

November 7, 2019 at 8:00pm | **Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall**
Pre-concert discussion between Gabriel Crouch and Andrew Lovett at 7:00pm

STEFAN JACKIW VIOLIN

JEREMY DENK PIANO

with members of the **Princeton University Glee Club**,
Gabriel Crouch Director

CHARLES IVES

(1874–1954)

Violin Sonata No. 4 “Children’s Day at the Camp Meeting”

Allegro
Largo
Allegro

Stites / Sweney
Lowry / Hawks

“Beulah Land”
“I Need Thee Every Hour”

NO PAUSE

CHARLES IVES

Violin Sonata No. 3

Adagio; Andante; Allegretto; Adagio
Allegro
Adagio cantabile

INTERMISSION

Barthélémon /
Robinson

“Autumn” (“Mighty God, While Angels Bless Thee”)

CHARLES IVES

Violin Sonata No. 2

Autumn
In the Barn
The Revival

Root / Nelson
Root
Kiallmark / Woodworth
Mason / Coghill

“The Shining Shore” (“My Days Are Gliding Swiftly By”)
“Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! The Boys Are Marching”
“The Old Oaken Bucket”
“Work Song” (“Work, for the Night is Coming”)

NO PAUSE

CHARLES IVES

Violin Sonata No. 1

Andante
Largo cantabile
Allegro

The hymn and song verses heard in this program were edited and arranged by Wilbur Pauley.

Why Ives?

By Jeremy Denk

WHY IVES?

Because Ives is one of the original American originals. Because he's a Founding Father of American "classical music"—whatever that strange term means. But most importantly, I love to play Ives because he's after things that most composers don't dare to attempt, and so he gets to emotional places and states that other composers can't find.

WHY THESE FOUR VIOLIN SONATAS?

Because they feel like a cycle. Mahler's first four Symphonies are similar—they're called the "Wunderhorn" Symphonies because their melodies come from a book of songs Mahler composed called *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*—"the youth's magic horn." Mahler's quoting himself, accessing a childlike wonder by reusing earlier material and weaving together big stories from small, folk-like tunes.

In the violin sonatas, Ives keeps trying to deal with beloved musical ideas—hymns, marches, ragtimes—the raw material of his childhood in New England, often just in snippets, like the fragments of memory. Lots of these ideas recur between the violin sonatas, like he's trying to deal with them again, trying to find the perfect way to access the complex memory.

Also, these four sonatas create a portrait of the composer—in four different states. (Ives is nothing if not schizophrenic.). The 3rd sonata is Ives trying to fit in (as best he can) with the broader European late Romantic music, by writing a serious "Romantic" sonata. But his oddities and tics can't help interrupting, transforming the Romantic narrative into something more unsettling. The 4th sonata is more like charming uncle Ives: a miniaturist and satirist, a childlike storyteller. The 2nd and 1st sonatas represent what you might call "mature" Ives, less compromising, less comprehensible, going after the most ambitious and emotionally fraught climaxes—especially the 1st, which is the wildest, and (to my ear) the greatest.

WHY THE SINGING?

I hate to say it, but here it goes: Ives is the first postmodern composer. So much of his work is in quotation marks, even the original stuff. The violinist will be playing along, and you will think, “Yes, that’s a gospel singer improvising on a hymn,” or the pianist will be banging away, and you’ll think, “That’s a barroom pianist playing a ragtime in a dive somewhere.” Everything has the sense of referring to other music, other musicians, music about music, music about the joys and emotional possibilities of music.

“I love to play Ives because he’s after things that most composers don’t dare to attempt... he gets to emotional places that other composers can’t find.”
—Jeremy Denk

Luckily, we still recognize many of the tunes Ives uses. But many of them are no longer popular: the musical world has changed in the last hundred and twenty years. So some of the “footnotes” in Ives have gone missing. We’re giving you those footnotes—live!—supplying the missing quotes. But also, we hope you find something emotionally satisfying about hearing the basic tunes, and then launching off into Ives’ crazy, dissonant musical world—entirely based (paradoxically) on these simplistic materials. I find it very moving to travel from the devotional hymns (the neighborhood choir, a barbershop quartet) into Ives’ music, which is also devotional in its way, devoted to the highest, usually unattainable ideals. The sense of travel and transformation is important—rehearing, shifting perspectives. Plus, at the simplest level, it’s always worthwhile to hear the human voice, and then aspire to that.

WHAT MAKES THESE VIOLIN SONATAS SO HARD?

