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Charles E. Ives: Two Works Explored

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CHARLES E. IVES:

TWO WORKS EXPLORED

(TITLE)

BY

WALLACE G. MOON

THESIS

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this research to discover what makes Charles Ives effective as a composer, and analyze two of his symphonic works, the Fourth Symphony and Three Places in New England.

Because of the complexity of Ives' music, a purely beat-by-beat harmonic analysis is not feasible. The procedure which is followed for the analysis of both symphonies will be obvious to the reader, and should at no time become so involved that he will become lost in the maze of the technical terminology that often finds its home in a harmonic analysis.

Each movement will be discussed first as a whole, that is, touching upon the high points to present an overview of the movement in its entirety, how it begins and ends and what the most prominent points of interest are.

After the movement has been discussed as an entity the analysis will then involve six main categories: meter, melody, harmony, tonality, texture, and form.

Within the framework of meter it will be determined whether the metrical organization is duple, triple, quadruple, etc, and the background simple or compound (i.e. subdivisible by halves or thirds), and whether the movement is multimetric or polymetric. Also what devices might have been used to obscure the metric scheme. Under the main heading of meter, tempo and rhythm will be included. Tempo will be discussed as a factor in general mood: slow; tragic, sombre, stately, or perhaps majestic: fast; gay, frivolous, joyous, savage, or humorous. The analysis of trhthm will deal with the complexity or flexibility involved and the variety of note values and rhythmic

groupings. Also the prominence of the rhythmic element will be discussed.

The melodic analysis will deal with the prominence of melody; the relationship to texture - monophonic, homophonic, or polyphonic; the general qualities, lyric or dramatic; the scale basis, major, minor, modal, pentatonic, chromatic, wholetone, or some other scale system or unconventional division of the octave; and lastly the use of the melodic material - repetition, variation, or developmental.

Chord structure; tertian, non-tertian, inversions; progression by root movement or sequence; diatonic or chromatic; cadence structure; polyharmony and tension are the items that the harmonic analysis will cover.

The tonal analysis will deal with areas such as scale basis: major, minor, polytonal, bitonal, or atonal. The key scheme as well as the clarity or vagueness of key feeling will also be discussed within the frame work of the tonal analysis.

Textural considerations will include a discussion of the homophonic or polyphonic nature of the movements.

Last, the analysis of form will deal with the basic structure of each movement. Labeling it with one, or possibly a combination, of the following forms: ternary, sonata allegro, rondo, sectional, variational, developmental, fugal, throughcomposed, or freely composed organization based upon extra-musical considerations.

The life of Ives will be examined to discover how he made use of the mechanics of music. What music meant to Charles Ives will also be discussed.

Charles Ives was not a symphonist in the traditional sense, and it is because of this that the two symphonies were chosen instead of other types of works. Another reason for choosing the symphonies arises from necessity: the bulk of Ives' music is just now beginning to come into print but the two selected works are readily available.

Charles E. Ives' works, according to W. Eugene Smith, have homely titles but are exceedingly difficult to understand and play.[1] Smith also says that Ives "... may well be America's greatest composer ...."[2]

Elliott Carter said that few composers have come to grips with the basic problems of musical expression, and few have taken so definite a stand as does Charles Ives in his Essays Before a Sonata. Reading them, one cannot help feeling that such a man must be capable of writing exceptional music.[3] Carter continues by saying Ives' range is remarkably broad. Offered to the listener; are the rural, homely qualities of Whitter, the severity of Emerson, the fancy of Hawthorne, and the meditation of Thoreau.[4]

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[1]W. Eugene Smith, Charles Ives, A Photograph (Life Magazine, October 31, 1949), p. 45.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Elliott Carter, "Ives Today, His Vision and Challenge," Modern Music (May, June, 1944, 21:4), p. 199.

[4]Ibid.

Henry Bellamann, after a discussion with Ives, concluded him to be excessively retiring. One enters upon any discussion of the man with trepidation.[5] He is a thoroughgoing New Englander with a deep love of the country and for his close friends.[6] Technically, Bellamann says, the music is hard to classify. One page might project him as a pure polyphonist, another a pure harmonist, and another that of neither, or both, or something else. As to content, some say he is a mystic, others call him a realist. Organically the fundamentals are exposition, developmenta and conclusion. It should be observed that sometimes the development seems to begin immediately after the introduction of the briefist figures, at other times the development leads into the them which is stated in its entirety only at the end. Harmonically, this composer was astonishingly ahead of his time. Bellamann, quotes Schloezer of Les Beaux Arts in Brussells, as having said: "Ives has something to say. He says it in his own way without looking around to see what others are doing."[7]

Bellamann continues by saying that it is impossible for anyone with any kind of ear to mistake a passage of Ives' music for the writing of anyone else. Discussing a melodic idea of Ives, Bellamann stated that there is an almost fanatic avoidance of anything in curve or surface of sensuous import. Never a concession to easy listening.[8]

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[5]Henry Bellamann, "Charles Ives, The Man and His Music," Musical Quarterly (January, 1933, 19:1), p. 47.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., p. 49.

[8]Ibid., p. 50.

Vincent d'Indy once said to Mr. Bellamann: "Why don't your American composers inspire themselves from their own landscape ... instead of leaning ... on the German walking-stick?"[9] Lawrence Gilman, commenting on a performance of Ives' Fourth Symphony, answers that question with the following statement:

> This music is as indubitably American in impulse and spiritusl texture as the prose of Jonathon Edwards ... and, like the writing of that true artist and mystic, it has at times and irresisitible veracity and strength, and uncorrupted sincerity.[10]

In another article Four Symphonies by Charles Ives Bernard Herrmann says that the Fourth Symphony is like nothing else in music. "The effect is indescribably beautiful."[11]

> Charles Ives, scion of an old New England family, is something of a legend in American music. This is music from the bowels of the earth. It is bewildering, tender, powerful, evocative, and at times uncomprehensibly clumsy.[12]

So wrote Paul Henry Lang on the subject of Ives in an article in the Saturday Review, and he continued by saying that what makes Ives' works more extraordinary is the date of their composition. Written before Elektra,

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[9]Bellamann, ibid, p. 51.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Bernard Herrmann, "Four Symphonies by Ives," Modern Music (May, June, 1945, 22:4), p. 220.

[12]Paul Henry Lang, "Charles Ives, Hearing Things," The Saturday Review of Literature (June, 1944), p. 43.

Le Sacre du Printemps, and Pierrot Lunaire they exhibit a talent as original as the protagonists of modern music whom Ives antedated and anticipated.

Lang, in his generous appraisal of Ives, is speaking about his smaller works. A few sentences later in the same article he writes:

> It is very difficult to reconcile the freshness of the songs and of the sonata with the lameness of the symphony, to understand how a man with Ives's innate gifts and thorough musical training can be so helpless in the orchestral medium.[13]

It is perhaps that the song is an eminently American phenomenon without any limiting factors and without inevitably invoking traditional stylistic features as do the quartet and symphony?

Lang is primarily concerned, in the articles, with what Charles Ives is. More important is what he means to us. According to Lang, Ives was involved with a lack of a center, of a focus, in the life of a young century. This relationship becomes obvious in his music. Not because of a lack of training or craftsmanship but because this lack of center was symbolic of the times. His predicament called for a revolutionary upheaval in which his music could have found fulfillment. Charles Ives' music belongs to a world of revolution divested of its revolutionary reality.[14]

In presenting some ideas and writings of others on

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., p. 44.

Charles Ives it should be evident that ives remains an enigma. There are no hard facts available to help discern what Ives' music is about. Ives wrote very little about himself and did not allow his musical life to become well known. As a result there are few authoritative and many conflicting writings about Charles Ives. One author's opinion will be full of praise while the next man's is filled with reservations. Perhaps this is the way he (Ives) wanted it to be. After all, Ives did not care for things which were simply written and clearly understandable.

Lang seems to be the most opinionated among the surveyed authors as witnessed by his quotation on the preceeding page. The others seem to be unwilling to make any statement that would label them as either 'pro' or 'con' Charles Ives.

Charles Ives, the composer, the man, has not become more understandable through the writings of others. He remains the enigma that, perhaps, has caused men like Carter, Lang, and Bellamann to write so conflictingly about him.

It is, in part, the purpose of the following chapters to present material which will lead to positive conclusions and bring about opinions which are without reservation, be they negative or positive.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE AND MUSICAL THOUGHT OF CHARLES E. IVES

Charles Ives was born in 1874 in Danbury, Connecticut. He has been identified with the Southwest part of New England all his life, although for many years he was successful in business in New York.

Charles' father, George, was a Civil War band leader and teacher in Danbury; his mother was a soloist in a Danbury church choir, so music was no stranger to Charles. Also, experimenting with music was not a Charles Ives original. One of Ives' earliest memories of his father was of his constant efforts to reproduce the sound of the church bells next door. The elder Ives finally gave up trying, concluding that the tones in the bells were not in the piano. However, this did not stop George, for soon afterward he built a machine that would play "between the cracks" in the piano keys.[15]

The idea of dividing the octave into smaller intervals than the semitone had occurred to others than George Ives. In Moscow, dated 1864,[16] there was a piano built to play quarter tones, and Karl Koenig, at the Philadelphia Exposition of 1875, demonstrated a tonometric apparatus dividing four octaves into 670 parts.[17] The instrument that the elder Ives built seemingly did not work out well.

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[15]Henry and Sidney Cowell, Charles Ives and His Music (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 18.

[16]Ibid., p. 19.

[17]Ibid.

Charles wrote, concerning this experiment, in 1925:

> My father had a weakness for quarter-tones--in fact, he didn't stop even with them. He rigged up a contrivance to suit the dictates of his own curiosity. He would pick out quarter-tones and try to get the family to sing them. But I remember he gave that up, except as a means of punishment, though we got to like some of the tunes which kept to the usual scale and had quarter-tone notes thrown in ....[18]

Experimental music was not the only form of music taken in the Ives's household. Young Ives was around his father's band from the time he could walk until the death of his father. He heard expert fiddling for dances, hymn singing, old, slow, decorated psalm singing, the popular songs of Steven Foster and their relatives the minstrels, and the music of the country fairs. Also, as far back as Charles could remember, a great deal of chamber music was played by his father and friends. The sonatas, trios, and quartets of Handel, Bach, and Beethoven were the favorites; Mozart and Haydn were never popular with either George or Charles Ives. They were considered too sweet, too pretty, or too easy on the ears.[19]

Charles was five when he started playing the piano. At eight, his father, aware of his interest in music, marched him off to take drum lessons from the drummer in his band. By the time Charles was twelve, he was playing the snare drum in his father's band.[20]

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[18] Ibid., p. 19 and 20.

[19] Cowell, Charles Ives, p. 23.

[20] Ibid., p. 25.

Charles' music was not confined to the drum, for his father soon taught his son piano, violin, cornet, sight-reading, harmony, and counterpoint all on the strictest academic principles.

At thirteen, Charles composed his first piece to win recognition. It was for band and was titled "Holiday Quick Step."[21] At fourteen he became organist at the First Baptist Church and by this time he was composing quite regularly. At seventeen Charles composed an organ fantasia entitled "Variations on America" that was played on recital in Danbury and Brewster, New York.[22] A little later, he composed a fugue with the entrances of each voice in a different key.

His father said about the fugue: "Charlie, it will be time enough to write improper fugues and do it well when you can write a proper fugue and do it well."[23]

By this time, Charles had gone through Danbury Academy, Danbury High School, and on to Hopkins Preparatory School in New Haven in preparation for Yale.

The year 1894 brought two experiences which were to play a large part in the life of the twenty year old Charles. 1) He decided to study composition at Yale. 2) A month after his matriculation, his father died suddenly.

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[21]Cowell, Charles Ives, p. 27.

[22]Ibid., p. 28.

[23]Ibid., p. 29.

