

CHARLES IVES SONGS

Ted Puffer, tenor James Tenney, piano, with Philip Corner, piano

Volume 2: 1915 to 1929 Folkways Records FM 3345



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1965
v. 2

MUSIC LP

**CHARLES IVES SONGS:
VOLUME 2: 1915 TO 1929**

RECORDED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
SAMUEL CHARTERS

SIDE I

- Band 1. Majority (1921)
- Band 2. Ann Street (1921)
- Band 3. September (1920)
- Band 4. Grantchester (1920)
- Band 5. Afterglow (1919)
- Band 6. Walt Whitman (1921)
- Band 7. Tom Sails Away (1917)
- Band 8. Maple Leaves (1920)
- Band 9. On The Antipodes (1915-1923)

SIDE II

- Band 1. Charlie Rutlage (after 1917)
- Band 2. Two Little Flowers (1921)
- Band 3. The sideshow (1921)
- Band 4. Nov. 2, 1920 or An Election (1921)
- Band 5. Serenity (1919)
- Band 6. White Gulls (1921)
- Band 7. 1,2,3 (1921)
- Band 8. Immortality (1921)
- Band 9. Evening (1921)
- Band 10. A Farewell To Land (1925)

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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CHARLES IVES SONGS

Performed by Ted Puffer, Tenor;
James Tenney, Piano; and Philip Corner, Piano

VOLUME 1 1894 to 1915
VOLUME 2 1915 to 1925

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Samuel Charters



Charles Ives with his daughter Edith in 1924.

"... Some have written a book for money; I have not. Some for kindlings; I have not. I have not written a book for any of these reasons or for all of them together. In fact, gentle borrower, I have not written a book at all" - I have merely cleaned house. All that is left out on the clothes line; but it's good for a man's vanity to have the neighbors see him - on the clothes line.

For some such or different reason, through some such or different process, this volume, this package of paper, uncollectable notes, marks of respect and expression, is now thrown, so to speak, at the music fraternity, who for this reason will feel free to dodge it on its way - perhaps to the waste basket. It is submitted as much or more in the chance that some points for the better education of the composer may be thrown back at him than that any of the points the music may contain may be valuable to the recipient.

Some of the songs in this book, particularly among the later ones, cannot be sung, and if they could, perhaps might prefer, if they had a say, to remain as they are; that is, "in the leaf" - and that they will remain in this peaceful state is more than presumable. An excuse (if none of the above are good enough) for their existence which suggests itself at this point is that a song has a few rights, the same as other ordinary citizens. If it feels like walking along the left-hand side of the street, passing the door of physiology or sitting on the curb, why not let it? If it feels like kicking over an ash can, a poet's castle, or the prosodic law, will you stop it? Must it always be a polite triad, a "breve gaudium," a ribbon to match the voice? Should it not be free at times from the dominion of the thorax, the diaphragm, the ear, and other points of interest? If it wants to beat around in the valley, to throw stones up the pyramids, or to sleep in the park, should it not have immunity from a Nemesis, a Rameses, or a policeman? Should it not have a chance to sing to itself, if it can sing? - to enjoy itself without making a bow, if it can't make a bow? - to swim around in any ocean, if it can swim, without having to swallow "hook and bait," or being sunk by an operatic greyhound? If it happens to feel like trying to fly where humans cannot fly, to sing what cannot be sung, to walk in a cave on all fours, or to tighten up its girth in blind hope and faith and try to scale mountains that are not, who shall stop it?

- In short, must a song
always be a song!

Charles Ives
from "Postface to 114 Songs"

THE SONGS OF CHARLES IVES

An Introductory Note and Commentary on Some Songs

Samuel Charters

Early in May, 1923, a thin, balding New York business man in his late forties left at the New York Public Library a book that he had just had privately printed. It was music that he'd been writing on weekends and in the evenings when he'd finished work since he'd left college, a collection of songs,

"114 Songs." The composer was a partner in the multi-million dollar insurance agency of Ives and Myrick, Charles E. Ives. The title page read "114 Songs, by Charles E. Ives," on the reverse of the page "Redding, Conn.: The Composer, 1922." The songs were not even copyrighted, and instead of an introduction the composer had appended a kind of "postface" that tried to explain why he had published the music, The Library kept the book, even though the composer was unknown, and someone added a note in pencil on the back of the title page. "Composer, May 18, 1923."

The collection of songs was Ives' second private publication of his music. His health failed in 1917, and during his convalescence he wrote a collection of prose pieces to accompany his most advanced piano composition, the "Concord" Sonata, and published both the Sonata and a book of the essays, "Essays Before A Sonata," in 1919. Then in a final creative burst he managed to revise some of his older songs, to write a number of new ones, and to see the whole collection through the press. After 1923 his health continued to fail, and the rest of the work with his music, the publication of the two string quartets, the four symphonies, the two orchestral sets, and the four sonatas for violin and piano, had to be done by a small group of dedicated followers who somehow learned of his music through the compositions that he had printed.