Ives, to a fault, hated to do things the “normal” way. He loved to turn everything on its head, backwards, or upside down. A “normal” composer would start with some tune and then begin to do developments or variations, letting you as listener perceive “something is happening to the tune (which I recognize).” But Ives loves to start with variations and improvisations, gradually giving way to the tune at the end, so that you only *understand the piece in retrospect*. That poses unique challenges for the performer and the listener, obviously. One thing you have to do when you play Ives is

try to untangle what is an improvisation on what: that is, to get in Ives' head a little bit. Pretend you're a madman genius riffing on a hymn or a ragtime—then, hopefully, maybe, you as the audience can understand the whole thing too, the way the hymns are constantly being changed, made funnier or more solemn, shifted into various personalities and styles—all setting up a final epiphany. The pacing to these climaxes is crucial. When Ives finally lets the hymn loose, it has to feel like a discovery.

One of the most complex and difficult passages in the four violin sonatas happens in the second movement of the 1st sonata.

The movement begins with a sentimental tune from Civil War days, "The Old Oaken Bucket" ("how dear to my heart are the scenes of the childhood"). All is well at the beginning. The violin starts with the tune, and gradually there are gorgeous modulations: the melody begins to drift, even nostalgia is becoming a memory.

But then, the trouble starts! The pianist is in a duple rhythm, while the violin remains in the waltz time of "The Old Oaken Bucket." The piano's rhythm becomes loudly and clearly a march, while the violin keeps quietly obsessing over the waltz in all kinds of elaborate, chromatic ways. The pianist is markedly

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much louder than the violin and may appear to be something of a jerk. Against all odds, this weird passage keeps going and going: the violin's almost inaudible frenzy, begging to be heard, and the marching pianist rising heedlessly. At last, the two instruments meet for a fanfare: but the window of clarity is brief. A second Civil War tune appears, clotted with sour notes, half-remembered, blurred as if through tears. It's stunning, how much emotional connotation Ives packs into this passage: the boys marching to war and the family at home lamenting their loss; the blur and submersion of memory; tender nostalgia juxtaposed against violent separation. Each technical element of the music is matched to its expressive end, but the passage is still almost impossible to pull off.

AGAIN, WHY DID IVES USE SO MANY HYMNS?

In the last movement of the 1st sonata (the last thing on this program), much of the music is about the hymn "Work, for the Night is Coming:"

Work, for the night is coming,
Work thro' the morning hours...
Work, for the night is coming,
When man's work is done.

which Ives transforms into a rambling and endlessly regenerating march, as if the whole town was stomping about singing, encouraging each other to be productive Protestants. Towards the end of the movement, the march becomes even more chaotic (an important sign

in Ives that things are about to explain themselves) and then resolves into an incredible climax in F major. The violin belts out the hymn (work, work, work!) while the pianist plays bells clanging, surrounding the hymn with color and dissonance. Yes, at last, it all makes sense, a glorious end to a glorious day, and as the smoke clears, something emerges which we haven't heard before: the pianist plays a soft gospel cadence, something achingly familiar to us from the American popular tradition. It's a cliché, almost. But somehow after all the welter of music, after all the veering marches and cross accents and different kinds of music colliding, it seems to contain and calm everything. The chaos of Ives' world laid the stage for this one quiet cadence to speak, and to feel new. Or in other words, Ives wrote whole impossible works, so that we could hear one thing well.

About the Program

By Lucy Caplan, © 2019

The past was something of an obsession for Charles Ives. He looked backward with a combination of flinty seriousness and rose-colored nostalgia. He was in search of raw material to fuel his radical musical ambitions; but he also sought confirmation that the good old days had, indeed, been better. His four violin sonatas, all written between 1902 and 1916, exemplify this multifaceted preoccupation with the past. At some moments, complexity verges on cacophony as snippets of nineteenth-century tunes mutate into something chaotic and weird. Hymns struggle to be heard under clanging dissonances, and rhythmic swerves disorient the ear. Yet intact, tuneful melodies also surface in these scores—quaint, simple, beautiful.

This evening's program brings that historical material to the fore by juxtaposing Ives's sonatas with some of the songs that inspired them. These songs, so ingrained in Ives' memory, are not necessarily familiar to twenty-first century listeners. Hearing them in full, whether for the first or the thousandth time, illuminates both the composer's radicalism and, perhaps more surprisingly, his conservatism. Is Ives's idiosyncratic reimagining of these songs an act of modernist brilliance? Or is such dedication to music of the past reactionary, a way of clinging to the familiar in a rapidly transforming modern world? Such questions might be, to borrow an Ivesian phrase, unanswered—or even unanswerable. But they gesture toward this music's fundamental combination of

familiarity and inscrutability, the sound of a new century hurtling toward the future.

