

Charles Ives - Orchestral works (Tilson-Thomas, Ozawa) [1977]

Written by bluesever

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1. *Three Places in New England: I. The 'St. Gaudens' In Boston Common (Col. Shaw And His Colored Regiment)* 2. *Three Places in New England: II. Putnam's Camp, Redding, Connecticut* 3. *Three Places in New England: III. The Housatonic At Stockbridge* 4. *Symphony No. 4: 1. Prelude: Maestoso* 5. *2. Allegretto* 6. *3. Fugue: Andante moderato* 7. *4. Very Slowly - Largo maestoso* 8. *Central Park In The Dark* Boston Symphony Orchestra Tanglewood Festival Chorus (4-7) Michel Tilson Thomas - conductor (1-3) Seiji Ozawa - conductor (4-8)

On most days, this is my favorite recording of the work for full orchestra. Tilson Thomas' conducting is idiomatic, and the Boston Symphony sounds incredible. The opening section in particular is very dignified, very grand. The second section is also strong, although perhaps it is not as rhythmically incisive as Sinclair's. The final section is a powerful evocation. While the "layers" of sound are less distinct than in Sinclair's recording, Tilson Thomas makes up for it with a tremendous sense of atmosphere and grandeur. This recording is available with three different couplings. The most recent release of this recording is as a part of the DG "Originals" series. It also includes "Sun Treader," an outstanding recording of Ruggles' seminal work, and Piston's Second Symphony, which I have never heard. The "Twentieth Century Classics" release includes Ives' Symphony No. 4 conducted by Seiji Ozawa. Ozawa's reading of the symphony is not a top recommendation--although I don't find it as bad as some others have suggested. --- musicweb-international.com

This is fantastic music -- amazing that Ives composed it from 1903 to 1916, as it utilizes high/low juxtapositions, pastiche and "sampling" that would become important only in the postmodern art of the '70s and after! "Three Places" was recorded in 1970, and the 4th Symphony and "Central Park" in 1976. DG's remastering is superb, and the sound is all you

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could want.

I see it as unfortunate that Ives' image is that of quaint Americana. While he marched to his own drummer, and allied himself with self-identified "ultramodernists" only because they were the only ones to champion him, Ives' vision was truly a modern one, and his music should have a place of honor alongside the more influential Second Vienna School. While he personally was a product of small town New England, his music was anything but -- at least not the music on this disc!

"Symphony No. 4" is a masterpiece, from the mystical prelude, to the infamous second movement's wild dissonance and pandemonium, to a somber fugue, and finally a chorus with tolling bells in the truly transcendental finale. I can't yet compare this to other recordings, but Ozawa and Boston are magnificent! --- Autonomieus, amazon.com

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