The Life and Times of Charles Ives

Takau Yoneyama (Professor of insurance history)

Prologue: the origins of prejudice against Ives

Ives is often described as a 'great composer and shrewd businessman'. There are a number of criteria for evaluating the 'greatness' of a composer; in the sense of a composer with a secure place in the history of music then Ives is certainly deserving of the title. If a 'great' composer is defined as having a large number of works frequently performed in concerts, then one would hesitate to call Ives 'great'.

On the other hand, while it is true that he ran a successful insurance agency, there is little evidence which proves that he was shrewd, but we can only imagine that he must have been as it is said that he reformed the insurance business.

However, it appears that his image problem as a 'great composer and shrewd businessman' is not in itself the source of the most important misconceptions about Ives, rather it is in the fact that these two seemingly conflicting elements coexisted within him. While the fact that he was one of America's most important composers despite being a successful businessman can on the one hand highlight his greatness, it has also led to a somewhat negative appraisal of him as an amateurish 'weekend composer'. That he was a successful businessman does not make him a great composer, and by the same token, the fact that the works were composed by a successful businessman does not make them 'amateurish'. The 'miracle' of the coexistence of these two conflicting elements has led to huge variation in the evaluation of Charles Ives. I will give two examples of typical misconceptions.

Misconception No. 1: "Ives went to Yale to study composition but he decided not to go down that road when his teacher Horatio Parker[1] disapproved of his compositions".

There are two major mistakes in this statement. The first is that Ives did not go to Yale to study composition, and the second is a misunderstanding of the influence Parker had over Ives's musical activities. Just before he went to Yale, Ives wrote to his father: "The first thing I'm going to get the best of is the harmony and counterpoint, which I ought to get through with out taking much time to it with Dr. Stoekel. There is some kind

of music course in college which I will look up. I think it can be taken with out any extra charge and may be substituted with other things".[2] J. Peter Burkholder states that it is not credible that he was not aware that had he intended to study composition Parker would have been assigned to him as his composition teacher from the start of the upcoming semester. It is perhaps more accurate to say that Ives did not go to Yale to study composition, but a chance meeting with Parker gave him a strong motivation to compose. Ives recalled that compositions from his youth, written when he lived in Danbury, Connecticut, were rejected by Parker, who told him never to bring anything like that again. But this does not mean that we must only dwell upon the negative role Parker played as Ives's music teacher. As we shall see in Timeline II, Parker gave Ives a thorough grounding and training in traditional musical techniques such as harmony and counterpoint. The results of this are immediately obvious from String Quartet No. 1 and Symphony No. 1. Parker was an extremely important contributor to Ives's mastery of traditional musical techniques.

Misconception No. 2: "Ives gave up on the idea of becoming a full-time composer and went into business".

We can see that this is inaccurate if we look at the four years between Ives's graduation from Yale and his 1902 decision to focus entirely on business. During these years he was employed by an insurance company and also worked as an organist at the Central Presbyterian Church in New York. It's not that he gave up on the idea of becoming a composer in order to go into business, rather he gave up his job as an organist to focus entirely on business. In other words, he gave up both his job as an organist and as a composer of "practical music" in the widest sense of the term, including church music. But he never stopped composing for himself.

Ives's role model during the first four years after his graduation from Yale was Parker. He saw his work as an organist, the cultivation of a good reputation for his compositions and a University teaching job like that held by Parker as ways to continue his musical activities. It was with this ambition in mind that he began to compose his cantata "The Celestial Country" in 1898. According to Burkholder, the work was performed just a week before Ives announced his resignation as organist. Burkholder also explains that "Ives had identified himself to the newspaper as Parker's student and had clearly

modelled both text and music of his cantata on Parker's oratorio 'Hora novissima', which had helped to secure for Parker his appointment at Yale".[3] Judging from reviews of this work, it may have been much discussed but it was not particularly successful. The abovementioned performance was not enough to secure a performing-teaching position like that held by Parker. There is no concrete evidence for this but it is highly plausible that the failure of the work prompted Ives to give up the music profession and devote himself entirely to the insurance business, a field in which he achieved great success later on.[4]

To sum up, after graduating from Yale, Ives worked as an organist for four years, alongside his work at the Mutual Life Insurance company, a period during which he aspired to live a life similar to that of Parker, his role model. He aimed to continue his musical activities, including composition, by finding a job as a performer-teacher. However, the failure of "The Celestial Country" prompted his decision to focus on business. His resignation as organist highlighted his commitment to this decision, but the irony of this decision is that it provided him with ample time, both after work and at weekends, to compose music for himself.

We will examine Ives and his music along two axes – time and space.

Time axis I: periodization

There were several turning points in Ives's musical career. Burkholder's division of Ives's life into six periods gives us a better understanding of his music.

Period I (1874-1894): Ives's youth in Danbury, Connecticut.

