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If a manuscript is accepted for publication by the editorial committee, the author will be asked to supply a brief biographical paragraph and an electronic mail attachment with the text, sent to thomas.riis@colorado.edu. Once accepted, the preparation of final copy in electronic form will require the following: abstract of no more than 200 words; article text in MSWord including notes and references (preferably as a .doc file). Musical examples and figures for final production should be high resolution (at least 300 dpi) images.

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Robert Waters

Considering the Other in Indianist Opera: Separation and Assimilation in Victor Herbert's *Natoma*

When discussing racial othering, some specialists in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century opera have used the term “Orientalism.”¹ Yet few have examined Indianist opera, particularly its intersections with racial identity. Opera composers Mary Carr Moore, Charles Cadman, Frederick Converse, Arthur Nevin, Eleanor Freer, William Hanson, and Victor Herbert treated Native American themes that highlighted their Eurocentric prejudices.² Their works set in transcultural landscapes asserted Darwinist ideals sometimes fused together with Hegelian notions of cultural progress, and these viewpoints affected both their librettos and music.³ These early twentieth-century American opera composers turned to Indianist works in a quest for a national character, but did so despite opera’s inherent structural constraints in echoing authentic Native American music and culture. Composers portrayed Native Americans exotically and mimetically, as Indianist compositions became part of the American Romantic lexicon.⁴ Although operas often contained approximations of Native American gestures, modes, and melodies, which were then harmonized, their composers set them with harmonic characteristics found in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European music, including Wagner’s music dramas as well as Puccini’s operas. These composers who borrowed from Wagner and Puccini include operetta composer Victor Herbert, who initially claimed that Indianist opera was not representative of Anglo-American culture and the idea of a soprano portraying a Native American woman unpalatable:

If the subject be an American one, it is not necessary that the *dramatis personae* be either Indians or Puritans. Indians are not a suitable subject for an opera. The state of the Indians is pathetic, it is true, but in an opera they would not strike audiences seriously. You will see what I mean; suppose an Indian tenor, taking a high C and

then trilling on a high D in order to touch the emotions of a soprano
 . . . prima donna squaw!⁵

Herbert nonetheless composed *Natoma* in 1911 with librettist Joseph Redding, as they treated four races textually and musically, exploring Native American, Spanish, Caucasian, and biracial characters through racial, national, economic, and religious conflict.⁶ The work is set in 1820s California under Spanish rule and shows fixed and emerging social hierarchies, both through the Spanish treatment of Native Americans, and through the encroaching Anglo-American culture's behavior toward the Spanish.

In *Natoma*, national identity issues were worked out by the othering of races through distinctive musical devices, such as themes, musical gestures, modes, and melodies. These devices speak to Herbert's depiction of this otherness to be resolved by ethnic assimilation, specifically the Christianization of *Natoma*, the principal Native American character at the opera's conclusion. *Natoma* becomes the sacrificial martyr, an allegorical representative of a disappearing culture through religious conversion, and Herbert similarly reflects this in the music. Dramatically and musically, assimilation eliminates the "other," allowing the dominant social group to remove a perceived threat. This trope of assimilation works in contrast to many nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century operas, such as Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Camille Saint Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*, Arthur Nevin's *Poia*, and Mary Carr Moore's *Narcissa*, in which the ethnic distinctiveness of the characters is preserved, thereby emphasizing the otherness of various races. This essay will not only address the other in Indianist opera, but will also discuss assimilation, particularly within Herbert's *Natoma*, and will consist of three parts: first, an introductory exposition on the rising interest in Native American culture in Herbert's day; second, important early influences on Indianist music; and third, otherness and assimilation conveyed through Indianist musical gestures in Indianist opera, principally Herbert's *Natoma*.

