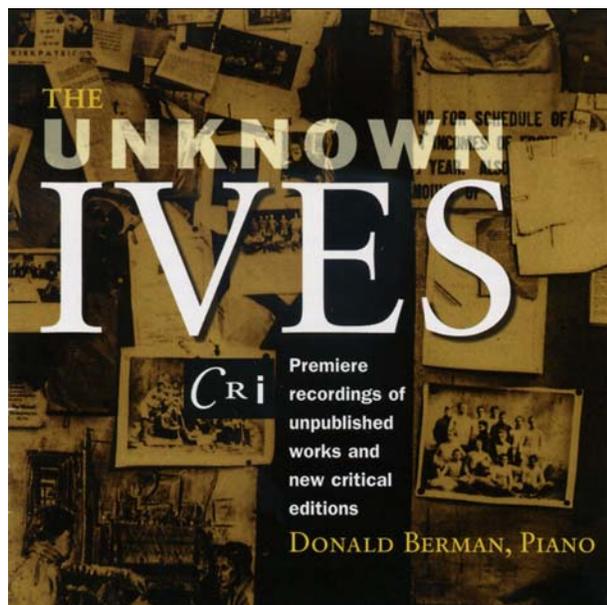


NWCR811

# The Unknown Ives

Donald Berman, piano



<i>Three-Page Sonata</i> (1905) .....	(8:00)
1. Allegro Moderato .....	(2:06)
2. Andante.....	(3:16)
3. Allegro–March Time .....	(2:38)
4. Study No. 6 (1907–1909) .....	(4:22)
5. Study No. 7 (1907) .....	(2:58)
6. Study No. 8 (1907) .....	(1:51)

7. Study No. 9 "The Anti-Abolitionist Riots" (1907) .....	(3:19)
8. Study No. 15 (1907–1909; 1920s) .....	(4:05)
9. Study No. 16/19 (1907–1909; 1920s) .....	(2:15)
10. Study No. 23 (1912–1914; 1920s) .....	(4:07)
<i>Set of Five Take-Offs</i> (1906) .....	(12:27)
11. The Seen & Unseen, or Sweet & Tough....	(2:55)
12. Rough & Ready, or The Jumping Frog .....	(3:06)
13. Song Without (good) Words .....	(3:17)
14. Scene Episode .....	(2:12)
15. Bad Resolutions & Good One.....	(0:57)
16. Study No. 20 (1920s) .....	(7:31)
17. Study No. 22 (1909) .....	(1:57)
18. Study No. 21 "Some South-Paw Pitching" (1917) .....	(2:48)

Carl Ruggles (1876–1971)

<i>Evocations, Four Chants for Piano</i> (1937-1954) .....	(10:01)
19. Largo (To Harriette Miller).....	(2:01)
20. Andante con fantasia (To John Kirkpatrick).....	(2:51)
21. Moderato appassionato (To Charlotte Ruggles).....	(1:37)
22. Adagio Sostenuto (To Charles Ives).....	(3:32)

Donald Berman, piano

Total playing time: 65:51

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## Notes

"Donald Berman is a superlative pianist, but as any number of attempts by excellent players have shown, it takes more than technique to bring Ives alive. To my ears Berman's Ives most resembles the playing of Ives himself, as we hear it in the composer's private recordings. With Berman there is the same subtlety of voicing you hear in Ives's playing, the same power combined with delicacy—a surprising thing to say about Ives, but that's how he often played his own music. Berman studied with John Kirkpatrick, the composer's first great interpreter, and kept growing from those studies. Ives was a prophetic genius whose consciousness, and piano writing, stayed rooted in Romanticism. For a pianist that's a very difficult balancing act, but Berman handles it beautifully.

A new generation of performers are reaching a mature and seasoned approach to Ives, and Donald Berman is a vital part of that achievement. "

—Jan Swafford

Author of *Charles Ives: A Life with Music*  
(1996, W.W. Norton)

Once a week, from 1983 to 1986, I traveled to New Haven, Connecticut for a six-hour piano lesson. My teacher was John Kirkpatrick (1905–1991) the great American pianist and Ives scholar. By this time he was retired from Yale University

(where he was curator of the Ives Collection) and also recovering from a stroke. I was his only student and he was my mentor. Our morning work at the piano often melded into lunch with Kirkpatrick's wife, Hope, and after ending the meal with the usual salad course, we proceeded back to the keyboard. Mostly we studied the classics: Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, Brahms, and later, Fauré, Stravinsky, and Gottschalk. Around the time of afternoon tea, I would take the opportunity to look over Kirkpatrick's on-going Ives work—usually an ink sketch or an errata sheet typed and re-typed on an historic manual typewriter. I would help him hunt down a metronome to find a tempo marking, or run to a nearby copy shop for a reproduction. It was during these invaluable sessions that I encountered the music which led to this CD.