The songs that Ives published were not, however, only an important incident in his own life. The "114 Songs" is one of the most important collections of vocal compositions that any composer has ever published. The art song had been one of the richest areas of Nineteenth Century music, but the body of song literature was almost entirely one of love songs. The century was going through incessant political upheaval as contemporary intellectuals attempted to adjust to the industrialization of Europe, and in Germany, where much of the musical activity was centered, there was almost continual political agitation that culminated in the revolution of 1848. Almost none of this, however, was reflected in the German art song. The composers, instead, were absorbed with the romantic concept of unfulfilled love, and in the songs of Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, and Wolfe the responses to the love relationship obsessed the music. There were some songs that were free of this, the Four Serious Songs of Brahms, occasional songs by Schubert and Schumann, but these were usually an expression of the other romantic obsession with death. Often the texts were so slight, or so repetitive, that the songs did become, as Ives said, "... a breve gaudium, a ribbon to match the voice." If there were more serious political or social concepts they found a tenuous expression in the larger orchestral works of the period, but even in these the melodic and harmonic material was closely related to the emotions that colored the art song. To some extent the failure of the Nineteenth Century German composer to involve his music in the political currents of his time re-

flected his insecure social position, and his vulnerability to pressures from the political establishment, but to an even larger extent it reflected the weakness of the romantic concept of the artist as the social rebel, living for his art outside of his society. It was an early expression of the "art for art's sake" attitude that has finally almost stilled the American composer as he has become further and further removed from his milieu.

Ives could be thought of as a disengaged artist, in that he stayed outside of the musical world of his time and earned his living as a business man. However, by holding himself aloof from the attitudes of the "serious" composer of his time he was able to keep himself within the larger American social and political world. It is these complexities in his creative attitudes that give both Ives and his music some of their individuality and excitement. If he had attempted to involve himself in American music he would have had to express the withdrawal from their society that was characteristic of American - as well as most European-composers during this period. In Ives' writings on music it is clear that this was one of the reasons that he went into the insurance business instead. His emotional ties to the entire American expression were too important to him to be given up for a romantic concept of the artist rebel. It is often because of this that his music finds only a limited acceptance by the academic musical community. If Ives was right to participate in his society then they are wrong for continuing to compose in styles and manners derived from the European romantic attitudes which have continued to dominate German composition - through the music of the late Viennese romantics, Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern - into the middle of the Twentieth Century. The larger American musical audience has so little confidence in its own responses to music that it depends on the professional to shape its tastes; and the academic composer's attitude toward Ives has been so consistently hostile that until recent years his music has been left unplayed.

Ives, however, refused to be limited in his expression, and the "114 Songs" moved freely over the entire American scene, touching upon the politics, the social attitudes, the wars, the elections, the sentimentalities, the jokes, and the dreams of the still only half-grown United States. The songs, as compositions, had this same freedom, often fiercely asserting their musical independence with crashing masses of sound, sometimes tenderly returning to the simpler America of the Nineteenth Century. With the "114 Songs" Ives dragged the art song away from its obsession with romantic love, forced it to confront the realities of contemporary life, and as he did it he permanently altered the concept of song composition. There were songs with conventional settings in the collection. Nos. 76 to 79 were songs with French texts

that he written just after leaving college. Nos. 80 to 83 used German texts, one even with the same Heine poem - "Ich Grolle Nicht" - that Schumann had used for one his most famous songs. There was also a group of three war songs and eight "Sentimental Ballads," in the style of the popular songs he'd known as a boy. But the song that he selected to begin the book was called "The Majority," After a crashing piano introduction the text began,

"The Masses! The Masses! The Masses have toiled,
Behold the works of the World! . . ."

Some of the songs were relatively simple to sing, but most of the pieces were extremely difficult. Ives had been so disappointed by the failure of musicians he'd approached to understand his music that he was no longer seriously concerned with performance, but he also meant it when he said that music didn't need to limit itself to the human fingers or the human throat. Because of this more than forty years after he left his collection of songs at the Public Library, most of the songs are sung only infrequently, and only a few of them have been recorded. But the "114 Songs" is one of the monuments of America's music, and beyond this, the music that Ives wrote in those years as a New York businessman is one of the great expressions of the American experience.

* * * * *



Ted Puffer

Photo by Ann Charters

VOLUME ONE 1894 to 1914-1915

SIDE I

Band 1.	General William Booth Enters Into Heaven (1914)	5'35"
Band 2.	The Indians (1912)	2'00"
Band 3.	The Childrens' Hour (1901)	2'20"
Band 4.	Canon (1894)	1'15"
Band 5.	Requiem (1911)	1'50"
Band 6.	Mists (1910)	2'10"
Band 7.	from "Paracelsus" (1912)	3'20"

SIDE II

Band 1.	from "Lincoln The Great Commoner" (1912)	3'30"
Band 2.	Like A Sick Eagle (1909)	1'50"
Band 3.	from "The Swimmers" (1915)	1'20"
Band 4.	The Cage (1906)	1'00"
Band 5.	Walking (1902)	3'00"
Band 6.	A Christmas Carol (before 1900)	2'20"
Band 7.	West London (1912)	3'10"

VOLUME TWO 1915 to 1925

SIDE I

Band 1.	Majority (1921)	5'35"
Band 2.	Ann Street (1921)	45"
Band 3.	September (1920)	50"
Band 4.	Grantchester (1920)	2'35"
Band 5.	Afterglow (1919)	1'55"
Band 6.	Walt Whitman (1921)	1'00"
Band 7.	Tom Sails Away (1917)	2'35"
Band 8.	Maple Leaves (1920)	45"
Band 9.	On The Antipodes (1915-1923)	3'00"

