# THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

## *The Thematic Use of Childhood in the Songs of Charles Ives*

ANDREW S. CHILDS

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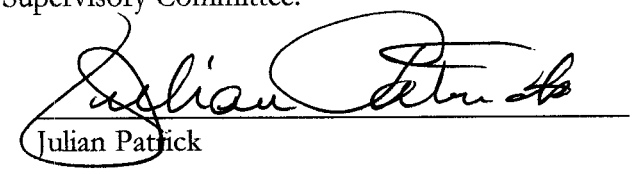

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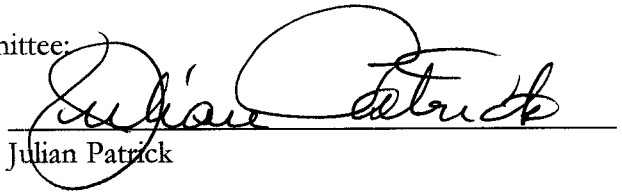

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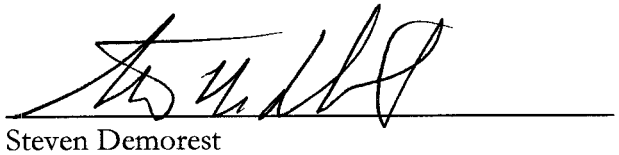

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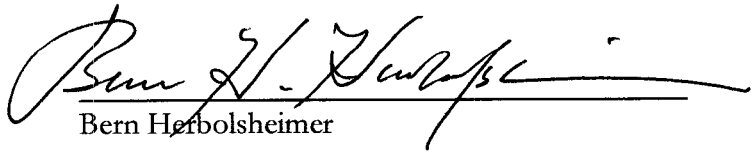

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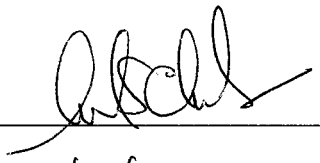
Signature 

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Abstract

**THE CHILDREN'S HOUR**
***The Thematic Use of Childhood in the Songs of Charles Ives***

ANDREW S. CHILDS

Chairman of the Supervisory Committee:

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This analytical study considers a group of songs by the American composer Charles Ives in terms of a thematic unity, childhood, and examines their unified variety through the prism of philosophical and societal dynamisms that shaped their singular author. Though not Ives's defining or most challenging works, these twenty-one songs of children and childhood nonetheless comprise some of his truest, concisely representing the convergence of his musical and philosophical influences. Protestantism, modernism, Americanism, and transcendental humanism form Ives's philosophical bedrock, and success in understanding his thinking lies in taking for granted the dialectic interconnectedness of these four tectonic ideologies as Ives did, not in critiquing his often polemical written expressions of any one of them. The present study endeavors to explain this interconnectedness related to the songs in question first as a means to understanding his compositional amalgam of styles as a unified whole, and second as a

way of explaining the primary and seemingly contradictory dualisms that defined Ives's career and life: tradition and progress, substance and manner related to musical content and form, cultivated and vernacular musical style. Considered here, these songs belong to one of three groups distinguished by narrative perspective, that of the child, that of the parent, and that of the sentient being—sons and daughters of our country and children of God. Most listeners identify on a very personal level with all three of these groups, though not necessarily through direct experience, and Ives explored this intimate universality with unique, metaphysical veracity. Chapter one briefly reviews the biographical facts of Ives's childhood and adolescence, specifically noting the sources, nature, and historical development of his foundational ideologies; chapter two considers the songs by children; chapter three, the songs by parents; chapter four, the songs by the sentient being.

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## ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

First, I offer simple respects. Charles Ives maintained near-total editorial control over his works and their dissemination as the result of his avoiding a career in music, choosing to release them when he would, in whatever form he pleased. Though his work has universal applicability perhaps now more than ever, he wrote music of such specialty that he succeeded in choosing his scholars, few of whom would put this past him as a conscious albeit future act. "Rollos" (a favorite Ives term of derision for the musical establishment elite) need not apply, nor those who seek their own glory. The relatively modest body of scholarship has an intimidating quality reminiscent of its subject and any who write on Ives owe much to Hitchcock, Rossiter, the Cowells, Burkholder, Swafford, Feder, and Sinclair. I gladly defer to these and all the company of Ives scholars whose work helped make this shadow of a study possible.

To my family who inhabit many of these pages, thanks and apologies. As I recognized many of my less attractive qualities in the subject matter and during research, I gained an appreciation for what they endured through the years. I extend sincerest thanks and appreciation to my committee Bern Herbolsheimer, Steven Demorest and Tanya Eadie for their close and patient reading; to Larry Starr, who inspired this topic in 1994; to Ken Crilly at the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library at Yale University for tolerating me when he could have helped real scholars. Thanks to the University of Washington for its Job-like patience with one of its prodigals and willingness to revive my long-dormant candidacy. Sincerest thanks to my friends and colleagues in Springfield whose support proved inspirational; most especially to the "Intrepid Band" who quite literally sustained me throughout the process.

To my sister-in-law Kelly, my eternal respect and gratitude: a former editor for the Naval Institute Press, her constitutional inability to let the smallest detail go unchecked—and subtle firmness in reminding me of the needed checking—made what follows infinitely more readable.

Gratitude seems not large enough a concept regarding these final two, to whom my debt is incalculable. To Julian Patrick I owe my artistic self. Anything I possess in terms of artistry or musical passion merely echoes his and faintly. To Karen, likely always in possession of some better part of me, to paraphrase Ives, I cannot put down here what she has done for me—she wouldn't let me. Only she truly knows how much this journey cost: let the world know I could not have completed it without her.

†AMDG†

# INTRODUCTION

Charles Ives relied heavily on recurring themes in his music, as do nearly all composers, yet his compositional genius defies nearly all other comparison. Often described as innovative and groundbreaking, Ives inhabits an American artistic cul-de-sac, neither purposefully alienating nor predictably derivative, but certainly alone.[1] Far from iconoclasm, however, Ives exhibited a determination in his musical development to enhance the understanding of the themes and sentiments he explored, and his technical innovations reflect a uniquely constructive musical ideal, one based on functional novelty, not an indiscriminate abandonment of recognizable form.[2] An intense realism shaped his musical expression, and he routinely abandoned conventional compositional procedures in order to depict the human condition honestly.

Some of the most compelling Ives scholarship and strident Ives criticism focuses on non-musical influences, much in the way he insisted upon finding an efficiency of expression made possible only by seeing composition in a new light, one cast not by a moribund stylistic tradition (itself non-musical in his opinion), but by life itself. Notwithstanding his often unconventional renderings, Ives portrayed and evoked common emotional states with compelling precision, and those who analyze him most successfully discover that this accuracy results directly from his willingness to wander outside musical convention and into the sphere of ideas. Ives created through his art a heightened, more acutely focused experience by abandoning pretense and mannerism for

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[1] See Rossiter, xii-xiii concerning Ives's artistic isolation.
[2] Swafford (90) argues for an Ives family iconoclasm, though in context he describes Ives's originality rather than any need for the active destruction of tradition for what it represents.

comfort and practicality. "The 'unity of dress' for a man at a ball," he wrote, "requires a collar, yet he could dance better without it."[3] He saw unity too often wrongly confused with static conformity, a process of decay "analogous to form; and form as analogous to custom; and custom to habit."[4] Ives possessed an idea of unity big enough to embrace contradictions, integrating no hostility to form, or custom, or even to habit. He exalted these traditional conventions, not for their formal associations, but because they appeal to the hearts and minds of men. He revealed his true concept of unity in the transcendent musical celebration of day-to-day existence, echoing Emerson's words: "Herein is especially apprehended the unity of Nature—the unity in variety—which meets us everywhere . . . . A leaf, a drop, a crystal, a moment of time, is related to the whole, and partakes of the perfection of the whole."[5]

This analytical study, admittedly sympathetic, considers a group of Ives's songs in terms of a thematic unity, childhood, and examines their unified variety through the prism of philosophical and societal dynamisms that shaped their singular author. Striving continually for more vitality, he moved beyond successful technical construction and meaningful elaboration of text, reaching into the realm of animation: Ives's songs do not merely portray things, or places, or people; they evoke palpable realities, locales, and specific characters. Considering Ives's use of recollection in a novel way proves crucial. He used memory as a circular device, a denial of the finite nature of emotional experience. At times, he sacrificed specificity or even accuracy in order to achieve universal applicability. Though not Ives's defining or most challenging compositions,

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[3] *Essays*, 98.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Emerson, "Nature," *Writings*, 22.

these twenty-one songs of children and childhood, nonetheless, contain some of his truest work, as they concisely represent the convergence of his musical and philosophical influences. Protestantism, modernism, Americanism, and transcendental humanism form Ives's philosophical bedrock; and success in understanding his thinking lies in accepting—as Ives did—the complex dialectic interconnectedness of these four tectonic ideologies, not in critiquing his often polemical written expressions of any one of them. The present study endeavors to explain this interconnectedness related to the songs in question, first as a means to understanding his compositional amalgam of styles as a unified whole and, second, as a way of explaining the primary and seemingly contradictory dualisms that defined Ives's career and life: tradition and progress, substance and manner related to musical content and form, concrete and abstract thought and music, cultivated and vernacular styles.[6] Considered here, these songs belong to one of three groups distinguished by narrative perspective: that of the child, that of the parent, and that of the sentient being—sons and daughters of our country and children of God. Most listeners identify on a very personal level with all three of these groups, and Ives explored this intimate sense of shared experience with unique veracity. Chapter one briefly reviews the biographical facts of Ives's childhood and adolescence, noting the sources, nature, and historical development of his foundational ideologies. Chapter two considers the songs by children, chapter three the songs by parents, and chapter four, the songs by the sentient being.

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[6] Rossiter (24) cites Hitchcock in *Music in the United States* as the source of the "cultivated" vs. "vernacular" nomenclature. This frames in the least dissatisfying way a conflict marked primarily by ambiguity. Ives embodies a most wonderful example of how vague a line exists between the two.

The first group, considered here in chapter two, includes eight songs by children. When he wrote from the perspective of a child, he resisted the adult inclination toward tidiness; when he wrote from the perspective of an adult, he maintained a rare retrospective honesty. "Slow March" was written by Ives at twelve (or thirteen) years of age.[7] Free of adult sentimentality, its solemnity befits a funeral, and, based on musical borrowing, it presents a foretaste of the mature Ives. Quintessential among this group in terms of perspective, "The Greatest Man" depicts a young narrator who lists his father ahead of "heroes and men who had done great things" in a school oration. The earnest quotation at the end of "The Cage" and its uniform style suggest a fascinating childish consideration of the seminal philosophical question, "What is life?" "The Circus Band," a true childhood epic, relives a foundational boyhood experience by way of an excitable and wonderfully imprecise recollection. "Memories," a double-song of past and present in which two songs function as one, separated by perspective and time, demonstrates the natural bond of shared experience. Both "The Old Mother," an adult's song of gratitude and devotion, and "Songs My Mother Taught Me," a poignant reflection on a departed parent, provide rare glimpses into Ives's relationship with his mother about whom we know nearly nothing else. In "Remembrance," a single page expressing one of Ives's profoundest tributes, a grown child recalls his father's song inspired by "the sound of a distant horn."

Ives wrote eight songs by parents, discussed here in chapter three. The artistic father of a large, diverse compositional brood and a human father under difficult

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[7] The Ives chronology goose-chase begins fittingly with his first song. Sinclair (496) writes: "Composed possibly in summer 1887. An annotation in the source [a pencil sketch]: "About in summer of '87 or '88." Debates still rage concerning the veracity of Ives's dating and its implications. Though not foundational in this study, no writing on Ives avoids the issue completely.

circumstances, he came palpably close to animation in these songs that are at times unbearably poignant. He exhibited a consistent and fervent parental sentiment even in the earliest of these songs, written well before his marriage. The three lullabies, "Cradle Song," "Scotch Lullaby," and "Berceuse," comfort both parent and child. Lilting and soft, the music reassures the child; serene and simple, the text soothes the parent. A simple evening routine initiated by three young girls in "The Childrens' Hour" reveals their characters and their father's affection. "To Edith" conveys a father's touching tribute to his daughter, a pure statement of parental love and thanksgiving through blessing. Ives composed "Immortality" as his own daughter Edith lay sick, and with it he forcefully rejected death as the cessation of existence: a child, a flower, or a season never dies that lives on in memory. Compared to bright, beautiful flowers (and said to be rarest and loveliest of them all), Ives's daughter Edith and a young playmate come to life in "Two Little Flowers." "The Last Reader" presents the metaphors of songs as poems and poems as children. The author of the text, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., compares the relationship of a father to his children with the artist as father of his works, his "own sweet songs."

The final five songs, considered as a group in chapter four, suggest most strongly Ives's philosophical affinities and social attitudes. "Down East" combines memories of home, family, and faith, all strung together with songs. Ives often challenged the listener to reexamine his personal beliefs, and in "The Light that is Felt," he used the parent-child relationship to mirror our relationship with God: He leads us—his children—out of darkness. Written in an era when many American composers searched abroad for their stylistic voices, Ives's patriotic songs exalt the strengths and expose the weaknesses

of the American condition with equal, well-intentioned zeal in an unmistakable Yankee dialect. In "Tom Sails Away," he used the images of childhood to reveal the greater good worth fighting for, but also the potential cost; as the protagonist leaves home to protect freedom, an overwhelming sense of sadness pervades the song. Ives expressed his affirmation of transcendental naturalism and his steadfast adherence to his religious belief in "So May it Be." William Wordsworth's poem depicts a narrator for whom a near-religious appreciation of nature provides inspiration in his youth and adulthood, and hope for his future. Finally, past and present converge through memory and music in "The Things Our Fathers Loved" as a grown child, hearing the music of his youth, comes to appreciate the things his father loved and the sacrifices he endured.

Though highly idealized in his representations, Ives's Connecticut boyhood is the central theme in an impressive number of his compositions and writings. He wrote to revisit the simple joy of youth, to recapture a lost era, to reaffirm his core values and beliefs, and to honor his father. In his songs centered on children and childhood, he depicted youthful themes expressed by adults, adult themes expressed by children, carefree memories, and parental hopes and fears. His vivid depictions remind us that, though we mature in years, we remain children in a very real sense. Taken as a whole, the songs of children and childhood form an irresistible autobiographical fabric woven of distinct but inseparable threads of perspective and experience. Ives shared his own life freely in his music, disclosing his own boyhood, presenting his own daughter as ours to know and love as he did. These songs portray Ives as a husband, a father, and a boy before he became a man. In them he revealed his mind, his heart, and the fullness of his soul with overwhelming generosity. Though his own childhood ended abruptly with the

death of his father, Ives never failed in his ability to conjure a sincere and realistic childish perspective. This ability to amplify his father's "open-mindedness, and his remarkable understanding of the ways of a boy's heart and mind"[8] constituted a large part of his musical inheritance.

Ives did not choose the philosophies that surrounded him in childhood, but he grew with them and as he matured found them comfortable enough not to reject them. While at Yale, he experienced strong currents of contemporary American religion and thought in his curriculum and daily life. The personal relationships he developed there proved unwittingly prophetic: his classmates gave him four separate nicknames for personalities he assumed upon occasion.[9] *Lemual*, the "ascetic New Englander," reflects the Protestant heritage that inspired Ives in many ways. The "spontaneous, explosive" *Dasher* depicts Ives the modern man of tireless industry, whose talent and ambition trumped station in the social realm, and whose embrace of innovation and progress defied the musical status quo. One sees in *Sam*, "the punster and jokester addicted to paradoxes," Ives's American spirit, the determination and drive that sustained him in the face of objective failure and allowed him to maintain his sense of humor, however dark. *Quigg* embodies Ives's "crotchety, quixotic" yet highly idealistic over-soul, his transcendental sensibility and self-reliance. These *alter-Iveses*—spiritual children, in a sense—hover ever-present over his songs, sometimes obviously apparent, other times barely perceptible in the sentiment of a text or harmony.

Protestantism exerted a relentless influence in late nineteenth-century New England. America's quasi-religious founding principles pervaded society; and, though

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[8] *Memos*, 114-115.
[9] Cowell & Cowell, 35.

not an overtly religious man, Ives professed American Protestant Christianity and absorbed the dominant national moral identity and relentless work ethic.[10] Religion instilled in him a sense of near-pious productive seriousness, certainly as regarded his art and relations with his fellow man. Practicing genuine charity in his business and personal life became, to a great extent, the naturalistic Christian religion of his adulthood. Certainly more idealistic than dogmatic in his piety, he, nonetheless, never avoided a public show of religion. He married a minister's daughter, and during their entire life together, "they were comfortable amidst the old hymns and inspiring words,"[11] the familiar morality and music so important in his life and compositional career. Their avoidance of doctrine as a dynamic element of their religiosity reflected the mood of the age. American Protestantism underwent foundational changes as the result of the dialectic with humanist philosophies. Having awakened from the medieval slumber of Calvin and the Puritans, Protestantism's new liberal ministers (Ives's father-in-law a leader among them) "sought to exorcise the last vestiges of shadow and magic from their creeds, to create a clean, well-lighted place where religion and rationalist optimism could coexist in harmony." As a result, "Liberal Protestantism lost much of its power as an independent source of moral authority and became the handmaiden of the positivist world view,"[12] as much social think-tank as organized religion. At the two poles lay Puritan ascetics and ethical humanist ideology. The vast ocean between evolved continually by design, and any shape it had resulted from what remained of religious

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[10] The foundational American governmental principles are more ethical than moral, more philosophical than doctrinal. The paradox of American religiosity is the principle of absolute pluralism: that which makes it most uniquely American, also makes it distinctly non-religious.
[11] Swafford, 191.
[12] Lears, 23.

ceremony, especially music. Ives's practice of religion as a liberal Protestant provided a reinforcing frame of reference for his conservative morality without intruding on his vivid progressive intellect, and opened a metaphysical line of communication allowing him continual access to his past through music.

Ives had three serious vocations—composer, insurance executive, and church musician. He was only properly paid for the latter two. George Ives's family crossed the street on Sundays to attend services at the first Congregational Church in Danbury; so from an early age, Charles experienced Protestant church music, and from the age of fourteen, he participated in the church as a "professional" organist.[13] Through his employment as a church musician, his father's work as a choir master, and his exposure to outdoor revival meetings, he experienced a variety of religious services that contributed to his practical ecumenical openness. Stylistically, his composition reflects the hymnody tradition and revival music of New England Protestantism, just as much of his thought mirrors the ethical principles of Christianity absorbed by America's founding philosophers, political and religious.

Though the shaping of the Ives family ideology and religion evolved over several generations, Charles Ives discovered technological American modernism by way of a single epic event, the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. His Uncle Lyman Brewster, an exceptional man as well as a role-model and sponsor, literally transported him into the world of the future by arranging for Charles to accompany him to the Midwest as his personal secretary on a business trip.[14]

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[13] Swafford, 49.

[14] Feder, *Life*, 3. Danbury's leading lawyer and judge, Brewster also demonstrated an artistic spirit appealing to his nephew: he was class poet at Yale, and helped draft the town charter (Swafford, 59).

The Columbian Exposition stood as a beacon of electric light at a turning point in American history illuminating a nation more urban than rural, more industrial than agrarian, and more commercial than homemade. Visitors to the exposition—which ran from May through October, 1893—came expecting a carnival and found themselves in a grand mixed-metaphor, bursting with irony and stranger-than-fiction juxtapositions. The builders of the exposition, led by Chicago architect Daniel Burnham, were burdened with "restoring the nation's pride and prominence in the wake of the Paris exposition [the World's Fair of 1889]."[15] The campus they designed to reflect the permanence of American modernity employed "a uniform style, neoclassical, meaning the buildings would have columns and pediments and evoke the glories of ancient Rome."[16] The facades, made of plaster, bore whitewash to reflect whatever light shone on them. Many of the dynamos and gadgets of the future faded immediately into the past, and what remained—Cracker Jacks, Shredded Wheat, Pabst Blue Ribbon, and the Zipper—hardly changed the course of history.[17] Susan B. Anthony and Buffalo Bill developed a mutual admiration; real American Indians rode carousel horses; Archduke Ferdinand (on whose head precariously sat the crown of Hapsburg and the last political vestiges of Christendom) rode the Ferris wheel. Scott Joplin played rags.[18] Displays such as this one were grand, quasi-liturgical spectacles for the religion of Man, the triumph of science and technological advancement, and the fruits of centuries of "enlightened" thought. Scientific reasoning unraveled the mysteries of creation, and man claimed his divinity by building, discovery, and creation, spurred on by the belief that

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[15] Larson, 33.
[16] Ibid., 106.
[17] Ibid., 247.
[18] Ibid., 284-6.

> the entire universe—including all human life—was governed by deterministic laws discoverable only through scientific inquiry. Science, in other words, was a kind of Easter-egg hunt; once the eggs were gathered the game would be over: the laws governing the universe would be fully known.[19]

Undoubtedly, Brewster and Ives felt the "aura of holiness around this radiant spectacle of American art and technology."[20] Positivist philosopher Auguste Comte, who died in 1857, established this "aura of holiness" in his humanist religion, replacing God with the "Great Being," humanity.[21] Emerson's "Supreme Spirit" represented a similar grand collective consciousness with mystical overtones, the godhead within and among men.[22]

American culture also stood at an ideological intersection of tradition and progress in 1893. "Unlike commerce and industry, national taste and accomplishment in music were more aspiration than fact."[23] This aspiration manifested itself in derivation. "We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe," Emerson wrote to inspire the American mind to original greatness rather than hollow imitation, to build on the past with hope for the future.[24] But since most serious American music depended upon European models, what would be left to inspire an American composer if he ignored the "courtly muses," the only traditionally known sources of artistic inspiration? In true democratic fashion, traditional *and* progressive forces filled the vacuum created in the confusion: a battle raged between the forces of cultivated and vernacular music for the

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[19] Lears, 20.
[20] Swafford, 74.
[21] Beardsly, 735. CE, xii, 312.
[22] Emerson, "An Address to Divinity Students," *Essays*, 29.
[23] Feder, *Life*, 4.
[24] Emerson, "The American Scholar" *Writings*, 59.

ears of America. To the horror of the musical establishment, their ramparts of fugues and counterpoint started to crumble under the attack of ragtime and minstrelsy, but Ives saw no more incongruity in the coexistence of these forces than he did in the peaceful cohabitation of people of different races or religions. He had lived with dichotomies his entire life.[25]

Young Charles Ives wasn't entirely enamored of the technological progress he encountered in August 1893.[26] The musical innovations Charles absorbed from his father related to the facile expression of ideas, and their procedural newness resulted in more human rather than more mechanical musical depictions. Ives employed modern procedures—and espoused modern ideologies—only when these provided a more efficient vehicle to communicate his ideas. Ives, "arch-modernist" in the eyes and ears of many, avoided even the simplest technologies. The radio and other "marvels" beckoned humankind to passivity, while industrialization incrementally emaciated the human spirit that Ives strove to elevate and nourish. We will never know exactly what music Ives listened to at the Columbian Exposition, but he must have heard his share of the cultivated and the vernacular. In refusing to pledge stylistic or aesthetic allegiance to one over the other, he embraced the essence of both in establishing America's voice along with his own. As for the abandoned exposition, it burned to the ground in July 1894.[27]

Modern without being a modernist, prophetically liberal yet unshakably conservative, Ives challenged convention with a fervor matched only by his longing for

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[25] Ives's innocence of spirit stands as one of his most remarkable traits. He expressed genuine surprise, for instance, at being abandoned by the avant-garde with whom he shared no non-musical affinities.
[26] Swafford, 75.
[27] Larson, 335.

tradition. His life as an American citizen appears as "a remarkable set of paradoxes."[28] Though the twentieth-century dawned amidst tumultuous change and ceaseless progress, old-fashioned duty and patriotism were not threadbare concepts to Ives but obligations, the external manifestations of the living ideology he applied to his art and his trade with equal zeal. Fiercely patriotic, Ives did not hesitate to adjure his fellow citizens to support the American effort in World War I, or draft an amendment to the Constitution. By the late 1920's, Ives drew a salary of half a million dollars, *and* belonged to the leftist bohemian musical avant-garde.[29] Only in America could the defining composer be an undeniable success, not in music but in insurance. He lived the American dream, seizing the opportunity to prosper unhindered, to love honestly, and to think passionately and freely. His particular embodiment of this ideal constitutes the most remarkable paradox of all, his extreme artistic isolation that "arose not only from his desire to write experimental music, but also from his desire to be a good American."[30] "Being a good American" meant providing for his family: "If a man has, say, a certain ideal he's aiming at in his art, and has a wife and children whom he can't support . . . , should he let his family starve and keep his ideals? No, I say—for if he did, his 'art' would be dishonestly weakened, his ideals would be but vanity."[31] Ives knew that America afforded few opportunities for "professional" composers. He also knew that mastery of technique and hard work required no specific laboratory. He developed his truest voice and composed his greatest music *because* he forsook a career in music and was true to his sensibilities.

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[28] Rossiter, ix.
[29] Swafford, 402.
[30] Rossiter, xii-xiii.
[31] *Memos*, 131.

Though now remembered for his musical intellect, his pioneering work in the insurance industry brought him success and wealth enough not only to provide amply for his wife and daughter, but to arrange for the distribution of his compositions as well. He strove, immoderately at times, to fulfill his perceived outward duties. Internally, however, his spirit increasingly yearned for Concord. Transcendental humanism quietly saturated Ives's thoughts and his compositions. The spirit of Thoreau and Emerson hung in the air he breathed as a child and as a student at Yale. He first recorded his impressions of transcendentalism in a paper on Emerson written for English professor "Billy" Phelps that formed much of the *Emerson* chapter of his *Essays Before a Sonata.* [32] After college, Ives drew on Emerson for inspiration in perceiving the foundational dilemmas in his life and work. As he wrestled with seemingly irreconcilable forces in his art, Emerson provided a model for forging, by Ives's estimation "so close a relationship between his content and expression, substance and manner, that if he were more definite in the latter he would lose power in the former."[33] In the "Thoreau" chapter of the *Essays* Ives described Thoreau as "a reassuring and true friend, who stood by me one 'low' day, when the sun had gone down, long, long before sunset,"[34] the low day of his father's death. Ives conceived the *Essays,* his ideological summation, during his college years. His affinity with the transcendentalists, passive at first, spanned his entire life, and dominated the final decades.

Listening to Ives, one contemplates the mind, heart, and soul of America: a spirit of revolution and noble resignation. The American mind intuitively grasps the European

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[32] Swafford, 136. The *Yale Review* "promptly sent it back" when Ives submitted it for publication. The paper does not survive.
[33] *Essays,* 29-30.
[34] *Essays,* 67.

humanist thinkers—Hobbes and Locke; Descartes and Rousseau; Kant and Hegel; Mill and Comte; Nietzsche and Freud—distilled and adapted for a new world by Emerson and Thoreau, Jefferson and Washington, and the American philosophers William James, C. S. Peirce, and John Dewey. It also understands paradox. George Washington—aware of the instability inherent in a centralized government established by a revolution fought against the concept of centralized government—wrote in his Farewell Address, "The very idea of the power and the right of the People to establish Government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established Government."[35] Ives absorbed his influences well and lived committed to a belief in liberty and the innate goodness and potential of humankind, though he recognized as Washington had that unchecked individual liberty could easily lead to anarchy. He wrote extensively of the highest ideals even in his business correspondence, and though his *Essays* contain equal parts polemics and philosophy, his transcendental optimism always held firm: everyday life and shared experience demanded practical ideologies, not theoretical musings. Ives sought common sense in abstract thought and found it in American transcendentalism. He attempted, as Emerson did, to inspire each "to use the great definite interests of humanity to express the greater, indefinite, spiritual values—to fulfill what he can in his realms of revelation."[36]

Of all the central themes Ives employed, childhood best reveals his indefatigable sense of hope as well as a palpable capacity for innocent joy. Though he composed in isolation, exposing his faith, ideas, and loyalties in private, he always maintained the belief that some day he would have an audience. While the modern world forsook hope

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[35] *American Historical Documents*, 239.
[36] *Essays*, 29.

as a superstitious yearning for a supernatural realm it had proved not to exist, Ives preserved his hope for humanity and the promises of eternity. He identified "definite interests of humanity," sometimes by unleashing monstrous dissonances and unrecognizable forms, other times by depicting individual emotions with unlikely delicacy. Though these songs represent only a partial sampling of his stylistic palette, each contains his intentions in full.

# CHAPTER 1

## *The Child is Father of the Man*

Childhood involves discovery and changing perspectives linked by memories; maturation, an often unpredictable process, involves as many variables as defined quantities. Molten developmental energy requires a sturdy matrix built of love and discipline to contain it, but one that will break with the final formation of a unique individual. Children have only a vague awareness of the protection that allows them the freedom to explore without sensational prejudice, and they develop unconcerned that forces act upon them; adults see and understand these forces in hindsight, and the retrospective can be a wild ride. On the surface, very little overt wildness characterized Charles Ives's childhood, the mechanical details of which numerous important biographers have painstakingly noted. [37] Not that his boyhood was unremarkable, but rather healthy and normal. When he looked back to his youth for inspiration, however, he saw the future and created a remarkable world.

Well-established and respected members of the community, the Ives family bore no major scandals or tragedies and occupied a position of prominence in nineteenth-century Danbury, Connecticut. Charles Ives's grandfather, George White Ives (1798-1862), held interests in several successful commercial ventures and founded the Danbury Savings Bank. His son, Isaac, Uncle "Ike" (1835-1910), operated a flourishing lumber yard and provided goods for much of the town's new construction. Uncle Joe (1835-

[37] Most important among them the Cowells, Rossiter, Swafford, Feder, and Burkholder. Many of the biographical details quoted here as specific to one of the authors in particular could as easily be attributed to the others.

1908) ran hardware and home-furnishings stores. Ives's father George Edward Ives (1845-1894) did have an unusual job as town bandmaster, but in late nineteenth-century America, every self-respecting community had a band. Danbury had more than one, and a citizen amply qualified to lead them in the person of George Ives, Civil War bandmaster and professionally trained musician.[38] At one point, George either conducted or assisted six different area bands and worked for his brother Joe on the side.[39] The Ives family lived in thriving Danbury and contributed greatly to its prosperity. "Ike's materials built the homes; Joe marketed just about everything that might go inside them."[40] These two reinforced their father's business legacy, literally helping to build the town and the family fortune which, ironically, made George's musical education possible. On the one hand, such training implied luxurious excess, if not frivolity, as no serious prospects existed for a career in music. On the other hand, the ability to pay for private music lessons proved financial success, "a sign of middle-class status."[41] George's musical talents built no structures, but combining stirring band music and the freshness of post-Civil War sentiments of nationalism and reconciliation did create a greater sense of community.

Music at the time, either cultivated or vernacular, served accepted functions and embodied specific connotations. The cultivated, European music of symphony halls, chamber concerts, and salon recitals appealed to people's need to feel sophisticated and prosperous. The wife of a successful businessman "did her duty by dragging her husband to a concert or the opera; her husband maintained his masculinity by protesting

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[38] Rossiter, 11-13.
[39] Feder, *Song*, 86.
[40] Ibid., 54.
[41] Perry, 2.

all the way and by falling asleep during the music."[42] American society accepted and expected music, but as it generally related to class and gender. A man who learned or performed "classical" music crossed over into the realm of womanly pursuits. Women trained in, taught, and performed cultivated music; women sat on the boards of the nation's most prestigious symphonies, making decisions about programming and the fates of conductors.[43] George Ives "naturally participated in the cultivated-tradition music in Danbury; when he did so, however, he was forced to enter the province of women, and his son Charles clearly saw that he was doing so."[44] George and Charles had the talent and affinity for serious music but understood the stigma; his entire life, Ives protested—far too much—against his perception of the "emasculation of art."[45] Men identified with the vernacular music of barn dances, revival meetings, church hymnody, and especially band music. These familiar styles made few demands on masculine ears and provided myriad benefits: vernacular music connected a man to his faith, confirmed him in his masculinity, and gave voice to his patriotism. However meagerly, it fulfilled some requirement of culture. Even if a man felt ill-at-ease in church, the "old familiar tunes" provided some consolation. Barn dances and revival meetings, both sufficiently manly traditions, featured high-spirited music in which men participated unashamed and actually looked forward to hearing.

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[42] Rossiter, 27-28.
[43] Ibid. "It was the ladies active in the New York Philharmonic who hounded Gustav Mahler out of the conductorship of that orchestra in 1911."
[44] Ibid.
[45] Boston critic Phillip Hale criticized Ives's work and received some of Ives's sharpest invective; being referred to as "Aunt Hale," etc. (Memos, 28). Ives wrote that Chopin's music sounded "pretty soft, but you don't mind it in him so much, because one naturally thinks of him with a skirt on, but one which he made himself" (Memos, 135). Though reading these words now inspires an amused embarrassment for Ives, it is meaningless to apply present sensibilities or correctness to him after the fact. In his often abrasive writings, he defended the art he loved so deeply and his methods, long since vindicated. His often misguided style was an unfortunate by-product of his isolation.

The defining event for every American at the time, the Civil War ended less than a decade before Charles Ives's birth in 1874. Arguably "the most musical war in world history," over 100,000 musicians could have played for the Union army over the course of the conflict had all the possible billets filled.[46] Hundreds of thousands more fought, and these veterans associated marches and ceremonial music with the best and worst times of their lives. George Ives decided to enlist in 1862 at seventeen, joining an appallingly high percentage of combatants on both sides who were barely men.[47] In late July 1863, only weeks after the Union victory at Gettysburg, he assumed leadership of a regimental band with the First Connecticut Volunteer Heavy Artillery attached to the Third Brigade of the Army of the Potomac, and turned the band into one of the Union's best.[48] Bands played for extraordinary functions and established daily structure, rousing the troops with "first call," and closing the day with "Taps." Inevitably, however, band members performed more mundane and unpleasant functions that likely contributed to George Ives's growing disillusionment with soldiering. Having reached a breaking point, he wrote a superior officer on June 29, 1864, requesting demotion and reassignment. He also destroyed his cornet, a punishable offense for which the court martial imposed forfeiture of a month's salary and ten days under arrest. While on furlough in Danbury in February 1864, George sustained a back injury that kept him out of action until June.[49] While his service merited no dishonor, it certainly fell short of heroism. The truth lay

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[46] Feder, *Song*, 34.
[47] Ibid., 37, Swafford, 19. Feder dates the enlistment after the death of George White Ives in December 1862; Swafford, September. Feder rightly calls the Civil War a "boys war" (44); Ellis (10) writes that in 1789, the American population totaled "nearly 4 million, about half of it sixteen years of age or younger."
[48] Swafford, 25.
[49] Feder, *Life*, 41-43. Roger Averill, Lyman Brewster's Uncle, attested the letters that confirm George's condition. That George destroyed his instrument speaks volumes in terms of symbolism.

somewhere in between and an idealized compromise marks both Charles's musical depictions of the war and his written remembrance of his father's role in it. In camp and in battle, the music of home strengthened a soldier's resolve; returning home, the music of war served not only as a reassuring frame of reference, but stoked the fires of nationalism such that every peaceful assembly and civic event provided a constant reminder that the fighting had been worthwhile. By Charles's estimation, George provided both.

Ives's boyhood memories include playing ball and watching parades; keeping shop with his younger brother, Moss, in the shed behind the house; enjoying summers at the shore with cousins, aunts, and uncles; attending school and church; listening to and making music with his father. When combined with his sensibilities and skills, two ideological aspects distinguish his childhood from most others: first, the Ives household atmosphere encouraged free thought within the boundaries of an over-arching American liberalism hewn from European enlightenment philosophies, polished and made fit for practical use by the Founding Fathers and transcendentalists; second, the spiritual link forged by talent and temperament between Charles and his father simultaneously provided the source of their most intimate connection as well as their ultimate separation. Charles's had a remarkable musical upbringing at his father's side making their relationship truly symbiotic. George Ives's originality and inventiveness formed the headwaters of his son's artistic expression, his source for inspiration, experimentation, and normalcy. Charles understood intuitively that abnormality existed primarily as the result of context, always highly subjective in art and ideas. Ives's family reared him in an

intellectual climate conducive to original thoughts and actions; indeed, his lineage, nearly as old as Danbury's, demanded it.

In 1684 "The Original Eight" families made the pioneering trek north from coastal Norwalk, Connecticut to settle what would become the town of Danbury.[50] By 1764 an Ives relation engaged in an ideological dispute. The Reverend Ebenezer White, great-great-grandfather of Charles Edward Ives, did not nail ninety-five theses to the door of the First Congregational Church in Danbury, but his stances against original sin and in favor of the separation of church and state did cause controversy resulting in the formation of White's New Danbury Church.[51] Neither was a minor theological point. The doctrine of original sin faced major opposition from the fifth century onward,[52] and its interpretation varied wildly. Throughout the history of Christendom, social order depended upon the cooperation of church and civil authorities. After Martin Luther's liturgical revolt and Henry VIII's usurpation of ecclesiastical authority, this cooperative arrangement disintegrated, allowing humanist ideologies to develop into the revolutionary spirit of 1776 and 1789.[53] Ives's great-great-grandfather risked his career to insure that religious pluralism and tolerance flourished in Connecticut a quarter-century before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Ebenezer White, a clergyman arguing against church influence in civil government, proved himself to be the first great

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[50] Swafford, 3. Chartered in 1787, a decree by the Governor saved the town from being named "Swampfield."

[51] Ibid., 4. Swafford lists the doctrines of original sin and infant damnation separately. The latter is traditionally a point within the former. The British burned the church in 1777 (Feder, *Life*, 244).

[52] CE xi: 604-605, "Pelagianism."

[53] Thomas Jefferson zealously promoted the social dogma of the separation of church and state as the inevitable evolutionary product of social dialogue and political development. The "Republican revolution" was ideologically radical notwithstanding the "Enlightenment platitudes" of classical ethics put forward by many of its proponents (Bailyn, v). It represented not only an attempt to wrest political power from colonial oppressors, but a revolt against perceived philosophical and moral prerogatives traditionally attributed to an absolute Godhead.

dialectic American thinker of record in the Ives family. Nearly two centuries later, Charles Edward Ives practiced an idealistic religion of charity and good works which his forbear would have enthusiastically sanctioned. Ives's own contribution to civil government, a proposal for a twentieth amendment suggesting the institution of governance by pure democracy, also developed from the ideology of his ancestors. He intended to voice his frustration at the "inadequacy of political parties to register public opinion," if not question their ability to function efficiently at all. Ives received apathetic responses from politicians and rejections from newspapers and periodicals. Undeterred, he planned to distribute five thousand copies of the proposal at the Republican National Convention in Chicago, June 8, 1920 (the copies did not arrive in time for distribution).[54] Charles Ives, pamphleteer, wrote:

> The intuitive reasoning of the masses is more scientifically true and so of greater value to the wholesome progress of social evolution than the personal admonitions of the intellectual . . . . If one will admit that God made man's brain as well as his stomach, one must then admit that the brain (the majority brain) if it has the normal amount of wholesome food—truth . . . will digest—and will function as normally as the stomach . . . . If one won't admit that, he comes pretty close to admitting that God is incapable.[55]

Ives echoed the faith of Ebenezer White, a distinctly American confluence of religion, politics, and philosophy. The inductive potential Ives perceived in the common intellect

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[54] *Essays*, 200.

[55] Ibid., 204-205; see also Tick in *Ives Studies*, 133-162. Hobbes (*Leviathan*) and Emerson are perceptible here. "Inductive" in the skeptic sense means "intuitive" as Ives uses it.

proved for him God's capability, if not His very existence. If Emerson suggested that truth lay in the individual's interpretation of the "Divine within," Ives extended this concept outward to the whole society. Collective understanding of truth provided a nobler ideological basis for government than entrenched partisanship.

