CHARLES IVES, AMERICAN MUSICAL INNOVATOR

by

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A PAPER IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE HONORS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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Excellent

April 23, 1967.
Charles Edward Ives was born in the New England environment of Danbury, Connecticut on October 20, 1874. His death on May 19, 1954, left to the world the memory of an extraordinarily unique and complex, although little known figure in the world of music. He was an extraordinary man from an extraordinary environment, a genius born ahead of his time, and a pioneer as he ventured into undiscovered regions of musical composition. By the middle 1890's, when Brahms was writing his organ Chorale-Preludes and Debussy his "Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun," Ives had already written a number of pieces and showed himself to be writing in a very different manner from his contemporaries.

Ives is considered one of the four great creative figures in the musical world in the first half of the twentieth century, along with Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Bartok. Between 1890 and 1910 he had gone further in the use of atonality and polytonality, polyrhythms and polyharmonics than any European had dared to go, and which later became associated with the most advanced European composers.

When one considers that Ives was freely using polyrhythmic and polytonal ideas before Stravinsky; original combinations of all twelve tones before Schoenberg, quarter-tones before Haba, and dissonant settings of folk-lore material before Bartok, one begins to grasp some notion of the enormity of this man's creativeness. Moreover, these discoveries were never set down for their own sake as discoveries, but simply as a means to expressivity.
While the influence of Schoenberg and Stravinsky has been felt for some time, the music of Bartok and Ives is only beginning to be understood, and their power only beginning to be felt. Both Bartok and Ives went deliberately back to the unsophisticated music of the people; Bartok, to the folk music of Central Europe and the Near East, and Ives, to the music of New England with its roots in the church, stage, parlor, and dance; in short, the popular music of his time. Because the techniques in his music are so fresh and alive today, it is easy to forget that as a boy he listened to the talk of Civil War veterans, and that his productive period as a composer ended with World War I.

Ives has often been compared to Walt Whitman, although Bernstein says that Ives went much farther in music than Whitman did with words. Like Whitman, Ives "asserted the right of the American artist to be himself and therefore different from any European, and both men drew upon the same flooding prose rhythms to express what they felt in the world." According to Chorniavsky, Ives, again like Whitman, is a phenomenon that could have occurred only in America. Paul Henry Lang says,

His music is often bewildering, at times powerful, tender, evocative, witty, at other times incomprehensibly clumsy. There are rhythms brisk and American to the core, melodies betraying a lively fantasy, and harmonics that can be found nowhere else. The only answer to the question 'What is Charles Ives?' can be silence filled with wonderment.

His total output of music, to the best of my ability to assimilate somewhat disputing authorities, includes four symphonies, three orchestral suites, two overtures, a string quartet, two cantatas and a number of other choral works, organ and church music, four violin sonatas, two piano sonatas, more than two hundred songs,
three quartertone pieces, at least one of which is for orchestra
and two pianos, and a great deal of other chamber music for many
various combinations of instruments. The texts of his songs range
from Aeschylus, through original lyrics, to an ordinary newspaper
article.

The most powerful influence on Ives' life and music was his
father, George Ives. In fact, throughout his entire lifetime, Charles
said that he admired his father more than any other musician he had
known. When George Ives was only seventeen years old, he led a
Civil War brigade band, considered the best in the Army. In Danbury
he was the well-known bandmaster and musical jack-of-all-trades. He
loved to experiment with different kinds of sound. He once tried
to reproduce on the piano the tone of a church bell he had heard
ringing during a heavy thunderstorm, but finally concluded that
there was no tone on the piano to match this. He later developed
two different devices with which he could play quartertones, and
experimented with the overtone series and with echos. Once he
placed sections of his band at various places in the village, the
church steeple, the roof of a building, and the village green, and
had each, in turn, play variations of a piece he had written.
Charles himself said that, "Father had a kind of natural interest
in sounds of every kind, known or unknown, 'measured as such' or not,
and this led him into situations that made some of the townspeople
call him a crank whenever he appeared in public with some of his
contraptions...(which was not often)."