Ives writes about his father at a later date:

> One thing I am certain of, that if I have done anything good in music it was first because of my father, and second, because of my wife. What she has done for me I will not put down, because she will not let me. But my father ... not only in his teaching from the technical side, but from his influence, his personality, character, and open-mindedness and his remarkable understanding of the ways of a boy's mind and heart ... I could not have been over ten years old when he would occasionally have us sing a tune like Swanne River (sic) in E-flat while he accompanied us in the key of C ... I do not think he had the possibility of polytonality in composition in mind, particularly; he rather wanted to encourage the use of the ears and mind to think for themselves and be more independent -- in other words, to be less dependent on customs and habits.[24]

Horatio Parker was Ives' composition teacher at Yale. Ives had respect for Parker and his music saying that "It was seldom trivial."[25] While at Yale, Ives wrote his First Symphony. It was supposed to be in D minor, but the first subject went through about six or eight different keys; so Parker made him write a new one.[26] Among other teachers at Yale, Ives studied unor A. R. Shelly and Dudley Buck.

Music was not the only interest for Ives. At Yale, he seemed to be a very gregarious person. He was a member of HeBeule, Delta Kappa Epsilon, and Wolf's Head.[27] In

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[24]Ibid., p. 29 and 30.

[25]Ibid., p. 33.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid., p. 35.

the class book of 1893, Ives was listed under the nicknames; Dasher (The spontaneous and explosive Ives), Lemuel (The ascetic New Englander), Quipp (The crotchety Quixote), and Sam (The joker addicted to paradoxes).[28] Oddly enough, Ives was not mentioned in the musical section of his class in its yearbook.

As his college career was coming to an end, Ives was faced with the problem of how he should earn his living. To give all his time to composition was more than a temptation, but the young Ives was far too practical. So he decided against music, in favor of a business career. To Ives it was obvious that this business was life insurance. This choice concurred with his ideal to do the most good for the largest number of people.[29] His first job was with the Mutual Life Insurance Company as a clerk,in the actuary department. Ives was not happy being a clerk, so in 1899 he was transferred to the Raymond Agency. Here he met Julian Myrick who soon became his lasting friend. It was in 1906 that Ives became restless in his job, and as a result of this restlessness, on January 1, 1907, Ives and Myrick formed a partnership and secured for themselves an agency with the Washington Life Insurance Company of New York.

In June of 1908, Charles Ives was married to Harmony Twitchell and almost immediately the horizons brightened. Ives and Myrick were offered an agency with their old company. This agency lasted and prospered

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[28] Ibid., p. 35.

[29] Ibid., p. 38.

very well until Ives' retirement in 1930. As example of their prosperity, in their first year they sold $1,800,000 worth of insurance, and in their last year $48 million. In their twenty-one years of selling insurance, they put in force some $450 millions of new business.[30]

Despite Ives's success in selling, he continued to remain faithful to his composition. Every spare moment was dedicated to composing. The list of works completed in this eight year period seem incredible for an evening and weekend composer. They are: The symphony Holiday, the Fourth Symphony, a Set for Theatre or Chamber Orchestra, many pieces for various instruments, some with voice and chorus, Three Places in New England, Second String Quartet, and the Second Violin Sonata.

Because performance of his works seemed unlikely, Ives gave full reign to his imaginative powers; as Ives said, "abandoning himself to the nature of things and letting the tides roll through him."[31]

The writing of music continued to blossom for Ives until the year 1927. At this time, "He came downstairs one day with tears in his eyes, and said he couldn't seem to compose anymore--nothing went well--nothing sounded right."[32] His flair for composing never recovered. He seemed to be exhausted from leading two lives. From this time on he spent his time revising, refinishing, and publishing his works.

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[30] Ibid., p. 48.

[31] Ibid., p. 64.

[32] John Kirkpatrick, Charles Edward Ives (unpublished Music Manuscripts and Other Related Materials, Library of the Yale School of Music, 1960), p. 5.

On May 19, 1954, Charles Edward Ives, a successful businessman, and a relatively unknown composer, died.

Throughout his life music meant much to Ives. He wrote a great deal about what music meant to him, and a few quotations from his writings should prove helpful.

When he was a boy, what music meant to him can be summed up in two words: his father.

> There was something about the way Father played hymns. Even if some of the choir could read music readily at the rehearsals, he always liked to play each part over with his horn, and have them get it entirely ... through the ear, through his phrasing, tone, and general style of playing. He had the gift of putting something in the music, which meant more sometimes than when some people say the words. He once gave a concert in Danbury on the basset-horn, playing songs of Schubert and Franz. He had the words printed ... and passed them out through the a audience, who were expected to read the words and sing silently with him. Somebody heard him play the Erlking of Schubert, and felt that he sang it, through the basset-horn or trombone (I forget which ...), and carried him away with it, without the words; as Bispham did singing it.[33]

To further show Ives's belief in his father, he once said:

> He had a belief that everyone was born with at least a germ of musical talent, and that an early appreciation of great music and not trivial music would help it grow. He started all the children of the family (and most of the town) ... on Bach and Stephen Foster. He sent a love of music into the h heart of many a boy, who might have gone without it, but for him. I feel that if I have done anything good in music in any way, I owe it mostly to him.[34]

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[33]John Kirkpatrick, "What Music Meant to Charles Ives" (Unpublished Music Review VI, Cornell University, 1963), p. 1.

[34]Ibid., p. 2.

Although his father was a continual influencing factor in Charles' music, he was soon to adopt the New England philosophy of Transcendentalism. The following quotation is a prime example of Ives's philosophy and depicts what music meant to Charles Ives:

> Music is one of the many ways God has of beating in on man -- his life, his ideals, his hope, his everything. An inner something, a spiritual storm, a something else that stirs man in all of his parts (as a kind of entity) "soul." It acts through, or vibrates or couples up to human sensations in ways (or thinks or feels) he knows them. Further than this, what this inner something is which begets all this, is something no one knows, especially those who define it and use it primarily to make a living. All this means almost nothing to those who will think about -- music -- that no one knows what it is -- and less he knows what it is, the nearer it is to music -- probably.[35]

For most people the baffling aspect of Ives's music is the multiplicity of simultaneous events and ideas in it. Ives's use of the materials of music is not the familiar or traditional, on the contrary, his mastery is quite imaginative and profound.

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[35] Ibid., p. 7.

CHAPTER III

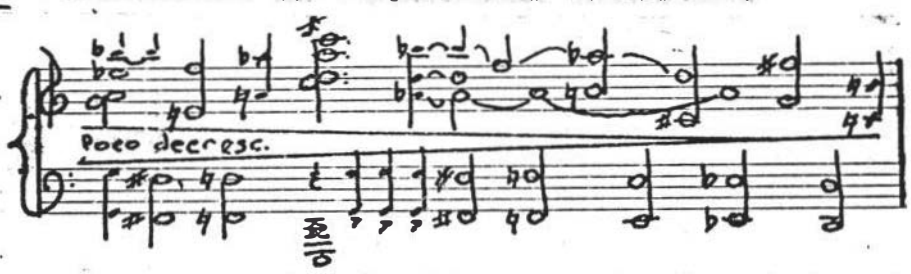
ELEMENTS OF IVES'S MUSICAL STYLE

In employing polyphony in his compositions he does not use the church modes or modal counterpoint, and canonic imitation is not frequently used. One exception to his is the third movement of his Fourth Symphony.

One means of using polyphony is voices answering each other with different forms of the same tune which seldom repeat exactly the same way. This repitition is usually sequencial and often with rhythmic variation. Example 1 illustrates a portion of such a section.[36]

Ives - Variation in sequential treatment

1



An extension of this idea can be found in the second movement of the Fourth Symphony, where there are twenty rhythmically independent parts, some single, others in block chords. The trombones are playing a melody based on Farmer in through Georgia, while the other parts are playing a short melodic phrase of their own over and over, combining different keys and rhythms to form a very complex polyphonic background.

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[36]Cowell, p. 150. (No measure number was given by Mr. Cowell for this example).

Ives makes use of all aspects of harmony in his compositions; consecutive extreme dissonances and old familiar chords as well as new sonorities, freely invented, are his tools. Ives was not concerned with resolving the dissonances and was very likely to leave one just hanging up in mid air. Once when Parker asked Ives to show him one of his manuscripts, Ives showed him a song called In Parting. In this song, there occurred one unresolved dissonance ending on a high E-flat in the key of G major. Parker said of this, "There's no excuse for that E-flat way up there stopping, and the nearest D natural way down two octaves." Ives told his father about this and the reply was,

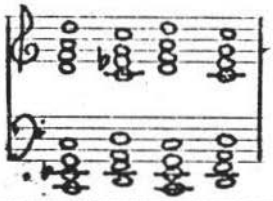
> Tell Parker that every dissonance doesn't have to resolve, if it doesn't happen to feel like it, any more than every horse should have its tail bobbed just because it's the prevailing fashion.[37]

The use of atonality is rare for Ives. He retains the feeling of key by keeping constantly before the listener the relation of each chromatic tone to its tonal center.

Bi-tonal chords are a favorite of Ives. He often piles up a certain interval to form his chord; seconds and thirds seem to be his favorite intervals.

Paracelsus - Bi-tonal chords.[38]

2



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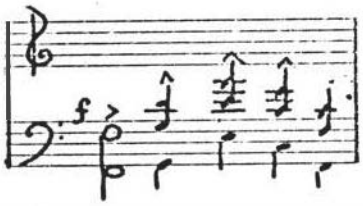
[37]Kirkpatrick, "Charles Edward Ives," p. 3.

[38]Cowell, p. 160 (No measure number was given by Mr. Cowell for this example).

One rule Ives sets for himself regarding harmony is that whatever type of organization he has chosen to begin with, he will remain constant to. For example, in the song Walt Whitman he has chosen parallel fifths and octaves, any other interval would violate his rule.

Walt Whitman - Intervallic Consistency[39]

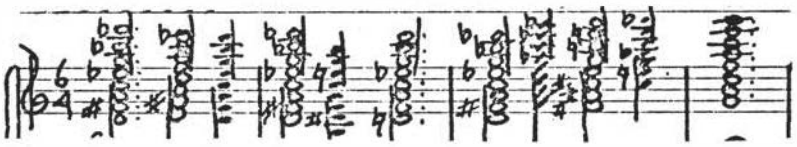
3



Another device for Ives's harmonic scheme is to use triads of different keys played simultaneously; polychordality.

Nearer My God to Thee - Polychordality[40]

4



Upon examining the melodies of Ives it is found that they are less unusual than what he does with them. He is fond of developing a melody in sonata fashion, that is, developing a short motif into a longer theme, and the theme into a longer melody. During this extension, he sometimes employs melodic inversion, retrograde, and inverted retrograde. He is also fond of rhythmic augmentation and diminution.

The begginning point of an Ives melody more than likely will be a quotation from some hymn, folk, or parlor tune. These quotations, many times obvious in origin,

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[39]Cowell, p. 161 (No measure number was given by Mr. Cowell for this example)

[40]Ibid., p. 351.

are almost never disclosed in the same form as in the original. Either the rhythm will be changed or in the middle of the tune he will take off into a new key.

Another device for creating a melody is to take a small section from the middle of a tune, perhaps only two or three notes.

To say that Ives' rhythm is complex is an understatement of gross proportions. The unique and unusual features of Ives' rhythms may be divided into several categories.

The first is concerned with metric patterns. Such patterns as 5/8, 10/8, 11/8, with irregular groupings within the measure, also patterns such as 5/4, 5/2, 7/2, 9/2, and some fractional beats such as $6\frac{1}{2}/2$ are not uncommon to Ives' music.

Another category of rhythm deals with unusual accentuation. For instance, he will divide an 8/16 measure into three plus five or into three plus three plus two which is a rumba rhythm. Incidentally, this particular rumba rhythm Ives used long before the dance was generally known in America.[41]

Another interesting device is his use of grouping. He makes little use of the normal two or three grouping so often found in late nineteenth-century music. He preferred to use groups of five, seven, nine, and sometimes more units and makes use of them rather regularly.

