



## Film 2

# Charles Ives' America

Steeped in nostalgia, in his Danbury childhood and the New England Transcendentalists with whom he profoundly identified, in the American experience of race which he absorbed from his Abolitionist grandparents, Ives used the past with consummate empathy and brave artistry. A musical Whitman or Melville, he embodies the American trope of the 'self-made genius', heeding Emerson's call to cut the cultural umbilical cord with Europe, forging an original path. The music at hand here includes his *Second Symphony* (a milestone in culling the vernacular to set beside *Huckleberry Finn*), *The Housatonic at Stockbridge* (possibly the most sublime nature reverie in the American orchestral repertoire), and *The St Gaudens in Boston Common* (a singular ghost dirge in tribute to Colonel Robert Gould Shaw's Black Civil War regiment). We also hear portions of Ives's *Concord Sonata* performed by Steven Mayer (an interpretation seasoned by a lifetime of advocacy) and half a dozen Ives songs peerlessly sung (in live performance with Paul Sanchez) by William Sharp. The commentators include the Ives scholars J. Peter Burkholder and Judith Tick, and the conductor James Sinclair. – J.H.

This film is part of the Naxos film series, *Dvořák's Prophecy - A New Narrative for American Classical Music*, aligned with Joseph Horowitz's book *Dvořák's Prophecy and the Vexed Fate of Black Classical Music*.

Written and produced by Joseph Horowitz  
Visual presentation by Peter Bogdanoff

Music by Charles Ives performed by baritone William Sharp, pianists Steven Mayer and Paul Sanchez, and conductors James Sinclair and Kenneth Schermerhorn.

Commentary by:  
J. Peter Burkholder, Joseph Horowitz, William Sharp, James Sinclair, Judith Tick

*Support for this project was provided by the Charles Ives Society*

'Charles Ives' America may be the most important film ever produced about American music. Horowitz moves Ives from the fringes squarely to his position as the seminal composer of our country.'  
– JoAnn Falletta, Music Director, Buffalo Philharmonic

As the *Dvořák's Prophecy* films were undertaken during the pandemic, interviews were conducted virtually and in many cases do not meet normal technical standards.

Total playing time: 84 minutes • NTSC 16:9 • PCM stereo • Region: 0 (worldwide) • DVD 9  
Language: English  
Composer photo: © Halley Erskine. The Charles Ives Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Library of Yale University.

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