Period II (1894-1902): Yale and the first four years in New York.

Period III (1902-1908): resignation as organist and focus on business. A period of solitary composition work.

Period IV (1908-1917): a period of maturity starting with Ives's marriage to Harmony in June 1908

Period V (1917-1926): reduction in compositional activity due to a heart attack in 1918

Period VI (1927-1954): encounters with people who championed his music. A period of adaptations and musical revisions.

Study of Ives's musical development shows that it was deeply intertwined with his

circumstances and personal health. His father, George Ives was highly influential during Period I. As he later recalled, “what my father did for me was not only in his teaching, on the technical side, etc., but in his influence, his personality, character, and open-mindedness, and his remarkable understanding of the ways of a boy’s heart and mind. He had a remarkable talent for music and for the nature of music and sound, and also a philosophy of music that was unusual. Besides starting my music lessons when I was five years old, and keeping me at music in many ways until he died, with the best teaching that a boy could have, Father knew (and filled me up with) Bach and the best of the classical music, and the study of harmony and counterpoint etc., and musical history. Above all this, he kept my interest and encouraged open-mindedness in all matters that needed it in any way.”[5]

George’s role in the formation of his son Charles’s character is beyond doubt. A further point which has not been emphasized by anybody is that he may well have contributed to Charles’s success in the insurance business.

George’s death shortly after Charles arrived at Yale, and the encounter with his music teacher Parker, greatly influenced his music. Burkholder calls Period II Ives’s ‘apprenticeship’. Works such as Symphony No. 1 and String Quartet No. 1 were composed during this period. Period III is a ‘period of innovation and synthesis’ during which he lived in New York and worked for a life insurance company, but he sat down at the piano after work and wrote a large number of sketches. According to Burkholder, “he returned to vernacular styles, showing an increased interest in ragtime, and began to incorporate into the longer classical forms he had learned from Parker the techniques he had first tried in his experimental and highly dissonant church music, producing a series of chamber and orchestral works based on hymn tunes and on the music he had written for church.”[6]

Period IV, which begins with Ives’s marriage to Harmony Twitchell[7], is a period which saw a succession of ambitious works and which can be called a period of maturity from a compositional point of view. He reduced his composition workload in 1918 after suffering a heart attack, an event which ushered in a period during which he brought together earlier hastily scribbled sketches and worked on completing works which had been left unfinished. Two self-published works are from this period: The second

Pianoforte Sonata ("Concord, Mass")[8] and "114 Songs"[9]. By this time Ives was mentioned occasionally in music magazines as a composer, although not particularly favorably. However, his growing reputation in avant garde circles enabled him to end his musical solitude, but unfortunately his wish to continue composing sharply declined in reverse proportion to the attention he gained. During the last period of Ives's life, Period VI, he corrected and edited completed works and reconstructed works which had been lost, but he did not compose one single new work. He gradually gained recognition during this period – people such as Henry Cowell[10], Nicholas Slonimsky[11], John Kirkpatrick[12] and Lou Silver Harrison[13] appreciated his value and raised his profile. The Pulitzer Prize for his Third Symphony, awarded during this final period of his life, established Ives's name as a composer. The first performance of the Third Symphony, more than thirty years after its completion, led to the 'discovery' of Ives the composer.

Space Axis I: New England

New England is the area in the northeastern United States first settled by the English. From the north southwards, it consists of the following six states: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, and its largest city is Boston. Incidentally, Ives's hometown of Danbury is to the southwest of the Connecticut capital Hartford, fairly near to New York[14]. Redding, where Ives lived in his later years, is an upmarket residential area south of Danbury which is popular with showbusiness people and musicians given its proximity to New York. For example, a long time ago it was home to the writer Mark Twain, and more recently Leonard Bernstein, who premiered Ives's Second Symphony, lived there.

It is worth adding here that the second half of the nineteenth century, notwithstanding the chaos of the Civil War, was overall a period of dramatic industrial growth. The railway network grew exponentially from the 1850s; the continent was traversed a few years before Ives was born. The railroad and telegraph networks which had spread across the entire United States brought about great movement in products and services, with companies like the grocers and tea merchants Great Atlantic & Pacific (A&P) and mail order catalog companies such as Montgomery Ward and Sears, Roebuck and Company revolutionizing distribution. Developments in high capacity power generation and bulk power transmission technologies, which occurred around the same time, revolutionized technologies in numerous related fields and enabled entrepreneurs

who spotted business opportunities to establish numerous companies not only in heavy chemical industries such as heavy electric machinery and steel manufacture, but also in mass-produced machine industry in which companies such as Singer sewing machines became leaders in the American economy. This is the so-called Second Industrial Revolution[15].