As example: 2/2  . This type of grouping usually starts on the beat; however, it may begin on an

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[41] Ibid., p. 167.

off-beat causing the group to end somewhere between beats. Some of his groupings deal with extended lengths, for instance, a triplet two measures in length in 4/4 meter. Further, Ives writes two, four, eight, or more notes across a 3/8 or 3/4 measure.

Still another device, which is an Ives original, is a series of successively shorter note values, such as  .

Finally, Ives sometimes leaves out meter signs of a metric organization as well as regular bar lines, and will place the latter (irregularly) only where he wishes an impression of a first beat.

Ives' whole approach to rhythm is to free the performer from the straight-jacket he has been wearing much too long.[42]

Physical realization in performance is less important to Ives as related to the thought that the idea can be seen and heard in the mind by a fellow score reader.[43]

Turning to Ives' use of form we discovered that he is concerned with not making the form used clear to the listener. He would rather create unity through such relationships of ideas, not by related motives or repeated ideas. Ives also would just as soon have the relationship remain in doubt and not be obvious. The following quotation points this out:

> Nature loves analogy and abhors repetition and explanation. Unity is too generally conceived of, or too easily accepted, as analogus to form and form as analogus to custom, and custom to habit.[44]

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[42] Ibid., p. 172.

[43] Ibid., p. 173.

[44] Charles Ives, Essays Before a Sonata (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1920), p. 22.

CHAPTER IV

TWO WORKS EXPLORED

Charles Ives' Symphony No. 4 was composed between the years of 1909 and 1916 and is assuredly one of his most prominent works. It combines elements from many of his earlier works, however, dates for some of these earlier works are not certain and Ives was often contradictory in his dates. Also, many of the earliest manuscripts are missing or lost.[45] Since the purpose here is not to trace the history but to analyze this work, further detailed discussion would be too time consuming, however, a summary of this background would be helpful. If more information is desired the preface to the symphony's manuscript, written by John Kirkpatrick, an Ives authority, and published by American Music Publishers, Inc. of New York will supply the reader with a very thorough knowledge of the history of Ives' Fourth Symphony.

A memo from Ives' autobiography of 1932 says:

> Fourth Symphony. This was strated with some of the Hawthorne movement of the second piano sonata around 1910-11... It was all finished around the end of 1916... Some things in it were from other things that I had been working on before or at that time... The second movement... is in some places an orchestration of the 'Celestial Railroad' idea from the second movement (which seems to me the best, compared with the other movements, or for that matter with any other thing I've done) was finished in the summer of 1915. The fugue was written just before the entire thing was finished in 1916, but the last movement covers a good many years.[46]

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[45] John Kirkpatrick, Manuscript, Fourth Symphony (New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc. 1965), p. vii.

[46] Ibid., p. vii.

In 1901 Ives wrote an organ piece entitled, Memorial Slow March based on Nearer, My God, to Thee, which is part of the thematic idea of the prelude. Later that same year he composed for soprano and organ a setting of Watchman, which is also found in the prelude.

As an example of Ives's contradiction in dating his works, a fugue was written in 1897 for Horatio Parker using as its subject From Greenland's Icy Mountains, and All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name as the countersubject. In 1909 the fugue was started into an orchestral version which Ives titled the First String Quartet.

The change in dates is typical of Ives since the quartet was later transferred to the symphony, and it was no longer a part of the quartet. "...its past history was nobody's business but its own," as he dated it by its finishing touches.

The four movements of Ives's Fourth Symphony bear the following designations:

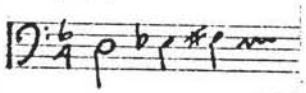
I. Prelude, Maestoso adagio
II. Allegretto
III. Fugue, Andante con moto
IV. Very Slowly, Largo maestoso

The work calls for a large orchestra that includes, in addition to the usual instrumentation; three saxophones, five keyboard instruments; solo piano, orchestral piano four hands, celesta, organ, and optional "Ether Organ," a large number of percussion instruments, a chorus of mixed voices, and a distant choir of five violins, viola, harp, and optional flute.

The first movement is scored for strings, percussion, mixed chorus, piano, celesta, and the "distant choir." The movement is essentially a setting of Watchman, Tell Us of the Night;[46] however, the piano and low strings begin the work with a rather energetic motif,

Fourth Symp., 1st Movt., Measure 1. Opening figure for String Bass.

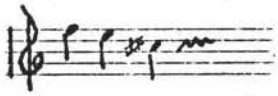
5



which is immediately inverted by the upper strings.

Fourth Symp., 1st Movt., Measure 2. Upper string inversion.

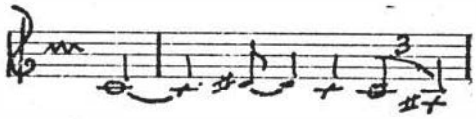
6



The upper strings then usher in the "distant choirs" statement of the last half of Nearer, My God to Thee.

Fourth Symp., 1st Movt., Measures 2 and 3. Flute and upper strings.

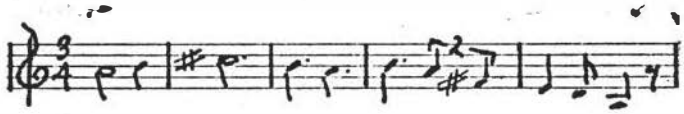
7



As the "distant choir" continues its statement at measure five, the first violin and solo cello begin their own statement of In the Sweet Bye and Bye.

Fourth Symp., 1st Movt., Measures 5-9. String melody.

8



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[46] Ibid., p. vii.

This continues with the piano's own non-committal rhythmic pattern:

Fourth Symp., 1st Movt., Measures 5 and 6. Piano rhythm.

9

until rehearsal number seventeen when the key of D is established by the entrance of the voices singing Watchman in the new key. To secure the feeling of tonality the timpani provides a D pedal point for fourteen measures. While the voices are singing, the "distant choir" continues its statement of Nearer, My God to Thee. Finally at measure twenty-seven there is a measure of rest for all parts. After two measures of strings and voices only, all the parts become active again, each with its own independent material. The movement is closed in this manner with each part fading away independently and the "distant choir" intoning the familiar Nearer, My God theme.

The metric scheme for the first movement is primarily duple-compound, making use of 6/4 and 6/8. At one point a measure of 9/8 appears only to be lost in the process of frequent meter changes. The meter is further complicated by the accenting of unusual beats and by the "distant choir" extending past the bar lines of the rest of the orchestra.

The rhythmic element is quite complex throughout an Ives composition and this first movement is no exception. Although, by comparison, it is not as difficult as either the second or fourth movements it certainly has its rhythmic problems. Triplets, dotted note patterns, and groupings of four against three, two against three, and the "distant choir" playing groups of five over the bar line against the rest of the orchestra rhythms -- all

these elements are common.

Melody plays a large part in the Prelude. The texture of the movement is polyphonic; however, one melodic line predominates.

After the first four measures the first violin and solo cello begin the statement of In the Sweet Bye and Bye. Above this is heard the Nearer, My God theme, repititiously played by the harp, however, it is scarcely audible.

That particular melodic idea is continued for twelve more measures. At this point the voices enter with the Watchman theme, and it is this melody that provides the melodic interest for the duration of the movement. It should not go unnoticed, however, that the harp is continuously providing the Nearer, My God motif above the voices Watchman.

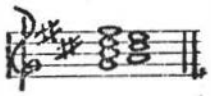
The sonorities involved are quite dissonant, thus creating much tension. These dissonances are not prepared, rather they seem to just happen. The first release of tension does not occur until four measures after the voices start with the Watchman theme. It is at this point that the first cadence appears, establishing the key of D. However, it should be pointed out that this cadence happens only in the voice part. The remaining instruments continue creating dissonant harmonies, immediately setting the next four measures of tension into action. It is then subdued once again by the point of cadence in the vocal line. This pattern of underlying tension, brought to rest only by the vocal line every four measures, continues until measure thirty-four in the score. At this point the tension is maintained until the movement comes to an end by

fading softly away.

However, Ives is not satisfied to end in peace in the key of D, as is illustrated by the orchestra's final chord.

Fourth Symp., 1st Movt., Measure 41. Final chord

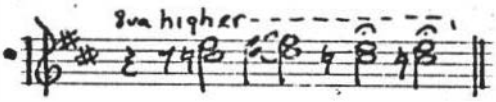
10



Thus he has the "distant choir" intone their "old favorite" Nearer, My God, to Thee.

Fourth Symp., 1st Movt., Measure 41. Distant choir motif.

11



The first movement is Prelude, just as Ives labeled it, divided into three sections consisting of four, twelve, and twenty-four measures.

Of the second movement, Kirkpatrick has written:

> The movement is not a scherzo in an accepted sense of word, but rather a comedy in the sense that Hawthorne's Celestial Railroad is a comedy... in which an exciting, easy, and worldly progress through life is contrasted with the trials of the Pilgrims in their journey through the swamps and rough country. The occasional slow episodes -- Pilgrims hymns -- are constantly crowded out and overwhelmed by the former. The dream, or fantasy, ends with an interruption of reality -- the Fourth of July in Concord -- brass bands, drum corps, etc.[47]

The second movement is scored for piccolo, flutes, clarinets, bassoons, orchestral piano: primo and secondo, cornets, trumpets in C, trombones, tuba, celesta, solo

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[47] Ibid., p. viii.

piano, strings, and percussion: triangle, high and low bells, timpani, indian drum, snare drum, bass drum, cymbal, and light and heavy gongs.

This movement is a huge conflict of moods ranging from a rather quiet, contemplative nature to that of loud, exuberant noise. Ives planned all of these conflicts with great detail except one: the chance conflict at measure forty-three of the score. It is here that a second conductor leads woodwinds, brasses, orchestral piano, solo piano, and timpani at an allegro (usually faster) tempo, fff, while the strings, the remaining instruments, and percussion continue to plod along in their adagio tempo, ppp, set earlier at measure thirty-eight. Soon a "break-down" occurs and the members of the fast group stop to wait for the slow group to catch up so they may join in again. They do so, at measure fifty-five, but attacking more violently than before.

As usual, Ives' thematic content consists of several familiar tunes milling around simultaneously or close together, with straight or distorted, loud or soft, high or low tones, most of which are unfamiliar to this writer. The texture of the entire movement is so complex however, that it is impossible through listening, to detect but a small portion of all the myriad things that happen in it. There are passages where literally every-body in this large orchestra plays his own independent material.

Ives' use of meter in the second movement covers the gamut. Duple, triple, compound, multimetric (frequent change of meter), polymetric, and fractional meters are used.

As example of polymetrics one need go no further than the opening chord of this movement. The bassoons are in 7/4 with the ♪ =70; the basses have no meter signature but their ♩ =80, and the rest of the orchestra is playing in 6/8 with the ♩. =50. The one use of fractional meter can be found five measures after number twenty-seven, page sixty-three, where at this point Ives uses a $4\frac{1}{2}/4$ meter change from 3/4. As to why Ives uses this meter signature instead of 9/8 (editors' choice), one cannot be sure. Perhaps "Rollo" would have preferred 9/8.[48]

Ives' use of tempo-changes as a structural device in the second movement is rather obvious. Ranging from a slow Largo to a rather quick Allegro there are no less than twenty-five changes in tempo. There are places where two different tempi are used simultaneously. Tempo, also, enters as a factor in the general mood, if one is to follow Ives programmatic statement of this movement. Or, as example, one may cite the slow sections refferring to the quite contemplative nature of man as opposed to the fast sections representing the noisy world closing in on man and shutting him off from the closeness of God.

The rhythmic aspect, as always, is quite prominent and very complex. Never allowing the rhythm to become fixed or rigid, Ives fills the page with dotted patterns, odd rhythmic groupings, and a variety of note values all of which lead to a rather unusual rhythmic mixture.

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[48]"Rollo" and Ives did not get along. "Rollo" symbolizes the social music enthusiasts.