The "personal admonitions of the intellectual" indeed meant little in Ives's boyhood home. Though educated and well-read, the family members tended to concern themselves more with practical matters such as care of extended family, civil action, and philanthropy than with philosophical debate. The family took in needy strangers, providing food and lodging, often for extended periods;[56] Charles's grandmother Sarah led a group of women who sought to rescue a captured slave in New Fairfield, and registered the Danbury Home for Destitute and Homeless Children as a permanent charity; his father returned home from the Civil War with ten-year-old ex-slave Henry Anderson Brooks whom the family sponsored.[57] "He who does a good deed is instantly ennobled," wrote Emerson (who stayed in the Ives home on two occasions in 1857 when he delivered lectures in Danbury).[58] In the face of pressing human need, a purely theoretical philosophy or religion held no appeal for the activist Iveses. Nobility lay in action, and from a very early age, Charles absorbed and took for granted a greater-than-average liberality and social consciousness. Both the seriousness and the spontaneity of his music affirm the ideas and aesthetics he developed as a child. As a composer, he sought above all else to convey honestly the human condition; small thoughts and conventional constructions often did not suffice.

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[56] *Memos*, 53: "[Grandmother] and Grandfather would take anybody and everybody in, and give them their last cookie or last cent, if their sense of injustice was stirred."
[57] Feder, *Song*, 231-232. Both Feder and Swafford use the word "adopted," though both in quotations.
[58] Ibid., 21. The Emerson quote is from "An Address," *Essential Writings*, 64.

Big ideas in the Ives household remained grounded in reality. Charles's father taught him that an artistic ideal, no matter how lofty, required a practical, dependable vehicle: "If a poet knows more about a horse than he does about heaven, he might better stick to the horse, and some day the horse may carry him into heaven."[59] Often portrayed as a sort of musical "mad scientist," George Ives devoted himself to breaking down what he considered artificial barriers and to extending musical boundaries. He passed these traits on undiluted to his son. Delightful vignettes exist of father and son: the toddler Charles listening to his father practice the fiddle, banished to the barn; polytonal family hymn-singing; rigging contraptions to find the "notes between the cracks"; George's nurturing discipline of Charles's more radical rhythmic and tonal departures; scenes of "rival" bands' sonic rumbles in the streets of Danbury; moments of pride, civic solemnity, and togetherness. More than father and son, the two were musical playmates and because of George's training, the games they invented together had true substance. They shared an extraordinarily sophisticated artistic sympathy and sense of adventure, unbearably puerile to the uninitiated.[60]

George taught Charles several instruments (sending him to other teachers when prudent or necessary), as well as simple orchestration, harmony, and counterpoint. He also instilled in his son a dynamic rather than dogmatic approach to musical rules, an "artistic morality, the knowing of right from wrong in a creative context,"[61] though not automatically excluding the potential usefulness of the "wrong." Thus, the playful

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[59] *Memos*, 240. Recalled by Ives in a letter to John Tasker Howard, June 1930.
[60] The idea exists that George Ives and his son were a kind of musical "noble savages," and some Ives scholars suggest he was a dilettante, a falsifier, etc. Composer Elliott Carter and musicologist Maynard Solomon, among others, praise Ives as an innovative and important colleague on the one hand while attempting to discredit him on the other concerning dating and revisions.
[61] Feder, *Song*, 90.

innovative spirit Charles saw in his father and later expanded, emerged from serious study and purposeful exploration—in harmony, rhythm, quarter-tones, even the construction of musical instruments and attempts to reproduce natural sound. All of this experimentation, however, originated in respect for cultivated and vernacular musical traditions and serves as an example of Ives's dialectic approach to reconciling the primary dichotomies in his life and art. As stated above, Ives refused to exclude either tradition, long assumed to be antithetical in form and function, and by exploring the common ground between them, created new synthetic procedures using experimentation as the catalyzing force and bonding agent. To return to the earlier metaphor, cultivated music might "dance" better without a collar. In the same respect, vernacular music lost nothing of its character by dressing up a little. For George and Charles Ives, putting on a collar never implied putting on airs.

Musical colleagues from very early on, their sense of artistic equality, awkward at times when it came to their non-musical relationship, did not evolve as Charles matured. Their play during his boyhood served the dual purposes of bonding and education, each finite in terms of what George could provide. George, who knew that Charles's talent surpassed his own, exerted his paternal authority over his teenaged son by correcting grammar and spelling mistakes in his letters home from Hopkins Grammar School in New Haven and by admonishing him for participating so enthusiastically in sports, potentially dangerous to his keyboard career. As Charles neared college age, George also realized that Uncle Lyman Brewster had begun to share this authority. While George laid the groundwork for his son's life as a composer and nurtured his development as a church musician, Brewster's educational pedigree and connections proved more useful to

the boy as he approached adulthood. Charles began his studies at Hopkins in 1893, a school that "specialized in preparing boys for Yale."[62] He may have felt that leaving Danbury represented an escape into freedom and enlightenment, but soon realized how solid a foundation his father gave him as he followed college courses in the same textbooks he had used at home.

Though Charles never doubted or failed to appreciate his father's musical influence, he took advantage of the move to New Haven to establish himself apart from George's personal control and plans for the future. Though a genuinely talented pianist, Charles never matched his father's natural love of performance. Ives's wife later stated simply, "he was too shy."[63] He maintained posts as a professional organist, however, for nearly fifteen years and, in this regard, his father's hopes for his career as a concert pianist bore some fruit.[64] Charles most obviously resisted his father's plan by pursuing "careers" in baseball and football instead. Feder suggests, "Charlie found a solution for his misgivings regarding the femininity of music, balancing an increasingly compelling musical life with the discovery of a strong interest in sports and considerable skill."[65] Captain of the Danbury Academy football team, he also played baseball for a local team called "The Alerts" beginning in 1889. He led the Hopkins baseball team that beat the Yale freshmen in 1894 and later became its captain as well.[66] Though Feder perhaps

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[62] Swafford, 72. Hopkins, now on an impressive property on the west edge of town, occupied the space where the Yale Law School now stands, one block from old campus.
[63] Burkholder, *Ideas*, 78.
[64] Another Ives paradox: too shy for one solo instrument—piano—but not another. Burkholder (*Ideas*, 78) suggests the difference was that, as an organist, "he was normally out of sight of the congregation." Another significant though perhaps only symbolic difference in playing the two instruments is that of physical orientation: whereas a pianist is exposed to the audience, an organist literally faces the music, something Ives never avoided.
[65] Feder, *Life*, 54.
[66] Swafford, 78, 118.

overestimates Ives's sporting skills, clearly he used sports as a foil to his musical pursuits, to reaffirm his masculinity, and to form an identity distinct from his father's. He also satisfied his sense of rebelliousness and George knew it.[67] Though their multifaceted connection made genuine estrangement impossible, a gap formed due to Charles's need for self-definition and his newfound space. Their shared fluency in the language of music, though in different degrees, formed an unbreakable bond. If George felt insecure in his musical career, he knew that he would never have to justify that choice to his older son, who grasped it intuitively. When Charles later felt similar pressures, he knew that his father understood. The dark side of this empathy lay in their understanding of the unequal distribution of talent between them. Both realized that the son would transcend the father; devastating knowledge in any event, made doubly so by the circumstances surrounding George's death.

Too much is made of the supposed rift between the two at the time. A terse final letter from Charles remains—"I started a letter Sunday evening to you but left it before I had finished"[68]—and the historical retrospective of his career paying homage to the father he lost too soon. Nevertheless, no proof exists of extraordinary tensions between them. George Ives died of a stroke "that seemed to come from nowhere" on November 4, 1894, two months after Charles started Yale.[69] George's symbiotic relation to Charles provided George's primary artistic and social outlet but had been diminishing

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[67] Feder, *Song*, 120. Ives never made a college roster in any sport. His leadership roles in sports most likely resulted as much from the force of his personality as from his athleticism. Ives wrote that he "went to college for athletics" (Swafford, 118); his delusions of competence were not unique for an American boy.

[68] Archive, 33/ 1. More on this below; the metaphysical ironies in this last letter are staggering.

[69] Swafford, 103. By this time, the Brewsters effectively raised younger son Moss, their favorite. On some level, George must have known he had done all he could as a father.

for years. With Charles in college following in his Uncle's footsteps, this aspect of their relationship ended. George had little more to give. Ives wrote in 1907 that "Father died just at the time when I needed him most,"[70] emotionally, perhaps; but as Feder states the unemotional truth of the matter, "George died not when Charlie needed him most but when he needed him least. Rather, it was a time when George, in his son's mind, needed Charlie most."[71] George and Charles Ives did better than a lot of fathers and sons at getting along and learning from their mistakes, but something exceptional connected them, and their talent shaped musical history. Undoubtedly, Charles felt the loss, guilt, and confused bewilderment that only a young man can feel; and though he admitted to looking for father figures in his teachers and mentors during his college years,[72] amidst the grief there lay a tangible and living connection to his father that could never be severed, a connection of sights, sounds, and memories in three dimensions. Knowing that he actually possessed his father's artistic spirit provided unique solace and an obligation to realize that spirit fully. [73] He straddled the threshold between childhood and adulthood as he began his college career, and the loss of his father pushed him over. Due to George's nature and artistry, and because of the ideologies that were a continuing

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[70] *Memos*, 261; in a letter to Joe Twichell, Ives's father-in-law.
[71] Feder, *Song*, 136.
[72] *Memos*, 258.
[73] Feder explored their personal relationship from the psychoanalytical perspective in what stands as the definitive book on this aspect of their lives. He proposes answers for many of the more troubling questions that emerge from the study of Ives and diagnoses the condition cyclothymia, a mild bi-polar disorder (Feder, *Life*, 95). No reason exists to disbelieve his speculation (emotional imbalance is discernable in the biographical facts), but it remains impossible to prove. Few people live with a thought to the post-facto psychological ramifications of their interactions, and relationships tend to fit the Freudian model because it is logically circular. The idea that conflict originates in the subconscious assumes the conclusion that subconscious states exist in conflict as proscribed by the model. This fills the void created by the skeptic position that though appearance is knowable, nothing of the reality underlying appearance is (Audi, 846-50; CE, xiii: 517). We sense, interact, and learn, but since we cannot know why, a super-sensual realm must logically exist in us. In a scientific world, Freud's psychic states subsumed the traditional supernatural model of moral absolutes and an external source of truth (Freud, *Writings*, 933-977).

part of his heritage, Charles Ives never closed the door. He would always look back for solace, affirmation, and inspiration.

Ives showed incredible emotional strength by not only remaining in school after his father's death, but by thriving there. He quickly established useful friendships through his wit, good nature, and his unusual talents at the piano. If his successes were more social than academic, all the better; Yale, like many institutions at the time, educated men—many with predetermined futures—who came not to find their calling, but to develop a sense of society. Perry writes of Ives's success and of Yale:

> He was an active and sociable person, a member of HeBoule [sic], Delta Kappa Epsilon, and Wolf's Head. Although he was a highly individualistic young man, the instinct for organization during the 1890's at Yale was strong. . . . The Yale man's education did not encourage him to be an individual, for his classmates thought that cooperation was far more important than critical thought. . . . This emphasis on conformity and cooperation set Yale apart from other institutions. At Cambridge, for example, the Harvard man was apt to be such a law unto himself that team play and concerted effort were impossible.[74]

Connections and community determined a man's worth at Yale, and through his connections, Ives gained entrance into the most prestigious sophomore society, Hé Boulé, and into one of the all-important senior "secret" societies, Wolf's Head.[75] One friend in particular, Dave Twichell, helped in securing Ives's elections. Having switched

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[74] Perry, 5. She cites George Wilson Pierce, *Yale College, 1894-1921* (Yale Press, 1952).
[75] Rossiter, 76. Each of the three societies "tapped" fifteen new members. 300 graduated in the class of '98. With an academic average of 68, he was, for all practical purposes, in the top 5% of his class.

from the class of '97 to the class of '98, Dave had friends in the classes above, and he was a prominent "big man" in the Yale community.[76]

Where did music fit in? Socially, in terms of his organ career in cultivated music, "Charlie was walking a tightrope. As gratifying as personal achievement in music might be, it could threaten prestige and position in college life from two directions: to be either too effeminate or too crazy would invite social ostracism."[77] Here Charles's experience with vernacular traditions proved invaluable. Elected to the junior fraternity Delta Kappa Epsilon, he composed original music for fraternity shows, saccharine ballades, humorous songs, even pieces for the glee club.[78] Ives found his own "band of brothers," and a home for his music. Despite the assuredness of his fraternal connections, however, he still felt the loss of his father.

Ives found four partial surrogates during his time at Yale, each important to his development in different ways. Horatio Parker (1863-1919) assumed the Battell Professorship of Music Theory in 1893 at age thirty-one. He also maintained the post of organist/choir master at Trinity Church in Boston and conducted the New Haven Symphony.[79] When Ives entered the class of '98, Parker carried the banner of European derivation and pedigree for America's new generation of composers who had lived and studied abroad out of ironic necessity. They returned with the hope that "a native-born American musician could compete most successfully for positions in this country by going to Europe and mastering the same training as the immigrant European musicians

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[76] Ibid., 79.
[77] Feder, *Song*, 153.
[78] Ibid., 155. Ives also found vernacular outlets in local theater orchestras and vaudeville houses.
[79] Swafford, 112.

had acquired."[80] Composers sought to establish an original American style, believing one would emerge through diligent application of accepted techniques learned with the masters in Europe. No one, it seems, imagined that the solution lay in the music of town squares, gazebos, and churches.

Parker unwittingly excluded himself from the possibility of direct influence by not encouraging Ives's experimentation. Ives wrote of their initial meetings, "He would just look at a measure or so, and hand it back with a smile or a joke about 'hogging all the keys at one meal' and then talk about something else."[81] In truth, Parker accommodated Ives, allowing him to audit music courses available only to upper-classmen.[82] History now rightly represents Parker as a tireless, gifted teacher and a competent, if not visionary, composer; his master work, the oratorio *Hora Novissima* initially garnered praise as "an inspired work of contemporary music."[83] Ives grudgingly obeyed the "courtly muses" of European technique and chafed at the exercises of imitation, but he owes his mastery of large-scale forms to Parker, as well as a measure of his discipline and self-respect as a composer. Parker made a legitimate career as a serious musician and maintained his manly dignity at a time when society "expected eccentricity, irresponsibility, a disheveled appearance, and discreetly immoral conduct from artist-performers."[84] That Parker embodied the precise opposite of this stereotype impressed Ives who later wrote, "I had and have great respect and admiration for Parker and most of his music. (It was seldom trivial . . . Parker had ideals that carried him higher than the

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[80] Feder, *Song*, 138; the quote is from Parker's mother.
[81] *Memos*, 49.
[82] Rossiter, 55.
[83] Feder, *Song*, 172.
[84] Perry, 7.

popular) but he was governed too much by the German rule . . . ."[85] Ives yearned for an original perspective he did not see in Parker, though he benefited greatly as a result of their work. Their conflict involved an irreconcilable difference of perspective, though the two shared many sensibilities; Ives refused to equate discipline with rigid mechanical or ideological structure and continued to look for someone who shared his vision.

John Cornelius Griggs (1865-1932) was perhaps the first to suspect an original genius in Ives. An accomplished musician, scholar, and teacher, he earned his Ph.D. from the University of Leipzig in 1893, *magna cum laude.* His dissertation, *Studien über die Musik in America* (studies about music in America) defends the potential for the development of an American music, while noting the paradoxes that hindered the immediate prospects.[86] As baritone soloist and choir master at Center Church in New Haven where Ives played, Griggs served as colleague, mentor, collaborator, and friend. He "paid Ives the compliment of performing a number of his songs and choral pieces, and allowed Ives to play, in services, his organ works from the conservative to the revolutionary."[87] Ives recognized in Griggs a philosophical likeness, a similar mix of ideals and influences. Griggs also shared with Ives an appreciation for the connection between music and higher ideals, not in terms of abstract themes trapped in concrete forms, but in the potential of music to achieve metaphysical goals:

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[85] *Memos,* 49.
[86] *Memos*, 253. America was paradoxically too American ("Send me your poor, your tired . . .") to develop her own music: "America has received, and is receiving, impulses from many countries . . . [and] this very breadth of outlook, and the lack of any musical history of importance, are the two great reasons why American music cannot, for the present, have any distinctive national character." By setting his gaze too high, Griggs, like Parker failed to see that American music did exist, had an important though not cultivated history, and possessed a profoundly distinct national character.
[87] Swafford, 114.

> Art is a projection into the realm beyond the understandable. . . . The actualities of life have always a penumbra of reachings outward. Here are the futilities of philosophy, the futilities of children's play, of our own diversions, the patterns of a piece of lace, perhaps even the mad whirl of the insects. The lure of these futilities is their promise of becoming the actuality of a larger and higher plane of existence.[88]

Though he by no means enjoyed all of Ives's innovations, he always encouraged the spirit that inspired them. "God," Ives recalled him saying "must get awfully tired of hearing the same thing over and over again, and in His all-embracing wisdom he could certainly embrace a dissonance—might even positively enjoy one now and then."[89] If Ives felt that Parker opposed him, he knew that Griggs supported him and would defend him even to Parker. On hearing the *Prelude and Postlude for a Thanksgiving Service*, Parker "made some fairly funny cracks about it, but Dr. Griggs said it had something of the Puritan character, a stern but outdoors strength, and something of the pioneering feeling. He liked it as such, and told Parker so."[90] Parker apparently made no reply, but took Griggs across the New Haven green for a beer.

On the other side of the green, the Phelps gate stands on the east side of the quad in Old Campus. Tradition holds that a Yale student passes through the gate only twice; coming in on the first day of classes, going out on graduation day. To transgress

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[88] Archive, 29/14.
[89] Ibid.
[90] *Memos*, 39; the service was in November of 1897.

this unwritten rule disqualifies a student from graduation.[91] The legend who lent his name to the gate is Professor William Lyon "Billy" Phelps (1865-1943). Ives began and ended his college career in a Phelps classroom. In freshman English literature, he read Brooke, Shakespeare, and Milton; sophomore year, he studied three more Shakespeare plays (*Tempest, Lear,* and *Hamlet*), Spencer, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Addison, and Swift; and senior year he followed the course, "American Literature of the past 100 years."[92] The relatively modest amount of literature covered in each class indicates that Phelps encouraged very close, unhurried reading. Though Ives set his own texts to music more than any other writer's, as Burkholder notes, "The impact of Phelps's teaching can be judged, in part, from the fact that Ives set to music many of the poets he had studied or had probably studied with Phelps."[93] Keats, Wordsworth, Browning, Byron, Shelley, and Tennyson constituted the pantheon of nineteenth-century poets represented in the senior seminar; but the great prose writers of Concord—the Alcotts, Margaret Fuller, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Emerson—also emerged, and Ives benefited from Phelps's guidance in reading them. "If Ives had read Emerson before," writes Burkholder, "his experience with Phelps must have revived his enthusiasm; if he had not, Phelps's importance for Ives's later philosophy is clear."[94] Billy Phelps probably did not

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[91] This was the fable as related to me by a Yale tour guide. The punishment, of course, is unofficial and unenforceable. Old Campus is a large outer perimeter of buildings with few convenient entrances. Though the Phelps gate affords an easy, time-saving shortcut across the quad, the tradition remains sufficiently strong that students would rather be late to class than "take the gate." An unfortunate nod to the present culture of liability, I'm told that Phelps gate is now chained shut during the year.

[92] *Memos,* 181-182. His transcript is amazingly bad, his four-year average a 68. Second semester sophomore year he deposited a 45 in French and a 53 in Rhetoric onto his academic record.

[93] Burkholder, *Ideas*, 74.

[94] Ibid., 76. Burkholder vehemently doubts that transcendentalism influenced Ives to the extent assumed by other Ives scholars.

introduce the transcendentalists to Ives; he no doubt revealed them, however, such that their voices remained, growing stronger in Ives as he aged.

Reverend Joseph Twichell (1838-1918) brought extraordinary credentials when he spoke at Yale. A Civil War chaplain who heard Lincoln's address at Gettysburg, a student of the legendary liberal theologian Horace Bushnell, a member of the company of intellectuals at Nook Farm and Mark Twain's close friend, he inspired many others besides Ives (most likely including Twichell's son, Dave) to come hear him after dinner on October 29, 1894. Ives's roommate Mullally, who brought him to the talk, surely told him about the preacher from Hartford.[95] That night, Charles started a letter to his father but left it behind to go hear Joe Twichell's lecture. He never saw his father alive again. Perhaps Twichell saw Ives's face in the crowd; did Ives feel providence at work? As one father departed, another appeared. Ives heard a gifted speaker that night, a man whose liberal religious ideology resonated with his own, not yet fully formed. Though he did not know it, at the same time he also saw the father of the man who became his closest friend and the father of his future wife. Reverend Joseph Twichell, often called upon to give moral and intellectual guidance to Yale students with his essays inspired by Bushnell and Emerson, had no way of knowing that he would share with one of the young men in attendance that night not only words of wisdom, but an entire life. The other surrogates of Ives's college years offered him insights and direction as he navigated the murky divide between boyhood and manhood. Joe Twichell gave him a family.

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[95] Swafford, 86.

These four men all gave Ives a measure of paternal guidance during his college years. Phelps and Griggs, only nine years older than Ives, very nearly belonged to his generation. Parker, eleven years his senior, chose to inhabit a different era. Joe Twichell occupied the generational gap between Ives's father and grandfather. Together, and in reference to each other, they provided Ives links to his past, definition in the present, possibilities for his future, and personal guidance through the mystical web of philosophical influences. Each man in a way embodied the interconnectedness of these ideologies. Joe Twichell knew Lincoln's measured pragmatism, Twain's witty and biting realism, and reflected Bushnell's liberal transcendental theology; Phelps opened doors that led to Concord; Griggs possessed a tireless, mystical idealism and an educated, practical concern for the future of American music; Parker represented contemporary American music, condemned (as the result of his inability to forecast the future of musical development), to produce period pieces by the hundreds, driven by a Puritan ethic and genuine depth of character. All four helped Charles recover from George's death and enabled him to develop those thoughts and talents bequeathed by his paternal legacy. After the loss of his father, Ives never again thought or spoke as a child. Because of the nineteenth-century American world that shaped him, the family that nurtured him, the teachers and friends that supported him and the talent that sustained him—his music does.

# CHAPTER 2

## *Expectancy and Ecstasy: Songs by Children*

With "Slow March" as introduction, the narrative of the first series of vignettes unfolds in chronological order relative to perspective rather than composition, beginning with the songs "sung" by the youngest children and ending with two adult odes of remembrance. Though childhood joy imbues the overall structure, death frames the set in a palpable way. Ives never avoided or ignored death and used memory as a device to deny any sense of its permanent victory. Memory trumps death in his music, which immortalizes sensations and personalities with penetrating effectiveness. "Slow March" accompanies the burial of a childhood friend, the family pet; the most poignant moment in "The Greatest Man" occurs when a boy united with his father remembers the death of the boy's mother; "The Cage" contemplates the futility of existence; failing to see the "lady all in pink," the boys in "The Circus Band" wonder if she has died and forcefully reject the notion. The narrative perspective of the set changes in "Memories." Ives captured the sublimation of the tangible childhood present into adult recollection of the past, while maintaining the immediacy of both perspectives. "Memory A," the only one of these songs sung entirely in the present tense, seems strangely unrelated to "Memory B" that wistfully recalls a departed relative. In "The Old Mother," an adult child declares, "I'll love thee till death our lives shall part"; "Songs my Mother taught me" and "Remembrance" are both sung by grown children to parents who exist only in memory, yet live on in the music they left behind.

Childhood and death fuse in this set, never with morbidity or despair, but with the sense that memory immortalizes people, places, and events. Ives possessed an uncanny ability to create a universal sense by depicting specific events in a manner ambiguous enough to require the listener to supply his or her own individual experiences as a necessary part of the artistic process. Thus, he succeeded in producing enduring works of art based on mundane scenarios, employing seemingly banal structures.[1] He wrote so effectively from a child's perspective—whether adult or pre-adolescent—because he had a childish lack of regard for technical prohibition and dared to animate stereotypical forms with honesty and sincerity.

***Slow March***
*1887/1888?; 28mm; Text by Lyman Brewster "& C[o?]."*[2]

Children experience with a heroic and disproportionate gravity difficult to recapture in later life, even in memory. Adults smile at children's unfiltered seriousness and think of simpler times, knowing that for the child, important events—in the case of the "Slow March," the burial of a family pet[3]—have no experiential context and prove seminal in the formation of abstract thought. A remarkably cogent musical statement for an adolescent boy, "Slow March" reveals much of Ives's character and an already confident style. It provides a unique frame of reference for determining the

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[1] Ives wrote, for example, believable parlor songs, parenthetically ennobling a form now seen only as belonging to a period, at best highly sentimental, at worst insipidly mawkish.
[2] Sinclair, 496. Mother, father, and grandmother are listed as co-contributors to the text.
[3] Accused later in life of falsification and augmentation, Ives seemed to evolve musical memories when necessary, though he never sought primarily to deceive: Davidson states "As a child, Ives writes a dirge for the family cat, and as a man, the experience is remembered, translated and transformed into the writing of a dirge for the family dog" (41). In "Slow March," the essential depiction of the emotional scenario supercedes the need for mnemonic detail or even accuracy. The animal in question was either "Chin-Chin" the cat (Feder), or the family dog (Burkholder, Reed, Rossiter, and Swafford). Hitchcock simply, perhaps wisely, indicates "pet."

methodology of his adult recollection and stands as a foundational example of Ives's use of quotation, as well as preserving a rare Ives family portrait in words and music.[4] Ives evoked a sense of the past in his own childhood present, the first example of his natural compositional genius for creating timelessness with the circular use of memory. Handel's "Dead March" from *Saul* provided a link to the musical past of cultivated tradition, as well as George Ives's wartime experiences and a nation's agony. Whether his father suggested the march or Charles decided to set it on his own, its use presents layers of connotation: the freshness of the Civil War in the nation's collective consciousness, a willingness to integrate the cultivated and the vernacular idioms, the collaborative relationship of father and son, and a boy's artistic representation of death and ceremony. At thirteen or fourteen, neither fully child nor man but something in between, Charles had reached the age when an emotional and intellectual half-light enveloped him, simultaneously the dawn of adulthood and childhood's gloaming. He had a conception of death and chose a song as his first expression of it.

Sardonically innocuous in its Civil War context, the "Dead March," used not only in funeral processions but in marching traitors to the firing squad,[5] resonated demise for all who had served. No war stakes an absolute claim to brutality, but the Civil War, the "Cousin's War," raged at the blood-soaked intersection of technology and tactics. Citizens of the same country, those who fought not only faced death but often associated it with indescribable physical destruction. Menand writes:

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[4] Lyman Brewster took the lead in writing the text, but the others apparently contributed. That Ives painted the family portrait is not as remarkable as when he painted it: the family could not have known at the time that the song represented not only Charlie's dabbling in composition but his immortalizing an emotional scenario in music for the first time. The family was fortunate to be part of the picture.

[5] Swafford, 21.

> The Civil War was fought with modern weapons and premodern tactics. The close-order infantry charge, a method of attack developed in the era of the musket, a gun with an effective range of about 80 yards, was used against defenders armed with rifles, a far deadlier weapon with a range of 400 yards. This mismatch was responsible for some of the most spectacular carnage of the war.[6]

Men accustomed to hearing the "Dead March" played for fellow soldiers dismantled in battle (or played for those executed for refusing to fight) could not have reacted to it in a purely sentimental way, and George would never have allowed his son to use the music in a frivolous manner. Though perhaps inappropriate in terms of emotional proportion as accompaniment for the family cat's committal, Charles set the march with sincerity. Lawrence Wallach wrote, "The intent is not to underline the banality of the subject with the pomposity of the music, but just the opposite: to enlarge the meaning of the seemingly ordinary event by 'proclaiming' it gravely and seriously."[7] Reed says of the music, "Anyone who cannot sight-read *Slow March* . . . is no musician, and anyone not moved by it has, in some wise, a tin ear. It is immediate."[8] Its musical immediacy results in large part from its vulnerable simplicity. The "Dead March" typifies Handel's unfailing capacity to achieve profundity through simple means, and Ives maintained both the economy and nobility of the tune. Bellaman describes "Slow March" as "a cantus firmus [the "Dead March"] and an original melody starting over it in the treble."[9] Kirkpatrick more accurately proposes that the Handel "serves only as

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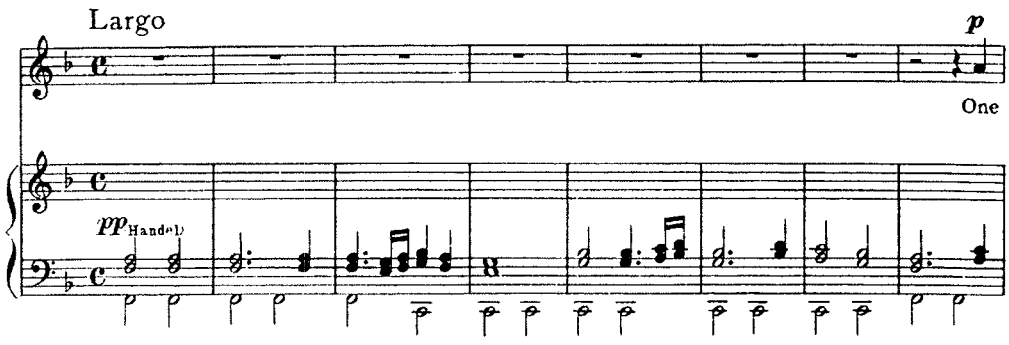
[6] Menand, 49. He cites James M. McPherson, *Battle cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era.*
[7] Burkholder, *Tunes*, 16.
[8] Reed, 36.
[9] Bellaman, "Charles Ives: The Man and His Music," 53.

introduction and coda, the voice part being accompanied by non-thematic chords."[10] Burkholder notes that the quotation serves only as prelude and postlude, "more of mood than of tune or structure,"[11] an example of the technique he calls "modeling."[12] The severity of the mood results primarily from the emotional wartime association; Handel's original tune seems incapable of inspiring true foreboding out of context.

All of these descriptions of Ives's borrowing, a foundational compositional device, assume his composer's perspective. He lacked, on the one hand, his father's performer's sensibility in the purest sense. On the other hand, he had an acutely developed appreciation for the performer's transcendent contribution to the compositional process, a sort of procreative breathing of a third dimension into the created two-dimensional notes on the page. He often did not quote music as much as perform it compositionally. Handel's idea maintained a position of primacy; Ives interpreted it and lent himself to it in his musical commentary. Thus, the relationship Ives maintained to the composers he quoted remained one of respectful collegiality and cooperation, rather than attempted subjection or conscription.






*Musical example 2-1: "Slow March," mm 1-8*

[10] *Memos,* 37.
[11] Burkholder, *Tunes*, 16.
[12] Ibid., 3.

Ives made the most of the text, two couplets of mixed poetic feet and forced rhymes, highlighting (rather than attempting to smooth out) its irregularities. The first line, two sets of three iambic feet, emerges from the eight-bar quotation of the "Dead March" in F-major.[13] The first of the two four-bar phrases in common time moves harmonically to the dominant in the downbeat of mm 4, the texture a single note in the bass with moving thirds above in the top of the bass staff. C sounding in the bass two beats earlier anticipates the harmony, adding a sense of elegance and gravity. The mood, serious though not somber, suggests courtly formality with the upward moving sixteenth-note flourishes in mm 3 and 5 as the second four-bar phrase of the introduction returns from the dominant C chord to the tonic F-major.

The unstressed first syllable of an iambic foot requires a pick-up note on a weak beat. Ives used this weakness to his advantage, employing the necessary textual pick-up to create a seamless transition from the introduction to his own recitation, matching Handel's musical pick-ups in mm 2, 6, and 8.

*One evening just at sunset we laid him in the grave;*

*Although a humble animal his heart was true and brave.*

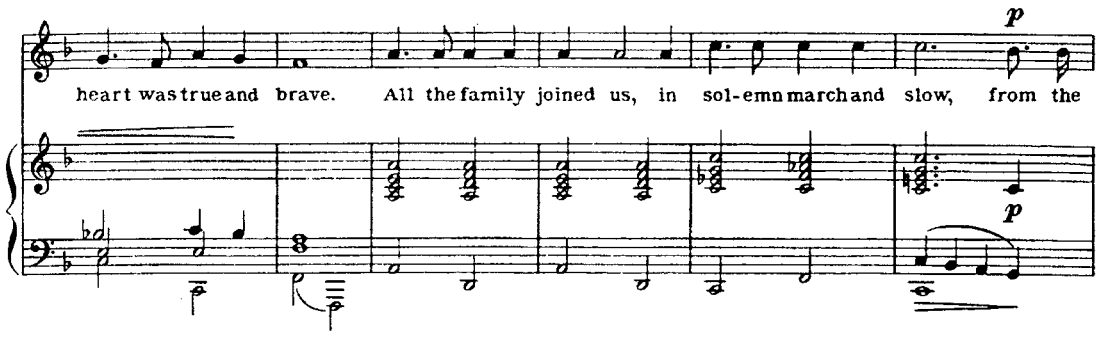
*All the family joined us, in solemn march and slow,*

*from the garden place beneath the trees and where the sun-flowers grow.*

The text contains nearly no specific details: "one" evening "we" laid him in the grave. Ives specified the gender of the animal but not the type and gave no definition of the burial party other than a plural pronoun. Specificity comes only in the adjectives describing the animal's heart, "true and brave," its character more important to the scenario than its species. Ives's original harmony first progresses to the sub-dominant in

[13] The original, in Part III of *Saul* is in C-major.

mm 10, briefly revealing a plagal character before moving through the dominant and dominant-7th harmonies in mm 11 and returning to the tonic in mm 12. For the first time, the accompaniment reaches up into the treble staff, sensitively highlighting in a hopeful, upward-reaching fashion the word "grave," breaking with a centuries-old tradition of depicting entombment with downward-moving motives. Increased motion in the bass, now changing on the half-bar, strengthens the pick-up to mm 13 required by the iambic "although." By this point in his life, long familiar with the harmonies of hymnody, Ives added two classic Protestant "blue-notes"—a 6th followed by a raised 6th—to the subdominant accompanying the word "humble" in the latter half of mm 13. Moving by way of a diminished chord to the dominant-7th in mm 15, the cadence to the tonic in mm 16 includes an echo of Handel's moving thirds between the vocal line and the top of the accompaniment.






*Musical example 2-2: "Slow March," mm 15-20*

Ives began his own dirge in mm 17, changing the tonality abruptly to A-minor. A change from iambic to trochaic feet also allows for a stressed first beat on the word "All," heightening the impact of the modal shift. The procession, "in solemn march and slow," includes "all the family," an unspecified group of those other than the burial

party.[14] Ives achieved very purposeful solemnity by way of two bars of repeated A-minor plagal-tonic progressions in mm 17 and 18 and maintained the minor mode, as he reestablished the dominant-tonic relationship between now C-minor and F-minor in anticipation of the home key F-major. This return comes by way of a disarmingly effective shift to the major dominant C chord in mm 20 and obscures the awkward syntax of the text (the dangling modifier "slow" anticipating the final word "grow"); a stepwise descent in the bass from C to F in the downbeat of mm 21 presents F-major.

Ives again made the best of an awkward poetic situation, the inclusion of an extra iambic foot in the first half of the final line of text, by setting the four syllables in mm 22 to four even quarter notes, creating a natural ritardando. Harmonically, he repeated the 6th-supplemented subdominant harmony of mm 13, adding further interest by lowering the 3rd. Ives did not so much reintroduce Handel's march as allow it to emerge from his own. The second half of mm 23 contains a harmonic and melodic condensation of mm 7 from the introduction, symmetrically preparing the return of the "Dead March," which begins as if uninterrupted as the voice sustains the final word "grow" over nine beats in mm 24-26. The closing plagal cadence reveals one final Ivesian compositional element, imprecise quotation: Ives restated Handel's melodic material, originally accompanied by a tonic-dominant progression, but absorbed it into his own harmonic scheme, the subdominant-tonic relationship first established in mm 10. The two composers collaborate in ending the song with a distinctly religious feel.

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[14] Ives did not indicate that he and his father buried the animal by themselves, but he was purposeful in depicting the marching group as separate from the burying group. Admittedly reading between the lines, this seems a musical representation of the special relationship Charles and George had, one of private moments and serious tasks which they shared with the family after completing the work.

Manifest in this astonishing single page, Ives's talent seems most evident in the ease with which he merged his own sentiments and Handel's, and in the stylistic delicacy he employed in placing his parenthetical present between the eternal musical "bookends" of the "Dead March." His conception of death, serious though not fearful, remains full of transcendent hope and natural imagery. In a beautifully ironic recasting of the march, the family processed not toward the grave, but rather from it, back toward life. Natural growth and the comfort of the garden stand in the place of death.

***The Greatest Man***
*1921; 33 mm; Text by Ann Collins (printed in the NY Evening Sun, June 7, 1921)*[15]

Though not written by Ives, the text of "The Greatest Man" records a loving tribute and provides an appropriate narrative starting point for the children's songs. In it Ives presented his youngest speaker, probably a seven or eight year-old boy.[16] Not written as an adult portrayal of a child, but rather as a child's innocent attempt to portray his father, the poem, filled with misspellings, erroneous contractions, and grammatical errors, must have captivated Ives. Remarkably unpretentious for such a meticulously stylized poem, Ann Collins's work overflows with childish excitement:

> *My teacher said us boys should write about some great man,*
> *so I thought last night 'n thought about heroes and men*
> *that had done great things, 'n then I got to thinkin' about my pa*
> *he ain't a hero 'r anything but, pshaw! Say!*
> *He can ride the wild hoss 'n find minners near the moss down by the creek;*

[15] Sinclair, 391.
[16] My deduction: seven or eight is the age of a child in second or third grade.

