to its warm heart and soul.

PostClassical Ensemble

PostClassical Ensemble was founded in 2003 by Angel Gil-Ordóñez (music director) and Joseph Horowitz (artistic director) as an experimental musical laboratory. It endeavors to expand the boundaries of orchestral programming and explore new presentation models for the field.

This season, subsequent to The Ives Project, PostClassical Ensemble will present new staged productions of Manuel de Falla’s *El Amor Brujo* and Stravinsky’s *The Soldier’s Tale*—a double bill at Georgetown University’s Gonda Theatre Dec. 3 and 4. “Schubert Uncorked,” on March 31 at Georgetown University’s Gaston Hall, will feature bass trombonist David Taylor in the world premiere of the *Arpeggione* Concerto for trombone and orchestra—a reworking of Franz Schubert’s *Arpeggione* Sonata. Both of these programs will link to film events at the National Gallery of Art.

The 2011-2012 season also marks a further stage in the ensemble’s ongoing collaborations with Strathmore, the National Gallery of Art and Georgetown University, the ensemble’s educational partner—a partnership supported by a major grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. PostClassical Ensemble broadcasts via Sirius XM Satellite Radio and WFMT Chicago, and records for Naxos.

New this season is “PostClassical Underground,” a series of informal performances at Bohemian Caverns jazz club in Washington, D.C. Upcoming “Post-Classical Underground” concerts will feature pipa virtuoso Min Xiao-Fen playing Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk (Jan.

22), and the David Taylor Trio (Feb. 18).

PostClassical Ensemble has presented more than five dozen events in the Washington, D.C. region, and has toured programs including the sold-out American stage premiere of Manuel de Falla’s *El Corregidor y la Molinera* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Jeremy Denk, pianist



American pianist Jeremy Denk has steadily built a reputation as one of today’s most compelling and persuasive artists

with an unusually broad repertoire. *The New York Times* describes Denk’s playing as “bracing, effortlessly virtuosic, and utterly joyous.”

He has appeared as soloist with many major orchestras, including the Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, NewWorld, St. Louis and San Francisco Symphonies, as well as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and London Philharmonia.

Denk maintains working relationships with a number of living composers and has participated in many premieres, including Jake Heggie’s concerto *Cut Time*, Libby Larsen’s *Collage: Boogie*, Kevin Putz’s *Alternating Current* and Ned Rorem’s *The Unquestioned Answer*. In 2002, he recorded Tobias Picker’s Second Piano Concerto with the Moscow Philharmonic. He also worked closely with composer Leon Kirchner on many of his recent compositions, recording his *Sonata No. 2* in 2001.

Denk is an avid chamber musician. He has collaborated with many of the world’s finest string quartets, has appeared at the Italian and American Spoleto Festivals, the Santa Fe and Seattle Chamber Music Festivals, the Verbier and Mostly Mozart Festivals, and the Bravo! Vail Valley and Bard Music Festivals. He has spent several summers at the Marlboro Music School and Festival in Vermont and has been

part of “Musicians from Marlboro” national tours.

After graduating from Oberlin College and Conservatory with degrees in piano and chemistry, Denk earned a master’s degree in music from Indiana University as a pupil of György Sebök, and a doctorate in piano performance from The Juilliard School, where he worked with Herbert Stessin. He lives in New York City.

Georgetown University Concert Choir

The Georgetown University Concert Choir is a mixed ensemble that performs a diverse range of sacred and secular works. Its past repertoire has included J.S. Bach’s *Jesu, meine Freude* Motet No. 3 in E minor (BWV 227), Duruflé’s *Ubi caritas*, and Vaughan Williams’ *Serenade to Music*. Directed by Professor Frederick Binkholder, the Concert Choir performs one major concert each semester and at special ceremonies and venues such as the White House and the opening of Georgetown University’s Qatar campus in 2005. This November, the Concert Choir will perform Leonard Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms* and Johannes Brahms’ *Liebeslieder Waltzes*.