Ives was born into a New England in which there were no cars on the roads and no radio in the air, but it was no rural backwater. The American manufacturing methods which characterized the industrialization of America have their roots not far from Danbury, in a munitions factory in Springfield, Massachusetts, forty kilometers north of the Connecticut capital, Hartford. Springfield became famous in the 1850s for a unique manufacturing method – assembly of interchangeable parts. In European machine industry, craftsmen skilfully operated machine tools to make parts, and these were assembled. In the manufacturing system perfected in Springfield and primarily implemented in the manufacture of muskets during the Civil War, an unskilled worker operates a single-purpose machine and uses a set of gauges to make parts which are later assembled. When interchangeable parts are used, if certain sections of a musket are lost in a battlefield, a new one can be assembled from parts taken from a number of other ones[16].

This interchangeable parts assembly method, which was later adapted to assembly manufacture of items such as sewing machines and cars, became one of the salient features of American industrial design, a field in which skilled craftsmen were scarce. In this sense, Springfield is one of the birthplaces of new American industrial design. The New England in which Ives was born had historical links with Europe, emerged victorious from the Civil War with the South, and was the ‘epicenter’ of American industrial technology.

This second industrial revolution, which originated in New England, has a bright side and a dark side. Mass production and mass consumerism enabled people to obtain cheaply not only essential items, but items which had previously been considered luxuries. The growth in popularity of the automobile in the early twentieth century rapidly created the new American lifestyle, which was soon emulated in other capitalist nations. Companies which provided people with these benefits grew in number and in

size, some going on to become giants, a phenomenon which strengthened the oligopolistic control of the market. The people who resisted this were Americans who were proud of the spirit of self-reliance created in America since the War of Independence.

The battle between independent oil producers and Rockefeller's Standard Oil over Appalachian oil wells is the prime example of conflict between proudly independent businessmen and big business. Independent businesses desperately resisted Rockefeller's acquisitions of Appalachian oil wells to rationalize the manufacture of kerosene, but eventually they were forced to surrender[17]. While this was ongoing, Ida Tarbell[18], the daughter of one of the leaders of the independent producers, published a magazine article which exposed illegal acts committed by Rockefeller, leading to severe criticism of the Standard Oil 'monopoly'. In the spirit of progressivism, Standard Oil was eventually dissolved 1911 by high court order. New England was the place that saw the split between the 'America' which created a new twentieth century lifestyle and the 'America' which cherished the spirit of independence, respected the individual and rejected monopolies.

It is often said about Ives that he reverted to Emersonian philosophy around the time he proposed to Harmony Twitchell[19], but Emerson's transcendentalism follows in the wake of the modern philosophy pioneered by Kant, a philosophy which has a strong element of individualism. This is linked to Ives's political beliefs which lean towards progressivism. Incidentally, his composition 'The New River', written in 1911, expresses the psychological crises people go through due to noise pollution and rampant industrial technology.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, in the northeastern US centered around New England, on the one hand Ives worked in the business world, moving around in a shiny new car offering insurance policies to wealthy adopters of the new American lifestyle, and on the other, he worked as a composer who manifested the traditional individuality of New England Americans.

Time Axis II: Ives as a representative of the generation of change

Ives was born in Danbury, Connecticut on October 20, 1874 to George and Mary. His father had been the youngest military band director in the northern army during the Civil War, which was not just the largest war ever to take place on American soil, it was also a precursor of the modern warfare waged during World War I. Textbooks stress Lincoln's emancipation of slaves as a positive, but many economic historians state that the emancipation was advocated for on economic rather than humanitarian grounds, in the sense that it would weaken the economy of the south and the industrializing north would need high quality labor rather than low quality slave labor. In actual fact, despite the noble concept of emancipation, discrimination against black Americans continued long after the abolition of slavery and was only fully removed from the legal code in 1964 with the Civil Rights Act.

Ives was a patriot, in the conventional sense of the word, and the America he loved was New England. The frontier disappeared from America during Ives's youth; railways and the telegraph turned the entire United States into one huge market. The deep scars of the Civil War remained, but the open wounds were healed by the country's spectacular development as an industrial nation. Numerous interconnected technological innovations made possible by the invention of high capacity power generation and bulk power transmission led to the second American industrial revolution. It is no exaggeration to say that during the period from Ives's birth until his employment in the insurance company, the country transformed from a traditional society into a modern twentieth century one. Ives wrote thus about his own work "Central Park in the Dark": "This piece purports to be a picture-in-sounds of the sounds of nature and of happenings that men would hear some thirty or so years ago (before the combustion engine and radio monopolized the earth and air), when sitting on a bench in Central Park on a hot summer night."[20]

The life Ives led in Danbury was a traditional pastoral farming village life not unlike that of the Amish communities whose pioneer era lifestyle survives to this day. Some in the widely scattered hamlets were not able to make the journey to church school every Sunday, so many believers participated in church gatherings every summer at which they slept in tents. The 'American' lifestyle of Ives's youth always remained in his heart despite living in the vast metropolis of New York and working for a modern insurance

company, but his music is not simply nostalgia for his lost youth in New England. What makes it special is not nostalgia in the psychological sense but his fixation with the entire soundscape of his time there, including noises. The fragments of old hymns infuse his idiom like ancient earthenware. Seen in this light, Ives's works neither reject nor affirm the enormous changes American society was undergoing, rather they strive to validate his identity and roots as a New Englander.

