

**UB** University at Buffalo *The State University of New York*

# SLEE SINFONIETTA

Tuesday, April 14, 2015

UB Music Department | 2014-15 Concert Season

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The University at Buffalo Department of Music and  
The Robert & Carol Morris Center for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Music present

## Slee Sinfonietta

Brad Lubman, conductor

Julia Bentley, mezzo-soprano

Tuesday, April 14, 2015

7:30pm

Lippes Concert Hall in Slee Hall

### PROGRAM

A Set of Pieces Charles Ives  
(1874-1954)

Three Places in New England\* Charles Ives

### Intermission

At the Tomb of Charles Ives Lou Harrison  
(1917-2003)

Piece No. 2 for small orchestra Conlon Nancarrow  
(1912-1997)

Vox clamans in deserto Carl Ruggles  
(1876-1971)

\*chamber orchestra version

*In collaboration with the Buffalo Philharmonic as part of the  
"Charles Ives: An American Maverick" Festival*

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## Slee Sinfonietta

Brad Lubman, conductor  
Julia Bentley, mezzo-soprano

Emlyn Johnson, flute  
Jackie Leclair, oboe  
Mary Kausek, English horn  
Jean Kopperud, clarinet  
Tiffany Valvo, clarinet  
Ivy Ringel, bassoon  
Kate Sheeran, horn  
Tim Leopold, trumpet  
Kyle Resnick, trumpet  
Will Lang, trombone  
Kristen Theriault, harp  
Sonja Inglefield, harp  
Erin Baker, harp  
Eric Huebner, piano  
Nicholas Emmanuel, piano  
Hangyu Bai, piano  
Tom Kolor, percussion  
Bill Solomon, percussion  
Yuki Numata Resnick, violin  
Lauren Cauley, violin  
Hanna Hurwitz, violin  
Nicole Oswald, violin  
Moshe Shulman, violin  
Victor Lowrie, viola  
Virginia Barron, viola  
Jonathan Golove, cello  
Lauren Radnofsky, cello  
Eric Polenik, bass  
Colin Corner, bass

## Meet the Artists

The **Slee Sinfonietta** is the professional chamber orchestra in residence at the University at Buffalo and the flagship ensemble of the Robert and Carol Morris Center for 21st Century Music. The Sinfonietta presents a series of concerts each year that feature performances of challenging new works by contemporary composers and lesser-known works from the chamber orchestra repertoire. Founded in 1997 by composer David Felder, and comprised of a core group including UB faculty performance artists, visiting artists, national and regional professionals and advanced performance students, the group is conducted by leading conductors and composers. This ensemble has produced world-class performances of important repertoire for eighteen years, and its activities include touring, professionally produced recordings, and unique concert experiences for listeners of all levels of experience.

Since completing apprenticeships with the Santa Fe Opera and the Chicago Lyric Opera, mezzo-soprano **Julia Bentley** has appeared in leading operatic roles (Carmen, Rosina, Dorbella, Despina, and both Rossini and Massenet Cinderellas) from Anchorage to New York, and has been featured as a soloist with orchestras led by George Manahan, Raymond Leppard, Oliver Knussen, Robert Shaw and Pierre Boulez. She performs in Chicago with Mostly Music, CUBE, the Contemporary Chamber Players, the Orion Ensemble, Pinotage, the New Budapest Orpheum Society, Ensemble Noamnesia, Fulcrum Point, the Chicago Chamber Musicians, Chicago Opera Theater, Concertante di Chicago, the Newberry Consort, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Lyric Opera and the MusicNOW series at Symphony Center with conductor Cliff Colnot. She has appeared to critical acclaim at Weill Hall with Pierre Boulez as the soloist in *Le Marteau Sans Maître*, and recorded on the Albany, Cedille and Tintagel labels. Recent engagements have included performances of *La Damnation de Faust* with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, *Pierrot Lunaire* with eighth blackbird, *La Cenerentola* with Sacramento Opera, *Little Women* with the Dayton Opera, and the Bach B Minor Mass with the Apollo Chorus as well as chamber music series in Chicago, Philadelphia, New York and the National Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. After leading the Composer Focus project at the DePaul University School of Music for six years, she is currently teaching voice at Concordia University, and the graduate Art Song Seminar at North Park University. She coaches privately, specializing in audition