Along with this free and experimental environment in the
world of sound, George Ives also gave his son an excellent founda-
tion in the strict fundamentals of music, such as harmony and
counterpoint, and several instruments, including drums, piano, violin, and cornet. He insisted that Charles be thoroughly familiar with these rudiments before permitting any experimentation on his own. Charles had been present at his father's band rehearsals almost since he could walk, and by the time he was twelve he was the snare drummer of the band. He began to study organ at age eleven, already quite proficient in piano, and two years later became the regular organist at the Congregational Church, followed the next year with a bigger job at the Baptist Church, with the Danbury News proclaiming him the youngest organist in the State. At sixteen he gave an organ recital, among which he played the Overture to William Tell, a Bach Toccata, and Mendelssohn's F minor Organ Sonata.

Charles actually began composing when he was about ten, and at thirteen wrote a band piece which won approval from the press. From the beginning, it was apparent that he was not following the traditional methods of composition. One idea he conceived was to have two bands approach from opposite directions, playing different tunes in different keys, passing each other, and then going off into the distance, which, of course, achieved a sensational effect. Once his father criticized a piece which ended in a different key from which it began. Charles failed to see the reason for criticism. "Why should anyone feel he had to die in the same house in which he was born?" At a later time, after violinist Robert Johnson had heard Ives' Second Violin Sonata, Johnson said, "Stuff like that...! If you consider that music and like it, how can you like Brahms and any good music?" Ives replied, "So! If you like the one, you can't like the other! This is as much as to say: If you look out of this window and enjoy the mountains, how can you possibly look out of
Ives attended the Danbury Public Schools, and after completing his education there entered Yale, where he studied counterpoint and composition with Horatio Parker. Parker, for the most part, simply ignored the unusual compositions which Charles offered him, often considering them just a joke, so Ives did not bother him too frequently with them. He did hand in a few times a fugue with each theme in a different key, and once he began an organ composition with a D-minor chord superimposed over one in C-major. He wrote his First Symphony while still in college, but this had to be re-worked to some extent to please Parker. Ives soon became bored with his counterpoint class, since he had learned the same thing from his father, and continued writing on his own, occasionally finding a small orchestra or group who would read through some of his works so he could hear them. Parker, who always adhered strictly to the rules of composition he had learned in the European schools, made Charles appreciate the liberal background his father had given him, and the idea he had inherited that only a fraction of the means of musical expression was being employed by composers. At this time a musical education in America was hardly adequate, and other Americans serious about music went to the famous European schools to study the traditions which had been the musical culture of the Western world for 250 years. No composer before had questioned the value of European music for Americans, but Ives, with his New England background, did not feel that he was capable of expressing himself in European terms. "He looked around him and discovered that Danbury bore no resemblance to Bayreuth, Munich, or Vienna, and he resolved to be himself and to translate the
New England countryside into music. He took courage from Emerson, who had said,

Have confidence in the unsearched might of man. We have too long listened to the courtly music of Europe... We will walk on our own two feet, we will work with our own hands, we will speak our own minds.

Thus, in that post-romantic world at the turn of the century, when most Europeans and all other Americans were still clinging to the plushy traditions of the time, Ives alone stood out as a completely independent and straightforward composer. He was the first to commit himself completely "to the vernacular for the grammar of a new symphonic speech." In his exploration, he created a whole new world of music, inculcating new musical concepts and ideas, some in embryonic form, some fully developed, which were to be used to a greater extent and make other men famous in years to come.