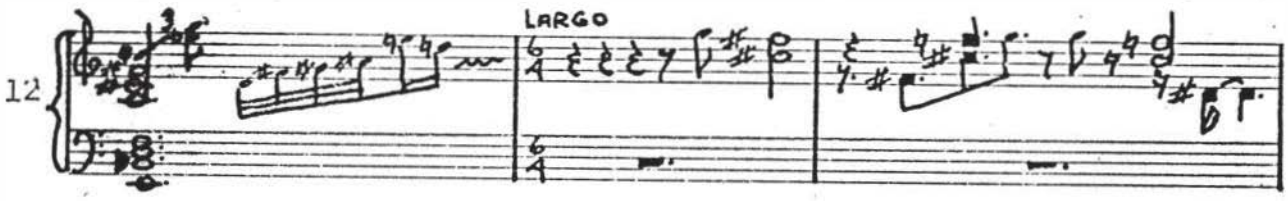
The use of melodic material in the second movement involves short fragments rather than a complete statements of old hymn or folk tunes. Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean, Marching Through Georgia, In the Sweet Bye and Bye, and the British Grenadiers are the only tunes stated in enough length so that one could readily recognize the melody, although there are many snatches of different tunes wandering in and out, either straight or distorted, throughout the entire movement.

In relationship to texture, the melodic fragments contribute to the density creating a greater difficulty of recognition than normal. It is not polyphony in the traditional meaning but polyphony in the Ives sense -- which only he really understands.

The harmonic elements in the second movement are as unconventional as every other aspect that Ives employs, and at times they appear almost subservient to the form of the movement.

As in the first movement, polychordal sounds reign supreme with quarter-tone and whole tone passages thrown in for good measure.

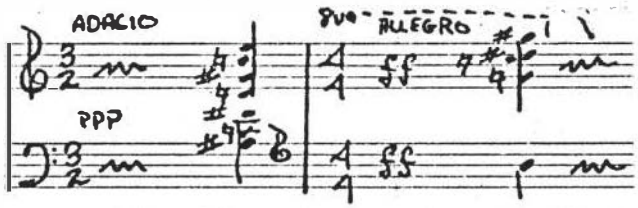
Fourth Symp., 2nd Movt., Measures 6 and 7. Piano polychords and quarter-tones.



The cadence structure is not reliant on a tonic-dominant relationship but rather a tension-release principle. This type of cadence occurs by two means; one dynamic, from soft to loud;

Fourth Symp., 2nd Movt., Measure 42 and 43. Piano cadence.

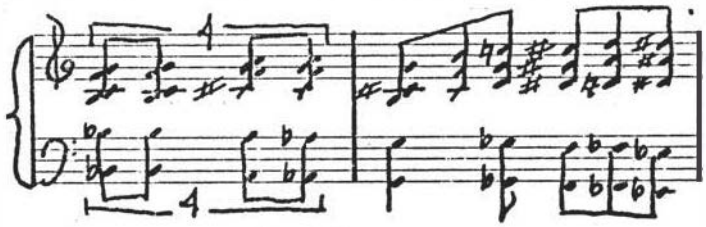
13



the other as a combination harmonic-rhythmic cadence.

Fourth Symp., 2nd Movt., Measure 260 and 261. Piano cadence.

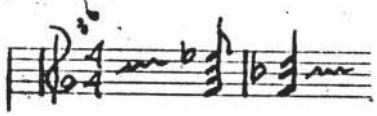
14



There does appear in the score one purely harmonic cadence for the entire orchestra along with several internal cadences usually found in the brass parts.

Fourth Symp., 2nd Movt., Measure 197 and 198. Cadence found in several parts.

15



In the second movement, the tonality Ives has chosen to make use of is extremely vague. The movement begins and ends with the same disregard for key. This vagueness is accomplished by an extreme use of dissonance, chromaticism, quarter-tones, and the avoidance of key feeling.

The only real sense of tonality occurs at measure 138 of the score, page seventy-one, where the dominant-tonic relationship is found F to B-flat (see example above). Also, the examination of the timpani part reveals that it

is providing an F2 to F3 octave pedal point throughout the entire second movement. The part strays only twice to a note other than F and that note is an E. Perhaps this provides the tonality that "Rollo" might miss.

The orchestral texture of the second movement is very thick. Ives, aware of this fact, and being very concerned with proper balance, went to great detail in marking every part exactly the way he wanted it to sound.

Ives' concern for proper balance is evident in the scale of importance he assigns for each instrument. The scale runs from A to F and the instruments assigned to their respective letters are:

A. Basses
B. Gongs, solo piano
C. High bells, bassoon
D. Orchestral piano primo
E. Celesta
F. Clarinets, violins I and II, orchestral piano secondo

No other movement is marked in such detail.

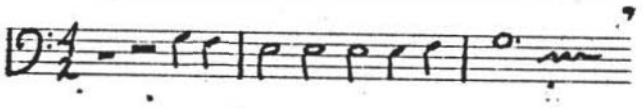
The form of the second movement is sectional and is derived from its programmatic aspects, that aspect being the questions of man as to the what and why of existence. Each section does not necessarily take on new material, but changes in dynamics and timbre. There are twenty-two sections representing man's effort to get close to God as the noisy world shuts him out each time. In addition to dynamics and orchestration, tempo also determines the beginning of each new section.

The third movement is scored for strings, flute, clarinet, horn, trombone, organ, and timpani. The instrumentation rests, however, upon the strings and the other instruments enter only when the music rises to dynamic climaxes. An interesting role is played by the organ. Its part enters rather dramatically at measure forty-six but only for one measure, falling silent again until measure eighty-four, where it takes up the role of doubling the other orchestral parts.

While the second movement is all turmoil and confusion, the third movement is its antithesis. The strict academic procedures of a fugue in C major, "... the reaction of life into formalism and ritual,"[49] is the second answer to the Prelude's question of what and why. Once again Ives turns to hymn tunes to provide the thematic material, this time choosing From Greenland's Icy Mountains (subject) and All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name (countersubject). The trombones make the last quotation as, five measures from the end, they super-impose a section from the carol Joy to the World.

Fourth Symp., 3rd Movt., Measures 116-118. Trombone melody.

16



The cello begins the fugue subject with the viola presenting the answer at measure four in the subdominant. Both parts then proceed to spin their way along until the

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[49] Ibid.

horn makes its entrance at measure nine once again in the tonic. At measure fourteen the first violins make their answer in the dominant followed by the first episode at measure nineteen. The episode lasts until measure twenty-seven, at which point the first violins once again take up the subject, but this time the countersubject is added in the horn.

Measure thirty-one provides a new episodic period as the viola begins with the subject and at the same time the countersubject is heard in the first violin section. The first half of the countersubject is then repeated until the grand cadence on the subdominat at measure forty-eight.

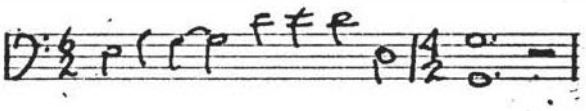
The episode is started again on the last beat of measure forty-eight (suggesting a developmental section to the fugue) and relentlessly forges ahead further and further away from the home key of C major. At measure ninety-nine a complete breakdown of tonality is expected, but at measure 102 unison horn and trombone, with great emphasis, force the tonality back to G at measure 104. Finally at measure 105 the tonic is heard.

Fourth Symp., 3rd Movt., Measure 99. Lack of tonality in organ part.

17

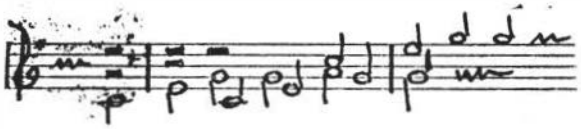
Fourth Symp., 3rd Movt., Measures 103 and 104. Return to tonality.

18



The last beat of measure begins the stretto Fourth Symp., 3rd Movt., Measures 106-108. Stretto in strings.

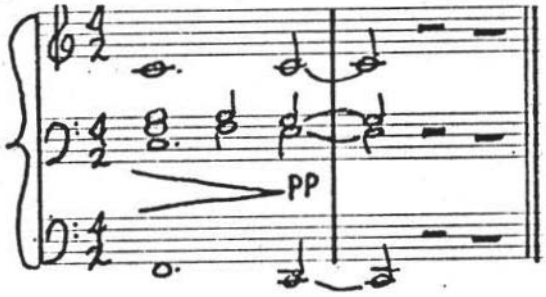
19



before the augmentation of the subject begins at measure 109. As the subject is drawing to a close the trombones rather energetically intone Joy to the World as the movement closes on a peaceful amen cadence.

Fourth Symp., 3rd Movt., Measures 120 and 121. Plagel cadence.

20



The meter chosen for the fugue is duple and stays quite metrically regular for the duration of the movement. Only on two occasions does Ives stray from the 4/2 meter. One change occurs at measure forty-six where a 5/4 meter appears for one measure, and the other occurs at measure 103 where one measure of 6/2 meter appears.

Ives chose Andante modorato for the tempo and it sets a rather stately mood. There are two changes in the tempo; maestoso and piu maestoso. Both changes are well placed in the movement as they happen at the beginning of the stretto and augmentation respectively.

In the previous movements the thythmic element was always complex. In the fugue, its existence is barely noticeable. It begins simply and remains so throughout the entire movement.

The melodic interest is in the fugue statement and answer. For this Ives chose From Greenland's Icy Mountains

and *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*. Ives' fugue presents the customary exposition and goes on to include such typical devices as stretto and augmentation.

The vertical structure is tertian. The chord progression emphasizes the tonic, subdominant, and dominant chords.

The tonality of the fugue is C major. Ives moves through the subdominant and then to the dominant until a deceptive cadence occurs at measure forty-eight. The composition then works its way back to the tonic which arrives at measure 105.

Two measures later the stretto begins in the tonic but lasts for only three measures. The augmentation then begins, in the tonic, and continues until the end of the composition, which closes with a plagel cadence.

The orchestration of the fugue, with horns and trombones often doubling the strings in statements of the subject, is hardly Baroque in effect, and the coloristic element is carried still further by the doubling of flutes with clarinets and organ with violas and double basses.

Dynamics are carefully chosen for this fugue with the level of sound mostly *piano*. It builds to a rather grand *fortissimo* at the deceptive cadence only to return again to *piano*. This does not last long, for only two measures of *piano* pass before it begins to build again. The dynamics continue to build to a *fortissimo* at measure ninety-eight and 104 at which time the tonic key appears. The dynamic level then diminishes until the conclusion, *pianissimo*, of the composition.

Of the fourth movement, Kirkpatrick says:

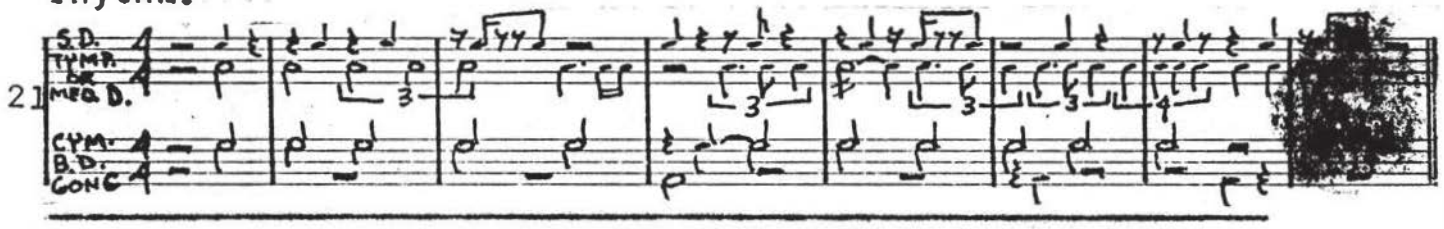
> As the eye, in looking at a view, may focus on the sky, clouds, or distant outlines, yet sense the color and form of the foreground, sense the distant outlines and color, so, in some similar way, can the listener choose to arrange in his mind the relation of the rhythmic, harmonic, and other material... The listener may choose which he wishes to hold in his mind as primal.[50]

The fourth movement, like the first, has a hymn tune as its predominant melodic ingredient, Nearer, My God to Thee. It also has a chorus to sing it, just as Watchman was sung. It, too, has a distant choir, less the viola and flute. However, the complexity or density of the fourth movement is far removed from that of the first. In fact, it is more closely related to the second movement.