Angel Gil-Ordóñez, music director, PostClassical Ensemble



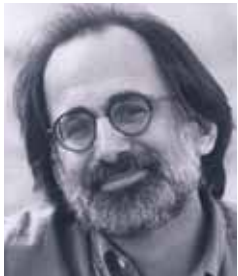
The former associate conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Spain, Angel Gil-Ordóñez has conducted symphonic music, opera and ballet throughout Europe, the United States and Latin America. In the United States, he has appeared with the American Composers Orchestra, Opera Colorado, the Pacific

Symphony, the Hartford Symphony, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Orchestra of St. Luke's and the National Gallery Orchestra in Washington.

Abroad, he has been heard with the Munich Philharmonic, the Solistes de Berne, at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival and at the Bellas Artes National Theatre in Mexico City. In summer of 2000, he toured the major music festivals of Spain with the Valencia Symphony Orchestra in the Spanish premiere of Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*.

Born in Madrid, Gil-Ordóñez has recorded four CDs devoted to Spanish composers, as well as a CD with PostClassical Ensemble's Virgil Thomson and Copland CD/DVDs. In 2006, the king of Spain awarded Gil-Ordóñez the country's highest civilian decoration, the Royal Order of Queen Isabella, for his work in advancing Spanish culture around the world and for performing and teaching Spanish music in its cultural context.

Joseph Horowitz,
artistic director, PostClassical Ensemble



Long a pioneer in classical music programming, he received national attention as executive director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra for The Russian Stravinsky and other festivals exploring the folk roots of concert works.

Now an artistic adviser to various American orchestras, he has created more than three dozen interdisciplinary music festivals since 1985. In 2008, he inaugurated the New York Philharmonic's Inside the Music series, writing, hosting and producing a program about Tchaikovsky's "Pathétique" Symphony; his subsequent Philharmonic productions explored Dvořák, Brahms and Stravinsky. He is writing and producing programs on Dvořák and *Revueltas* for the Buffalo Philharmonic, Louisville Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony and Pacific Symphony.

PostClassical Ensemble musician roster for The Ives Project

<p>First Violins Oleg Rylatko, <i>Concertmaster</i> Zino Bogachek Michelle Kim Tim Macek</p> <p>Second Violins Julia Cox, <i>Principal Second</i> Eva Cappelletti Heather Haughn Jennifer Rickard</p> <p>Violas Phillipe Chao, <i>Principal</i> Chris Shieh Chelsey Green</p>	<p>Cellos Gita Ladd, <i>Principal</i> Igor Zubkowsky</p> <p>Bass Ed Malaga</p> <p>Flutes Adria Sternstein Nicolette Oppelt Jonathan Baumgarten Kim Valerio</p> <p>Piccolo Adria Sternstein</p> <p>Oboes Igor Leschisin Carole Libelo</p>	<p>Clarinets David Jones</p> <p>Baritone Saxophone/Clarinet/Bass Clarinet Ben Bokor</p> <p>Bassoons Don Shore Ben Greanya</p> <p>Horns Greg Drone Mark Hughes</p> <p>Trumpet Chris Gekker</p>	<p>Trombones Lee Rogers Sam Barlow Steve Dunkel</p> <p>Timpani/Percussion Bill Richards</p> <p>Harp Susan Robinson</p> <p>Piano Mayron Tsong</p>
--	---	--	--

Horowitz is also the award-winning author of eight books mainly dealing with the institutional history of classical music in the United States. Both his *Classical Music in America: A History and Artists in Exile: How Refugees from 20th Century War and Revolution Transformed the American Performing Arts* were named best books of the year by *The Economist*.

His honors and awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship, two National Endowment for the Humanities fellowships and a commendation from the Czech Parliament for his projects exploring Dvořák in America.

Carolyn Goelzer, actor

Carolyn Goelzer was a Minneapolis-based theater artist for 25 years, performing roles in most Twin Cities theaters, including the Guthrie, Jungle Theater, Children's Theatre and Illusion. She has also performed on stage in Kansas City, Milwaukee, Chicago, New York and Los Angeles. She received a New York Innovative Theater Award for Outstanding Actress in a Lead Role for her portrayal of Clytemnestra in Theodora Skipitares' *Iphigenia* at La Mama E.T.C. Goelzer's original interdisciplinary performance works (*The Plant Society*, *Vicarious Thrills* and *Peas*) have been commissioned and presented at the Walker Art Center and Intermedia Arts, among numerous

other venues. She is a Minnesota State Arts Board Individual Artist Grantee, and a three-time recipient of the McKnight Fellowship.