SIDE II

Band 1.	Charlie Rutlage (after 1917)	2'50"
Band 2.	Two Little Flowers (1921)	1'40"
Band 3.	The sideshow (1921)	30"
Band 4.	Nov. 2, 1920 or An Election (1921)	4'30"
Band 5.	Serenity (1919)	1'45"
Band 6.	White Gulls (1921)	2'20"
Band 7.	1,2,3 (1921)	25"
Band 8.	Immortality (1921)	1'45"
Band 9.	Evening (1921)	1'45"
Band 10.	A Farewell To Land (1925)	1'25"

SIDE ONEBand 1. General William Booth Enters Into Heaven

The song was written in 1914, but Ives didn't include it in the 114 Songs, although it is one of the greatest of his compositions for voice. As in the Vachel Lindsay poem which he used for the text the melodic and rhythmic texture is almost programmatic, building from the opening beat of the Salvation Army drums, through the clashing tambourines and cymbals of the religious service, to the full, open exultation of the hymn "Washed In The Blood Of The Lamb." As the song rises to its exultant shout Ives matches the beautiful poignancy of Lindsay's image, .

(Sweet flute music.)

Jesus came from out the court-house door,
Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there
Round and round the mighty court-house
square. . . .

with the slow, wheeling repetitions of "round and round, round and round and round and round and round. . ." the music soft and sweetly melodic. Then, after Booth's lame and blind, all his ". . . blear review" have been ". . . been clad in raiment new. . . the withered limbs uncurled . . . And blind eyes opened on a new sweet world. . ." the hymn returns. "Are You Washed in the blood of the Lamb?" Quietly, slowly, almost as a prayer; then as Ives notes in the score, "A little faster recalling the march." The drums fade away into the distance and the song ends.

Booth led boldly with his big bass drum -
(Bass Drum beaten loudly)
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? of the
Lamb?)
Hallelujah.
Saints smiled gravely and they said "He's Come."
(Washed in the blood of the Lamb? The blood of
the Lamb?)
Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank.
Drabs from the alleyways and drug fiends pale -
Minds still passion-ridden, soul powers frail: -
Vermin-eaten saints with mouldy breath,
Unwashed legions with the ways of Death -
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

Every slum had sent its half-a-score
(banjos)
The round world over. (Booth had groaned for
more).
Every banner that the wide world flies,
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes.
Big-voiced lassies made their banjos bang, bang,
bang,
made their banjos,
Tranced, fanatical, they shrieked and sang - They
shrieked and sang: "Are you?
"Are you washed in the blood?
In the blood of the Lamb? - of the Lamb?"
Hallelujah!
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Lord, Hallelujah, Lord,
Hallujah!
It was queer to see
Bull-necked convicts, bull-necked convicts with
that land make free.
Loons with trumpets blowed a blare,
On, on upward thro' the golden air!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb,
in the blood of the Lamb, the Lamb, of the
Lamb, the Lamb?) . . .

Jesus came from the courthouse door,
(sweet flute music)
Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones,
Round and round, round and round and round and
round and round and round
and round and round -
Yet! in an instant all that blear review
Marched on, marched on marched on marched on marched
on marched on marched on spotless, clad
in raiment new.
The lame were strightened, withered limbs uncurled
And blind eyes opened on a new sweet world.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Band 2. The Indians

Number 14 in the "114 Songs." "The Indians" is dated
1921 and uses a poem by Charles Sprague. The song
was arranged from an earlier orchestral piece of the

same title, written in 1912. In this version the
instrumentation was trumpet, voice, bassoon, and
strings, but at a later date Ives sketched out an
orchestration from the published song with English
horn substituting for the voice and a tom tom
quietly drumming in the background.

Alas, for them their day is o'er, no more,
No more for them the wild deer bounds;
The plough is on their hunting grounds,
The pale man's axe rings through their woods,
The pale man's sail skims o'er their floods;
Beyond the mountains of the west,
Their children go to die.
Charles Sprague

Band 3. The Children's Hour

Number 74 in the "114 Songs." This early song,
dated 1901, is an example of Ives' ability to work
within the emotional framework of the Nineteenth
century while avoiding its excessive sentimentality.
Longfellow's poem had been, for many years, a parlor
favorite, but in Ives' setting it becomes again a
fresh emotional statement.

Between the dark and the daylight,
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
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,
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.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Band 4. Canon

Number 106 in the "114 Songs." There are earlier
songs than "Canon," which Ives wrote in 1894
when he was twenty, but it was one of the first
which has some of his characteristic freedom
and inventiveness. Although it is firmly rooted
to the E major tonality the use of a canon re-
lationship between the voice and the accompaniment
is a fresh and imaginative concept. It is a young
man's song, with Thomas Moore's verse that ends
". . . there's nothing half so sweet in life as
Love's young dream," and the freedom and the exu-
berance of the setting.

Oh, the days are gone, when beauty bright
My hearts chain wove;
When my dream of life, from morn till night
Was love, still love, was still love.

Oh! the days are gone, when beauty bright,
When my dream of life, from morn till night
Was love, still love, from morn to night,
My dream of life was love.

New hope may bloom, and days
May come of milder, calmer beam,
But there's nothing half so sweet in life
As love's young dream, as love's young dream.

Thomas Moore

Band 5. Requiem

Although "Requiem" is dated November, 1911, it was not included in the 114 Songs, probably only because Ives overlooked it when he was assembling the songs for the book. It was included in a collection of "19 Songs" published by the New Music Quarterly in the 1940's. It is an intense song, the opening chords of the accompaniment strong and assertive, and the vocal line unyielding in its emotional demands. In the first lines the voice is faced with three difficult passages which descend by leaps of a major or minor seventh, and it is not until the final phrase, ". . . and the hunter home from the hill," with its suggestion of a distant hunting horn playing the opening notes of "taps," that the restlessness finds any kind of resolution.