Ives's musical fabric is rooted in pre-industrial New England, not in the Model T Ford or the Wright brothers' airplane, and this makes him a conservative composer. The source of his conservatism, which will be dealt with in more detail later, was in the training he received at Yale from Parker.

Space Axis II: an extension of the European space

By the second half of the nineteenth century, remarkable developments in shipping technology had made crossing the Atlantic Ocean much easier. The flow of musical exchange went in one direction – from the European upstream to the American downstream. Many American composers active in the second half of the nineteenth century studied in Germany, as did Parker, Ives's teacher at Yale.

The mainstream of the American musical world at the time was what is known as the "Second New England School", led by the "Boston 6". These were John Knowles Paine[21], the founder of the music faculty at Harvard and the first American professor of musicology, Arthur Foote[22], the first musicology graduate at Harvard, George Chadwick[23], Edward Alexander MacDowell[24], Horatio Parker[25], and Amy Marcy Beach[26,27]. There are slight generational differences between these composers, but one thing they have in common is deep links to European Classical music. They all studied in Leipzig or Munich[28], and frequently visited Europe for concert tours.

They introduced an 'extension of the European musical space' to New England. Just as Boston has a European feel to it to this day, their music reminds us of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, Brahms and Wagner.

The space in which the "Boston 6" were active is in sharp contrast with the second industrial revolution which developed in the industrial cities in the North and strove to transform the American space into a global space. Ives struggled over whether to

continue his musical career or to devote himself to music at a time when the American space was caught between musical culture and industrialization. Very few people studied music at Yale. Given that the age difference between Ives and Parker was only eleven years, Burkholder surmises that "…both teacher and student must have come to know thoroughly each others' opinions, capabilities and limitations."[29]. It is possible that while learning through Parker to appreciate the greatness of classical composers such as Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, he also came to realize the shortcomings of the "Boston 6" and understand that his calling as an American musician would be to overcome these. What should he do to overcome the constraints of space and establish the space known as America within musical culture? Burkholder states that "Ives turned to different genres and different musical aims."[30] by Parker's teaching. Perhaps this is the goal he was referring to.

Changes in Ives's compositional style after he failed to follow in the footsteps of his role model Parker and decided to devote himself to business stem from this new goal. Instead of expanding the European space into New England, he strove to create music in the unique American space, music which is both contiguous in spirit to European music and is a successor to traditional music. American composers at the time did not consider this to be a valid concept, but it is one about which Ives started to think very seriously.

Time Axis III: the contemporary sharing of technical innovation and musical issues

Ives is often criticized for being an amateur composer whose works have been given too much attention and overpraised for their radicalism, simply because he happened to be an American.

But was Ives really an amateur? His father George would forgive his son's 'incorrect music' which diverged from the traditional rules of harmony if he could prove that he had a sufficiently deep understanding of them. Ives describes this in his "Memos": "I had to practise right and know my lesson first, then he was willing to let us roam a little for fun." [31]

Charles's musical training continued under Parker, with whom he "reviewed the same harmony textbook and covered some of the same problems of counterpoint as he had with his father, though at a more rigorous level[32]. His motivation for studying at Yale was not to become a composer, but Parker's training gave him a mastery of musical traditions which far exceeded the level of 'amateur', and this gave him an interest in composing. He definitely cannot be dismissed as a 'weekend composer'.

Therefore, the radicalism of his compositional techniques ensures him a legitimate place in the history of music. Whereas in Europe, Schoenberg's 12-tone method was 'invented' intentionally, Ives boldly employed atonality, polytonality, compound rhythms and tone clusters in a far less self-conscious manner. In terms of the time axis, he was one of the first to undertake extremely innovative endeavors in a space entirely detached from European music.

It is not particularly meaningful to praise Ives for his innovativeness as we are not speaking about a scientific technology patent application. What we need to consider is the inevitability of the birth of his music in America, or in other words, the kind of musical context in which his particular radicalism was born. Intuitively, we can say that the dead end in which western music found itself was felt simultaneously in Europe and America. This is due to Parker's training, even if this served for Ives as a good example of what not to do[33]. With hindsight, there were many routes out of this dead end.

