

CHARLES IVES

Born: October 29, 1874 in Danbury, Connecticut
Died: May 19, 1954 in New York, New York



Charles Ives was a truly original American composer. Although he played piano, organ, cornet, violin and drums, he never made a living as a composer or a musician. In fact, he ran a very successful insurance agency by day. Ives actually invented the concept of estate planning, and at night he would hurry home to write music. He also was a huge baseball fan and played many sports such as baseball, football, track and tennis. He often tried to recreate the everyday sounds he heard both in the city and the country.

Ives loved to borrow material from other people such as old hymns, cowboy songs, Christmas carols, and spirituals - even the theme from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, and use it in new ways. He was famous for composing music for solo piano, orchestra, chamber music, and songs for voice.

VARIATIONS ON AMERICA

Composed: 1891

Originally composed for organ, this piece modifies the selection *America* with a variety of witty variations. The piece was premiered at an 1891 Fourth of July Celebration. William Schumann orchestrated the piece for full orchestra in 1964. Charles wrote this series of variations when he was only 17.