Alongside his better known symphonies, chamber works, songs, and two piano sonatas, Charles Ives also wrote a series of short, groundbreaking works for solo piano. Given that these stunning compositions were written so long ago, it may seem surprising that some of the pieces still remain unpublished and others are only now receiving critical editing. Ironically, this may be due to the colorfully mischievous nature of the music and of Charles Ives himself.

It was the manuscripts of major works to which Ives continually turned his attention rather than the more

occasional miniatures (likewise with Kirkpatrick and subsequent scholars and musicians). Also, Ives may have initiated some of the short works as exercises of musical procedure, and thus considered them to be largely private. And finally, their abstract and experimental appearance didn't easily reveal their greatness. (Even Ives, in his published remembrances, *Memos*, wrote that "some of these are much better than they seemed at first.") Indeed, the neglect of the smaller piano works does not indicate their insignificance at all. Ives's masterful, penetrating voice and deep sense of transcendent musicality are all very much in evidence in these pieces.

The shorter piano works can be heard as self-contained treasures, as well as entrées to Ives's larger works. Within each piece, there is always a lucid idea, occasionally a literary genesis (such as in *The Jumping Frog* which is a take-off on Mark Twain's story, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*), and often a more abstract compositional idea (as in the ordering of approaching and retreating events in *Study No. 20*, or the layering of melody and several accompaniments in *Study No. 6* and *No. 7*). As a key to the larger works, the material in the miniatures is often heard developed further in longer pieces—the assuredness of the small scale experiment affording the adventure of the large scale experience.

Though they are distinctively emotional and melodic, the *Studies* and other short works for piano can be considered some of Ives's most abstruse and difficult music. Ives was probably well aware of this, often writing editorial commentaries in the margins as salvos to potential performers (which also indicates that he *did* intend them to be performed). His comments included suggestions that one could omit notes or even re-score for other instruments the lines which seemed unplayable by merely a two-handed pianist. These works are consciously "compositional"—that is, Ives tried out musical procedures, games, and experiments of rhythm, harmony, and structure. They were written in a style that later might be called experimental or experiential—music that unfolds as a process, rather than as a narrative.

Ives scholar Peter Burkholder suggests that Ives made no effort to have such ambitious and exploratory works performed until Henry Cowell, Lou Harrison, and other composers became interested in them. But as *avant-garde* as the *Studies* may have appeared, their *raison d'être* was less shocking. The studies are intended to be in the more traditional Chopinesque sense of the piano etude: the extension of an idea in a myriad of physically technical and developmental ways. Ives's prodigious talent as an organist, not to mention as an athlete, led to his interest in the capabilities of the piano, and, in turn, to the treacherous physical demands that characterize his piano works. The short pieces for piano feature many novel tasks for the performer: taking quick chromatic runs and spacing them throughout the keyboard with an octave added between the half-steps; sounding out drum rolls and other complex rhythmic patterns in the bass notes of the piano; voicing independent layers of sound, sometimes involving different keys with each hand. Kirkpatrick coined such technical tinkerings "Yankee ingenuity."

In 1934, Ives transported all of his manuscripts that had survived his various moves, two church fires, and the last several years of photostating, transcribing, and printing, to what would prove to be his final home in West Redding, CT. His nephew, Richard, and neighbor, William Ryder, helped him set up a storeroom in a converted barn, sorting the loose

leaves into drawers of a large built-in cabinet—stacks that Ives shuffled and reshuffled many times subsequently.

The works on this CD were bound into a book that Ives gave to John Kirkpatrick in 1938. Ives had numbered and renumbered them with the idea of a book of twenty-seven works, presumably in the vein of Chopin's twenty-seven Etudes. Some pieces may have been given a number out of sequence based upon Ives's recollection of other pieces which he felt belonged to the collection but which had been misplaced and which remain lost to this day. This truncated collection, falling short of twenty-seven complete works, ensured that the final editorial numbering (especially for works with more than one numerical/titular designation) would be somewhat random, and that a manifest overarching scheme for the whole set of pieces would ultimately be elusive. (It is not just with the short piano works that Ives's tendency to revise, rename, and reorder caused later confusion).