CHARLES IVES (1874–1954)

Violin Sonata No. 4, S. 63

Ives had his young nephew in mind when he wrote his Violin Sonata No. 4. His goal, he later explained, was to write "a sonata which Moss White [then about twelve years old] could play." If Ives was writing for his nephew, however, he was also writing for himself. The sonata is subtitled "Children's Day at the Camp Meeting," and Ives called it a "reflection, remembrance, expression, etc." of the hymns that were sung at children's services during his Connecticut childhood. The sonata begins simply, with violinist and pianist marching forward more or less in sync. In the solemn second movement, a haunting rendition of the hymn "Jesus Loves Me" is set against a rustling piano. The third movement returns to a cheerier tone, then fades quickly to a close.

Ives deemed his original effort only a partial success: "The first movement kept to the idea fairly well, but the second got way away from it, and the third got about in between. Moss White certainly couldn't play the last two, and neither could his teacher." Even if the sonata was too difficult for Ives's nephew, however, it is now among the composer's most popular chamber works, a favorite of performers and audiences alike.

EDGAR PAGE STITES (1836–1921)

JOHN SWENEY (1837–1899)

“Beulah Land” (1876)

A mainstay at camp meetings during Ives’s childhood, “Beulah Land” is a song of hope and promise. Its title refers to a beautiful place that is a vantage point from which one can see heaven. Ives returned often to the song, incorporating it into his First Symphony and First String Quartet as well as the Third Violin Sonata.

ROBERT LOWRY (1826–1899)

ANNIE HAWKS (1836–1918)

“I Need Thee Every Hour” (1872)

Annie Hawks, a New York-based poet and hymnist, collaborated frequently with her pastor, the songwriter Robert Lowry. Hawks wrote the lyrics to “I Need Thee Every Hour” after experiencing an epiphany about her sense of closeness to God: in her words, “the hymn was wafted out to the world on the wings of love and joy.”

CHARLES IVES

Violin Sonata No. 3, S. 62

Emerging out of an impressionistic haze, the first movement of Ives’s Third Violin Sonata is rhapsodic yet coherent. Its meandering protagonist is brought back home by the chords of a much-loved hymn. In the second movement, he goes astray again, zigzagging through a thicket of thorny rhythms and strange

harmonies. The third movement returns to the expansive pace and melodic beauty of the first. It exemplifies Ives’s use of “cumulative form,” a structure in which several variations appear before the appearance of the initial theme that inspired them.

Ives would despise the complimentary tone of that description. In his writings, he disparaged this sonata, dismissing it as a “kind of reversion,” “not much good,” “an attempt to please the soft-ears,” and – with the casual sexism that peppers much of his writing – “a weak sister.” The contemporary listener can determine for herself, however, whether this music’s sincerity and grace are a sign of weakness or the source of its strength.

FRANÇOIS BARTHÉLÉMON

(1741–1808)

ROBERT ROBINSON (1735–1790)

“Autumn” (1797)

The hymn “Autumn” has an international backstory: the text, authored by a British man, was set to music by a French-born composer working in England, who adapted it from a piece called “A Pathetic Scotch Ballad” that was also printed with the title “A Spanish Melody.” The hymn crossed the Atlantic in the nineteenth century, becoming part of the soundscape of Ives’s childhood.

CHARLES IVES

Violin Sonata No. 2, S. 61

Ives bestowed programmatic titles upon the three movements of his Second Violin Sonata. The first movement, “Autumn,” is playfully misleading: it refers not to the season, but to the hymn of that name. Following that movement’s back-and-forth between ethereal melody and punchy passagework, the second movement is located “In the Barn,” where an ebullient mixture of fiddle tunes and ragtime syncopations awaits. The final movement, “The Revival,” evokes a religious meeting, alternating between tranquil song and joyful fervor. This is Ives at his most earnest and nostalgic. Tellingly, the composer made fewer written comments about this violin sonata than about any of his others; this music spoke for itself.

GEORGE ROOT (1820–1895)

DAVID NELSON (1793–1844)

“The Shining Shore” (1855)

Among the best-known hymns by acclaimed Civil War-era songwriter George F. Root, “Shining Shore” joyfully imagines the Promised Land. In his memoir about caring for wounded soldiers, Walt Whitman recalled a rendition of the song by a makeshift chorus of nurses and soldiers: “Of course it was not such a performance as the great soloists at the New York opera house take a hand in, yet I am not sure but I receiv’d as much pleasure under the circumstances, sitting there, as I have had from the

best Italian compositions, express’d by world-famous performers.”

