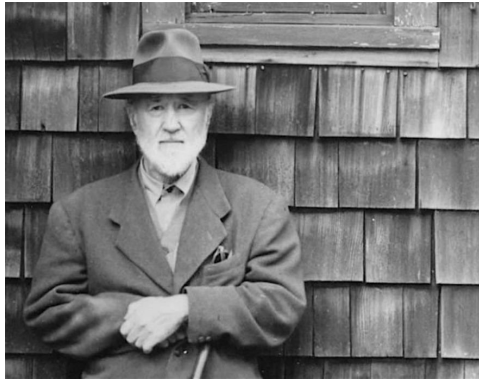


# Music We'd Like to Hear

Friday 3 September 2021

## Charles Ives

*Three Quarter-Tone Pieces* (c. 1924)



Of the three short pieces that I've composed with the use of quarter-tones, the first and last were originally intended for a quarter-tone piano, two keyboards, and for one player.

The first movement, *Largo*, is primarily diatonic, using quarter-tones as passing-notes or suspensions and quarter-tone chords as extensions or variants, though the middle section is of quarter-tone chord extensions.

The second movement, *Allegro*, for two pianos, one tuned a quarter-tone sharp, is mostly made of rhythms contrasted or "split" between the two pianos. From a pure quarter-tone harmonic stand-point it doesn't amount to much.

The last is a "Chorale" played by two pianos as it stands written for one piano; there is very little doubling. It attempts to work along [...] pure quarter-tone harmonic lines [...] and is based principally on a primary and secondary chord. A *cantus firmus*, taken by the upper voice in the coda, is made of a phrase in quarter-tones going to one in half-tones and ending in whole tones, while the harmonic plan remains throughout on a quarter-tone basis.

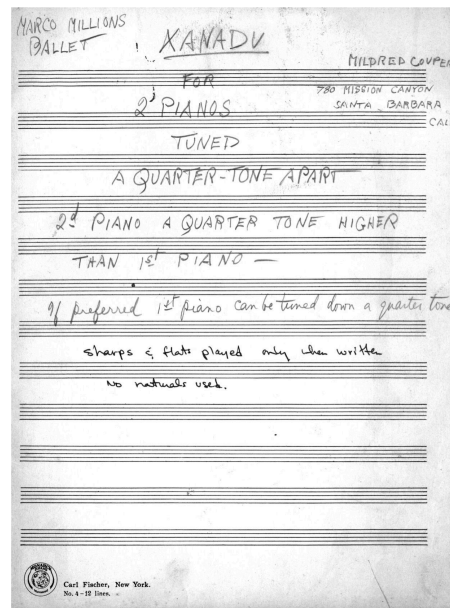
Charles Ives

## Mildred Couper

*Xanadu* (1930)

- i. *Largo*
- ii. *Andante*
- iii. *Scherzando*
- iv. *Allegro*
- v. *Allegro Agitato*

*Xanadu* was first performed as incidental music to a production of Eugene O'Neill's *Marco Millions* in the Lobero Theatre, Santa Barbara. Aside from the two pianos, the full score also features various percussion instruments (side drum, Chinese gongs, cymbals and wood blocks). Couper's two-piano music is described as a 'ballet' in the score, and presumably functioned as an overture or entr'acte for costumed dancers. This is the first of Mildred Couper's many quarter-tone pieces, and in it she prioritises the sonorous potential of the two pianos playing simultaneously. Couper reportedly wrote at two keyboards, making choices through listening and experimenting.



## Georg Friedrich Haas

*Trois Hommages: Hommage No. 2 à Josef Matthias Hauer* (1982)

The *Trois Hommages* were composed for a lone pianist playing two pianos tuned a quarter-tone apart. All three works seem to focus on continuity, process and subtle difference. The first work is dedicated to Ligeti, the third to Steve Reich. The centre movement, which we will hear this evening, is dedicated to the 12-tone pioneer JM Hauer, who created highly integrated canonic music containing various symmetries and fractal-like structurings. The Haas work begins with shifting arpeggios of five notes, and extra notes are gradually added until the eight-note groupings of the final section.

