

IVES'S CONDUCTOR'S NOTE TO MOVEMENT II

[The original "A 'Conductor's Note' to the second movement of a fourth symphony by Charles E. Ives" was published after the printed score had been distributed. Henry Cowell's *New Music Edition* included it as an insert to its January 1929 issue (vol. 2, no. 2). Unfortunately, through numerous oversights, those notes did not correlate to all of the asterisks that Ives had placed in the printed score. In addition, in his manuscripts Ives gives other important information about the performance of this music. The following expanded and edited notes use Ives's memos and marginalia from his *Fourth Symphony* manuscripts to collect information that might otherwise clutter the score pages. Ives's original notes (lightly edited) are shown here in **boldface**. Notes within square brackets offer editorial speculation where Ives left no directives. Ives's use of page numbers for reference location has been altered here to cite the relevant measure number(s). — James B. Sinclair]

In the following, reference is made to the asterisks on the pages in the printed score. The letters (in a circle) over some of the parts indicate the degree of prominence [proximity] these may take.*

1 Bassoon: **Bassoon I may be interchanged, as indicated, with a Tenor or Baritone Saxophone.** [It is not always clear what Ives wanted in the optional use of Saxophone(s). The 1929 published score does not give a complete picture of Ives's manuscript memos. The present Ives Society edition fills in with information from Ives's markings on his copyist's score. It does not seem advisable to use Saxophone throughout (no source indicates a Saxophone substitution for mm. 1–6 and 173–79). There are passages where a Bassoon would handle the soft dynamic marking much better (e.g. mm. 165 & 173–79).]

1 Cornets & Trumpets: **It is rather essential that Trumpets be not substituted for the Cornets. The number of the trumpets depends to a certain extent upon the size of the orchestra. At least three are required; at Sec. 31 [m. 198], 34 [m. 211], and from Sec. 38 [m. 225] on, more are advisable.**

1 Bells & Triangle: **The Triangle may be taken by the High Bell player, though a separate player is advisable. It is assumed that the Low and High Bells present a continuous scale and of like quality.**

1 Timpani: **The Timpani are tuned (and not changed) as low and as high as will give suitable resonance—preferably a little under or over an octave, but not an exact octave.**

1 Light Gong: **The Light Gong may be a small cymbal (hung and fairly taut).**

1(–5) Violins: [One player per note; very distant; harmonics where possible (resultant pitch notated here).]

1(–5) Bass: **The recitative of the Bases controls this page. (If there are [only] a few Bases, some of the Cellos may play with them [8va]).**

3(–5) Solo Piano: **The Solo Piano from the third measure to the end of the page may not be played in the exact time relation indicated by the measure divisions, but there is rather a brief accelerando and crescendo and an easing down toward [the] end of [the] Bass recitative. It is better not to have**

the Orchestra Piano[s] in the front of the orchestra nor next to the Solo Piano.

5 Bass: [The *glissando* at the end of the measure goes through the hold, blurring into m. 6 *agitato*. It is to be played] slowly, in major thirds, falling through whole-tones.

7(–15) Solo Piano: **Omit Solo Piano in [mm. 7–8] if a quarter-tone piano is not available; also omit it in [mm. 10, 12, 14–15] for the same reason.**

19 Cello: Div. in two or three parts ad lib. throughout unless double stops happen to lie right and are on the accents.

38(–42) Clarinet I: As a kind of distant chord; G sharp not held very much.

38(–42) Piano I & Violins: **If few strings, Primo Piano may be omitted to Sec. 8 [m. 43]. It is preferable to have no double-stopping here. Throughout the movement there is little double-stopping indicated. The players may use it at their discretion, to better bring out the accent and rhythm, especially if the string orchestra is not large.** Only the lower Violin II goes up to D natural, others hold their notes.

38(–42) Viola: Played as a kind of distant chord, not holding F sharp much.

40–41 Piano I: Perhaps better to omit these two measures and repeat first two measures [38–39], unless there be a good body of strings.