*'n he can swim 'n fish, we ketched five new lights, me 'n him!*

*Dad's some hunter too, Oh, my! Miss Molly Cottontail sure does fly*

*when he tromps through the field and brush! (Dad won't kill a lark 'r thrush.)*

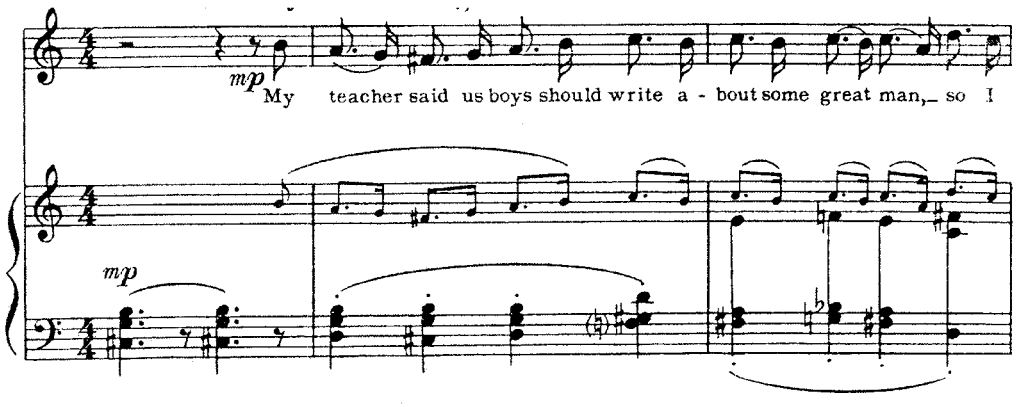
*Once when I was sick 'n though his hands were rough he rubbed the pain right out.*

*"That's the stuff!" he said when I winked back the tears.*

*He never cried but once 'n that was when my mother died*

*They're lots o' great men George Washington 'n Lee but Dad's got 'em all beat holler, seems to me!*

Collins encourages her reader to adopt the perspective of a child presenting a routine homework assignment. The report starts grudgingly, and a half-hearted testimonial seems sure to follow. Ives matched the opening mood of the text by writing two awkward, yet matter-of-fact chords as an introduction. The boy declaims in a dotted eighth-note/sixteenth-note rhythmic pattern matched in the right hand of the accompaniment.[17]




"The Greatest Man" © 1933 by Merion Music

*Musical example 2-3: "The Greatest Man," mm 1-3*

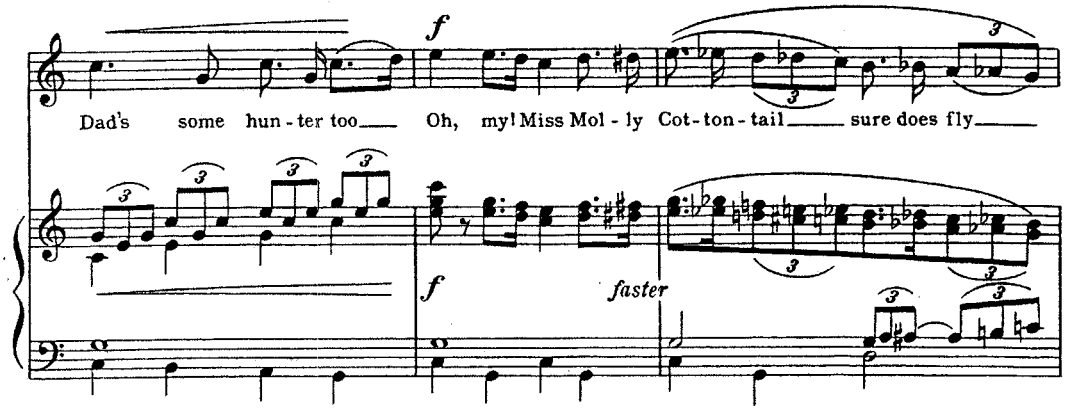
[17] Hitchcock (*Ives*, 15) describes the "Childlike music in skipping rhythms related to children's play-party songs," found here and in "Memories."

Surprise comes with the revelation that, given the task to write about a "great man" or a "hero," the boy chooses to write about his father. Ives departs from the dotted rhythm for the first time on the word "hero" in mm 5, though with no loss of musical momentum. This unfiltered narrative spontaneity provides great textual impact and begs a personal examination of the listener's memory and ideals. Feder calls the song "a piece of unabashed hero-worship cast in a homey boyhood vernacular," the "musical equivalent of a Norman Rockwell illustration"; but any implied sense of banality depends on the listener (or perhaps a mediocre performance). In this and all the children's songs, one can safely assume Ives's sincerity.[18]

In true child-like fashion the explanation of the father-as-hero directly follows the statement that the father is *not* a hero. At "but, pshaw! Say" Ives momentarily stops the rhythmic figure, as if to allow the boy to prepare for what follows. The vocal line, which had remained below D-natural in a G-major tonality, now pushes excitedly up to a forte E-natural, heralding the tonicization of C-major in mm 10. The boy presents every heroic fatherly attribute with more excitement as the dotted rhythm vibrantly returns. He describes his father's riding and fishing prowess, finally including himself in the exploits as he boasts about one day's triumphant catch ("five new lights"). Boy and music catch their breath before mm 16 and prepare to launch into the next series of exclamations. An octave trill on G in the left hand and a G-seventh chord above seem coiled to pounce and in releasing, match note-for-word the sentiment of the text as it

[18] Feder, *Song*, 315. Few have written so much or so well on Ives as Feder, a psychoanalyst. I do think it is important, however, to address those of his points that seem sarcastic or dismissive in the context of his understandably clinical approach. His empirical skepticism seems incapable of accepting innocence expressed by an adult as free from at least some degree of emotional disingenuousness.

reaches the climactic description of the father's hunting expertise. The music pushes outward in heraldic C-major, the bass-line moving downward in stepwise motion, while the right hand bounds upward in triplet figures in mm 16-17, sounding the call of a hunting horn that curiously echoes the tune "I've Been Working on the Railroad."[19] Ives anticipates the flight of "Miss Molly Cottontail" in mm 18, as the two hands of the accompaniment converge and scurry about in a chromatic crush.




"The Greatest Man" © 1933 by Merion Music

*Musical example 2-4: "The Greatest Man," mm 16-18*

Equal parts emotional encouragement and word-painting, the music depicts the boy's feelings and expressions as much as the specific things or events in question; Ives never prompted narrative memory, but rather adapted his music to the stream-of-consciousness nature of childish recollection.

The music slows in mm 19-20, depicting purposeful "tromping through the brush" in parenthetically tonicized A-major; and as if in deference to the near-religious gravity with which the child insists, "Dad won't kill a lark 'r thrush," the music retreats

[19] Burkholder, *Tunes*, 286.

almost entirely in mm 21-22. Just as the boy sees no need to create a seamless transition from one sentiment to the next, Ives moved directly to a plaintive C-minor tonality depicting "Once when I was sick" in mm 23-25. As quickly as the music retreats, the dotted rhythmic figure returns, first in the vocal line, then in the accompaniment as the few measures of queasy, dominant-based sickness give way to a fleeting but triumphant return of C-major in mm 26 at "That's the stuff!" Jolted back into reflection at "as I winked back the tears" in mm 27, the boy ponders his own sadness during his physical pain and his father's sadness in mm 29 due to the death of the boy's mother, the only time his father ever cried. Father and son recollect together as the music diminishes and slows to a near full stop. Though not Ives's text, the poem depicts emotional pain indirectly in the Ivesian mode, not specifically forcing the child to make the intellectual connections between physical and emotional hurting or to give any indication of his own reaction to the loss of his parent. It is enough that father and son have each other for consolation, united through tears.

Musically, Ives used the pause to set up a quasi-recapitulation in mm 30-33. G-major returns as the tonal center, and the introductory chord played *sotto voce* in the left hand at "when my mother died" in mm 29 weaves into the return at "they're lots o' great men" in mm 30-31, a near-precise quotation of mm 2-3. The vocal line breaks away from the quotation to soar to an emphatic high G, underscoring the word *all* in "Dad's got 'em all beat holler." Unconcerned with tidy endings as well as graceful structural juxtapositions, the boy provides the perfect textual vehicle for an Ivesian open musical ending with the line, "seems to me." The song simply ends with a shrug.

***The Cage***
*1906; 1 mm introduction (to be repeated "2 or 3 times"), unbarred body; Text by Ives*[20]

Though one of Ives's more experimental compositions,[21] "The Cage" retains an undeniable thematic accessibility and perhaps best represents his approach to reconciling the dualism that exists between the concrete and the abstract in thought and music. Simply stated, Ives saw useful balance in the two rather than ideological incompatibility. "The Cage" creates a delightfully bewildering collage of profound and ridiculous elements: Ives wrote a highly complex accompaniment for the perpetually debated philosophical query, "What is the meaning of life?" but posed the question in a subtly yet undeniably humorous text devoid of poetic structure:

> *A leopard went around his cage from one side back to the other side;*
>
> *he stopped only when the keeper came around with meat;*
>
> *A boy who had been there three hours began to wonder,*
>
> *"Is life anything like that?"*

Most composers who write in highly atonal, experimental, or serialist styles choose to set poems and texts of similar complexity, often resulting in incomprehensibility for the listener who finds no understandable communicative frame of reference. [22] Ives never tired of challenging his audience, but he drew each member in by establishing an

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[20] Sinclair, 349.
[21] Bryan Simms describes the Ives songs as belonging to one of three groups: "tonal, largely triadic, and often in simple repetitive forms"; "slow, static, mildly dissonant, and atonal"; or, as this one, "more bombastic, aggressively dissonant . . ." (309). Predictably, Ives's development as a songwriter was not linear. Songs of each of these types occur in every phase of his compositional career.
[22] The Symbolist movement in literature provides an artistic parallel and not surprisingly much of the texts for serial/experimental vocal music. Symbolists "sought to communicate the underlying mystery of existence through a free and highly personal use of metaphors and images that, though lacking in precise meaning, would nevertheless convey the state of the poet's mind and hint at the 'darkness and confused unity' of an inexpressible reality." (EL, 1085) Though this is the negative image of Emerson's conception of unity, the pathos in each emerges from the inexpressibility of reality.

emotional or philosophical common ground, even in his most alienating vocal music. In effect, he invited his listeners to challenge themselves on their own terms.

The boy in the song plays one of two dramatic roles, the other played by a caged leopard. He is old enough to be fascinated but not scared by the animal and young enough to pose Ives's philosophical question believably and without guile. An external speaker serves as narrative guide, recounting the scene as a neutral observer. No change occurs either to the texture or mood of the song when the boy finally speaks; this leaves no doubt that his emotional perspective (not the narrator's) remains central throughout. Ives described the actual event that inspired the song (originally intended as the movement "In the Cage" from "Theater or Chamber Orchestra Set"[23]) as

> the result of taking a walk one hot summer afternoon in Central Park with Bart Yung (one-half Oriental) and George Lewis (non Oriental), when we were all living together at 65 Central Park West in 1906 (or before). Sitting on a bench near the menagerie, watching the leopard's cage and a little boy (who had apparently been a long time watching the leopard)—this aroused Bart's Oriental fatalism—hence the text in the score and in the song.[24]

Seemingly flippant, the remark about "Oriental" fatalism raises a crucial point relative to Ives's philosophical approach; the intimate and elusive relationship between Eastern and Western thought embodied in American transcendentalism. Fatalism (whether or not Yung actually possessed it) bears a striking resemblance to the Calvinistic application of predestination relative to natural depravity and divine grace, an overarching sense of

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[23] *Memos*, 55.
[24] Ibid.

resignation regarding the ultimate futility of existence and the individual's control over it.[25] But while predestination threatened to make Protestantism worse as a cure than the liturgical diseases it hoped to eradicate (the doctrines of original sin and free will), one element of Calvin's philosophy resonated loudly in the humanist age, that of immanence, the discernable presence of God in nature, knowable by sensation and reason. This quasi-pantheistic concept of God's perceptible existence in all things also paradoxically rendered Him transcendent, outside and above the world.[26]

Ives possessed a far greater affinity with Yung's inherent philosophy than perhaps he admitted, and much of the song's humor lies in a pomposity of seriousness. Ives's use of a pre-adolescent mouthpiece, however, diffused any possible charge of cynicism. He left no doubt of the song's purpose to contemplate a "profound" matter, accompanied by music of near-caricaturist complexity; and yet with a young boy's utterance of the generic meaning-of-life question, he produced an entirely genuine result. The genius again lies in the dialectic. The humorous scenario renders the difficult music supple and accessible, while its gravity assures that the vignette, though funny, avoids classification as a joke. Compositionally Ives used humor, writes Burkholder, "to open his own ears to what new technical possibilities existed, without limiting himself with any preconceptions."[27] Carr classifies Ives's humorous works as either parody, "whimsical

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[25] The conceptual irony of Calvin and the puritans lies not in their quasi-Eastern concept of total preordination, but in the attempt to reconcile it with traditional Christianity; without reincarnation the outlook becomes impossibly pessimistic. The belief in the inherent badness of human nature reads remarkably like the Confucian philosopher Hsün Tzu. The transcendental application of Protestantism reads ironically like Arminianism, the "heresy," opposed by Calvin, that suggested that man might "regulate grace," in effect, participate in his own salvation (Kuklick, 6; Audi, 327; CE iii:198-204).

[26] Though transcendence and immanence contrast on some levels, in both, God exists not as a matter of doctrinal faith but of cognitive perception. On the practical level, immanence held that while God's presence in nature provided proof of His benevolence, transcendence suggested that the divine will best communicated itself through men from a distance (Stroh, 53; Audi, 418, 925).

[27] Burkholder, *Ideas,* 90.

reminiscence," or philosophical.[28] "The Cage" belongs in the latter group, but as humorous philosophy, not philosophical humor. Neither the narrator nor the child speaks in profound terms, and Ives fully intended to pose a serious question even if he did so by way of a charming, almost nostalgic scene.

Starr writes of the musical language, "the piece offers two distinctive kinds of musical vocabulary inextricably bound together in a powerful, if artificially imposed, unity."[29] This necessary linkage transcends vocabulary, however, and results from tension Ives created by setting two irreconcilable systems in opposition: whole-tone scale fragments in the vocal line represent linear modality in its purest form, block chords of stacked perfect fourths and fifths in the accompaniment signify the distilled essence of diatonic harmonic progressions of vertical sonorities. Structurally, the song consists of a repeated one-measure introduction and five accompanied musical phrases set to four lines of unrhymed, non-metrical text. Lambert sees the chords in the accompaniment as the animal in his exhaustive analysis.[30] Considered here, the absolute steadiness of the vocal line reflects the animal's even, hypnotic pacing; the unsettled, arrhythmic chords beneath represent the boy's sense of uneasiness, awe, and contemplation.[31] The musical phrases do not coincide with Ives's written punctuation, though the text has multiple meanings, each complete, in the absence of this punctuation and when coordinated with the musical phrases. Beyond this, the visual alignment of the accompanying chords

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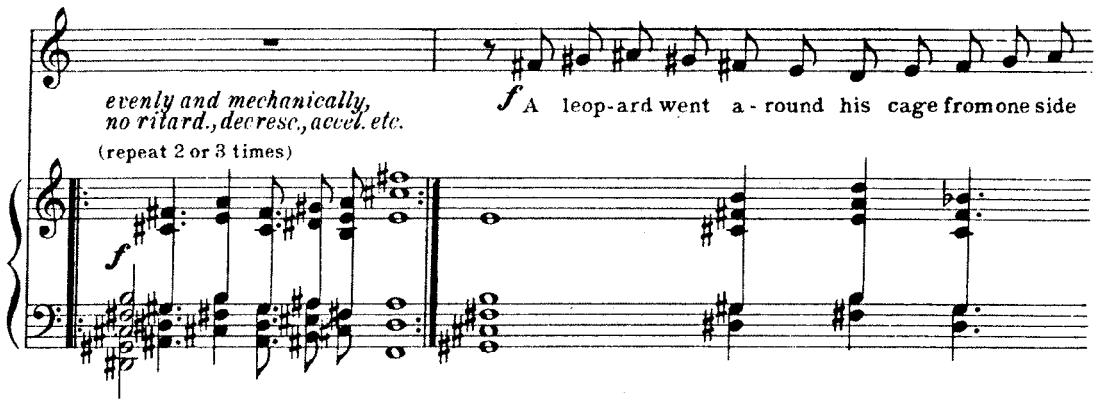
[28] Carr, 124.
[29] Starr, *Union*, 129.
[30] Lambert, *Music*, 153. Lambert's analysis is exceptional though largely impenetrable without extensive knowledge of advanced modern compositional/analytical techniques. In no way discounting his important work, I find it hard to believe that Ives wrote with anything remotely like Lambert's schematics in mind. Analysis by its nature often uncovers more than a composer intended.
[31] The disjointed movement of the chords seems distinctly un-feline. Starr suggests the vocal line which "circles back and forth aimlessly," is "more like the leopard it is describing" (*Union,* 128); Carr agrees (134). Cats, though unpredictable in terms of when—or if—they might move are seldom erratic once in motion.

relative to the coincident notes in the vocal line has seemingly no relation to their note values. Hitchcock notes these temporal inconsistencies and summarizes the difficulties in editing Ives, "to decide whether a notational 'error' or a notational 'problem' is in fact an Ivesian leap into the notationally unconventional, unprecedented, unknown, in the interest of achieving his private vision," rather than simply a mistake.[32] Closer examination reveals method, wondrous madness, and more questions.



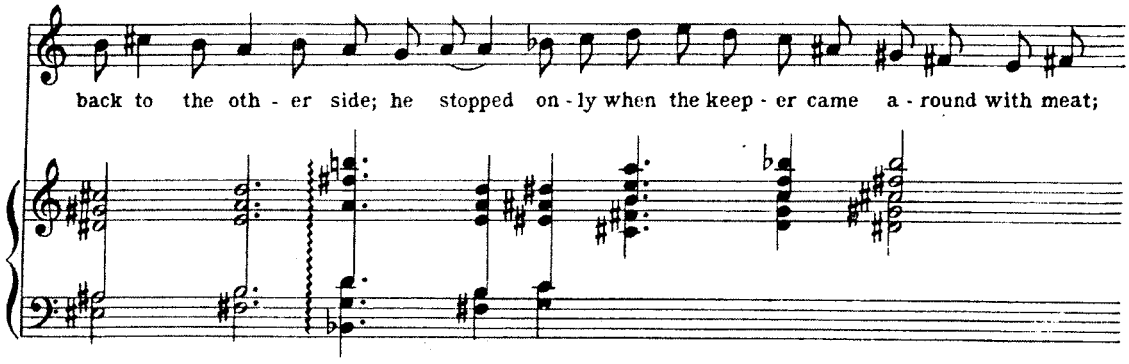



*Musical example 2-5: "The Cage," Introduction, mm 1*

From the outset, Ives showed little regard for a restrictive sense of time in indicating "2 or 3" repeats of the introductory bar. The first line of text (T1), the longest of the four, contains a description of the scene in seventeen syllables ("A leopard went around his cage from one side back to the other side"). This neutral exposition of reality depicts the leopard as if in perpetual motion, building on the murky trance-like tone

[32] Hitchcock, "Editing," 56. Ives permanently muddied the waters with statements like the one made to copyist George Price, "Please don't try to make things nice! All the wrong notes are right." (Ibid.; Swafford, 475).

established in the repeated introductory bar, and in effect, hypnotizes the boy.[33] Each musical phrase of the vocal line consists of a whole-tone scale fragment. The first, M1, a serpentine melodic fragment of eight eighth notes corresponding to the first eight syllables of text (roughly half of the first line, "A leopard went around his cage"), begins on F-sharp, rises to A-sharp, descends to D-natural, and returns to settle on E-natural. The scale starts on its third scale-degree and finishes on its second. The second musical phrase, M2, begins on its first scale-degree F-natural (a half step higher than the concluding note of M1), and proceeds directly to the fifth scale degree, C-sharp, finally settling on the third scale-degree, A-natural, after approaching first from above then below, on the word "stopped." Ives established a mood of ambivalence between text and music by overlapping the ending of M2 with the beginning of the second phrase of text (T2, "he stopped//only when the keeper came around with meat").






*Musical example 2-6: "The Cage," mm 1(continuation)*

[33] Ives established a definite, though incomplete, rhythmic pattern of diminishing note values in the introductory bar: the first chord is a half-note, the second a dotted quarter, the third a quarter, the fourth a dotted eighth, the fifth and sixth chords both eighths. In the "Set for Theater Orchestra" he continued the pattern such that the sixth chord was a sixteenth-note's duration (Sinclair, 81). The "snap" of the sixteenth adds jazziness to the rhythm inappropriate to the song.

Lambert suggests that the

> overlapping structural divisions help to highlight the word *stopped* and the necessity for the leopard to pause for nourishment, while also maintaining the musical momentum needed to stress the inevitability of the continual pacing. A performer might play up these ideas by breathing not between the melodic phrases but at the text division, so that the performance highlights one division, while the music itself, especially the rhythm, brings out another.[34]

If, however, the singer continues precisely in rhythm (and "evenly and mechanically" as Ives indicated), the more logical breaking point is between M2 and the third musical phrase, M3: the final A-natural in M2 lasts three full eighth notes, the longest duration of any note yet to appear in the vocal line. Ives, in essence, ignored his own punctuation, but the resulting textual phrases make grammatical sense. Re-punctuated to fit with M1 and M2, the extended T1 reads, "A leopard went around his cage from one side back to the other side. He stopped."

M3 contains a full whole-tone scale starting on the fifth, B-flat (as with the transition from M1 to M2, a half-step higher than the final note of the preceding phrase) and rises to E-natural before descending the entire octave and coming back upward to rest on the second scale-degree F-sharp.[35] T2 in its entirety lasts thirteen syllables; M3 sets the words of the shortened T2 "only when the keeper came around with meat." Also thirteen syllables in length, the third line of text T3 ("A boy who had been there three hours began to wonder") introduces the boy—main character, emotional narrator,

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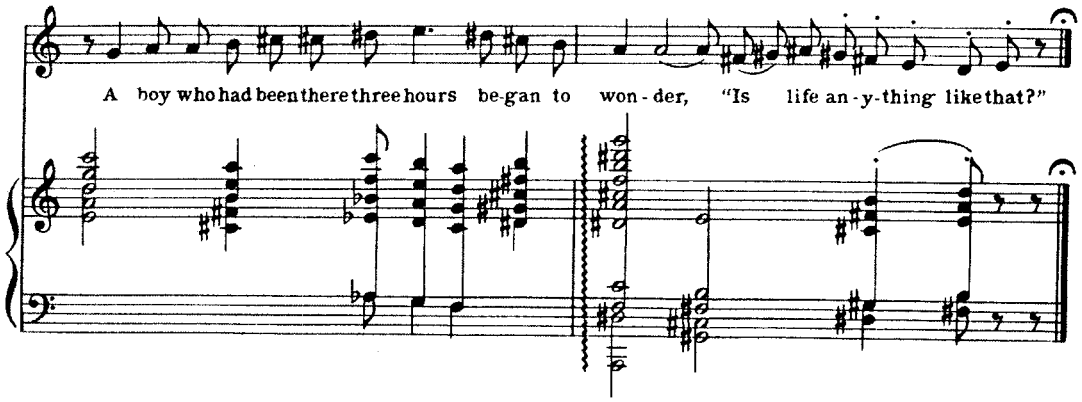
[34] Lambert, *Music*, 151. As stated above, he sees the introduction as the animal's pacing, and names the final chord of the introduction the "meal chord" indicating the leopard's feeding time (153).
[35] The initial B-flat is respelled A-sharp on the descent, creating the odd interval of a diminished third.

and vehicle for philosophical discovery. T3 also coincides exactly with the fourth musical phrase, M4, which breaks the pattern of whole-tone scale fragments in the vocal line. M4 also departs from the wave-like shapes of M1-3, each of which ascends to its highest point, descends, and rises again. The arc shape of M4 ascends from G-natural by four whole steps to D-sharp, which acts as a leading-tone to the climactic dotted-quarter note E-natural on the word "hours" before sloping downward, again by whole-step, from D-sharp to A-natural. Just as the whole-note scale pattern breaks in the vocal line M4/T3, the chordal accompaniment strays from its formulaic construction of stacked perfect intervals, sounding the expansive "wonder" chord, full of minor and major thirds and containing the highest and lowest notes of the song. Though notated a half-note, it actually lasts three full beats.[36] The final textual phrase T4 (the shortest in the piece at seven syllables) contains the philosophical question, "Is life anything like that?" and coincides with musical phrase M5, an exact replica of M1.






*Musical example 2-7: "The Cage," mm 1(continuation), 2*

[36] Obscured by this beautifully crafted phrase—its climatic E-natural so satisfying as the result of the leading-tone, its final chord truly wondrous—the word "began," by far the funniest in the text, passes unnoticed. The young narrator is certainly earnest, if not particularly bright; perhaps an Ives commentary on philosophical contemplation?

Ives presented the greatest macro-dualism in Western music—modality and tonality—on one page as the sonic backdrop for a little boy's contemplation of the meaning of life. No less epic, the philosophical inspiration of "half-Oriental" Bart Yung's Eastern fatalism embodied Ives's attempts to reconcile the progressive thinker's responsibilities to an external divinity with his yearning to define truth as coming from within. He prompted the listener to consider the question by putting forward the comparison of everyday existence with the life of the leopard in the cage, doing so with humor and an ambiguous manipulation of language and time: returning to the overlapping phrases T1/M1-2 and T2/M2-3, consider the effect of Ives's musical "re-punctuation" on the proceeding T3. Just as the extended T1 forms a complete thought, so does the remainder of T2 when combined with T3 (again, re-punctuated): "Only when the keeper came around with meat a boy who had been there three hours began to wonder." Read by itself, Ives's text indicates that the keeper's "coming around with meat" causes the leopard to stop his pacing. His music implies that the same action—the mundane reward of food (an allusion to a day's pay?)—causes the boy to start his wondering as much as does his observation of monotonous captivity.

As mentioned above, the twenty-two chords in the accompaniment have specific note-values unrelated to their placement on the page; performers simply coordinate the chords and the vocal line visually. If, however, both parts proceed in strict rhythm, something fascinating occurs: the vocal line (33 quarter-note beats) and the chordal accompaniment (33-and-a-half quarter note beats) end at precisely the same time.[37] The question remains circular and eternal, the ideological and musical systems irreconcilable, and yet, at least mathematically, Ives made it all line up for an instant.

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[37] Though this requires ignoring the lone bar-line, Ives often showed a willingness to bend rules.

***The Circus Band***
*1894; 96 mm; Text by Ives*[38]

Ives wrote "The Circus Band" for his band of college brothers. It represents one of the finest examples of his ability to create strata of emotional perspective and to imbue a situational project or period piece (in this case one of the compositions "demanded" by his Yale cohorts) with permanent substance. Such pieces had, as Rossiter wrote, "above all, a utilitarian purpose: the strengthening of the bonds of collegiate fellowship."[39] Another of Ives's favorite gangs, "we boys," runs helter-skelter in the song through the marching sensory-overload of a fictitious summer parade, a "riot of recollections of the annual 'big circus joys' of childhood."[40]

Ives highlighted the relationship of martial and popular dance music in his "quickstep" tempo indication. Not a march at all, the quickstep is an up-tempo version of the foxtrot, a dance form popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[41] The reconciliation of vernacular and cultivated forms became an essential element in Ives's compositional affect, and mixing multiple vernacular styles constituted much of the vitality in his process. Dance forms substituted perfectly well for marches and parade music. Composers had long borrowed ideas from non-military sources, music "adapted for military use from popular tunes, operas and oratorios," a practice,

> particularly common in Britain, where most of the military music in such printed collections as *Sprightly Companion* (1695, ed. Playford), *Musica*

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[38] Sinclair, 358.
[39] Rossiter, 64.
[40] Hitchcock, "Noise," 41.
[41] Grove 6, vi: 738. Ives's syncopated rhythms in mm 13-16 would have caused pandemonium on the battle field and sound, in fact, much like the Charleston. In another example of Ives's seeming prescience, these dance forms peaked in terms of popularity through the 1910s and 1920s.

> *bellicosa* (1733), *Musica curiosa* (1745), *Warlike Musick* (c. 1760) seems to have come from the popular operas and oratorios of foreign composers like Handel, Jommelli, Graun, Traetta and Monsigny.[42]

"The Circus Band," besides being a "riot of recollections," embodies the parade of vernacular influences of Ives's childhood—marches, band music, circus and calliope music, and ragtime—and reflects the traditions of integration and cross-pollination long employed by military composers. If an opera aria served as accompaniment for marching men to war, why the indignation at the use of a hymn tune in a symphony or a syncopated melodic rhythm in an art song? Ives never heard a satisfactory answer for this, and much of cultivated defensiveness relates to broader social issues, chief among them race. In 1894, Ives's composition of the "Circus Band" for his classmates represented a nearly imperceptible risk in terms of political activism, but even a subtle, light-hearted employment of recognizably "black" genres set him in opposition with the musical establishment. Minstrel shows ran in seedy vaudeville theaters; ragtime played in bordello parlors. Though the practice of slavery ended with the Civil War, no legislation existed to eradicate prejudice in the hearts and minds of an embittered citizenry and the mixing of musical genres seemed more an issue of social metaphor than stylistic development.[43] Jubilantly color blind, Ives's compositional liberality hastened the development of a truly American music not by virtue of any uniqueness in mixing cultivated and vernacular forms (this had happened before), but because he pioneered

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[42] Ibid., xi: 651.

[43] The scientific community had not helped matters of race relations: as late as 1871, editions appeared of the "scholarly" volume *Types of Mankind* by physician Josiah Nott and anthropologist George Gliddon that detailed *polygenism*, a quasi-scientific theory used to justify slavery on the grounds that different races actually represented different stages of evolutionary development, or worse, different species (Menand, 108, 110-112).

the de-segregation of musical styles. In so many ways quintessentially Ivesian, "The Circus Band" represents a triumph of perspective and purpose.

The boy who animates the song has almost reached the age of the young creator of "Slow March." A subtle desperation embedded in the narration results from the fact that the wonder and innocence of childhood will soon give way to serious moods and complicated matters. Accompanied by such ebullient music, proposing a darker narrative mood for the song seems incongruous; yet the "Circus Band" depicts a profound emotional transition, as the boy's focus shifts from parades and spectacles to a mysterious "lady" and represents the cacophonous inner transmogrification from adolescence to puberty.

*All summer long, we boys dreamed 'bout big circus joys!*

*Down Main street, comes the band, Oh! "Aint it a grand and glorious noise!"*

*Horses are prancing, Knights advancing; Helmets gleaming, Pennants streaming,*

*Cleopatra's on her throne! That golden hair is all her own.*

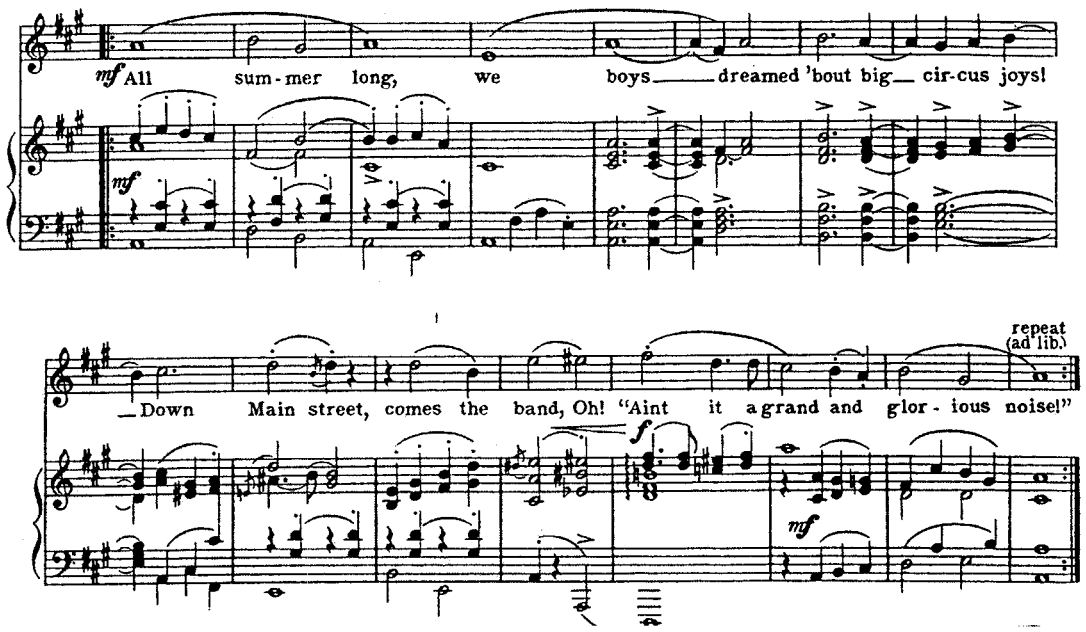
*Where is the lady all in pink? Last year she waved to me I think,*

*Can she have died? Can! that! rot! She is passing but she sees me not.*

Ives crafted a highly predictable structure that consists of five standard sixteen-bar march sections and two eight-bar preparatory phrases (the first of which serves as an introduction, the second, as an interlude between sections 2 and 3). Sections 1, 2, 3, and 5 each set two lines of text (section 5 contains a repeat of the fifth and sixth lines of text, set in section 3); section 4 is a sixteen-bar "band" interlude. The eight-measure introduction, an F-sharp-minor "street beat"[44] in quickstep cut-time musters childhood recollections, influences, and experience into line to begin the parade, and presents

[44] A gathering cadence, e.g., the military "left, left; left, right, left" (Burkholder, *Tunes*, 470).

musical section 1, mm 9-24 in A-major flavored by a hint of the brassy passing-harmonies to come. The first narrative transition transports the boys, at this point still a collective, from the past-tense ("All summer long we boys *dreamed* 'bout big circus joys!" mm 9-16) to the present. The dream ends, or rather finds fulfillment, as the band appears "Down Main street" in mm 17. Ives's indication "repeat (ad lib.)" stands open to interpretation. Purposefully and childishly ambiguous, this direction leaves the performer—and the youthful guides—free to take the repeat, ignore it, or replay the spectacle not so much *ad libitum*, but *ad nauseam* or *ad infinitum*.[45]



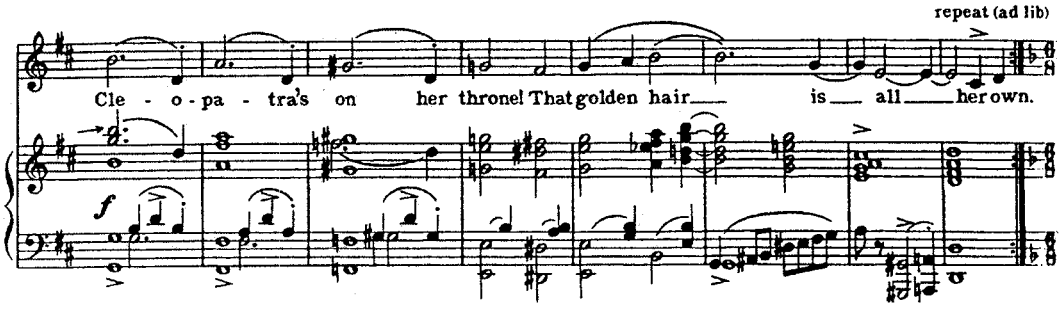



*Musical example 2-8: "The Circus Band," mm 9-24*

[45] Never boring for a child, endless repetition represents the extension of an experience over which he or she has some emotional ownership and actual control, e.g., literally "wearing out" a recording, something the digital generations will never have the satisfaction of doing. A great metaphor is lost in this: tangible markers of youth should degrade, replaced by memory and broader perspectives. Parents attest of the fruitlessness of breaking certain harmless patterns of childhood repetition (e.g. eating the same meal every day), that tend to dissolve on their own.

Ives maintained a rhythmic separation between the vocal line and the accompaniment, setting apart the boys' recollection of their anticipation. Only on the word "big" does the voice join the syncopation and the moving quarter-notes that represent the kinetic marching band texture, rising to climactic F-sharp on the proudly proclaimed "Aint" in mm 21. Three internal rhymes ("boys," "joys," and "noise") lend a measure of poetic structure, but the lack of any predictable feet and the jarring off-beat vocal entrances depict palpable uncontrolled excitement while painting a vivid picture of the boys trying frantically to see too many things all at once.

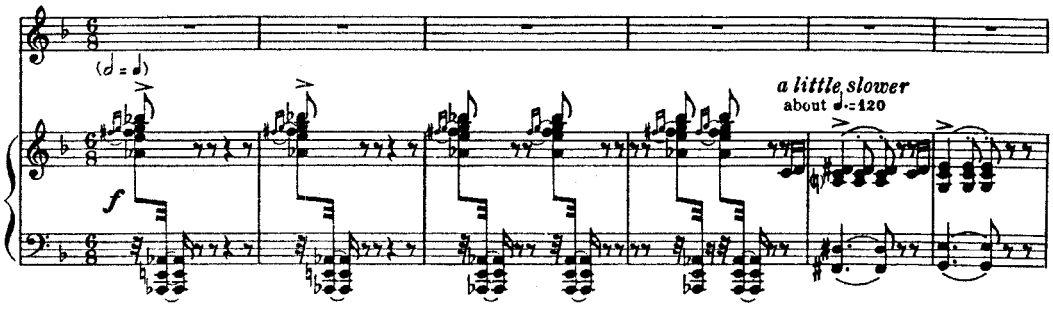
In section 2, mm 25-40 (also indicated "repeat ad lib"), the same band describes the procession ("Horses are prancing, Knights advancing; Helmets gleaming, Pennants streaming") in a relatively hushed D-major, maintaining both the sharp key signature and weak-beat "oom-pah" bass-line rhythm of section 1. The *piano* dynamic marking lends an air of reverential awe (appropriate in the presence of medieval nobles in battle finery), and a tighter rhyme scheme indicates that the boys' mood has changed from frantic exhilaration to moderately controlled wonder. The dominant-$7^{th}$ harmony in mm 30-32 flows seamlessly to the subdominant G chord by way of the passing tone A-sharp in the vocal line, allowing the absurd juxtaposition of images that follows to achieve maximum effect. The knights barely pass when Cleopatra (on her throne!) comes into view, accompanied by a trombone-like vocal line and harmonies moving downward chromatically from G to E chords in mm 33-36. The text, "That golden hair is all her own," speaks directly to her authenticity, and in a supreme boyish moment, Ives wrote the musical equivalent of an elbow to the ribs of an insufficiently impressed fellow parade watcher with the delightfully and literally off-beat tag, "her own," in mm 40.






*Musical example 2-9: "The Circus Band," mm 33-40*

Time-signature, key, and bands all change in mm 41. The meter shifts to 6/8 time, the key to F-major, and a different band (one that plays in a "flat" key and maintains a quarter-note/eighth-note bass-line rhythm) falls in to an eight bar "roll off" introduction, highlighting one of the most distinctive of Ives's devices, the "piano-drum" chord, more percussive than harmonic.[46] The band starts some distance off and Ives created a marvelous effect of spatial separation by de-synchronizing the right and left hands of the accompaniment such that the left hand sounds a 32nd rest off the beat. Fully assembled at mm 45, the band prepares to start section 3, mm49-64 in F-major.

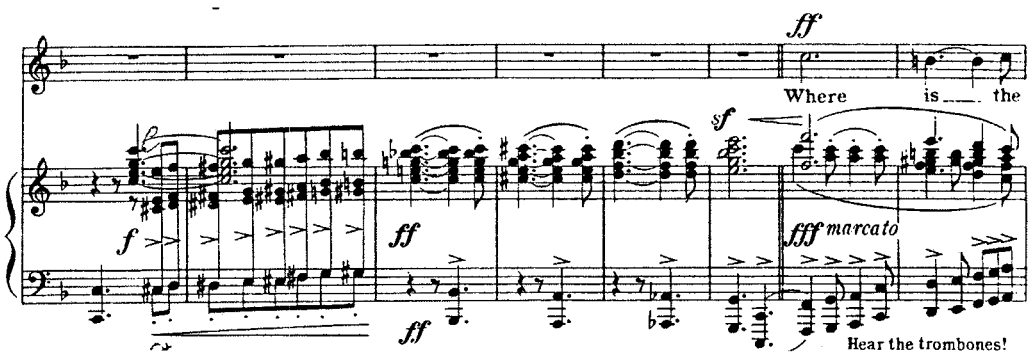





*Musical example 2-10: "The Circus Band," mm 41-46*

[46] *Memos,* 42-43 (opening credits of 20th Century Fox movies provide a good example of "roll off").

For the first time, the boy speaks apart from his friends, conducting an awkward, solitary search for the "lady all in pink." Though undeniably humorous, the lines "last year she waved to me I think/Can she have died? Can! that! rot!/She is passing but she sees me not" also contain panic and poignancy. Whereas the boy watched sections 1 and 2 with familiar joy, the roll-off into section 3 triggers a different set of emotions. The music sounds more relentless, heavier with marching brass in the bass and continuous chromatic passing notes in the treble, creating distinct levels of perspective: the parade watchers—the boy's friends included—are swept up in the raucous spectacle, oblivious to his private desperation. The absurdly amplified interlude section 4, mm 65-80, represents both the ever-increasing volume of childhood's revelry that swells to a disorienting crush of noise and confusion, and the boy's isolation as he searches for the cause of feelings he can't yet explain.