Kirkpatrick gave the title "Songbook B" to the volume Ives gave him because the works at hand were sketched on the verso of a collection originally bound in 1898 as an early attempt by Ives to produce a volume of songs. (Almost all of the works were for piano solo, the *Chromâtimelôdtune No. 27*, being for piano plus brass). Kirkpatrick referred to the book as a "housecleaning," just as Ives had described his independently published *114 Songs* in 1922. Both collections present a variety of styles and musical experiences in the vein of a diary of experiences written over time. In 1949, Henry Cowell edited three works from "Songbook B": *Three-Page Sonata*, *Some Southpaw Pitching*, and *The Anti-Abolitionist Riots in the 1830s and 1840s*.

A year after Charles Ives's death in 1954, Harmony donated all of his manuscripts to Yale. John Kirkpatrick added the piano volume and was appointed curator of the entire collection. Kirkpatrick's meticulous work on the large collection of manuscripts, including its loose sheets and unidentified sketches, led to his important catalogue of the complete works issued by Yale in 1960. He also published an edition of Ives's writing, *Memos* (1973), and constantly retooled work on a definitive edition of the *Concord Sonata* (which he had premiered in 1939). It is not hard to understand that, while getting these large jobs in order, he tabled the careful editing of the shorter piano works for future years.

In 1967, pianist Alan Mandel was the first to consider the complete canon of the piano pieces, transcribing and playing straight off the manuscript virtually all of the pages contained in "Songbook B." They were premiered in a Town Hall recital and recorded on an impressive and invaluable VoxBox. Other musicians and scholars followed with occasional contributions, a helpful one to the present compact disc being Noel Magee's master's thesis for Indiana University in 1966, "The Short Piano Works of Charles Ives."

In the 1980s, Kirkpatrick slowly began to edit and publish critical editions of these works, carefully considering all of Ives's sketches, possible patches, and directions as to the arrangement of materials. Kirkpatrick illuminated the meaningfulness of works such as *Study No. 20* (published 1981) and *Study No. 22* (1973) both of which revealed a tight organization of form. While preparing these editions, Kirkpatrick attempted to piece together works not hitherto seen as belonging together. The *Set of Five Take-Offs* (prepared in the 1970s and 80s, and published in 1991), taken as a whole, reveal an overarching form and tonal scheme that clearly unites its five pieces. Similarly, Kirkpatrick began to unite a set of studies which he believed might have been the

start of a third piano sonata. He handed his tentative realizations to me in 1989, two years before his death, and suggested I complete them. I concluded that the set resulted in a smaller grouping: *Study No. 15*, marked by Ives as [movement] I, and *Study No. 16/19*, marked by Ives as [movement] II. I followed Kirkpatrick's hunch that *Study No. 23* (published 1990) belonged to the set as a third movement. Of the works on this CD, *Studies Nos. 6, 7, and 8* were edited for the recording by me (DLB), proceeding from the work initiated by Alan Mandel in the 60s. *Study No. 15* and *Study No. 16/19* were edited by DLB, in collaboration with John Kirkpatrick (JK). *Study No. 9* is from a new critical edition by Keith Ward (still unpublished) with additions and changes by DLB; *Studies Nos. 20, 21, 22, 23, Set of Five Take-Offs, Three-Page Sonata*, and Ruggles's *Evocations* were edited by JK, with occasional changes and revisions added by DLB based on the original sketches and Ives's own recorded performances and improvisations (available on *Ives Plays Ives*, CRI CD 810).

### Three-Page Sonata (1905)

Composed during a vacation with his good friends and eventual in-laws the Twitchells at Saranac Lake, NY, this portentous work ushered in an era of great change in Ives's life. It was completed on the verge of the decade of his greatest creativity, his courtship to Harmony, and his successful insurance agency partnership with Julian Myrick. Musically, the short sonata is ahead of its time, most notably in its tantalizing use of what would more formally come to be known as a twelve-tone row. The work (so titled because its original sketch contained three pages) begins with a rumination on the tones spelled in the name B-A-C-H (B in German notation is B-flat; H is B-natural). There are bugle calls and faint quotes of America. The quiet second movement contains the works' clearest tune: a quote of a piece by Carl Foeppel (Bach's teacher), originally entitled *Ever of Thee* ("Ever of thee I'm fondly dreaming"). Could thoughts of Harmony be far away? The finale is a march in the unpretentious key of C major that begins with a twelve-tone row and is interrupted by snippets of rag-time and other triumphant crashes along its route.

