

COVENANT COLLEGE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE “HUMAN-FAITH MELODY”
IN CHARLES IVES’S CONCORD SONATA

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“One difference between God's work and man's is, that, while God's work cannot mean more than he meant, man's must mean more than he meant...A man may well

himself discover truth in what he wrote; for he was dealing all the time with things that came from thoughts beyond his own.”¹ In order to make art—visual, verbal or musical—people work with materials outside of themselves; the substances they manipulate to create art necessarily come from God’s creation. People are made in the image of God, whether they acknowledge this or not, and this reality will somehow be reflected as they work with created materials to create art. At the same time, their creativity will also always be affected by their fallenness, whether they are Christians or not. Christians are called to be intentional in their glorification of God, but that does not mean the creative work of non-Christians does not speak to God’s glory.

Working from this general understanding, I will examine the Second Piano Sonata, known as the “Concord Sonata,” by Charles Ives. This analysis will be what Christopher Ballantine terms a “musico-philosophical” analysis.² This sort of analysis mingles both abstract musical analysis and analysis of the intended program, but it goes beyond both analyses by attempting to understand the philosophical implications conveyed through particular musical and programmatic choices. Important to this discussion will be the Essays Before a Sonata that Ives wrote as a companion to the Concord Sonata, in which he expounds his philosophy and explains some of his programmatic intentions for the Concord Sonata.

My analysis will focus on one musical theme of the Concord Sonata, generally understood to be what Ives refers to as the “human-faith melody.” This theme becomes

¹ George MacDonald, “The Fantastic Imagination,” in A Dish of Orts (Whitethorn, CA: Johannsen, 1996): 320.

² Christopher Ballantine, “Charles Ives and the Meaning of Quotation in Music.” Musical Quarterly 65 (April 1979): 181.

an important theme in all four movements of the sonata (Example 1).³ It is an amalgamation of the motive from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the opening chords of Beethoven's "Hammer-Clavier Sonata," two hymn tunes: Missionary Chant and Martyn, (Examples 2-5), and newly composed music. Within this theme, the motive from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony has particular musical and philosophical significance.

I will use what I glean from the study of this melody and its context in the sonata to address two important questions. How do I properly analyze and understand the Concord Sonata from a reformed perspective? And what can I learn from Ives and his approach to composition that can help me as a Christian composer in the twenty-first century? Ives was a person created in the image of God. He was at the same time completely depraved, and as far as the evidence suggests never was a true Christian. Both his fallenness and his image-bearing will be reflected somehow in his intentions and in his music. There will be features of his Concord Sonata and his Essays that I can embrace, or reinterpret, from a Christian framework, but at the same time I must reject many of his motivations for making these works. In order to analyze these motivations, it is important to understand his musical background.

Born in 1874, Ives grew up in the town of Danbury, Connecticut, where his father George Ives was a town musician. Charles received his first musical training from his father. As a child and throughout his years at college, he was exposed to a variety of musical languages: American popular music, American Protestant church music, European classical music, and experimental music. He learned to compose within each

³ Charles Ives, Essays Before a Sonata and Other Writings, ed. by Howard Boatwright (New York: Norton, 1962): 47.

of these styles, using the musical grammar expected of each genre. In the areas of popular music and church music, he wrote music that was well accepted, adhering to the stylistic norms of the genres.⁴ Contrary to common assumptions, Ives was extremely concerned about his audiences' opinions of his music throughout his life.⁵

Ives could well fulfill the demands of European classical music, taking Romantic composers as his models. His aptitude for classical music can be seen in some of the works he wrote under the tutelage of Horatio Parker. Ives realized that

...art music asked to be listened to for its own sake...and its purpose was to convey an artistic experience from the composer to the individual listener. In this tradition, audience reaction was less important than the intrinsic value of a piece as judged by its authenticity, depth, integrity, and durability.⁶

After learning the parameters and issues of each of these compositional languages, Ives brought together the techniques from these four styles within the “genres and expectations of European concert music.”⁷ As a result of this diversity, it can be difficult to find coherence, both in the entire body of Ives's music and within the individual pieces that make use of a combination of languages.

⁴ J. Peter Burkholder, “Ives and the Four Musical Traditions,” in Charles Ives and His World, ed. by J. Peter Burkholder (Princeton U. Press, 1996): 4.

⁵ Even his experimental music, which he mainly wrote for himself, was meant to please a small audience. He used these works to help himself accept new musical possibilities, and he also showed these works to friends couched as jokes so that they would come to accept the unfamiliar sounds (Burkholder, Ives and the Four Musical Traditions, 17).

⁶ Burkholder, Ives and the Four Musical Traditions, 4.

⁷ Ibid., 4.

Ives's musical output is so complex that various groups have adopted him as their father figure, using his music as their model.

Ives has been seen as an avant-garde composer by members of the avant-garde, a Transcendentalist composer by those who like their music to have mystic overtones, and an American composer by those searching for a native-born champion. Each of these views is incomplete...⁸

Ives has also been regarded as an Impressionist composer, an Expressionist composer, and as a precursor to post-modernism in music.⁹ But Ives is too complex and unique a composer to fit his music into a single stylistic box. His musical eclecticism defies categorization.