GEORGE ROOT

“Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! The Boys Are Marching” (1864)

Published in 1864, “Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!” was intended to bring hope to Union prisoners of war. It is narrated by a prisoner, who assures his compatriots that they will soon be liberated. The song was an enormous success, selling more than 150,000 copies in its first year.

GEORGE KIALLMARK (1781–1835)

SAMUEL WOODWORTH (1784–1842)

“The Old Oaken Bucket” (1826)

A sentimental staple sung by generations of American schoolchildren, “The Old Oaken Bucket” offers a dreamy evocation of bygone days. Not only does the song itself idealize youth, but it also appeared frequently in music catalogs published during Ives’s childhood—making it a perfect candidate for the composer’s nostalgic use.

LOWELL MASON (1792–1872)

ANNA COGHILL (1836–1907)

“Work Song” (1864)

The poet Anna Coghill wrote the text of this song when she was only 18 years old; ten years later, the celebrated composer and music educator Lowell Mason set it to music. Ives associated the song with “the hymns and the actions at the farmers’ camp meeting,” which he described as “inciting them to ‘work for the night is coming.’”

CHARLES IVES

Violin Sonata No. 1, S. 60

Free-speech enthusiasts might find something to admire in this sonata: Ives described its first movement as “a kind of reflection and remembrance of the peoples’ outdoor gatherings in which men got up and said what they thought, regardless of consequences.” Those thoughts tumble forth in a dense, muddled manner here, and their structure can be difficult to follow. The second movement begins on a more peaceful note, returns to the agitated mood of the first, and ultimately ends serenely. In the final movement—which centers upon the “Work Song” and another Lowell

Mason hymn, “Watchman”—musical complexity stands in striking contrast to the hymns’ straightforward message. Ives later expressed doubt about this sonata, too, calling it “in part a kind slump backward, though in some places it is quite the opposite.” But Ives is not always the most persuasive critic of his own work, and while he is free to make that claim, other listeners are also free to disagree with harsh self-assessment.

Lucy Caplan holds a Ph.D. in American Studies and African American Studies from Yale University. The recipient of the Rubin Prize for Music Criticism, she teaches at Harvard College and writes frequently about music, history, and culture.

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JEREMY DENK Piano

Jeremy Denk is a winner of a MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship, and the Avery Fisher Prize, and was recently elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Denk returns frequently to Carnegie Hall and in recent seasons has appeared with the Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, and Cleveland Orchestra, as well as on tour with Academy of St Martin in the Fields, and at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the BBC Proms.

In 2019-20, Denk plays J.S. Bach’s *Well-Tempered Klavier* Book 1, culminating in performances at Lincoln Center in New York City and the Barbican in London. He returns to Carnegie Hall to perform Beethoven’s *Choral Fantasy* with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and makes his solo debut at the Royal Festival Hall with the London Philharmonic performing Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 4. He also makes his solo recital debut at the Boulez Saal in Berlin performing works by Bach, György Ligeti, Berg, and Schumann, and returns to the Piano aux Jacobins Festival

in France, as well as London's Wigmore Hall, ahead of his residency there in the 2020-21 season. Further performances abroad include his debut with the Bournemouth Symphony, and his returns to the City of Birmingham Symphony, and the Piano Espoo Festival in Finland, where he will perform concerti by Bach, Mozart and Elliott Carter.

Denk continues to tour the US extensively, including performances of John Adams' *Must the Devil Have all the Good Tunes?* with the St. Louis Symphony, and the Seattle Symphony, and play-conducting Schumann's piano concerto to open the season with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, with whom he continues to collaborate as Artistic Partner. Other collaborations include performances of Schubert *Winterreise* with Eric Owens, the complete Ives Violin Sonatas with Stefan Jackiw, and performances of the Beethoven Triple Concerto with his longtime musical partners, violinist Joshua Bell and cellist Steven Isserlis.

Denk is also known for his original and insightful writing on music, which Alex Ross (*The New Yorker*) praises for its "arresting sensitivity and wit." He wrote the libretto for a comic opera presented by Carnegie Hall, Cal Performances, and the Aspen Festival, and his writing has appeared in *The New Yorker*, the *New Republic*, *The Guardian*, and on the front page of *The New York Times Book Review*. One of his *New Yorker* contributions, "Every Good Boy Does Fine," forms the basis of a book for future publication by Random House in the US, and Macmillan in the UK.