Most early twentieth-century Americans initially learned about Native Americans from literature depicting indigenous culture, such as works written by James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851) and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–85).⁷ In *Social Backgrounds of American Literature*, Ralph Boas and Katherine Burton speak about this trend:

The Indian was romantic only after he disappeared as a menace to the seizure of his white man's lands. In actual practice he was a creature to be contemptuously tolerated, or if he gave trouble, to be exterminated. In Cooper's time the Indian was becoming a legend to Easterners. That the legend has become a permanent part of romantic literature is due to him.⁸

Burton alludes to the fact that romanticizing Native American culture became commonplace among white American Easterners once altercations between European Americans and Native Americans ceased and Native Americans became increasingly segregated from European American society. This romanticization only increased following the abatement of the Indian Wars and the capture of the Apache leader Geronimo in 1886. In 1887 the Dawes Allotment Act provided for the reservation system and placed restrictions on performances of traditional ceremonies to prevent potential uprisings.⁹

Examining, romanticizing, and deconstructing Native American mythology and culture then became popular for much of white America living on the East Coast, as tourists found visiting the Southwest increasingly convenient. The tourist industry helped usher in this interest by coaxing Americans to visit Native American reservations and archeological sites. One advertisement described a "Mesa Verde trip at the heart of the mystical southwest," referring to the cultural exoticism and otherness that visitors would allegedly encounter.¹⁰ British novelist D.H. Lawrence described the American Southwest as the "great playground of the white American."¹¹ New railroad systems crossing the southwest were laid, including the Southern Pacific Railroad, which also sponsored the building of new hotels and resorts across this region. Visitors were encouraged to observe "authorized" Native American ceremonials.

Folklore societies and expositions also emerged during the late nineteenth century. The American Folklore Society, established during the 1880s, enabled visitors to view collections of Native American artifacts. The Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 included performances of Native American music and ceremonial dances; for many if not most fair goers, this became their earliest exposure to live Native American music.¹²

All of these carefully circumscribed events gave many Caucasians a feeling of safety, thereby allowing them to deconstruct the meaning of Native American culture. This deconstruction came in several ways, effectively cited by musician Arthur Farwell, the publisher of the Wa-Wan Press. Farwell summarized a four-step process that he believed white America underwent upon coming in contact with Native Americans: first, European Americans fought the Indian; second, upon winning the Indian Wars, they sought to convert the Indian, usually in the form of Christianization; third, in an attempt to employ a more "scientific" process, they dissected Native American culture as a specimen to be analyzed; and finally, they extended the hand of fellowship, which Farwell saw as a democratic and ethical principle needing to be enacted.¹³ But since most Indianist operas were composed long after the Indian Wars

and before this hand of fellowship would be extended (if it ever was), three possibilities, according to Farwell, became available: either to kill the lone rebellious “angry” Indian still fighting the white man; to study Native Americans more scientifically as a well-meaning, yet antiseptic gesture on the part of ethnologists and composers; or, to convert the Native American to Christianity, which in Indianist opera, meant the disappearance of the Native American by their assimilation into the dominant culture’s traditions. This assimilation was relatively easy to capture in opera, because Native American stereotypes in Indianist libretti were not so much framed in accordance with how Indians appeared visually to white society (as was the practice with African Americans), but in how they were viewed in relationship to their culture and traditions. The special character of Native cultures and traditions inspired anthropologists and ethnologists, such as Alice Fletcher, Arthur Farwell, and Theodore Baker to explore several subgroups in order to more fully understand the range and uniqueness of the “race.” Their ethnological explorations were spurred on following Thomas Edison’s invention of the phonograph in 1877, which allowed scholars to record indigenous music *in situ* and not have to rely solely on second-hand reports or inadequate Western notation.

Baker, an American musical scholar and lexicographer, studied at the University of Leipzig in Germany and traveled to Western New York to research Native American culture. He based his doctoral dissertation, entitled *Über die Musik der nordamerikanischen Wilden* (“On the Music of the North American Indians,” 1882), on this research.¹⁴ His work studied Iroquois harvest songs as well as chants from the Cheyenne, Comanche, Dakota, Iowa, and Kiowa nations. Baker’s research was rooted in social Darwinist theories of cultural evolution, which asserted that aboriginal peoples throughout the world existed in the present as representatives of the European past.¹⁵ For Baker, therefore, Native American music was “primitive” and could offer insight as to how European music originally evolved. Baker did not describe musical or social characteristics of Native American nations; that is, he did not discuss the melodies or the context in which they were sung. Instead, he focused his attention on generalizations about scales, poetry, rhythms, vocalization techniques, and superficial observations regarding performance practice. Baker’s dissertation on Native American music became the earliest source from which some American composers learned about indigenous melodies.¹⁶