43(–51): **The instruments are divided here into two separate orchestras; the lower continuing the preceding *adagio*, while the upper, including woodwind, brass, tympani and both pianos, breaks suddenly in, canceling the sound of the lower orchestra (unless its players can be placed near enough to the majority of listeners or the upper orchestra removed sufficiently so that it may, in a way, be heard through the lower). Both groups may**

keep in the time relation indicated on this page, but at the beginning of the next page [m. 45] the upper orchestra begins to play gradually faster and faster until the “collapse” indicated [at m. 51] but which will occur sooner—perhaps towards the end of [the previous] page [m. 49]. Care must be taken that the lower orchestra in no way increases its tempo or intensity through here. After the upper orchestra has stopped, the lower must sound quietly on as if it had been oblivious of the disturbance. During this passage it may be advisable to have one of the players in the upper orchestra act as a separate conductor.

50 Piccolo: [Glissando quickly through approximately the full range of the instrument.]

55(–58): This passage is an illustration of a matter discussed in the footnote [below]. If the instruments here could be grouped and placed apart from each other and at varying distances from the audience, the rhythms would better stand out in their perspective.

75(–106) Clarinets: Legato, except short and sharp on *sf* notes.

107(–111) Piano II: L.H. may take even beat if Trumpets are strong.

108 Piano I: L.H. may be omitted if Solo Piano and Clarinet are enough, or upper notes in R.H. may be doubled in octaves.

114 Tm & Gng: [Ives may have unintentionally interrupted the patterns here (m. 114 begins new page in MS source M). To maintain the pattern, the Tm and Gng should each play their *ossias*.]

115(–122) Piano II: Better to let Piano II play Bassoon part, and omit $\frac{5}{16}$ figure which Solo Piano must play distinctly.

123–132 Trombones: **Two tenor Trombones may reinforce the Trumpets here, though this may not be necessary if the orchestra is not large.**

126 Snare Drum: **If the Snare-drum player takes the unit of the Bass-drum as his basic pulse, it will be easier to play.**

136 Viola: These chords are more of a blow than tones—double stops (ad lib.) will help here and in similar places.

141(–145) Percussion & Bassoons [& Tenor Sax]: **All the Percussion with the Saxophones or Bassoons play in Sec. 21 as a single and independent group.** If phrased in 5's [it is] clearer in playing. **There may be a slight ritardando as well as a decrescendo [of the Main Orchestra] in this passage which may extend into Sec. 22** (if so, they [i.e. Sax & Perc] wait at end of [m. 145] ... and begin at conductor's beat at [Sec.] 22 [m.

146]). **If so, one of their number acting as leader for these few measures will simplify the playing.**

142 Extra Violin II: This does not slow down with rest of orchestra, but continues same time or faster, *ppp*, as though in distance—better to have [Ex.Vn] in back [of section] or off-stage.

149 Low Bells: **If the Low Bell be used here, the player should be near the Strings, especially to the Second Violins playing the extra part. It is but to clarify in an unobtrusive way the lower notes of the extra string parts at the beginning of each group of five.**

149 Extra Violin II & Extra Viola: **The number of players for the extra string parts in the following pages depends to a great extent on the piano tone and the acoustics of the hall.**

153 Strings: **The pizzicato may be omitted if the percussion instruments here give a sufficient sense of rising pitch.**

156 Extra Violin II & Viola [& Low Bells]: [These continue as before, unaffected by the tempo change.]

156 Solo Piano: A take-off here on polite salon music. This is sweetie sweet stuff—violet water, pink teas in Vanity Fair social life—Chaminade, Chopin at their worst—make it sound mushy.

161 Flutes: Let two violins (*sordini*) play this if Flutes stand out too much. Upper part lighter than lower.

161(–164) Low Bells, Extra Violin & Extra Viola: **The Extra Strings and Bell may continue a little farther and gradually stop after the rhythms in the *più mosso* get going.**

161(–164) Snare Drum: Bass drum, *ppp*, with a slight cymbal ring, may be used [with snare drum] in the next four measures.