Through Parker, Ives found himself in a magnetic field of shared ideas and concerns with contemporaries such as Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Debussy and Bartok et al. Schoenberg criticized traditional music theory for its logic and believed he had succeeded in vanquishing it with his twelve-tone method. In the 'Rite of Spring', Stravinsky used primitive power and violent rhythms to create a devastating yet creative scene[34]. French modernists, led by Debussy, tried new harmonies and sensibilities to create something new. Bartok created music which drove a sharp knife through the edge of Europe right into its center.

Ives tried to overcome traditions by going in the direction of expanding the scope of traditional European musical concepts through the introduction of experimental

techniques. To put it schematically, while Schoenberg tried to achieve his breakthrough by 'thinking things through thoroughly in his head', Ives tried to achieve his by 'broadening his ears'. In this sense, Ives's method sharply contrasts with Schoenberg's. Ives's experimental methods only came to be widely used in European works after composers began to feel that the twelve-tone system was heading towards a dead end[35].

Space Axis III: the search for America

American history is in many ways a search for an American identity. America was not born out of nothing; it was born out of expulsions of native peoples and rivalries with other nations such as France etc. Its independence from its former mother country is another factor. Ancestral legacy, as in 'we've lived here for a long time' does not make for a history with a clear identity.

People constantly ask the question of what America is. An ideological identity would create the ideal country able to achieve the 'liberty, equality and fraternity' of the French Revolution. No one disagrees with this basic idea. But looking at the details, the direction of each opinion is not the same.

Simon & Garfunkel put the following words into the mouth of an American youth who has come searching for America but no longer understands it: "Cathy, I'm lost" I said, though I knew she was sleeping, "I'm empty and aching and I don't know why". This song, entitled 'America' ends with "They've all come to look for America. All come to look for America"[36].

Is the America which bombed the North Vietnamese, who did not have modern weapons, the ideal America? The youth of the time were losing sight of America. In the song 'America', Simon & Garfunkel sing about the youth losing their American identity. The situation was the same in Ives's time, if in a different dimension. As described above, as the American spirit of individualism clashed with the development of industrial conglomerations, the industrialists destroyed the American environment of the good old days. Within this conflict, Ives's musical attitude was 'conservative'. Particularly after his marriage to Harmony, he wrote many works which were musical reminiscences of

the period between the War of Independence and the Civil War. For example, Ives's America is expressed in each of the movements of 'A Symphony: New England Holidays' (also known as the 'Holiday Symphony'), which is really a collection of four tone poems. The titles of the four movements are as follows: I Washington's Birthday, II Decoration Day, III The Fourth of July, IV Thanksgiving and Forefathers' Day. The music in this 'Symphony' gives the impression of Ives reminiscing about his youth[37]. It is not implausible to interpret this work, which was written in 1910, as a response to the deep psychological and social search for an American identity during the period of anxiety before World War I. It is said that Ives's 'return' to America at this time was due to his wife Harmony[38], but perhaps it can also be explained from the standpoint of this being a period during which the timeless space known as America needed to be shared.

New recordings of compositions by Ives were made in the 1960s[39], leading to something of an 'Ives boom' in the 70s. Interest in Ives grew in Japan when Seiji Ozawa presented a number of his works and when Haruna Miyake published a collection of essays entitled 'Listen to Ives'[40].

We may think that since the 1980s Ives's works have been performed less often, with certain exceptions such as 'The Unanswered Question', but in 2018 the NHK Symphony Orchestra included Symphony No. 2, for the first time in many years, in one of their subscription concerts[41]. There is also a 'quiet boom' in the United States, with new recordings of songs and chamber music, which may have something to do with profound identity crises American society is undergoing at the deepest psychological level. But when thinking about Ives the composer, his place and that of his music in history, the entity of 'America' is an important keyword to consider, even if it is not something one ordinarily thinks about when listening to music.

Time Axis IV: Ives's compositional techniques during periods III and IV

Ives's musical mission was, in his own way, to follow in the footsteps of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, but from Period III onwards his technique was very different from that of Beethoven, who sculpted motifs into brilliant, radiant compositions. He was conservative from a structural point of view, composing symphonies, string quartets, a piano trio, piano sonatas, violin sonatas, orchestral music, cantatas, hymns and songs.

What mattered most to Ives was the 'substance' inside the perhaps archaic skin[42]. Metaphorically speaking, the body of Ives's newest wines was more important than the texture. Similarly, music which is just pleasant to the ear is not music. The 'substance' of music, in concrete terms, is what Bach, Beethoven and Brahms were trying to express. For example, Beethoven's last piano sonatas do not make for easy listening; rather they are a confession of Beethoven's 'substance'. Perhaps Ives discovered this kind of 'substance' in the music of Beethoven and other composers he revered.