Ethnologist Alice Cunningham Fletcher (1838–1923), who was born in Cuba to parents of New England ancestry, studied the Omaha Nation of Nebraska in 1881. The Bureau of Indian Affairs hired her a year later to undertake a survey of all Indian lands for their viability for reservation allotment prior to the Dawes Act of 1887. Fletcher accepted this appointment despite her view

that allotment of land to Native Americans blocked economic advantages by diminishing individual incentive to work. She was also concerned that as long as Native Americans held this land collectively, neighboring European Americans would not respect their rights to the land. Fletcher's first book on Native American culture, entitled *A Study of Omaha Indian Music* (1895), was based on an article she authored that same year.¹⁷ She included Native American melodies she collected and had transcribed with the help of music theorist John Fillmore.¹⁸ This study became the most influential and most frequently used source for composers' musical borrowing at the time.

Fletcher's book was a major accomplishment. She applied the same scientific rigor to Native American music that was applied to archaeology, which included careful ethnological fieldwork. In this regard, Fletcher was one of the first scholars of Native American culture to move beyond purely descriptive language and use more thorough and precise methods to categorize indigenous music and culture. Despite Fletcher's innovative approach, she nonetheless relied on contemporary practices that described Native American culture based on a continuum between "savagery" and "civilization"; the closer Indians emulated Caucasian culture, the more she deemed them civilized. As a result, she provided four- or five-part harmonization with piano accompaniment for most of the transcribed melodies, based on her belief that Native Americans preferred harmonized accompaniments and "not only the major and minor concords, but also the dominant seventh . . . and dissonances in the shape of suspensions whether prepared . . . or free."¹⁹ Fillmore, who helped her, corroborated this assumption:

Fletcher . . . informed me . . . that . . . whenever [the Indians'] songs were played for them on a piano or organ, they were not satisfied without the addition of chords to the melodies . . . I thought [this] indicated . . . a latent harmonic sense which might, unconsciously on their part, be a determining factor in their choice of melody tones . . . I found that no satisfactory scheme of chords could be made without employing the missing scale tone. . . . I harmonized songs . . . and then, requested by Fletcher, tried them on as many Indians as I could. . . . Whatever chords were natural and satisfactory to me were equally so to them, from which it seems proper to draw the conclusion that . . . harmony is an innate endowment of human nature, that it is the same for the trained musician and for the untrained primitive man, the difference being purely one of development.²⁰

Fillmore's description illustrates his Darwinian viewpoint as well as that of Fletcher regarding harmony that placed unharmonized Native American music low on an evolutionary scale. Because Fletcher also maintained that

most Native American scales were pentatonic, Fletcher and Fillmore accompanied them with tonic, subdominant, and dominant harmonies, occasionally modified by secondary triads and suspensions or appoggiaturas; cadences were usually plagal or authentic.

Although Fletcher proposed nuanced theories regarding Native American music and understood that there were distinct nations within Native America, once various groups or tribes were placed on reservations the situation became more complex. She believed that the different factions should attempt to present a unified front in order to achieve social and political equality. Anglo-Americans, in a quest for a distinctly “American” identity, easily identified the various Indian nations as one group, as this became a way to allege their solidarity as a nation. As a result, many European American composers began to associate all Native American music with powwows, war dances, and round dances whose musical character was indicated by steady, rapid tempos, accented rhythms, and instruments such as drums, flutes, whistles, and hand-held rattles as well as those worn on dancers’ arms and legs.²¹

Harmonizing indigenous melodies while adding other Euro-American characteristics was labeled *idealization* by composer Charles Cadman, who discussed the difficulty of assimilating music from one culture into another:

Certain critics in America, and indeed, well-known orchestral conductors, have an inborn prejudice against recognizing American works which contain even a small amount of Indian coloring. [They say] it is not aesthetic or artistic to objectify Indian musical utterance. Some go so far as to say that the moment a composer touches a native melody . . . it loses its original character. . . . If this is true than you might as well put many of the successful works of the Russian composers who have employed barbaric Czech or [Tartar] themes in the same category. And all those French and Italian composers who have employed the wilder oriental and semi-barbaric tunes for which little or no accompaniment, harmonically speaking, is used! Without the accepted treatment of modern composition, Indian melodies are merely of archeological interest. . . . Very often they are not even melodies until after the adapter has given them form, symmetry, and rhythmical cohesion. . . . What would [the Indian] be without our idealization of him? Unharmonized [*sic*] Indian music sounds as uncouth to us as the tone poems that come out of Japan, China, and Tibet. Go to an Indian camp and see how much musical atmosphere you’ll find there. [However] the Indian’s non-harmonic concept . . . has been a bone to chew on. . . . It is but a step forward from the rather subjective but potentially harmonic primitive utterance to the matter

of objectifying the theme for ears accustomed to hear in terms of harmony plus melody. We take up the process (of course, in imagination) where the Indian has dropped it, and by this action the composer follows the line of least resistance. We do it as any European composer, upon hearing a Scandinavian or Neapolitan folk song accompaniment, would take down his tune and afterward use it or objectify and idealize it for some orchestral or choral work, chamber piece, or short song.²²

Cadman, like Fletcher and Fillmore, emphasized evolutionary social Darwinist theories applied to music, which according to him, involved harmonization as a way of eliminating “uncouth” monophony. These beliefs were also echoed by Herbert in his Indianist opera, *Natoma*. Herbert attempted to capture the spirit of Native American culture, mostly without employing actual Native American melodies; yet he did include two indigenous melodies in *Natoma* that he harmonized:

I have composed all of *Natoma*'s music, at least the greater part of it, out of fragments of Indian music, which I have collected and studied for some time past. However, I have pursued none of these melodies to their logical conclusion. If I used Indian music with all its original intervals and cadences it would become very monotonous, and so, of course, I have adapted it. But I have fashioned melodies by using fragments of this and that Indian theme. There is also the question of harmonization. Indian music is not harmonized, and the moment a musician harmonizes it he has made it into something different. I hope, however, to have achieved the result I was striving for, to suggest the Indian character. In two instances I have introduced Indian tunes almost verbatim, of course with my own harmonization. . . . But I do repudiate absolutely the idea that an infusion of popular or folk songs reproduces the spiritual and intellectual or romantic atmosphere of the country to which these folk songs belong.²³

Herbert's views echo those of Cadman in that Herbert viewed authentic Native American music as monotonous monophony. His belief that employing Native American music in compositions was not a way to establish a national identity deviated slightly from ideas proposed by other musicians, who viewed Native American music as one tool in finding an American character. These more affirmative composers included publisher and musician Arthur Farwell, who drew on Fletcher's scholarship by emphasizing the melodic structure, poetic inspiration, and legend behind each song, while adding harmony to Native American melodies. His 1903 lecture, “Myth and Music of the American Indian and Its Relation to the Development of American Musical Art,” dealt with Native American mythology and legend. Farwell

asked several useful questions in theorizing a national musical identity: Is a national art music desirable for America? What is the American spirit in music? Do American folk songs exist? Should folk songs enter into a national art music? And what should American composers do regarding American identity? Farwell concluded that, as in politics, American art music needed to be democratized. He offered two primary goals: first, that being an “American composer” as a profession does and should exist; and second, that American composers must compose American music and that this new music be based on American ideals. Although these American ideals were not yet culturally solidified, Farwell established the Wa-Wan Press (1901–12) with the object of generating a national art music, much of which was to be based on Native American folklore.²⁴ Farwell claimed:

Ultimate American composition will not be consciously and artificially based on Indian music. Nevertheless, Indian music remains a great source of inspiration and a significant point of departure for the American composer who understands it in connection with its underlying wealth of mythical lore. . . . Two distinct channels of development for music are suggested by Indian life. The first will employ actual Indian themes; the second will derive its creative impulse from Indian themes and mythos.²⁵

Farwell’s comments here could be construed as idealistic (albeit still ethnocentric) if his belief that “ultimate” American composition were not to be consciously based on Native American music, yet related in a significant way, derived from it, so to speak, by means of a culturally significant tool. It could be argued that eventual employment of Native American music as a tool would necessitate an immediate attempt at incorporating Native American musical elements into art works. This music would then be assimilated into art music more unconsciously with the passing of time.