This was a time in which other composers approached new ideas with timidity, so as not to shock the ears of the "cultivated" people. Ives cared little whether the "nice" people thought his music was pretty or in good taste, but only that it expressed his feelings and philosophy. "He was completely undismayed by the lack of recognition accorded him, and equally unconcerned when anyone criticized him for his innovations." Although he did not begrudge the fact that he did not have an audience, he was fully aware of this. He realized that without an audience he could never earn a living as a musician. The only way he could gain the public eye would be to compromise his musical freedom to the limits set by popular taste. This was obviously too great a sacrifice, since this was the only way he felt he could write meaningfully. As a result he decided to enter the business world for his career. He joined an insurance firm, soon had a partnership in a new firm of Ives and
Mycro, and eventually became one of the nation's most important and successful men in the insurance business. This was a profound decision in his life, for it enabled him to continue composing with the utmost freedom, simply to suit himself, without any thought of profit, recognition, or even performance. "His creative thoughts were unmodified by any consideration of the musical market place," He had freed his art from all expediency, even, in some cases, from the practicability of performance, which is often an extremely difficult task for one attempting Ives' works, sometimes almost humanly impossible. In the preface to one of his song albums Ives states, "Some of these should never be sung as they are unsingable." He also allows the utmost freedom in expression to the performer; he stresses the experimental nature of his music, that every performance is something special unto itself, and that the music must be recreated in each performance. He said that many of the rhythms which he has written precisely call for a certain amount of improvisation. He directs the player to play as his feeling dictates at the time, loud or soft, slow or fast, and to add or leave out notes at his discretion. Sometimes he offers several alternate versions for certain passages. Yet he also strongly feels that "the difficulty of performance is the performer's problem, not his," and that the composer should be able to follow his wildest instincts. Music is something that must be perceived, and the sounds that come from instruments are not always the same as the music. A composer must be free to go beyond these barriers and not be limited by them. Indeed, some of his music was written simply to be perceived without being sounded. Ives asks the question, "Why can't music go out the same way it comes in to a man, without having to crawl over a fence of sounds, thoraxes,
As stated earlier, Ives' music is the expression of his philosophy. He had grown up in the New England atmosphere under the strong influence of the transcendental philosophy of Emerson, Thoreau, and others, which was so inculcated as to form the basis of his own philosophy of life. In his music, Ives reveals himself as a devout believer in transcendental philosophy, in the immanence of God in nature, in the glorious mission of music which is to be achieved only when freed from the pedestrian ideas of professional musicians, in the ability of man to grasp the divinity behind nature through feeling and not through artificialities of logic. On the surface of his work, the infinite complexity of nature, the rapidly changing moods of forest and plain, the web of counterbalancing forces appear confused and disassociated. But Ives' involved texture, while mirroring this superficial confusion, at the same time attempts to show the larger harmony of rhythm behind the natural process.

His keen sense of personal freedom, combined with his New England heritage, led him to uncharted regions in music. He says the unusual things he wishes to say with new and unprecedented methods, which result in the terrifying complexity of his music on paper. Yet the simple unsophisticated thought in his music tends to balance the extremely complicated form. Ives believes that music, unlike the spoken language which so often cannot be understood, is "so transcendent that its heights and depths will be common to all mankind, and that the time is coming...when it will develop possibilities now inconceivable." His musical range is extremely broad.

"He offers us the rural, homely qualities of Whittier, the severity of Emerson, the fancy of Hawthorne, and the meditation of Thoreau." The methods he employs to portray his meaning show as much variety...
as the thoughts themselves. For Ives, any sound or combination of sounds, heard or imagined, can be used legitimately. "It is apparent that the sum total of musical schemata are for Ives all valid means for musical expression." 18 He can use a G-major chord as effectively as any original dissonance, taking us from serene calmness to the borders of madness and back again with complete assurance and conviction. In this respect of using every method conceivable, he has been compared to James Joyce, who used Elizabethan English, modern French, Latin, and American journalese as the tools for his expression.