Floyd King, actor

Floyd King is a veteran of the Shakespeare Theatre Company stage and teaches comedy at The Juilliard School. His performance credits for the Shakespeare Theatre Company include Fool in *King Lear*, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, Master Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Corbaccio in *Volpone*, Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Dromio of Ephesus and Dromio of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors*, Touchstone in *As You Like It* and Parolles in *All's Well That Ends Well*.

William Sharp, baritone

Praised by *The New York Times* as a "sensitive and subtle singer" who is able to evoke "the special character of every song that he sings," baritone William Sharp has earned a reputation as a singer of great versatility and continues to garner critical acclaim for his work in concerts, recitals, operas and recordings.

Sharp has appeared throughout the United States with major orchestras and music festivals. In recent seasons he has performed with the New York Philharmonic, St. Louis Symphony,

San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony, New Jersey Symphony and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. He is a frequent participant in Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, Aspen Music Festival, Colorado Music Festival and the Marlboro Music Festival. Sharp also works extensively in the performance of baroque and pre-baroque music. He has made numerous appearances with the Bach Aria Group, the Handel and Haydn Society and at the Maryland Handel Festival.

Thomas C. Owens

Thomas C. Owens is a specialist in the life and music of Charles Ives and is the editor of *Selected Correspondence of Charles Ives* (University of California Press, 2007). He is director of music history and literature at George Mason University and was the recipient of its Teaching Excellence Award in 2010. His other research interests include Modernism, 20th century American music, popular music and Balinese music. Owens is a member of the board of the Charles Ives Society.

Program Notes

Beethoven and Ives

Even if he had not saturated his *Concord* Sonata with the motto theme from Beethoven's Fifth, we would well know that Beethoven was paramount for Charles Ives: "in the history of this youthful world the best product that human-beings can boast of," Ives called him. Beethoven was ethical. He tore up his "Eroica" Symphony inscription to Napoleon when Napoleon named himself emperor. He celebrated the freedom fighters Egmont and Florestan. In Beethoven, writes Ives in *Essays before a Sonata*, "the moral and the intellectual" are one.

It is told, and the story is so well known that we hesitate to repeat it here, that [Beethoven and Goethe] were standing in the street one day when the Emperor drove

by—Goethe, like the rest of the crowd, bowed and uncovered—but Beethoven stood bolt upright, and refused even to salute, saying: "Let him bow to us, for ours is a nobler empire." Goethe's mind knew this was true, but his moral courage was not instinctive.

Like Ives, like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Beethoven embodies ideals of uplift and equality—and yet will not pander. His language grows arcane. Ives knows this paradox and solves it: Beethoven writes symphonies "to the people," not "for the people"; he composes "for the human soul," not for the "human ear." In fact, with their Beethoven enco-miums, the *Concord* Sonata and Ives' accompanying *Essays Before a Sonata* mutually testify that Ives saw himself striding alongside Emerson and Beethoven in a common high endeavor—that the human, morally empowered, might become divine.

For decades, the nine Beethoven symphonies comprised a canonical text, narrating an exemplary creative odyssey. The four numbered symphonies of Charles Ives, too, comprise an evolutionary sequence shadowed by Beethoven's example, and embedded in hallowed Germanic practice. The Beethoven narrative is commonly read as progressive, with "late Beethoven"—the Ninth Symphony, and kindred late piano sonatas and string quartets—foretasting a challenging future. So, too, with Ives. But the Beethoven trajectory can be differently read: as a retreat into subjective depths of experience and expression by a composer—deaf and eccentric—increasingly cut off from the world. And so it is, as well, with Ives.

Ives cautioned against the dangers of a "superimposed idiomatic [musical] education" that may not fit a composer's "constitution." He also wrote: "unity is too generally conceived of ... as analogous to form; and form as analogous to custom; and custom to habit... Perhaps all unity in art, at its inception, is half-natural and half-artificial, but time ... inclines to make us feel that it is all natural."