The pieces in which Ives strove to express 'substance' are from Periods III and IV. His composition methodology during these periods involved putting together as complete compositions sketches which he had scribbled down in the past. With a couple of exceptions, the multi-movement compositions from this period were not conceived from the start as integrated works. Burkholder notes this, somewhat critically: "…. by and large, his works with multiple movements, including the sonatas for piano solo and for violin and piano, the Third and Fourth Symphonies, and the sets for orchestra and the sets for orchestra or chamber ensembles, were assembled from individual movements conceived independently and only later gathered together into sets with varying degrees and sources of unity between movements. While some of these sets, particularly the Concord Sonata and the Fourth Symphony achieve an impressive sense of integration, none of them completely conceals its origin as a collection of separate movements."[43]

It cannot be said that Burkholder's claim is incorrect, but one feels that it is insufficient to evaluate a work solely based on the method of its composition. In the liner notes to the Paul Zukofsky and Gilbert Kalish recording of the four Ives sonatas for violin and piano, Samuel Charters states that "each of the sonatas is strongly individual, and stands very firmly on its own feet, but each of them also takes on a greater depth and a richer coloration from its relationship with the other three. Ives wrote and revised them at about the same time, even using the same melodic material. From an earlier work as the source for movements in both the Second and the Fourth; so it is entirely possible that there was a larger artistic design running through their composition, even though it may have been only an unconscious one."[44]

The evaluation of compositions from Periods III and IV alters considerably depending

on whether they are seen as arbitrary ‘collections’ or as having been composed with an overarching concept. Incidentally, Ives’s composition method does not have to be the same as Beethoven’s. Either way, I feel that compositions should be evaluated for their ‘substance’ rather than for the way in which they were composed.

Technical evaluation should perhaps focus on new techniques such as ‘gathering’ and ‘quotation’, which Ives has in common with Gustav Mahler. It may seem surprising but there are many similarities between Ives and Mahler; sudden unexpected musical developments, reciprocal borrowing of passages from previous works, quotations of fragments of other music, including that of sub-cultures etc. Early works such as ‘The Celestial Country’ show that Ives, like Mahler, had a real gift for melody. Just as one must be familiar with Mahler’s songs in order to understand his symphonies, if one is to understand Ives’s music one must be familiar with his borrowings from his own works.

Space Axis IV: techniques

Ives liberally experimented with new techniques. The result of this was that once he was could compose freely without giving undue heed to the audience, he gained the ability to insert experimental musical idioms into traditional forms. The four sonatas for violin and piano make extensive use of polytonality, atonality, complex compound rhythms, tone clusters, modulations in every measure etc., features which bewildered his contemporaries.

Up to the end of Period II, Ives tried out these techniques in experimental music or as musical jokes, but he almost never tried to weave them into traditional forms[45]. Even Charles’s normally liberal father would not let him play the polytonal episodes of his Variations on “America” (1891) in public, and by the time it was finally performed the polytonal episodes had been omitted[46]. The Celestial Country, written when Ives was in pursuit of work, has a certain amount of innovative resonance, but does not employ musical techniques which would befuddle the listener. It is evident that Ives thought he had to draw a line between his experimental musical idioms and his traditional compositions which were for public consumption. This line became more blurred from Period III onwards, when he started to compose using superior musical ideas.

There is no need to stress here how innovative Ives’s compositional techniques were.

Suffice it to say that many of the techniques Ives used began to be experimented with in Europe around the time the twelve-tone system reached a dead end. What must be stressed here is the phenomenon of quotation.

Ives quoted hymns, folksongs, popular songs etc in many different ways. He also quotes his own works. Some quotes are long enough for the melody to be clearly discerned, but most of them are highly deft and skilful, which in concrete terms means that the original piece is transformed, the quote is too short to be recognized, or it is hidden by other themes, so in this sense these are used as musical elements rather than being simple quotes. The tradition of quotation has a long history in orthodox European music. Bach and Mozart composed within this culture of quotation. The major difference between Ives's use of quotes and that of the so-called patriotic composers is that they quoted folksongs and popular songs within their traditional musical idiom and stressed the uniqueness of this as American music, whereas Ives was critical of their parochialism[47]. Ives believed that the 'substance' of music was the most important thing, not superficial effects created by the use of external elements.

On this point, Samuel Charters's words leave a lasting impression. "He did not hesitate to use whatever material came to hand in his effort to compose music that would be like Emerson's essays, "all substance." If a phrase of a popular song or a line from an old hymn shaped itself into his music he made no effort to get it out. Just as he had the radical idea that all sounds were valid – rejecting both the Nineteenth Century strictures of tonal law on the one hand and the equally restricting contemporary concept of the level of dissonance – he also felt that all music was valid, and that it was the artist's integrity and purpose that determined the use of whatever materials he might turn to".

This attitude is also closely linked to the formation of his later literary concepts. "In this attitude Ives was very close to the later literary concept that helped shape the work of Eliot, Joyce, and Pound. As Eliot wrote in Tradition and Individual Talent, "For it is not the 'greatness,' the intensity of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place that counts."[48]

There are quotes from hymns which may put a nostalgic smile of the faces of people who grew up in New England. Do they have the universality essential to good music? It is obvious that these questions must be asked.