*Musical example 2-11: "The Circus Band," mm 75-82*

Section 5 transcends the physical capacities of a single pianist and instrument. Ives, in effect, allowed the singer to disappear, overwhelmed by the sonic enormity of the accompaniment, the repeated text (the same as that set in section 3) barely audible above the pianistic realization of "big circus joys." By marking the entrance *marcato triple-forte*

(an indication in force through the end of the song), Ives hilariously abandoned any sense of musical decorum. F-major remains the tonal framework, buffeted and stretched beyond recognition as both hands of the accompaniment collide and retreat in contrary streams of passing chords in the treble, crashing octaves in bass. Wooldridge rightly describes the song as, "anticipating the zest and precision of the best musical comedy traditions by 40 or 50 years,"[47] yet the emotional scene, relative to the young narrator, stands in direct opposition to the undeniable humor. For the boy, "The Circus Band" ends with the abruptness of waking from a nightmare. As he comes to understand his nascent adult perspectives, he will once more enjoy the celebrations of his youth, though never in the same way. With incredible insight, Ives used the ultimate public childhood spectacle to capture the essence of a young boy's private emotional metamorphosis.

***Memories: A. Very Pleasant; B. Rather Sad***
*1897; 75 mm; Text by Ives*[48]

"Memories" presents the shift from childhood to adult perspectives not as it gradually evolves, but as distinct in terms of character and tense, mystically juxtaposed. Rarely linear, recollection transports the bearer erratically through time and space, the smallest sensations often triggering a return to an emotional scenario seemingly long forgotten. The journey into the realm of past experiences provides both renewal and direction. We learn from our former selves, applying thoughts and actions from the past to present difficulties and new challenges, reminded of the constancy of ideas and the revitalizing potential of old perspectives in memory, a continuum of liquid time.

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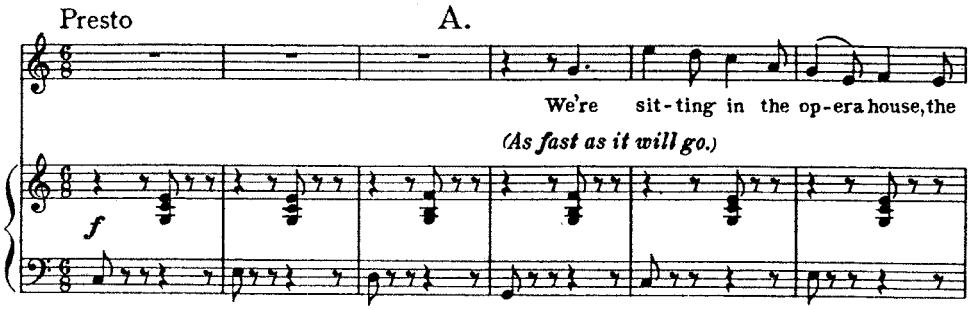
[47] Wooldridge, 81.
[48] Sinclair, 434.

Questions surrounding the nature of reminiscence form the psychological backdrop of the song, dualistic on many levels. The two halves form a whole not due to superficial likeness, but substantive compatibility. Past and present, childhood and adulthood, joy and melancholy, *presto* and *adagio*; each set of complementary opposites provides an important bracing element in the emotional structure of the song. Ives simply presented the dichotomies, making no attempt to reconcile them or suggest any primacy. The two perspectives have individual validity, further enhanced by juxtaposition: neither the boy nor the man speaks for the other. Ives employed a double-song format to depict a sense of double remembrance wherein his recollection and the representation of his father's conflate, rounding any linear sense of experience. George's future resonated as Charles's memory; George's own past formed his son's emotional heritage, kindling Charles's hope.

***A. Very Pleasant***

*We're sitting in the opera house, the opera house, the opera house;*
*We're waiting for the curtain to arise with wonders for our eyes;*
*We're feeling pretty gay, and well we may, "O, Jimmy, look" I say,*
*"The band is tuning up and soon will start to play."*
*We whistle and we hum, beat time with the drum.* [Whistle]
*We whistle and we hum, beat time with the drum.* [Whistle]
*We're sitting in the opera house, the opera house, the opera house;*
*We're waiting for the curtain to arise with wonders for our eyes,*
*a feeling of expectancy, a certain kind of ecstasy,*
*expectancy and ecstasy, expectancy and ecstasy, Sh's's's.* [Curtain!]

Ives gave the tempo marking *Presto* for Memory A ("Very Pleasant"), further indicating "*As fast as it will go*" parenthetically beneath the first vocal entrance in mm 4, implying that the singer not control the piece so much as set it loose. In C-major, 6/8-time, the accompaniment charges along in an incessant "boom-chuck" pattern of a single bass note in the left hand and triad in the right.





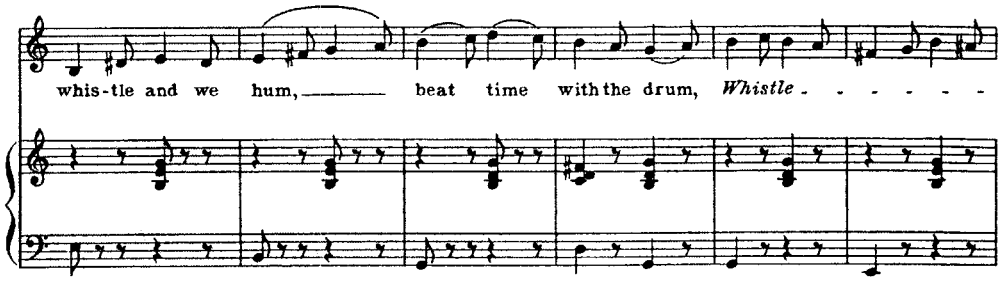

*Musical example 2-12: "Memories," mm 1-6*

In rough *ABA* form, the internal sections correspond to narrative perspective and key. Section A, mm 1-20 and section A□, mm 37-55, both in C-major, depict the two boys' anticipation of the show in present tense, what Feder calls "the time-frame of remembering" in psychoanalytic terms.[49] Sixteen-bar section B, mm 21-36, portrays the theater orchestra tuning in E-minor and the boys' real-time participation.

From the outset the vocal line fidgets, bounding along in the same "skipping" quarter-note/eighth-note rhythmic pattern that represented the child in "The Greatest Man."[50] E-naturals sung on the verbs "sitting" and "feeling" in mm 5 and 13 respectively punctuate the quasi-melodic declamation. Ives established a humorous

[49] Feder, *Song*, 250.
[50] Hitchcock, *Ives*, 15 (see note 17).

mood and the boys' impatience immediately by repeating the text "the opera house" three times in rapid succession, mm 6-8.[51] Overwhelming anticipation differs from surprise, however, and the narrators provide ample evidence of having seen the show before: they know that there will be "wonders" for their eyes, and that the tuning band will soon start to play. Ultimate proof of familiarity comes by way of their active participation in the show, whistling, humming, and beating time "with the drum" throughout section B. The singer must literally whistle after the repeated lines of text and though the phrases pass quickly, Ives added layers of details worth noting. Each whistling phrase is different, and more so than required by the fact that the second of the two phrases, mm 33-36, modulates back to the C-major tonality of section A□ .






*Musical example 2-13: "Memories," mm 29-34*

Enthusiastic experience supercedes accuracy for the boys, a not-so-subtle implication of the relative importance of precision in memory. The two have unquestionably absorbed the essence of the event, despite their seeming carelessness with some of the details. The music of section B, flavored with minor-mode melodic chromaticism, indicates the

[51] Perhaps not brilliant literature, Ives's poetry evokes mood to perfection; this text defies a slow reading. The opera house setting provides an important link to George and Ives most likely had Danbury's Taylor opera house in mind, where his father played and conducted (Rossiter, 38).

nature of the show, likely a review with depictions of exotic places and adventures.[52] Ives accomplished the modulation from the E-minor "band" key via a misspelled major dominant-7th chord in mm 35 and a half-diminished dominant chord in mm 36 acting as a root-less secondary dominant to C-major, the tonality of anticipation.

Measures 37-44 contain an exact quotation of mm 5-12. The vocal line in section A□ continues the musical repetition through mm 49, though to different text, the frantic incantation "expectancy and ecstasy." Underpinning the dramatic build-up, Ives established a pedal G in the left hand of the accompaniment in mm 49 and broke the "boom-chuck" rhythmic pattern. Half-diminished chords on the downbeats of mm 49 and 50 resolve to dominant-7th harmonies on the second beats, stretching the tonality; similar chords on the downbeats of mm 51 and 52 resolve to second-beat dominant-9th chords, pushing the top line of the accompaniment upward. In mm 53 and 54, Ives stacked half-diminished chords built on G in the left hand and F in the right hand of the accompaniment to support the climactic *forte* "Sh's's's" in the vocal line.[53] A dominant-7th chord tremolo in mm 55 spanning four octaves seems ready to burst into another declamation of C-major. Uncertain whether reality lies in front or behind, the listener sits in wonder with the boys as the curtain stands poised to be drawn. The chord never resolves, and "Memory B" starts unprepared in the tenuously related key of E-flat-major. Ives chose not to lift the veil, leaving that to the listener whom he abruptly placed in adulthood; in the void visible from either side, the past lives in memory, the future in imagination.

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[52] In vogue at the time, musical exoticism, chinoiserie, various "revival" architectural styles, etc., all sacrificed accuracy for commercial viability. Ives could well have been recalling some of the scandalous reviews of the Columbian Expo, where the striptease tune "Streets of Cairo" premiered (Swafford, 74). No proof exists that he saw the show; everyone who had, however, sang the tune.

[53] Though hardly in doubt, more proof of Ives's humor lies in the *crescendo* under the "Shhh."

***B. Rather Sad***

*From the street a strain on my ear doth fall,*

*a tune as threadbare as that "old red shawl,"*

*It is tattered, it is torn,*

*it shows signs of being worn,*

*It's the tune my Uncle hummed from early morn,*

*'Twas a common little thing and kind 'a sweet,*

*But 'twas sad and seemed to slow up both his feet;*

*I can see him shuffling down to the barn or to the town, a-humming.*

The lack of any transition between the two "Memories" raises many questions and stands as a powerful metaphor. No such transition exists in life, and the song—a two-part exposition on the singular concept of memory—provides another example of Ives's use of previously unconsidered technical means to convey powerfully accurate metaphysical ends. Do the boys of "Memory A" watch "Memory B" through the divide? Does the adult narrator of "Memory B" recall his experiences of "Memory A" in an interactive or cinematic fashion? Ironically, Ives highlighted rather than avoided the relationship of the two perspectives by choosing not to provide narrative direction. He encouraged active recollective participation by the listener, just as he allowed the boys to whistle and hum along with the tuning band.

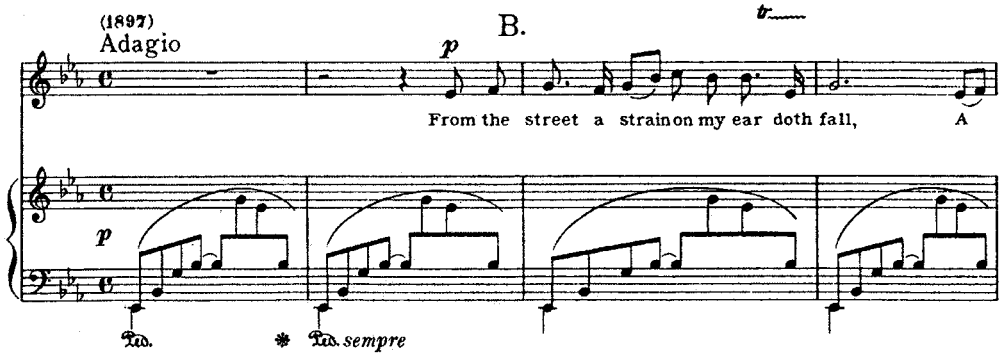
With its halting arpeggios and vulnerable, folk-like melodic line, "Memory B" conveys a depth of peaceful emotion, while entirely avoiding the mawkishness of the turn-of-the-century parlor song. Nearly opaque in its simplicity, it represents one of the finest moments of sheer beauty in the genre. Ives felt comfortable in the familiar styles

but took a great risk composing in them, having no guarantee that his contribution to the format, no matter how substantive, would receive any particular consideration.[54] Though often psychically crushing, Ives's artistic isolation liberated him from nearly all procedural constraints. He joined the "Uncle" of "Memory B" in his solitude, simultaneously burdened and sustained by his tune.

The harmonic progression of "Memory A" gallops along hindered only by the physical limitations of the performers; Ives indicated *adagio* for "Memory B" and created a musical backdrop of near-total stasis with the liquid, hypnotic accompaniment figures. He added rhythmic ambiguity and mild off-beat stress by tying the fourth and fifth eighth-notes together, further softening the mood. Harmonies change once per system rather than once per bar. The tonic arpeggio repeats five times in mm 56-60; a second-inversion dominant-7$^{th}$ chord sounds in mm 61-64, resolving to the tonic, mm 65-68 (avoiding the dominant root position creates a subtler harmonic atmosphere and decreases movement in the bass). Ives effected a seamless transition to the subdominant harmony (enhanced by C, the 6$^{th}$ scale-degree in the chord) mm 69-71; by writing a D-flat (the lowered 7$^{th}$ scale-degree in the tonic chord) as the pick-up to mm 69, he momentarily employed the tonic E-flat as a secondary dominant. Measure 72 contains a marvelous transition to the final statement of the tonic arpeggio, mm 73-75, with passing chromatic harmonies and half-diminished chords. Composed entirely of three primary arpeggios and connected with impressionistic subtlety, the accompaniment supports the text, a subconscious memory-scape of past images in present tense. Ives created an antique feel by using the words "doth" and "'Twas" and by likening the hummed tune to

[54] Though many disbelieve his contention that he never sought such consideration, especially from the establishment, the passive and active stylistic risks he took bear him out. His song output so disorients the analyst because his obviously successful heterogeneity exposed the fallibility of form and style.

an "old red shawl" tattered and torn with "signs of being worn," rendered tired and fragile not from abuse or neglect, but rather by a continual and loving overuse. The quotation marks around the words "old red shawl" imply a well-known tune, though rather than quote a recognizable pre-existing melody, Ives wrote a sentimental and familiar sounding song, "more nostalgic than truly unhappy."[55]



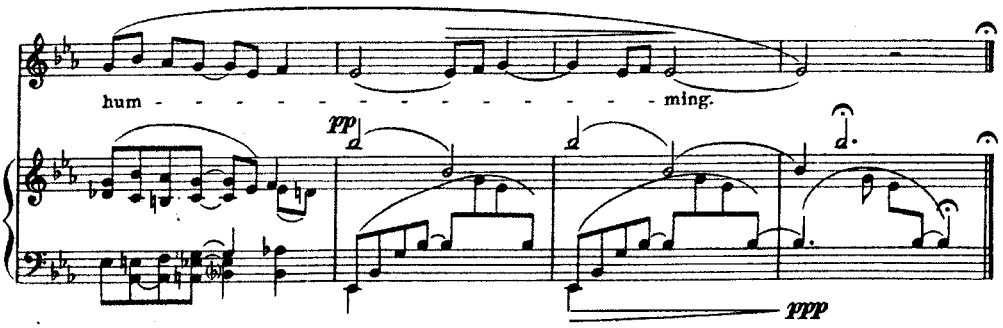

"Memories" © 1953 by PEER INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION

*Musical example 2-14: "Memories," mm 56-59*

A change in narrative tense in mm 64-69 reveals the source of sadness: even the present tense of remembering cannot change that the "Uncle" has died, his humming and slowing feet recalled in past tense. The text can refer to no literal Uncle of Ives's,[56] and seems most logically to represent George, but as teacher, friend, and colleague rather than father. The use of the Uncle figure allowed Ives to express love and sympathy for a departed mentor and relative, while shielding him from the pain of mentioning his father's death directly. Compelling proof of this theory exists in final system of music. For the first time, the narrator takes up the Uncle's humming tune in the transitional mm 72, the most complex of the song: the Uncle's music (actually George's) sounds

[55] Feder, *Song*, 251.
[56] Ibid.

harmonically more like a Brahms interlude than a Victorian ballad, though the accompaniment unobtrusively supports the tune just as George's training and teaching of cultivated procedures always made allowances for the inclusion of vernacular forms.






*Musical example 2-15: "Memories," mm 72-75*

A 4-3 suspension in the dominant-7$^{th}$ chord on beat four of mm 72 evaporates rather than resolves as the narrative tense returns to the recollective present: the leading-tone D-natural in the right hand remains a part of the commemorative act of humming, the non-verbal link between "Memories" A and B. On the downbeat of mm 73 the tonic arpeggio resumes, though accompanied by a lone half-note B-flat nearly four octaves above in the right hand, a span reminiscent of the unresolved tremolo in mm 55. A second half-note B-flat an octave below sounds on the third beat, completing the arpeggio started in the left hand and resolving the off-beat rhythmic tie. Imperceptible to the ear, this "help from above" creates a fascinating visual effect and stands as an undeniable metaphor, a musical intercession from a higher plane. Just as anticipation of the future gives balance to the boys' C-major perspective in "Memory A," appreciation of the past creates emotional equilibrium for the man in E-flat-major "Memory B." Mystically tying them together, a C played on George Ives's cornet sounds a B-flat.

***Songs my Mother taught me***
*1895/1902?; 40 mm; Text by Adolf Heyduk (1835-1923), English by Natalia Macfarran*[57]

***The Old Mother***
*1900; 43 mm; Text by Aasmund Olafsson Vinje (1818-1870), German by Edmund Lobedanz, English by Frederick Corder*[58]

Ives's relationship with his father forms the basis of the psychoanalytical studies of his life and work. Conversely, his interaction with his mother remains largely unknown. "The most striking thing about Mollie Ives," writes Feder expressing the majority opinion, "is the lack of information about her. Although we know that in his later life Charlie treated her with kindly respect, he barely acknowledges her in any of his biographical writing. . . .How can we account for this lack of recorded memory about one's mother in a man who was preoccupied with remembrance?"[59] Yet, before implying anything sinister about the relationship, Feder allows that "[t]he biographical absence of Mollie in the writings of Ives may well reflect a degree of stability and tranquility that constituted a positive contribution to her son's early development . . . there is no evidence in Charlie's early life that Mollie was anything but an excellent mother."[60] Ives's silence seems uncharacteristic but does not necessarily speak volumes: in his extensive writings concerning his father, he rarely highlighted issues unrelated to their shared musical sensibilities and experiences. What need existed to record the ordinary facts of everyday life? That his mother provided homely comfort in *post facto* anonymity speaks more to her maternal competence than to any mysterious alienation. Ives's two "mother songs" reflect a sincerity of devotion and affectionate appreciation.

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[57] Sinclair, 508.
[58] *Memos*, 173. Ives composed an earlier F-major setting of 35 mm in 1897-8 (Sinclair, 457).
[59] Feder, *Song*, 68-69.
[60] Ibid.

On one level they quite obviously represent the product of his work with Horatio Parker at Yale; Ives wrote the songs for Parker's class to texts previously and famously set by Dvorák and Grieg, making them easily accounted for as study pieces. Comparison with the originals, however, yields unexpected results. In both cases, Ives more than held his own, making distinct choices both in terms of construction and mood.[61] He had proved his competence as a song composer before he entered college, and a famous incident involving George Chadwick, Parker's teacher, stands as a singular moment of vindication for Ives at any point in his career. As he recounted in *Memos,*

> When Chadwick came in [to Parker's class], Parker [was] objecting to the too many keys in the middle of *Summerfields* . . . C. said "The melodic line has a natural continuity—it flows . . . as only good songs do. And [it's] different from Brahms, as in the piano part and the harmony it takes a more difficult and almost opposite [approach] to Brahms, for the active tranquility of the outdoor beauty of nature is harder to express than just quietude. In a way [it's] almost as good as Brahms." He winked at H. W. P. and said "That's as good a song as you could write."[62]

In his college compositions, Ives already had established a secure enough compositional voice to depart from or even oppose classical models. On a higher plane, Ives used these two songs as vehicles to express sentiments for which no words exist, and closer consideration of the pair dispels any inclination to define them as immature academic exercises. At least 20 and an experienced composer when he wrote these songs, Ives began them when his father had been dead less than a year. For all that he never wrote

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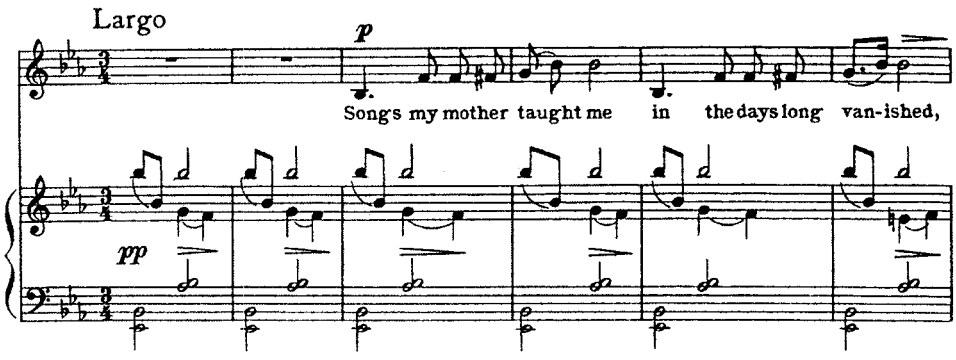
[61] In fact, Grieg's "Die alte Mutter" op. 33 #7 and Dvorák's "Als die alte Mutter" op. 55 #4—both in melancholic B-minor 6/8 time—resemble each other more than Ives's songs resemble theirs.
[62] *Memos*, 183-4.

or said about Mollie Ives, he chose in these two songs to set undeniably sympathetic poems addressing the subject of motherhood at a time when the loss of his father dominated his thoughts. Ives never gave a public voice to his mother who chose not to speak on the historical record. Instead, Ives immortalized her in two poignant and enduring musical portraits.

***Songs my Mother taught me***

The seamless transition from the end of "Memory B" to the beginning of "Songs my Mother taught me" provides the most spectacular of the many gratifying coincidences that occur in arranging the songs of children as a singular dramatic narrative. George's reassuring cornet tone, octave B-flats in mm 73-75 of "Memory B" merge with the Mollie's "teardrop" motive—also right hand octave B-flats, though rhythmically softer, two eighth-notes followed by a half-note in the 3/4 meter—that depicts her presence throughout "Songs my Mother taught me." The two musical parental elements combine intimately and completely, fused such that consideration of one without the other proves impossible in the context of narrative transition.






*Musical example 2-16: "Songs my Mother taught me," mm 1-6*

Though Ives did not intend the dramatic through-line proposed in the present study, his choice of similar motives to depict the memorial presence of his two parents speaks to a larger connectivity.[63] In "Memory B," Ives invoked his father's assistance to complete an unfinished structural element; in "Songs my mother taught me," he joined the motivic representation of his mother, musically expressing experiential empathy. A beautifully rounded journey in three parts, the song illustrates emotional development relative to a single recollective scenario, a mother teaching songs to her children.

*Songs my mother taught me in the days long vanished,*

*Seldom from her eyelids were the tear drops banished.*

*Now I teach my children each melodious measure*

*often tears are flowing from my memory's treasure.*

*Songs my mother taught me in the days long vanished,*

*Seldom from her eyelids were the tear drops banished.*[64]

The adult narrator recalls not only the instruction, but the ever-present tears, happily shed by the mother. Descending octave B-flat teardrop motives and subtle inner-voice suspensions remain a constant presence in section A, mm 1-14. Ives wrote a reassuring and pacific E-flat major in *largo* 3/4 time, a marked departure from Dvorák's nearly mournful B-minor that pits a 2/4 vocal meter against 6/8 in the accompaniment. The adult narrative perspective in section A contains elements of childish vulnerability: reaching upward toward the teardrop motive, the vocal line avoids E-flat until mm 8, expressing both a sense of awkwardness at the mother's outward display of emotion and an obliviousness to the responsibilities of adulthood, the concreteness of the tonic note.

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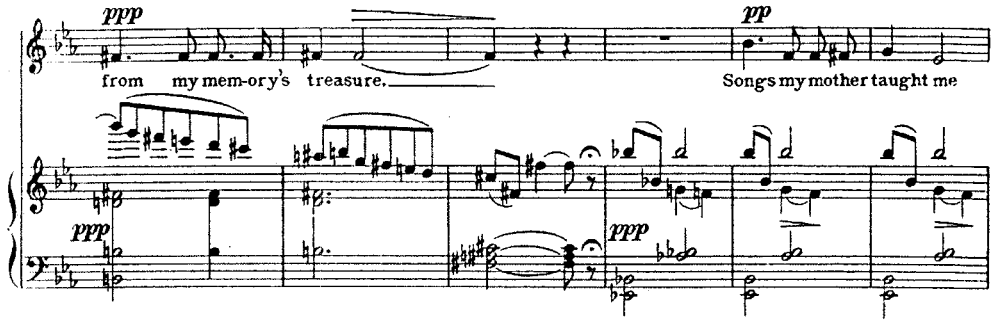
[63] This also mitigates the impression of Ives's paranoia concerning gender roles and music.

[64] Literal discrepancies between the German and English texts mean nothing in this instance: though an imperfect translation, the existing English poem has legitimacy and Ives set it as such.

The harmony moves to the subdominant with the initial vocal E-flat in mm 8 under the word "eyelids" and through the dominant B-flat chord in mm 9 to a tonic cadence in mm 10 under "banished," the completed first couplet of text ending on a half-note tonic E-flat. Ives repeated the text "were the tear drops banished" in mm 11-14 and gives the first hint of wistfulness in mm 11, with a second-beat diminished dominant-9$^{th}$ chord and an upward moving octave C-flat teardrop motive on beat three. Transitional measures 15 and 16 contain the dramatic shift from reminiscence to the narrator's present situation, parenthood, and transmitting the mother's songs to the next generation. As the adult child—of unspecified gender—faces reality, the upward moving teardrop motive glimpsed in mm 11 reappears, chromatically preparing a modulation to G-major with octave C-flats and C-naturals in mm 15 and C-sharps in the two-beat mm 16. The rhythmic hitch and abrupt arrival of G-major in mm 17 implies that parental responsibility often arrives regardless of readiness.

Section B, mm 17-26, depicts the completed transfer of parental duties and the empathetic application of the mother's teardrop figure, now octave D-naturals in tonicized G-major. Unlike the reassuring calm of section A, section B manifests the wondrous and often overwhelming untidiness of raising and teaching children. Ives obscured both key and rhythm in mm 20-26, while never allowing the song to devolve into disorder. In mm 19, the subdominant C chord, still recognizable as belonging to G-major, moves to a B-major chord in the two-beat mm 20 under the text "each melodious measure." Further highlighting the rhythmic ambiguity caused by the dropped beat in mm 20, Ives tied the half-diminished F-sharp-7$^{th}$ harmony over the bar line, creating a subtle, syncopated sobbing effect to accompany the words "often tears are flowing" in

mm 21. In another example of what Hitchcock cites as texts Ives "revised by strategic *repetition*,"[65] mm 22-23 contain a languorous reiteration of the word "flowing," set to passing chromatic harmonies in the left hand, upward striving teardrop motives in the right. Ives set the text "from my memory's treasure" in mm 24-25 to an unexpected and atmospheric B-minor harmony, hauntingly representing the flow of memory with a descending quasi-cadenza in the right hand, all moving to an F-sharp chord in mm 26.[66]






*Musical example 2-17: "Songs my Mother taught me," mm 24-29*

Section A', mm 27-40 again in limpid E-flat major, returns to the recollective mood of section A, though with a different melodic shape, one now informed by adult emotional experience. Moving in descending rather than ascending phrases, the simplified vocal line eschews most of the rhythmic elaboration of section A and no longer avoids stating the tonic note. The adult child realizes that he or she will soon live on only in future memory and inherited tradition. Underscoring the perpetual continuity of the experiential chain, Ives ended the song as it began, with a lone high B-flat.

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[65] Hitchcock, "Noise," 34.

[66] Ives revealed some of his own "memory's treasure": he deferred momentarily to Dvořák with the B-minor tonicization, and the cadenza figure sounds remarkably like Schumann in the close of "Hör' ich das Liedchen klingen," song 10 from *Dichterliebe*.

***The Old Mother***

Ives composed his first setting of the text in 1897 or 1898 for Parker.[67] In F-major, AAA' form, the 35-measure song maintains a sense of reverential sentimentality throughout. The later setting, considered here, surpasses the former in musical complexity and raises interesting questions relative to mood and inspiration. Why did Ives choose to re-set a foreign text, resulting in a song arguably more awkward and stylized? Having taken a full year of college German, he possessed sufficient command of the language and composed several successful *Lieder.* The text serves, in essence, as thanks and farewell to a dying or already deceased mother and shows motherhood as a continual process of toil and giving. Assuming Ives's full comprehension of the poem, the stylistic and atmospheric discrepancies between the two settings preserve his developing sentiments regarding the deterioration and death of his mother. In many ways, the later song reveals a man less reconciled with the fact.

*Du alte Mutter bist so arm, und schafffst im Schweiss wie Blut*
*(Old mother, you are poor, and toil in sweat and blood)*
*Doch immer noch ist's Herz dir warm*
*(Yet always is your heart warm)*
*Und du gabst mir den starken Arm und diesen wilden Muht.*
*(And you gave to me a strong arm and wild courage.)*
*Du wischtest ab die Thräne mein, war's mir im Herzen bang,*
*(You wiped away my tears that made my heart anxious,)*
*Und küsstest mich den Knaben dein,*
*(And kissed me, your little boy,)*
*Und hauchtest in die Brust hinein den siegesfrohen Sang.*
*(And breathed into my breast a triumphant happy song.)*
*Du gabst mir, was beseligt mich das weiche herz dazu;*
*(You gave me what makes me blissful, a tender heart;)*
*Drum Alte will ich lieben dich*
*(In all, Dear, will I love you)*
*Wohin mein Fuss auch richtet sich, wohl sonder Rast und Ruh*
*(Wherever my foot leads, until we separate in rest and peace.)*

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[67] Sinclair, 457.

Separated from the text, the accompaniment stands as a singularly peculiar expression of filial devotion. Ives employed harmonies that, when analyzable, create more a sense of eeriness than of affection, and he purposefully used this jarring opposition of textual and musical sentiments to create an atmosphere of genuine psychic uncertainty. In September 1894, George sent news that Mollie had "another new nurse."[68] Feder writes,

> Something happened to Mollie . . . that the family—including Ives himself—wished to keep private. Mollie was forty-five when the nurse was mentioned in George's last letter to Charlie. She may have been beginning to undergo some form of mental deterioration at that time in the nature of a mood disorder or even presenile dementia.[69]

The song inhabits two distinct planes. Ives articulated his very real love for his mother in the text and the melody, obviously feeling that he had left something unsaid in the initial setting, or that his expression lacked a particular essence that he needed to provide with different music. In the accompaniment, he painted an utterly, perhaps frighteningly realistic portrait, employing palpably uncomfortable music, not to disparage his mother, but to portray her sympathetically as she existed. Seen in this light, the song becomes a conversation between son and mother, rather than a musical oddity. An ode like no other, "The Old Mother" contains all of Ives's appreciation and concern, and the fear he had that as he came into his own, his mother would continue to slip away.

Written in ABA' form, the song starts tentatively in fragile G-major. Measures 1-4 serve as an introduction to section A, mm 1-15, and the harmony alternates between

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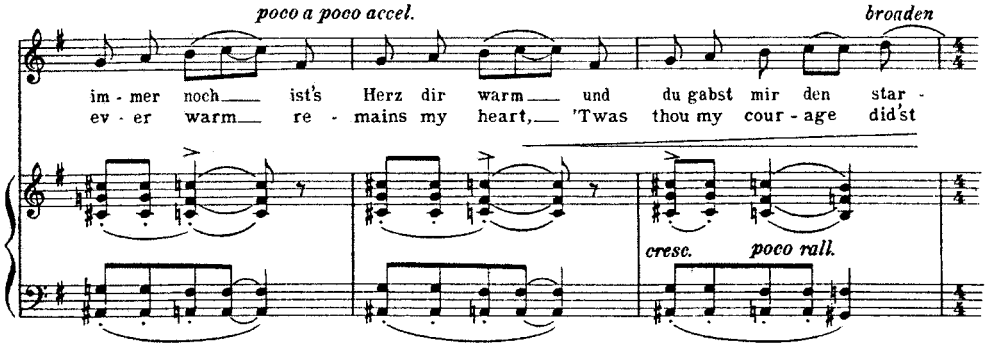
[68] Swafford, 85.
[69] Feder, *Song*, 227.

the tonic chord and an augmented dominant-7th chord in first-inversion with a sustained tonic G in the right hand. A pulsing, two-bar rhythmic pattern—four eighths plus a quarter, two eighths plus a dotted quarter and eighth rest in 3/4 time—repeats three times, mm 1-6. Under the text, "und schaffst im Schweiss, im Schweiss wie Blut" in mm 7-8, Ives set descending, transitional harmonies, a C-major-7th chord (with major followed by minor sevenths) in mm7 and a B-minor chord (with a minor seventh followed by a major sixth) in mm 8. The soothing vocal line matches—or perhaps directs—the downward motion and in mm 9-11 provides emotional stability to the muted, troubled accompaniment, a major sixth in the left hand and two stacked tritones a major third above in the right hand. This structural figure alternates between A-sharp and A-natural in the bass in mm 9-10, moving further chromatically downward in mm 11 to G-sharp.






*Musical example 2-18: "The Old Mother," mm 9-11*

As the narrator expresses thanks for "a strong arm and a wild courage," the texture broadens in the 4/4 mm 12, both hands pushing outward *forte, largamente* toward a dominant-9th of G-major. As if to indicate that the conversation had become too

stressful for the old mother, Ives returned abruptly in mm 13-15 to the calmer, though unstable, harmonies of mm 9-11, allowing for the mother to recover and preparing section B, mm 16-29.

Returning to a more emotionally sustainable conversation, the child recounts more details of motherly consolation and affection, the tears wiped away and an anxious heart soothed. Beneath the text, Ives established an uncertain F-sharp-minor tonality and a nervous texture that bounces back and forth between the hands of the accompaniment, evoking the mother's soft laughter as she remembers the events. Moving downward chromatically in the upper three voices over a bass C-sharp in mm 16-18, the accompaniment then shifts its tonal center to A-sharp and continues the downward chromatic progression through mm 24, preparing an emphatic cadence to F-sharp-major in mm 25 brought on by the recollection of one of the mother's greatest gifts, that of inspiring the triumphant happy song that has always remained in the narrator's heart. Again seeming to indicate the mother's inability to sustain even joyful animated conversation, Ives reduced the texture dramatically in mm 26-29—as he had in mm 13-15—alternating between tonic and flat-VI-$7^{th}$ chords in F-sharp-major.

Section A', mm 30-43, contains fourteen bars of exact musical repetition under text indicating that the mother has drifted away completely. The wistful reminiscences mix with the narrator's promise in mm 36-40 to love the old mother wherever life's journey may take him, until "*Rast und Ruh*," the peace of death. In the final three measures, Ives set a harmonic echo of the old mother beneath barely audible *sotto voce* repetitions, "*Mutter, Mutter, Mutter*," creating a bittersweet musical ellipsis coming to rest on an offbeat B-minor chord whispered in the accompaniment; *Rast und Ruh.*

***Remembrance***
*1921; 9 mm; Text by Ives, superscript quotation of Wordsworth, "The Solitary Reaper"*[70]

The final vignette in the songs by children, "Remembrance" stands both as an appropriate narrative destination and an ideological postlude. Three different texts, representing separate planes of consciousness, combine to form a complete reflective solitude. In the superscript, Ives quoted the English romantic poet William Wordsworth, "The music in my heart I bore/Long after it was heard no more" from "The Solitary Reaper,"[71] an ode of wonder and appreciation for the beauty of artistic inspiration in its purest form. In Wordsworth's poem, the speaker stops, unobserved, and listens to a "solitary Highland Lass/Reaping and singing by herself." Her voice fills the valley, more beautiful than the song of the nightingale or the cuckoo. He wonders what her song represents: longing, remembrance, "loss, or pain, that has been, and may be again?" In the full final stanza Wordsworth's narrator realizes,

> Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
> As if her song could have no ending;
> I saw her singing at her work,
> And o'er the sickle bending:—
> I listened, motionless and still;
> And, as I mounted up the hill,
> The music in my heart I bore,
> Long after it was heard no more

[70] Sinclair, 477.
[71] Wordsworth, 77 (from *Memorials of a Tour in Scotland*, published in 1803).

An eternal creative spirit—a joy in finding art expressed without artifice in the everyday—united Charles and his father during their lives and remained as a supernatural bond between the two after George's death. Ives gave the sense in his writings that he felt more like a chronicler of art as it existed in life than as a creative force bound either to serve or to defy myopic trends of formal expression, the mere outward accidents of musical communication. Just as Wordsworth bore the music of a lone girl at work in the fields, Ives and his father remained in constant contact with nature's song, learning together how best to transmit that which they carried in their hearts.

The text by Ives, "A sound of a distant horn, O'er shadowed lake is borne, my father's song," contains elements of time, space, nature, and memory. Ives employed present tense in the three fragments, each separated by a comma; the punctuation and odd number of phrases allow for multiple juxtapositions and readings. Coupling the first two phrases indicates that the "sound" travels over the lake, whereas pairing the final two fragments shifts the subjective focus to "my father's song." Though the "sound" and the "song" represent each other, the grammatical ambiguity in Ives's text allows for both a literal and metaphysical interpretation of the phrase "my father's song": both the singular aural event ("A sound" as opposed to "the sound," a recurrent sonic state) and the perennial evocation of memory as the result of sound and location.[72] Swafford writes,

> George would play for Charlie at increasing distances, or from across a pond, so the boy could gauge the effect of space on the tone. Charlie had an indelible memory of the sound of his father's cornet floating

[72] Ives made no decision on this point. The capitalized O in "O'er" argues for the latter pairing, the breath mark after "borne" (as well as the cadential feel of the second musical phrase) for the former.

> across the water. That image of a sound receding into an echoing distance came to symbolize to Charles Ives his entire relationship with his father.[73]

The final textual layer, though undeniable, remains unspoken. Ives quoted musically from his song "Hymn," grafting elements of the melody as a canon (which he described as an "echo") between the accompaniment and vocal line. The implied text "Inly I sigh for thy repose" hovers over the song.[74] "Remembrance" also exists in orchestrated form (as "Largo sostenuto, *The Pond*—[for] flute, harp, 2 violins, viola, cello, bass, piano, medium voice"),[75] which evolved from the earlier instrumental work, "The Pond," for flute, horn, violin, and piano.[76] In it, the horn plays the melody and Ives wrote the text in parentheses beneath.

Undeniably liquid and distinctly cold in vague, though recognizable, G-major, the nine measures of "Remembrance" encapsulate Ives's ability to create atmospheric music, perhaps best displayed in "The Unanswered Question," and "The Housatonic at Stockbridge."[77] He presented a world of natural serenity, visually and aurally portraying the pond with the arpeggiated accompaniment. The voice inspires the right hand accompaniment echo, "in canon one measure and one octave apart,"[78] the structural element representing Charles's lessons with his father in classical forms.