If the sonata forms of the First and Second Ives symphonies signify "artifice," the Fourth Symphony—in common with the *Concord* Sonata—is "all natural"; it abandons "superimposed" idioms. At the same time, the example of Beethoven—revered by the Transcendentalists—remains pertinent. "Late Beethoven"—tonight's *Hammerklavier* Sonata, for instance—and "late Ives" are cognates. As in late Ives, the narratives of the late Beethoven piano sonatas disregard practicalities of public performance; can the abnormally dense, precipitously rapid fugue of the *Hammerklavier* Sonata be heard fully as written?

Also pertinent to late Beethoven and late Ives is stream of consciousness as explored in fin-de-siecle Germany and Austria. Ives wrote of Beethoven as a beginning: a step toward a liberated music of the future. Here is Ferruccio Busoni, in his *Sketch of a New Aesthetic of Music*: "[Beethoven] ascended one short step on the way leading music back to its loftier self. ... He did not quite reach absolute music, but in certain moments he divined it, as in the introduction to the fugue of the *Hammerklavier* Sonata. Indeed, all composers have drawn nearest the true nature of music ... where they felt at liberty to disregard symmetrical proportions, and unconsciously drew free breath." Busoni's idealized "Ur-Musik" is an unfettered stream. Composers, he complains, "have retained Form as a symbol, and made it into a fetish, a religion. ... Is it not singular, to demand of a composer originality in all things, and to forbid it as regards form? No wonder that, once he becomes original, he is accused of 'formlessness.'"

This was written by an Italian in Berlin in 1911. In Vienna, Freud and Klimt, Mahler and Schoenberg were charting a darker, more menacing unconscious. Like Freud, like Mahler, Klimt favors a psychological realism stressing desire and anxiety, neurosis and transcendence. His mural "Philosophy" (1900) shows a tangle of naked

bodies floating aimlessly: an aqueous cosmos inhabited by torpid humanity. As in other Klimt paintings, the liquefied medium suggests a stratum of primal subjectivity, an unconscious world of instinct dissipating every 'I,' a fatalistic vision of transient humanity more Eastern than Western.

Ives is comparably obsessed with water. The transcendental nature portraits "The Housatonic at Stockbridge" and "Thoreau" (the song and the piano sonata movement, both of which we hear this week) are also river and pond portraits: elemental musical watercolors. In his Fourth Symphony, the finale's gathering current constitutes Ives' most heroic Ur-Musik: an ocean. Mahler's Ninth is a psychic autobiography infested with Old World demons, defiantly swimming against the tide toward apotheosis. Ives knows nothing of floating nudes; a New World meliorist (who was also a New World prude), he simply rides an upward wave.

Joseph Horowitz

Artistic Director, PostClassical Ensemble
(Extracted from Joseph Horowitz's Moral Fire: Portraits from America's Fin de Siecle, to be published by the University of California Press in 2012)

About Ives and the *Concord Sonata*

There is a terrific tenderness emanating from this dissonant, difficult music: a tenderness for experiences of childhood, for the "uneducated," fervid hymn-singing of camp meetings, for the silliness or ragtime, for the quaint wistful corners of ballads, and on and on. There is a correspondingly enormous wit: the love of crazy musical mishap, a love of syncopation, disjunction, mashup; the merger of opposites. Ives re-creates, almost like Proust, a whole world for us: the musical world of America in the last part of the 19th century. He evokes a tremendous nostalgia for that world, while making it alive again . . .

The *Concord Sonata* represents the summit of Ives' maturity, an attempt to consolidate his musical (and extramusical) thinking, to bring it all together in

a huge statement. . . .

Maybe finally I play Ives because I feel he's authentic (a dangerous word). There was a lot of jazz-inspired classical music in the 20th century, but so often the jazz seems weirdly off, dolled up, uncomfortable in classical confines. . . . Ives wants to re-create the raw experience of music-making, something unfiltered, and beyond all your piano lessons; though writing fiendishly difficult piano music, he wants you to remember there is something more important than just "playing well"; while driving me crazy, he reminds me why I play the piano at all.