167 Solo Piano: Solo Piano predominates here.

173 High Bells: The High Bells start on this off-beat and play almost extempore until the end of [m. 180].

180 High Bells: **The High Bell may not take the time literally in this measure, but rather as a short *ritardando*.**

186(–190) Gong: Do not use small cymbal here unless the common beat needs reinforcing—or use it lightly at the beginning of the $\frac{7}{16}$ rhythm if that seems to need it.

194(–197) Brass & Percussion: Care must be taken [here] to make the plain after-beats (♩) stand out; the rest are but shadings of sound. All other parts must fit into the time of the tune (Piano I-R.H. and Violins) which has a kind of lilt (sometimes)—i.e., it's elastic, having the effect of a dance tune—but isn't. **The Brass may be omitted**

from here to the measure before Sec. 31 [m. 197] if the Pianos stand out sufficiently and if the string orchestra is not large.

194 High Bells: Celesta better than Bells here.

197 Trumpets & Trombones: [no memos: perhaps that the Tps take over the lead here.]

198(–207) Piano II: The phrases in L.H. (of six notes) should be brought out if possible.

198 Snare Drum: **The Snare-drum will take his phrases more easily by listening carefully for the accented beat of the Indian Drum (the third of the three-beat group) as indicated by the dotted lines** [connecting the Sn.Dr & I.Dr staves—seen in the Critical Edition only].

198 Bass: More of a blow here than a note; any middle notes that suit the bowing may be used here. Viola, Cello, & Basses are used almost as drums.

200(–207) Cornet: **The Cornet part in this Sec. 31 should cut its way down through the mass. Probably Mr. Theremin's Ether-organ could be used effectively here.**

203 Piano II: Secondo Piano may start with this rhythm at #31 [m. 198] and work up. [A realization of this is provided in the part.]

207: **The “hold” just before Sec. 33 ceases the moment the *largo* is started, but not before. The Extra Violin starting on this hold may play ahead with its phrase and continue it “impromptu” until Sec. 34 [i.e., through m. 210]. This part should be scarcely audible. In Secs. 33, 36, & 37 it is better, if possible, to have Celesta and Solo Violin at a distance or off the stage.**

210: **There may be a slight “hold” before Sec. 34—preferably not.**

211 Piccolo & Flutes: R.H. part in Piano I may be omitted if Piccolo, Flute I & Clarinet I are strong enough (then Piano I may double the L.H.).

216 Strings: **The quarter-tone notes in the Strings at Sec. 35 may not be taken exactly; a slight rise and fall in pitch, less than a semi-tone, will do. The last chord in all parts, except those playing at Sec. 36, should stop just as the *largo* begins and not before. (In this and similar places, what is wanted, in a way, is the suggestion of the feeling one may have when entering a church; and as the street noises are suddenly shut out, the organ is heard quietly playing an old hymn that has ministered in**

the church for generations.) Distribute the double-stopping according to the number of strings.

217 Vn1 (solo): Not too prominent—as a song; use *sord.* [if not at a distance (note for m. 207 indicates it best for solo violin to be at a distance or offstage). Accents show shifted phrasing (not to be played heavily).]

217 Ex.Vn2: From here on the one or two violins are almost independent—perhaps about five quarter beats in this $\frac{6}{8}$.

218, 222 Piano I: **The Primo Piano plays here only if there is no quarter-tone piano available.**

225 Trumpets: **More trumpets than four from here on would be better, especially if the orchestra is quite large.**

226(–228?) Piano I: R.H. notes may be omitted and L.H. doubled [at the octave?] if Trumpet and Solo Piano are strong.

226 Violin I: Kind of a swarm (or use glissando piano). Part of the Violins can play up high to get a kind of harmonic cluster, heard just faintly.

232(–236) Violin I: **The First Violins throughout Sec. 39 may play an approximate *glissando* resembling harmonics, in the last part of the measures.**

232 Cello: As a drum; *divisi* or double stop, ad lib.

234(–235) Solo Piano: This L.H. may be used in the two preceding measures.