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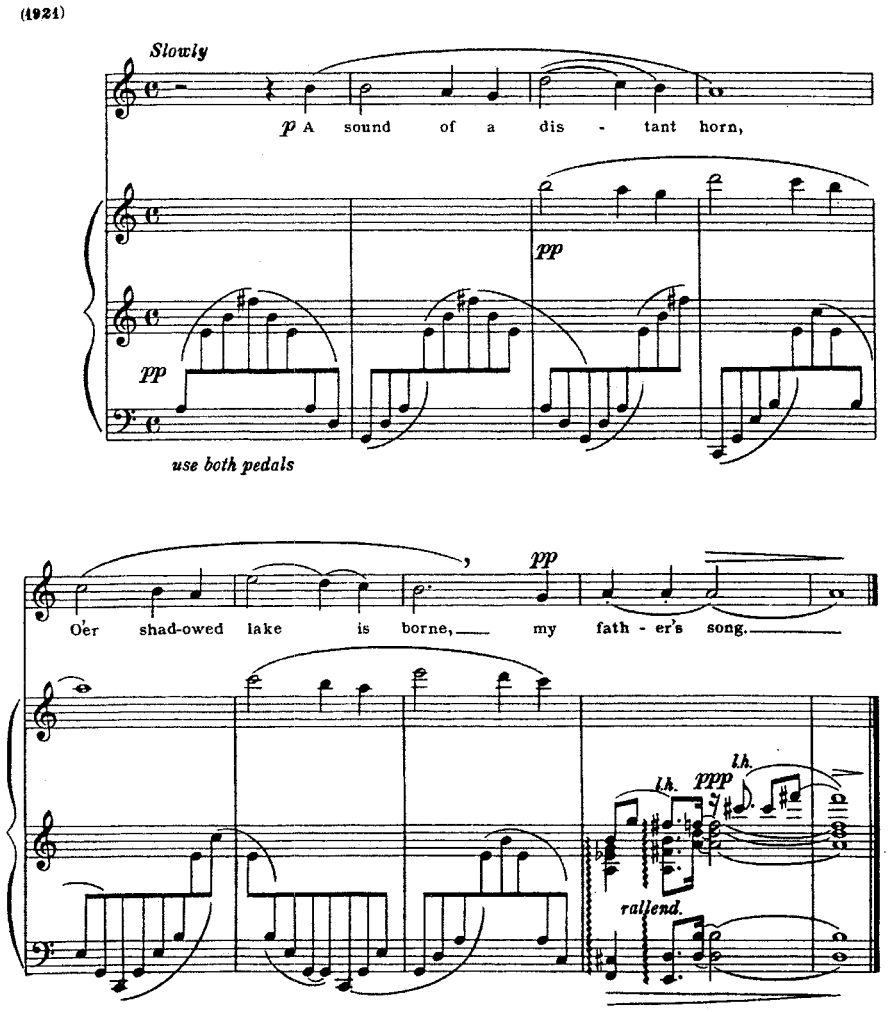
[73] Swafford, 92; "George Ives playing from across the water and across the years" (178).
[74] "Hymn," No. 20, *114* Songs. Invoking Emerson and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. as well, Ives quoted a conversation between the two about "the greatest hymn" as a superscript to the song, arranged from the first movement, "Largo Cantabile," of *A Set of Three Short Pieces* (Sinclair, 180).
[75] *Memos*, 157. The voice part (optional) may be played by a trumpet or Bassett horn (Sinclair, 111).
[76] Sinclair, 72.
[77] One of his best known works, Ives composed in 1906 or 1907 "The Unanswered Question," a musical/philosophical dialectic for trumpet, winds, and strings. Ives may have sketched the orchestral version of "The Housatonic at Stockbridge" in 1908, the year of his marriage to Harmony; he wrote a song version in 1921 (Sinclair 39, 128, 398).
[78] Starr, *Union*, 141.






*Musical example 2-19: "Remembrance," (complete)*

Something—a sound or a memory—breaks the liquid surface of the musical texture interrupting the echo in mm 8 beneath the words "my father's song." From out of the sonic splash created by mystical rolled chords in the accompaniment emerges one final, poignant tribute to George in George's own "words": out of time and key, the opening notes of the bugle call "Taps" ring out from the physical and temporal distance.[79]

[79] Starr (*Union*, 143), Feder (*Song*, 2), and Burkholder (*Tunes*, 361) all note this.

Ives kept an intensely close circle of influences, drawing on them continually and in varying combination as if, having absorbed aspects of their various philosophies, each became interchangeable parts of his intellectual whole. Besides his father, Ives took inspiration in "Remembrance" from Wordsworth and, by quoting "Hymn," Emerson and Oliver Wendell Holmes as well. The centrality of the pond and the dramatic and musical use of echo, however, suggest most profoundly the influence of Thoreau, the "reassuring and true friend" who comforted Ives on that "one 'low' day, when the sun had gone down, long, long before sunset."[80] Rossiter writes, "In the life of the philosopher of Walden, Ives seems to have sensed an analogy to his own musical isolation and his own tendency to reclusion."[81] Thoreau wrote in *Walden* of the sounds that Ives heard and set—eternal sounds of memory.

> There came to me in this case a melody which the air had strained, and which had conversed with every leaf and needle of the wood, that portion of the sound which the elements had taken up and modulated and echoed from vale to vale. The echo is, to some extent, an original sound, and therein is the magic and charm of it. It is not merely a repetition of what was worth repeating. . . .[82]

Ives's expression of childhood's narrative spanned his entire compositional lifetime. His songs of children present every age, rejoice and agonize over each transition, and defy death in celebrating life and immortalizing memory. In these songs, where childhood sentiment and perspective do not merely repeat, Ives truly sang with loving desperation, "as if his song could have no ending."

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[80] *Essays*, 67.
[81] Rossiter, 105.
[82] Thoreau, *Walden*, 83.

# CHAPTER 3

## *The Golden Mingling with the Gray: Songs by Parents*

Parenthood undergoes dynamic shaping both by children and childhood. Parents tend to rear as they were raised or in a diametrically opposed manner attempting to erase all memory of childhood conflicts. For an undertaking necessarily approached with methodical, almost mundane practicality, parents recall parenting with a uniquely charged sentimentality; in no other pursuit do memories grow in three dimensions, emotional sovereignty and self-determination. Enormous concepts, creation and sacrifice define parenthood; having produced a son or daughter, what reasonable parent hesitates to take on any difficulty or inconvenience to keep the child safe from harm and free from unnecessary pain? Like childhood, parenthood is a permanent, self-perpetuating state of being. Though a composer can claim that his works outlast him and take on, to a certain extent, the distinct personality of each performer, none proposes that a symphony or a song will remember him; none alleges that a composition can chase a band, watch a leopard, be a flower, or have a soul. For Ives, musical animation lay not in a heroic act of creation on the part of the artist but rather in the successful re-creation of an individual personality or recollection. His songs of parenthood contain such vitality because they present memory as a living thing, a free exchange of sentiment and experience transcending time and circumstance. His memories mingle with those of the listener and live again; few could deny with any certainty the mutual and ongoing nature of the exchange.

The phases of Ives's life overlapped unexpectedly, as enharmonic modulations rather than marked transitions, and his short, immensely poignant final letter to his father seems somehow appropriate in its irony. He last wrote to George of a letter he had previously left incomplete: "I started a letter Sunday evening to you but left it before I had finished, to go over to Dwight Hall as Mullally wanted to have me go with him to hear the Rev. Mr. Twichell of Hartford."[1] College life took precedence that night over writing letters, and the event which distracted him from George was a talk—most likely an essay in the Emersonian mode—delivered by the Reverend Joe Twichell, pastor of the Asylum Hill Congregational Church, Civil War chaplain at Gettysburg,[2] protégé of the controversial liberal theologian Horace Bushnell, part of the intellectual society at Nook Farm, and lifelong friend and confidante of Mark Twain (known as "Uncle Mark" to the Twichell children). Ives returned that night to his correspondence to make a final request of his father: send "Harmony."[3] She arrived thanks to Reverend Twichell and, thanks to George, Charles stood ready to receive her.

Twenty-year-old Harmony Twichell and twenty-one-year-old Charles Ives became officially acquainted in 1896 during a Twichell family summer vacation in the Adirondacks; they had assuredly met before then at Yale.[4] Harmony's brother, Dave, originally entered Yale as a member of the class of 1897. He graduated with his friend Charles Ives and the class of 1898, crucial to Ives's social progress and ultimate college success.[5] Dave, a Yale "big man," played football, served as the class deacon and

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[1] Archive, 33/1.
[2] Twichell "heard Lincoln give his little address a year after the battle of Gettysburg. Probably he heard, now and again . . . the best band in the army, led by teenaged George Ives." (Swafford, 171).
[3] Archive, 33/1; *Harmony*, "that book of B. Cornwallis that Dr. Stoekel used."
[4] Feder, *Song*, 156.
[5] Rossiter, 75-78.

president of the Football Association, and was voted best-looking man in the class.[6] Charles Ives, a member of Dave's inner circle of friends, became, in effect, a part of the Twichell family. In this intimate, yet purely platonic, social context, Ives came to know some of the everyday habits of his future wife. He took Harmony to his Yale junior prom as a friend where, in keeping with the Twichell tradition of being the most attractive person in any room, she was selected queen.[7] Charles and Harmony unwittingly founded their future relationship on relaxed familiarity during his college years; in retrospect, imagining Ives married to a woman with whom he had not established a genuine rapport seems impossible. Though developing an intimate friendship between genders represented a genuine accomplishment in the prevailing Victorian social climate, and though he possessed more artistic than romantic passion, Ives knew bachelorhood did not suit him. The problem was that for all his charisma, talent, and ambition, so obvious to his Yale friends, he somehow felt impossibly insecure around women. He needed an improbably secure woman to help him navigate the terrors of courtship. In every sense, he needed Harmony in his life.

On June 4, 1876, Joe Twichell and Julia Harmony Twichell (née Cushman), welcomed their fifth child into the world, giving her Julia's middle name.[8] Initially educated at home by her mother, she grew up in an intellectually charged environment, in constant contact with the likes of "aunt" Harriet Beecher Stowe, "uncles" John Greenleaf Whittier and—of course—Mark Twain. She also felt at ease in the prevailing atmosphere of progressive theology, Bushnell's brand of Christianity, filtered through

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[6] Swafford, 119.
[7] Ibid., 129.
[8] Feder, *Song*, 201. The Twichells had nine children, "a doctor, a minister, several good wives, a nurse and a good wife to a genius, and a couple of wandering souls." (Swafford, 173).

transcendental immanence, refined and advanced by her father and others.[9] After attending finishing school she decided in 1898, to become a nurse. An invaluable asset in this capacity to family and friends (and ultimately to Ives himself), she intended to work with the urban poor. On receiving her degree as a Registered Nurse in October 1900, Harmony delivered a graduation speech, detailing her perception of the difficult but important work of nursing; what the world saw as the choice to give up "a great deal," she embraced as the "privileges bestowed by the profession."[10] The innate sense of altruistic sacrifice as ennobling defined her character throughout her life, which she spent helping others. In 1903 she served "as companion and nurse" to her brother, Dave, during a month's rest necessitated by the rigors of medical school; she assisted many friends of the family in similar ways.[11] Little time remained for a social life. In 1904 she worked as a visiting nurse with Dave at the Trudeau Sanitarium in Lake Saranac, New York where he had begun his career as a specialist treating tuberculosis. Then, as Kirkpatrick matter-of-factly notes, "[in fall] 1904 she was briefly engaged to Rev. Walter Lowrie, son of a family she had visited other summers in Keene Valley. It may have been early in 1905 that she met Charlie Ives again."[12]

Perhaps as early as the summer of 1896, or shortly thereafter, Harmony seems to have quietly committed herself to Charles. Outside her choice to undertake a career in

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[9] Swafford, 173.

[10] *Memos*, 275: "So many are the gains that it is difficult to enumerate them, but in the first and to my mind the biggest place come the unique and constant opportunities of succouring [sic] others. It is true that such opportunities are constantly occurring in all walks of life, but we are peculiarly fortunate in having them made part of our daily routine, in having them put before us in such a way that they must be patent to us. We are *forced* into alleviating pain, into doing things that are necessary for the comfort of those less fortunate than ourselves. It is really a great piece of good luck, all this, for it is proved that the fullest development individually comes from altruistic effort, and fullest development means in the end the greatest usefulness and happiness."

[11] Feder, *Song*, 203.

[12] *Memos*, 276.

nursing, this stands as perhaps the one reasonable explanation why she—one of Connecticut's most marriageable daughters—lived, as it seemed to the world, the life of a spinster aunt until well past marrying age. Besides, no woman unconvinced of her own intentions would have tolerated Ives's nearly undetectable mode of courtship. The glances, unrecorded banter, intellectual sparring, and the friendly intimacy that the two developed during their extended habituation remains undisclosed. During the next dozen years they accompanied each other through the phases of acquaintance, friendship, courtship, and the artistic consummation of their relationship in the creation of two songs—"The World's Highway" and "Spring Song"—all before the blissful inevitability of their wedding.[13]

Harmony was thirty-two when she and Charles wed in June of 1908, married by her father. For Ives, the marriage represented the realization of countless dreams, known and unknown; fatherhood, the fulfillment of his own childhood, and the dream of a partner who would fathom the scope of his vision, tolerate his darker moods, and amplify his artistic spirit. Had Ives married someone not possessing an artistic sensibility, neither could have survived it. In Harmony's words, his musical instincts found an empathetic voice. After their marriage, parenthood, actual rather than artistic, became first in their minds. As Feder writes, "Both were poised for it, Harmony eagerly and fervently, Ives quietly, deeply. Her poems written for Ives to set to music all contain scarcely disguised metaphors of impregnation and generation."[14] Twelve years of familiarity and affection, of mutual experience and artistic growth led to the natural union both assumed would produce many long-awaited children.

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[13] Feder, *Song*, 204-205.
[14] Ibid., 215.

Ives's parental sentiment was so desperate, in part, because he never achieved biological parenthood; he and Harmony came palpably, agonizingly close. After only ten months of marriage, the one child they did produce died before birth. This most natural of states represented one of the very few non-successes in their life, and no amount of toil or talent could change that. In April 1909, Harmony Twichell Ives entered a hospital in New York City with internal bleeding. The newlywed Iveses lost their only natural child and any possibility of others in the resulting emergency hysterectomy.[15] The bond between them strengthened, and they became utterly dependent on each other after the tragedy. Harmony "recovered medically from an event from which full psychological recovery is scarcely possible"[16]; together they made her recovery a reality by completing each other, and looked for other ways to fulfill their need for a family. Swafford writes,

> Harmony had been involved in the Fresh Air Program from its inception, and during the summer the Iveses opened up Deac's house, their cottage, to poor urban families. The first family arrived in mid-July 1915. They were succeeded by the Osbornes, a mother and five children; another child or two stayed in New York with their father. One of the Osborne children was a sickly girl of fourteen months named Edith. The Ives family had taken in the needy for generations and Harmony had been a nurse to the poor. When the Osbornes left in August, the Iveses naturally offered to take care of Edith until she was well again. They soon began to feel they could not giver her up.[17]

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[15] Feder, *Life*, 113.
[16] Feder, *Song*, 216.
[17] Swafford, 273. "Deac," Harmony's oldest brother, Edward Carrington Twichell, often stayed in Redding. One of the aforementioned Twichell "wandering souls," he became a favorite of Ives's.

The Iveses arranged to adopt Edith in 1916, paying the family an undisclosed amount. On October 18, 1916 Ives noted in his and Harmony's diary, "Our Book," "Edith now our own. Edith Osborne Ives."[18] Charles and Harmony chose not to succumb to devastation or alienation at the loss of natural parenthood. Though their dream of parenthood metamorphosed nightmarishly from expectation to mourning, this grief led not to lasting retrospective despair but to life-long, transcendent optimism. Though neither believed in superficial or sentimental cheerfulness for its own sake (ample biographical and autobiographical proof exists of darker moods and human frailties in them both), they, nevertheless, believed in the goodness of creation, a fundamental tenet of their philosophical and supernatural ethos. Thus, their marriage proved eminently fruitful in different ways, both as a testament to their enduring love and as a constant source of reassurance and inspiration for Ives. He wrote unequivocally in his *Memos*,

> One thing I am certain of is 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 won't put down, because she won't let me. But I am going to put down this at least:— . . . she never once said or suggested that there was something wrong with me—a thing implied, if not expressed by everybody else, including members of the family. . . . She urged me on my way—to be myself! *She* gave me not only help but a confidence that no one else since father had given me.[19]

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[18] Ibid., 274. Ives supported the family even after the adoption. His secretary, Katherine Verplanck wrote, "After the Iveses took Edith, her family bothered him to death for more money, and he kept giving to them." By Swafford's reckoning, Ives may in total have paid the equivalent of $500,000.

[19] *Memos*, 43.

***A SCOTCH LULLABY***
*1896; 20mm; Text by Charles Edmund Merrill Jr.*[20]

***BERCEUSE***
*1900 (?); 21mm; Text by Ives*[21]

***CRADLE SONG***
*1919; 9mm (24mm with written repeats); Text by Augusta L. Ives, collected in Musical Spelling Book, Isaac Ives, ed. (1846)*[22]

A lullaby embodies musical reassurance; active for the parent, passive for the child transported to a world where words are indistinguishable and communication is more a feeling than a sound. The child nonetheless recognizes even in a half-conscious state the absolute safety in these sounds, a bridge between life and dreams. Considered together, the three Ives lullabies form a fascinating retrospective. In the years between the composition of "A Scotch Lullaby" and "Cradle Song," Ives's direct experience with parenthood evolved from the purely theoretical to the actual, involving both life and death. No mere lilting set pieces, the three serve as working lullabies and depict not only heart-warming and familiar scenes of singing a child to sleep, but a young parent's emotions and conspicuous need to provide absolute protection. With a rhythmic pause, a metric shift, or a dynamic indication, Ives subtly but undeniably crafted each song to indicate that the listening baby actually falls asleep. In all of the lullabies nature serves a discernable narrative purpose, and Ives employed similar moods and structural elements in each to convey the outside world. Whether acting as a hostile force kept at bay or a

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[20] Sinclair, 341-342. Merrill was a Yale '98 classmate.
[21] Ibid., 220-221. Ives composed a fourth lullaby in or around 1900, a setting of the famous "Wiegenlied" text set by Brahms and others. "A few years later," Hitchcock writes, "Ives adapted his music to an English-language text of his own . . . ." (Hitchcock, "Noise," 39). Considered here as "Berceuse," 1903 seems the best estimate for the year of composition/adaptation.
[22] Ibid., 362-363.

welcome partner providing assistance in soothing the child, nature provides a boundless backdrop against which Ives cast the constant, steadfast force of parental love.

***A Scotch Lullaby***

Ives and Yale classmate Edmund Merrill, Jr., collaborated on "A Scotch Lullaby," one of Ives's earliest publishing successes, for publication in the Yale *Courant*, Vol. 33, No. 5, December 1896.[23] As with all of the works he composed while at Yale, however, nothing besides the date of composition indicates a "student" exercise in the pejorative sense. "A Scotch Lullaby" not only reveals a fully mature mastery of compositional style, but also surprisingly well-developed parental sensibilities. Following Merrill's text (written in Scot's dialect), Ives depicted nature and the outside world as harsh and antagonistic; the mother provides both consolation and protection from the elements, reassuring the child with her presence and offering her body as a bed.

*Blaw! skirlin' win'! raw, tirlin' win! Nowt reck we*

*In the byre the coo's gly an' warm, By the fire na wink o' storm,*

*Whaup on the wing, Snaw on the tree, Thou wi' me*

*Thy mither's breast shall be thy rest*

*Close thy bonnie e'e Sleep! Sleep! Sleep! Sleep!*

*A' shieddit fae harm Whiles couthie shall guard thee Mither's arm.*

*Sleep! Sleep! Sleep! Sleep! She'll still be near.*

*Naething shall fley thy rest, Sae dinna fear*

*Sleep on thy mither's breast.*

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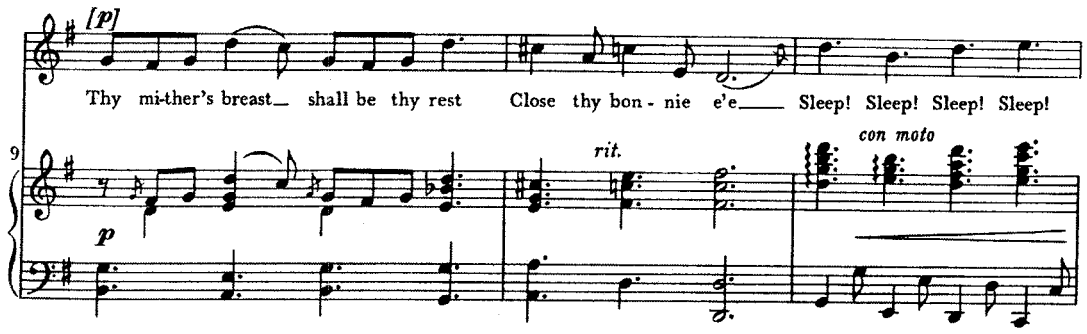
[23] Wooldridge, 90. Also published in 1896: the song "William Will," a McKinley campaign song, and "For You & Me," a part-song performed by the Yale Glee Club.

"A Scotch Lullaby" represents one of Ives's finest examples of ennobling a vernacular format. The song manifests many outward characteristics of a turn-of-the-century parlor song; rather than avoiding the style, Ives embraced and adapted it to his purposes. Often defying his listeners' expectations regarding melodic form and harmonic structures, his subtle changes and substantive innovations shine in greater relief. In lilting 12/8 meter, the G-major verse-and-refrain lullaby begins with a two-measure introduction. A tonic G sounds alone in the bass, followed by a C-sharp grace-note to the open fifth scale-degree D-natural on the pick-up to the second beat of mm 1. These two elements help to establish a Highland flavor, reminiscent of a bagpipe or hurdy-gurdy drone. Ives wrote a standard parlor-style cadence in mm 2, a sentimental sounding half-diminished subdominant to dominant-7$^{th}$ progression that ushers in the two four-bar verse phrases. In the first phrase the narrator presents the forbidding natural scene, describing the shrieking ("skirlin'"), twirling wind.[24] Rising to E-natural on the downbeat of mm 4 on the words "Nowt reck we" ("Naught reckon we" or "why should we worry?"), the young mother establishes her control of the situation, affirmed by the purposeful, upward, stepwise motion in the bass. As if revealing her secret concerns for an instant, Ives wrote a gentle, heartfelt minor-subdominant to dominant-7$^{th}$ progression within the fourth beat. Further explaining away any reason to fear, she notes in mm 5-6 the normalcy surrounding them and the protection provided by their farm—"In the byre the coo's gly an' warm/By the fire na wink o' storm" ("In the barn the cow's happy and warm/ by the fire there's no hint of the storm"). Beneath these reassurances Ives wrote harmonic sequences hinting at a tonicization of B-major that

[24] Nothing in the song indicates gender specificity in terms of performance. Sung by a man, references to the mother show respect for her unique capacity to comfort; sung by a woman, the third-person indication establishes motherhood as an abstract, universal concept, and represents constancy.

dissolves quickly into a dominant cadence to the tonic G chord on the downbeat of mm 7, the start of the second four-bar verse phrase. After more scenic description ("curlew flying, snow in the trees"), she personalizes the assurance and offers herself rather than the house as the true physical source of comfort. Measures 7-8 repeat the music of mm 3-4; but as the young mother sings in mm 9-10 "Thy mither's breast shall be thy rest/Close thy bonnie e'e," Ives added touching, unexpected harmonic elements: a supertonic-7th chord under the word "breast," a minor-tonic chord under the word "rest." An echo of the half-diminished subdominant to dominant-7th progression from the introduction leaves the second verse phrase harmonically open, blended seamlessly into the start of the first refrain section, mm 11-14.




"A Scotch Lullaby" © 1968 by Associated Music Publishers, Inc.

*Musical example 3-1: "A Scotch Lullaby," mm 9-11*

The mother gently entreats the child, "Sleep! Sleep! Sleep! Sleep!" in mm 11. Ives created here a visual and aural span between the top three lines of the accompaniment supporting the vocal line and the bass line, moving in stepwise octaves down the full range of the tonic scale in mm 11-12; by doing so, he gave both a sense of calm and separation between states of consciousness. As the child drifts off to sleep, the mother once again finds herself harmonically distracted; under the text "Whiles couthie

shall guard thee Mither's arm" ("while snugly mother's arm will guard you"), Ives tonicized B-major in mm 13-14, fully realizing the partial tonicization of mm 6. As the young mother waits to see if the baby has fallen asleep, two eighth-note F-sharps—the dominant in B-major—sound in the top of the accompaniment in beat three of mm 14, each under a *fermata.* On beat four, either the child stirs or the mother hears a noise; something breaks the state of suspended animation and an abrupt cadence to G-major leads immediately into the second refrain phrase, mm 15-18. The mother once again soothes the child, "Sleep! Sleep! Sleep! Sleep!"; the accompaniment in mm 15-16 echoes that of mm 11-12, the bass again moving gently down the tonic scale. Ives added more poignant harmonic colors to her final lines of text, sung as much to herself as to her sleeping child; rocking between the tonic chord in first inversion and a diminished-7$^{th}$ chord in beats one through three, then moving to the minor subdominant in beat four under the words "Naething shall fley thy rest, Sae dinna fear" ("Nothing shall frighten you in your sleep, don't be afraid"), the harmonies confirm the mother's ability to provide comfort and protection. A plagal cadence in mm 18, beneath the triple-*piano* "Sleep on the mither's breast," imparts an appropriately hallowed air. Though the lullaby has ended, the song—and the routine—remain incomplete. The mother soon will need to sing her baby to sleep once more, and in the coda, mm 19-20, Ives created an ethereal air of perpetuity. High in the right hand of the accompaniment, a lilting melodic figure outlines the tonic arpeggio; a crystalline tonic-9$^{th}$ to dominant-7$^{th}$ progression and a Schubertian turn prepare the final tonic cadence, little more than a vapor, the three notes spanning more than two octaves. Mother and child have slept through the night, warm and safe by the fire.

***Berceuse***

Ives's text for "Berceuse" shows the natural world in an entirely different light, giving it a voice as a gentle mother singing her own lullaby of sunset and warm breezes. Night provides a blanket of security for the sleeping baby, protecting her until daybreak.

> *O'er the mountain towards the west, as the children go to rest,*
>
> *Faintly comes a sound, a song of nature hovers round,*
>
> *'Tis the beauty of the night; Sleep thee well till morning light.*

Feder describes Ives's text as having a "Thoreauvian ring"[25] and, indeed, Ives personified nature here much as Thoreau did in Walden. Though the song contains undeniable transcendental elements, in choosing the title—French for lullaby—Ives left no doubt of the song's purpose. Rather than subsuming human images and actions into a larger philosophical metaphor, he employed the natural world in a personal manner. The "song of nature hovers round," welcomed in through an open window on a warm summer evening to help soothe both parent and child. Hitchcock writes,

> The moment described is that when "the children go to rest"—a sweet suggestion of twilight. Especially striking is the richness of natural phenomena—a mountain, a sound, nighttime beauty, dawn's early light. And especially evocative is the identification of that nighttime beauty with a sound, "a song of nature." This centering of the song on *sound*, I suggest, is quintessentially Ivesian, as is the elevation of sound itself to a height verging on the divine—but a transcendental, natural Divinity, not an anthropomorphic one.[26]

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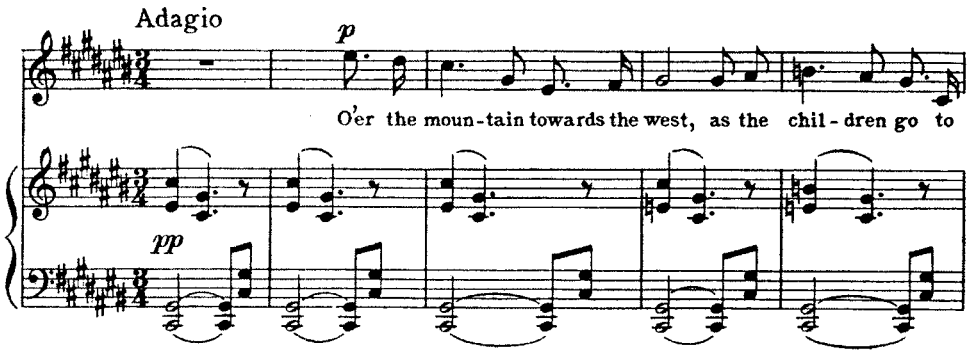
[25] Feder, *Studies*, 163.
[26] Hitchcock, "Noise," 40.

The choice of C-sharp-major as the key hints at the fragile, indefinable line that separates sleeping from waking;[27] the near-constant bass left hand rhythm—a half-note tied to an eighth followed by an eighth in 3/4 meter—indicates the breathing pattern of the sleeping child. Ives created a sense of static hovering in the accompaniment; the first harmonic move comes in mm 4 and 5, a subtle shifts from the tonic to the minor tonic and minor tonic-7th chords (the latter under the word "children"), returning to the major tonic chord with the word "rest" in mm 6.






*Musical example 3-2: "Berceuse," mm 1-5*

After six bars of tonic harmony with only subtle variations, the simple shift to the subdominant-7th chord in mm 7-8 comes as an arrestingly beautiful and effective surprise. These two measures, combined with the ambiguous dominant-9th harmony in mm 9-10, depict the faint sounds of nature. Beginning in mm 11 and the return to the tonic chord beneath "beauty," Ives added an additional echo of nature, a bird-like melodic figure in the right hand of the accompaniment, a nightingale repeating a three note motive, oblivious to yet not disruptive of the overall accompaniment texture.

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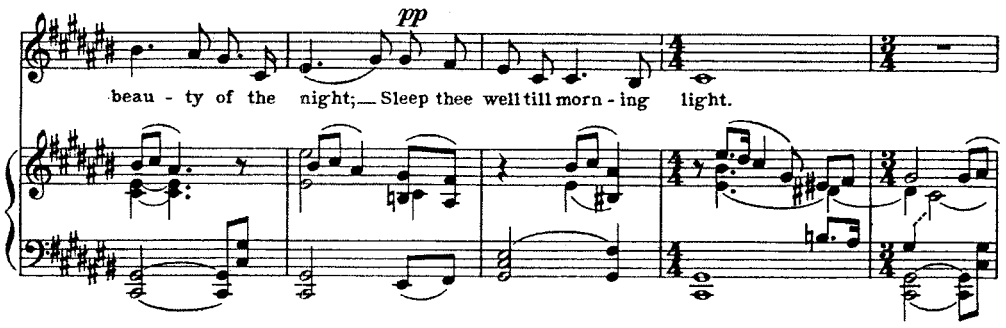
[27] Beyond this, Ives may have subtly commented on the incompleteness of natural peace by avoiding the "heavenly" key of C-major ("Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you." John xiv: 27).



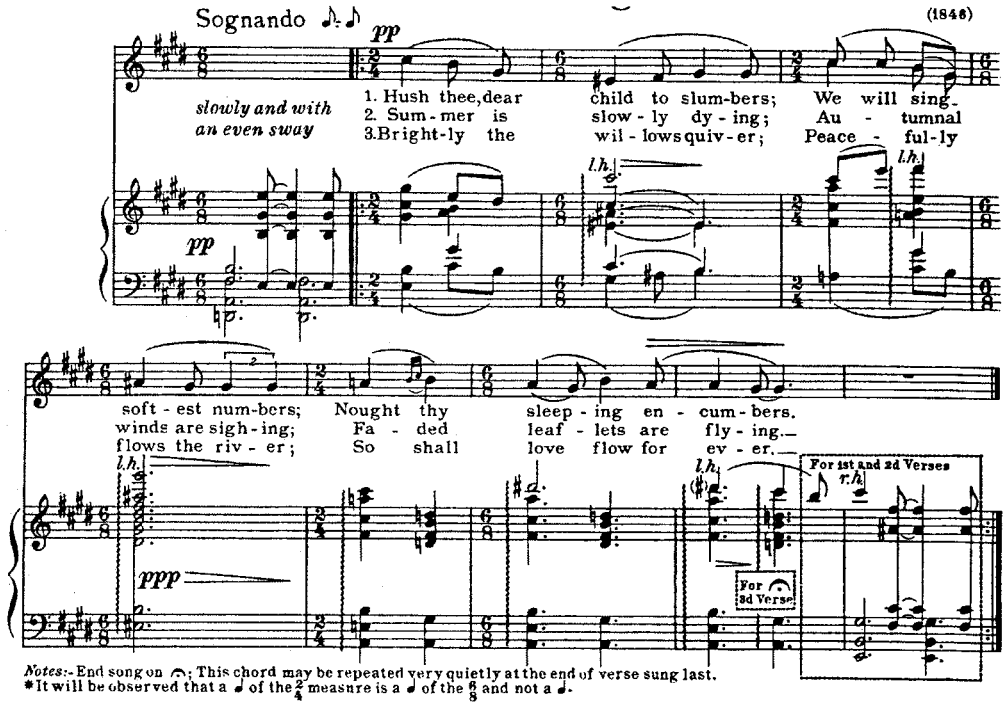



*Musical example 3-3: "Berceuse," mm 11-15*

With the utterance "Sleep thee well till morning light," supported by a reassuring tonic-7th to subdominant to dominant-7th harmonic progression, the lullaby comes to its peaceful conclusion. Just as in "A Scotch Lullaby," however, the baby's sleep does not proceed with total calm. In mm 14 a gust of wind or unexpected sound disrupts the rhythmic texture for the first time, sufficient to require a single-bar shift to 4/4 meter as the opening vocal melody resounds in the right hand of the accompaniment in mm 14-17. The effect delights; nature suddenly becomes the over-eager duet partner that risks waking the child it so peacefully transported to sleep. The parent restores order—perhaps by closing the window slightly or by covering the baby—and in mm 17-18 reiterates the blessing "Sleep thee well till morning light," singing an exact melodic repetition of mm 12-13. Though the shape of the vocal line remains intact, Ives changed the text setting in mm 17, adding stress to the word "Sleep" by increasing its duration, reinforcing the sense of protected calm. Nature succeeds in melding her own nurturing consolation with that of the parent; the nightingale sings its final unchanged motivic figure in mm 20, and the duet-lullaby fades into the night, the final off-beat open fifth less an ending than an echo.

***Cradle Song***

In "Cradle Song," the most thoughtful narrative of the three lullabies, Ives invoked nature as a metaphor for life's transitions in the changing of the seasons, comparing the steadfastness of parental love to an eternally flowing river. Ives's choice to alternate between 6/8 and 2/4 meter directly related to the unusual metric pattern in the text provides the initial source of musical interest in the song and highlights his extraordinary sensitivity to poetic nuances. A. L. Ives, who wrote the original four stanza poem—Ives set stanzas 1, 2, and 4—devised the following pattern for the verses containing three seven syllable lines, each comprised of three poetic feet: dactylic-trochaic-trochaic/dactylic-trochaic-trochaic/trochaic-dactylic-trochaic.[28]






*Musical example 3-4: "Cradle Song," (complete)*

[28] A dactyl consists of one stressed, followed by two unstressed syllables; a trochee consists of one stressed, then one unstressed syllable. Miss Ives, perhaps distantly related to Charles Ives, is not mentioned in the family genealogy (Feder, *Song*, 316).

The prosodic construction places the primary stress in the first two lines of each verse on the first syllable of the first word. In the third line, the first syllable of the interior noun receives the primary stress; "sleeping," "leaflets," and "love." Ironically, the dilemma for Ives existed in the need to avoid the obvious choice of meter, 7/8, inappropriately kinetic for a lullaby. Conversely, had he alternated measures of 3/4 and 2/4, a clumsy evenness would have resulted, rendering subtlety in terms of textual expression impossible. His solution lay in forging a compromise between syllabic stress and time signature by exploiting the internal differences in the two duple meters 2/4 and 6/8. Taking the eighth-note as the common unit of pulse, a measure of 2/4 contains, in effect, two trochaic feet, and a measure of 6/8 contains two dactylic feet.[29] By deferring to the obvious stresses implied by the text and by alternating 2/4 and 6/8 measures, however, he came upon a pattern of rhythmic emphasis that sounds initially arbitrary or even contradictory, but in reality best serves the poem: he set each stressed syllable to a quarter-note, each unstressed syllable to a single eighth-note or moving pattern. The seemingly paradoxical result, a three-syllable dactyl so notated, fits precisely into a 2/4 bar, and a pair of two-syllable trochees complete a 6/8 bar. The exception to this pattern occurs in the latter half of mm 5; here Ives indicated a duple in the 6/8 meter, creating a natural *allargando* leading into the third line of each verse.

Ives crafted a truly mystical harmonic landscape for this final lullaby, writing gentle but luxuriously voiced chords with added $6^{ths}$, $7^{ths}$, and $9^{ths}$. The harmonies do not progress as much as attempt to find a comfortable tonic. The entire scheme has a distinctly liquid feel, suggesting polytonality and exploiting whole tone relationships;

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[29] In the footnote to the song, he indicated with purposeful redundancy, "It will be observed that a [quarter-note] of the 2/4 measure is a [quarter] of the 6/8 and not a [dotted-quarter].

many of the chords are large enough to suggest multiple possible tonal centers. Though Ives indicated E-major in the key signature, the single 6/8 bar introduction suffices to establish a non-standard harmonic mood. Two bell-like chords mesh, D-major in the bass and E-major in the treble; the latter remains the tonality in the first half of 2/4 mm 2, the first vocal entrance. On beat two of mm 2, a $9^{th}$-chord—with a major-$7^{th}$—suggests the subdominant A-major, C-sharp-minor, or both. In mm 3-4, Ives further explored C-sharp and, by way of progression to an F-sharp-minor chord on the downbeat of 2/4 mm 4, reinforced the structural importance of the subdominant. On beat two of mm 4—the two unstressed syllables of the dactylic foot—he repeated the ambiguous chord of mm 2, beat 2. Measure five contains a cluster-like rolled $11^{th}$ chord, marked triple-piano, built on E-sharp and spanning three octaves. The resulting tonal wash supports the words "softest," "winds," and "flows," in the 6/8 bar containing the previously mentioned rhythmic *allargando.* This natural slowing process continues in the 2/4 mm 6 where Ives, maintaining the pattern of alternation between 2/4 and 6/8 measures, set a single trochee, ensuring that the crucial internal dactyl of each third line of text receives unique attention. He established a gentle pedal A-natural in mm 6-8 and alternated between A-major and B-minor-$7^{th}$ chords on the first and second beats of each bar. Heard only after verses 1 and 2, the music in mm 9, containing alternating E-major and F-sharp-major chords, prepares the return to mm 2.

A technical analysis of "Cradle Song" indicates a sense of active complexity; the truth emerges as completely the opposite. Ives created an atmosphere every bit as soothing as either of his other two lullabies and "Cradle Song" represents a supreme example of his ability to channel the serene chaos of nature, the "active tranquility of the

outdoor beauty of nature," rather than "just quietude."[30] Equating life's transitions—from childhood to adulthood, from consciousness to sleep—with the changing seasons, and parental love with the perpetual flowing of the river, Ives invoked a transcendental affinity between parenthood and the natural world; blowing leaves and moving water play vitalizing roles in "Cradle Song," acting as nature's spirit, strengthening the parent's resolve. Thoreau wrote,

> A field of water betrays the spirit that is in the air. It is continually receiving new life and motion from above. It is intermediate in its nature between land and sky. On land, only the grass and trees wave, but the water itself is rippled by the wind. I see where the breeze dashes across it by the streaks or flakes of light. It is remarkable that we can look down on its surface. We shall, perhaps, look down thus on the surface of the air at length, and mark where a still subtler spirit sweeps over it.[31]

Every parent finds it no less remarkable to look down upon a sleeping baby, intermediate in her nature between men and angels. Throughout his compositional career, Ives did not avoid naming—as Thoreau did—the "subtler spirit" that sweeps over the "surface of the air." In this nine measure lullaby, he revealed the entirety of his ideological composition, each component part easily recognizable. To separate Ives's transcendental, romantic appreciation of nature from his sense of religious devotion exposes each as disproportionately incomplete; separating the simple, familiar melody of "Cradle Song" from its ambiguous, musically and rhythmically complex accompaniment renders both less viable.