Not only did Ives learn to compose in four different languages and learn to combine these languages, he also extensively borrowed or quoted music that others had written. The line between using musical languages and musical borrowing is easily blurred. A good analogy is the difference between writing a grammatically correct sentence in a paper and quoting someone else's sentence in a paper.

⁸ J. Peter Burkholder, Charles Ives: The Ideas Behind the Music (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985): 6.

⁹ Christopher Palmer, Impressionism in Music (New York: Charles Scribner's Son's, 1973). Palmer claims Ives is "loosely" an Impressionist composer who shares with Debussy "a desire for untrammelled freedom of musical expression (227)." Ives's music is impressionistic in that it consists of "...a chaotic jumble of impressions, a hodge-podge of disparate fragments, reminisces, quotations... (228)"

Debussy differed from Ives in that he refined his experience before it passed into music, but for Ives "...the raw bleeding chunks of life which served him as inspiration tended to remain raw bleeding chunks in the completed works of art (228)."

John C Crawford and Dorothy L Crawford, Expressionism in Twentieth-Century Music (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993). The Crawfords find that "in many ways Ives sums up musical expressionism (204)." His understanding of the "metaphysical basis of music (204)," the subjectivity of his music, his refusal to separate art and life, and his musical experiments are all part of his expressionistic tendencies (204-6).

For the most part, Ives quoted music from American popular music and church music, but he also occasionally borrowed from European classical music. A quotation of a familiar hymn tune or popular song in the middle of a classical piece can be unnerving for many listeners. Burkholder refers to this as a feeling of “formal dissonance.”¹⁰ After much study, however, it has been realized that many of Ives’s quotations are not inserted into previously formed music solely for programmatic reasons, but instead:

...his original musical ideas, and often the forms his music takes, both grow organically out of the way he uses his sources. Thus the relationship between the “quotation” and the context is, by and large, exactly backwards from what seems at first to be the case: it is the quotation, in the sense that it represents the model Ives uses as a starting point, which has priority over the surrounding musical material.¹¹

The complexity of Ives’s music emerges from his complex personality. It is difficult to understand Ives as a person, much less to discover the connection between his personality and his music. He was an accomplished actor: “Besides being a musical chameleon, he was a social chameleon, willing to play a role to fit in with his surroundings.”¹² At home, at church, with his friends, at college, in business, “in all of these environments, Ives proved himself able to play the role expected of him.”¹³ How can we know who Ives really was?

It is important to understand that Ives often used his writings to mask who he was and what he believed. It seems from Ives’s own writings and from the writings of his

¹⁰ J. Peter Burkholder. “‘Quotation’ and Emulation: Charles Ives’s Use of His Models,” *Musical Quarterly* 70 (Winter 1985): 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹² Burkholder, *Ives and the Four Musical Traditions*, 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 21.

friends, that he was shy, vulnerable, generous and idealistic.¹⁴ It is also apparent that he was a liar, deliberately falsifying records and reconstructing events to fit the way he desired reality to be.¹⁵

Perhaps the central characteristic of Ives's personality was his idealism. This idealism was fostered by his father, encouraged by his wife, and influenced by the writings of the New England Transcendentalists, especially Ralph Waldo Emerson.¹⁶ Central to his idealism was his belief in the "innate goodness of man."¹⁷ Ives's idealization of the nature of man did not fit reality, and he experienced much frustration when people could not meet his expectations. He had many difficulties with people, as can be seen in his Memos, which contain scathing commentaries on fellow musicians and on music critics.¹⁸

Throughout his life, people and circumstances could not live up to his idealism, so he restructured the truth to better fit his beliefs. One instance of this is his idealization

¹⁴ Vivian Perlis, ed. Charles Ives Remembered: An Oral History (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974). This book is especially helpful in understanding how Ives's friends, family and colleagues viewed Ives.

¹⁵ Solomon, Maynard, "Charles Ives: Some Questions of Veracity" The Journal of The American Musicological Society, Vol. XL/3 (Fall 1987), 443-70. This article is particularly important, giving evidence that Ives deliberately tampered with and redated his scores, along with other incidents of dishonesty.

¹⁶ Ibid., 105.

¹⁷ Ives. Essays, 35.

¹⁸ Ives, Memos. Not only did Ives criticize music critics and listeners who had soft ears, but he also wrote derisive comments about other composers. Grieg, Wagner and Tchaikovsky were all "ladies," (136) who make nice, sweet, unmanly sounds, but Chopin was not quite as bad, "...one naturally thinks of him with a skirt on, but one which he made himself (135)."

of his relationship with his father: he highly exaggerated his father's musicianship and the influence his father had on his own composition.¹⁹ This idealization, however, did not emerge solely out of Ives's idealism, but also from his desire to be perceived as an original.