The *Concord Sonata*'s four movements are wildly different portraits, reflecting Ives' visions of four major figures of the Transcendentalist movement. Ives begins with "Emerson," and aims to capture his digressive, heavenstorming spirit:

As thoughts surge to his mind, he fills the heavens with them, crowds them in, if necessary, but seldom arranges them along the ground first.

And so, Ives presents all his ideas piled on top of each other at the outset, in a sea of dissonant improvisation. It is a bold opening gambit, a cadenza on everything. Then, over the course of the next 15 minutes, Ives untangles the mess, revealing each idea individually in an epiphanic series of episodes. One gets the sense of a vast gospel/essay, including materials from hymn, revival, Beethoven, Wagner, fugue, recitative: you name it, from the "highest" to the "lowest."

It is impossible to discuss the form of "Emerson" as a whole; it's irreducible to any formula. Some of these episodes represent the prose of Emerson, and others, with greater rhythmic regularity, evoke his verse.

Toward the end, though, there is a sense of perspective: descending chromatic lines take over in the bass; there is a dissolve and deconstruction, with the various themes disintegrating into ever-shorter bits and haunting recurrences of Beethoven's Fifth.

With these silences between the ideas, Ives approaches the opposite of

the piled-up opening; gaps appear between the thoughts. And in those gaps, you get glimpses of Emersonian revelation: meanings that come from implication, metaphor, overtone.

The "Hawthorne" movement is fundamentally a joke. We enter a cosmos of wild, supernatural humor, in which Ives fuses several ghostly episodes from Hawthorne's short stories: . . . an 'extended fragment' trying to suggest some of his wilder, fantastical adventures into the half-childlike, half-fairylike phantasmal realms. . . .

One tale that plays a central role is *The Celestial Railroad*, where passengers book an express ticket to Heaven, do a great deal of celebrating and drinking en route, and laugh heartily at the slow-moving, hungry pilgrims singing their hymns outside the window. Of course, the express train does not exactly make it to Heaven. This ironic interplay of the profane and the sacred is arguably the "theme" of the movement, and the source of much of its wit and brilliance. Shifting back and forth from ragtime to marching band to hymn to unearthly filigree, the movement never sits still; it is insatiably associative. Experienced Ivesians will know that once "Columbia the Gem of the Ocean" enters, all (musical) hell will break loose: the movement careens to its end, with a chaotic, virtuosic pile-up of everything but the kitchen sink.

"The Alcotts" is an evocation of the Orchard House in Concord, where the Alcott family lived. . . . There is a commonplace beauty about "Orchard House"—a kind of spiritual sturdiness underlying its quaint picturesqueness—a kind of common triad of the New England homestead, whose overtones tell us that there must have been something aesthetic fibered in the Puritan severity—the self-sacrificing part of the idea—a value that seems to stir a deeper feeling, a stronger sense of being nearer some perfect truth. . . .

Beth is playing at the spinet, a gift from Sophia Thoreau; she plays Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, of course, but does not discriminate; she plays

hymns, too, a Scotch air, and a glimpse of Mendelssohn's wedding march. This movement very overtly and obviously fuses classical themes with popular ones. This fusion has a cathartic effect: there is a triumphant, C-major arrival, toward the end, of the "transcendental theme of Concord": The emergence of this theme in its entirety—"the human faith melody"—is a pivotal moment of clarity and understanding. To borrow a phrase from Emerson, it's a glorious shining forth of the piece's "Over-soul."

The last movement, "Thoreau," has a simple, specific narrative: a day on Walden Pond. Thoreau awakens at dawn, in haze and mist, and listens to Nature's sounds. But eventually he gets the desire to act. He gets (as Ives puts it) "going after somethin'." He makes several attempts to get after something—whatever it is—and reaches an ecstatic climax of action (C major). But just at that moment the rhythm of Nature intervenes:

...he knows now that he must let Nature flow through him, and slowly...