Farwell then proceeded to publish thirty-seven works by American composers in the Wa-Wan Press, of which many incorporated Native American themes.²⁶ This move, in turn, inspired operas by Charles Cadman, Arthur Nevin, and Victor Herbert.²⁷

Herbert’s *Natoma* was one of the earliest Indianist operas in a series of works written by various composers between 1910 and 1930. And these works often deconstructed Native American history, including the sacrificing and martyring of Native Americans. Such scenarios were almost invariably accompanied by depictions of melancholic resignation, forced Christianization, or self-sacrificing death, all ways of propagating the theory of a “disappearing race.” Indianist operas that included martyrdom through resignation or sacrificial death were composed as early as 1794. For example, in James

Hewitt's *Tammany, or The Indian Chief*, the noble chieftain Tammany and his maiden lover Manana perish intoning a dirge in their wigwam as it is burned by an unscrupulous European. More than a century later composer Arthur Nevin helped spark an interest in this theme in his Indianist opera *Poia* (1910). Natoya is in love with Poia, the prophet and savior of the Blackfoot people. She is then accidentally killed by a bullet intended for Poia, thus dying in his place and being martyred in the process.

Even when white Americans are martyred in Indianist opera, Native Americans are often brought into the fray. In Mary Carr Moore's *Narcissa* (1911), for example, when the white missionary Whitman and his wife, Narcissa, are killed, Native American women in the Indian compound are found wailing over the genocide. By 1918 this gesture had become a cliché. In Charles Cadman's *Shanewis: the Robin Woman* (1918), an Indian woman travels to New York to study music and falls in love with a white man; he follows her back to her reservation, but is shot by her brother with a poisoned arrow. The libretto initially lacked a suitable finale and Cadman suggested an especially dramatic but nonfatal ending, with which his librettist, Nelle Eberhart, took issue, feeling that only introspective resignation or sacrifice would be appropriate. Cadman referred to her proposed sacrificial ending as "an old chestnut . . . which is absolutely worn threadbare."²⁸

Herbert included martyrdom in his opera *Natoma*, but in a more enigmatic way. His attention was brought to Indianist opera when surveyor and photographer Walter McClintock, who lived among the Blackfoot nation on a Montana reservation in order to record songs and stories for non-Indian audiences, asked Herbert to compose an Indianist opera. Herbert declined and recommended composer Arthur Nevin instead. Nevin then composed *Poia*, which had an unsuccessful premiere in Berlin. Herbert was inspired by Nevin's endeavor, but wanted to avoid elements in Nevins's work that led to his opera's failure; Herbert therefore created a libretto with a more diverse roster of characters.

Herbert's *Natoma* is set in 1890s California in Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara, both under Spanish rule.²⁹ The opera surrounds wealthy widowed Spanish landowner and hospitable patriarch Don Francisco, whose daughter Barbara, having received her education at the local convent in Santa Barbara, is returning home following her graduation. She then falls in love with an Anglo-American military officer, Lieutenant Paul Merrill. Natoma, a Native American servant working for Don Francisco, is devoted to Barbara, and she confides to Merrill that she herself is a princess, the last of a noble race. Other characters include the biracial Castro, whom Natoma despises, and

his friend Alvarado, a hot-tempered local Spaniard also in unrequited love with Barbara. Natoma subsequently overhears Alvarado planning to kidnap Barbara at the upcoming fiesta, during which a young man asks for a partner to join him in an ancient “Dagger Dance.” Seeing an opportunity to thwart the abduction of her mistress, Natoma volunteers for the dance, acquires a dagger, and eventually plunges the knife into Alvarado and kills him. The crowd is enraged by Natoma’s shocking behavior, but she slips away to seek asylum at the nearby Spanish monastery, where the priest, Father Peralta, allows her permanent sanctuary within if she converts to Christianity. She complies and walks through the cloister doors as they close dramatically behind her.

Herbert’s friend and librettist for *Natoma*, Joseph Redding, initially came up with the idea, and his libretto won a national competition for a grand opera libretto before it was set to music.³⁰ Herbert then composed the music and impresario Oscar Hammerstein agreed to mount the premiere at the Manhattan Opera House. Hammerstein unfortunately encountered financial difficulties and had to renege on his offer, at which time Herbert brought the work to the Metropolitan Opera, which refused to take it up. *Natoma* was then diverted to the Chicago–Philadelphia Opera Company in Philadelphia, where the premiere took place on February 25, 1911. Apparently the Met thought better of its initial decision, since it immediately reversed itself and agreed to stage *Natoma* three days later in New York at the Metropolitan Opera House, with the Philadelphia cast, which included Mary Garden and John McCormack.