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig a grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

Robert Louis Stevenson

Band 6. Mists

Number 57 in the "114 Songs." The text of "Mists" was written by Ives' wife, Harmony Twitchell Ives, and both the words and the setting have a mood of quiet reminiscence.

Low lie the mists; they hide each hill and dell;
The grey skies weep with us who bid farewell.
But happier days through memory weaves a spell,
And brings new hope to hearts who bid farewell.

Harmony Twitchell Ives

Band 7. from "Paracletus"

Number 30 in the "114 Songs." Ives wrote in a note to the collection of songs that this ". . . may be found suitable for some religious services." "Paracletus," with its text from the latter part of Scene 5 of Browning's dramatic poem, would still be difficult musical going for most church congregations,

and he probably intended his note as much as a comment on the "softness" of the religious music of his time as anything else. The song is almost disturbing in its emotional intensity, until the last, half-whispered ". . . always, always much more love." "Paracletus" is dated 1912.

. . . For God is glorified in man,
And to man's glory vowed I soul and limb.
Yet, constituted thus, and thus endowed,
I failed: I gazed on power, I gazed on power
till I grew blind. . .
What wonder if I saw no way to shun despair?
The power I sought seemed God's. . .
. . . I learned my own deep error;. . .
And what proportion love should hold with power
In man's right constitution;
Always preceding power, and with much power,
Always, always much more love . . .

Robert Browning

SIDE II

Band 1. from "Lincoln The Great Commoner"

Number 11 in the "114 Songs." Ives used an Edwin Markham poem for the text, but he printed a poem of his own on Lincoln with the song.

The storm and stress of life!
The curse of war and strife!
The harsh vindictiveness of men!
The cuts of sword and pen!
What needed to be borne - he bore!
What needed to be fought - he fought!
But in his soul, he stood them up as - naught!
(C. E. I.)

He was drawn to the figure of Lincoln, and saw his struggle to save the Union as a great personal heroism. The music has a heroic quality - almost operatic in its demands on the singer - which expresses this feeling. Ives was to return to Lincoln again in the ending to the later song "November 2, 1920", or "An Election."

. . . And so he came from the prairie cabin
to the Capitol,
One fair ideal led our chieftain on . . .
He built the railpile as he built the State,
The conscience testing every stroke to make
his deed the measure of the man. . .
So came our Captain with the mighty heart;
and when the step of earthquake shook the house,
wrenching rafters from their ancient hold,
he held the ridge-pole up and spiked again
the rafters of the Home.
He held his place, he held the long purpose
like a growing tree
Held on thro' blame and faltered not at praise,
and when he fell in whirlwind he went down
as when a Kingly cedar green with boughs goes down
with a great shout upon the hills!

Edwin Markham

Band 2. Like A Sick Eagle

Number 26 in the "114 Songs." The version of this song for voice and piano was arranged from 1909 "Intonation for Voice or English Horn with Flute, Strings and Piano." At the top of the score he has written, "Very slowly, in a weak and dragging way," and in a note to the performer at the end of the song he added, "This part (the top line of the piano accompaniment) in the score was played by violin and a slide was made down or up through a $\frac{1}{4}$ tone, in a semitone interval and through 2 or 3 lesser tones in a whole tone interval, except between the last 5 notes. The voice may do similarly." This use of quarter-tone slur gives the song a desolate, brooding quality.

. . . 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 towards the sky.

John Keats

Band 3. from "The Swimmers"

Number 27 in the "114 Songs." The song begins with a series of running figures in 8 and 10 note groupings of 32nds in the left hand, beneath a melodic line that Ives has marked "As a Barcarolle." After the vocal entrance the tempo indication is "as fast as it can be played," until the piano is playing a series of six note tone clusters in the left hand and the right hand is crashing above and below it with the booming roar of waves beating on a half-submerged stone ledge at the edge of the sea. The poem is by Louis Untermeyer. Permission to reprint the text was not available at this time.

Band 4. The Cage

Number 64 of the "114 Songs." Although "The Cage" is one of Ives' earlier songs - it was composed in 1906 - it is already concerned with the questioning of life that became more strongly pronounced in some of the later songs. The tempo marking for the piano introduction, to match the dull pacing of the leopard, is "evenly and mechanically, no ritard, decresc., accel. etc."

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?"

Charles Ives

Band 5. Walking

Number 67 in the "114 Songs." Like "The Cage" "Walking" has a text which Ives wrote himself, and it again tries to grasp some essential element of human experience. Here Ives is talking of the

vitality that keeps us walking ". . . walking towards the future . . ." even when something ". . . bids us pause." While the singer waits - as though he were standing on a hillside road looking across a low New England valley - he sees a funeral and a dance below him. As the funeral music is played by the piano a note in the music reads, "down the valley - a church - a funeral going on." The music becomes lighter, more dance-like. "Up the valley - a roadhouse, a dance going on." Then the walking pace returns, the singer turns away from the scene and goes on with his own life. The song is one of Ives' most immediate and direct compositions.

