

A Faculty Recital by

Stephen Drury  
*piano*

with  
Anne Chao, flute  
Yukiko Takagi, celesta

*Charles Ives (1874–1954):  
The Complete Sonatas for Piano*

Wednesday, January 24, 2024  
7:30 p.m.  
NEC's Jordan Hall

## PROGRAM

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**Charles Ives**  
(1874–1954)

**Sonata No. 1** (1902–1910)

Adagio con moto

Allegro moderato: “In the Inn”

Adagio

“not for the lilies lying back in soft dress -

circle cushion to lap up pretty velvet

sound with their soft ears”; Allegro

Andante maestoso

**Three Page Sonata** (1905)

Yukiko Takagi, celesta

*Intermission*

**Sonata No. 2, “Concord, Mass. 1840–1860”**

Emerson

Hawthorne

The Alcotts

Thoreau

Anne Chao, flute

*This performance is dedicated to the memory of John Heiss.*

## First Sonata

What is it all about? – Dan S. asks. Mostly about the outdoor life in Conn. villages in the '80s & '90s – impressions, remembrances, & reflections of country farmers in Conn. farmland.

On page 14 back, Fred's Daddy got so excited that he shouted when Fred hit a home run & the school won the baseball game. But Aunt Sarah was always humming *Where Is My Wandering Boy*, after Fred an' John left for a job in Bridgeport. There was usually a sadness – but not at the Barn Dances, with their jigs, foot jumping, & reels, mostly on winter nights.

In the summer times, the hymns were sung outdoors. Folks sang (as *Old Black Joe*) - & the Bethel Band (quickstep street marches) - & the people like[d to say] things as they wanted to say, and to do things as they wanted to, in their own way – and many old times ... there were feelings, and of spiritual fervency!

## Sonata #2, "Concord, Mass., 1840-1860"

### I. Emerson

It has seemed to the writer, that Emerson is greater—his identity more complete perhaps—in the realms of revelation—natural disclosure—than in those of poetry, philosophy, or prophecy...

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

There is an "oracle" at the beginning of the *Fifth Symphony*—in those 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 greater 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!

### II. Hawthorne

[The] fundamental part of Hawthorne is not attempted in our music which is but an "extended fragment" trying to suggest some of his wilder, fantastical adventures into the half-childlike, half-fairylike phantasmal realms. It may have something to do with the children's excitement on that "frosty Berkshire morning, and the frost imagery on the enchanted hall window" or something to do with "Feathertop," the "Scarecrow," and his "Looking Glass" and the little demons dancing around his pipe bowl; or something to do with the old hymn tune that haunts the church and sings only to

those in the churchyard, to protect them from secular noises, as when the circus parade comes down Main Street;—not something that happens, but the way something happens; or something personal, which tries to be “national” suddenly at twilight, and universal suddenly at midnight; or something about the ghost of a man who never lived, or about something that never will happen, or something else that is not.

### *III. The Alcotts*

We won't try to reconcile the music sketch of the Alcotts with much besides the memory of that home under the elms—the Scotch songs and the family hymns that were sung at the end of each day—though there may be an attempt to catch something of that common sentiment (which we have tried to suggest above)—a strength of hope that never gives way to despair—a conviction in the power of the common soul which, when all is said and done, may be as typical as any theme of Concord and its transcendentalists.

### *IV. Thoreau*

You, James Russell Lowells! You, Robert Louis Stevensons! You, Mark Van Dorens! With your literary perception, your power of illumination, your brilliancy of expression, yea, and with your love of sincerity, you know your Thoreau, but not my Thoreau—that reassuring and true friend, who stood by me one “low” day, when the sun had gone down, long, long before sunset. You may know something of the affection that heart yearned for but knew it a duty not to grasp; you may know something of the great human passions which stirred that soul —too deep for animate expression—you may know all of this, all there is to know about Thoreau, but you know him not, unless you love him!

And if there shall be a program for our music let it follow his thought on an autumn day of Indian summer at Walden—a shadow of a thought at first, colored by the mist and haze over the pond ... but this is momentary; the beauty of the day moves him to a certain restlessness—to aspirations more specific—an eagerness for outward action, but through it all he is conscious that it is not in keeping with the mood for this “Day.” As the mists rise, there comes a clearer thought more traditional than the first, a meditation more calm.