In order to maintain his independent identity, Ives lied about his exposure to modern music, claiming that he had worked in almost complete isolation. It was not until these past two decades that musicologists have realized the extent to which Ives deliberately altered the truth. In fact, Ives's negative attitude towards his contemporaries in classical music and his denials of knowledge of their music show how familiar he actually was with their music, rather than verifying his originality. "We can laugh at Ives as long as we remember that his criticism tells us that he knew the Europeans. He knew his Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner, Chopin and Debussy."²⁰

Ives's lack of respect for the truth has implications for the way that I use his own writings in my analysis of the Concord Sonata. What Ives asserts about his music, or more importantly his motivations for making that music, must be carefully scrutinized, keeping in mind his duplicity; Ives uses his words to obscure truth as well as reveal it. However, by keeping a certain amount of skepticism, the reading of Ives's writings can give profound insights into how his mind worked as he thought about music. Ives does not often state things directly; more often he suggests and alludes to what he really

¹⁹ Solomon. "Charles Ives: Some Questions of Veracity," 433-469.

²⁰ David Michael Hertz, Angels of Reality: Emersonian Unfoldings in Wright, Stevens and Ives (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993).

means. It is important to examine both Ives's stated intentions for writing the sonata, and those intentions that are beneath the surface.

Ives finished writing his Concord Sonata in 1915, as a mature composer with mastery over his materials. The four movements of the sonata correspond to people living in the town of Concord, Massachusetts from 1840-1860: Emerson, Hawthorne, The Alcotts and Thoreau. Most of these people were associated with the philosophical or literary movement known as New England Transcendentalism.²¹ The writings of Emerson and Thoreau highly influenced Ives as he attempted to summarize and synthesize his philosophy of life and aesthetics of music. The New England Transcendentalists were a diverse group whose beliefs were primarily influenced by literature, especially that which came out of European Romanticism, and also by Platonism, Unitarian Christianity and German idealism.²² They valued "imagination over reason, creativity above theory, action over contemplation," and they saw the "spontaneous activity of the creative artist as the ultimate achievement of civilization."²³

Significant for Ives were the ideas expressed by Emerson, especially Emerson's conception of the "Oversoul." Man is connected somehow to what Emerson terms "God," but this God is a mystical, unknown thing, completely unlike the Christian concept of a personal, immanent God. "Man is a stream whose course is hidden. Our

²¹ Though he is often linked to the movement, Hawthorne's beliefs differed widely from those held by the New England Transcendentalists.

²² Michael Moran, "New England Transcendentalism," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy (New York: MacMillan Company & The Free Press, 1967) vol. 5, 479.

²³ Ibid., 479.

being is descending into us from we know not whence.”²⁴ The Oversoul is the mystical oneness of all mankind, “within which every man’s particular being is made one with all other,” and through which each man’s being contains the “soul of the whole.”²⁵

Ives picks up on Emerson’s idealistic concept of the Oversoul in his Essays Before a Sonata, a set of essays written as a companion to the Concord Sonata. The Essays, written in 1919, consists of four essays corresponding to the individuals/movements of the sonata, along with an introductory and concluding essay. In these Essays, Ives uses the lives and ideas of these individuals to present his own philosophy of life and aesthetics of music. Ives found in the lives and writings of these individuals articulate expressions of issues that he had struggled with for years. In a complex way, these Essays form a kind of program for the Sonata.

Many have taken these Essays to be Ives’s philosophy for his entire musical output, and have thereby misunderstood both Ives’s music and the purpose of the Essays. In his book Charles Ives: The Ideas Behind the Music, Burkholder attempts to see these Essays in their proper context, and in so doing, to gain a truer understanding of Ives and his aesthetics.

From the evidence Burkholder has gathered, it seems that Ives came into serious contact with the writings of Thoreau and Emerson comparatively late in his musical development, so these developments did not emerge solely from his transcendental

²⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The Oversoul,” in Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1950), 91.

²⁵ Ibid., 91.

beliefs.²⁶ But in the Essays, the Transcendentalists became mouthpieces for Ives to formulate and synthesize his own beliefs. Transcendentalism reinforced his idealistic tendencies, especially his belief in the innate goodness of man.

Several elements make the analysis of this sonata a daunting task: the complexity of the musical elements of the sonata, the multi-layered meaning of Ives's musical borrowings within the sonata, the difficulty of the ideas Ives struggled with in the Essays (whose difficulties are heightened by Ives's vague and wandering prose-style), and the ambiguity of the relationship between the Sonata and the Essays. These difficulties are enhanced by the numerous interpretations made by Ives and by other musicians and scholars of Ives and his music.²⁷ I have come to the conclusion that there is no one "meaning" of this sonata, but that it can be legitimately analyzed at several levels. From what Ives himself said about his music, it would seem that the "meaning" of this piece was left intentionally ambiguous: "But maybe music was not intended to satisfy the curious definiteness of man. Maybe it is better to hope that music may always be a transcendental language in the most extravagant sense."²⁸

²⁶ Burkholder, Ideas Behind the Music, 37. It is possible that Ives first came into serious contact with Thoreau and Emerson during his years at Yale.

²⁷ Burkholder, "Ives Today," in Ives Studies, edited by Philip Lambert (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 266. Burkholder states, "The challenge has been to see Ives as he actually was, beyond the myth that had grown up around him, to discover his place within the musical and social culture of his time, more than his significance for the work of composers two or three generations later. Almost all of the work on Ives since 1974 has been revisionist, and newer work has revised the earlier revisers (266)."