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[30] *Memos*, 183-4.
[31] Thoreau, *Walden*, 126-127.

## *THE CHILDRENS' HOUR*

*1901?; 27mm.; Text by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow from "Birds of Passage. Flight the Second," (1863)*[32]

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem "The Childrens' Hour" depicts in ten verses the nightly frolic between a father and his children. Ives set only the first three stanzas, capturing the essence of the sentiment, while not including most of the details, a prime example of how he universalized an emotional scenario by excluding incidentals, especially in setting the texts of others. Much of his keen poetic editing resulted in emotional focus, too easily blurred by an excess of specific situational references and description. As Hitchcock notes, Ives "appropriated" texts of others, "usually transforming their writings as he turned them into song lyrics."[33] Though a published poem exists in a public forum, Ives showed his respect for the privacy of Longfellow's routine by not including a majority of the text; the intimate details of the family ritual belong to Longfellow, and Ives left them aside. On the other hand, the love Longfellow described—and which Ives exploited—lies in the public domain. Whereas Longfellow invited his readers to view a set of images in an emotional family album, Ives's omission of the details found in the complete poem allows each listener to make a personal identification via specific, individual memory. By excluding all mention of the intimate play pervading stanzas four through ten, Ives set the stage but invited the listener to define the drama, panning out to the more general and, consequently, more universal image of parent-child interaction. The poem that remains allows for active participation rather than passive observation.

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[32] Sinclair, 356.
[33] Hitchcock, "Noise," 30.

*Between the dark and the daylight,* [Longfellow, stanza 1]

*When the night is beginning to lower,*

*Comes a pause in the day's occupations,*

*That is known as Childrens' Hour*

*I hear in the chamber above me* [Longfellow, stanza 2]

*the patter of little feet*

*The sound of a door that is opened*

*and voices soft and sweet*

*From my study I see in the lamplight* [Longfellow, stanza 3]

*Descending the broad hall stair,*

*Grave Alice and laughing Allegra*

*and Edith with Golden Hair*

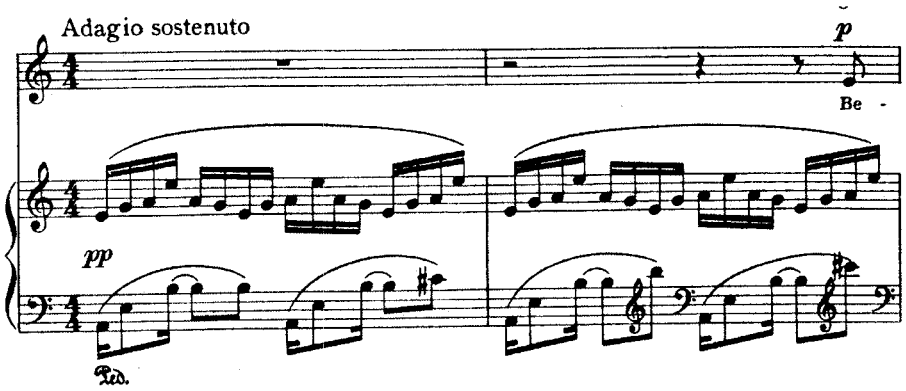
*(Between the dark and daylight, comes a pause,*

*That is known as Childrens' hour.)*

This poetic distillation allows for real structural symmetry. Ives framed the song, which begins and ends with the first stanza of text, in a loose ternary form. Bellaman described the piece as consisting of a "Melody in C major with accompaniment blending between A minor and A major, also a chord suggesting later tone clusters."[34] The music of the first stanza of text—stanzas one and four in the song—acts as the recurring A section, and the music of the second and third stanzas unifies the two in an extended B section. The introduction, marked *Adagio sostenuto*, produces a placid and impressionistic atmosphere matched by the slightly blurred A-major tonality. A two note motive rings out above the treble staff—B-natural to C-sharp (the second and third scale-degrees)—

[34] *Memos*, 36.

played by the left hand and barred as part of syncopated ascending arpeggios in the left hand of the accompaniment creates the only disturbance of the texture, imparting a whole-tone flavor. The two hands of the accompaniment have distinct rhythmic roles; the right hand plays constant murmuring sixteenth-notes, the left hand the above-mentioned arpeggios that rhythmically call faintly to mind Brahms's "Wiegenlied."

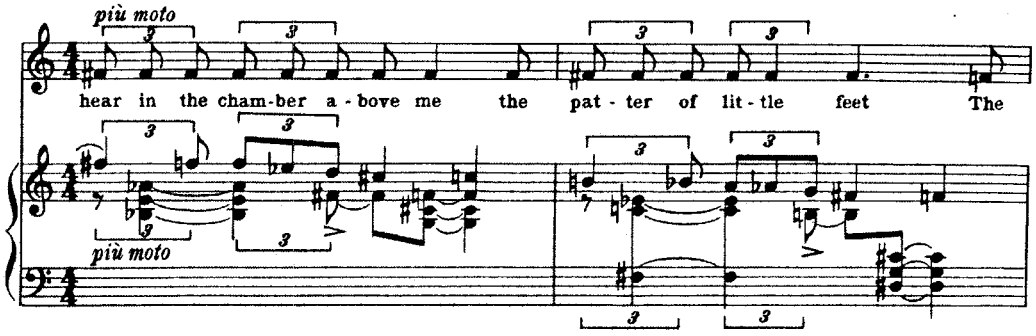





*Musical example 3-5: "The Childrens' Hour," mm 1-2*

Almost incanted, the initial vocal entrance hovers between E and G until a gentle upward leap of a fifth from F to C highlights the word "known" on the downbeat of mm 9. A sense of metric ambiguity first occurs in mm 5-7 by way of a nearly imperceptible shift to 3/4 time and the appearance of triplets in the vocal line. This in no way disturbs the texture, helping to highlight the sense of calm; stasis so pervades the vocal line as to defy any recognizable sense of narrative perspective. Though the close of the first stanza hints at the impending activity of the unseen children, the feeling of tranquility established in the first ten-measure A section seems to depict a household where all have gone to bed. This makes the disturbance that follows all the more delightful. The children appear first not visually but aurally in the second stanza.

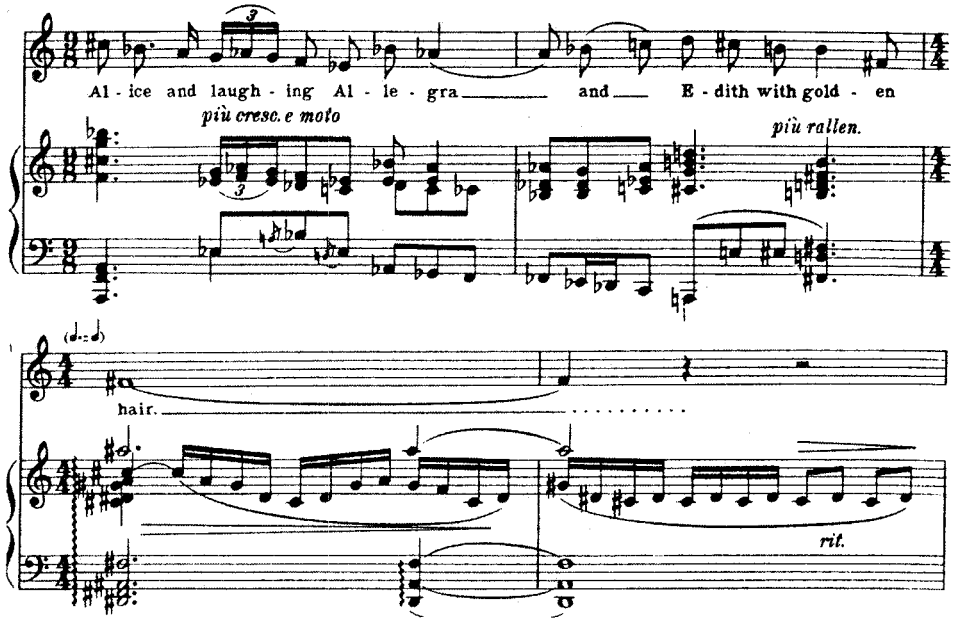
Longfellow's trochaic lines representing the children fall naturally into two-bar phrases in 6/8, and Ives adopted the meter of the text, indicating a change in mood and a sense of anticipation. He created a narrative separation between the vocal line and the accompaniment beginning in mm 11; the voice simply declaims the text, while the music shifts abruptly from creating atmospheric mood to portraying the children's activity, skipping chromatically in triplets down the hallway in mm 11-14.






*Musical example 3-6: "The Childrens' Hour," mm 11-12*

An undeniable visual element attends this metric shift; the accompaniment changes to match the clumsy, quasi-D-major descent down the stairs that are still too big for little feet to negotiate gracefully. All three girls come into view in mm 19 and the meter slows to a deliberate 9/8. What follows could read simply as a listing of the children's names—grave Alice, laughing Allegra, blond Edith—but Ives chose to set each girl's personality, not merely her name. Alice, a "grave" augmented dotted quarter-note chord, contrasts with effervescent Allegra, set to giggling triplets and intent on playing in warm flat keys. Most special to Ives, however, was golden Edith; reflection on her prompts, in mm 21, the return to the placid dreamscape of the A section.






*Musical example 3-7: "The Childrens' Hour," mm 19-22*

Though Ives did not meet his own Edith until 1915, he found inspiration for "The Childrens' Hour" in Longfellow's special child. Distilling the text to its essence, Ives compressed the return of the first stanza into two lines. The original rhythmic figures and A-major tonality reappear but dissolve at the final cadence, which has the feel of G-major. A-major remains a melodic entity in the right hand, poised once more to start this song that never ends, though the scenario has played out a thousand times. Alice surely grew less grave; Allegra always laughed but came also to know tears; Edith didn't always have golden hair, though she undoubtedly (especially for Ives) remained the golden child. For all fathers, the patter of little feet disappears; but although the children who eagerly and clumsily trod the stairs become infrequent visitors, the song continues as long as the memory of their innocence lives on.

***TO EDITH***
*1892, adapted 1919; 18mm; Text by Harmony Ives*[35]

***IMMORTALITY***
*1921; Partial barring; Text by Ives*[36]

***TWO LITTLE FLOWERS***
*1921; 29mm; Text by Harmony and Charles Ives*[37]

Though Ives rarely publicly revealed his feelings, he recklessly plumbed the depths of his emotions in his music. In the three "Edith" songs, he made no attempt to mask the fear, love, or even the anger he felt as a parent. The songs reveal private sentiments and episodes of narrative non-fiction with bewildering candor. Unembarrassed to share the intimacies of his parenthood with the world, he published all three of the songs in *114 Songs*, writing in the "Postface," "it's good for a man's vanity to have his neighbors see *him*—on the clothes line." The "Edith" songs form a narrative whole, not only because they contain many unifying elements, but because each records a chapter of Ives's autobiographical history wholly apart from his artistic development. Harmony collaborated on the texts for "To Edith" and "Two Little Flowers," two songs bursting with happiness and parental love. Though Ives's own text for "Immortality" displays intensely negative emotions, he included Harmony and wrote of shared, rather than individual grief, making reference to "our child." Images of nature, particularly flowers, pervade the three pieces, highlighting Ives's—and, perhaps more notably, Harmony's—sense of literary romanticism. Their shared religious devotion, also unashamedly evident, manifests itself in the overt references to God and parental blessing and in hymn tune quotation, foundational in the latter two songs.

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[35] Sinclair, 526-527.
[36] Ibid., 406-407.
[37] Ibid., 530-531.

Ives created the finished version of "To Edith" twenty-seven years after he started it. Only his wife's poetic expression of the joy they felt having Edith in their lives could complete the musical statement he first uttered as a boy of eighteen. Harmony repeatedly referred to her in the text as resembling a flower in visage and in "fragrance sweet." "Immortality," written as Edith lay sick with a serious ear infection, shows the full force of Ives's desperation and his panicked recollection of the child he and Harmony lost in 1909. Feder writes,

> At this pre-antibiotic time, such a condition could result in deafness, meningitis, or fulminating, even fatal sepsis. The song incorporates a prayer in the form of the hymn tune *St. Peter*, upon which the entire song is based—St. Peter, the keeper of the doors of heaven. Following a dissonantly menacing climax, the reference to God is accompanied by rich organ-like tones, the score marked "quietly and firmly."[38]

He channeled his anxiety by challenging those who would say that a change in natural states represents supernatural death, refusing even in the face of his only child's mortality to entertain atheistic notions.

The last artistic "offspring" the Iveses produced together, "Two Little Flowers" represents an act of thanksgiving and celebration of the everyday as they observed daughter Edith and a friend at play. Expressing gratitude for God's attentiveness to the desperate prayer of "Immortality," Ives again quoted the hymn "St. Peter," though with an entirely different sentiment. Simple, yet deeply spiritual, the song "musically depicts a moment of heaven on earth in a backyard Garden of Eden."[39]

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[38] Feder, *Life*, 133.
[39] Ibid., 134.

***To Edith***

Swafford writes, "One day, sitting on the porch, Harmony wrote down how Edie's face, flushed and happy after play, looked like a flower. From this came her poem 'To Edith' . . . for which Charlie adapted a sentimental old tune of his."[40] Another example of an Ives composition taking years to find its true purpose, the "sentimental old tune," now lost, seems to have existed precisely to express this particular scenario. Whereas the lullabies portrayed images of parents watching over their children drifting off to sleep, in "To Edith," Ives turned the tables: in an impossibly tender and heart-warming vignette, he depicted four year-old Edith coming to her parents' bedside to wake them with a smile and receive her morning blessing in the form of a kiss.

*So like a flower, thy little four year face in its pure freshness*

*That to my bedside comes each morn in happy guise*

*I must be smiling too.*

*O, little flower-like face that comes to me, each morn for kisses*

*Bend thou near me while I inhale its fragrance sweet*

*And put a blessing there.*

Harmony's only concession to the poetic traditions of the time consists in her use of the antique pronouns "thy" and "thou." In every other way, the poem reads as formally progressive; no recognizable rhyme scheme or consistent meter exists. The two short verses seem almost haiku-like, containing only fragments of thoughts, implying that the private actions accompanying the words deserve more attention than the recording of the event. The text hints at a delightful family intimacy; the music opens the imagination to encompass the scene.

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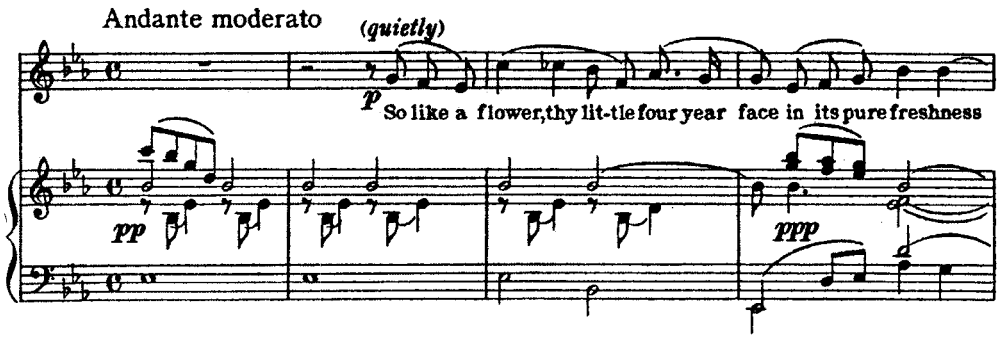
[40] Swafford, 290.

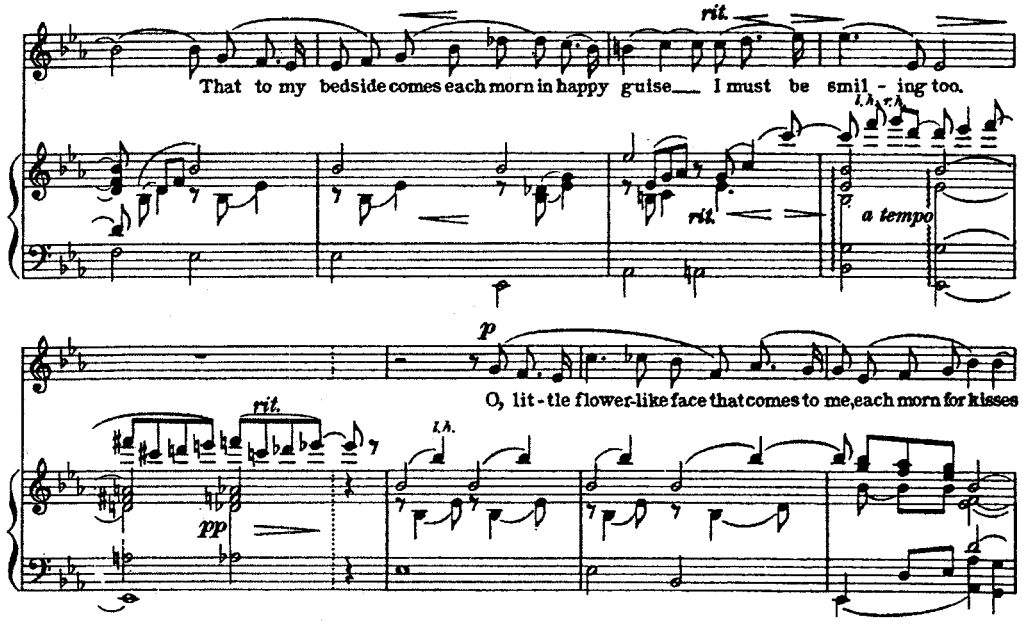





*Musical example 3-8: "To Edith," mm 1-4*

Throughout the song, Ives used moving eighth-notes high in the treble register to represent Edith. In mm 1, she tiptoes into the room, not particularly concerned with the E-flat-major tonality, the established key of her parents' slumber. The rocking, offbeat B-flat to E-flat motive in the middle of the accompaniment that represents the parents—as well as literal and symbolic harmonic stability—completes the textural family scene before the first vocal entrance in mm 2. Edith never speaks but acts; so the poem in many ways only makes sense in musical context and seems incomplete without the accompaniment, which embellishes the verse with unseen looks and movements. By mm 3 the parents, now awake, interact with the child, whose eighth-note figure appears again—either by way of a smile or laugh—in mm 4. Ives conveyed a wonderful feeling of grogginess, depicting the gradual physical and mental process whereby alertness evolves out of mere consciousness, with simple, slightly disheveled harmonies and bleary chromaticism in the vocal line. The tonic E-flat remains in the dominant-7$^{th}$ harmony in the second half of mm 4, and the left hand of the accompaniment moves downward in sleepy stepwise motion to the second-inversion dominant to tonic cadence in mm 5 under the word "freshness," sustained on a B-flat.

Acuity and activity increase in mm 6-7. The morning's first purposeful harmonic act, a tonicization of the subdominant in mm 7, supports the second line of text. Ives added chromatic interest under the word "guise," a B-natural, the augmented second scale-degree in the A-flat-major subdominant chord. A passing half-diminished chord built on A-natural in the bass moves to a second-inversion tonic chord serving as the dominant harmony in the downbeat of mm 8. Above, the voice sings the final fragment of the first verse "I must be smiling too," happily stretching upward to the tonic E-flat.

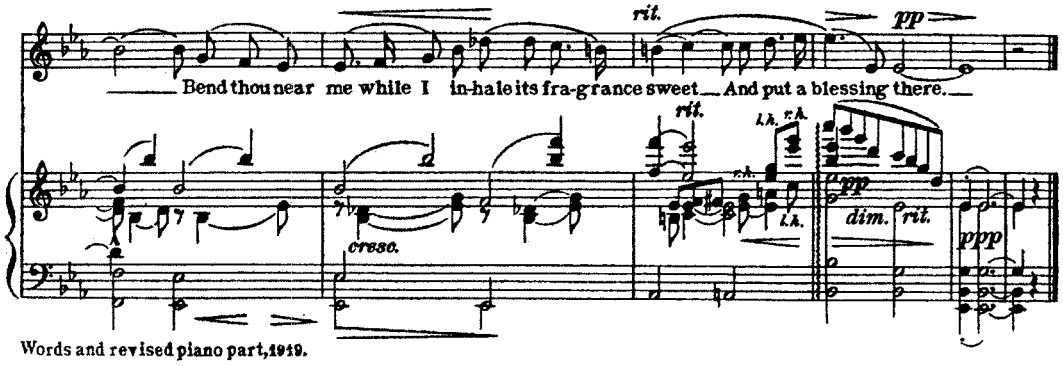





*Musical example 3-9: "To Edith," mm 5-12*

Ives gave a hint of the activities occurring between verses in the delightful, parenthetical mm 9; Harmony obviously felt the scene too intimate to record. Edith gently frolics with her parents in their bed, her giggling melisma tenderly sustained by chromatic passing harmonies, D-major and D-flat-major chords in second-inversion.

Verse two, mm 10-18, follows the melodic and harmonic outline of verse one, with only slight variation. Calling to mind the evocation of his own parents in "Remembrance" and "Songs my Mother taught me," Ives added an additional element to the accompaniment, octave B-flats played by the left hand reaching above the treble staff; the rocking, offbeat B-flat to E-flat "parent" motive remains. Here, the action takes on more important meaning for the parents, and the text poignantly highlights the intellectual gap separating them from their four-year-old in terms of metaphysical interpretation. Though certainly a delightful routine for Edith, she simply gives and receives spontaneous acts of physical affection at her parents' bedside; for her mother and father who daily await her "flower-like face" and "inhale its fragrance sweet," the kisses are not only tangible acts of love but blessings.






*Musical example 3-10: "To Edith," mm 13-18*

More purposeful than the corresponding phrase in mm 7-8, the vocal climax in mm 15-16 lingers on the E-flat "blessing." In return for their benediction, Edith reaffirms her parents' love. With one last eighth-note motivic figure, her freshness and innocence descend to join them, enfolded in the embrace of the final tonic cadence.

***Immortality***

No greater desperation exists than that of a parent witnessing the suffering of a child. Having lost his only natural offspring in the womb, in "Immortality" Ives barely contained the panic he felt at the prospect of losing Edith to her sickness. The three-section song represents nothing less than the soul's struggle to maintain faith in the face of human tragedy and pain; it also allowed Ives to express outwardly the grief he had suppressed for more than a decade. His only written comments on the death of their unborn child, a single cryptic sentence jotted on a manuscript, hardly sufficed as proper mourning.[41] "Immortality" served two purposes for Ives: as the cathartic release of remembered agony and the strengthening of his resolve in a time of severe trial. Never wavering in his faith, he demanded answers not from God but from men, and he proposed his unanswerable questions in a formidable tone.

*Who dares to say the spring is dead, in Autumn's radiant glow!*

*Who dares to say the rose is dead in winter's sunset snow!*

*Who dares to say our child is dead!*

*Who dares to say our child is dead!*

*If God had meant she were to die, She would not have been.*

A palpable sense of denial shadows the text, yet Ives's final statement reveals his transcendent hope. In the end, his refusal to accept death results directly from his belief in supernatural regeneration and the eternal life of the soul. Nature serves as a grand

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[41] Ives wrote on the manuscript of his work "Like a Sick Eagle," "H. T. I. in Hospital—Sally [Harmony's sister] singing, 70 W. 11, April 29, '09" (*Memos*, 278). If Sally in fact sang this as a song at the time, a sketch of piece #4 of *Set #1* from 1906 according to Kirkpatrick, Ives surely must have called upon it to represent his feelings. The text by Keats is as dark as any Ives set: "The spirit is too weak; mortality weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep, and each imagined pinnacle and steep of God-like hardship tells me I must die, like a sick eagle looking toward the sky." He mourned through and with his music, but nowhere else.

metaphor, exposing, to Ives's way of thinking, the offensive folly of disbelief. To argue for the first and second premises—that spring is dead in autumn, and that the rose is dead in winter—requires that the non-believer not only deny nature's ability to renew itself, but also that he ignore the lessons taught by the natural world relative to human death. For a season or a flower, temporal death represents dormancy, a suspended state of animation, rather than cessation. Ives assumed—as a believer—both in the reality of eternal life, and that God had a specific purpose for his daughter, which He proved by granting her existence.

Though creating a poetic mood of exasperation, Ives wrote in a consistent meter, and established a recognizable, if incomplete, rhyme scheme. His choice of iambic heptameter affirms his sense of the divine; the pattern of seven poetic feet breaks only with the restatement of the exclamation, "Who dares to say our child is dead!" The first musical section, mm 1-9, contains the initial two lines of text. Measure one, a sober fourteen-beat introduction, seems to represent the world's disquiet and the darkness of a troubled soul. Remarkably, however, as if mitigating his sadness, Ives set a mood in the opening which, though uneasy, lacks any sense of the belligerence so apparent in the text. Hinting initially at E-flat-minor, the tonality struggles to establish a foothold, moving through C-major-6$^{th}$ and F-major-augmented chords to a whole-tone cluster built on E-flat on beat eight, through F-sharp-minor and F-minor and finally to F-major and C-major, established on beat thirteen. Purposefully murky, the dense harmonies of mm 1-5 modulate continually by way of large chromatic chords, which defy standard analysis. Above, the voice sings the opening line to the hymn-tune "St. Peter."[42]

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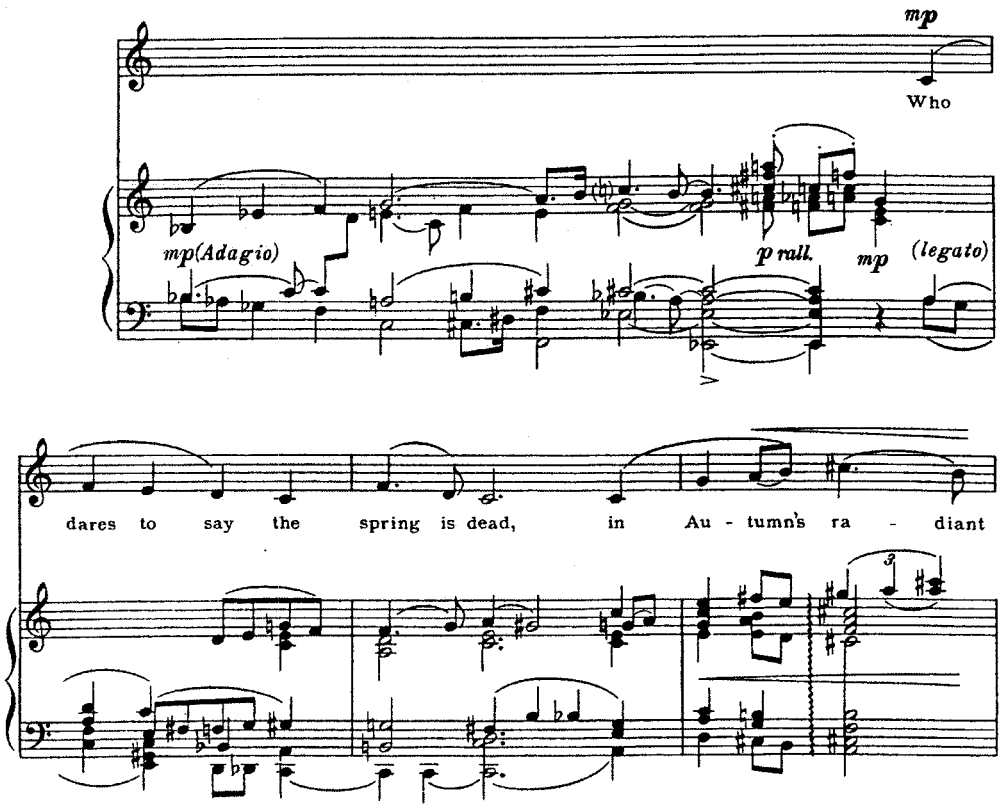
[42] Burkholder, *Tunes*, 289.






*Musical example 3-11: "Immortality," mm 1-4*

The use of "St. Peter" has layered meaning; most obviously, anyone with specific concerns for a dying or deceased soul wisely invokes the saint who holds the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Beyond this, Ives's use of a familiar hymn tune opened up entire worlds of associative recollection. Perry writes,

> [Ives's] attempt to create human consciousness in music led him to use tunes which had prior association in the mind of the listener and certain mechanical controls to represent the movement of consciousness in music; for example, his use of nonmetrical melody interwoven in

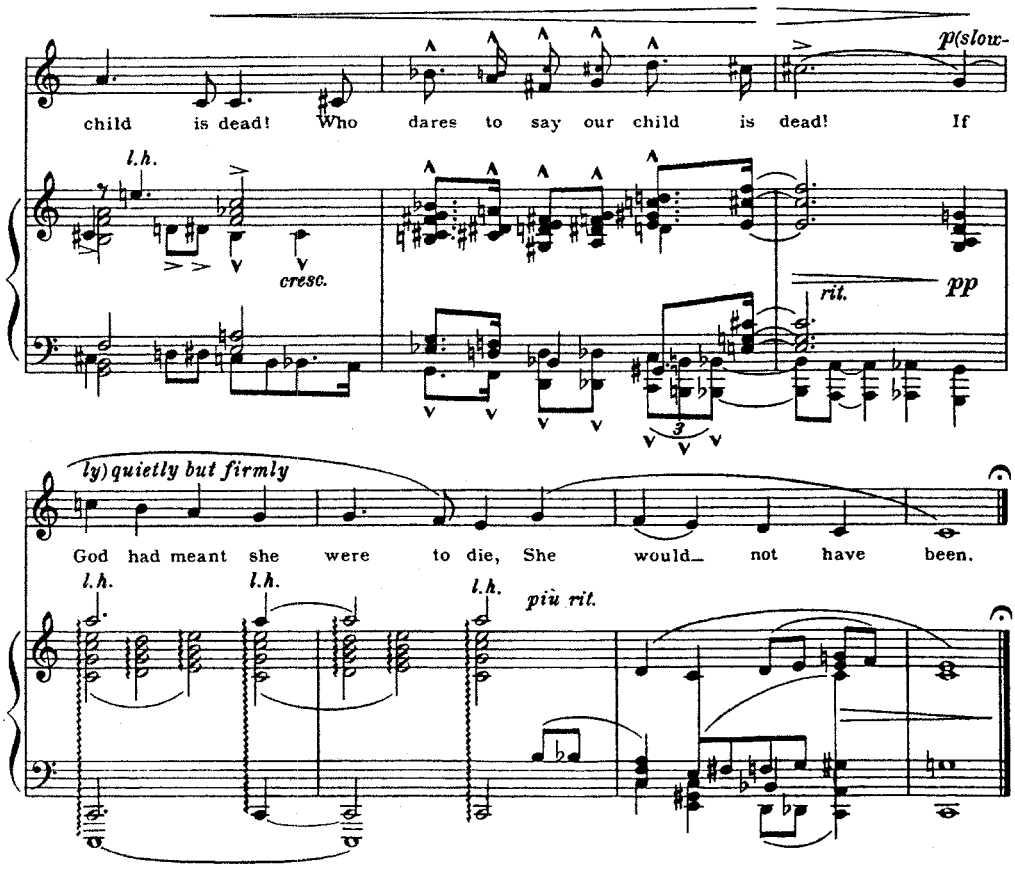
> relatively free temporal relationships. Within his work, the principles of psychological free-association guided him. [43]

In this case, Ives used a metrical melodic fragment superimposed on a nearly entirely free harmonic accompaniment schema designed neither to support nor oppose the listener's accumulated emotional experiences with the familiar tune, but to represent the feelings behind the association. Ives felt compelled to quote "St. Peter" for all of its extra-musical connotations. The melody in this case acts as the will, which makes the expeditious decision to trust in divine providence; the accompaniment corresponds to the emotions, feelings of uncertainty and despair that impede making the right choice and often linger even after the fact. On the communicative surface of the song, the text exudes a combative assuredness, and the melodic quotation of "St. Peter" lends the proper sentimental support given the scenario; just beneath, the accompaniment exposes the inner doubt capable of causing even the strongest faith to waiver.

Almost immediately, the hymn quotation begins to dissolve. The tune fragment, quoted precisely in mm 2, starts again unexpectedly in mm 3 under "the spring is dead," as if having lost its place. By mm 4, the melody has derailed relative to the hymn-tune and surges upward in whole tones toward the word "radiant." Ives established a sense of tonal stability in mm 5, implying D (major and minor) in a subdominant role, readying the start of the second heptametrical line in mm 6. The phrase "Who dares to say the rose is dead," set in discernable A-minor mm 6-7, maintains the rhythmic contour but only the rough shape of the tune. A perceptible composure marks this latter half of the first musical section and, comforted by the familiar hymn, Ives added a wave-like moving eighth-note figure in the right hand of the accompaniment reminiscent of "The

[43] Perry, 106.

Childrens' Hour." By the close of the section, mm 8-9, a more hopeful G-major-7th harmony gives the impression that the soul has won its battle with doubt. Immediately, however, the real fight ensues with the start of the second musical section, mm 10-13, which Feder describes as the "dissonantly menacing climax." The song's two purposes converge in the repetition the text "Who dares to say our child is dead!" In the first utterance set to grave upward-marching chromatic octaves in the bass, Ives forcefully rejected the idea that the natural death of his unborn child ended her existence; in the second musical statement, he frantically pleads for his adopted daughter to recover.




"Immortality" © 1933 by Merion Music, Inc.

*Musical example 3-12: "Immortality," mm 11-17*

Though section two contains the most overtly powerful music, the song's true climax and message lies in the final musical section, mm 14-17, showing the ultimate victory of calm resignation over the bluster of fearful rage. Out of the violent cloudburst of mm 10-12, the bass line, suddenly quiet in steady octaves, moves chromatically downward to G as the dominant to C-major. The vocal G-natural pick-up note to mm 14 stands in stark musical contrast to the final C-sharp of section two, a tritone above and a world away in terms of sentiment. Ives's direction "quietly but firmly" for the final and most complete quotation of "St. Peter" indicates emotions more than dynamics or phrasing. Beneath, sets of three harp-like chords move gently upward over a pedal C-natural deep in the bass, lending an ethereal support to the reference to God in the vocal line. Indicating a sense of unearthly peace and eternity, Ives notated these moving chords as half-notes corresponding to the quarter-note melody. Confirming his belief with quiet determination in mm 16-17, Ives allowed one final echo of the world to disrupt the harmonic texture before the final C-major cadence; the soul, though resigned and comforted by faith, remains human and subject to doubts and disquiet. In this powerful musical depiction of his own struggles due to his children's suffering, he fought against his weaknesses rather than denying his belief, resolving not to give in to despair.

***Two Little Flowers***

Edith recovered from her ear infection, though she never enjoyed truly good health.[44] In "Two Little Flowers," however, Ives portrayed Edith as surpassing nature in vitality and beauty; for this moment frozen in time, she exists in a healthy state of delicate perfection. Ives again drew on the hymn-tune "St. Peter," but incorporated the tune fragments subconsciously and in a spirit of buoyant affection and gratitude.

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[44] Perlis, 76. Brewster Ives describes Edith as "handicapped with illness all her life."

*On sunny days in our backyard, Two little flowers are seen,*

*One dressed, at times, in brightest pink and one in green.*

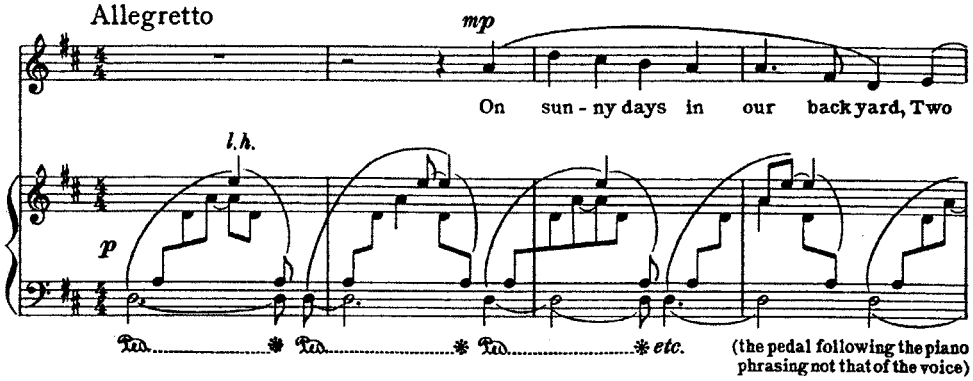
*The marigold is radiant, the rose, passing fair;*

*The violet is ever dear, the orchid, ever rare;*

*There's lovliness in wild flow'rs of field or wide savannah,*

*But fairest, rarest of them all are Edith and Susanna.*

Whereas "To Edith" showed scenes of direct parent-child interaction, "Two Little Flowers" presents separate worlds; the parent, unseen, watches the children playing from a distance while they create their own realm, sovereign in their perspective and sensibilities. Ives used a delightfully disjointed yet not disruptive rhythmic mixture to depict the metaphysical divide between adult and child. The simple, diatonic D-major melody in common time represents the parent's sentimental observation of the girls whose play, portrayed in 7/8 accompaniment patterns, simultaneously manifests their innocence and childish untidiness. Ives's indication that the pedaling follows "the piano phrasing not that of the voice" reveals his desire to create two distinct experiential planes.






*Musical example 3-13: "Two Little Flowers," mm 1-4*

The song shows Ives at his playful best. He could successfully have depicted his love for his daughter—and his thanksgiving for her recovery—had he simply written the lilting, D-major song implied by the melody. Not content to create a lovely, purposeful song, however, he proceeded past mere musical representation, creating a musical game to mirror the play of the children. Voice and piano enter together after seven beats of piano introduction, two 7/8 patterns. From that point on, the two line up only occasionally: on the first syllables of "brightest," mm 8; "marigold," mm 11; "violet," mm 15; "ever," mm 17; "lovliness," mm 19; and "fairest," mm 23, where the accompaniment pattern breaks to match the vocal line for the declaration of the final line of text. Adding further interest—or perhaps anticipating the difficulty in coordination—Ives occasionally recalibrated the accompaniment pattern, "artificially" creating the occurrences in mm 9, 15, 19, and 23.

Harmonically, the accompaniment remains almost entirely static for the first page, each 7/8 pattern starting on a percussive, droning D-natural in the bass. The arching arpeggio figure outlines the tonic D-major with an added, recurring bell-like E-natural played by the left hand at the top of the treble staff, the second perfect fifth adding a sense of openness to the harmony that shifts for the first time in mm 11 to the tonic-$7^{th}$ chord as the list of described flowers begins. As the litany continues, Ives playfully increased the harmonic drama in mm 15 under "violet," moving to a whole tone cluster built on the same sustained D-natural. Revealing his lack of seriousness, Ives dissolved the tension in mm 19, moving the sustained bass drone for the first time to B-natural and outlining the major submediant, a B-major-$7^{th}$ chord, above.

Beginning in mm 23, the final cadence, under the text "But fairest, rarest of them all" set to a "St. Peter" fragment, proceeds through E-major to a half-diminished chord to the tonic 6-4 chord in mm 24. A temporarily subservient rhythm indicates that the parent has stopped observing the children for a moment to lose himself in his sentiments. Adding an element of poignancy, Ives extended the cadence by moving not to the dominant, but to the major flat-VI chord leading to an E-major chord as the dominant of A-major. He lingered on the dominant A-major in mm 26, writing a delightfully tender full-measure E-natural to D-natural suspension on the name of Edith's friend, Susanna. D-major resumes with the 7/8 play pattern in the second half of mm 26, returning both parent and children to their separate contentedness.