### Studies Nos. 6–9 (1907–1909)

The four studies in this set seem to belong together, written as they were on overlapping leaves of the sketchbook. Each is an exploration of multiple-layered sonic worlds.

*Study No. 6* is a veiled setting of the hymn tune *Bethany* ("Nearer my God to Thee"—Sarah Flower Adams/Lowell Mason, 1859) and shares the hazy atmosphere of Ives's *The Housatonic at Stockbridge*. Ives is quite specific in the score as to which parts are accompaniment and which voices lead, and he offers suggestions for gradually accumulating them, beginning and ending the work with repetitions of specific parts.

*Study No. 7* also was intended to accumulate parts on repeat, beginning as a simple tune in G Major, with a rolling left-hand accompaniment. The few and far between notes of the tune suggest only peaks and highlights, leaving the melody's connective tissue unstated. (A similar technique appears in Ives's song "Romanzo di Central Park" (1900) in which only the rhyming words of a stanza are set). Soon the music in G Major is joined by some in G-flat Major and merrily rolls along until the two tonalities cross-fertilize to a point of saturation, eventually returning quietly to their individual tonal centers.

*Study No. 8* may have been intended as a trio, or middle section, to *Study No. 7*, though it appears Ives did not pursue

this idea, and instead let the piece stand on its own. It is a rollicking scherzo, anchored throughout by a play on the simple progression, Doh-Sol-Fah-Doh, here made ecstatic by voicing the clearly consonant underpinnings (D, A, G chords) with upper-tiered voicings that add up to a twelve-tone crash. Between each chordal landmark are presto pianistic adventures which appear like sections of an extremely chromatic toccata.

*Study No. 9, The Anti-Abolitionist Riots in the 1830s and 1840s* is the best known piece of the set, though the least complete of the original manuscripts. The piece is a description of a real event, the Boston anti-abolitionist riots, and also an homage to Ives's grandfather, George White Ives. Though remembered as an abolitionist, George W. was also a business man who, in the mid 1800s, chartered territorial rights to a railroad line that was later affected by the turmoil of protests. In the piece, one can hear gun-pops, the rumble of steel wheels, and the familiar "fate motif" of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

### Study No. 15, No. 16/19 (1907–1909; 1920s), No. 23 (1912–1914; 1920s)

These three studies were possibly intended as a set: at the bottom of the page marked with a Roman numeral I (*Study No. 15*), there begins a [Movement] II (*Study No. 16*). It was Kirkpatrick who detected the links that unite the fragments of *No. 16* and *No. 19* so that together they form the second movement. Both of those sketches, in turn, resembled a patch for *Study No. 23*, leading Kirkpatrick to surmise that *No. 23*, with its finale-like exuberance, was the third of a musical triptych.

In the dauntingly boisterous *Study No. 15*, there is a series of numbers which Ives jotted over many of the triads in the left hand and right hand parts. (The score practically resembles an actuarial table from Ives's insurance work!) The numbers seem to indicate that Ives was intending for all twenty-four major and minor triads to be used simultaneously through different orderings for each hand (though the numbered triads within a given passage usually peter out after twenty-one or so). Thus, the piece is bitonal to an extreme. Despite such rigid compositional technique, the work's in-your-face clamor alternates with soaring melodic lines. The manuscript contains notes in the margin that tweak fun of what seems to be a dead-serious piece. For example: "First movement—hard work! then [referring to II] something nice to eat—only pianists who are there with both feet can play."

*Study No. 16/19* is as tender as *No. 15* is gruff. It opens and closes on a rumination of the tune *There's No Place Like Home*, and contains a wrenchingly heartfelt setting of the hymn *Even Me* ("Lord, I hear of showers of blessing/ Thou art scattering full and free: Showers, the thirsty land refreshing: Let some drops fall on me/ Even me, Even me, Let some drops fall on me."—Elizabeth Codner/William Bradbury, 1872).