In his transcendental view of life, "the natural world reflects the spiritual, and so is of great concern." 19 In his music Ives portrays this natural world (thus also the spiritual) by using things which are familiar to him, and which make up that world for him. His music did not emerge from intangible philosophic ideas, but it all stems from very tangible substances in the world around him. He imitated the sounds of life, of everyday people; the country village, the town band banging at a Fourth of July celebration, the out-of-tune country fiddler, the curious chanting of school children, the popular songs, the village choir, the church organ and hymn singing all make up a vital part of his music. His use of hymns and the influence of the church is very important, because in that time and place, when there was a lack of opera and other spectacle, the church functioned to some extent as a form of popular entertainment. Ives was also fascinated by dissonances made by natural causes and "various strange accidents of aural phenomena." 20 The dissonance in his music always had models in natural life which were prerequisite to his compositions. His music conveys natural settings and the human events which take place within them, resulting
in a clashing of ideas and orders which often form the basis for his dissonances. His representation of the transcendental takes on the most severe form of dissonances. Ives wrote things as he actually heard them, not as isolated figures or events, but as something happening within a larger framework, so that the entire picture is presented, resulting in many dissonances. One example of this is his setting of a hymn which he placed in different voices, played in different keys and offbeat rhythms a few beats apart. This is what he actually heard in the village church, with the congregation lagging behind the organ, and each person singing at his own tempo and in his own key. Just as today, we might stand in our own house and hear a radio in one room, stereo in another, television in another, and someone singing in the shower, all fused together and heard at the same time. Ives shapes these old hymns, popular songs, fiddle tunes, etc., into an atmospheric setting, but these appear as specific details (usually recognizable) which give the music a more realistic than abstract quality. His music shows a great pictorial sense, but he deals more with situations and environments than with individual people. Because he borrows and uses those very simple and common ideas, Bernstein has made an analogy to Grandma Moses, saying that, "he was somehow a 'primitive', that he was as purely American as a Connecticut quahog, and that he liked to borrow themes and other musical ideas from every source on earth, including folk songs of his time and the works of the masters."\(^{21}\) Bernstein, however, has been criticized by others for referring to him as "primitive."

Ives' life in the business world also had an effect on his music. In his business contacts he was able to see many aspects of life that he otherwise would have missed. He definitely felt that
his business helped his music, as well as his music helping his business. Ives himself said that, "Art comes directly out of the heart of experience of life and thinking about life and living life." His music sprang from the human understanding which comes from participation in the workaday world, but the resulting music would not condition itself to the listening tastes of the same world. In comparing the two worlds of music and business Ives said, "It is my impression that there is more openmindedness and willingness to examine carefully the premises underlying a new or unfamiliar thing, before condemning it, in the world of business than in the world of music." This music which cannot be comprehended by most people, resulting from his complete recklessness as an artist, is not incongruous with his somewhat retiring and reserved nature, but comes from the carefully guarded privilege of complete independence.

The strain of Ives' double life of businessman-musician finally caused his health to break down in 1930, and forced his retirement from the insurance business. Out of a possible multi-million dollars he took into retirement only what he considered his moral apportionment of wealth. He had composed only slightly since the First World War. However his faithfulness to the spirit is shown in the fact that, until that time, he had continued to compose without any support or public gains. In his entire life he never heard any of his larger works in a concert performance, of which, of course, there were not many. He did little towards the promotion of his music, although he was pleased when he received praise from the critics, which occurred increasingly often in the later part of his life. This growing audience resulted mainly from several different individual supporters of his music who were responsible for its promotion and performance. The performance of some of his orchestral works
was held back because these often called for extra musicians besides the regular orchestra personnel, resulting in budget problems. Ives had some of his music printed privately, but had never published any until 1929, when the second movement of his Fourth Symphony was published in the quarterly *New Music*. This was permitted only after Ives was assured that this was a non-commercial and experimental publication. He became interested in this and submitted some of his other scores, with the provision that he would pay all the expenses. Nor would he take or allow anyone else to take out a copyright on his music. "Everybody who wants a copy is to have one! If anyone wants to copy or reprint these pieces, that's fine! This music is not to make money but to be known and heard. Why should I interfere with its life by hanging on to some sort of personal legal right in it?"24 Besides paying for his own publication costs, he insisted on paying an equal amount for publication of works by other composers, to spare those less fortunate some of the burdens of an expensive and monetarily unrewarding profession. When later some of the large publishers wanted his music, he would consent only on the condition that he did not want to make money from his music, that the publisher was not to make a profit from the publication of it, and that free copies were always to be available to anyone who asked for one.

The most extensively employed and most interesting technique Ives used in his writing was the concept of polyphony or counterpoint in its largest sense. This is not just note against note, but rather an idea against another entirely different idea, which seems entirely unrelated. He would occasionally place one orchestra against another or one section against another, or a few individual
lines, each playing their own part which seems to have no relation to whatever else is going on. For Ives, again stressing his own complete independence, "the free progress of the melodies was essential, and he freed the melodic lines from any formal pro-
arrangement as to the kind of chords their several junctures should make."25 The result is somewhat of a rambling prose style. This concept of the plurality of ideas sounding simultaneously is perhaps the greatest contribution Ives has made to the world of music.