preparation and advanced vocal literature. This season features first-time collaborations with Sarah Rothenberg, the Emerson Quartet and the Spektral Quartet, as well as continuing escapades with pianist Kuang-Hao Huang

## Meet the Conductor

**Brad Lubman**, conductor/composer, has played a vital role in contemporary music for more than two decades. A frequent guest conductor of the world's leading ensembles, he has gained widespread recognition for his versatility, commanding technique, and insightful interpretations.

Conducting a broad range of repertoire from classical to contemporary works, Lubman has led major orchestras in Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Taiwan, and the U.S. Among these are the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Dresden Philharmonic, DSO Berlin, RSO Stuttgart, WDR Symphony Cologne, National Symphony Orchestra Taiwan, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Finnish Radio Symphony, and the Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic.

In addition, he has worked with some of the most important European and American ensembles for contemporary music, including Ensemble Modern, London Sinfonietta, Musik Fabrik, ASKO Ensemble, Ensemble Resonanz, Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, Chicago Symphony MusicNOW, and Steve Reich and Musicians.

Lubman has conducted at new-music festivals across Europe, including those in Lucerne, Salzburg, Berlin, Huddersfield, Paris, Cologne, Frankfurt, and Oslo. He has recorded for BMG/RCA, Nonesuch, Koch, and New World, among other labels. His own music has been performed in the USA and Europe, and can be heard on his first portrait CD, *insomniac*, on Tzadik.

Brad Lubman is particularly noted for his ability to master challenging new scores in a variety of settings, a skill honed during his tenure as Assistant Conductor to Oliver Knussen at the Tanglewood Music Center from 1989-94. That aptitude has earned him the opportunity to premiere works by a wide range of composers, including Michael Gordon, Jonny Greenwood, David Lang, Helmut Lachenmann, Meredith Monk, Michael Nyman, Steve Reich, Augusta Read Thomas, Julia Wolfe, Charles Wuorinen, and John Zorn.

Lubman is Music Director of the new music ensemble Signal, founded in 2008 and recently hailed by *The New York Times* as "one of the most vital groups of its kind." With critically-praised performances at the Bang on a Can Marathon, Le Poisson Rouge (NYC), and the Ojai Music Festival, Signal has rapidly become a vital force in the American new music scene.

Brad Lubman is on faculty at the Eastman School of Music and the Bang on a Can Summer Institute. He is represented by Karsten Witt Musik Management.

## Program Notes

### A Set of Pieces for theater or chamber orchestra

- I. In the Cage
- II. In the Inn
- III. In the Night

Ives assembled "A Set of Pieces" circa 1914, based on material he had composed between 1899 and 1906. The premiere performance of the complete work took place on February 16, 1932 in New York City. Adolph Weiss conducted the Pan American Chamber Orchestra at the New School Auditorium. The following excerpts come from Ives' Memos regarding "A Set of Pieces":

#### I. In the Cage

The first movement is a result of taking a walk one hot summer afternoon in Central Park with Bart Yung (one-half Oriental) and George Lewis (non Oriental), when we were all living together at 65 Central Park West in 1906... Sitting on a bench near the menagerie, watching the leopard's cage and a little boy (who had apparently been a long time watching the leopard)—this aroused Bart's Oriental fatalism—hence the text in the score and in the song.

*A leopard went around his cage  
from one side back to the other side;  
he stopped only when the keeper came around with meat;  
A boy who had been there three hours  
began to wonder, "Is life anything like that?"*

...A drum is supposed to represent the leopard's feet going pro and con. Technically, the principal thing about this movement is to show that a song does not have to be in any one key to make musical sense [55-56].

