

# Charles Ives: The Complete Sonatas for Piano

## Stephen Drury, piano

Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.  
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall | Conrad Prebys Music Center

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### First Sonata

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

\* intermission \*

### Sonata #2, “Concord, Mass. 1840 – 1860”

I. Emerson

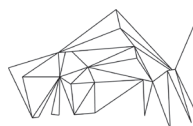
II. Hawthorne

III. The Alcotts

IV. Thoreau



<-- SCAN for additional  
program notes.



UC San Diego

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES  
Department of Music

## PROGRAM NOTES

### 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 and John left for a job in Bridgeport. There was usually a sadness – but not at the Ban 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 (quick-step 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.”

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Pianist and conductor STEPHEN DRURY has performed throughout the world with a repertoire that stretches from Bach to Liszt to the music of today. He has appeared at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Barbican Centre and Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, the Cité de la Musique in Paris, and the Leipzig Gewandhaus, and from Arkansas to Seoul. A champion of contemporary music, he has taken the sound of dissonance into remote corners of Pakistan, Greenland and Montana.

In 1985 Stephen Drury was chosen by Affiliate Artists for its Xerox Pianists Program, and performed in residencies with symphony orchestras in San Diego, Cedar Rapids, San Angelo, Spokane, and Stamford. He has since performed or recorded with the American Composers Orchestra, the Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Vienna Radio Orchestra, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Boston Philharmonic, the Boston Pops, the Springfield (Massachusetts) and Portland (Maine) Symphony Orchestras, and the Romanian National Symphony. Drury was a prize-winner in the Carnegie Hall/Rockefeller Foundation Competitions in American Music, and was selected by the United States Information Agency for its Artistic Ambassador Program and a 1986 European recital tour. A second tour in the fall of 1988 took him to Pakistan, Hong Kong, and Japan. He gave the first piano recitals ever in Julianehaab, Greenland, and Quetta, Pakistan. In 1989 the National Endowment for the Arts awarded Drury a Solo Recitalist Fellowship which funded residencies and recitals of American music for two years. The same year he was named "Musician of the Year" by the Boston Globe.

Stephen Drury's performances of music written in the last hundred years, ranging from the piano sonatas of Charles Ives to works by György Ligeti, Frederic Rzewski and John Cage have received the highest critical acclaim. Drury has worked closely with many of the leading composers of our time, including Cage, Ligeti, Rzewski, Steve Reich, Olivier Messiaen, John Zorn, Luciano Berio, Helmut Lachenmann, Christian Wolff, Jonathan Harvey, Michael Finnissy, Lee Hyla and John Luther Adams. Drury has appeared at the MusikTriennale Koln in Germany, the Subtropics Festival in Miami, and the North American New Music Festival in Buffalo as well as at Roulette, the Knitting Factory, Tonic and The Stone in New York. At Spoleto USA, the Angelica Festival in Bologna and Oberlin Conservatory he performed as both conductor and pianist. He has conducted the Britten Sinfonia in England, the Santa Cruz New Music Works Ensemble, and the Harvard Group for New Music. In 1988 - 1989 he organized a year-long festival of the music of John Cage which led to a request from the composer to perform the solo piano part in Cage's 101, premiered with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in April, 1989. In 2009 Drury performed the solo piano part in the Fourth Symphony of Charles Ives, again with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under Alan Gilbert. In 1999 Drury was invited by choreographer Merce Cunningham to perform onstage with Cunningham and Mikhail Barishnikov as part of the Lincoln Center Festival. Drury has also appeared in New York at Alice Tully Hall as part of the Great Day in New York Festival and on the Bargemusic series, in Boston with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players and as soloist with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and with the Seattle Chamber Players in Seattle and Moscow at the International Music Festival "Images of Contemporary American Music". In 2003 he performed and taught at the Mannes College of Music's Beethoven Institute; in 2005 he returned to Mannes to play and teach at the Institute and Festival for Contemporary Performance. That summer he was also the piano faculty at the Bang on a Can Summer Institute. In 2006, Drury's performance of Frederic Rzewski's "The People United Will Never Be Defeated!" at the Gilmore Keyboard Festival was a sensation; he was invited back in 2008 to premiere Rzewski's Natural Things with the Opus 21 Ensemble at the Gilmore Festival in Michigan and Carnegie's Zankel Hall in New York as part of the composer's 70th birthday. That same summer Drury appeared at Bard College's SUMMERSCAPE Festival, and at the Cité de la Musique in Paris for a week-long celebration of the music of John Zorn. In 2007 he was invited to León, Mexico to perform music by Rzewski, Zorn and Cage at the International Festival of Contemporary Art.

Drury has commissioned new works for solo piano from John Cage, John Zorn, John Luther Adams, Terry Riley, and Chinary Ung with funding provided by Meet The Composer. He has performed with Zorn in Paris, Vienna, London, Brussels, and New York, and conducted Zorn's music in Bologna, Boston, Chicago, and in the UK and Costa Rica. In March of 1995 he gave the first performance of Zorn's concerto for piano and orchestra Aporias with Dennis Russell Davies and the Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra. Later that same season he gave the premiere of Basic Training for solo piano, written for him by Lee Hyla. Drury has recorded the music of John Cage, Elliott Carter, Charles Ives, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Colin McPhee, John Zorn, John Luther Adams and Frederic Rzewski, as well as works of Liszt and Beethoven, for Mode, New Albion, Catalyst, Tzadik, Avant, MusicMasters, Cold Blue, New World and Neuma.

Stephen Drury has given masterclasses at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, Mannes Beethoven Institute, and Oberlin Conservatory, and in Japan, Romania, Argentina, Costa Rica, Denmark, and throughout the United States, and served on juries for the Concert Artist Guild, Gaudeamus and Orléans Concours International de Piano XXème Siècle Competitions. Drury is artistic director and conductor of the Callithumpian Consort, and he created and directs the Summer Institute for Contemporary Performance Practice at New England Conservatory. Drury earned his undergraduate degree for Harvard College, and has also earned the New England Conservatory's select Artist Diploma. His teachers have included Claudio Arrau, Patricia Zander, William Masselos, Margaret Ott, and Theodore Lettvin, and conducting with Donald Thulean. He teaches at New England Conservatory, where he has directed festivals of the music of John Cage, Steve Reich, and (in 2010) Christian Wolff.