It has not been revived often since 1911, in part due to its initial reception among critics. Following the Philadelphia premiere, the *New York Times* wrote in the headlines: “American Opera, ‘*Natoma*’ Produced. Victor Herbert and Joseph D. Redding’s Work Greeted by Big Audience in Philadelphia. Furor after First Act. Highly Colored Climaxes, but Opera Suffers from Amateurish Libretto—Conclusion is Conventional.”³¹ Critic Lawrence Gilman commented on the work in *Musical America* after the premiere:

The libretto of Joseph Redding should go down into operatic history as one of the most futile, fatuous, halting, impotent, inane, and puerile ever written. Its dramatic development is totally wanting in sense and logic, its situations have been worn threadbare by convention, its characters are sawdust—stuffed marionettes and its verbiage, cheap colloquialism or jingling balderdash. This posed a handicap on the composer, who had nonetheless produced surprising excellences.³²

According to Meredith Wilson, the audience at the premiere concurred:

The disaster became apparent early in the first act, and by the intermission all the people who were able to attend the reception . . . were clutching at their bosoms in agony. . . . The opera got worse clear down to the last curtain, which finally fell, like the hopes of the customers praying for a last-minute miracle. . . . The event was saved by Chauncey DePew, who made a speech in which he pulled out some clippings, saying it was appropriate to read these reviews. Everyone froze in his chair as he read review after review saying things like "what happened last night was neither opera nor drama, the performance was so disgraceful and never should have been allowed." He then revealed to the audience that these reviews he was reading were not of *Natoma* but of the first performance of Bizet's *Carmen*. Nonetheless, it would have taken the great Manitou himself to have saved *Natoma*.³³

Assimilation and Othering in *Natoma*

Character assimilation in Indianist opera often occurred by converting Native Americans to Christianity and this evangelization can be viewed as a way of asserting colonial power. Longfellow's poem *The Song of Hiawatha* helped set this trend in literature as early as 1855; the work concludes with the approach of "the priest of prayer, the pale-face" to Hiawatha's village, as the "black-robe chief" brings words of Jesus Christ. Hiawatha accepts the Christian message and bids farewell to his village by stating: "But my guests I leave behind me/ Listen to their words of wisdom,/ Listen to the truth they tell you," thereby endorsing the message of the Christian missionaries.

Christianizing Native Americans figured prominently in several subsequent operas based on Native American and European American culture, including Giacomo Puccini's *La fanciulla del West* ("Girl of the Golden West," 1910). In this work, the character of Minnie Christianizes her Native American servant Wowkle and Wowkle's mixed-race lover Billy Jackrabbit. Wowkle and Billy have a baby out of wedlock and Minnie stresses the need for them to have a church wedding. Puccini (or more likely his librettists, Guelfo Civinini and Carlo Zangarini) others the two characters not only through portraying their deferential behavior, but also by sidelining them in the text. The libretto not only accomplishes this by giving them few appearances on the stage, but also through the Italian writers' stilted English dialogue (informed in part by David Belasco's original American story) that gives Billy and Wowkle, when they do speak, their own racial and ethnic accents. Wowkle addresses Billy: "Wowkle

say: better keep blanket we for baby,” and in reference to the forthcoming wedding to be celebrated with the singing of a hymn based on a psalm, Billy replies: “Our baby! Tomorrow sing church. The day which the Lord gave unto man is like a blade of grass, once winter descends onto the plains, man becomes sad and dies”; his biblical language and archaic grammar thus illustrate his conversion.³⁴ Despite his religious transformation though, Billy remains demoralized by life in a miners’ camp, stealing cigars and whiskey and remaining drunk most of the time, and therefore perpetuates additional stereotypes as he is further marginalized and othered in the process.