## II. In the Inn

The second movement is one of several ragtime dances which have been used in whole or in part in several things...Some of them started as far back as George Felsberg's reign in "Poli's." George could read a newspaper and play the piano better than some pianist could play without any newspaper at all. When I was in college, I used to go down there and "spell him" a little if he wanted to go out for five minutes and get a glass of beer, or a dozen glasses... [56].

## III. In the Night

Behind the music is a ... picture-the heart of an old man, dying alone in the night, sad, low in heart--then God comes to help him--bring him to his own loved ones. This is the main line, the substance. All around, the rest of the music is the silence and the sounds of the night-bells tolling in the far distances...[58-59].

## Three Places in New England

- I. The "Saint Gaudens" in Boston Common  
(Col. Shaw and His Colored Regiment)
- II. Putnam's Camp, Redding, Connecticut
- III. The Housatonic at Stockbridge

Ives composed most of the *Three Places* during the years circa 1908-1914. He completed the final score for full orchestra in the years

1913-14. In 1929, Ives rearranged the work for chamber orchestra for Nicolas Slonimsky's premiere performance. On January 10, 1931, Slonimsky conducted the premiere performance of the work with his Chamber Orchestra of Boston in New York's Town Hall. Ives financed the concert himself. It was the first complete performance that any of his major orchestral works had ever received. The composer accompanied each movement with the following texts in the score:

### I. The "Saint Gaudens" in Boston Common (Col. Shaw and His Colored Regiment)

Moving,-Marching-Faces of Souls!  
Marked with generations of pain,  
Part-freers of a Destiny,  
Slowly, restlessly-swaying us on with you  
Towards other Freedom . . .

You images of a Divine Law  
Carved in the shadow of a saddened heart--  
Never light abandoned--  
Of an age and of a nation.

Above and beyond that compelling mass  
Rises the drum beat of the common-heart  
In the silence of a strange and  
Sounding afterglow  
Moving,-Marching-Faces of Souls!

*-Charles Ives*

### II. Putnam's Camp

Near Redding Center, Conn., is a small park preserved as a Revolutionary Memorial; for here General Israel Putnam's soldiers had their winter quarters in 1778-1779. Low rows of stone camp fireplaces still remain to stir a child's imagination. The hardships which the soldiers endured, and the agitation, of a few hot-heads, to break camp and march to the Hartford Assembly for relief, is part of Redding history.

Once upon a "4th of July," some time ago, so the story goes, a child went here on a picnic, held under the auspices of the first Church and the Village Cornet Band. Wandering away from the rest of the children past the camp ground into the

woods, he hopes to catch a glimpse of some of the old soldiers. As he rests on the hillside of laurels and hickories the tunes of the band and the songs of the children grow fainter and fainter; --when-"mirabile dictu"--over the trees on the crest of the hill he sees a tall woman standing. She reminds him of a picture he has of the Goddess Liberty, --but the face is sorrowful--she is pleading with the soldiers not to forget their "cause" and the great sacrifices they have made for it. But they march out of camp with fife and drum to a popular tune of the day. Suddenly, a new national note is heard. Putnam is coming over the hills from the center,--the soldiers turn back and cheer. --The little boy awakes, he hears the children's songs and runs down past the monument to "listen to the band" and join in the games and dances.