238 High Bells: High Bells may use top octave if Low Bells [i.e. low range of High Bells] do not reach low enough & Triangle is then omitted.

245(–246) Piano I: These two measures are awkward and difficult, and Piano I may play just R.H., omit L.H., and [instead] reinforce Piano II-L.H. If very fast, the groups of three notes may be rolled as one chord just after each beat.

247(–251) Cornets: **From the fourth beat of [m. 247], to Sec. 44 [i.e. to the end of Sec. 43], it is well, especially if the orchestra is large, to have some of the Trumpets play with the Cornets.**

250(–253) Piano I: **Primo Piano continues the phrase faster and faster until at Sec. 45 it is twice as fast as it was the first time played (beginning at end of [m. 250]).**

265 Low Bell & Solo Piano: **The Low Bell and the B natural in the Solo Piano sound on after the last notes of the Violas.**

★ To give the various parts in their intended relations is, at times, as conductors and players know, more difficult than it may seem to the casual listener. After a certain point it is a matter which seems to pass beyond the control of any conductor or player into the field of acoustics. In this connection, a distribution of instruments or group of instruments or an arrangement of them at varying distances from the audience is a matter of some interest, as is also the consideration as to the extent it may be advisable and practicable to devise plans in any combination of over two players so that the distance sounds shall travel, from the sounding body to the listener's ear, may be a favorable element in interpretation. It is difficult to reproduce the sounds and feeling that distance gives to sound wholly by reducing or increasing the number of instruments or by varying their intensities. A brass band playing *pianissimo* across the street is a different sounding thing than the same band playing the same piece *forte*, a block or so away. Experiments, even on a limited scale, as when a conductor separates a chorus from the orchestra or places a choir off the stage or in a remote part of the hall, seem to indicate that there are possibilities in this matter that may benefit the presentation of music, not only from the standpoint of clarifying the harmonic, rhythmic, thematic material, etc., but of bringing the inner content to a deeper realization (assuming for argument sake, that there is an inner content). Thoreau found a deeper import even in the symphonies of the Concord church bell when its sounds were rarified through the distant air. "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 eye by the azure tint it imparts."

A horn over a lake gives a quality of sound and feeling that is hard to produce in any other way. It has been asked if the radio might not help in this matter. But it functions in a different way. It has little of the ethereal quality. It is but a photographing process which seems only to hand over the foreground or parts of it in a clump.

The writer remembers hearing, when a boy, the music of a band in which the players were arranged in two or three groups around the town square. The main group in the bandstand at the center usually played the main themes, while the others, from the neighboring roofs and verandas, played the variations, refrains, etc. The piece remembered was a kind of paraphrase of "Jerusalem the Golden," a rather elaborate tone poem for those days. The bandmaster told of a man who, living nearer the variations, insisted that they were the real music and it was more beautiful to hear the hymn come sifting through them than the other way around. Others, walking around the square, were surprised at the different and interesting

effects they got as they changed position. It was said also that many thought the music lost in effect when the piece was played by the band altogether, though, I think, the town vote was about even. The writer remembers, as a deep impression, the echo parts from the roofs played by a chorus of violins and voices.

Somewhat similar effects may be obtained indoors by partially enclosing the sounding body. For instance, in a piece of music which is based in its rhythmic side principally on a primary and wider rhythmic phrases and a secondary one of shorter span, played mostly simultaneously—the first by a grand piano in a larger room which opens into a smaller one in which there is an upright piano playing the secondary part, if the listener stands in the larger room about equi-distant from both pianos, but not in a direct line between them (the door between the rooms being partially closed), the contrasting rhythms will be more readily felt by the listener than if the pianos be in the same room. The above suggests something in the way of listening that may have a bearing on the interpretation of certain kinds of music. In the illustration above, the listener may choose which of these two rhythms he wishes to hold in his mind as primal. If it is the shorter spaced one and played after the longer has had prominence and the listener stands in the room with the piano playing this, the music may react in a different way—not enough to change its character, but enough to show possibilities in this way of listening. As the eye, in looking at a view, may focus on the sky, clouds or distant outlines, yet sense the color and form of the foreground, and then, by bringing the eye to the foreground, sense the distant outlines and color, so, in some similar way can the listener choose to arrange in his mind the relation of the rhythmic, harmonic and other material. In other words, in music the ear may play a rôle similar to the eye in the above instance.