²⁸ Ives, Essays Before a Sonata, 71.

Through analysis of the human faith melody and the motive from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, I have discovered that the Beethoven's Fifth motive underlies much of the music of the sonata (Appendix 1). It provides a musical coherence to movements that otherwise seem stylistically disparate. The use of this motive is extremely skillful. It is easily recognized, even in complex contexts. It also can be varied in a number of ways, conveying a variety of expressive qualities, and still be recognized as the same motive (Example 6).²⁹ Though used less frequently than the short Beethoven's Fifth motive, the human-faith melody appears in structurally important positions and provides coherent long-term connections throughout the sonata.

The prominence of the Beethoven's Fifth motive throughout the movements, appearing oftentimes without the full human-faith melody, leads me to believe that the Beethoven's Fifth motive is the deepest expression of transcendental unity in this sonata. The motive contains the most succinct statement of the repeated note leaping down a major third gesture that forms much of the fabric of this sonata. This gesture is found in the hymn tunes, in the human-faith melody, and throughout the sonata.

The expressive qualities of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony itself are important for Ives's transcendental use of the Beethoven's Fifth motive.³⁰ Ives draws on the romantic understanding of the motive symbolizing fate knocking at the door, but Ives takes this idea even further. For him, it symbolizes the transcendental unity and innate goodness of

²⁹ Page numbers and system numbers taken from Charles Ives, Piano Sonata No. 2 "Concord Mass., 1840-1860," 2nd Edition (Milwaukee: Associated Music Press, 1947).

³⁰ Ives, Essays, 36.

man, the center of his Romantic idealism. This common unity is his religion as this next statement illustrates.³¹

There is an “oracle” at the beginning of the *Fifth Symphony*; in these four notes lies one of Beethoven’s greatest messages. We would place its translation above the relentlessness of fate knocking at the door, above the human message of destiny, and strive to bring it towards the spiritual message of Emerson’s revelations, even to the “common heart” of Concord—the soul of humanity knocking at the door of the divine mysteries, radiant in the faith that it *will* be opened—and the human become the divine.³²

Ives’s use of the Beethoven’s Fifth motive, as well as the motive from Beethoven’s Hammer-Clavier Sonata, has several other facets to it. On the surface, the use of these motives serve as a way for Ives to pay tribute to Beethoven, a composer he highly praises in the Essays. At another level, the use of Beethoven’s music gave Ives a chance to show up his hero by using the famous Beethoven’s Fifth motive in a new context, unfettered by the limitations of eighteenth and nineteenth-century tonality:

The diverse multivalent nature of Ives’s source material helps him overcome the dominating nature of Beethoven’s personality, symbolized in Beethoven’s most famous four notes.³³

Ives was obsessed with depicting himself as *the* greatest composer. As noted, Ives built himself up through his merciless criticism of other composers. In Memos, from the 1930’s, he no longer professes adoration of his hero, and at some points

³¹ Ives’s quest for unity can be problematic. At times, in his search for unity, he reduces terms to the point of meaninglessness. For example, in his Essays he writes: “Geniuses—and there are millions of them—differ as to *what* is beautiful and *what* is ugly, as to *what* is right and *what* is wrong—there are many interpretations of God—but they all agree that beauty is better than ugliness and right is better than wrong, and that there is a God—all are one when they reach the essence (Ives, Essays Before a Sonata, 57).”

³² Ives, Essays, 36.

³³ Hertz, Angels of Reality, 125.

caustically belittles him.³⁴ This change in tone may be surprising, but Burkholder states that Ives's relationship to Beethoven is another area where Ives twists the truth to his own advantage:

He was such an accomplished actor that he could use role-playing to his own ends. In the *Essays Before a Sonata*, published in 1920, he cast himself as a Beethoven disciple; once he attracted the interest of ultramodernists around Henry Cowell and Nicolas Slonimsky, he recast himself in the *Memos* of the early 1930's as a radical experimentalist. In some measures he was both, as he was in all the parts he had played, when he chose to play them.³⁵

The unity of man, as found in transcendentalist thought, is conveyed through Ives's use of the Beethoven motive and the human-faith melody in all four movements of the Concord Sonata. These movements are stylistically distinct from each other, yet this motive and melody underlie and unite all four of the movements.

The amalgamating of four previously written melodies along with newly-composed music created a flexible complex, which Ives used as a way of musically creating unity and variety at several levels: within the theme itself, within the individual movements and also in the sonata as a whole. This complex is generally understood to be what Ives speaks of as the "human-faith melody" in his essay on "The Alcotts," in which he attributes to the melody transcendental significance:

All around you, under the Concord sky, there still floats the influence of that human-faith-melody...reflecting an innate hope, a common interest in common things and common men—a tune that the Concord bards are ever playing while they pound away at the immensities with a Beethoven-like sublimity...³⁶

³⁴ See *Memos*, 44, for example.

³⁵ Burkholder, *The Ideas Behind the Music*, 20.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

The melodic contours of the borrowed motives are similar, and Ives exploits these similarities. But Ives does not choose these motives purely for their melodic parallels. The sources of these melodies, hymnody and Beethoven, are important considerations in Ives's use of the material. Both the Beethoven motives and the hymn melodies contribute to Ives's representation of his transcendental philosophies.