Denk's recording of the *Goldberg Variations* for Nonesuch Records reached No. 1 on the Billboard Classical Charts. His recording of Beethoven Op. 111 paired with Ligeti Études was named one of the best discs of the year by the *New Yorker*, NPR, and the *Washington Post*, and his account of the Beethoven sonata was selected by BBC Radio 3's *Building a Library* as the best available version recorded on modern piano. Denk has a long-standing attachment to the music of American visionary Charles Ives, and his recording of Ives' two piano sonatas also featured in many "best of the year" lists. His recording c. 1300–c. 2000 was released in 2018 with music ranging from Guillaume de Machaut, Gilles Binchois, and Carlo Gesualdo to Stockhausen, Ligeti and Glass.

Jeremy Denk graduated from Oberlin College, Indiana University, and The Juilliard School. He lives in New York City, and his website and blog are at jeremydenk.net. This concert marks Jeremy Denk's Princeton University Concerts debut.



STEFAN JACKIW Violin

Violinist Stefan Jackiw has appeared as soloist with the Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco symphony orchestras, among others. This season, he will reunite with Juraj Valcuha to make his debut with the Konzerthaus Orchestra Berlin performing Korngold Violin Concerto. He also returns to the Bournemouth Symphony with Kirill Karabits, the Helsinki Philharmonic with Hans Graf, and the RTÉ National Symphony in Dublin with Leonard Slatkin. Other highlights include performances with the San Diego Symphony and Rafael Payare, the Indianapolis and Baltimore Symphonies with David Danzmayr, and the Omaha Symphony. In recital, Stefan continues touring the complete Ives Sonatas with Jeremy Denk, with whom he has recorded the sonatas for future release on Nonesuch Records. He appears on tour with harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani, exploring works for violin and harpsichord and featuring a new commission by Lester St. Louis, and continues to perform alongside pianist Conrad Tao and cellist Jay Campbell as part of the JCT Trio. The trio performed on PUC's Up Close Series as part of PUC's 125th anniversary season.

Highlights of recent seasons include his debut with the Cleveland Orchestra and Juraj Valcuha, performances of Prokofiev second violin concerto at Carnegie Hall, and performances with the Rotterdam Philharmonic under Yannick Nézet-Séguin. He has also toured Korea, playing chamber music with violinist Gidon Kremer and Kremerata Baltica. In Australia, Stefan toured with the Australian Chamber Orchestra play-directing Mendelssohn. Recital highlights have included his performances of the complete Ives violin Sonatas with Jeremy Denk at Tanglewood and Boston's Jordan Hall, and multiple performances of the complete Brahms violin sonatas, which he has recorded for Sony. He also recently recorded the Beethoven Triple concerto with pianist Inon Barnatan, cellist Alisa Weilerstein, conductor Alan Gilbert and Academy St. Martin in the Fields.

Jackiw has performed in numerous important festivals and concert series, including the Aspen Music Festival, Ravinia Festival, Caramoor International Music Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, New York's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Philharmonie de Paris, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, the Celebrity Series of Boston, and the Washington Performing Arts Society. As a chamber musician, he has collaborated with such artists as Jeremy Denk, cellists Steven Isserlis and Yo-Yo Ma, and violinist Gil Shaham. At the opening night of Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall in New York City, Jackiw was the only young artist invited to perform, playing alongside such artists as pianists Emanuel Ax, Evgeny Kissin, James Levine, and soprano Renée Fleming.

Born to physicist parents of Korean and German descent, Stefan Jackiw began playing the violin at the age of four. His teachers have included Zinaida Gilels, Michèle Auclair, and Donald Weilerstein. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University, as well as an Artist Diploma from the New England Conservatory, and is the recipient of a prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant. He lives in New York City. This is Stefan's third appearance on the Princeton University Concerts series. In 2015 he stepped in for violinist Isabelle Faust after she was forced to cancel due to illness. His recital was a highlight of the 2014-15 season.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY GLEE CLUB

Gabriel Crouch, Music Director

Ulysses S. Grant was president, Verdi's Requiem was premiered, and the Battle of Little Big Horn was still two years in the future when the Princeton University Glee Club was founded in 1874 by Andrew Fleming West, the first Dean of the Graduate College. In its early years, the group consisted of a few young men and was run entirely by its student members, but in 1907, Charles E. Burnham became the first of a long line of eminent professional musicians to lead the Glee Club. Since then, the ensemble has established itself as the largest choral body on Princeton's campus, and has distinguished itself nationally and overseas. Today the Glee Club performs frequently on Princeton's campus, enjoying the wonderful acoustic and aesthetic of Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall. Led by Gabriel Crouch, Director of Choral Activities and Senior Lecturer in Music at Princeton University, the choir embraces a vast array of repertoire. The spectrum of Glee Club members is perhaps even broader: undergraduate and graduate students, scientists and poets, philosophers and economists—all walks of academic life are represented, knit together by their belief in the nobility and joy of singing.

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