Some method similar to that of the enclosed parts of a pipe organ played by the choir or swell manuals might be adopted in some way for an orchestra. That similar plans, as suggested, have been tried by conductors and musicians is quite certain, but the writer knows only of the ways mentioned in the instances above.

When one tries to use an analogy between the arts as an illustration, especially of some technical matter, he is liable to get in wrong. But the general aim of the plans under discussion is to bring various parts of the music to the ear in their relation, as the perspective of a picture brings to the eye. As the distant hills, in a landscape, row upon row, grow gradually into the horizon, so there may be something corresponding to this in the presentation of music. Music seems too often all foreground even if played by a master of dynamics.

Among the physical difficulties to a satisfactory working out are those of retarded sounds that may affect the rhythmic plan unfavorably and of the cancellation of

sounds as far as some of the players are concerned, though the audience in general may better hear the various groups in their intended relation. Another difficulty, probably less serious, is suggested by the occasional impression in hearing sounds from a distance, that the pitch is changed to some extent. That pitch is not changed by the distance a sound travels unless the sounding body is moving at a high velocity is an axiom of acoustics; that is, the number of the vibrations of the fundamental is constant; but the effect does not always sound so—at least to the writer—perhaps because, as the overtones become less acute, the pitch seems to sag a little. There are difficulties transcending those of acoustics. The cost of trial rehearsals, duplicate players, locations or halls suitably arranged and acoustically favorable, is very high nowadays. The plan will seem to some little more than another way of increasing the already heavy burdens of conductors, orchestras and their management. In fact, most of the remarks in this rather long footnote are somewhat out of place in a “Conductor’s Note.” It is far from the intention to have these taken as an issuance of instructions. The writer has but taken the opportunity to get some things out of his system that have been there for some time; whether the process will help or not help music presentation is another matter. Nor does anything that has been said mean to imply that music which might be benefitted by a certain arrangement, etc., of players, cannot be given acceptably well in the usual way, with sufficient rehearsals and care in preparation.

The matter of placement is only one of the many things which, if properly examined, might strengthen the means and functions of interpretation, etc. The means to examine seem more lacking than the will to examine. Money may travel faster than sound in some directions—but not in the direction of musical experimentation or extension. If only one one-hundredth part of the funds that are expended in this country for the elaborate production of opera, spectacular or otherwise, or of the money invested in soft-headed movies with their music resultants, or in the manufacture of artless substitutes for the soul of man, putting many a true artist in straightened circumstances—if only a small part of these funds could be directed to more of the unsensational but important fields of musical activity, music in general would be the gainer.

Most of the research and other work of extending and distributing the premises, either by the presentation of new works or any other ways, has been done by societies and individuals against trying obstacles. Organizations like the “Pro-Musica” Society, with its chapters throughout this and foreign countries, the “League of Composers,” the “Friends of Music” (in its work of uncovering neglected premises of the past), and similar societies in the cities of this and other countries, are working with little or no aid from the larger institutions and foundations who could well afford to help them in their cause. The same

may be said of individual workers,—writers, lecturers and artists who take upon themselves unremunerative subjects and unremunerative programs for the cause, or, at least for one of the causes they believe in—the pianist and teacher who, failing to interest any of the larger piano companies in building a quarter-tone piano for the sake of further study in that field, after a hard day’s work in the conservatory, takes off his coat and builds the piano with his own hands,—the self-effacing singing teacher who, by her genius, character and unconscious influence, puts a new note of radiance into the life of a shop-girl,—the open-minded editor of musical literature and the courageous and unselfish editor of new music quarterlies who choose their subject-matter with the commercial eye closed.