This amalgamated melody consists of both new and borrowed material. The first half of the melody seems to consist of completely new material (ex. 1), while the second half is a fusion of the four sources. Three of the sources, the motive from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and the two hymn melodies, resemble each other through the melodic prominence in their openings of a repeated note which precedes to leap down the interval of a third. In the motive from Beethoven's "Hammer-Clavier" sonata, this downward leap of a third occurs on beats 1-2 of the second measure, and again on beat 1-2 of the fourth measure. Beethoven's Fifth motive, Missionary Chant and Martyn all open with a leap down a major third. In the Beethoven Fifth motive and in Missionary Chant, a repeated note that then leaps down a minor third follows this opening gesture. The use of major and minor thirds in these sources create possibilities of variations that Ives exploits throughout the sonata.

The metrical positions of the downward leap of a third in the sources also create variety that Ives can exploit throughout the sonata. Both the Beethoven's Fifth motive and Missionary Chant begin with an anacrusis that propels the motion forward into the downward leap that occurs on the first beat of the next measure. The Hammer-Clavier motive also has an anacrusis propulsion, but in this motive the downward leap is delayed until the second beat of the second measure. Martyn is the only tune that lacks an

anacrusis. Though this sonata, for the most part, lacks barlines, the semblance of these metrical positions is effected through the use of accents and the note beaming.

In the full exposition of the human-faith melody (first occurring in “The Alcotts” page 55, system 2-3), newly composed material is followed by the amalgamated material. This second half begins in an anacrusis-like position with a D repeated three times, followed by a leap down a major third, as occurs in the Beethoven’s Fifth motive, to a Bb. This is followed by a D repeated four times, which then moves up a half-step and back to the D before it again leaps down to the Bb (followed by a B only in its first full appearance in “The Alcotts”). This approximates the melodic shape, and in some appearances is harmonized similarly to the “Hammer-Clavier” Sonata motive. Moving up the scale through a C, D is again repeated three times, this time leaping up a minor third to F, which then resolves down through Eb, D and back down to Bb.

When Ives borrows hymns, the text may be significant programmatically, but more often it is the general mood of the hymn that is used programmatically. Most importantly, for Ives the act of hymn-singing was important. Burkholder asserts, “When Ives uses tunes, textures, and sounds from the traditions of American popular music and Protestant church music, they convey meanings by invoking associations with certain activities, events, people, or places.”³⁷ The coming together of many people to sing in unity was significant for Ives, with his belief in the unity of man: “When Ives used these hymns in his music, they carried these associations of strength and of a group feeling in

³⁷ Burkholder, All Made of Tunes, 21.

which the individual is merged but not erased.”³⁸ In other words, congregational singing for Ives was an activity analogous with the transcendental ideal of the Oversoul.

If the specific texts of these two hymns had further programmatic significance for Ives, it is difficult to find where that significance lies. Perhaps there could be vague programmatic significance in the overall feeling of the text, especially of Missionary Chant. The text emphasizes the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the world (ex. 4). Perhaps the emphasis on the worldwide spread of the gospel in this hymn rang true with Ives’s universalism, though the universal call of the gospel for sinners and a universal unity based on the goodness of man are fundamentally conflicting concepts.

The hymn-tune Martyn (1834) was originally intended for John Newton’s text, “Mary at Her Savior’s Tomb,” but in 1864 it was first used with the text “Jesus Lover of My Soul” and this union of text and music soon became customary.³⁹ I cannot see any reasonable connections between either of these texts with Ives’s transcendental philosophies. In spite of vague analogies the text associated with Missionary Chant may have with Ives’s philosophies, I believe that the melodic similarities between the hymn tunes and Beethoven’s Fifth, and the general associations of hymn-singing Ives evokes through hymns are the more important considerations in examining the meanings of the human-faith melody.

The importance of the Beethoven’s Fifth motive and the human-faith motive is seen from the beginning of the sonata. The Beethoven’s Fifth motive is present in the very first system of “Emerson” (page 1, system 1), and the second half of the human-faith

³⁸ Ibid., 251.

³⁹ Kenneth W. Osbeck, 101 Hymn Stories (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications,

melody appears soon after in the bass (p. 1, sys. 3), underneath dense, chromatic material. The next appearance of the melody is again in the bass (p. 2, sys. 2). With a tempo marking of “very fast” and a *fortissimo* dynamic marking, the entrance of the melody towards the middle of the movement is tense and aggressive (p. 6, sys. 2). There are three important entrances at the end of the movement: the first one resembles the middle entrance in its character (p. 18, sys. 1-2); the second one is gentler and appears over a descending chromatic scale in the bass (p. 18, sys. 5—p. 19, sys. 1); and the final entrance in the bass (p. 19, sys. 4). The movement concludes with the Beethoven’s Fifth motive low in the bass (p. 19, sys. 4).