A big October morning, the village church bells, the road along the ridge, the chestnut burr and sumac, the hills above the bridge with autumn colors glow. Now we strike a steady gait, walking toward the future, letting past and present wait, we push on in the sun, Now hark! Something bids us pause.
(down in the valley - a church - a funeral going on.)
(up the valley - a roadhouse, a dance going on)
But we keep on a walking, 'tis not noonday,
the road still calls us onward, today we do not choose to die
or to dance, but to live and walk.

Charles Ives

Band 6. A Christmas Carol

Number 100 in the "114 Songs." The earliest song Ives included in the book was a "slow March" that he had written when he was fourteen for the funeral of the family dog, and some of the other songs also sound as though they were written for family occasions. "A Christmas Carol" could certainly have been sung in the Ives household during Christmas holidays. It was another of the songs that he suggested for possible use in church services.

Little star of Bethlehem! Do we see Thee now?
Do we see Thee shining o'er the tall trees?
Little child of Bethlehem! Do we hear Thee in our hearts?
Hear the Angels singing:
Peace on earth goodwill to men! Noel!

O'er the cradle of a king, Hear the Angels sing:
In Excelsis Gloria, Gloria!
From His Father's home on high, Lo! for us He came to die;
Hear the Angels sing:
Venite adoremus Dominum.

Traditional

Band 7. West London

Number 105 in the "114 Songs." Although Ives also wrote that this song could be used for religious services his intention was probably as much a social comment as it was a serious suggestion. The sonnet of Mathew Arnold's that he used for a text is one of the handful of serious poetic attacks on

the failure of capitalism in Nineteenth Century English literature. As early as 1912, when he composed the first version of the song, he was expressing some of the highly individual political ideas that were to become an important part of his life and work in the 1920's.

Crouched on the pavement, close by Belgrave Square,
A tramp I saw, ill, moody, and tongue-tied.
A babe was in her arms, and at her side
A girl; their clothes were rags, their feet were bare.
Some laboring men, whose work lay somewhere there,
Passed opposite; she touched her girl, who hied
Across, and begged, and came back satisfied.
The rich she had let pass with frozen stare.
Thought I: "Above her state this spirit towers;
She will not ask of aliens, but of friends,
Of sharers in a common human fate.
She turns from that cold succor, which attends
The unknown little from the unknowing great,
And points us to a better time than ours."

Mathew Arnold

VOLUME TWO 1915 to 1925

SIDE I

Band 1. Majority

During the period when Ives was preparing his collection of songs for the printer he was also deeply involved in his fight for an amendment to the Constitution which would give the American people a more direct role in the government, and it may have been because of his preoccupation that "Majority" was the first song in the book. It is one of his most difficult songs both to play and sing and it would certainly have shaken any unwary singer who had opened the book inadvertently. As Ives himself noted at the bottom of the page, "Preferably for unison chorus; it is almost impossible for a single voice to hold the part against the score." The piano introduction is a crashing mass of sound, with tone clusters covering two octaves of the keyboard that force the pianist to use either his elbows or some kind of a board. For this performance a score of the songs was rolled up and struck with the pianist's fist. The idealistic socialism that the song expresses was Ives' personal political belief and had little relationship to any party grouping in the United States at that time. The text for the song was his own.

The Masses! The Masses! The Masses have toiled,
Behold the works of the World!
The Masses are thinking, Whence comes the Thought of the World!
The Masses are singing, are singing, singing,
Whence comes the Art of the World!
The Masses are yearning, are yearning, are yearning.
Whence comes the hope of the World.
The Masses are dreaming, dreaming,

The Masses are dreaming,
Whence come the visions of God!
God's in His Heaven,
All will be well with the World!

Charles Ives

Band 2. Ann Street

Number 25 in the "114 Songs." Despite its shortness - only 45" - "Ann Street" manages to suggest some of the bustle of downtown New York, the intersection that divides Ann Street into two short blocks, and, as much as anything else, Ives' easy sense of humor.

Quaint name Ann Street.
Width of same, ten feet.
Barnums mob Ann Street, far from obsolete.
Narrow, yes, Ann Street,
But Business, Both feet.

Sun just hits Ann Street, then it quits -
Some greet!
Rather short, Ann Street.

Maurice Morris; from "The New York Herald" January 12, 1921.

Band 3. September

Number 36 in the "114 Songs." There were three songs which Ives took from texts in a collection of early Italian poetry, "August," "December," and "September," which was completed in 1920. His setting is a richly detailed realization of the medieval text, even though the song was written at a time when he was emotionally concerned with the directions that American society was taking.

And in September, Falcons, astors, merlins, sparrow hawks,
Decoy birds that lure your game in flocks; and hounds with bells. . .
Cross-bows shooting out of sight;
Arblasts and javelins; . . . All birds the best to fly;
And each to each of you shall be lavish still in gifts;
and robbery find no gainsaying;
And if you meet with travelers going by,
Their purses from your purses' flow shall fill;
and Avarice be the only outcast thing!

Folgore da San Geminiano
translated by D. G. Rosseti

Band 4. Grantchester

Number 17 in the "114 Songs." Ives was a strong minded individualist in all of his music, but he was also conscious of much that was happening in both the European and American music of the period. In "Grantchester"

he consciously used a quotation from Debussy's "Afternoon Of A Faun" and added to the title, "with a quotation from Debussy." The text is by Rupert Brooke, and permission to reprint was not available at this time. The song was one a large number that Ives completed in 1920.