The instrumentation for the last movement is gigantic in scope. In addition to the chorus and distant choir, there is a "battery unit" which consists of snare drum, timpani, cymbal, bass drum, and gong; and finally the main orchestra. All of these go their own independent ways.

The movement opens with the battery unit playing, very softly, an intricate rhythm in the tempo of a slow march.

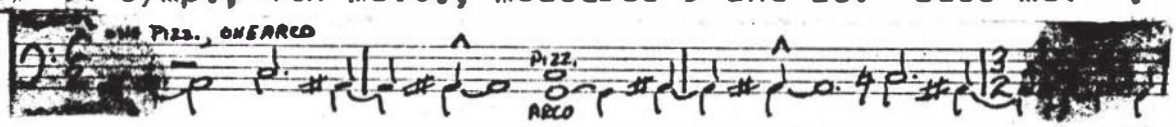
Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measures 1-8. Battery unit rhythm.



[50] Ibid., p. 13.

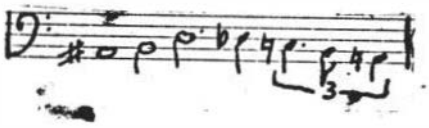
After eight measures the double basses enter with a strange sounding Nearer, My God, to Thee which leads into another link with the Prelude.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measures 9 and 10. Bass motive.

22 

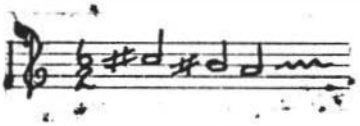
The link occurs when the basses are joined by the cellos and orchestral piano in the semitone-minor third opening of the first statement

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measure 13. Statement of first theme.

23 

and its immediate inversion by the upper strings.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measure 14. Inversion of first theme.

24 

Gradually the texture thickens; sonorities, rhythms, meters, and pitches grow until every instrument is on his own. However, the obvious contrasts that were as prevalent in the second movement are missing as this movement becomes an avalanche of glorious sound, filling the air with a mysterious Nearer, My God, to Thee.

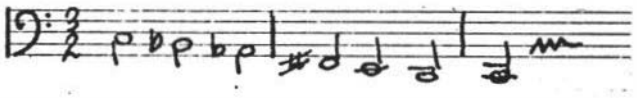
As the movement begins to fade out, the chorus softly sings the hymn tune while the instruments, one by one, fall silent. While the movement began with its lowest instrument, the double bass, it ends with the highest. The last tones are scored for the bells, celesta, and violin ending the composition without any sense of security. Perhaps man's questions are never answered.

The fourth movement, as will as the first and second, is filled with metric problems. Polymetric, duple, triple, compound, and fractional meters are employed with frequent changes; twenty-six time changes in ninety measures. Ives' usual device for obscuring the metric scheme are found; staggered bar lines, tying over bar lines, and consistently accenting unusual beats of the measure.

The prominence of the rhythmic element is quite obvious and the more complex, Ives feels, the better. It is by no means rigid except in one instance. The basses, at measure forty, begin an ostineto type pattern which persists until the end of the movement. With this one exception the rhythmic scheme is quite flexible.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measures 40-42. Ostinato pattern in string base.

25

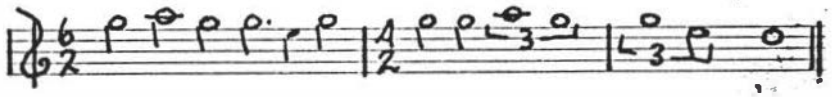


A variety of note values, triplets, dotted patterns, and odd rhythmic groupings all make their presence known throughout the duration of the last movement.

The hymn tune that Ives chose for this movement remains in short fragments for the largest part of this movement.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measures 24-26. Fragmented melody in flute.

26

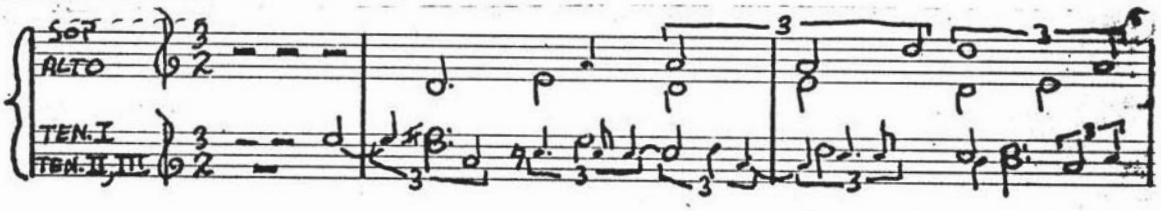


The melody is well hiddin under the maze of sound until measure seventy. The trumpets with soprano and alto voices take charge at this point, and the melody then remains prominent until the last note is sounded.

The brasses cease to take part in the movement at measure seventy-eitht, as a choir of soprano, alto, and tenor I, II, and III take up the melody at this point. The choir then proceeds to carry the melody, in an interesting polyphonic setting, to its end at measure eighty-eight.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measures 80-82. Choral polyphony.

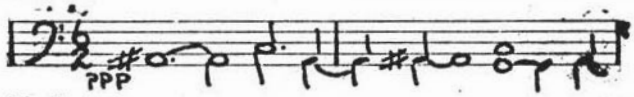
27



Ives's use of the hymn tune is rather interesting. Ives may well have borrowed a page from d'Indy and the Ishtar Variations. Using the whole step, minor third pattern from the hymn to unify the movement, and allowing the actual tune to be heard in its fullness only at the waning moments is quite interesting.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measures 1-2. Variation motif.

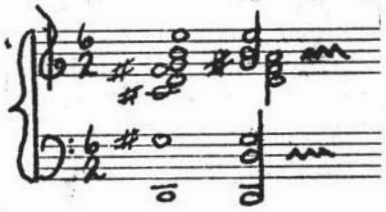
28



The harmonic elements of this movement appear to be a chance harmonic structure thrown together with no chord root in mind. Polychordal parallelism would do nicely as an explanation of what goes on in this fourth movement.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measure 24. Solo piano polychords.

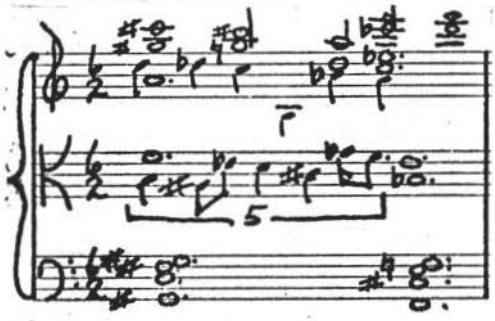
29



In creating tension for this fourth movement Ives makes use of many dissonances; both unprepared and unresolved.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measure 6. Dissonances unresolved.

30

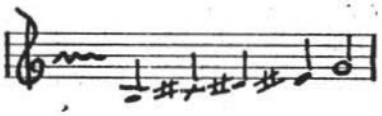


Tension for Ives is primal in this movement and it is not let down for one moment.

What effect does this vagueness of harmony and sureness of tension have on tonality? Very little, because there is not any feeling of tonality or key. Polytonality occupies the largest share of this movement. However, there are sections where a five tone whole-tone scale predominates.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measure 11. Violin III whole-tone scale.

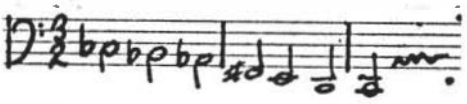
31



Also, at measure forty the basses begin an ostinato motion downward in a scale that is unconventionally divided which tentatively establishes a tonality.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measures 40-42. Ostinato in string bass.

32



They do not remain in the same scale long enough, however, to determine what tonality they are pointing towards.

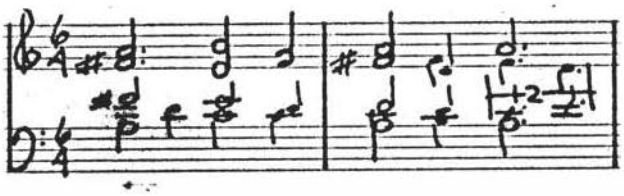
The texture of the fourth movement is quite thick. A hybrid combination of homophonic and polyphonic factors make for an interesting effect. There are times in this

movement when thirty-seven different parts are going on at the same time, while other times only a few parts are active.

At times homophony appeares to rule the movement, when the trumpets and voices are carrying the melodic material and the other parts merely provided the necessary chordal structure.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measures 72 and 73. Homophony in voice and trumpet.

33



This only lasts for a short period of time because the five part vocal choir presents their polyphonic setting of the hymn tune and the other parts seem unnecessary.

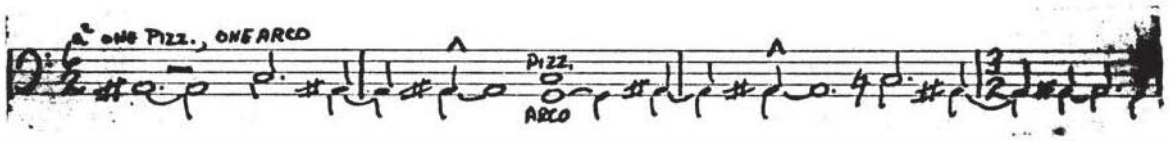
Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measures 78-80. Polyphony in voices.

34

All this shifting of parts leads into the question of form of the fourth movement. Although the form is not clear, it answers easily to the description of a theme and variations. The first variation is found at the opening statement of basses.

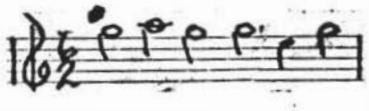
Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measures 1-4. Variation of hymn tune.

35



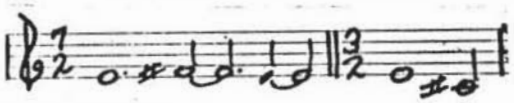
Each subsequent variation is tossed from instrument to instrument; either in a new rhythm

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measure 24. Variation on hymn tune in flute.

36 

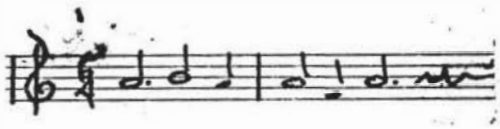
or starting on a new note.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measures 22 and 23. Variation on hymn tune in piano.

37 

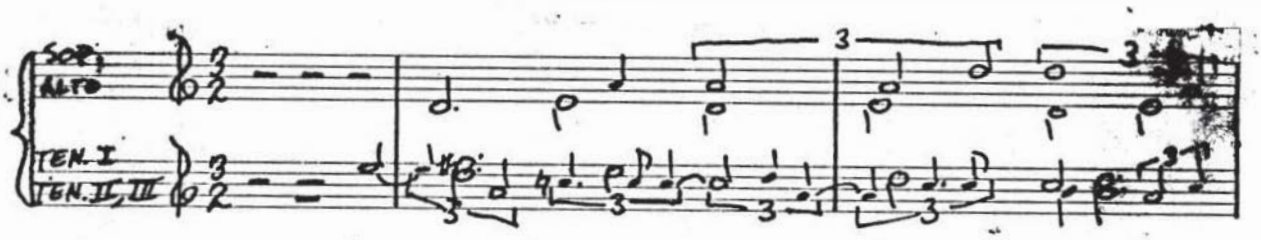
Finally, when the movement nears its completion the theme is heard in its entirety by the trumpets and voices.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measures 72 and 73. Variation on hymn tune in voice and trumpet.

38 

However, there is another variation yet to be heard, that of the five voice choir and with this variation the movement comes to an end.

Fourth Symp., 4th Movt., Measures 78-80. Variation on hymn tune in voices.

39 

Three Places in New England was composed between the years 1903 and 1914. Sometimes referred to as A New England Symphony, it is a prime example of Ives's rich, creative period. The symphony consists of three movements, each assigned a subtitle: "The St. Gaudens in Boston Common" (Col. Shaw and his Colored Regiment), "Putnam's Camp, Redding, Connecticut," and "The Housatonic at Stockbridge." With each movement there is also a programmatic element in that each has a story or poem.