The “Emerson” movement does not have an explicit program, but it seems as though Ives is imitating Emerson’s prose style in this movement. Ives was much more influenced by his musical contemporaries than he would admit, but Ives’s use of literary techniques to structure his music helped him retain a unique approach. The lack of barlines, particularly in this movement, is a part of this imitation of Emerson’s prose. Ives explains his impression of Emerson’s style,

Emerson wrote by sentences or phrases rather than by logical sequence. His underlying plan of work seems based on the large unity of a series of particular aspects of a subject rather than on the continuity of its expression.⁴⁰

After the first exposition of the human-faith melody in the “Hawthorne” movement, a movement characterized by dissonant, scherzo-like complexity, a new variation of the human-faith melody appears. This version more closely approximates

1982): 130-131.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 22. Also see Hertz, *Angels of Reality*, especially chapter 5. Hertz believes that Ives’s knowledge of Emerson was fundamental to the way Ives thought about music, through his philosophies and his writing style.

the hymn tune Martyn. At the appearance of the human-faith melody, the dissonant, rhythmically dense action comes to a halt; the pedal is held down, and this melody emerges with its diatonic harmonization, haunting in its simplicity (Example 7). This treatment of the human-faith melody occurs twice, a shorter fragment of the human-faith melody (p. 33, sys. 1) that is followed with an extended appearance of the melody a few moments later (p. 34, sys 2-4). Burkholder argues that this particular treatment of the melody is programmatically significant, symbolizing the graveyard and haunted church that Ives describes in his Hawthorne Essay.⁴¹ If Burkholder is correct that this is a reference to a graveyard, perhaps the original text to Martyn, “Mary Waiting at the Tomb” could have been significant partially for its reference to a tomb.

“The Alcotts” movement is the clearest movement of the sonata texturally, melodically, harmonically. It also contains the clearest presentations of the human-faith melody. Its tonal basis is straightforward, with some bitonal elements, such as the human-faith melody in Bb major over a sustained Ab triad (p. 53, sys. 2-3), and only an occasional element that is suggestive of atonal procedures. The human-faith melody is pervasive throughout the first section, beginning with a version that resembles Missionary Chant. After several variations of the human-faith melody, a second, song-like section follows. The simple song-like melody disintegrates (p. 56, sys. 4-5) and is blended with elements from the human-faith melody, which leads into a joyful, triumphant appearance of the human-faith melody in C-major (p. 57, sys. 4-5). The comparatively simple and clear texture of this movement has programmatic and structural significance. Programmatically, this movement represents the Alcott family singing

⁴¹ Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes*, 355.

together “the Scotch songs and the family hymns” and Beth Alcott as she played the Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.⁴²

In the Thoreau movement, Ives highlights the human-faith melody at the conclusion—the first clear and complete exposition of the human-faith melody in this movement—by scoring it for flute, an unanticipated event in this sonata and completely unexpected within the context of a piano sonata (p. 67, sys. 1—p. 68 sys. 1) (Example 8). The use of the flute has programmatic importance. In the Thoreau essay, Ives vividly describes a scene by the Walden Pond, “the poet’s flute is heard out over the pond...is it a transcendental tune of Concord?”⁴³ It is interesting that in each of the other movements, there are clear expositions of the human-faith melody before the coda, but Ives gives the melody special significance in Thoreau by reserving it until the end.

As has been noted, the human-faith melody occurs in the codas of “Emerson,” “The Alcotts” and “Thoreau.” It is extremely important that this theme often appears at the end of movements, and that the melody gains prominence and clarity overall as the sonata advances towards its end. Ives often constructed end-weighted music. Romantic music in general inclined towards end-weightedness, but for Ives, this carried important philosophical significance:

He feels that music, like other truths, should never be immediately understood; there must always remain some further element yet to be disclosed. A complete musical statement in all its clarity and simplicity, like any other absolute truth, is

⁴² Ibid., 47-48. Beethoven was held in great esteem by the Transcendentalists and Ives may also be referring to that in his use of Beethoven’s music.

⁴³ Ives, Essays, 69.

an ultimate not a beginning. Ives reserves it, therefore, for the culmination of a work.”⁴⁴

Keeping this understanding of Ives’s philosophy in mind, it becomes evident why the Alcotts is the clearest movement musically, and why the full exposition of the human-faith melody is reserved for this third movement. It explains why important statements of the human-faith melody are reserved for the codas. It also shows the importance of why the final statement of the human-faith melody is made especially significant by giving it to a flute.

The use of this amalgamated melody in all four movements symbolizes Ives’s belief in the unity and goodness of man, which corresponds with the beliefs of the Transcendentalists that he admired. It is an attempt to unite the four movements in the same way that these people were united in their belief. But the success of this sonata is not dependent on the program. Taken separately from the philosophical intentions of Ives, this melody creates a coherent musical structure that works, even in the midst of music that is superficially complex and disunited. The musical structure can be appreciated and enjoyed without condoning the mistaken idealism that lies behind Ives’s motivation in creating this piece. I can refute the philosophy of the human maker yet still am able to interact with, and even to take delight in what has been made.