Individual creative work is probably more harmed than helped by artificial stimulants, as contests, prizes, commissions and subsidies; but some material aid in better organizing the medium through which the work is done and interpreted will be of some benefit to music as a whole. In his interesting treatise, “Music: A Science and an Art” (Alfred A. Knopf, New York), Professor Redfield says: “The States of Europe have reached sufficient maturity to recognize the wisdom of extending governmental support to musical institutions. America is yet too young, perhaps, to take this point of view; possibly the attitude of American governments toward music is one inherent in democracy.” Although in some instances, if there be especially able men at the head as there are in the Music Division of the Library of Congress, the government’s aid may be a favorable influence, yet, it is probably better in this country, for a while at least, to keep music out of politics; it might become softened up as some tenets of morality and personal conduct seem to have been by the contact. It may be better to trust the people and the individual. They, after enough opportunity to examine the premises and so get at the underlying facts, whether in a fundamental matter of music or of economics, may work out their own problems better than statesmanlike politicians can for them. “As compared with the endowment of an additional musical foundation providing for the instruction of interpretive artists” of which he says, “there is in America an over-supply”—though probably only an over-supply of a certain kind—“the endowment of a school for musical research should commend itself.” “If . . . the musical philanthropist establishes an institution for conductors and composers or for the improvement of musical instruments and music itself, through research in the fundamentals of music, then he is entering a field where the harvest is great and the laborers few. Every one who contributes according to his ability to the improvement in the world of music, is choosing probably one of the most prolific fields for the expenditure of his efforts, for human betterment.” But the voice born the day after Adam and every day since, keeps on chanting, there’s nothing in all this—there’s nothing in

art to-day worth developing, worth reading, worth looking at or listening to—art is dead”—and somebody says to Rollo, “How do you get that way?”

In closing, and to go still further afield, it may be suggested that in any music based to some extent on more than one or two rhythmic, melodic, harmonic schemes, the hearer has a rather active part to play. Conductors, players and composers, as a rule, do the best they can and for that reason get more out of music and, incidentally, more out of life—though, perhaps, not more in their pockets. Many hearers do the same, but there is a type of auditor who will not meet the performers halfway by projecting himself, as it were, into the premises as best he can, and who will furnish nothing more than a ticket and a receptive inertia which may be induced by predilections or static ear habits—a condition perhaps accounting for the fact that some who consider themselves unmusical will get the “gist of” and sometimes get “all set up” by many modern pieces, which some of those who call themselves musical (this is not saying they’re not)—probably because of long acquaintance solely with certain consonances, single tonalities, monorhythms, formal progressions and structure—do not like. Some hearers of the latter type seem to require, pretty constantly, something, desirable at times, which may be called a kind of ear-easing and under a limited prescription; if they get it, they put the music down as beautiful; if they don’t get

it, they put it down and out—to them it is bad, ugly or “awful from beginning to end.” It may or may not be all of this, but whatever it is will not be for the reason given by the man who doesn’t listen to what he hears.

“Nature cannot be so easily disposed of,” says Emerson. “All of the virtues are not final”—neither are the vices.

The hope of all music—of the future, of the past, to say nothing of the present—will not lie with the partialist who raves about an ultra-modern opera (if there is such a thing), but despises Schubert, or with the party man who viciously takes the opposite assumption. Nor will it lie in any cult or any idiom or in any artist or any composer. “All things in their variety are of one essence and are limited only by themselves.” The future of music may not lie entirely with music itself, but rather in the way it makes itself a part with—in the way it encourages and extends, rather than limits, the aspirations and ideals of the people—the finer things that humanity does and dreams of. Or to put it the other way around, what music is and is to be may lie somewhere in the belief of an unknown philosopher of a half century ago, who said:

“How can there be any bad music? All music is from heaven. If there is anything bad in it, I put it there—by my implications and limitations. Nature builds the mountains and meadows and man puts in the fences and labels.”

He may have been nearer right than we think.

C. E. I