Ives uses fragments of forgotten hymns he played while he was an organist and subsequently disappeared. He quotes them, but only after he has skilfully transformed them. He does not do this to appeal to American emotions, but simply because they are musical fragments which remained with him. Had he wanted to appeal to American emotions he could have composed popular songs like those of Stephen Foster or produced bulk quantities of mass-appeal compositions like 'The Circus Band'. Given the musical tasks he set himself, he did not go down this route at the end of Period II.

The final subject which needs to be broached is self-quotation. Ives quoted himself often, and often used the same elements in multiple compositions. From Period III onwards, this may be the result of his compositional methodology and due to the way in which he formed his musical ideas. The issue of revisions is different to that of Bruckner, and it relates to how the differences between Ives the composer at the time the original was written and Ives the composer at the time the revision was carried out, are evaluated. One striking example is the revision of the harmonies in the finale of Symphony No. 2. "…(during) the Second World War… changed the closing tonic chord of the Second Symphony to an eleven-note crunch[49]. Kirkpatrick clearly states that he prefers the original[50], but the fact that it is the composer's own revision legitimizes everything. This is perhaps a subject for future Ives research.

Epilog: cataloging Ives's manuscripts

After Ives's death, Harmony gifted his manuscripts the Yale Music Library. Kirkpatrick organized them and published a detailed catalogue in 1960. The Charles Ives Society began to plan a critical edition in 1973, entrusted numerous musicologists with the task of editing, and thanks to this we now have critical editions of all the major works[51]. Attention was later given to works not published during the composer's lifetime, for example the critical edition of the very late "Universe Symphony", left unfinished, was published and the work was recorded[52].

Ives's scores are fairly well organized, but given his habit of writing sketches and then setting them aside, as stated in Time Axis IV, and his compositional methods from Period III onwards, it is unclear when his works were completed.

His method of writing and collecting large numbers of sketches and later compiling them according to a superordinate concept is a walk in the park compared to Beethoven who worked himself into a sweat over his compositions. However, this act of compiling sketches according to a superordinate concept is by no means simple. It is unimaginable that Ives pieced his sketches together randomly in Period III and particularly in Period IV. This writer's hypothesis is that for Ives, the act of composition functioned as a way to erase the pain of solitary work.

This writer learned from Ives's methods in writing these liner notes, perhaps gaining a minimal insight into Ives by writing sketches and then compiling them into a coherent whole. Hopefully this poor piece of writing will not hinder the listener's enjoyment of this splendid recording.

Notes

[1] Horatio Parker, 1863-1919, henceforth referred to as Parker.

[2] Ives, Charles (edited by Tom C. Owens), *Selected Correspondence of Charles Ives,* p23, University of California Press, 2007.

[3] J. Peter Burkholder, '*Charles Ives: The Ideas Behind the Music*', p 81, Yale University Press, 1985. Burkholder's description here is based on Yellin, Victor Fell, 'Review on first recording of The Celestial Country, by Charles E. Ives', *The Musical Quarterly* 60 (July 1974).

[4] "The Celestial Country" was the last major work Ives composed using traditional musical techniques. Cf. Calum MacDonald, 'Liner Note for The Celestial Country by Charles Ives,' [Collins, 14792].

[5] Burkholder, op. cit. p 45-47. This recollection is sourced from: Ives, Charles E., *Memos*, Edited and appendices by John Kirkpatrick, New York, 1972

[6] Burkholder, op. cit. p 44.

[7] Harmony Twitchell, 1876-1969, married Ives in 1908.

[8] Ives, Charles E., [Sonata No.2 for Piano.] *Second Pianoforte Sonata ("Concord, Mass., 1849-1860")*, Redding, Conn.: By the author, 1920.

[9] Ives, Charles E., *114 Songs*, Redding, Conn.: By the author, 1922.

[10] Henry Cowell, 1897-1965, henceforth referred to as Cawell.

[11] Nicolas Slonimsky, 1894-1995 Russian composer, conductor and music critic who moved to America in 1923. Henceforth referred to as Slonimsky.

[12] John Kirkpatrick, pianist, editor of Ives's works. Henceforth referred to as Kirkpatrick.

[13] Lou Silver Harrison, 1917-2003, American composer. Henceforth referred to as Harrison.

[14] It appears that the town was named after Danbury in Essex, England, the hometown of many of the

earliest settlers.

[15] For details of the Second American Industrial Revolution, see Chandler, A.D., *Scale and Scope: The Dynamics of Industrial Capitalism*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press , 1990

[16] For detailed information on this American manufacturing system, see Hounshell, David A., *From the American system to mass production, 1800-1932: the development of manufacturing technology in the United States*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984.