***THE LAST READER***
*1921; 22mm; Text by Oliver Wendell Holmes (1836)*[45]

"The Last Reader" stands as the narrative transition between sets. By way of metaphor, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., explored the metaphysical link between artistic and physical parenthood. In the first stanza of text that Ives set, Holmes wrote of reading his own poems that, more than entries in a volume, represent formative events in his life; their validity exists not in their importance to other men, but in their honest preservation of an emotional moment in time. In the second, Holmes attributed to the works—and accompanying recollections—the rejuvenating affects of a young child, capable with her innocence of infusing vitality into an aging father's weary spirit.

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[45] Sinclair, 420-421. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. (father of Wendell Holmes—Oliver, Jr.—the Supreme Court Justice), was a physician and Harvard professor and member of the "Saturday Club" in Boston, "a literary dining and conversation society whose participants included Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., James Russell Lowell, and Charles Eliot Norton." (Menand, 6)

This latter element of Holmes's poem appealed directly to Ives who chose to omit the remaining six stanzas. In these Holmes intermingled introspection and melancholic contemplation on mortality, reflecting his mildly disingenuous "acceptance" of what he perceives as the inevitability of his own oblivion.[46] "Ives," writes Hitchcock "plucks poems—or parts of them—where he finds them."[47] In "The Last Reader," Ives forged a song of parental sentiment from a poem in which none existed, choosing to highlight disproportionately an image Holmes intended as incidental in the poem. The resulting condensation represents more than zealous editing. Ives the poet, Hitchcock notes, proved to be an astute "borrower of lyrics of others—and in fact not only borrower but manipulator, editor, adaptor to his own purposes, and even transmogrifier into song lyrics of texts never intended as such by their authors."[48] Ives, in truth, exercised an artistic prerogative unique to composers who set the texts of others. Edward Cone writes,

> Because in a song the complete musical persona embraces both vocal and instrumental components, the composer's persona governs words as well as music. The words, that is, have become a part of the composer's message, utterances in his own voice.[49]

Any poet could justly require that composers not twist and abuse his words, but none can make demands on the interpretive sensibilities of his readers, some of whom may set his texts to music. Certain of Holmes's images proved irresistible for Ives;

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[46] Menand concisely profiles Holmes, Sr. in *The Metaphysical Club*. Holmes more honestly described his intentions for his life and work in his essays *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* where he wrote, "I should like to be remembered as having said something worth lasting, well enough to last."
[47] Hitchcock, "Noise," 33.
[48] Ibid., 26.
[49] Ibid., 28, from Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

poems as songs, and the juxtaposition of flowers and children; but the beautiful description of the affectionate interplay of father and daughter—her youthful golden hair "mingling with the gray"—resonated most deeply with him. Holmes's peripheral metaphor became the poetic centerpiece for Ives; if, in selecting the text for "The Last Reader," Ives commandeered Holmes's poem to a certain extent, one could argue that Holmes provided the ammunition.

*I sometimes sit beneath a tree* [Holmes, stanza 1]

*And read my own sweet songs;*

*Though naught they may to others be,*

*Each humble line prolongs*

*A tone that may have passed away,*

*But for that scare remembered lay.*

*They lie upon my pathway bleak,* [Holmes, stanza 3]

*Those flowers that once ran wild,*

*As on a father's careworn cheek*

*The ringlets of a child;*

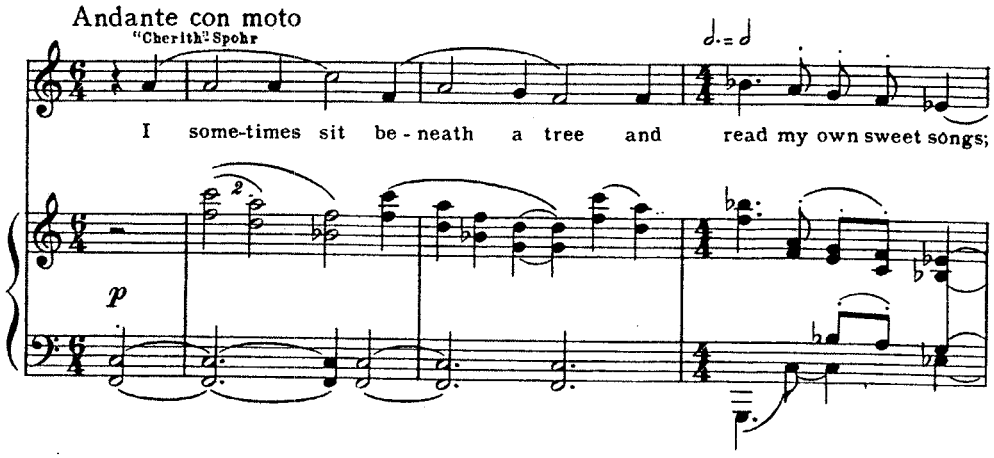
*The golden mingling with the gray,*

*And stealing half its snows away.*

One of the defining elements of Ives's genius lies in his ability to speak in his own musical voice, while allowing other composers in effect to join him in conversation via borrowing. Many quintessentially Ivesian pieces contain unmasked quotation; still more incorporate subtler forms of inference. "The Last Reader" represents Ives's use of "patchwork" technique. Burkholder writes,

> In a patchwork, several tunes are joined into a single melody, sometimes elided through paraphrase and sometimes interspersed with new music. The sources for any one piece are usually drawn from a single genre, making this in many respects an extension of modeling, perhaps influenced by medley or quodlibet. The effect is like that of stylistic allusion, but with direct borrowing.[50]

Ives not only borrowed directly, but credited his sources; exact quotations of the hymns "Cherith" by Ludwig Spohr and "Manoah," adapted from Haydn, receive printed acknowledgment in the score. An obvious though not literal use of "St. Peter," Ives's leitmotiv for the eternal, also inspires the musical texture, as does the tune "Bethany."[51] In his remarkable analytical disrobing of the song, Burkholder definitively exposes the progression of borrowings and quotations in the song.[52]






*Musical example 3-14: "The Last Reader," mm 1-3*

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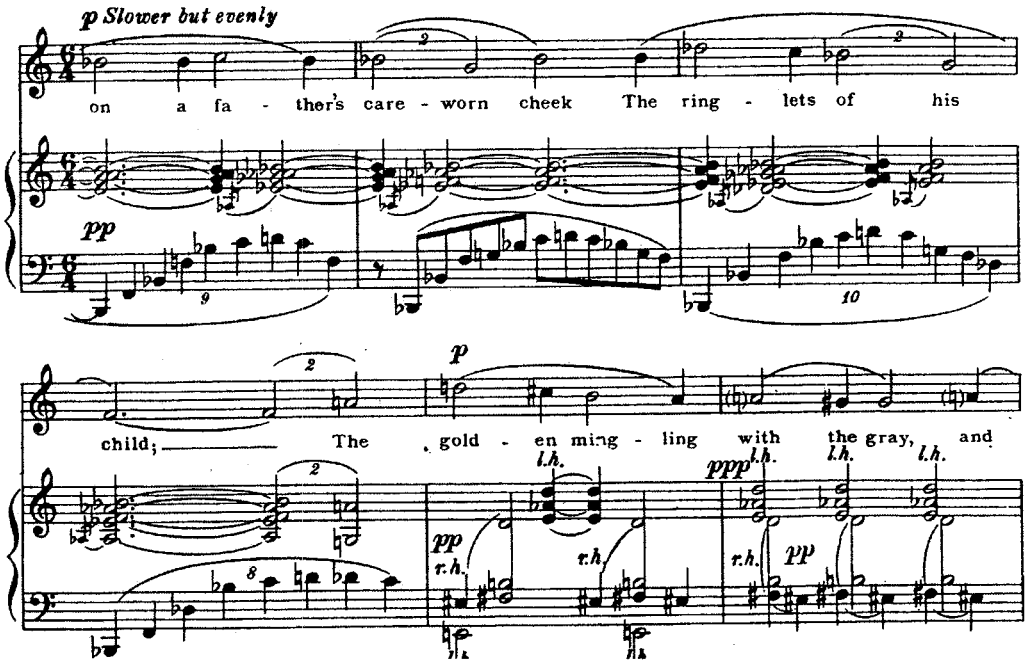
[50] Burkholder, *Tunes*, 301.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., 302-305.

To summarize, the song opens with a stated quotation of "Cherith" in F-major, moving to an inference of "St. Peter" in B-flat combined with "Cherith" in C and "Bethany" in F in mm 3-5 before returning to a subtle E-flat utterance of "St. Peter" in mm 6-7. Another declared borrowing, Haydn's "Manoah" in F, fills mm 8-10. "Bethany" in E-flat predominates mm 14-17. "St. Peter" returns in D-major, mm 18-19, and the final cadence, in D-major, evokes "Cherith." But "The Last Reader" represents more than a collage of hymn tunes. Three structural elements deserve further consideration. First, the bell-like descending perfect fifths in the treble that recur throughout the song; second, the accompaniment texture and use of rhythmically vague arching whole-tone figures in the bass in mm 14-17; third, a *recitative-aria* approach to sectionalization and text emphasis.

Texturally, Ives alternated between passages of deliberate *arioso* lyricism, filled with emotional elaboration, and sections more purposefully rhythmic with increased, *recitativo* kinetic energy, allowing for a more direct exposition of the narrative line. Measures 1-2, the noted quotation of "Cherith," serve as a lyric introduction in F-major 6/4 time, an elegant, unhurried duple meter. The descending perfect fifth motives appear immediately, creating a sense of harmonically open, supernatural reverberation under the words that set the scene, "I sometimes sit beneath a tree." Ives maintained the duple pulse but changed the meter to common time at the start of the three part *recitative* section, mm 3-13. The accompaniment, much more active over a pedal E-flat beginning in mm 4, changes to reflect the business-like critical reading of one's own work, mm 3-7. The reflective two measure *arioso* quotation of "Manoah" punctuates the recitative in mm 8-9, recalling the 6/4 meter, descending perfect fifth motive, and F-major tonality.

In order to highlight the *aria* section to come, Ives set the first two lines of the second stanza in mm 11-13, the close of the *recitative.* This also serves to create musical continuity, made more important by the omission of Holmes's intervening stanza. The *aria* proper, mm 14-22, contains some of Ives's most fervent parental sentiments and beautifully depicted images, the first of which describes the daughter's ringlets on the father's "careworn" cheek in mm 14-17. Beneath, the right hand of the accompaniment creates a dense, misty texture of pulsing block chords, while the left hand plays cresting figures, representing the unfurling of the child's hair, with a distinctly whole-tone feel.




"The Last Reader" © 1933 by Merion Music, Inc.

*Musical example 3-15: "The Last Reader," mm 14-19*

By making his strongest reference to 'St. Peter" in mm 18-19, under the text "The golden mingling with the gray," Ives included an undeniable supernatural element; the accompaniment—gray in the left hand, golden in the right—literally mingles, lovingly

and affectionately. Looking to "St. Peter," Ives took one last musical opportunity to commune with the daughter never born to him.

In "The Last Reader" Ives formed a cohesive whole through conscription. Selecting specific thematic elements from part of a preexisting text, his literary statement differed from the poet's. Though he admittedly employed multiple, well-known hymn-tunes, he had no interest in evoking the explicit images in their texts or drawing any discernable parallel between the hymns as complete entities and his own song; he seemed only to want to convey a devotional attitude, appropriate for his final narrative statement on parenthood.[53] Charles Ives poured his parental altruism into all his works but, perhaps, especially into the songs by parents; as he had given his only natural child to God in exchange for her immortality, he gave freely in producing his artistic offspring in hopes of inspiring a sense of the eternal in the hearts and minds of others.

[53] I disagree with Burkholder's suggestion of quodlibet, a procedure generally accepted as non-serious. A sense of peaceful buoyancy colors the music, but no perceptible humor or blatant virtuosity comes through. Taking into consideration the facts of Ives's personality and psychological makeup, however, a curious parallel to Holmes emerges if one assumes Ives's intention to invoke the idea of quodlibet if only in a passive sense. Ives used humor throughout his compositional career, not only for its own sake, but as a shield, a defense against the uncertainty he felt as the result of his background and his artistic isolation. If he intended this latter use of implied, structural humor as a backdrop, he essentially displayed the same insecurities that Holmes did in his text. Holmes, in writing a poem protesting not to care about being forgotten by history, exposes his desires for an opposite fate. By not writing overtly "serious" works, Ives (however subtly) evaded the criticism that accompanies such composition. On one level, he preferred to take his chances with isolation rather than subject himself to the judgments of the establishment whose perspective—and competence—he questioned.

# CHAPTER 4

## *A place in the Soul: Songs of Being*

In this final set, Ives explored the childhood of being. Daughters and sons of a country and children of God never outgrow the need for metaphysical comforts or the sustaining normalcy of native traditions. But just as no natural family can avoid conflict entirely, maintaining a place within the larger societal and supernatural family comes fraught with practical, emotional, and spiritual complications. Clashes arise between siblings and fellow citizens, the result of both external and internal tensions. In these songs, Ives used images of childhood and memory meditatively, encouraging profound consideration of self, the individual's position in the physical and metaphysical realms, and the relationships on both planes.

Ives, the American son, often railed against the political establishment. His faith in the democratic process lay in the good sense of the masses, and he nurtured a life-long distrust of politicians, even those whose ideas he espoused. Though Ives tended toward political progressivism, the presidential election of 1912, featuring progressive candidates Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, inspired him to write the bitterly satirical song "Vote for Names," in which an accompaniment chord "hit over and over again" represents a "Hot Air Election Slogan." Rossiter writes, "on election day, he made a memo to himself in which he indicated that the differences among Roosevelt, Wilson, and Taft were about as great as the differences among three chords that were exactly the same: 'a sad chord—a hopeless chord—a chord of futility.'"[1] This described politicians with whom Ives felt aligned; but their party affiliation represented an insurmountable

[1] Rossiter, 128.

ideological obstacle for him, a betrayal of self-reliance. He trusted the instincts of the common man, and, transferring his own disillusionment to others, he wrote "It is discouraging for thinking persons . . . to go to the polls and find nothing but a mass of names and party emblems staring dumbly up at them."[2] Ives's activism took the form of music and writing, especially letters to politicians and prose—including his essay "The Majority"—advocating direct democracy;[3] yet Swafford makes the important distinction that Ives's "attitudes about direct democracy and the divine law of averages came more from actuarial tables and the Progressive movement than from Emerson, and still less from the anarchistic Thoreau."[4] Ives majority ideals stopped short of pure populism. His fictive "masses" consisted of people as self-sufficient and thoughtful as he.

Despite his misgivings concerning the bureaucratic machine, Ives's love of country never faltered. "Tom Sails Away" represents his numerous patriotic and political songs, revealing a hauntingly touching portrait of a family—a community—sending a son off to war. Ives never hesitated admonishing fellow citizens for their lack of nationalistic fervor or haranguing elected officials, and the patriotic songs contain some of his most powerful sentiments. In "Tom Sails Away," however, he depicted no images of heroes or stirring pageantry and made no grand pronouncements. He chose instead to highlight the human costs of war and sacrifice for country by showing simple homely scenes and the soldier Tom as a child in his mother's arms. This curious support of the war effort typifies Ives's labored reconciliation of social and emotional issues with his sensibilities; his responses reflected his inner conflict and invariably focused on individuals and private, emotional scenarios. On the one hand, he eagerly wanted to do

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[2] Ibid, 209.
[3] Tick, *Ives Studies*, 134.
[4] Swafford, 295.

his part for his country, spearheading bond initiatives and volunteering in 1918 to drive ambulances in France for the Red Cross.[5] On the other hand, his frustration prompted him to write "patriotism is in a sense a magnified form of personal vanity," and "the stupidity of the politicians of [the] human race is the only cause of war."[6]

Ives's conception of humankind's filial relation to God balanced his patriotic fervor and represents the most complex foundational element of his ideology. His religious belief made it impossible for him to adhere exclusively to any one of his primary philosophical influences and tended to exclude him from the company of those who did, yet his faith held them all together.[7] Unless one acknowledges Ives's Christianity as the source of his highly conservative morality and his liberal charity, he seems maddeningly contradictory. Rossiter comments on some of the more obvious dichotomies,

> His compositions were extremely advanced, anticipating many of the innovations of Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and other European modernists; yet he quoted old-fashioned American tunes and looked back nostalgically to the simplicity of New England Yankee life in the nineteenth century. He was a wealthy insurance executive; yet he held radical political and social views, advocating the substitution of direct for representative government and a redistribution of wealth and income.[8]

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[5] Swafford, 283. Due to his heart condition, Ives, at 43 well past enlistment age, never went.
[6] Rossiter, 131. From Ives's "Diary of a Commuter."
[7] Though Emerson's philosophical influence forms the bedrock of Ives's thought, Ives exhibited in his religious devotion an obvious kinship to C. S. Peirce and William James. James attempted in his development of pragmatism to reconcile philosophy that included faith with the post-Darwinian scientific empiricism of the late nineteenth-century; "in order to defend religious belief in what he regarded as an excessively scientistic and materialistic age. . . . Defending religious belief was a task almost every nineteenth-century scientist felt obliged to take on." (Menand, 353)
[8] Rossiter, xii.

Starr notes that "Ives's use of stylistic heterogeneity made him without much doubt the most profoundly radical composer of his time."[9] Yet he failed to fulfill any societal expectations regarding avant-garde artists. As Swafford succinctly puts it, "[he] was different from his Modernist friends in many ways, among them the fact that he was not a Modernist."[10] He encouraged, inspired, and to a remarkable extent financed an entire generation of American composers whose views were anathema to him. Just as Ives continually revisited his Danbury boyhood in memory, he cleaved to his quiet but unchanging belief, refusing to leave behind his childhood relative to God. All the other components of his philosophical makeup combined with his Protestant Christianity, and he viewed the resolution of any internal inconsistency or dualistic contradiction as simply another element of faith. Maintaining this constancy in light of his intellectual affinities with transcendental humanism, however, was the most difficult reconciliation of all.

As he differed from his modernist friends, he also stood apart from his transcendentalist idols Emerson, Thoreau, the Alcotts, and Hawthorne. In the daily practice of his core beliefs, he opposed transcendentalism as a theoretical philosophical system. Thinkers since the enlightenment had argued that man's position had shifted relative to God, or, more importantly, that the essence of God had somehow changed as the result of man's evolving perception of Him. Though Emerson and other philosophers of the nineteenth-centuries often invoked God, they supported or opposed a deity vaguely perceptible in nature, not an exclusive Godhead in an unchangeable system of His own devising. As Kuklick explains, Emerson proposed that "God did not *create* nature to accomplish his work and to evidence himself. Nature *was* God as he

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[9] Starr, "The Next Hundred Years," 102.
[10] Swafford, 391.

appeared to parts of himself."[11] American transcendentalists, especially Emerson, sought to discover man's proper place in this dynamic new conception of nature. With unmistakable brilliance, they combined philosophy, religion, literature, individual rhetorical narrative, Aristotelian logic, Platonic discursive style, and elements of mysticism in creating something short of a cogent system. Though they agreed with Coleridge on the differences between understanding and reason, "[on] almost every other point there were disagreements."[12] Stroh writes,

> For Emerson and other romanticists the term "transcendental" really referred to an infinite array of the mind's own intuitions or direct insights. These intuitions were not only sources of knowledge, but sources of the deepest and most important truths. For Kant, however, there was no such thing as intuitive knowledge. . . . In borrowing the term "transcendentalism" from Kant, Emerson breathed a new and essentially romantic meaning into the word. . .[using] "intuition" to signify the poetic faculty of seeing things creatively, seeing things with a freshness and a richness such as only the widest exercise of the imagination could contemplate.[13]

Within this broader philosophical construct based loosely on Kantian idealism, divine truth resided within man as he represented a part of the divine collective (knowable through *a priori* intuition), and outside of man as a vaguely benevolent cosmic essence.[14] For the American transcendentalists, the fact that perceptions and emotion differ from

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[11] Kuklick, 80.
[12] Audi, 926.
[13] Stroh, 53.
[14] Boller, 66; Audi 460-466.

person to person merely proved the subjectivity of truth.[15] In denying the absolute nature of truth as it existed in the Christian model, humanist thinkers attacked the notion that conflicting philosophical points or internal inconsistencies invalidated any conclusions relative to the nature and perception of truth. For knowledge to result primarily from processing sense-perception and natural phenomena within each individual, however, the system had to allow for opposing truths to exist without negating each other. The Hegelian dialectic approach (the "universal and perpetual transition of everything to something else")[16] set up opposing concepts as *theses* and *antitheses* that produce new and continuously evolving future "truths," or *syntheses*, after engaging in the dialectic exchange.[17]

For the transcendentalists, the dialectic process proved foundational for their poetic new expression of reason and understanding. Having resigned his own pulpit in 1832, Emerson delivered in 1838 the sensational lecture, "An Address," to graduating Harvard Divinity School students. In it he revealed the logical end of the dialectic exchange relative to the nature of truth and God's association with man:

> Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets. He saw with open eye the mystery of the soul. Drawn by its severe harmony, ravished with its beauty, he lived in it, and had his being there. Alone in all history he estimated the greatness of man. One man was true to what is in you and

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[15] This difference also logically implied that truth might not exist. The fact that two opposing circular arguments emerge from the same major premises has posed a foundational philosophical dilemma for centuries. The ancients knew that man could not deny the concept of truth, only ignore or oppose it; modern philosophers proposed multiple possible truths as theoretical and developmental in nature. Truth accepted as absolute precludes contradiction; truth accepted as changeable results in negation.

[16] Loewenberg, xviii.

[17] Dray, 74. The perception of truth as changeable prompted the dialectic fabrication of a metaphysical impossibility, a non-binding absolute: truth exists without any real responsibility to know it, only a vague directive to interpret it on an individual basis.

> me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his world.[18]

Emerson spoke of Christ as only a man; though a lapsed Unitarian, he nonetheless still held to the denial of Christ's divinity. In stating that "God incarnates himself in man," he put forth the transcendental doctrine of man's divinity.

All of this conflicted with Ives's sensibilities in many ways. He had no desire to explain away God in the Christian context or for that matter to make himself a god. Perry writes, "[Ives's] preoccupation with Transcendentalism was not so much an indication of his aspiration to divinity as it was an attempt to delve into the subconscious."[19] Ives's concerns relative to truth lay not in redefining why people thought, but explaining what they felt; his approach, often highly metaphysical, remained rooted in the solid ground of his belief and its absolutes, and his fascination with transcendentalism grew from impulses as much artistic as ideological. Burkholder notes, "[The] great influence of the romantic writers, compounding Emerson's very subjective reading of Kant, transforms New England Transcendentalism into a literary tradition rather than a philosophical school."[20]

Ives and Emerson each possessed an isolated, poetic spirit and a sense of artistic eloquence of mystical scope and singular importance. Each took tremendous risks in his expression. In his *Essays Before a Sonata*, Ives addressed Emerson not as a philosophic peer but as a fellow poet. Ives understood transcendentalism intuitively, and its purposefully indefinable vagueness allowed him unlimited space to explore the soul. When he wrote of Emerson, he wrote also of himself and his dreams for his own art:

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[18] Emerson, *Essential Writings*, 67.
[19] Perry, xvii.
[20] Burkholder, *Ideas*, 25.

> We see him—standing on a summit at the door of the infinite where many men do not dare to climb, peering into the mysteries of life, contemplating the eternities, hurling back whatever he discovered there—now thunderbolts for us to grasp, if we can, and translate—now placing quietly, even tenderly, in our hands things that we may see without effort; if we don't see them, so much the worse for us.[21]

***DOWN EAST***
*1919; 44mm; Text by Ives*[22]

"Down East" employs a double-memory format similar to that of "Memories"; the two "songs" have little in common besides their narrator, yet a remarkably coherent unity results. Music triggers remembrance in both sections; in effect, songs equate to memory. Ives wrote a murky and mystical opening, conjuring the pleasant recollections that follow with a surprising amount of psychic effort. Burkholder describes it as "an impressionistic, harmonically static invocation of songs of the past and the visions they invoke."[23] In mm 1-7 all of the "visions" of a home far away come with their own types of melodies attached; "strains" of youth, "tunes" of school, and "songs" of a departed mother. Ives chose the hymn-tune "Bethany" as the literal and figurative framework for "Down East"; the tune, chromatically embedded and only faintly perceptible in the introduction, carries the reflective latter portion of the song that contains a verbatim quotation of music and text in mm 35-38. "Bethany," best known as the hymn "Nearer my God to Thee," implies a sense of natural piety and personal closeness to God.

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[21] *Essays*, 12.
[22] Sinclair, 366-367
[23] Burkholder, *Tunes*, 331.

*Songs! Visions of my homeland, come with strains of childhood,*

*Come with tunes we sang in school days and with songs from mother's heart.*

*Way down east in a village by the sea,*

*Stands an old, red farm house that watches o'er the lea;*

*All that is best in me, lying deep in memory,*

*draws my heart where I would be, nearer to thee.*

*Ev'ry Sunday morning when the chores were almost done,*

*from the little parlor sounds the old melodeon,*

*"Nearer my God to Thee, nearer to Thee;"*

*With those strains a stronger hope comes nearer to me.*

Infused with "impressionistic, spell-weaving music that whispers, 'Now we are going back,'"[24] Ives's navigation through time begins not in the bright light of day but rather in a forbidding, misty darkness. Anticipating the prominent use of "Bethany," the mood set in the opening represents three separate emotional dynamics. First, Ives created an air of associative melancholy with the narrator's specific memories, related either to regrets of his youth or sadness at the passing of his mother, portrayed as a teacher of songs. Second, he indicated the psychic cost of remembrance. Third, he established an atmosphere in which he seemed to pay homage to the traditions of his Protestant upbringing; in fact, he explored a sense of naturalistic transcendental piety not bound to a specific liturgy or church, but rather based in the sanctity of home life and the potential for edification in everyday pursuits. Like all people of faith, Ives surely had occasional misgivings about religion, and they appear in "Down East."

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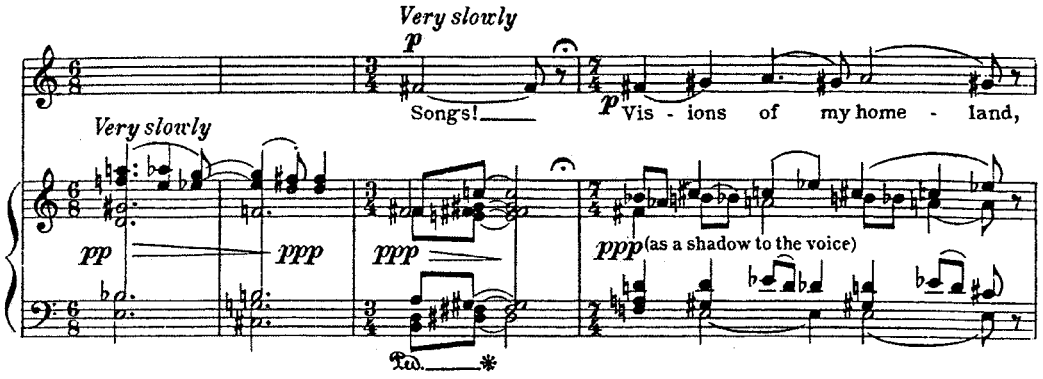
[24] Feder, *Song*, 314. Feder discusses "Down East" in combination with "Old Home Day" stating that "They richly catalog the human and nonhuman objects of which George is at the center," though "Down East" refers explicitly only to a mother.





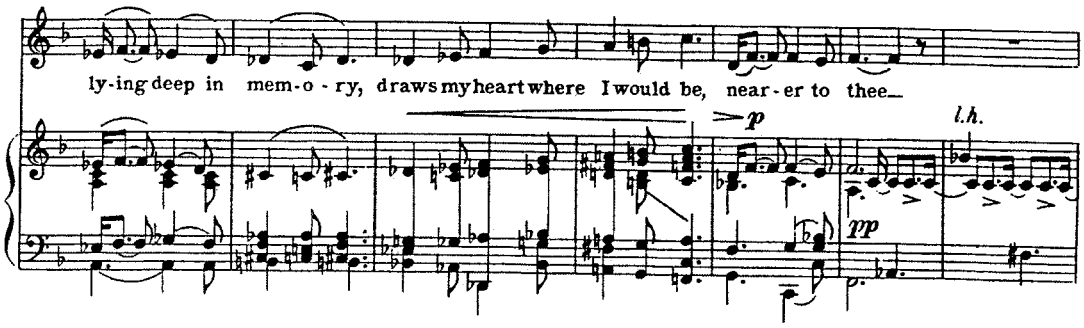

*Musical example 4-1: "Down East," mm 1-4*

Harmonically murky, the devolved "Bethany" reference in mm 1-2 appears in rhythmic, rather than melodic, form, a murmur of the refrain "Nearer my God to Thee." The initial vocal entrance, though marked *piano* and "Very slowly," utters a surprised response to the introductory measures, as if reacting to the unexpected inference of the seminal tune. Densely layered, mm 4-7 contain rhythmic and melodic patterns that repeat and develop with the succession of related memories. A pedal-like major third built on E-natural anchors the bass; on the downbeats of mm 4, 5, and 6 the same harmonic interval built on F-natural sounds then moves downward by whole step to the pedal harmony. "Visions of my homeland," the subject of the entire first section, result from three types of songs, each inspiring a similar-feeling diminished F-sharp melodic fragment. In the accompaniment, indicated by Ives "as a shadow to the voice," three pairs of moving eighth-notes—B-flat to A-flat, B-natural to B-flat in the right hand and E-flat to D-natural in the left—add subtle rhythmic interest, their hypnotic repetition in slightly varying sequence establishing a sense of charged stasis, but not calm. The process of remembrance, highly unsettling in this case, overrides what should be pleasant

images; Ives set a mood that indicates the metaphysical cost of time and doubt. Memory necessarily represents what no longer exists. No matter how pleasant the song, recollection includes present knowledge of lessons learned and lost and of friendships and relations dissolved by time or death. With the recounting of each musically inspired vision, Ives increased dramatic tension by elongating the melodic fragments and arching higher into the staff with the phrase climaxes. The narrator struggles with the choice to go back, knowing both the sentimental rewards in reminiscence and the emotional price of returning to the present.

The mists of the introductions burn off to reveal an idyllic F-major townscape. Dominated by the 6/8 rhythm and the melodic shape of "Bethany," the second section of the song, mm 8-44, consists of two verses separated by a three-bar interlude. Yet another example of Ives's successful stylistic heterogeneity, the mildly insipid strophic portion of "Down East" provides welcome psychic relief after the intrigue of the opening. Interest in this latter section comes not from musical complexity, but from the interchange between the visions and their musical catalyst. Three different song types receive mention in the introduction, but only "Bethany" emerges, and in a straightforward, recognizable form. The first verse depicts a vision of an "old, red farmhouse" situated in "a village by the sea." Hardly a detailed description, with the help of a familiar, if not yet discernable, tune shadowing the vocal line, a sufficiently specific picture emerges in mm 8-15. Ives personified the farmhouse that "watches o'er the lea" or field. Shifting from physical to metaphysical description in the second phrase of verse one, mm 16-23, the narrator declares his active appreciation and attraction to home. While maintaining the lilting 6/8 rhythmic pulse, Ives intensified the harmonic texture

indicating a feeling larger than mere nostalgia. Though the melody still sounds in the accompaniment, the chords become increasingly chromatic as the narrator confesses that "all that is best in me, lying deep in memory, draws my heart where I would be, nearer to thee."[25] Ives played continually on the words of the refrain, "Nearer to Thee," throughout the strophic section. Use of the lower-case "t" in the word "thee" in mm 23 allowed Ives to expose completely his use of the hymn-tune by incorporating the final words of the refrain verbatim, while still maintaining the proper object of the first verse, the old farm house. Ives established a literally animated home, not God, as the source of goodness drawing the narrator in.




"Down East" © 1958 by PEER INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION.

*Musical example 4-2: "Down East," mm 18-24*

A three-bar interlude, mm 24-26, overlaps the end of the first verse and prepares the second, mm 27-44. Comprised of a syncopated, repeated middle C in the right hand and bell-like E-flats and B-flats played on the beat throughout both registers with the left hand, the interlude creates a parenthetical pause between visions, as if giving the narrator courage for what follows. Embedded in the seeming banality of the sing-song verse—containing an exact quotation of a beloved hymn—lies one of Ives's most radical

[25] The word "heart" appears twice; the first use describes the heart as the source of maternal songs.

transcendental formulations: domestic normalcy, at least in the context of "Down East," replaces religious observance as an edifying family activity. On Sunday morning, with hymns playing not on a piano but on an organ in the background, Ives made no mention of preparing for church. Quite the opposite, his narrator speaks of doing chores. The refrain text "Nearer to Thee" appears as intended—with an upper-case "T"—in mm 35-38, but in quotation marks, implying that the hymn serves not to inspire pious fervor, but rather to accompany housework. The closing sentiment only serves to obscure matters further. Speaking now directly of "Bethany"—referred to as a "strain," the synonym for songs used in mm 5 to describe the outgrown music of childhood—the narrator states that because of the hymn—again, not because of God—"a stronger hope comes nearer to me," representing Ives's most curious case of the refrain play on words.

"Down East," a deceptively accessible song about memory, gives a glimpse of the conflicted emotions within Ives regarding the nature of faith and religious practice. He certainly did not deny his belief, nor did he draw the Emersonian conclusion that since home serves the "sanctifying" function of church for some, then man can assume a sense of natural divinity. He did, however, listen intently when Emerson said "A true conversion, a true Christ, is now, as always, to be made by the reception of beautiful sentiments."[26] Ives took in his recollective visions—his own life's beautiful sentiments—but not without a cost. Emerson made his statements years after having resigned his pulpit. Ives never abandoned his religious practice—the sacramental rather than sentimental element of his faith—but, as "Down East" makes clear, he fought hard at times to maintain it.

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[26] Emerson, "An Address," *Essential Writings*, 69.

***THE LIGHT THAT IS FELT***
*1903; 25mm; Text by John Greenleaf Whittier (1884)*[27]

None of the questions that haunt "Down East" invade the serene affirmation of "The Light that is Felt," a song of trust and consolation in which poet John Greenleaf Whittier draws the parallel between a young girl's dependence on her mother and an adult's relationship with God. Two contrasting metaphors provide a structural element to text and song: darkness as fear of the unknown and light as reassurance resulting from faith in a trusted higher power. Setting only two of Whittier's five stanzas, Ives wrote a stylistically uniform parlor song that, while fully credible within that genre, contains unmistakable marks of Ivesian originality, an admixture of novelty and tradition resulting in more efficient and effective communication. Ironically, Ives's distinctly American innovations, such as those suggested in "The Light that is Felt," drew rebukes both from native critics and modern composers alike.

During a recent phase in Ives study, certain scholars called into question the legitimacy of Ives's pioneering modernism basing their objections on long-standing questions relative to chronology and curious decades-old accusations made by American composer Elliott Carter who claimed that Ives continually revised his works. Recalling in 1969 a day spent with Ives some forty years prior, Carter charged,

> A new score was being derived from the older one to which he was adding and changing, turning octaves into sevenths and ninths, and adding dissonant notes. Since then, I have often wondered at exactly what date a lot of the music written early in his life received its last shot of dissonance and polyrhythm. In this case he showed me quite simply

[27] Sinclair, 421-422.

> how he was improving the score. I got the impression that he might have frequently jacked up the level of dissonance of many works as his tastes changed. While the question no longer seems important, one could wonder whether he was as early a precursor of "modern" music as is sometimes made out.[28]

In 1987, Maynard Solomon wrote "Charles Ives: Some Questions of Veracity," accusing Ives of a "systematic pattern of falsification sufficient for the prudent scholar to withhold acceptance of Ives's datings pending independent verification of his assertions and scrupulous testing of the evidentiary trail that he left on his autographs."[29] The subsequent body of scholarship has since vindicated Ives, but the fact of his personal and artistic isolation remains as acute an issue now as it did in his own time. In the eyes of the modernists who wanted to "exalt the artist as superior to the philistine rabble, the lonely genius as the crown of society," Ives seemed "nearer the Romantic than the Modern." [30] For the American critics and scholars, who should have reveled in a truly native and original genius, his music inspired skepticism. As evidenced in this highly stylized yet delightfully fresh song, Ives refused to swear stylistic allegiance. "What I had in mind rather by 'new'," he wrote, "was something that gives one the sense, whether remote or vivid, of that constant organic flow going on in all life, the outward form of which may appear different to different men."[31]

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[28] Perlis, 138. Ives nurtured and supported Carter, writing on his behalf when he applied—successfully—to Harvard in 1926. As Swafford writes, Carter chose to "pay back his mentor with a baffling mixture of admiration, advocacy, and cold repudiation" (332). Carter wrote in 1939, "[his] esthetic is naive, often too naive to express serious thoughts . . . possibly charming but certainly trivial" ("Case," 175-176). Here is not the appropriate forum to discuss Carter's unseemly myopia as a colleague or chronicler. Simply put, each man's work, now wards of history, speaks for itself.

[29] Solomon, "Veracity," 463.

[30] Swafford, 391.

[31] *Memos*, 239 (letter to John Tasker Howard, 1930).

*A tender child of summers three,*

*at night, while seeking her little bed,*

*Paused on the dark stair timidly,*

*Oh, mother take my hand, said she,*

*And then the dark will all be light.*

*We older children grope our way*

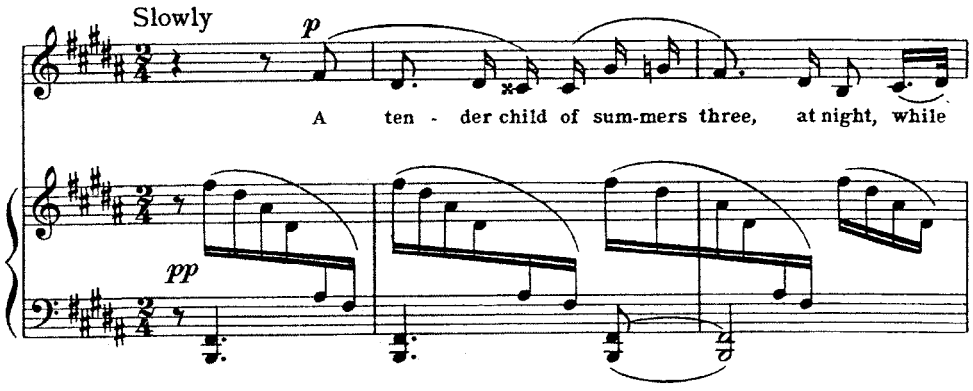
*From dark behind to dark before;*

*And only when our hands we lay in Thine,*

*O God! the night is day*

*and there is darkness never more.*

The confluence of childhood, parenthood, and divine protection presented in Whittier's poem formed an undeniable part of this metaphysical "organic flow" in Ives, who included many supernatural elements in the song. The near-constant pattern of gentle descending sixteenth-notes creates a sense of interaction between the temporal and divine, a musical depiction of downward-flowing blessings. Indicated "Slowly" in 2/4 time, Ives wrote, in effect, a 3/8 measure to open the B-major parlor song.