[interval]

## Clarence Barlow

*Çoğluotobüsişletmesi* (1975-79)

*Çoğluotobüsişletmesi* (approximate pronunciation: cholu-otobüs-ishletmessy) is a polyphonic, 30-minute piece for piano from 1978. In this piece, up to four sound layers run parallel to each other in time, most often at different speeds. Other musical qualities are also simultaneously deployed in varying forms, both relation to pitch (pointillistic, melodic, chordal) and rhythm (legato or syncopated). Furthermore the music can vary between consonant and dissonant, tonal and atonal, metric and ametric, dense and sparse, loud and soft, etc. Yet the work achieves an organic, almost seamless unity through targeted computer programming. The composition itself was preceded by scientific studies on legendary psychoacoustic research by Plomp and Levelt on the phenomenon of consonance and dissonance. In their 1965 work, these two scientists demonstrated that one's perception of the roughness of a sound is a quality originating in the cochlea in the inner ear. For the piece, I also worked out an algebraic treatment of the phenomenon of tonality, one based on material from which intervals originate: prime numbers (which are indivisible) and their products. This treatment enabled me to develop a usable method for increasing and decreasing the intensity of tonal fields. A numeric and prosodic study of metre derived from these numbers was a further prerequisite before I



wrote the piece. This research later reappeared in my computer programme *Autobusk*. Conspicuous in *Çoğluotobüsişletmesi* is the use of so-called microintervals: the notes B, D, E, and F-sharp are tuned a quarter-tone lower in each and every octave. This was inspired by the music of the Middle East: the work's first sketches were made in 1975 during a bus trip in eastern Anatolia, an experience which also gave rise to the title. This very virtuosic work is for piano, 2 or more hands. When played on 2 hands, the work's polyphonic concept is best represented, viz. that of enormous multi-layeredness, capable of being assimilated and executed by a single human intelligence. By contrast, the 2006 version for 8 hands on 4 identically retuned grand pianos offers a most imposing sound picture, both voluminous and transparent. In this latter version, each pianist is assigned one of the four sound layers.

Clarence Barlow, translated by Dan Albertson

Note: Tonight's version is based on the version for four pianos with some parts pre-recorded.

**MARK KNOOP**  
**SIWAN RHYS**  
**piano and keyboards**

**Charles Edward Ives** (1874–1954) was an American modernist composer, one of the first American composers of international renown. His music was largely ignored during his early life, and many of his works went unperformed for many years. Later in life, the quality of his music was publicly recognised, and he came to be regarded as an "American original". He was also among the first composers to engage in a systematic program of experimental music, with musical techniques including polytonality, polyrhythm, tone clusters, aleatory elements, and quarter tones. His experimentation foreshadowed many musical innovations that were later more widely adopted during the 20th century. Hence, he is often regarded as the leading American composer of art music of the 20th century. Sources of Ives's tonal imagery included hymn tunes and traditional songs; he also incorporated melodies of the town band at holiday parade, the fiddlers at Saturday night dances, patriotic songs, sentimental parlour ballads, and the melodies of Stephen Foster.

**Mildred Cooper Couper** (1887–1974), prominent American composer and pianist, was one of the first musicians to experiment with quarter-tone music. She was based in Santa Barbara, California, but her music and influence were felt around the world. Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina; educated in Italy, France and Germany; married to American expatriate artist Richard Hamilton Couper; she spent her early married life in Rome, Italy. She studied in Europe at the Karlsruhe Baden Conservatory, and later with Moszkowski, Sgambati, and Cortot. At the outbreak of World War One she and her family fled to New York City. There she taught piano for nine years at the David Mannes Music School. She moved to California in 1927. Establishing a studio in Santa Barbara she started her quarter-tone experiments, the first work in this medium being a ballet, "Xanadu," which was performed in the production of Eugene O'Neill's "Marco Millions" in the Lobero Theatre. Besides quarter-tone works, Mildred Couper wrote incidental music for plays, and also a Dance-Opera "And on Earth Peace", to words by Scottish-Argentine artist Malcolm Thurburn. She was a friend of Harry Partch and Henry Eichheim, and worked with gamelan and microtonal music. Active in Santa Barbara as President of the Music Society, she was one of the founders of the Music Academy

of the West, first female faculty member of the Cate School in Carpinteria, worked with Henry Cowell, and often had concerts in her large Spanish-styled home with singers Nadia Boulanger, Lotte Lehmann, Madeleine De Bryas, cellist Gregor Piatigorsky, and the Paganini Quartet with Henri Temianka, Charles Libove, David Schwarz, and Lucien Laporte.

**Georg Friedrich Haas** (born 16 August 1953 in Graz, Austria) is an Austrian composer. Haas grew up in Tschagguns, Vorarlberg and studied composition with Gösta Neuwirth and Iván Erőd and piano with Doris Wolf at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, Austria. Since 1978, he has been teaching at the Hochschule as an instructor, and since 1989 as an associate professor in counterpoint, contemporary composition techniques, analysis, and introduction to microtonal music. Haas is a founding member of the Graz composers' collective *Die andere Seite*. He composes in a cottage in Fischbach, Styria.