[17] In those days oil was the raw material for producing kerosene, a consumer product used in lamps and stoves etc. The largest market was Europe. Gasoline became important with the development of motorization, from 1910 onwards.

[18] Ida Minerva Tarbell, 1857-1944, author, journalist. Henceforth referred to as Tarbell. Her father made his fortune as a manufacturer of wooden barrels for the storage and transportation of oil.

[19] Burkholder, op. cit. p 106

[20] Paul C. Echols, 'Liner Note for Holiday Symphony by Charles Ives,' [Sony CSCR8219].

[21] John Knowles Paine, 1839-1906.

[22] Arthur Foote, 1853-1937.

[23] George Chadwick, 1854-1931.

[24] Edward Alexander MacDowell, 1860-1908.

[25] Ives's music teacher at Harvard. Studied with Chadwick.

[26] Amy Marcy Beach, 1867-1944.

[27] These are sometimes known as the "Boston 7" when Margaret Ruthven Lang, 1867-1972, a composer and a member of the Lang family who played an important role in the cultural life of Boston. Lindsay Koob, 'Liner note for Complete Piano Music by Arthur Foote' [Delos DE3442].

[28] For example, Chadwick studied with Reinecke in Leipzig and with Rheinberger in Munich. Parker also studied with Rheinberger.

[29] Burkholder, op. cit. p 61

[30] Burkholder, op. cit. p 84

[31] The above description is from Burkholder, op. cit. p 48

[32] For example, let's look at how Parker's evaluation of Richard Strauss's music influenced Ives. Burkholder, op. cit. p 46.

[33] Parker gave Ives a deep understanding of the European Classics, and at the same time unwittingly laid bare his (Parker's) own limitations, despite being in a leading position in American music.

[34] Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes commissioned works from many composers, not just Stravinsky. Some of these works included the new element of 'surprise' as a way to vanquish traditional music. Elements nobody had used before found their way into music compositions, such as when Satie used a typewriter and airship.

[35] The Russian composer Ivan Wyschnegradsky (1893-1979) experimented with quarter tones. His experiments were unrelated to those undertaken by Ives.

[36] Simon & Garfunkel, [CBS/Sony SOPB-55131-2] linear notes.

[37] Paul C. Echols, 'Linear note for Holiday Symphony by Charles Ives,' [Sony CSCR8219].

[38] Burkholder stresses Harmony's influence. Burkholder, op. cit. p 100-104

[39] The symphonies: Stokowsky recorded Symphony No. 4 in 1965, followed by recordings of the same work by Seiji Ozawa and Serebrier, but these were made before the publication of the critical edition. (The first recording of the critical edition was made in 1989 by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by

Michael Tilson Thomas). Bernstein, who had made the premiere recording of Symphony No. 2 with the New York Philharmonic in 1958, recorded No. 3 in 1965. Symphony No. 1 was first recorded in 1966 by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Morton Gould, meaning that by the mid-1960s one could listen to recordings of all four numbered Ives symphonies.

[40] Haruna Miyake 'Listen to Ives', Chikuma Shobō, 1977. The book, which includes an essay of the same name, is not a practical guide to Ives and does not contain detailed descriptions of him.

[41] Subscription Concert #1899, Program A conducted by Jun'ichi Hirokami, NHK Hall, November 24, 25, 2018. Incidentally, the notes in the concert program stressed that unlike other American composers, Ives did not have a complex about Europe. The meaning of the word 'complex' here is open to discussion, one possible explanation being that in musical terms Ives had great freedom as he didn't have any complexes.

[42] Parker had a considerable influence over Ives's musical undertakings, one influence being the importance attached to 'substance'.

[43] Burkholder, op. cit. p88

[44] Samuel Charters, 'An Introductory Note,' 1965, [Folkways Records FM3346/3347].

[45] One exception is the Piano Trio, the second movement of which is inscribed TSIAJ, which stands for 'this is a joke'.

[46] Burkholder, op. cit. p49.

[47] Samuel Charters, 'An Introductory Note,' [Folkways Records FM3346/3347].

[48] Charter, 'An Introductory Note,' [Folkways Records FM3346/3347].

[49] Burkholder, op. cit. p113

[50] Burkholder, op. cit. chapter 10, footnote 9, quotes Kirkpatrick as follows: "I (Kirkpatrick) have also seen the manuscript of the original ending in the Ives Collection and much prefer it. In my opinion, performing this work of 1902 with an ending from the 1940s is an absolute travesty. The new ending would not have been added had Ives received recognition for this symphony at the time he wrote it."

[51] Paul C. Echols, 'Liner Note for Symphony No1 & 4 by Charles Ives,' [Sony SK44939].

[52] Charles Ives, Universe Symphony, Cincinnati PO directed by Gerhard Samuel, [Centaur CRC2205]. Recorded January 29, 1994.