The three movements have the following tempo indications:

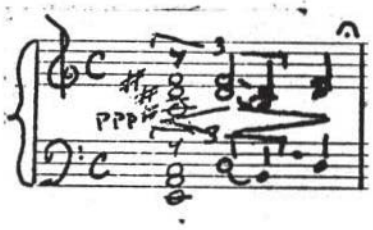
I. Very slowly
II. Allegro (Quick step time. About 126-♩)
III. Adagio molto (Very slowly. About 50-♩)

and is orchestrated for piccolo, flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bassoon, horns, trumpets, trombones, tuba, strings, percussion, piano, and organ ad lib.

The first movement begins very softly with the strings, piano, tympani, and flute.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 1. Opening chord.

40

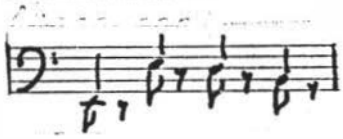


The interval of the minor third in the flute and piano is of importance for it becomes the interval used throughout the movement. The purpose for the minor third is that this interval is the starting interval for the two tunes that Ives has chosen for this movement: Marching Thru Georgia and "I'm Coming" from Old Black Joe.

This rather nostalgic mood set in the beginning remains prominent throughout with only a few brief interruptions: at measure thirty-five, the basses, cello, and piano begin a throbbing ostinato passage,

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 35. Ostinato

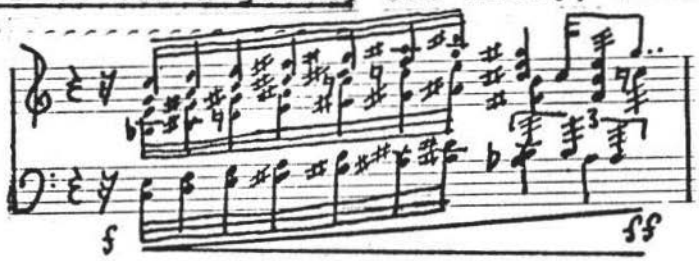
41



and at the climax to the movement which begins at measure sixty and ends at measure sixty-three.

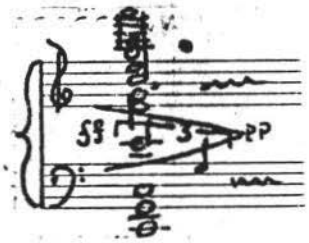
Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 60. Climax in strings.

42



Three Places in New England 1st Movt., Measure 63. Climax in strings.

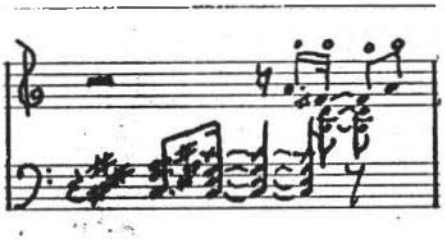
43



As the movement comes to a close with the strings on a IV-I cadence, the viola and piano superimpose the minor third interval above the cadence giving a mysterious air to the ending.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 83. Minor third interval.

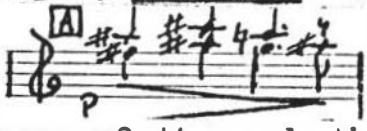
44



Tempo is a factor in setting the mood for the first movement. It is very slow and carries an air of the past. There are seven tempo changes but none allows the mood to really change.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 10. Viola. Tempo changes, piu moto (♩ =60-69)

45

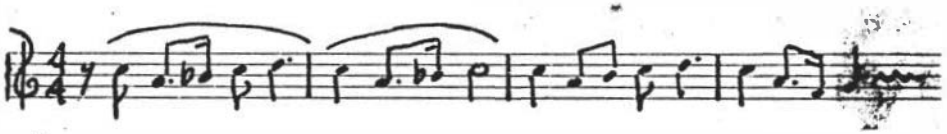


The prominence of the melodic element in the first movement is obvious in that it is never dropped or covered by the accompanying parts.

The general quality then would be a rather lyric presentation of the melody standing out above the accompaniment.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 66. Flute melody.

46



The scale basis for the melody when heard in a repititious, sequential manner so as not to lose the effect of the minor third interval.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measures 5-7. Repeated minor third.

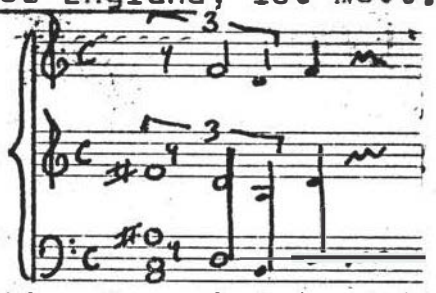
47

Although the sonority in the first movement is not as harsh as Ives sometimes uses, polyharmony still is the rule. The opening chord will serve as example of this; a D-sharp minor triad superimposed or an A-minor triad, with the flute and piano sounding a minor third on B and D

natural.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 1. Polyharmony.

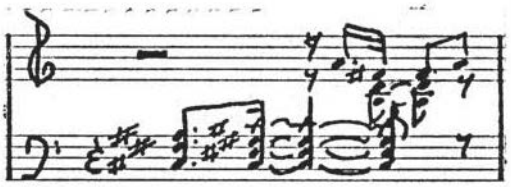
48



This style of writing is maintained throughout the first movement and ends with the same idea, a C-sharp major triad under a B-minor triad.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 83. Polyharmony

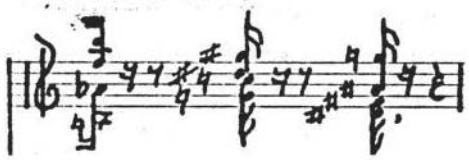
49



Many added tones as well as unprepared, unresolved dissonances are present.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 56. Dissonance.

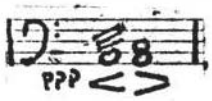
50



The tonality upon first look is dictated by the basses and tympani as they appear to point to A-minor.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 1. Tonality.

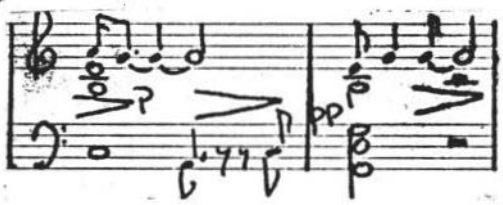
51



However, at measures twenty-one and twenty-two, there is a cadence in G major.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measures 21-22. Cadence (harmonic).

52



Only for that moment, however, does a G prevail; because a new tonality immediately begins.

It is not long, however, until A minor reappears (measure thirty-five) and remains in the timpani as a pedal point until the end of the movement. There the C sharp minor triad appears in a cadence and the tonality is no longer clear. This type of writing is the rule for Ives and not the exception.

The tonality is a purely Ives tonality, filled with chromaticism, extensive key changes, and a definitive absence of a clear tonal concept.

The texture for the most part is clear instead of the usual conglomerate of sound. The first movement is primarily homophonic in texture. Only at measure sixty-three, where the principal climax occurs, does the texture become dense.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 63. Dense texture.

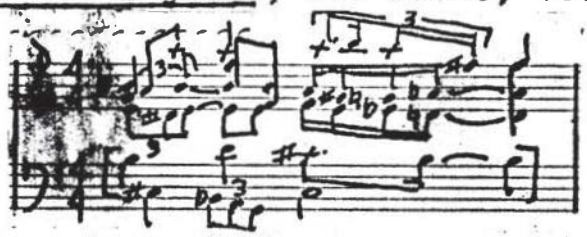
53

The rest of the movement is concerned with one or two instruments carrying the melody and the balance of the

orchestra providing the accompaniment.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 73. Homophony.

54

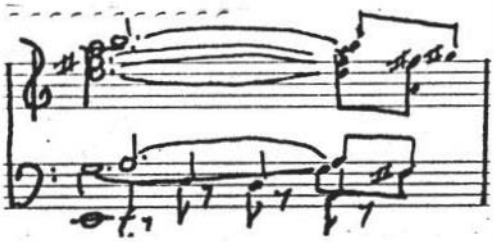


The form used, again typically Ivesian, is freely sectionalized based upon extra-musical ideas. There are five sections to the first movement, all based upon the same idea but varied to some degree. The first section deals intirely with the minor third motif and lasts for twenty-three measures. The motif is treated sequentially until the cadence occurs at measure twenty-two; two measures later, the second section begins.

The second section deals with the quote from Old Black Joe and lasts until measure thirty-five. Old Black Joe is still the concern of section three as a complete change of pace occurs.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 66. Pace change.

55

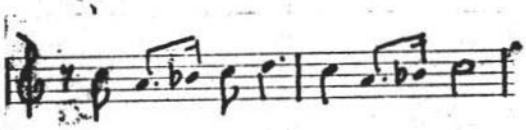


This section lasts until measure sixty-six and it is in this section that the grand climax happens at measure sixty-three.

As the fourth section begins, the plantive sound of the flute is heard playing the tune Marching Thru Georgia.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 66. Flute melody.

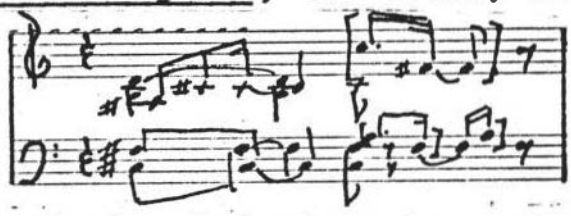
56



This section lasts for only ten measures. During this time, at measure seventy-three, the bassoons and cellos intone the Old Black Joe quotation, at which point the last section is ready to begin. This it does at measure seventy-six and like its opening, this last section concerns itself with the minor third even to the point of having this interval superimposed over the final chord.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 83. Minor third interval

57



The last section is loyal to the chosen interval, but with this one exception: a cello solo plays the mirror of Marching Thru Georgia at measure seventy-nine.

Three Places in New England, 1st Movt., Measure 79. Mirror of melody.

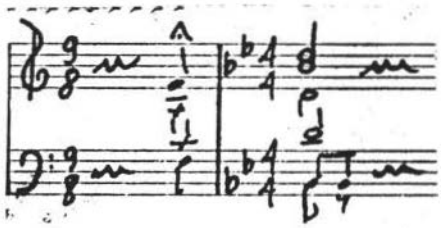
58

While the first movement is all serentiy and quietness, the second movement offers the antithesis. It begins chaotically and ends with as much, if not more confusion than it began with.

The first five measures are introductory material. Each instrument begins in its upper register at either forte or fortissimo and plays a downward scale passage for two measures. At the end of the fifth measure, there occurs a clear, precise cadence which sets the tonality in B flat.

Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measure 5-6. Tonality.

59

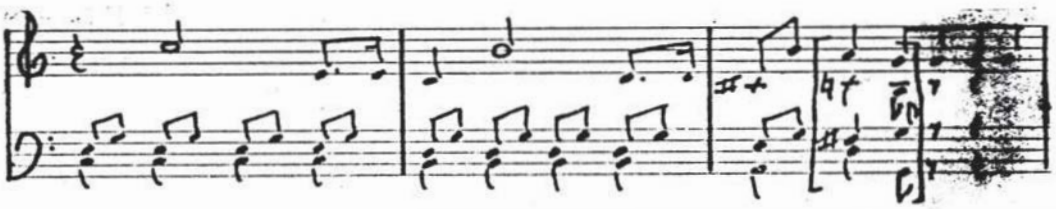


Measure six begins the first section with the strings quoting British Grenadiers and in a simple, straighrforward way. However, at measure twelve the atmosphere changes as every instrument begins to participate, each with its own melodic and rhythmic idea. The confusion continues until measure sixty-three, at which time the double basses slow the pace down markedly and close the section with a very soft, low open E; the relaxation, however, is short-lived.

Measure sixty-eight signals the start of more turmoil which builds in anxiety up to the ending chord. The brutal attack is relaxed only once, as the strings at measure 114 have a rather humorous little interlude, with a dominant-tonic cadence that at this stage is a little too obvious, if not out of place for an Ives composition.

Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measure 114. Harmonic cadence.

60

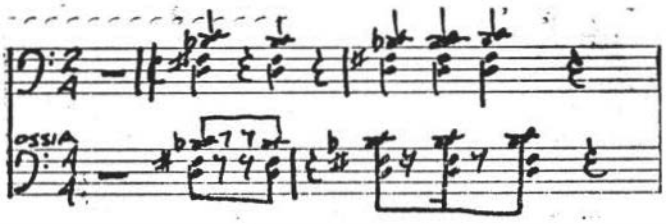


The moment of repose provided by the strings lasts for only a short time as the forces begin to regroup for their final splash of sound. It comes to an end with every instrument playing a ffff except the bassoon, which has a fff, and the piano, which plays a fffff.

As is usual with Ives, duple, triple, and compound meters find their way into his music. The second movement is no exception as there appears 4/4, 7/4, 3/4, and 9/8 meter. The second movement is not very multimetric and

when the changes do occur (the movement is basically in 4/4) they last for only one measure. The only example of polymeter appears in the percussion and piano, and Ives has provided an ossia part to lessen the difficulty. Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measure 68. Polymetrics.

61



Of course, this choice of polymeter and the omnipresent accenting of unusual beats of the measure is the typical Ives way to obscure the metric scheme.

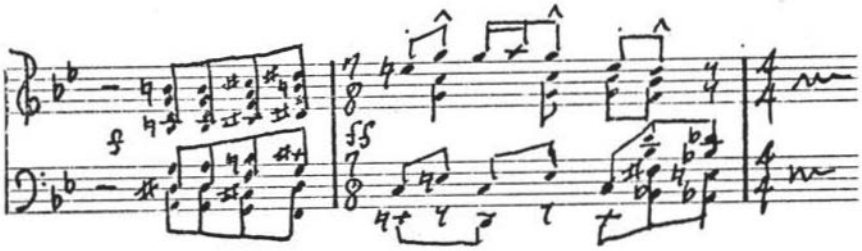
The choice of tempo, Allegro, for the second movement is wise if following the programmatic aspect of the movement. (The young boy, on the Fourth of July, goes to a pinic only to wander away from the crowd. Stopping to rest on a hillside, he falls asleep and dreams of soldiers marching up the side of the hill to a popular tune of the day. The little boy then awakes, and hearing the children's songs he races down the hill to join in the games and dances.) The Allegro tempo is replaced only once throughout the movement and this happens at measure sixty-five where Andante moderato is indicated. This lasts until measure ninety where, by slight increases, the tempo returns to Allegro moderato. The tempo is gradually increased until, at the concluding seven measures, "con fuoco (as fast as playable)" brings the movement to a climactic ending. Tempo is a factor in formal structure, but only to a slight degree because the programmatic ideas dictate the form of this movement.

Ives covers the area of rhythmic ideas in this movement as the rhythmic element remains prominent at all times. In general, the rhythm is complex, each measure being filled with dotted patterns, triplet figures, and unusual groupings as well as a great variety of note values.

There are three places in the score where Ives makes tasteful use of a rhythmic cadence, providing for much interest. One occurs at measures thirty-five and thirty-six in the strings,

Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measures 35-36. Rhythmic cadence.

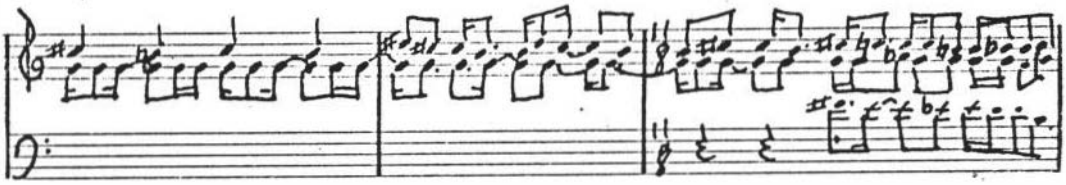
62



another at measures 124-125 in all instruments except the percussion and piano,

Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measures 124-125. Rhythmic cadence.

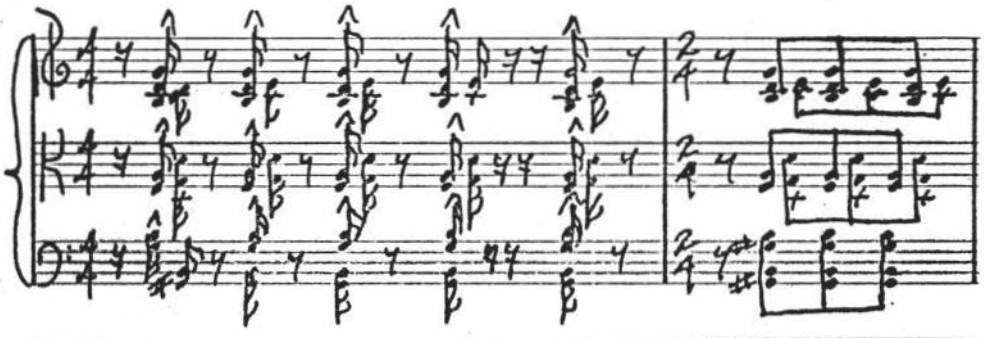
63



and finally at measures 141-143 in the brass section.

Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measures 141-143. Rhythmic cadence.

64



Each one of these cadences provides an interlude between sections.

Another interesting use of rhythm is found at measure sixty-eight, where the piano brutally pounds out its ostinato pattern against the rest of the orchestra.

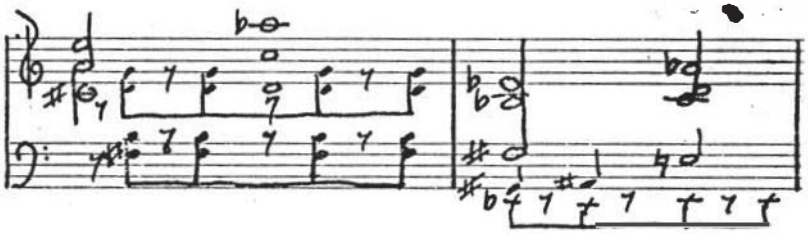
Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measure 68. Ostinato.

65

The rhythmic struggle between the orchestra and piano finally breaks apart at measure eighty-five and every part returns to its rhythmic compatibility which was shared earlier.

Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measure 85. Rhythmic cadence.

66



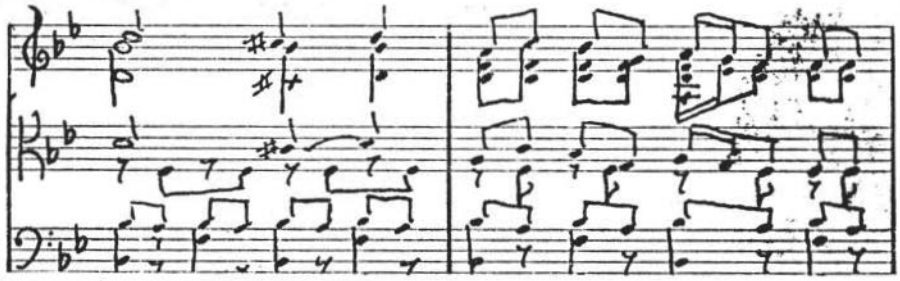
The above example is typical of the change of pace that Ives likes to make use of. This type of pace change happens four times during the span of the second movement.

The importance of the melodic element in the second movement is quite obvious. As in Ives' other compositions, the second movement is constructed from some quoted song, either folk, patriotic, hymn, or parlor tune. In this case, the movement is based upon the British Grenadiers, with brief quotations of other patriotic songs appearing only momentarily throughout the movement.

In relationship to the texture, the melodic idea has two roles; one is homophony which usually occurs during the moments when the orchestration is less dense:

Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measures 6 and 7. Homophony (strings).

67



the other is polyphony.

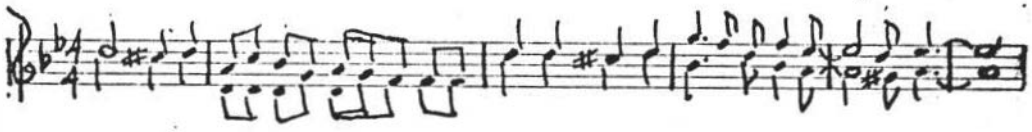
Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measures 14 and 15. Polyphony (strings and flute).

68

When the melody is clearly understandable the scale basis is major:

Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measures 6-11. Major scale in strings.

69



but overall the progression of the melodic material is chromatic. Modification, variation, and sequential treatment of the melody adds to this chromaticism.

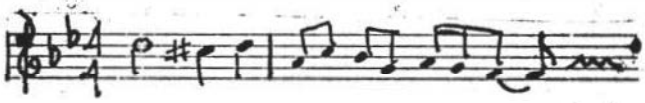
The melody is not developed in the true sense, but it is heard in different keys, in slight rhythmic variations perhaps, or may be played differently by two instruments simultaneously.

The chord structure is basically tertian with extreme use, as always, of inversions, alterations, omitted members, and polyharmony. The vertical sonorities rely upon root movement and sequence, starting in a diatonic manner and becoming progressively more chromatic until the final dash of chromaticism which ends the second movement.

Traditional harmonic cadences are rare in an Ives composition. When they are used they usually serve to release tension built from the constant use of extreme dissonances and not to satisfy the needs of tonality. However, in this second movement there are five harmonic cadences in addition to the rhythmic cadences discussed previously. Each time a harmonic cadence occurs it marks the beginning of new melodic material or a return to a quote of British Grenadiers.

Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measures 6 and 7. Melody introducing a new section.

70



Several times throughout the second movement a major tonality is recognized, but only briefly. As soon as one tonality becomes a reality, Ives immediately begins to stack chords of different roots, add chromaticism in different instruments, and sometimes changes the

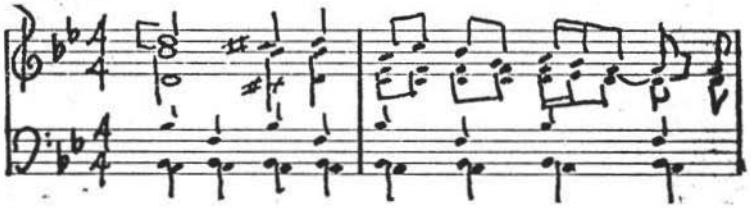
original melody to obscure the first tonality and move on to another, usually bitonal.

The absence then of a clear tonal concept, or feeling of key is absolute as it is in the greatest portion of Ives' music. The reason for this is his use of chromaticism, the harmonic dissonances, and the extensive, extended modulations.

The texture of this movement alternates between homophony and polyphony. In one instance there is a melody with a repeated chordal accompaniment,

Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measures 6 and 7. Homophony (strings).

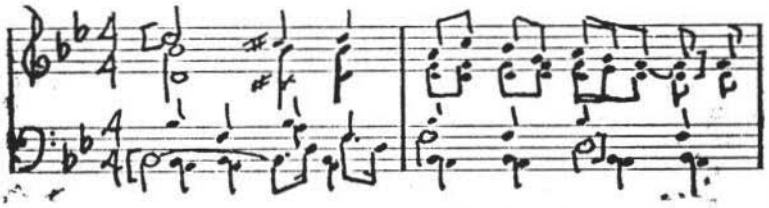
71



and in another two melodies with chordal accompaniment.

Three Places in New England, 2nd Movt., Measures 27 and 28. Polyphony (strings and tuba).

72



This type of alternation is constant during the span of the second movement.