Ives' Sonatas for Violin and Piano are among his finest compositions. He must have enjoyed writing for the violin since he wrote four of these, a number equal to his symphonies and double that of his piano sonatas. For the most part he wrote lyrically for the violin. All four sonatas are quite closely related and each has a three-movement form. He seems to have established an over-all conception in the First, varying between somewhat of a rambling abstract prose, and more concentrated verse-like sections in which he often uses his familiar quotations. The Third Sonata is similar to the First in a somewhat expanded form, more lengthy and highly abstract. The Second is shorter and more concentrated, using more of the "verse". The Fourth is still shorter, and tightens to the utmost the tendency of the Second with more direct use of the quotations. In each of these he has assigned a particular hymn which he worked throughout the movement or sometimes the whole sonata, either in a specific section or interspersed throughout. Each of the four sonatas ends in a grand coda which seems to tie all of them together. In each, the particular hymn tune already used is assigned to the violin in one final, somewhat "recomposed," and usually elaborate statement, with a chordal ostinato-like
figure in the piano part. According to Lou Harrison, "The richness of the whole combination, with the piano sounding rhythmic variants of its figure in climactic or sumptuous support of the violin's song is singularly lovely." The Fourth Sonata is entitled "Children's Day at the Camp Meeting," and is an expression or reflection of the children's services at the outdoor summer camp meetings held around Danbury in Ives' youth. There would usually be only one Children's Day during the summer, and the children would therefore make the most of that one. There would be a stirred up, boisterous excitement, yet underneath there was always something serious. This he has tried to portray in the sonata.

In the Second Sonata, which was written between 1902 and 1910, the opening few measures of the first movement, Autumn, present a variation on the beginning of the First Sonata. Beginning with the fifth measure the tone is set for the whole movement, which is quite "harmonic" in texture, while still retaining the lyrical melodies in the violin. This is the most ambiguous and fanciful of the movements, with only an occasional briskness, like a sudden whisk of autumn leaves. Even the Allegro theme is irregular, and the movement ends in another ambiguous tone. The second movement, In the Barn, presents its lively mood with the use of triads moving in intervals of seconds. This pattern can be seen throughout the movement. Several tunes are "quoted" in this movement, one being "The Battle Cry of Freedom." There is a good example here of the fact that he used the same quotes in more than one composition, for one quote in this movement appears almost precisely the same as it does in the flute part of one of his orchestral works, "Washington's Birthday." The mood of this entire movement is happy and carefree
with lively rhythms and fast fingerwork, and the country fiddler can be heard throughout. The last movement, The Revival, is the culmination of the entire sonata, with the ambiguities being more ambiguous, and the quotes more direct and familiar. Paul Lang says of this movement that, "it presents an impressionistic musical canvas that rivals similar works of the best French masters; at the same time it has vigor and a curiously haunting affinity with traditional American melodies." The hymn tune in this movement resembles that in the first movement, and the ambiguity presented recalls all that proceeding. After a slow beginning, it increases in speed and excitement toward the end, when he returns for a last whisper of the hymn in a very soft and formal ending. Referring to this whole sonata, Ellis B. Kohs says, "It is highly original in form and has that special blend of the plain, the homespun and the unexpected, the diatonic hymn-tune and chromatically dissonant harmony which are the stamp of this still highly controversial figure." In this sonata, as in his other works, Ives reveals to us his full character: the great patriot and devout churchman through his snatches of hymns and patriotic songs, the transcendentalist through his dissonances and abstract qualities, his great devotion to the simple and unsophisticated things of life, and perhaps most important, the joy in life which, for Ives, always balances the perplexing questions of the universe. These things are not always revealed by the first listening, but after a few hearings one can begin to grasp these ideas. This music, some strictly for fun, some genuinely beautiful, some completely bewildering, yet all wholly American, is the expression of a genius who at this time can only begin to be contemplated.
NOTES


