

Charles Ives - Four Sonatas (2011)

Wpisany przez bluesever

Poniedziałek, 11 Czerwiec 2012 18:52 - Zmieniony Poniedziałek, 13 Styczeń 2014 20:59

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Sonata for Violin and Piano No.1, S.60 (K. 2C4) 01 I. *Andante - Allegro vivace* 02 II. *Largo cantabile* 03 III. *Allegro* Sonata for Violin

and Piano No.2, S.61 (K. 2C5)

04 I. *Autumn. Adagio maestoso - Allegro moderato* 05 II. *In the Barn. Presto - Allegro moderato* 06 III. *The Revival. Largo - Allegretto*

Sonata for Violin and Piano No.3, S.62 (K. 2C6)

07 I. *Adagio (Verse I) - Andante (Verse II) - Allegretto (Verse III) - Adagio (Last Verse)* 08 II. *Allegro* 09 III. *Adagio (Cantabile) - Andante con spirito*

Sonata for Violin and Piano No.4 "Children's Day At The Camp Meeting", S.63 (K. 2C3)

10 I. *Allegro* 11 II. *Largo - Allegro (con slugarocko)* 12 III. *Allegro* Total time - 66:16

Hilary Hahn - violin Valentina Lisitsa – piano

“Welcome to the Stone, and to the Ives geek-out party,” the violinist Hilary Hahn announced brightly on Monday at the Stone, a tiny, boxy East Village new-music laboratory operated by the saxophonist and composer John Zorn. Ms. Hahn, a performer who draws sizable throngs to prominent auditoriums, was making a point by celebrating her admirable new CD, “Charles Ives: Four Sonatas,” of Ives’s violin sonatas at Mr. Zorn’s space, which seats fewer than 100.

The Stone, Ms. Hahn explained during the first of the evening’s two sets, is a hotbed for a kind of unbridled, borderless creative expression that felt true to Ives’s spirit. And as persuasive as her work in the standard repertory has been, you got the sense that this undertaking reflected something personal and dear.

Creative expression is clearly on Ms. Hahn’s mind; she is amassing a collection of 27 encore pieces commissioned from a broad range of contemporary composers. (Nor can her own quirkiness be disregarded: how many other artists of similar stature have posted videos in which

they interview a fish via Skype?)

Thus, instead of a conventional affair at Carnegie Hall, or even a chic night at Le Poisson Rouge, Ms. Hahn gathered her flock into a cramped brick space on an unseasonably warm evening. Before she played a note of Ives, she asked the audience to sing hymns under the supervision of Jan Swafford, an esteemed Ives biographer.

With Cory Smythe, a versatile pianist and composer whose own recent album, "Pluripotent," shows a healthy disregard for genre boundaries, Ms. Hahn accompanied Mr. Swafford's impromptu choir in renditions of "In the Sweet By and By" and "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night." The point was twofold: to illuminate some of the sources Ives quoted in his sonatas and to show the kind of joyfully unkempt community music-making from which Ives took inspiration.

As the congregants fanned themselves with paper hymnals, Ms. Hahn and Mr. Smythe gave a handsomely characterized account of Ives's Sonata No. 1. Two more hymns, "Shall We Gather at the River?" and "Nearer My God to Thee," prefaced a frolicsome account of Ives's more playful Sonata No. 4. The performance concluded, and Ms. Hahn convened Mr. Smythe, Mr. Swafford and Mr. Zorn for a brief but insightful discussion touching on stylistic open-mindedness, creative liberty and the paramount importance of community. Finally, noting that Ives's birthday is approaching next Thursday, Ms. Hahn rallied her volunteer chorale once more for a hearty rendition of "Happy Birthday." ---Steve Smith, nytimes.com

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