The form of this movement is sectional, based upon extramusical considerations and coupled with a quasi theme and variation. There is an introduction consisting of five measures which cadences into the first section at letter 8 of the score. The tonality, except the opening of section one, which is a B-flat, never adheres to any one key. It is rather Ives' brand of "Near Tonality.[51] The first

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[51]Ives' brand of "Near Tonality" is his never adhering to one key but continually touching upon one key to mislead the listener.

section lasts until measure twenty-five where it cadences in G on the first half of beat one. The remains of twenty-five and measure twenty-six then introduce the second section at letter D, which has returned to B-flat. The second section is short as it lasts until measure thirty-six where the third section begins at letter E and lasts until measure sixty-three where the double basses close with a very soft low E-natural. Letter G at measure sixty-four, signals the beginning of the fourth section which is the longest of all, lasting until measure 126. The key signature has changed to no sharps or flats, but neither C major or A-minor is recognizable. At measure ninety-one after a change in the rhythmic pace the British Grenadiers is played by the flute. This sub-section lasts until measure 106. The instruments at this point are unleashed to go their own merry ways and do so until letter M. At this point, the violins begin very softly, the last sub-section. This little section grows in excitement until the rhythmic cadence at measure 125 sets up the next major section.

For the fifth major section the key signature is changed to A-flat, which is follow rather closely for Ives, especially in the double basses. Once again British Grenadiers is heard very prominently in several parts. As this section comes to a close at letter P, Ives' disregard for key signatures is evident as the fifth section cadences (V-I) in the key of F-major. Immediately following this harmonic cadence, the brass section begins

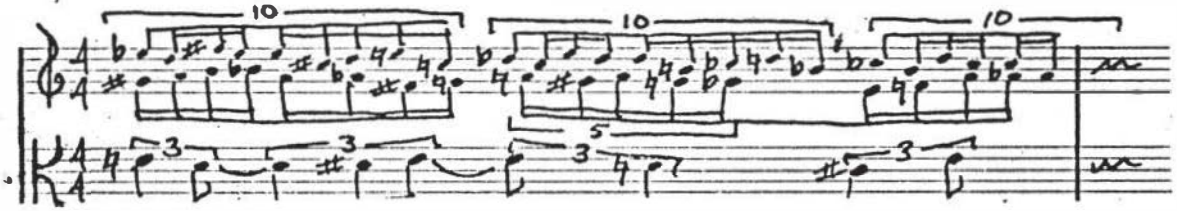
the devilish rhythmic cadonce introducing the last major section.

Distorted quotations make up this section until letter T at which time any resemblance of melody is totally lost. All barriers of rhythm and dynamics are let down for one final barrage of sound as the movement comes to its end.

The third movement begins with the strings playing very softly, (p-pppp) and very slowly, Adagio molto, a lulling rhythmic introduction.

Three Places in New England, 3rd Movt., Measure 1. Rhythmic introduction.

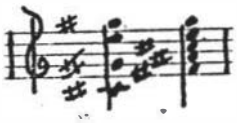
73



This atmosphere remains prominent as an accompaniment figure for almost the entire movement. At measure thirty-three there is a crescendo, however, that builds during the last nine measures to a ffff in all parts. While part of the orchestra is holding the last chord, the second and fourth violins, second viola, cello, and double basses enter at ppp. As the orchestra stops sounding their last chord, the quartet of strings is heard, very softly, playing their last chord and the last chord of the movement and composition.

Three Places in New England, 3rd Movt., Measure 44. Strings last chord.

74

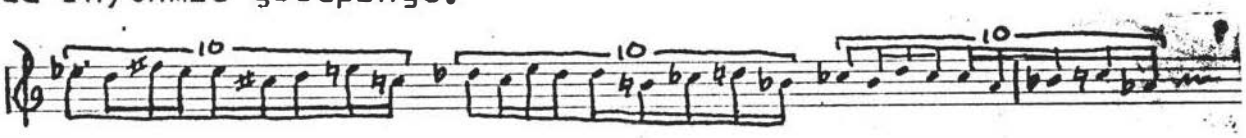


Unlike all the other movements analyzed, this movement has only one meter signature, which is 4/4. It persists throughout the movement with one exception: one measure of 5/4, occurring at measure nineteen. There is no use of polymetrics or multimetrics to obscure the metric scheme and all the bar lines are synchronized as well.

There is little syncopation, nor is there the frequent use of varied note values usually found in an Ives composition.

The means by which the metric scheme is obscured is the odd rhythmic groupings found mostly in the strings, and in this respect the rhythm is complex.

Three Places in New England, 3rd Movt., Measure 1.
Odd rhythmic groupings.



The tempo is quite slow, Adagio molto ♩=50, and helps to create a rather mystic, undulating atmosphere throughout the movement; except for the last nine measures. The tempo begins to speed up at this point, and at measure thirty-nine there is an Allegro con brio indication which lasts until the penultimate measure. The strings at this point sound what will be the final two chords in the original Adagio molto tempo.

The melody chosen is one of those very lyric, cantabile hymn tunes which first appears alternating between the French horn and the English horn. The melody begins on the last eight beat in measure six in the French

horn part and at measure nine on beat four the English horn takes up the last half of the melody.

Three Places in New England, 3rd Movt., Measures 6-10. Melody

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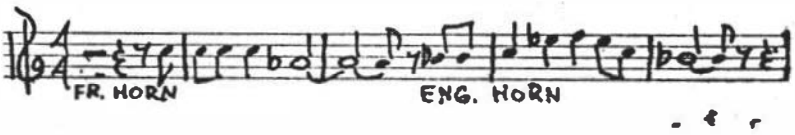
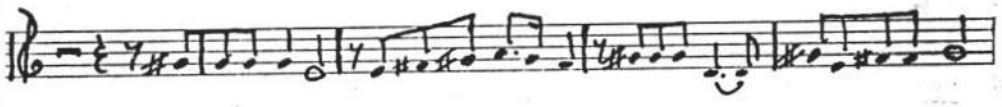


This is done in a very haunting manner as the strings ebb and flow in accompaniment of the melody. The melody remains quite prominent until measure nineteen at which time it is lost during an interlude that is very garbled. At measure twenty-two the melody is once again stated but this time by the violins.

Three Places in New England, 3rd Movt., Measures 22-26. Melody.

77



The wind instruments at this point pick up the undulating accompaniment. This idea is followed through until measure thirty-one at which point another interlude begins.

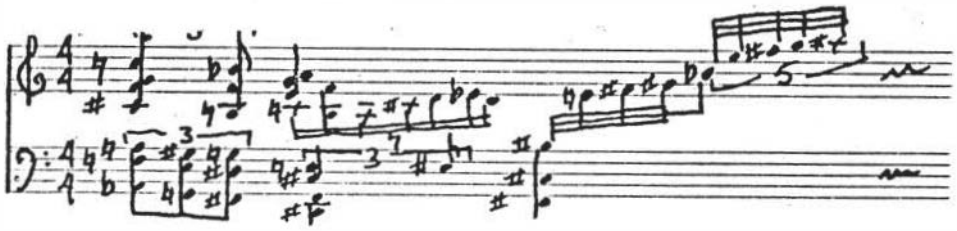
The trumpet begins to play bits of the melody until finally at measure thirty-nine the hymn tune is heard distinctively above the rest of the orchestra, which by this time is at the fff level.

The melody has a major scale basis and diatonic in nature. It is, of course, used in a repetitious manner and never devloped.

The type of harmony used in the third movement is reminiscent of that of the late nineteenth-century French Impressionists.

Three Places in New England, 3rd Movt., Measure 39. Piano, chromaticism and root progression.

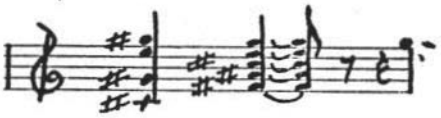
78



The only time a cadence occurs is at the very last chord,

Three Places in New England, 3rd Movt., Measure 44. Harmonic cadence.

79



and there it is left unresolved. The treatment of dissonance is through non-chord tones and the absence of preparation.

This movement is one of the finest example of Ives' approach to atonality. Perhaps the best way to describe his approach is that he made tonality more fluid, that is to say, while still observing a tonal center, he combined a free use of all the twelve notes of the chromatic scale. In this particular instance, the tonality would appear to be C-sharp. The reason for this is that the double basses and organ pedal sustains a C-sharp for practically the entire movement. To further augment this, at measure thirty-one the timpani begins a roll on C-sharp which lasts until the penultimate measure where the full orchestra stops playing.

The texture of this last movement is homophonic in nature throughout with the exception of the last nine measures. The haunting melody is heard distinctively above the maze of chromaticism in the accompanying parts. Unlike the other movements, it does not become cloudy and filled with myriad events, but remains clear with only minor exceptions.

The form is freely based upon extra-musical considerations and the theme and variation form. There is an introduction followed by four sections, each divided by a short interlude. The first section begins at measure six and fades into the first interlude at measure fifteen. Section two begins at measure seventeen and once move the melody is heard clearly and then fades into the second interlude at measure twenty-one. The violins begin section three at measure twenty-three as they intone the haunting melody. After another two measure interlude the fourth section begins at measure thirty-six where the trumpets take their turn at the melody. They carry the movement to its close at measure forty-two with the exception of the final cadence by the strings.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the writer will view the two symphonies as whole units, disucssing their place, as well as that of Charles Ives, in musical history.

Neither work was conceived as a coherent whole: each of the movements has its own history. Each began as something else. With this consideration in mind there is an enigma as to why Ives tried to make it appear as though they were the outgrowth of one programmatic aspect. In fact, this programmatic aspect seems to be the result of an afterthought. The programs have very little, if any, relevance to the symphonies as musical compositions.

Ives was not a symphonist because of the fact that each movement is essentially an individual piece. This factor does, however, create an interesting point. These symphonies are not then a climax to a composer's life but rather a collection of his efforts throughout his maturity as a composer, which he then selected and revised and placed them in the best possible form.

Neither symphony sheds any new light on Ives but reiterates what he had tried to do from the beginning, mixing incompatibles with great pleasure just to witness the outcome. Ives is a composer whose music is filled with contradictory styles and attitudes. This all adds to the improbability of knowing for certain what he or his music really stood for.

To bring more light to this area, one must take into consideration the fact that Ives is reluctant to work with original material. In the entire two symphonies there are

no original themes. With few exceptions, all prominent melodic material comes from borrowed familiar tunes. This seems a rather impersonal view for a composer.

Why did Ives choose familiar folk and hymn tunes to create his music? Perhaps it is part of his delight in mixing incompatibles, or it may be an expression of his transcendentalistic philosophy. These, however, are extramusical. It could well be that Ives felt that it was much easier to follow a familiar tune through the intricate musical structure of his works and therefore allow the listener to concentrate more deeply on the melodic element being twisted and distorted. In some respects, perhaps this is what Ives meant when he said that he was not concerned with "something that happens, but the way something happens."

As for the tunes themselves, they seem to have no apparent relevance to the works, nor do they have any relationship to each other. They seem to have been chosen as to their relationship to Ives' personal life -- his favorite tunes so to speak. At any rate it appears that any other tune would have done just as well.

If all that is required to create a work of art is to write many disparate things at the same time, Ives' position as a composer is lowered, but it does not make a difference if a listener knows how many tunes were used in both symphonies and what their titles are.

The harmonies in both symphonies are non-functional (except the third movement of the Fourth Symphony), nor is their progression controlled. There are moments of polytonality and bitonality, but they really seem to be a by-product of separate horizontal lines which create a barrage of unprepared, unresolved dissonances.

The most interesting aspect of Ives' music is found in the interplay of the many independent rhythmic and metric happenings. These are original thematic ideas and are planned very carefully by Ives. They are quite exciting and carefully controlled as to when they should happen. However, for the most part these interactions are lost in the maze of sound and cannot be truly appreciated.

At any rate, Ives all by himself developed new concepts and techniques in composition. Long before his music was known, some of his ideas appeared in Europe, especially the bitonality and atonality which Schoenberg was to develop so highly. There are other techniques, too, for example the polymetrics and metric modulation that must have been influential to men like Sessions and Carter. He foreshadowed Ruggles with his dissonances and tone clusters as well. But it is these chordal and structural concepts that make a place in history for Charles Ives and not the music itself.

The Fourth Symphony and Three Places in New England represent seven singular historical examples. It should not be denied that both are rather fascinating works of art and make tremendous impact upon the listener. However, in the final analysis, the many contradictions in style and artistry result in the writer being not able to accept these works as genuine pieces of first-rate craftsmanship.

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