-Charles Ives

### III. The Housatonic at Stockbridge

"Contented river! In thy dreamy realm--  
 The cloudy willow and the plummy elm:"...  
 ...Thou hast grown human laboring with men  
 At wheel and spindle; sorrow thou dost ken;...  
 Thou beautiful! From every dreamy hill  
 What eye but wanders with thee at thy will,  
 Imagining thy silver course unseen  
 Convoyed by two attendant streams of green...  
 Contented river! And yet over-shy  
 To mask thy beauty from the eager eye;  
 Hast thou a thought to hide from field and town?  
 In some deep current of the sunlit brown  
 Art thou disquieted--still discontent  
 With praise from thy Homeric bard, who lent  
 The world the placidness thou gavest him?  
 Thee Bryant loved when life was at it's brim;...  
 ...Ah! There's a sensitive ripple, and the swift  
 Red leaves--September's firstlings--faster adrift;..  
 ...Wouldst thou away!...  
 ...I also of much resting have a fear;  
 Let me thy companion be  
 By fall and shallow to the Adventureous seal

from The Housatonic at Stockbridge  
 Robert Underwood Johnson

**Charles Ives** (October 20, 1874 – May 19, 1954) was the son of George Ives, a U.S. Army bandleader in the American Civil War, and his wife Mary Parmelee. A strong influence of Charles's may have been sitting in the Danbury town square, listening to his father's marching band and other bands on other sides of the square simultaneously. George Ives's unique music lessons were also a strong influence on Charles; George Ives took an open-minded approach to musical theory, encouraging his son to experiment in bi-tonal and polytonal harmonizations. It was from his father that Charles Ives also learned the music of Stephen Foster. Ives became a church organist at the age of 14 and wrote various hymns and songs for church services, including his *Variations on 'America'*. Ives moved to New Haven in 1893, enrolling in the Hopkins School where he captained the baseball team. In September 1894, Ives entered Yale University, studying under Horatio Parker. Here he composed in a choral style similar to his mentor, writing church music and even an 1896 campaign song for William McKinley. On November 4, 1894 Charles's father died, a crushing blow to the young composer, but to a large degree Ives continued the musical experimentation he had begun with George Ives.

At Yale College Charles Ives was a prominent figure; he was a member of HeBoule, Delta Kappa Epsilon (Phi chapter) and Wolf's Head Society, and sat as chairman of the Ivy Committee. He enjoyed sports at Yale and played on the varsity football team. Michael C. Murphy, his coach, once remarked that it was a crying shame that Charles Ives spent so much time at music as otherwise he could have been a champion sprinter. His works *Calcium Light Night* and "*Yale-Princeton Football Game* show the influence of college and sports on Ives' composition. He wrote his *Symphony No. 1* as his senior thesis under Parker's supervision.

Charles Ives continued his work as a church organist until May 1902. In 1899 he moved to employment with the insurance agency Charles H. Raymond & Co., where he stayed until 1906. In 1907, upon the failure of Raymond & Co., he and his friend Julian Myrick formed their own insurance agency Ives & Co., which later became Ives & Myrick, where he remained until he retired. During his career as an insurance executive, Ives devised creative ways to structure life-insurance packages for people of means, which laid the foundation of the modern practice of estate planning. His *Life Insurance with Relation to Inheritance Tax*, published in 1918, was well-received. As a result of this he achieved considerable fame in the insurance industry of his time, with many of his business peers surprised to learn that he was also a composer. In his spare time he composed music and, until his

marriage, worked as an organist in Danbury and New Haven as well as Bloomfield, New Jersey and New York City. In 1907, Ives suffered the first of several "heart attacks" (as he and his family called them) that he had throughout his lifetime. These attacks may have been psychological in origin rather than physical. Following his recovery from the 1907 attack, Ives entered into one of the most creative periods of his life as a composer. After marrying Harmony Twitchell in 1908, they moved into their own apartment in New York. He had a remarkably successful career in insurance, and continued to be a prolific composer until he suffered another of several heart attacks in 1918, after which he composed very little, writing his very last piece, the song *Sunrise*, in August 1926. In 1922, Ives published his 114 *Songs* which represents the breadth of his work as a composer - it includes art songs, songs he wrote as a teenager and young man, and highly dissonant songs such as "The Majority." According to his wife, one day in early 1927 he came downstairs with tears in his eyes: he could compose no more, he said, "nothing sounds right." There have been numerous theories advanced to explain the silence of his late years, which seems as mysterious as the last several decades of the life of Jean Sibelius, who also stopped composing at almost the same time. While Ives had stopped composing, and was increasingly plagued by health problems, he did continue to revise and refine his earlier work, as well as oversee premieres of his music. After continuing health problems, including diabetes, in 1930 he retired from his insurance business, which gave him more time to devote to his musical work, but he was unable to write any new music. During the 1940's he revised his *Concord Sonata*, publishing it in 1947 (an earlier version of the sonata and the accompanying prose volume, *Essays Before a Sonata* were privately printed in 1920). Ives died in 1954 in New York City.

