

Layouts of Existing Melodies in the Songs of Charles Ives

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When we try to analyze the music of Charles Ives, perhaps one of the most difficult problems is his extensive use of musical quotations. In the music of Ives, many of quoted melodies are surrounded by different musical textures. With a view to reducing the works of Ives to some of his compositional methods, I discuss layouts of existing melodies in Ives's songs.

In this paper, I examine the musical relations between quoted melodies and their surroundings in Ives's songs, and show some of his compositional methods of transfiguring the sounds of existing melodies, in each of following three aspects. First: Simultaneous relations between the quoted melodies and their accompaniments. Second: Successive relations between the sections containing quotations and the sections before and after them. Third: Placements of the quoted melodies and those functions in the works.

From these three points of view, I discuss some of compositional techniques in Ives's songs, such as polytonality, polyrhythm, modal harmony, musical texture, fragmentation of existing melody, modulation, repetition of beginning at ending, cadence, etc. I conclude that the main purpose of quotations in Ives's songs is to write some new elements to the surroundings of the existing melodies, and to rewrite the musical contexts around the existing melodies.