It seems as though this piece was built out of a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of God, the nature of man and the function of music. Yet, the Concord Sonata still is a creative and ingenious piece of music. Ives’s erroneous beliefs cannot be condoned, but his music still can be appreciated. This is possible only with the

⁴⁴ Henry Cowell and Sidney Cowell, Charles Ives and his Music, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955): 142.

acknowledgment of Ives's reflection of the image of God in his humanity, and with the realization that the materials he uses in the making of music come from God's creation. Even in his rebellion and confusion, he could still craft music with skill and imagination. This has implications for how I approach music by Christians and by non-Christians: I must approach music with humility, realizing that non-Christians can craft beautiful musical works, and Christians can create shoddy musical works.

Music is not a link to transcendence, as Ives claims. It seems as though Ives makes a logical leap from his perception that music is somehow transcendent of verbal expression, to a belief that music is the link to some transcendent world, a link to a "God" of which there may be a "billion interpretations."⁴⁵ Music, according to Ives, will evolve so that it becomes "so transcendent that its heights and depths will be common to all mankind."⁴⁶ Music becomes the fullest expression of the unity of mankind. For Ives, it is almost as if *music* is the Oversoul, the common link of the souls of mankind. But if music could have this power, if it was "beyond any analogy to word language," why would Ives have needed to write a set of Essays to explain his music?⁴⁷

When Ives attempts to make music a link to the transcendent, he makes an idol out of it. When Christ came to earth and became a man, he became our mediator, the link between sinful men and a holy, transcendent God. If we make music our link to the transcendent, we are attributing to it qualities that only God has. Christians must be careful because this can be an especially slippery temptation with music written by

⁴⁵ Ives, Essays, 8.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 8.

Christians, and with music used in the church. When we attribute to music mystical qualities, such as is often done with the music of Bach, it becomes easy to worship the music instead of God. Is it not easy for Christians to sin in a way that parallels Ives's sin of idolatry? When I write music and listen to music made by others, I must do so with humility, not attributing to the music qualities that it does not possess, but approaching the music with a proper understanding of its nature.

When I approach music without an exaggerated view of its qualities and function, then I am free to interact with it properly. I can even take joy in music that was written with idolatrous intentions, such as this sonata. Harold Best finds a strong Biblical basis for this approach, "Paul's worldview was so thorough that, once we fully grasp it, we can understand that when idols are stripped of their pretended meaning and power, they can still possess intrinsic, even aesthetic worth."⁴⁸ A particularly applicable passage addressing this issue is found in I Corinthians 8:

So, then, about food sacrificed to idols: we know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.⁴⁹

How do I evaluate what musical tools to use in my own composition? As a redeemed person set free from the powers of this world, I am free to learn from the work of Charles Ives. He worked with skill and craft, even if his heart was rebellious. It is even conceivable that a Christian composer could use some of the same musical

⁴⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁴⁸ Harold Best, Music Through the Eyes of Faith (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 50.

techniques Ives did, such as blending the Beethoven's Fifth motive and hymn tunes, and create something intended for the glory of God. I cannot find anywhere in the Bible a specific musical style that Christians must use. As a redeemed person, I can use the same musical tools that a non-Christian may use. Yet a Christian and a non-Christian may use these tools with opposite intentions: a non-Christian using the tools in rebellion against God, and a Christian, only by God's grace, using these tools with the intention of glorifying God.

Music is not philosophy. Ives confuses the two, and though the Concord Sonata is successful as music, it seems to work clumsily (if it works at all) as philosophy. When I make music, I do not have to try intentionally to convey a Christian philosophy or worldview. If I am a new creation, then the music I make should reflect in some way my new self. Making music is part of my activity as a redeemed creature.

Without the conception that I must strive for some kind of "Christian" style of music when I compose, I still must acknowledge that whatever musical tools I use should be subservient to the principles of glorifying God and serving my neighbor. I must be faithful to God and to the musical calling he has given me, with the understanding that I am made in his image and that all of my life has been redeemed for His purposes.

⁴⁹ I Corinthians 8:4-6 (New International Version).

Appendix : Beethoven's Fifth Motive and the Human-Faith Melody in the Concord Sonata

Key to analysis:

S= System

B= bar number within line (if applicable)

HF= human faith melody

En.= enharmonic equivalent

*X= motive repeated * times

?=motive's presence is questionable

Fl.= flute

Pno.= piano

Emerson:

Page:

1	S1	C-G#, E-
	S2	C#, D# (En. Eb)-C bass, C#-A#

- S3 B2: G-A-G#-D# (HF), B3: C-G#, C-
 S4 Db-C-G#-A# (HF)
 S5 B2: G-A-B-E-D (HF)
 2 S1 B1: Eb-F-G-C (HF)
 S2 C-G#, C to D# bass
 S3 B3: D-A#
 S4 B3: G-E-F#
 S5 G-E-F#, B-G
 3 S4 G#-E 3X
 S5 B1-2: A-E?
 4 S4 E-Db, A-D#?
 6 S2 B2: G-Eb, G-Eb-C, G-Eb
 S3 G-A-G-Eb-F (HF), G-B-A
 S4 C-A bass
 S5 C-A
 10 S4 Bb-G, C#-
 11 S1 C#-A, D#-C-D
 12 S2 B2: B-G#, B3: G#-E, G#-D
 S4 B1: D#-C, B2: D#-G#
 13 S1-S2 G-E bass?
 18 S1 B2: G-Eb 2X
 S2 G-Eb, B-D-C-G-Eb (HF), A-Eb bass
 S3 Bb-F, G-F# bass
 S4 B1: G-F# bass
 S5 B1: F-C, B2: B-G, B3: B-C-B-G (HF), B4: B-G#-F#-
 19 S1 B1: F#-C#-E, B2: A-F, B3: A- B4: F# (HF)
 S2 B2: C#- B3: C#-A, C#-
 S3 B1: C#-D#-C#-A-B (HF), B2: G-D#, F-D
 S4 B1: G-Eb-F bass, B2: G-Ab-G-Eb bass, A- B4: A-F