## At the Tomb of Charles Ives

This work was composed in 1963 and premiered in 1970 at the Aspen Music Festival. After being published in 1978 by Peer, it was performed and recorded by the Brooklyn Philharmonic under Lukas Foss in 1981.

The middle section of the work entitled "a cry of anguish at the tomb" calls for precise melodic tunings of whole-number ratio intervals. Fixed-pitch instruments provide reference points for the strings.

**Lou Harrison** (May 14, 1917 – February 2, 2003) was born in Portland, Oregon, but moved with his family to a number of locations around the San Francisco Bay Area as a child. The very diverse musical atmosphere of San Francisco was the primary formative force in his life. He could hear Cantonese opera; Gregorian chant; Spanish, Mexican, and Native-American music; and jazz and classical music. The San Francisco Public Library, with its strong music department, enabled him to take armloads of music home to study. He studied jazz piano, Gregorian chant, and conducting while in high school. He took Henry Cowell's course on "Music of the World's Peoples," further studying counterpoint and composition with Cowell.

He and John Cage both wrote percussion-dominated music and found new percussion instruments in automobile junkyards and import shops; one of their discoveries was the wonderful pitched ringing sound produced by brake drums. Harrison eventually went to the University of California at Los Angeles to work with its dance department. While there, he was a composition pupil of Arnold Schoenberg. Harrison had already developed a love of Renaissance and earlier music. He adopted the old dance form "estampie," a word he translates as "stampede" for his own stamping, highly rhythmic fast movements.

In 1943, he moved to New York where he worked as a musician and writer. It was the unhappiest period of his life; he did not like the place, and found it difficult to make a living, although he did write some 300 music reviews for the *Herald Tribune* from 1944 to 1947. He developed a stomach ulcer and finally had a nervous breakdown. During this period, he made the acquaintance of Charles Ives and assisted the aged composer by editing and preparing for performance Ives' Third Symphony, which Harrison conducted at its premiere. Ives assisted Harrison financially when needed and, when the Third Symphony won the Pulitzer Prize in Music, Ives gave Harrison half the money.

The 1947 nervous breakdown resulted in Harrison deciding to change his compositional style. He began to imitate the sounds of gamelan orchestra, which he had first heard at the 1939 Golden Gate Exposition. He studied Harry Partch's theoretical book *Genesis of a Music* (a gift from Virgil Thomson) and was convinced to adopt various forms of just-intonation rather than the standard 12-note scale. (He says he wishes musicians were numerically trained, so that he could say, for instance, "Cellos, you gave me a 10/9 there;

please give me a 9/8 instead.")

Harrison subsequently resumed his high productivity, returned to the West coast in 1951 to settle for life in Aptos, California and continued to write music sounding primarily "Pan-Pacific" in style, often for unusual combinations of instruments. He first visited Asia in 1961 at a world music symposium, afterward, he became interested in establishing gamelan orchestras in North America, and devised an "American gamelan" made by his partner William Colvig from readily obtainable materials. He went on to write hundreds of compositions, and his works are often recorded. Harrison developed a system of musical organization based around melodic shapes he calls "melodicles" and analogous rhythmic patterns ("rhythmicals") and durations ("icti controls"). Lou Harrison died in 2003 en route to an Ohio festival dedicated to performances of his works.