*Musical example 4-3: "The Light that is Felt," mm 1-3*

Swafford, a composer, notes the practical impossibility of "modernizing" conventional pieces;[32] in the case of subtly embedded polyrhythms, the construction must exist as part of the formal plan from the outset. The question remains as to why Ives felt a need to add any compositional complexity to a strophic song, containing no stylistic variation, set to a text of uniformly placid sentiment. Just as he did in "Cradle Song," Ives went out of his way in setting Whittier's text to make musical allowances for poetic incongruities. In the second line of text, Whittier upset the pattern of iambic feet, writing the dactyl "seeking her." By establishing 3/8 in mm 1 as an internal alternate meter, he allowed for the imperceptible absorption of the dactyl in mm 4 and left open the possibility of exploring the 3/8 against 2/4 rhythmic relationship throughout the song. The poem set to music reads more smoothly than the text alone.

Ives wrote an exceptionally simple harmonic scheme. Avoiding the obvious use of the plagal cadence to represent God, he used the tonic-subdominant relationship to define the pattern of progression, the "conflict" in each verse; the primary cadences in mm 11 and 23 resolve dominant to tonic, forging a connection between the heavenly assurance provided by God and the parental comforting of the child. Ives deferred to the popular parlor style by adding chromatic passing notes in the melodic line, creating an exceptional sense of smoothness in framing each musical phrase. The toddler "seeking her little bed" in 3/8 time, mm 4 and 5, "paused" in mm 6, afraid to continue in the darkness. Ives depicted her fear with a halting off-beat rhythm in the bass. The harmony moves to the dominant in mm 8 as the child cries out "Oh, mother take my hand," rising to C-sharp. Neither artist portrayed the physical act of comfort; the process of asking for help and the belief in its presence provides resolution.

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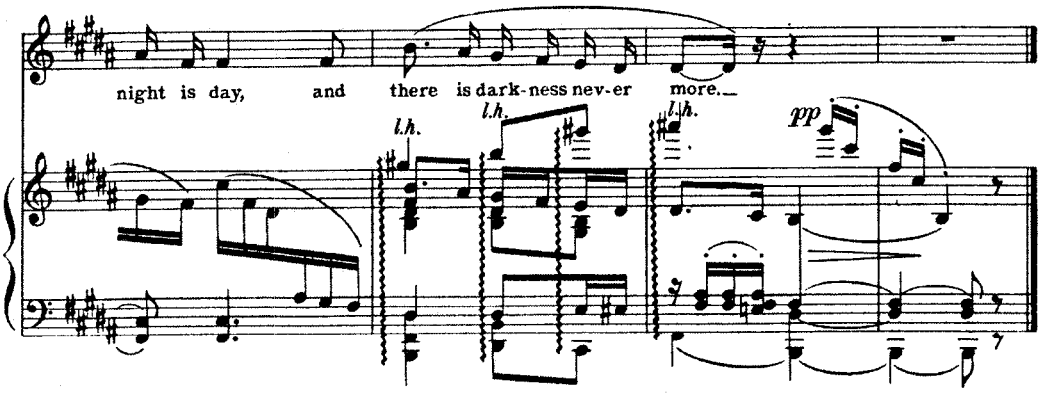
[32] Swafford, 504.

A descending sixteenth-note figure implying both D-sharp-minor and F-sharp-major prepares the second verse, mm 14-25. Elaborating on Whittier's description of the dependence "We older children" have on God, Ives continued the shower of benevolent descending figures in the accompaniment. Mirroring mm 4-5, he wrote two measures of 3/8, mm 15-16, not out of prosodic necessity, but to support Whittier who wrote poignantly that we men and women "grope our way from dark behind to dark before," forgetful of lessons learned and blind to future events. Indicating the potential for a more cooperative supernatural exchange, however, Ives incorporated upward moving sixteenth-note figures in mm 18-19 to accompany the conscious act of seeking God's aid. Just as the child felt soothed merely by knowing the comforts that the parent could provide, the older children of God trust that in His hands, "there is darkness never more." Taking advantage of the rhythmic ambiguity once again, a last 3/8 grouping in mm 22 prepares the ultimate cadence, set to majestic rolled chords and a final upward-moving figure high in the right hand. The harmonically open *pianissimo* figure that descends in response, mm 24-25, whispers eternal assurance and light.






*Musical example 4-4: "The Light that is Felt," mm 22-25*

***TOM SAILS AWAY***
*1917; 25mm; Text by Ives*[33]

One of Ives's patriotic songs, "Tom Sails Away" evokes childhood directly as a thematic element and formative memory as a structural element. With "In Flanders Fields" and "He Is There!," "Tom Sails Away" completes the powerful set "Three Songs of War." War remained a constant presence throughout Ives's life. The Civil War defined every man of George Ives's generation, and Charles grew up fully aware of the spectacle and pageantry of war manifested in parades and band music, as well as the permanent physical and psychic scars earned in combat. In adulthood, Ives endured both World Wars, feeling powerless and humiliated by his physical inability to serve in World War I and emotionally overwhelmed at the scale of human loss and suffering. Rather than depict the brutality in music, however, he chose in "Tom Sails Away," to focus on the emotional costs of sacrifice, not for those who fought, but for those left behind, a community less concerned with global strategy than with the safe return of a son and brother. The narrative journey begins after Tom, seen only as a babe-in-arms, has sailed off to fight, never to return. "Tom Sails Away" neither glorifies war nor celebrates its participants: it demands serious recollective reflection on benefits realized through the ultimate sacrifice of others.

*Scenes from my childhood are with me,*

*I'm in the lot behind our house upon the hill, a spring day's sun is setting,*

*mother with Tom in her arms is coming towards the garden;*

*the lettuce rows are showing green.*

*Thinner grows the smoke oe'r the town, stronger comes the breeze from the ridge,*

[33] Sinclair, 528-529.

*'Tis after six, the whistles have blown, the milk train's gone down the valley*

*Daddy is coming up the hill from the mill, We run down the lane to meet him*

*But today! In freedom's cause Tom sailed away*

*for over there, over there, over there!*

*Scenes from my childhood are floating before my eyes.*

For this most painful of recollective journeys that combines death and innocence, Ives chose a multi-scene format in which the opening and closing sections (similar to the opening of "Down East") depict a solemn impressionistic present that weighs down the process of remembering pleasant simpler times. Unlike "Down East" in which the initial source of disquiet comes from the narrator's uncertainties, in "Tom Sails Away," sadness results from the knowledge that Tom's death will forever darken any memory of home; remembrance, rather than a pleasurable diversion, becomes a sober pilgrimage.[34]

Starr proposes that "stylistic shifts in the music illuminate the progression of thought, ultimately creating larger patterns within the seemingly spontaneous flow of ideas."[35] Beyond this, the song, in many ways an album of miniatures portrays a strong sense of stream-of-consciousness recollection, a pastiche of individual memories leading up to Tom's departure. Connectivity results from the singular narrative perspective, regardless of the order of recollective flow; shifting scenes trigger associated internal transitions based on sensual catalysts.

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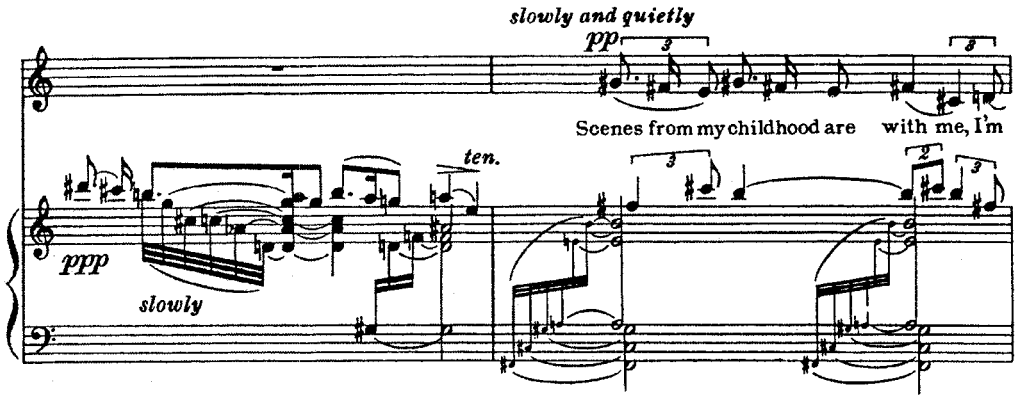
[34] I work under the assumption that Ives imagined Tom as a casualty of the war. His other "Songs of War" express patriotic fervor ("He Is There!) and disillusionment ("In Flanders Fields"). It seems entirely unlikely that his war song expressing sadness would have as its subject a soldier who returned. Ives never wrote the song of triumphant homecoming.

[35] Starr, *Union*, 72. Both Starr (*Union*, 71-78) and David Metzger ("Boys" 83-87) present superb analyses, which need no elaboration. The present consideration focuses on Ives's transcendental perspective relative to nature, sense perception, duty, and memory.

The introduction, mm 1-2, shows astonishing stylistic breadth. In mm 1, Ives anticipated the finest lyricism of the Second Viennese School; in mm 2, he created a Debussian F-sharp-minor waterscape that Perry describes as "a metreless [sic] kind of musical impressionism reminding us of the flow of time."[36] Once again highlighting the direct connection between songs and memory, Ives quoted music and text from the well-known folk-song "The Old Oaken Bucket."[37] The accompaniment figure in mm 1 enters the realm of memory from above; the narrator, well aware of the devastating emotional destination of the upcoming recollective passage, feels the beginning as an undeniable descent.




"Tom Sails Away" © 1935 by Merion Music, Inc.

*Musical example 4-5: "Tom Sails Away," mm 1-2*

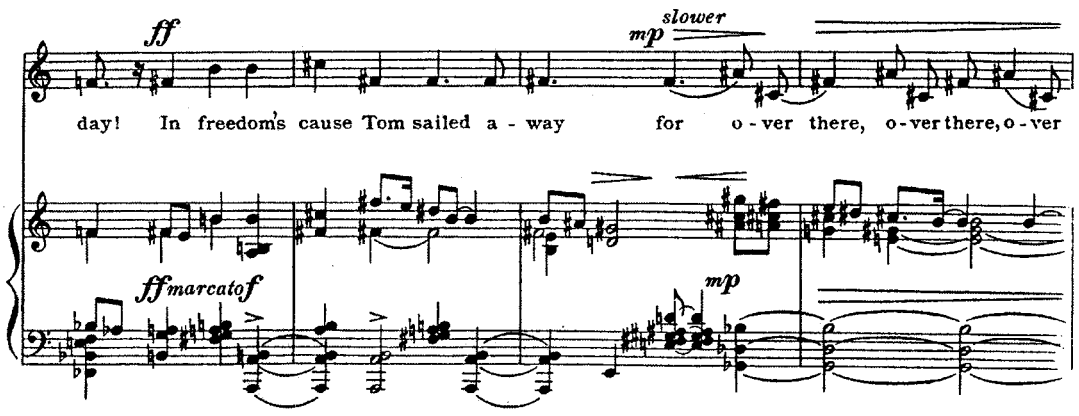
Scene 1, "Sunset," mm 3-5, establishes place. In present tense (the "tense of remembering"), the narrator describes the location in detail, accompanied in mm 3 by block chords in the bass and moving groups of three eighth-notes in the right hand that exude youthful energy. In mm 4-5 further description reveals the season and time of

[36] Perry, 28.
[37] Burkholder, *Tunes*, 363. The opening line of the "Old Oaken Bucket" reads, "How dear to this heart are the scenes of my childhood."

day, showing a picturesque but conflicting setting of new life (spring) and decay (evening). Seeing provides the primary sensual stimuli: images of place and the colors of the sunset sky. Images of people dominate scene 2, "Mother," mm 5-8. "Mother with Tom in her arms" walks to the garden over a stable, pleasant accompaniment. The scene radiates maternal domesticity, and the activity, her gathering vegetables for dinner, introduces the sense of taste into the reminiscence. The "Mother" accompaniment blends seamlessly into the next scene, "Breeze," mm 9-13, filled with airborne stimulations. A rising right hand figure in mm 9 indicates dissipating smoke from the closing mills, sure to have a familiar smell. In mm 10-12 a "stronger breeze" indicated emphatically in the accompaniment, comes over the ridge. The first indication of chronological time occurs in mm 13; having returned to childhood, the narrator knows the time—past six in the evening—not by a clock but from hearing the blowing factory whistle. A two-bar transition, mm 14-15, featuring a return of the youthful "Sunset" accompaniment texture, introduces scene 4, "Daddy," mm 15-18. Adding a marvelous detail, Ives depicted the sound of the milk train horn on the third beat of mm 14.

The father returns from work at the mill with purposeful walking music in the accompaniment and a flourish of excitement in the bass indicating the song's climactic event, the children rushing out to meet their Daddy. The heaviness of his steps disappears, absorbed by the children's rushing "down the lane to meet him." Accompanied, curiously, by an extended upward-moving figure in mm 17-18, the direction of the figure depicts not only the children's running, but also indicates a shift in recollective perspective. The narrative returns not quite to the surface of the present,

but ascends partially from the full depth of remembrance to the time when Tom, still his mother's baby, has grown old enough to sail away to war.






*Musical example 4-6: "Tom Sails Away," mm 19-22*

"Tom," scene 5, mm 19-23, poignantly depicts the narrator—representing an entire family and community—trying to say all the right things in the face of crushing doubt and despair. The words "In freedom's cause" ring hollow; the patriotic tunes "Columbia, Gem of the Ocean," quoted in the right hand of the accompaniment in mm 19-21, and "Over there" sound half-hearted, an attempt at a stiff upper lip. The conflict rages not only across the ocean where Tom has gone to die, but also in the hearts of the family members he left at home. They must somehow reconcile the love of country and sense of genuine patriotic sacrifice with the desperate desire to see Tom alive. In the postlude, Ives again (as he did in "Down East") indicated the enormous psychic cost of remembrance, manifested in this case in the lowered pitch, F-minor. With an upward-moving gesture, reversing mm 1, the narrator returns to the present and, looking up to avoid welling tears, still sees the same childhood scenes "floating" in his sight.

***THE RAINBOW (SO MAY IT BE!)***
*1921; 16mm; Text by William Wordsworth,* Poems in Two Volumes *(1807)*[38]

Exploiting the understated solemnity in Wordsworth's text, Ives expressed some of his purest transcendental sentiments in "So may it be!," creating an atmosphere of contemplative holiness on three separate levels. First, he depicted man in nature; the central image of the rainbow serves as the constant frame of reference for the narrator during all developmental phases of his life. Essentially, the speaker defines his vitality by his reactions to and interaction with nature throughout these stages of physical and metaphysical maturation. Second, Ives developed the inherent religiosity embedded in the text: "Amen" means "So Be It" in Hebrew. Following Wordsworth, Ives wrote, in effect, an extended transcendental doxology and fantasia reminiscent of the Protestant "Three-fold" or "Great Amen." Third, he incorporated variations of the hymn-tune "Serenity" in multiple keys.[39] For Ives, Protestant church music for Ives remained perpetually evocative of piety, natural and religious.

*My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky:*

*So was it when my life began;*

*So is it now I am a man;*

*So be it when I shall grow old, or let me die!*

*The Child is father of the Man;*

*And I could wish my days to be*

*Bound each to each by natural piety*

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[38] Sinclair, 474-475.
[39] See Burkholder, *Tunes*, 287-289: "The frequent changes of key and the slight rhythmic alterations make the tune less recognizable, so that the melody is heard less as a quotation of a particular tune than as an evocation of hymn-tune style that creates the appropriate mood of reverence and humility."

Ives first wrote "The Rainbow" as the third movement of the "Set of Three Pieces for Chamber Ensemble, No. 1." On the score he inscribed the dedication "To H. T. I. on her first birthday in Redding June 4 1914."[40] Ives always conceived of "So may it be" as a song, however, even in its chamber ensemble form. Burkholder suggests that "Ives had the words in mind as he wrote the instrumental work. Indeed, in the published score of *The Rainbow*, the vocal melody of the song is given verbatim to the basset horn or English horn, and the text is provided underneath."[41] The dedication to Harmony reveals important elements of Ives's highly romantic sense of transcendental naturalism. As stated above, though he never accepted the idea of man as God, he embraced a divinized concept of nature. In August 1912 Ives bought nearly 15 acres of countryside in West Redding, Connecticut, within ten miles of Danbury, where he and Harmony built "their retreat, their Eden," a house with a studio, a barn, "and a rustic cottage by the driveway where Deac would often stay."[42] Ives's life had in a sense begun anew with his marriage to Harmony in 1908, and he continually relied on her for spiritual revitalization. Their Walden-esque escape to a place so close to Ives's boyhood home represented the culmination of many facets of his existence, including home, family, music, business success (that made the whole enterprise possible), and the hope for future idyllic togetherness. If their marriage felt like the beginning of a new life, the house in West Redding provided a new realm, a world of their own creation where they communed not with men but with nature. Harmony's "first birthday" came a year after the completed construction of their "Eden."

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[40] Sinclair, 121.
[41] Burkholder, *Tunes*, 287.
[42] Swafford, 216. It is significant that Ives never winterized the house; even Eden had seasons and a time came each year when the Iveses left to return to New York for the winter.

A rainbow forms "by reflection, twofold refraction, and dispersion of the sun's rays in falling rain or in spray or mist."[43] Separate component colors in sunlight each have different wavelengths with distinct angles of refraction. When light shines through water, each color refracts first into the droplet, reflecting in it, then refracts outward at its own angle visible as an individual color; simply put, an optically explicable miracle occurs, serving no purpose other than to excite wonder. "Let me die," Wordsworth wrote, if such an event ceases to cause his heart to "leap up." The first half of the text expresses this sense of awe at nature's spectacle in the past, present, and future stages of his maturity. (Wordsworth speculated concerning the final phase though he confidently claimed to stake his life on maintaining this awe perpetually.) The latter half of the text forges the connection between the concepts of near-religious appreciation for natural beauty and life's developmental continuum, visible in distinct phases as refracted and reflected through sensual experience and memory.

"So may it be!" contains three sections. Section 1, mm 1-7, consists of a four-bar introduction, and the first vocal entrance, mm 5-7, which includes the statement of metaphysical reaction to the rainbow. In mm 1-2 the introductory music has the intimidating pianistic feel of Brahms or Liszt; densely chromatic chords in 5/4 time move toward impressionistic six and seven note right hand clusters in mm 3-4. Though he avoided a diatonic key center, Ives created a harmonic frame of reference in the opening with pedal notes in the bass moving from A-natural in mm 1-2 to C-natural in m 3-5, overlapping the 3/4½ time vocal entrance. The storms of the introduction hasten the appearance of the rainbow in mm 6, an unexpectedly brilliant example of Ivesian text-painting; chromatic arches pervade the vocal line and accompaniment.

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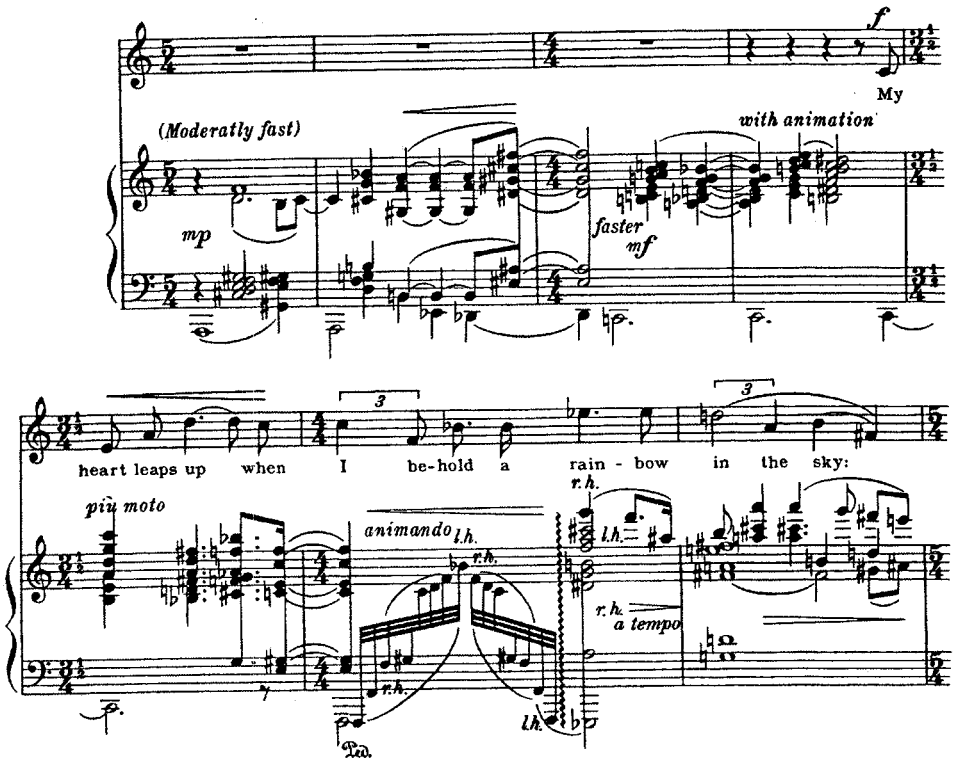
[43] *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 675.



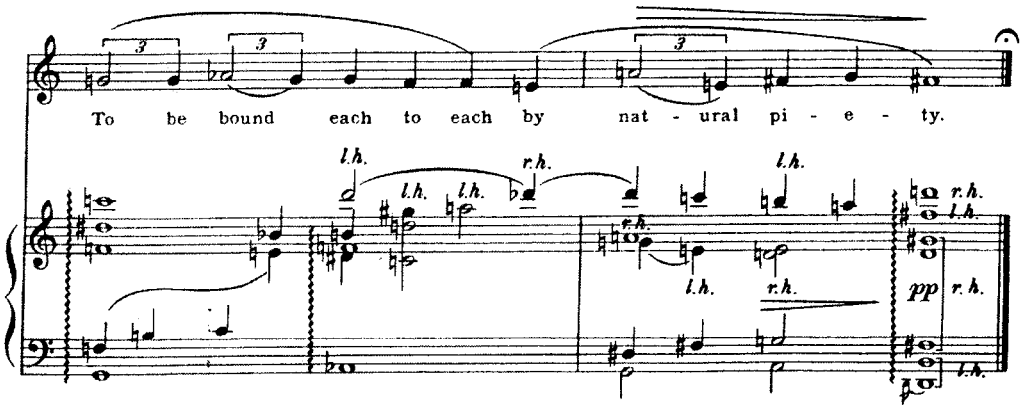

"So may it be!" © 1933 by Merion Music, Inc.

*Musical example 4-7: "So may it be!" mm 1-7*

Section 2, mm 8-12, contains an artistic doxology, Wordsworth's and Ives's "Great Amen." In explicating the phasic nature of his maturation—past, present, and future—Wordsworth reflected the Trinitarian nature of the liturgical Doxology (Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.) Ives depicted both past and present similarly in mm 8 and 9 respectively. Huge rolled chord clusters with F-sharp in the bass dominate the measures; a diminished chord built on C-sharp echoes faintly on the fifth beats. The vocal melody moves downward from C-natural in each measure roughly in whole steps. Ives changed harmonies and texture to match Wordsworth's future hopes,

a line of iambic hexameter set in mm 10-12. In hymn-like 4/4 time, the chords of stacked fourths and fifths move downward by half-step from mm 10 to 11 under the voice, which soars climactically to the top of the staff on the words "or let me die."

Both Wordsworth and Ives explored the interrelatedness of life's stages with reverence in section 3; Wordsworth does so with his marvelous phrase "The Child is father to the Man," and Ives set the text to the hymn-tune "Serenity." Writing for the first time in discernable keys, he maintained a supernatural air by constantly shifting tonal center: A-major in mm 13-14, E-flat-major in mm 15, and D-major in mm 16. Each of the three melodic "Serenity" fragments remains recognizable, yet their juxtaposition within the continuously modulating harmonic framework creates a larger original melody. In stating the hymn-tune in three separate keys, Ives fused his ingrained sense of religious devotion—represented by the church music and the doxology form of section 2—and his transcendental "natural" piety: each key represents not only one of life's three developmental stages, but separate colors—integral components of a larger rainbow—discernable through reflective contemplation.






*Musical example 4-8: "So may it be!" mm 15-16*

***THE THINGS OUR FATHERS LOVED***
*1917; 22mm; Text by Ives*[44]

American isolation is philosophical. The American Republic—a vast and disparate territory was founded on the revolutionary principles of liberty, brotherhood, and equality by a landed class with "an obsessive suspicion of any centralized political power that operated in faraway places beyond the immediate supervision or surveillance of the citizens it claimed to govern."[45] Its ideological foundation consists of the concept of religious liberty that, paradoxically, came from the unlikely success of an extremist religious community forced to flee England in search of freedom for their doctrinal intolerance.[46] Democratic liberty represents a compromise struck between antagonisms for the sake of mutual preservation: a philosophical standoff. For the citizens of Europe raised on the absolutism of Christendom, the total collapse of such a system seemed a foregone conclusion, yet they underestimated Hobbes's prescient humanism. In 1785, Noah Webster refuted in *Sketches of American Policy* the concept "that *virtue* is the foundation of republics," writing that the only "real principle that is predominant in every individual and directs all his actions . . . [is] self-interest."[47]

From the outset there existed liberty, brotherhood and equality; liberty meaning the minimally regulated pursuit of self-interest, brotherhood resulting from common experiential and ideological influences, and equality based on opportunity. Ives added a subtitle to "The Things Our Fathers Loved," writing in parentheses "and the greatest of

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[44] Sinclair, 521-522.
[45] Ellis, 7.
[46] Describing the success of America has always troubled European historians; in *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville accurately anticipated "the dogmatic nothingness of Unitarianism and the absurdities of Illuminism." (CE, xiv: 753) The government of the people succeeds because the people, as the government, have so much to gain in its commercial success.
[47] Bailyn, 373.

these was Liberty." St. Paul wrote to the people of Corinth, "And now there remain faith, hope, and charity these three: but the greatest of these is charity."[48] Ives's undeniable reference to Corinthians serves as another example of his reverential adherence to principles related to God, country, and his fellow man. Religion, nationalism, and transcendental recollection constitute the song's reason for being. The revolutionary rallying cry of liberty, brotherhood, and equality mustered the resolve to form nations. For Ives, liberty stood apart; in his estimation, "Our Fathers" loved freedom best of the humanist tripartite doctrine. They created it with their will and defended it with their blood. Patriotism felt most real to Ives when expressed with music, whether hymn-tunes, songs of war, or civilian band music. To his way of thinking, these sonic nationalistic "colors" vividly evoked red, white, and blue fervor in the hearts and minds of Americans. "The Things Our Fathers Loved," inspires such sentiments, yet avoids devolving into the inevitable mawkish nostalgia. A profound and considered appreciation pervades the song, and Ives indicated that the debt we owe our forebears consists not only of honored remembrance, but the active enjoyment of the liberty they died to preserve. In writing this montage of filial gratitude, Ives presented for consideration, as Burkholder notes,

> not merely the tunes themselves, but the values they represent . . . home; the natural beauty of one's homeland; religious faith; patriotism and group feeling; and hope for a future reunion with those we love, in Heaven if not on earth. These are the things our fathers loved, the fruits of liberty.[49]

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[48] I Corinthians, 13: 13, *The Holy Bible,* Douay Rheims Version (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1991).
[49] Burkholder, *Tunes*, 311.

Ives's text, one of his least poetic, begins with arguably his most quotable line.

*I think there must be a place in the soul*

*all made of tunes, of tunes of long ago;*

*I hear the organ on the Main Street corner,*

*Aunt Sarah humming Gospels;*

*Summer evenings,*

*The village cornet band, playing in the square.*

*The town's Red, White and Blue,*

*all Red, White and Blue*

*Now! Hear the songs!*

*I know not what are the words*

*But they sing in my soul*

*of the things our Fathers loved.*

Ives established the groundwork for technical analysis in the opening sentence.[50] On some levels a peculiarly satisfying musical puzzle, the song demands at least a specific acknowledgement of the recognizable tunes and their stylistic connotations.[51] Ives fully intended that the quotations be discernable, words or no, and their rapid succession in the opening bars represents the narrator's return to the recollected past triggered by real or imagined musical catalysts. Like "Memories," "Down East," and "Tom Sails Away," "The Things Our Fathers Loved" takes place in multiple tenses.

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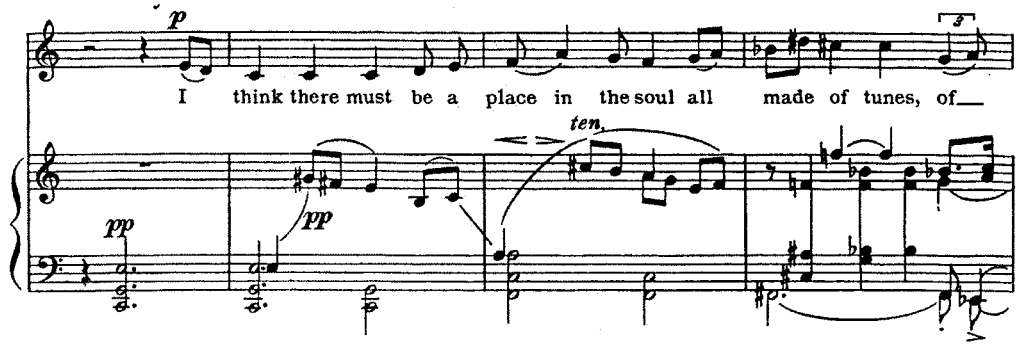
[50] Morgan (*Studies*, 3-27), Whitesell ("Reckless Form," 305-311), and Starr (*Union*, 57-67) each presents a thorough analysis.

[51] Burkholder, *Tunes*, 310: "It is not crucial to the song's meaning that a listener identify the borrowed songs or think of their words; what is most important is the character of the songs, each of which represents a type of song that played a distinctive role in American society in Ives's day and is endowed with a particular emotional resonance."






*Musical example 4-9: "The Things Our Fathers Loved" mm 1-4*

The narrative section in present tense, mm 1-10, begins with a quotation of "Dixie" in C-major, mm 1-3, leading toward "soul" in mm 3, supported by an F-major chord in the bass.[52] Ives's purposeful indication of the soul—not the heart or the mind—as the repository for songs comes as no surprise given his faith.[53] In mm 4, the harmonic and melodic structure dissolves out of "Dixie" and the C-major/F-major relationships, evolving into a C-major quotation of "My Old Kentucky Home," under the text "tunes of long ago." Measures 6-9 begin the shift toward the past on the narrative plane; the lines "I hear the organ on the Main Street corner" (accompanied by "On the Banks of the Wabash," G-major for the voice, F-major for the piano) and "Aunt Sarah humming Gospels" (supported by the hymn-tune "Nettleton" in F-major) could both pertain either to present or past. These lines represent recollective triggers as well as being part of the litany of remembrances. Similarly, in "Memory B" Ives made reference to humming relative to memory, tunes "sung" without words.

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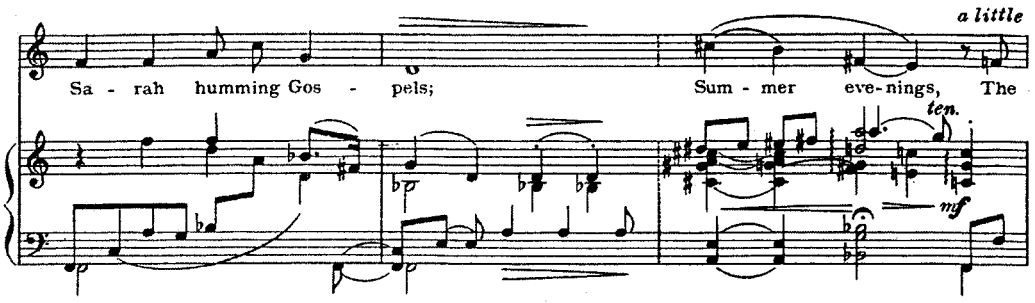
[52] Morgan argues convincingly that the song represents an overall antecedent-consequent form, though his first "half" consists of mm 1-14, his second, mm 15-22 (*Studies*, 10).

[53] Feder (*Life*, 20) uses heart and soul interchangeably, an unsustainable presumption given Ives's belief system.

In mm 10 Ives crafted a mystical change in narrative perspective, a recollective shift to the past; the thought of "Summer evenings" inspires the transition, set with harmonies obscure enough to inspire references to *Tristan und Isolde.*[54] Besides the obvious alteration to the texture and the absence for the first time of a recognizable quotation, the fact that Ives wrote a *fermata* over the left hand chord on the third beat of mm 10 supports the thesis that the sectional shift occurs here.



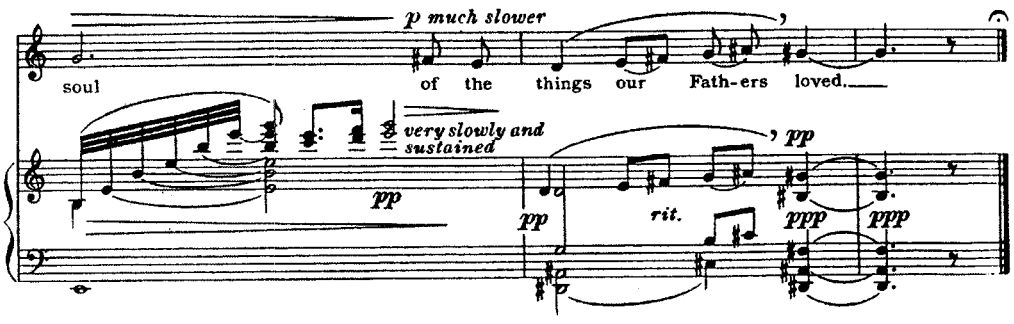



*Musical example 4-10: "The Things Our Fathers Loved" mm 8-10*

Texture and mood change completely as the narrator willingly inhabits the world of memory. Again, the parade of image passes by with musical accompaniment in mm 11-14, the marching cornet band (one of George Ives's ensembles) playing "The Battle Cry of Freedom" in energized F-major, complete with "oom-pah" bass line. The song's emotional and musical climax comes in waves; first the crashing *fortissimo* of mm 15 sets the exclamation "Now! Hear the songs!" then the ebbing mm 19, "But they sing in my soul." In both phrases, the vocal melody outlines "In the Sweet By-and-By." The right hand of the accompaniment frantically surges up and down in chromatic sixteenth-notes

[54] Morgan (*Studies*, 14, note 8) writes of being apprised of the embedded *Tristan* chord. Leaving aside my bemusement at Wagner's being credited for every application of the half-diminished-7th chord, the obviously possible *Tristan* reference seems coincidental, if not unlikely, given Ives's thoughts about Wagner. I hear something entirely less profound: a nightingale's call in the vocal line.

over pedal D-naturals and C-naturals that strive to forge the molten tonality into dominant and subdominant chords of G in mm 15-17; the stilted syntax "I know not what are the words" adds to the frenzied revelry. Images of larger concepts and higher values long ago replaced text as the center of importance in these songs, and as the moving figures becomes a wash of sixteenth-note quintuplets and sextuplets moving from the left to the right hand of the accompaniment in mm 18-19, the narrator's declaration of the song's metaphysical center, "But they sing in my soul," effects the reestablishment of the present tense in mm 20. As he did in "Tom Sails Away," Ives depicted the return as a rising to the surface with a liquid ascending figure, in this case via a deceptive cadence to E-minor, the submediant harmony in G. The unsettled ending stands as another depiction of the tremendous cost of remembrance made doubly so in this case due to the psychic weight of realization and appreciation for the things "our fathers loved" and the sacrifices they endured in securing them. The breath indicated before the utterance of the final word allows the narrator a moment of silent gratitude. The final cadence of "The Things Our Fathers Loved" comes to rest on a G-sharp 6-4 chord but feels as if it could resolve anywhere. Ives's own father taught him many lessons as a composer and as a man; the greatest of these was liberty.






*Musical example 4-11: "The Things Our Fathers Loved" mm 20-22*

## POSTFACE

"Now the recollection of his former toils had disenchanted him of ambition, and he went about . . . in search of the life of a private man. . . ."[55]

Charles Ives's desire to convey the human condition with unprecedented honesty compelled him to establish dynamic new approaches to form. In his songs of children and childhood, he exposed the sum of his compositional development and the trajectory of his metaphysical ethos in exploring with kaleidoscopic diversity a thematic unity of singular importance and universality. Writing as a child, he revealed the depth of his love and appreciation for his father and shared the intimacies of their relationship with startling frankness. Writing as a father, he revealed parental joy and devastation. As a citizen and servant of God he strove to inspire more thoughtful consideration of what draws men and women toward Heaven and binds one to the other.

His thought represents the confluence of massive ideological and societal forces. Living during a time of unprecedented philosophical and societal flux, his music flowed out of his struggle with the dualities within him and the contradictions in the world around him. In the constant and painful process of reconciliation he found his voice and sang out because of the truth that he knew, unsure that any would hear: bound neither by constructs or community, his art became a totality. He employed ground-breaking techniques adopted by many avant-garde composers, yet remained apart from their company, cut off by his distrust of their atheistic ideologies. Refusing to abandon the absolute principles in his religious belief, he often found himself alienated by his transcendental heroes whose redefinition of truth and deification of man strayed too far

[55] Plato, *Republic*, Book x: 396 (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1986)

from Christianity. Because of the seriousness with which he embraced his foundational influences, he met ideological obstacles wherever he turned. He knew true freedom only in his music and developed something beyond style, a quantum musical embrace of emotional and communicative potentialities that nurtured the human spirit.

By 1926, Charles Ives, age 52, had uttered his last original statement. He knew he was finished as a composer, "he came downstairs one day with tears in his eyes, and said he couldn't seem to compose any more—nothing went well, nothing sounded right."[56] He had realized his isolation. Marr writes, "Emerson said he had but one idea. He was preoccupied throughout his life with the 'infinitude of the private man.'"[57] Ives came to accept this infinitude and the ensuing solitude: he knew that he had sung with an eternal voice and had given himself entirely.

> The sun set, but set not his hope:
> Stars rose; his faith was earlier up:
> Fixed on the enormous galaxy,
> Deeper and older seemed his eye;
> And matched his sufferance sublime
> The taciturnity of time
> He spoke, and words more soft than rain
> Brought the Age of Gold again:
> His action won such reverence sweet
> As hid all measure of the feat.[58]

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[56] *Memos*, 279. Harmony related the story to John Kirkpatrick.
[57] Marr, 3. The Emerson quote is from *Journals*, vii: 342.
[58] Emerson, "Character," *Essential Writings*, 735.

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# VITA

Andrew Childs is currently Assistant Professor of Music at Southwest Missouri State University. He was previously Guest Lecturer in Music at the Yale University School of Drama and Managing Coordinator of the Department of Voice and Opera at the Yale School of Music. He taught voice, Music Theory, and Music History at Thames Valley Music School at Connecticut College, and has given lectures and masterclasses throughout the country. He earned his Bachelor of Music Degree from the University of California, Irvine, where he was a member of the Dean's Council and was awarded an academic fellowship for graduate study. He completed his Doctoral studies at the University of Washington where he was a Brechemin Scholar.

Praised for the clarity and beauty of his voice and as a versatile and empathetic performer, Andrew has been a featured soloist with many prestigious organizations in performances ranging from Chant to New Music and Broadway. Guest appearances include those with Seattle Symphony, Seattle Symphony Chorale, Society of Composers International (SCI), American Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Northwest, Yale Camerata, Santa Barbara Quire of Voyces, Connecticut Master Chorale, Orchestra Seattle, Connecticut Chamber Players, and the American Guild of Organists. Andrew has sung over one hundred performances of operatic roles for Seattle Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Harrisburg Opera, The Center for Contemporary Opera, Amato Opera and others. He has become a frequent and sought-after collaborator by composers of new works. Among his numerous premieres are works by Yehudi Wyner, Victoria Bond, Timothy Melbinger, Brian Field, and Richard Wilson. His recorded performances include Wilson's *Aethelred the Unready* for Albany records, and Melbinger's *Some things are Dark* on the Centaur label.