Band 5. Afterglow

Number 39 in the "114 Songs." There is a note to the pianist in the score, "The piano should be played as indistinctly as possible, and both pedals used almost constantly." "Afterglow," written in 1919, is a quiet song, but it is deeply felt and has a muted sadness.

At the quiet close of day,
Gently yet the willows sway;
When the sunset light is low,
Lingers still the afterglow;

Beauty tarries loth to die,
Every lightest fantasy
Lovelier grows in memory,
Where the truer beauties lie.

James Fenimore Cooper Jr.

Band 6. Walt Whitman

Number 31 in the "114 Songs." Ives has often been compared to Whitman for his independence and artistic vision; so it is not surprising that he used a Whitman poem for one of his songs. The text is from the 20th Stanza of the "Song of Myself" in Whitman's "Leaves Of Grass."

Who goes there? hankering, gross, mystical, nude;
How is it I extract strength from the beef I eat?

What is a man, anyhow? What am I? What are you?

All I mark as my own, you shall offset it with your own;

Else it were time lost listening to me. . .

Walt Whitman
from "Song Of Myself"

Band 7. Tom Sails Away

Number 51 of the "114 Songs." "Tom Sails Away," composed in 1917, is one of three war songs that Ives included in his collection. No. 49 was a setting of "In Flanders Field," and No. 50 was a patriotic song "He Is There!" The war affected Ives very deeply, and "Tom Sails Away," with a text of his own, is a moving and eloquent song as it follows the emotions of someone realizing that his younger brother, whom he still remembers as a child, is being sent overseas.

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 o'er the town,
stronger comes the breeze from the ridge, '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! Today Tom sailed away for, for over there,
over there, over there!
Scenes from my childhood are floating before my eyes.

Charles Ives

Band 8. Maple Leaves

Number 23 of the "114 Songs." The opening phrase recalls Hugo Wolf, but the song has an astringency that is more distinctly American than European. It is another of the songs written during 1920.

October turned my maple's leaves to gold;
The most are gone now; here and there one lingers:
Soon these will slip from out the twigs' weak hold,
Like coins between a dying miser's fingers.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich

Band 9. On The Antipodes

"On The Antipodes" was begun in 1915, but it was not finished until 1923, the year after Ives had published the songs. It is one of Ives' most difficult songs, atonal, rhythmically complex, clamorous, and insistent. The singer is called upon to leap from one awkward interval to another against an accompaniment that is often fiercely engaged in its own assertions. Even in the humorous interlude of the "andante grazioso," as Ives sets "Sometimes Nature's nice and sweet, as a little pansy. . ." to a melody that could be from a popular song, the song has been so demanding that the respite fails to resolve the tension. Both the text, by Ives, and the setting have the harsh determination to confront the reality of existence that marks his first Sonata for violin and piano. The accompaniment is for two pianists at one piano, as though he were trying to fill the emptiness of eternity with the sound. In the final measures he adds a low pedal tone for organ and a third pianist is needed on the last chords as the singer is forced to lift his voice above the din, but there is still almost a despair to the outcry, as though Ives is asking "Is there even a universe?" It was probably a song like "On The Antipodes" that Ives meant when he wrote "Some of the songs. . . cannot be sung."

Nature's relentless;
Nature is kind.
Nature is eternity;
Nature's today!
Nature is geometry; Nature is mystery.
Nature's man's master;
Nature's man's slave.
Sometimes Nature's nice and sweet,
as a little pansy and,
Sometimes it "ain't."

Nature is man's enemy;
Nature is man's friend.
Nature shows us part of life;
Nature shows us all the grave.

Does Nature know the beginning of Time
or the ending of Space?
Man! We ask you! Is Nature nothing but
atomic cosmic cycles around the
perennial antipodes?

Charles Ives

SIDE TWO

Band 1. Charlie Rutlage

Number 10 of the "114 Songs." In the opening line of his song "The Things Our Fathers Loved" Ives wrote, "I think there must be a place in the soul all made of tunes of long ago. . ." He seemed to have forgotten nothing of what he'd heard in his life, and when something jogged his memory he was able to draw on this background of American song. The thing that seems to have jogged him for "Charlie Rutlage" was the book of "Cowboy Songs" collected by John A. Lomax. The text was taken from songs in the book, and as the singer recites the tragic story of Charlie's death the pianist plays a harrowing version of "Whoopie ti yi yo, git along little dogies. . ." It is a unique achievement in the American vocal literature, and it is one of Ives' greatest songs. Permission to reprint the text was not available at this time.

Band 2. Two Little Flowers

Number 104 in the "114 Songs." The "two little flowers" were Ives' nieces, Edith and Susannah. It is one of the paradoxes of Ives' complex personality that he could write songs of such charming simplicity, as well as the clamor of a song like "On The Antipodes."

On sunny days in our back yard,
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 loveliness in wild flowers
Of field or wide savannah,
But fairest, rarest of them all
Are Edith and Susanna.

Charles Ives.

Band 3. The Sideshow

Number 32 in the "114 Songs." Even lighter than "Two Little Flowers," "The Sideshow" limps along in an en-

gaging rhythm of alternating 3/4 and 2/4 measures that Ives has marked, "In a moderate waltz time." It was written during his creative burst of song composition in 1921.

"Is that Mr. Riley, who keeps the hotel?" is the tune that accompanies the trotting track bell; An old horse unsound, turns the merry-go-round, making poor Mister Riley look a bit like a Russian dance, some speak of so highly, as they do of Riley!

Charles Ives.