## Piece No. 2 for Small Orchestra

Conlon Nancarrow lived and composed in obscurity for most of his life. His self-exile in Mexico and intensive, imaginative relationship with the player-piano divorced his work from stage performance. After receiving a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant in 1982, Nancarrow became renowned and musicians began asking him for "live" music.

In 1986, he agreed to compose a piece for Continuum's Nancarrow retrospective at the Lincoln Center, which was commissioned by the Los Angeles patron Betty Freeman. He warned that the piece would likely be small, but it ended up being one of his largest-scale pieces since the player piano studies. The result was Piece No. 2 for Small Orchestra.

**Conlon Nancarrow** (October 27, 1912 – August 10, 1997) was born in Texarkana (Miller County) on October 27, 1912. His father, Samuel Charles Nancarrow, was a businessman and mayor of Texarkana from 1927 to 1930. His mother was Myra Brady Nancarrow, and he had one brother, Charles.

At the insistence of his father, Nancarrow attended Western Military Academy in Alton, Illinois. While there, his interest in music blossomed, and he attended the National Music Camp in Interlochen, Michigan, the following summer. He began listening to jazz and

composing. Nancarrow's father sent him at age fifteen to Vanderbilt University to study engineering, but he stayed just one semester. Already proficient on the trumpet, he was still a teenager when he left Texarkana in 1929 to study at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory. He played jazz there in a German beer hall.

In 1932, he married Helen Rigby, a singer and contrabass player, in Cincinnati, Ohio. She divorced him in 1940. Later marriages were to Annette Margolis, a painter, from 1948 until their divorce in 1953, and Yoko Seguire, an anthropologist, in 1970, with whom he had a son, David Makoto, in 1971.

In 1934, Nancarrow moved to Boston, Massachusetts, where he studied composition privately with Walter Piston, Roger Sessions, and Nicolas Slonimsky and conducted a Works Progress Administration (WPA) orchestra.

Like many artists in that period, he joined the Communist Party in 1934 and went to Spain in 1937 with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade to fight against Francisco Franco's fascist army. He was wounded and escaped in 1939 after Franco's victory.

Upon his return to the United States in 1939, he discovered that Slonimsky had arranged for publication of two of his compositions. He settled in New York City, where he associated with other composers, including Aaron Copland and Elliott Carter.

Describing Nancarrow as an "undesirable" because of his Spanish experience, the State Department refused to issue him the passport he applied for after learning that his friends in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade were denied permission to travel. In protest, he moved to Mexico City in 1940, Mexico being the only country other than Canada where he could go without a passport. He lived there the rest of his life, becoming a Mexican citizen in 1956. His only return visit to Arkansas after moving to Mexico was in 1992, when he dealt with family matters.

As he continued composing, he realized that the complex rhythms he envisioned could be cut on a player piano roll. In 1947, he bought a player piano and punching machine and began composing his *Studies for Player Piano*, which captured the attention of the musical world. In 1960, Merce Cunningham choreographed several of Nancarrow's compositions and presented them on a world tour in 1964. It was not until 1977, however, that scores of his *Studies* were

published and recordings of all the *Studies* began.

Beginning in 1981, Nancarrow made trips to the United States and Europe for performances of his music, and he received commissions from major artists. In 1982, he received a \$300,000 MacArthur Fellowship “given in recognition of...major accomplishments in music which demonstrate...originality, dedication to creative pursuits, and capacity for self-direction.” In 1990, the New England Conservatory of Music awarded him an honorary doctorate, and the University of Mexico City presented two days of performances of his music, including his works for player piano. Significant works include approximately fifty *Studies for Player Piano* (1952–1992), *String Quartet no. 1* (1945), *String Quartet no. 3* (1987), and *Piece for Small Orchestra no. 2* (1985).

Nancarrow died on August 10, 1997, apparently from heart failure, at his home in Mexico City.