*Study No. 23* is a romp through tunes popular in Ives's day: *Hello, My Baby*, *Beautiful Dreamer*, and *Roll out the Barrel*. Some of its music also appears in the orchestral works *Emerson Overture* (1907), and *Scherzo: Over the Pavements* (1906–1913). In addition to the lively rhythmic counterpoint, the fist-smashes, and the tempo markings (such as "Prestoto con blasta"), there are passages of depth and stretching expressivity. The critical edition and my performance were based, in part, on Ives's recorded improvisations of the piece.

### Set of Five Take-Offs (1906–1907)

The *Set of Five Take-Offs* were collected and named by Kirkpatrick because they each take as points of departure

some real person or thing. In *The Seen and Unseen or Sweet and Tough*, Ives exhibits nostalgia for an old-fashioned tune, yet wields a craggy determination to stretch the ears' acceptance of dissonance and odd phrase lengths. The play between background and foreground music, the alternation of consonant and dissonant bars, and the clichéd phrases with unexpected sparks of dissonance, all make for a mischievous opener for the set. *Rough and Ready or The Jumping Frog*, is a take-off on the Mark Twain story, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*. It is riotous in its use of rhythmic play in perpetual motion, with the thumbs and pinkies plunking out lead-footed note splats throughout. The music tumbles forward, yet culminates in heroic tunes, including a quote from the Finale to Ives's First Symphony (1895–98) and one from a college football song. Ultimately, it is a triumphant treatment of a comical tale. The emotional center of the set is the humorous yet hauntingly beautiful *Song without (good) Words*, Ives's caricatured idea of meltingly pretty music by Mendelssohn. Its harmonically unresolved ending proves to be an upbeat to the start of *Scene Episode*. Here, the exalted hymn, *O Happy Day*, rises out of the domestic calm of the portrayed "scene." The entire piece is a paraphrase of a section found in the First Piano Sonata (1901–1911), where it is sandwiched between outbursts of ragtime. The set's coda, *Bad Resolutions and a Good One*, juxtaposes sugary sweet suspensions with a passage of no-holds-barred dissonance. That it was penned on the eve of New Year's Day, 1907 belies the little number's sincere musical, as well as personal, resolutions.

**Study No. 20 (1920s), No. 22 (1909), No. 21 "Some South-Paw Pitching" (1917)**

Ives grew up with marches and composed them throughout his life, so it follows that one of the major studies is in that genre. Practically a one-man (marching) band, *Study No. 20* is highly canonic and rhythmically adventurous, as indicated by Ives's subtitle, "even durations—unequally divided." The form of the work is reminiscent of a game Charlie's father, George, used to play with marching bands from neighboring towns. (Out on the village green, one band came from one direction while a second band advanced from the opposite direction. With each playing different music, the inevitable clash resulted in great fun for all). *Study No. 20* unfolds in four sections of differing character that approach the trio, and then recede in reverse order (A-B-C-D-Trio-D-C-B-A). The trio itself is a humorous mix-up of popular tunes, most notably a ragtime favorite, *Alexander*, which is interrupted by what Ives called "whip chords." (These are 12-tone chords of piled-up triads spanning several octaves and sounded by a quick hand over hand technique). The boisterous middle section is marked in the ink score as "Trioh!" and has the following memo attached to its two mock-prosaic introductory bars: "These two nice measures are to star lady bird pleasers Josy Hoffman, Howold Bower, Ossy Gab, Sery Rachnotmanenough—Rollo boys!—play it pretty and make an easier living!" (Rollo was the comic book goody two-shoes character who always did exactly as he was told). Along its rambunctious course, the piece includes polyphonic counterpoint which exchanges places in the hands (the music in the treble becomes the music in the bass and vice-versa), massive chords that change shape in mirror-like fashion, and the pitting of differently metered phrases against one another.

In *Study No. 22*, Ives's starting point is a playful setting of a strict twelve-tone row. Yet he has such fun with the twelve-tone excursions and ends them so abruptly that one forgets the rigor of their design. The piece ends as it began in a quiet

reflective moment—at which point Ives wrote in the score, "Adagio (as a remark after the row!)."