3. Paul Henry Lang, "Charles Ives," *Saturday Review*, (June 1, 1941) p.43-44


7. Lang, *Saturday Review*


9. Ibid., p.5


16. Ibid., p.199

17. Ibid., p.202


21. Winthrop Sargeant, "Saluting Mr. Ives," *New Yorker*, (October 11, 1958) 34:158

23. Ibid., p.353


25. Lou Harrison, "Charles Ives: Sonatas No. 2, 3, and 4," MG50097 Mercury Records

26. Ibid.

27. Lang, Saturday Review, p.43

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Sargeant, Winthrop "Saluting Mr. Ives," New Yorker 34:158 (October 11, 1958)
The Division of Music
of
Ball State University
presents

Alice Neff, voice and violin
in
Senior Honors Recital

assisted by
Janet Norman, piano and harpsichord
Otto Feld, violin
Lynn Feld, violin
Leslie Clark, viola
Albert McLane, cello
Carol McCollister, oboe

THEATER
April 23, 1967
3:00 p.m.

Coming Events
April 23 - Faculty Recital - Ars Musica Quartet - Theater 8:00 p.m.
April 24 - Senior Recital - Sandra Merlo, piano - Theater 1:00 p.m.
April 24 - Ball State University Ballet - Esken Auditorium 8:00 p.m.
April 30 - Recital - Charles Kahn, piano - With Chamber Group - Theater 3:00 p.m.
Program

Wedding Cantata No. 202 "Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten"  
J. S. Bach
Aria: "Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten"  
Recitative: "Die Welt wird wieder neu"  
Aria: "Phoebus eilt mit schnellen Pferden"  
Recitative: "Dram sucht auch Amor sein Vergnügen"  
Aria: "Wenn die Frühlingshüfte streicheln"  
Recitative: "Und dieses ist das Glücke"  
Aria: "Sich ueben im lieben"  
Recitative: "So sei das Band der ewichen Liebe"  
Gavotte and Aria: "Scheit in Zufriedenheit"  
MISS NEFF and ENSEMBLE

Intermission

Sonata No. 3 in D Major  
Jean Marie Leclair
Un poco andante  
Allegro  
Sarabande: Largo  
Tambourin: Presto

Second Sonata for Violin and Piano  
Charles Ives
Autumn  
In the Barn  
The Revival

Symphony Espagnole  
Edouard Lalo
Andante  
Allegro non troppo  
MISS NEFF and MISS NORMAN
J.S. BACH WEDDING CANTATA NO. 202
Translation by Henry Drinker

Aria
Vanish now, ye winter shadows,
Frost and tempest all are gone.
Spring delight is in sight, flowers fair adorn the meadows,
Fill the field and deck the lawn.

Recitative
The world is dressed anew,
O're hill and dale enchanting
The budding leaves go gallivanting,
The air is warm, the sky is blue.

Aria
Phoebus drives his horses prancing,
Swiftly through the sky above.
All the world is so entrancing,
Even he must stoop to love.

Recitative and Arioso
And then it is Love seeks his pleasure
Amid the purple meadows gay,
When flowers display their bright array and all their bright attire,
And hearts with love on fire can carry all before them.

Aria
When in springtime breezes blowing
Stroke the fields with soft caress,
Out steals Cupid bent on showing
All the world his choicest dress.
Ah! his choicest dress is this,
That he see two lovers kiss.

Recitative and Arioso
When two pure souls are plighted
And true and steadfast are united,
Both filled with hope of high endeavor,
They are content and blessed ever.

Aria
Oh, Maytime's the gay time for cooing and wooing,
Far better than flowers' so fleeting delight.
The clover's soon over, but never will sever
The bonds of devotion that true love unite.

Recitative
Inspired by purest love's emotion
May you two be from fickleness and meanness free,
May no rude jolt or thunderbolt
Deter you from your firm devotion.

Govatte
May you live in sweet content
Free from want and care and sadness,
Years of joy together spent
Flower rich in hope and gladness.