A repeated, haunting three-note figure in the left hand (A-C-G) represents this rhythm of nature. Over it, and seemingly inseparable from it, is a new theme in the right hand: a mournful reworking of Stephen Foster's ballad "Down in the Cornfield," evoking a line from Walden: "I grew in those seasons like corn in the night, and they were far better than any work of the hands..." Thoreau has relapses of desire; the push and pull of action versus Nature continues.

But for the conclusion and synthesis of this dialectical day, Ives reserves a beautiful, crowning Romantic gesture. The "human faith melody" of Concord appears once more, to evoke Thoreau's flute over Walden Pond). This Transcendental Theme is seen through the mists of other motives; it merges with the rhythm of Nature; and then it vanishes, leaving us listening to the rhythm of Nature, pulsing on. I will leave it to Ives to describe the ending:

'Tis an evening when the "whole body is one sense," ...and before

ending his day he looks out over the clear, crystalline water of the pond and catches a glimpse of the shadow—thought he saw in the morning's mist and haze—he knows that by his final submission, he possesses the "Freedom of the Night."

A paradoxical way to end such an ambitious monument of the imagination: with the notion of night, nature, renunciation. For all his self-reliance, for all his desire to hew his own path, Ives always seemed to gesture toward an ideal of music much bigger than himself.

By Jeremy Denk
(excerpted from his notes for the CD
Jeremy Denk Plays Ives)

Charles Ives: A Life in Music

Though regarded by many as America's pre-eminent concert composer, Charles Ives (1874-1954) remains little known to the concert-going public. His music retains an esoteric taint. In part, this results from its belated discovery by modernists who cherished complexity.

Today, in post-modern times, the opportunity is ripe to rediscover Ives as a turn-of-the-century Connecticut Yankee rooted in Transcendentalism and Progressivism—a product (however original) of his own time and place. Ives' vivid personality, and a plethora of vivid writings (essays and letters), reinforce this opportunity. In particular, Tom Owens' *Selected Correspondence of Charles Ives* (2007) affords a treasure trove of potential readings for Ives concerts.

Tonight's program uses words and music to narrate Ives' story, including his passionate courtship, his fierce Transcendentalism, and his cranky politics. The music ranges from the familiar—*The Unanswered Question*, perhaps Ives' best-known composition, and "The Alcotts" from his *Concord* Piano Sonata—to such densely original orchestral nuggets as *In the Inn* and *Over the Pavements*. Interwoven are no fewer than a dozen Ives songs, including one with its piano accompaniment orchestrated by early American modernist John Becker, and

five comprising a serene set with orchestrated accompaniments created by John Adams.

The texts I have culled, in addition to letters written by Charles, his wife Harmony, and their daughter Edie, include passages from the *New York Herald*, the *New York Herald-Tribune*, the *Danbury News* and Ives' own *Memos* and *Essays Before a Sonata*.

Many are the stories memorably limning Ives the man. One of my favorites was told by Charles Buesing, an employee of the life insurance firm Ives & Myrick, which supplied Ives with an ample livelihood to support his composing habit.

Buesing remembered Ives as "a very shy, retiring man." He was "very kindly," never harsh or angry. He "would talk to anyone." He "made everyone feel important." The first time Buesing entered Ives' office, which was "out of sight," "around a corner," he thought Ives asleep. His eyes were shut, his feet rested on a desk drawer, his desk was a mass of papers. "Come in and sit down," Ives said, his eyes still closed. He asked Buesing about his family, his work, his future plans. He encouraged him to stick with the life insurance business.

One day, an Ives & Myrick salesman named Charlie came to Buesing with tears in his eyes. Charlie had gone months without a sale; he had no income. Ives had just paid him a visit. "Charlie," Ives had said, "will you take out your wallet?" Charlie did. "Now, you open it," said Ives. The wallet was empty. "I thought so," said Ives. "No one can ever make a sale of anything with an empty wallet. Now, I want you to take this as a business loan. I know you'll have so much confidence with what I am going to put in that wallet that you will pay me back, and I don't want an I.O.U. or anything else." And Ives put \$50 in Charlie's wallet. As Ives left the office, Charlie said to Buesing, "There is a great man."

Joseph Horowitz
Artistic Director, PostClassical Ensemble

Please see insert for song texts.