## Vox clamans in deserto

- I. Parting at Morning
- II. Son of Mine
- III. A Clear Midnight

Vox clamans in deserto, which translates to “a voice crying in the wilderness”, was completed in 1923. It received its premiere on January 13, 1924 at the Vanderbilt Theatre in New York City through the International Composers’ Guild. Each movement includes a text sung by the soprano, each from a different author:

### I. Parting at Morning

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,  
And the sun look'd over the mountain's rim:  
And straight was a path of gold for him,  
And the need of a world of men for me.

*Robert Browning*

### II. Son of Mine

Son of mine my soul is of its pain,  
The joy of living has passed me by.  
Dark clouds have dimm'd the glow of the sky.

Son of mine the lonely night draweth nigh.  
O could I only live in my dream again,  
Know the joy I'd sought in vain.  
Ah, were you near me even itself I'd defy.

*C.H. Meltzer*

### III. A Clear Midnight

This is thy house O Soul, they free flight into the  
wordless,  
Away from books, away from art, the day erased,  
the lesson done,  
Thee full by force emerging, silent, gazing,  
Pondering the themes thou lovest best.  
Night, sleep, Death and the stars.

*Walt Whitman*

..

**Carl Ruggles** (March 11, 1876 – October 24, 1971) was born to a New England farming family and received his first musical instruction from his mother, who died when he was 14. Ruggles studied violin with Walter Spaulding and Felix Winternitz, theory with Josef Claus, and composition with Harvard educator John Knowles Paine. In 1899-1901 Ruggles published several songs for voice and piano, though only three titles survive; Ruggles had a lifelong habit of destroying older compositions. In 1907, Ruggles settled in Winona, MN, founding a symphony orchestra that yet exists. Ruggles piloted the Winona Symphony for its first ten seasons, and through it met and married the oratorio singer Charlotte Snell. Starting in 1912, Ruggles concentrated his efforts on an opera, *The Sunken Bell*. Despite acceptance of *The Sunken Bell* for performance at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Ruggles never completed it, discarding the score around 1960. He neglected to dispose of a number of sketches relating to this work, and these reveal Ruggles

arrived at his mature style during the years he devoted to its composition.

In 1919, Ruggles composed the song Toys as a fourth birthday present for his son Micah; this was the earliest work Ruggles allowed to stand as his own. In 1922, Ruggles joined the International Composers' Guild, founded by Edgard Varèse and Carlos Salzedo to promote the works of avant-garde composers in New York. On December 17, 1922, Ruggles' brass piece Angels was premiered at a Composer's Guild concert. Ruggles followed Angels with Vox clamans in deserto, a setting of seven poems for voice and chamber ensemble. Only three of the songs were heard in a concert of 1924, but the cycle failed to meet Ruggles' standard, and did not appear in print until 1974. Portals for string orchestra followed in 1926, Men and Mountains, a short, three-movement symphony including "Lilacs" for strings, was completed in 1927 and published in the first issue of Henry Cowell's periodical New Music. Also in the late 1920s Ruggles began to paint. Whereas Ruggles' musical reputation rests on only a dozen works, he created more than 300 paintings that were avidly purchased by museums and private individuals.

In 1932, Ruggles completed the orchestral piece Sun-treader, both his largest-scale work and his masterpiece. Ruggles' pieces were subject to years-long gestation periods, the final result produced through a painstaking process of trial and error. Ruggles' music is built out of "crooked" individual lines, frequent dissonances resulting from places where these lines intersect. Rhythmically his work is not complex, but in some respects is difficult to decipher, particularly in manuscripts, which involve sketches written on paper that is of every conceivable shape or size. Throughout his life, Ruggles would rely on the advice of musical friends to assist him with the knotty problems resulting from his style and method, including Varèse, Cowell, pianist John Kirkpatrick, and composer-musicologist Charles Seeger. Seeger first coined the phrase "dissonant counterpoint" in an attempt to describe Ruggles' approach.