Haas completed two years of postgraduate studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna with Friedrich Cerha, participated in the Darmstädter Ferienkurse (1980, 1988 and 1990), and the computer music course at IRCAM (1991). He received a fellowship from the Salzburg Festival (1992–93), was awarded the Sandoz Prize (1992) and a music grant from the National Ministry of Science, Research, and Culture (1995). His works have been on the programs of the following festivals: Wien Modern (Vienna), Musikprotokoll (Graz), Witten, Huddersfield, Royaumont, Venice Biennale, Festival d'Automne (Paris), as well as at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse and the Salzburg Festival 2011. Since 2005, he has lectured at the Hochschule in Basel, Switzerland; since 2013, he has been a professor of composition at Columbia University, New York.

**Clarence Barlow** (also Klarenz, born 27 December 1945) Born into the Anglophone minority of Calcutta in 1945, the composer Clarence Barlow studied math and physics while steeping himself in the musical traditions of northern India and medieval Europe. In 1968, Barlow moved to Cologne, Germany, where he studied for a brief time with Bernd Alois Zimmermann before the latter's suicide in 1970. In 1984, he was appointed as a lecturer in computer music at the Cologne Music

Academy. He currently teaches at the University of California in Santa Barbara.

Although Barlow sees the computer simply as a compositional tool, and not the basis of a distinct musical style ("I hate the computer," he declared in an interview), he was among the first in Germany to use computer languages to build algorithmic structures to guide his music. His particular interest lies in mathematically specifying certain perceptual musical qualities (tonality, metricism, etc.) and using generalised compositional methods to modulate these qualities on command.

London based pianist and conductor **Mark Knoop** is known for his fearless performances and individual interpretations. He has commissioned and premiered countless new works and worked with many respected composers including Peter Ablinger, Joanna Bailie, Michael Finnissy, Bernhard Lang, Cassandra Miller, Matthew Shlomowitz, and Steven Kazuo Takasugi. His versatile technique and virtuosity also bring fresh approaches to the standard and 20th-century repertoire. Mark performs regularly throughout Europe, the United Kingdom and Australia and in New Zealand, South Korea, Mongolia, United States of America, Canada and at festivals including Donaueschinger Musiktage, Huddersfield, Klang (Copenhagen), Klangspuren (Schwaz), MaerzMusik (Berlin), Musiikin Aika (Viitasaari, Finland), Spor (Århus), Transit (Leuven), Ukho Music (Kiev), and Ultima (Oslo). He performs with various ensembles including Plus-Minus (London/Brussels), WeSpoke (London/Lausanne), and Apartment House (London), and has conducted EXAUDI (London), Scenatet (Denmark), Britten Sinfonia (UK), Crash Ensemble (Ireland), and London Sinfonietta. His recordings of music by John Cage (Wergo and Another Timbre), Morton Feldman (Another Timbre and all that dust), Bryn Harrison (Another Timbre), and Karlheinz Stockhausen (HatHut) have been critically acclaimed.

Pianist **Siwan Rhys** enjoys a varied career of solo, chamber, and ensemble playing, with a strong focus on contemporary music and collaboration with composers. She has played at prestigious British venues such as the Wigmore Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Barbican Hall, St David's Hall, Symphony Hall, and abroad at the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Shanghai

Symphony Hall, Esplanade Concert Hall Singapore and many others. She has also appeared at the BBC Proms, Aldeburgh Festival, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, London Contemporary Music Festival, Principal Sound, Occupy the Pianos, and has recorded many times for television, radio, and for labels such as NMC, all that dust, Another Timbre, Classical Remix, and Prima Facie. Recent releases include a critically-acclaimed recording of Stockhausen's KONTAKTE and of Oliver Leith's good day good day bad day bad day with GBSR Duo, a re-voicing by Mira Calix of some of John Cage's Sonatas and Interludes, and appearances on Tim Parkinson's Here Comes a Monster and Nonclassical's I hope this finds you well in these strange times. Also a regular ensemble and orchestral pianist, Siwan has worked with the London Sinfonietta, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Colin Currie Group, Clod Ensemble, Aldeburgh Festival Ensemble, Philharmonia Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Siwan is a member of piano-percussion duo GBSR Duo, new music group Explore Ensemble, and also works regularly with mezzo-soprano Lucy Goddard. Her recent foray into experimental filmmaking is supported by the Royal Philharmonic Society Enterprise Fund in association with Harriet's Trust. She is an honorary member of the Welsh Gorsedd of Bards and an Entente Cordiale alumna. She teaches at the London Contemporary School of Piano.

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