Hawthorne:

- 23 S3-4 F#-D#
 29 S2 G-E
 30 S2 D-E-F#-B (HF)
 31 S2 G#-E, A-
 S3 A, G#-E
 S4 G#-A-G#-E (S2-4 HF)
 32 S1-2 ext. of HF from p. 31
 S3 G#-A-G#-
 S5 E-F# (HF)
 33 S1 (6/8) B-G-A-
 S2 C (HF)
 34 S2 B2: A-F#-
 S3 B1: G#, B2: B-G#-F#, B4: F#-C#-F#-
 S4 B1: G#, B2: B-G#-F#- B3: F#-B C# (HF)
 42 S3 A-F-
 S4 G (HF), A-C-A#-A
 46 S4 C#-A bass
 50 S1 G#-F
 51 S5 G-Eb-F (HF)

The Alcotts:

- 53 S1 D-Bb, C-A, D-Bb, C-A
 S3 D-Bb, D-Eb-D-Bb-C, D-F-Eb-D (HF), B-G#
 54 S1 D-Bb, D-Bb-C, Eb-C, Eb-C-

	S2	D, Ab-D bass, Ab-F, Ab-Bb-Ab-F-G (HF), Bb-A-Bb-
	S3	Db-Bb, Eb-C 3X
	S4	Eb-C 2X, C-Eb-C, Eb-C 2X
55	S1	G-Eb, Eb-C-A, Bb-C-D-G-F-D-C-D-Eb-F-
	S2	G-Bb-D-Bb-C-D-Bb-D-Bb-D-Eb-D-Bb-B
	S3	C (Full HF), D-F-Eb-D-Bb (HF)
57	S2	B1: Eb-F-G-C (HF),
	S3	B2: G-A-B, Bb-C-D, G-A-B, Bb-C-D-
	S4	G (HF sequence), C-D-E-A-G-E-D-E-F-G-A-C-D-A-E-C-D (Full HF), E-
	S5	C-E-F-E-C-D-E-G-F-E-C (HF)

Thoreau

59	S1	F#-D, F#-D#-
	S2	D#
	S3	C-G
60	S2	C-A
63	S1	E-C bass, A-C-A
	S2	C-
	S3	C-A, A-C-A
	S4	F-A bass, F-A-F bass
65	S3	G-Eb
67	S1	Fl.: Bb-C-D-F-D-C-D-Eb-F-G-Bb-C-G-D-Bb, C-D-Bb-C-D-A# (HF)
	S2	(fl.) B-A#, B-A#, B-C#-D#-G#-F#-D#-C#-D-E-F#-C#-B#-
	S3	(fl.) G-F-D-C-D-Eb-F-G-Bb-C-G-D-Bb-C-D-
68	S1	(fl.) Bb, (HF), D-Eb-D-Bb-C, D - (pno) A# (HF)
	S5	A

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The melodies of the Beatles, for example, were often highly adventurous, with internal rhyming and ventures into neighbouring keys. But the Beatles belong to another era, and their once insolent songs sound quaint and innocent beside Oasis, Nirvana or The Verve. All the same, the desire for a catchy tune remains, at least with a certain section of the pop audience. To that extent, externalisation has an all-important cultural meaning. Its significance can be more clearly appreciated if we turn our attention to the sociological aspect of pop. Three features stand out as worthy of comment. 1. The relation between the performer and the fan. The smooth melody, like heavenly music, takes you away from the noisy world to the Creator to enjoy His words of life in the new age! The appearance of God refers to His personal arrival on earth to do His work. With His own identity and disposition, and in His own method, He descends among man to initiate an age and end an age. The new kingdom hymn "The Significance of the Appearance of God" is performed through Tai Chi Dance, which is special and fluent. It gently tells you the true significance of God's work and word in His two incarnations. With green grass and blue sky as background, the dance perfectly corresponds to a soft, melodious ensemble of Zheng and Xiao, the discourse between classical musical instruments. The significance of melody becomes also apparent by the universal use of "Motherese", the typical infant-directed speech. Motherese is characterized by the use of exaggerated melodic expression, and exemplifies how messages are conveyed to the preverbal human infant by melody (e.g., Fernald, 1989, 1993). Dean Falk. (2004) developed a cogent model, in which parental prosody (with melody as an. The extraordinary performances in perception of melody and rhythm of newborns and young infants leave no doubt that the human infant has a specific sensitivity to just these acoustic features.