At times the more definite personal strivings for the ideal freedom, the former more active speculations come over him, as if he would trace a certain intensity even in his submission. “He grew in those seasons like corn in the night and they

were better than any works of the hands. They were not time subtracted from his life but so much over and above the usual allowance." "He realized what the Orientals meant by contemplation and forsaking of works." "The day advanced as if to light some work of his—it was morning and lo! now it is evening and nothing memorable is accomplished ..."

"The evening train has gone by," and "all the restless world with it. The fishes in the pond no longer feel its rumbling and he is more alone than ever. ..."

His meditations are interrupted only by the faint sound of the Concord bell—'tis prayer-meeting night in the village—"a melody as it were, imported into the wilderness. ..." "At a distance over the woods the sound acquires a certain vibratory hum as if the pine needles in the horizon were the strings of a harp which it swept. ... A vibration of the universal lyre. . . . Just as the intervening atmosphere makes a distant ridge of earth interesting to the eyes by the azure tint it imparts." . . .

It is darker, the poet's flute is heard out over the pond and Walden hears the swan song of that "Day" and faintly echoes. ... Is it a transcendental tune of Concord?

'Tis an evening when the "whole body is one sense," . . . and before ending his day he looks out over the clear, crystalline water of the pond and catches a glimpse of the shadow-thought he saw in the morning's mist and haze—he knows that by his final submission, he possesses the "Freedom of the Night."

He goes up the "pleasant hillside of pines, hickories," and moonlight to his cabin, "with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself."

*Notes by Charles Ives, from Memos and Essays Before a Sonata*

**Stephen Drury** has given performances throughout the U.S., Europe, Asia, and Latin America, soloing with orchestras from San Diego to Bucharest. A prize winner in several competitions, including the Concert Artists Guild, Affiliate Artists, and Carnegie Hall/Rockefeller competitions, his repertoire stretches from Bach, Mozart, and Liszt to the music of today.

U.S. State Department sponsored two concert tours that enabled him to take the sounds of dissonance to Paris, Hong Kong, Greenland, Pakistan, Prague, and Japan. He has appeared as conductor and pianist at the Angelica Festival in Italy, the

MusikTriennale Köln in Germany, the Spoleto Festival USA, the Britten Sinfonia in England, as well as at Tonic, Roulette, and the Knitting Factory in New York. Drury has also performed with Merce Cunningham and Mikhail Barishnikov in the Lincoln Center Festival, at Alice Tully Hall as part of the Great Day in New York Festival, with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, and with the Seattle Chamber Players in Seattle and Moscow.

A champion of 20th-century music, Drury's critically acclaimed performances range from the piano sonatas of Charles Ives to works by John Cage and György Ligeti. He premiered the solo part of John Cage's *101* with the BSO and gave the first performance of John Zorn's concerto for piano and orchestra *Aporias* with Dennis Russell Davies and the Cologne Radio Symphony. He has commissioned new works from Cage, Zorn, Terry Riley, Lee Hyla, and Chinari Ung,

Drury has given masterclasses at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, Oberlin Conservatory, Mannes Beethoven Institute and throughout the world, and served on juries for the Concert Artist Guild and Orléans Concours International de Piano XXème Siècle Competitions.

His recordings include music by Beethoven, Liszt, Stockhausen, Ravel, Stravinsky, Charles Ives, Elliott Carter, Frederic Rzewski, John Cage, Colin McPhee, and John Zorn.

## IVES 150

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America's great original composer

### **January 24**

Stephen Drury performs the complete sonatas of Charles Ives  
*7:30pm, Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory*

### **February 5**

The Violin Sonatas –the four sonatas for violin and piano, performed by renowned Ives specialists Daniel Stepner, Donald Berman and Stephen Drury collaborating with students of New England Conservatory  
*8:00pm, Williams Hall, New England Conservatory*

### **February 27**

New England Conservatory Piano Department students perform shorter and early works, including *The Anti-Abolitionist Riots*, *Some Southpaw Pitching*, and the *Three Page Sonata*.  
*7:30pm, Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory*

### **March 27**

Ives Extended - New England Conservatory Piano Department students perform *The Celestial Railroad*, the *Set of Five Take-Offs*, works by Carl Ruggles, Lou Harrison and Henry Cowell, and rarely heard music for two pianos in quarter-tones by Ives, David Fulmer, and Georg Haas.  
*7:30pm, Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory*

### **March 29 and April 9**

The Callithumpian Consort performs piano trios by Ives and Ravel and Elliott Carter's Sonata for Violoncello and Piano  
*March 29, 8:00pm, Wayland High School*  
*April 9, 8:00pm, Williams Hall, New England Conservatory*

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and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.  
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Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management.

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