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Honors Program at Ball State University.
NOTES ON CHARLES IVES AND THE SECOND SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO

Charles Edward Ives was born on October 20, 1874 in the New England environment of Danbury, Connecticut. His death on May 19, 1954, left to the world the memory of an extraordinarily unique and complex, although little known figure in the world of music. He was an extraordinary man from an extraordinary environment, a genius born ahead of his time, and a pioneer as he worked his way into undiscovered regions of musical composition. By the middle 1890's, when Brahms was writing his organ Chorale-Preludes and Debussy his "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun," Ives had already written a number of pieces and showed himself to be writing in a very different manner from his contemporaries. Between 1890 and 1910, he had gone further in the use of atonality and polytonality, polyrhythms and polyharmonies, than any European had dared to go, and which later became associated with the most advanced European composers. Because his techniques are so fresh and alive today, it is easy to forget that as a boy he listened to the talk of Civil War veterans and that his productive years as a composer ended with the first World War. He has been considered one of the four great creative figures in the musical world in the first half of the twentieth century, along with Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Bartok. In similarity and origin, Ives' music is closest to Bartok's, for both took their ideas from the unsophisticated music of the people and places they knew and loved. Ives' music comes from the church, the town celebrations, patriotic songs, country fiddlers, and the popular music of his day. Paul Henry Lang states that, "His music is often bewildering, at times powerful, tender, evocative, witty, at other times incomprehensibly clumsy. There are rhythms brisk and American to the core, melodies betraying a lively fantasy, and harmonics that can be found nowhere else."
The most powerful influence on Ives' life and music was his father, George Ives, who was the well-known bandmaster and musical jack-of-all-trades in the Danbury area. George gave his son a rich musical background, including several instruments and counterpoint. He himself was fond of experimenting with all kinds of various sounds and trying to reproduce natural sounds on instruments. It was this free musical environment from which Charles drew his own ideas for experimentation. Charles actually began composing at about age ten and at thirteen wrote a piece which was played by his father's band. From the beginning, it was apparent that he was not writing in an accepted way, but his father always insisted that he be completely familiar with the fundamental structures before permitting Charles to experiment. Once he criticized Charles for ending a piece in a different key from which he had begun. Charles failed to understand the criticism and said, "Why should anyone feel he had to die in the same house in which he was born?" Once, when he was asked how he could write music as he did and still like Brahms and other good music, Charles replied, "This is as much as to say: If you look out of this window and enjoy the mountains, how can you possibly look out of another window and enjoy the ocean?"

Although Ives went to Yale and studied music, upon graduation in 1898 he knew that he could not make a living in music unless he would conform to popular tastes, and this he could not do. As a result, he entered the insurance business and later became one of the most prominent and successful men in this field. This decision concerning his life was the result of probably the most important characteristic of Ives' personality: that is, his complete freedom and independence from any bonds whatsoever of expediency in life. It left him free to go to the farthest limits he wished to reach in his music, with no thought of the
musical marketplace of performance and profit. In some cases, he even went beyond the human capability of performance. In the preface to an album of his songs, Ives wrote, "Some of these should never be sung, as they are unsingable." While he gave the utmost freedom of interpretation to the performer, he also felt that the "difficulty of performance is the performer's problem," not his, and that the composer must be allowed to follow his instincts wherever they might lead.

For Ives, these instincts turned out to be as wholly American as the New England life he had always known. At that time, other Americans had gone to Europe to study music and no one had questioned the value of European music for America. Ives looked around him, however, and decided that Danbury bore no resemblance to Bayreuth, Munich, or Vienna, and that the New England countryside was what he must translate into music. He drew courage from the words of Emerson, who had said, "Have confidence in the unsearched might of man. We have too long listened to the courtly music of Europe...We will walk on our own two feet, we will work with our own hands, we will speak our own minds." Other composers approached new ideas with timidity, so as not to shock the ears of the "cultivated people," but Ives cared little whether the "nice" people thought his music was pretty or in good taste. He only wanted it to express his ideas and philosophy.

