Questions for discussion:
• What is the instrumentation of the work? How is it handled to represent the "program."?
• Aspects of layering, stratification, spatial relationships: how are these created?
• Aspect of rhythm: are events "measured"? How is a sense of tension and "motion" created?
• What pitch materials are used in: strings, flutes, trumpet? (general characteristics) [also consider alternate instrumentation]
• What later methods (or styles) of composition are present in this work?


Introduction:
"The title of this lecture series is borrowed from Charles Ives, who wrote that brief but remarkable piece of his called 'The Unanswered Question' way back in 1908. Ives had a highly metaphysical question in mind; but I've always felt he was also asking another question, a purely musical one -- 'whither music?' -- as the question must have been asked by Musical Man (sic) entering the twentieth century. Today, . . . we are still asking it; only it is not quite the same question as it was then."
"...Even to guess at the answer to 'whither music?' we must first ask Whence music? What music? and Whose music? ...."

The Unanswered Question (ca. 1907/1908)
Originally Paired with Central Park in the Dark as a group:
I. A Contemplation of a Serious Matter (UQ)
II. A Contemplation of Nothing Serious (CP)

Overall design: (see Ives’s program in score)
Constant Strings represent the Silence of the Druids
Solo Trumpet poses ‘question’ seven times
Answered by Woodwinds six times, Hunt for Invisible Answer, Secret Conference
Three Strata:

I. Strings
- Represent timelessness of the Druids
- Diatonic feel (G major or C major, uses F# and F natural)
- Extreme Range and Register
- Very Slow Moving, no sense of meter or beat
- Very Quiet, ppp, con sordino throughout, backstage

II. Woodwinds
- Six answers, gradually louder and more animated
- Very chromatic
- Wedge shapes
- Disassociated from strings

III. Trumpet
- Seven questions
- Emphasis on Minor Third (sometimes fits in octatonic scale)
- Final question -- fits into Strings?
- Disassociated from Strings

Other elements: Use of Timbre, Tempo, Dynamics, and Spatial Separation to distinguish layers (Strata) which translate the program into music. Flexibility of instrumentation.

Progressive elements in Charles Ives, The Unanswered Question
- stereophonic effects; “spatial music” (strings offstage, or separated from flutes/trumpet)
- aleatoric or indeterminate aspects (elements of chance); “nonsynchronous relationships” -- flute quartet “need not be played in the exact time position indicated. It is played in somewhat of an impromptu way.” (Ives, Foreward to the piece)
- strata, stratification (layering); stratified linear events (fl./trp.), occurring above an unvarying continuum (strings, ppp, con sordini)
- symbolic references: question and answer (7 statments of a question (trumpet) answered 6 times by flutes (last question unanswered; unresolved) all against
largo strings, playing triadic harmonies in a chorale texture (C maj., ends on V - - unresolved)

• literary idea which generates a form

• polytempi, polytonality