In *Study No. 21, Some South-Paw Pitching*, the title suggests much about the music. In the most obvious sense, it refers to left-handed baseball pitchers, and thus to the athletic nature of the piece, particularly in the left hand. On another level, the "South" refers to the Confederacy (an idea suggested by Stuart Feder), the "Paw" as in "maw and paw" (notably Charlie's "paw" who led a Union army band), and "Pitching" as in the pitches of an army bugle, or the pitching of dirt over the graves of Confederate soldiers. When considered in the context of the tunes quoted, most clearly Stephen Foster's *Massa's in de Cold Ground* and Lowell Mason's *Joy to the World*, one can sense the pride of Yankee victory in the Civil War, and the resulting emancipation of southern slaves.

**Carl Ruggles: Evocations: Four Chants for Piano (1937–1954)**

It seems appropriate to close out this CD with this work of Carl Ruggles, Ives's comrade in contemporary music. Ruggles and Ives, and their wives Charlotte and Harmony, were close friends for the last two decades of Ives's life. Finding validation in each other's rough-hewn musical and philosophical attitudes, the composers took pleasure in calling each other the greatest modern composer. Both cantankerous Yankees born in the 1870s, each sensed the weight of his own musical vision. They also shared a rugged individualism and a feeling of safety in isolation and reclusion.

Ruggles was also an accomplished and prolific visual artist and his paintings and music share an aesthetic: the manifestation of a vivid idea that branches up and out into a highly developed climax. In his music specifically there is a dense chromaticism, use of tone rows, and a unique method of transforming melodic notes into sustained harmonies. With these traits, the *Evocations* are indicative of Ruggles's handful of other finished works (thirteen in all).

Ruggles's chants are dedicated to people central to his life and career: his sponsor, Harriette Miller; pianist John Kirkpatrick; his wife, Charlotte; and Charles Ives. The fourth chant is so personal and mystical in nature that the score leaves the dedication to Ives to be tacitly understood. The score includes notes which are held silently on the piano, so that they catch the resonance of other tones, as if by magic. From the distance of time, it can be heard as a memorial to Ives.

—Donald Berman

The *Boston Globe* has acclaimed **Donald Berman** as an "essential" and "first-rate" pianist. He is a winner of the 1991 Schubert International Competition, Germany, and has been a performer and director of the Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble since 1987. Among his many solo appearances are the "Masters of Tomorrow" series in Germany, French Cultural Services (Fauré Sesquicentennial), Tanglewood, Jordan Hall, Emmanuel Music (Schubert Series), Fromm Foundation (concerts of music by Imbrie and Babbitt), Goethe Institute, Monadnock Music, Boston Aria Guild, NPR's "A Note to You", and with the Martha Graham and Mark Morris Dance companies. He has premiered works for Nuclassix, Real Art Ways, Alea III, Core Ensemble, and on his series, "Pioneers and Premieres", recitals and lecture-demonstrations which include commissioned solo works. He developed the "Firstworks" program for First Night Boston, an annual concert featuring a commission, culminating in a work by John Harbison at the millennium. In 1997 and 1998 he was a visiting artist fellow at the American Academy in Rome. He is a League-ISCN recitalist for the 1999 New York season.

His recording of solo and chamber music by Arthur Levering can also be heard on CRI CD 812.

Berman teaches at Tufts University and in Cambridge, where he is a tutor at Pforzheimer House, Harvard University, and has served as teaching assistant to Leonard Shure. He received a Masters with Distinction from the New England

Conservatory in 1988. He was an exclusive student of John Kirkpatrick and holds a BA from Wesleyan University where he studied with George Barth. Originally from White Plains, NY, Berman was raised pianistically by Mildred Victor.

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## Production Notes

Produced and Engineered by Joel Gordon

Executive Producer: Joseph Ridings Dalton

Recording location: Paine Hall, Harvard University

Piano Technician: Laurie Cote

Cover Photo: Studio Doors, Charles Ives's house, West Redding, Connecticut © Lee Friedlander, used by permission, The Charles Ives Papers, Yale University Music Library.

Back cover: John Kirkpatrick by Daisy Kirkpatrick; Donald Berman by Louis Fabian Bachrach.

Publishing: *Three-Page Sonata*: Mercury Music, 1975; *Study #20*: Merion Music 1981; *Study #21*: Mercury Music 1975; *Study #22*: Merion Music 1973; *Study #23*: Merion Music 1990. All editions sponsored by the Charles Ives Society, Inc. and edited by John Kirkpatrick. All other editions used for the recording are unpublished as credited in liner notes. *Evocations, Four Chants for Piano*: American Music Edition, Carl Fisher, Inc. 1956

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Executive Director: Joseph R. Dalton.

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