Band 4. Nov. 2, 1920 or An Election

Number 22 in the "114 Songs." Below the title Ives wrote,

"Soliloquy of an old man whose son lies in "Flanders Field."

It is the day after election; he is sitting by the roadside,

Looking down the valley towards the station."

The election was the presidential election of 1920, in which the country rejected Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations and voted for the isolationism of Warren G. Harding. It is one of Ives' most bitter political statements, and it expresses his disappointment and anger at the lack of idealism in the America of 1920. His last lines, "Oh Captain, my Captain. . .," recall Whitman's poem on the death of Lincoln.

It strikes me that. . . Some men and women got tired of a big job; but, over there our men did not quit. They fought and died that better things might be! Perhaps some who stayed at home are beginning to forget and to quit. The pocketbook and certain little things talked loud and "noble" and got in the way. Too many readers go by the headlines, party men will muddle up the facts, so a good many citizens voted as grandpa always did, or thought a change back to the re'lar thing seemed natural enough. "It's raining, let's throw out the weatherman. Kick him out! Kick him out, Kick him!"

Prejudice and politics and the stand-patters came in strong and yelled, "Slide back! Now you're safe, that's the easy way!" Then the timid smiled and looked relieved. "We've got enough to eat, to hell with ideals!" Some old women, male and female, had their way today, and the "ole mole came out of his hole;" but he won't stay out long, God always drives him back!

Oh Captain, my Captain! a heritage we've thrown away;
But we'll find it again, my Captain, Captain, oh my
Captain.

Charles Ives

Band 5. Serenity

Number 42 of the "114 Songs." Ives refers to the song as "A unison chant," and it is another of the

pieces that he suggested might be used for church services. The Whittier text is hymnlike in its simple piety, and Ives has set it almost as a prayer. The song is from 1919.

O, Sabbath rest of Galilee!
O, calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee
The silence of eternity
Interpreted by love.

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease:
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess,
The beauty of Thy peace.

John Greenleaf Whittier

Band 6. White Gulls

Number 103 of the "114 Songs." Although the song is from 1921 it could have been written at almost any point during Ives' mature years of composition. The poem, as in several other songs, came from a newspaper, in this instance the New York Evening Sun.

The white gulls dip and wheel
Over waters gray like steel.
The white gulls call and cry
As they spread their wings and fly.

The white gulls sink to rest
On the tides slow heaving breast.
Souls of men that turn and wheel
Over waters cold as steel.

Souls of men that call and cry
As they know not where to fly.
Souls of men that sink to rest
On an all receiving breast.

Maurice Morris

Band 7. 1,2,3

Number 41 in the "114 Songs." Like "Ann Street" and "The Sideshow" - both also written in 1921 - "1,2,3" is one of Ives' moments of exuberant high spirits.

Why doesn't one, two, three seem to appeal to a
Yankee as much as one, two!

Charles Ives

Band 8. Immortality

Number 5 in the "114 Songs." It is difficult not to think of this as a personal song; although the biography of Ives by Sidney and Henry Cowell does not discuss the death of a child in 1921, when the song was written. Both the text and the setting

use hymn material, and the vocal melody is in the simple style of a congregation anthem.

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.

Charles Ives

Band 9. Evening

Number 2 in the "114 Songs." The song that Ives chose to follow "Majority" in the collection was "Evening," a soft, melodic setting of a passage from Milton's "Paradise Lost."

Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied for the beast and bird -

They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were slunk, but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long, all night long her amorous
descant sung;
Silence is pleased . . .

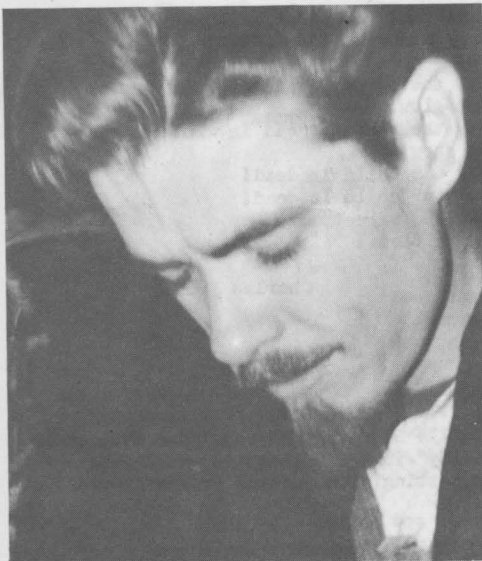
John Milton
(from "Paradise Lost")

Band 10. A Farewell To Land

As Ives' health failed in the 1920's he was able to do less and less composing, and "A Farewell To Land" was not only his last song, but it was also one of his last compositions. It is a startling conception, with both the voice and the piano descending slowly from almost the top of their range to their lower limits without ever breaking the movement of the line. It is somehow reminiscent of Webern in its compressed, almost pointilist technique. Written in 1925 the song comes as a summation of many of the musical techniques that had preoccupied Ives for so many years.

Adieu, Adieu! my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue;
The night winds sigh, the breakers roar
And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
Yon sun that sets upon the sea,
We follow in his flight;
Farewell awhile to him and thee,
My native Land, Good-night!