A great part of Ives' philosophy was his belief in transcendentalism, which was so prevalent in New England at the time, in the immanence of God in nature and the reflection of the spiritual world in the natural world, which he infused in his music. According to Elliot Carter, "On the surface of his work, the infinite complexity of nature, the rapidly changing moods of forest and plain, the web of countervailing forces appear confused and disassociated. But Ives' involved texture,
while mirroring this superficial confusion, at the same time attempts to show the larger harmony of rhythm behind the natural process." He expressed the unusual things he wished to say in new and unprecedented methods which resulted in the terrifying complexity of his music on paper. Yet, the unusual things in the music were actually the things he heard around him all the time; the popular songs, the country fiddler, the village band banging at a Fourth of July celebration, the chanting of school children, the church organ and hymn singing. He wrote these things as he actually heard them, not as an isolated figure or event, but as something happening within the larger framework of nature, so that the entire picture is presented at one time, which often results in a great deal of dissonance. We today, for example, hear dissonances all the time without realizing it, such as a television in one room at home, a radio in another, record player in another, and someone singing in the shower, all in a mass of aural confusion. For Ives any sound or combination of sounds, heard or imagined, could be used legitimately, and he would use any tool from a G-major chord to the wildest dissonance to make these sounds, taking us from serene calmness to the borders of madness and back again with complete assurance and conviction. There was always a tangible basis for his musical abstractions. Ives said himself that, "Art comes directly out of the heart of experience of life and thinking about life and living life." His concept of having these seemingly wholly unrelated ideas occurring at once is polyphony or counterpoint in its broadest sense and is the most interesting and extensively employed technique in Ives' music and probably the greatest contribution he has made to the music of today. He has freed his melodic lines from any formal prearrangement as to the kinds of chords their several junctures should make. The free progress of the melodies, again
stressing his own complete independence, is the most essential characteristic of Ives' music.

His total output of music is quite large, including four symphonies, three orchestral suites, two piano sonatas, over two hundred songs, and several volumes of chamber music. He also wrote four violin sonatas, which are among his finest works. These four sonatas seem quite closely related, all having a three-movement form and each varying in degree between somewhat of a rambling prose style where he offers his abstract qualities, and more concentrated verse-like sections where he uses several familiar "quotations." In each sonata, there is at least one familiar and usually recognizable hymn tune which he has developed throughout either a movement or the whole sonata. All four end in 'grand cedas which seem to tie the four together. In each, the particular hymn tune which he has used is assigned to the violin in one final, somewhat "recomposed" and elaborate statement, with a chordal ostinato-like figure in the piano part.

The Second Sonata was written between 1902 and 1910. It is quite "harmonic" in texture but has lyrical melodies in the violin part. It takes us through many different moods, from lazy and ambiguous chords to the poignant and witty familiar quotes. The first movement, Autumn, is the most ambiguous and fanciful with only an occasional briskness, like a sudden whisk of autumn leaves. Even the Allegro section is irregular and the movement ends in another final ambiguous tone. The second movement, In the Barn, is more concrete in substance, and the country fiddler can be heard through the whole movement. Its lively mood is patterned by triads moving in intervals of seconds which can be observed in various passages throughout the movement. He has quoted several familiar tunes in this section, one of which is "The Battle Cry of Freedom." The last movement, The Revival, is the
culmination of the whole sonata, the ambiguities being more ambiguous, the quotes more direct and familiar. After a slow beginning, it increases in speed and excitement towards the end, then returns for a last whisper of the hymn and a very soft formal ending. His dissonant and offbeat setting of the hymn is derived from what he actually heard in church with the people lagging behind the organ and each singing in his own key. Speaking of this sonata, Ellis B. Kohs says, "It is highly original in form, has that special blend of the plain, the homespun and the unexpected, the diatonic hymn-tune and chromatically dissonant harmony which are the stamp of this still highly controversial figure." In this sonata and in his other works, Ives reveals to us his full character: the great patriot and devout churchman through his snatches of hymn and patriotic songs; the transcendentalist through his dissonances and abstract qualities; his great devotion to the simple and unsophisticated things of life; and, perhaps most important, the joy in life which, for Ives, always balances the perplexing problems of the universe. These things are not always revealed in the first listening, but after a few hearings one can begin to grasp these ideas. This music, some strictly for fun, some genuinely beautiful, some completely bewildering, yet all wholly American, is the expression of a genius who at this time can only begin to be contemplated.