Lord Byron
(from "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage")



James Tenney

Photo by Carolee Schneeman

Some Notes on the Music of Charles Ives

by James Tenney

It is difficult to characterize the essential features of Ives' style without oversimplification. In addition to the many innovations that are uniquely his own, Ives incorporates and extends most of the major lines of development in music up to about 1900. In the face of such an expansive and inclusive approach to music, the very word "style" begins to take on a new meaning. His material was virtually the whole world of sound--all aspects of aural experience--and he worked with this broader range of materials in ways that not only anticipated but helped make possible many of the more recent extensions of the medium, such as those that have become possible in electronic music.

Each generation will focus attention on those aspects of the music that are the most closely related to its own attitudes, and these change with time, but the following features are perhaps most relevant to the present:

1. Ives' extensions of the harmonic aspect of music far beyond the traditional tonal system, by way of frequent modulations and dense polytonal sonorities, to a dissonant chromaticism free of any suggestion of a tonal center.
2. His use of complex, asymmetrical rhythms, produced by rapid changes of meter, higher-order gruppetto-subdivisions within a given meter, syncopations, and the simultaneous articulation of rhythmic patterns that are independent with respect to any or all of the above devices.

3. The creation of a sort of compound polyphony, in which independent strata -- each consisting of several linear elements -- are developed simultaneously, in the way individual melodic lines are developed in a more traditional contrapuntal texture.

4. The application of highly refined techniques of thematic transformation, by means of which even the simplest melodic ideas are perpetually reinterpreted and renewed, and

5. The development of completely athenematic musical forms, in which each successive configuration is generated anew, without any apparent thematic, relationship to earlier configurations. These last two points are not as contradictory as they might seem, because the essential formal features of Ives' pieces are not usually delineated by thematic relationships primarily -- even when the process of thematic transformation is very evident.

6. A direct concern with sonority, and a process in which a very wide range of sonorities and musical gestures are juxtaposed in rapid succession, and

7. His use of familiar musical materials -- bits of the sound "environment" -- both by quotation and by stylistic suggestion. These last two create a situation very similar, in its large rhythmic or formal effect, to the filmic device of montage used in "musique concrete", and to more recent tape collage techniques.

Most of the innovations mentioned above were paralleled by similar developments in Europe at about the same time, most notably in the music of Schoenberg and Webern. It is significant, however, that Ives never really abandoned the more traditional procedures, as did his European counter-parts. Instead of replacing earlier stylistic elements, each new element was simply incorporated into a style that became, thereby, broader in its scope than that of any other composer of that period, certainly, and perhaps of any period in the history of music. The only parallel that suggests itself in this respect is the music of Bach, encompassing many disparate lines of development in the music of his predecessors, as well as his own innovations.

A Note On The Performers

For many years Ives' songs were not sung because they were too difficult for conventionally trained singers. The only time that Ives was able to hear some of the later songs was when the wife of Henry Bellaman, the poet who was one of Ives' early supporters, sang them over for him. Since the second World War, however, there has been a new generation of singers and musicians who have the training and the musicality to perform all of Ives' music. Ted Puffer, the singer on these recordings, studied voice and piano at the

Eastman School of Music; then in the 1950's toured with the Robert Shaw Chorale as tenor soloist. Much of his work has been in the field of opera, not only as a singer, but as a director and conductor. He was at Tanglewood Opera Department in the summer of 1956 and 1957, and from 1958 to 1960 he was the leading tenor for the Boston Opera Group. From May 1960 to July 1961 he was the stage director for the Boston Comic Opera Company, and since 1962 he has been head of the vocal department at Utah State University. His experience as a coach and as a musical director has expanded his musical interests to composition as difficult as the Ives songs, and he brings to them an excellent vocal technique and musical sense, as well as a personal warmth and sensitivity. With his wife Deena Cavalieri he is also active as an opera translator, and they have translated works as diverse as "The Merry Widow" for Columbia Records, and "The Nose," Shostakovich's comic opera, for the Santa Fe Opera Company. Although he is still in his mid-thirties he has already had an extensive and varied professional career.

James Tenney, the accompanist for nearly all of the songs, is another of the new generation of younger musicians who find Ives' music an exciting challenge. He is primarily a composer in advanced electronic and computer techniques, but he is also an excellent pianist and conductor. As conductor of the Tone Roads Chamber Ensemble he performed Ives' chamber works in concert in 1960 and 1961, and he has been represented as both composer and performer in New York's Avant Gard Music Festivals in 1964 and 1965. He studied the piano with Edward Steuermann at Julliard and has performed movements from Ives' "Concord" Sonata, as well as music by Ruggles and other modern American composers in concerts in recent years. He is also associated with the composer John Cage and has worked with Cage in a number of "improvisation" performances. At present he is a research associate in the theory of music at Yale University, with most of his work in musical acoustics and electronic composition. Philip Corner, who also plays on the record, is also a composer-pianist, and like Tenney is active in the contemporary music scene in New York City, as well as lecturing in the United States and Europe on the most recent developments in American music.

The accompaniment for all of the songs except "Majority" and "Nov. 2, 1920" is played by James Tenney, with Philip Corner assisting on "Requiem," and "Lincoln, The Great Commoner." Corner is the accompanist for "Majority" and "November 2, 1920," and both of them play the piano-duet accompaniment for "On The Antipodes." Also for "On The Antipodes" Deena Puffer played the top note of the final chord and Ann Charters played the pedal tone on the organ. The performers would also like to express their appreciation to Mrs. Puffer and Mrs. Charters for their page turning during the sessions.

The recording was done at Cue Studios, New York City, September 13 through 17, 1965, under the supervision of Samuel Charters.

LITHO IN U.S.A. 