Christian conversion and colonial authority in Herbert’s *Natoma* is represented through the character of Father Peralta, who symbolizes colonial Spain, in his role as leader of the local monastery. Peralta tries to convert Natoma. Barbara, who is the daughter of a Spanish nobleman, and Paul, an American military officer whom Barbara loves, become the inheritors of Christian power and authority when Natoma eventually hands over her tribal necklace to a kneeling Barbara next to Paul inside the church. Natoma then submits herself to the local monastery to be cloistered as a Christian for the rest of her life.

The othering of races dramatically as well as musically in *Natoma* includes other characters and cultures, especially the villainous hot-tempered Spaniard Alvarado, who refers to religious mores by his seemingly innocuous statements to women that suggest his carnal nature. The whole action transpires in this setting where religion plays an important function in the othering of culture: “You little devil!” he says. “I would rather dance with you than have absolution for my sins!” To depict the Spanish other, Herbert often uses Phrygian cadences in the orchestra when accompanying Alvarado with triplet motives (associated with Andalusian traditions), Spanish Cuban dances (such as the *habanera* and *pañuelo*), and instrumentation that includes guitars and castanets. These musical gestures align Alvarado’s seductive and temperamental behavior with his stereotypical Hispanic character (Examples 1 and 2).

Although Natoma is othered, she herself participates in the othering of others, especially Castro, whose biracial identity—he is half-Spanish and half-Native American—makes him an outcast in both societies. For Natoma, Castro’s lack of clear identity feeds her uncertainty as to where he fits into society. He thus mirrors her own insecurity about her own place in this confusion of cultures. Herbert symbolizes Castro’s ambiguous status through harmonically ambiguous tritones and diminished chords (Example 3).³⁷

Alvarado *sotto voce*

(Castanets on stage, played by Chiquita) You lit-tle dev-il! I would

Meno

ff

Più mosso

rather dance with thee than have abso-lution for all my sins!

Meno mosso (Habanera)

p molto espressivo

Example 1. *Natoma*, Act III, mm. 688–716, Habanera³⁵



Example 2. *Natoma*, Act II, mm. 1399–1402, Pañuelo

In *Natoma*, the process of cultural othering is also accomplished in the face of the intruding proverbial “stranger,” a figure in countless fictional works of the nineteenth century. In *Natoma*, this stranger is Paul, who is described with this moniker no fewer than eight times during the opera. Paul, the American military officer, and his group of sailors suggest Anglo-American inroads into 1820s California, where white colonial and military power will become part of a new emerging social hierarchy. The American men thus illustrate a way of life in which physical appearance becomes a manifestation of racial individuality and cultural identity. Paul’s identity is accomplished by diatonic harmony, major triads, and fanfare rhythms, as well as drums accompanying these fanfares, symbolizing an encroaching American military power—one purportedly justified in its colonializing mission in Spanish California on the grounds of clear moral duty.

Toward the end of the work, *Natoma* compares physical differences between her people and that of Paul and the sailors under his command: “The eyes of my people were cold and dark; the eyes of the stranger were soft and blue.” The music segues from minor to major as the narrative shifts from Native American “cold and dark eyes” to Anglo-American “soft and blue ones.” The textual and musical dichotomy identifies cultural biases within Herbert’s world: Anglo-Americans appear “soft” and Native Americans “cold”; burdened and unwelcoming indigenous peoples are accompanied by minor harmony, morally worthy Anglo-Americans are accompanied by major triads (Examples 4 and 5).

Composers often portrayed Native American women in Indianist operas as maidens. Their innocence is often depicted through their deferential martyrdom, thereby appealing to audience members who appreciated the subservient nature of Native American women through their sacrifices. Seen in this light, however, the character of *Natoma* becomes complex, conflicted, and enigmatic. On the one hand, she is passively dedicating her life to Barbara, the daughter of a wealthy Spanish landowner who has just graduated from

Example 3. *Natoma*, Act I, mm. 1032–42³⁸

school at the local convent. Her religiosity if not her specific faith is taken for granted. On the other hand, her devotion to Barbara is such that it drives her to murder anyone who would threaten her mistress. Natoma's dispatch of the villainous, hot-tempered Alvarado is at once highly commendable and entirely inconsistent with her placid Native calm; in this extreme dramatic gesture she confounds our expectations about her yielding nature.⁴⁰

To further complicate matters, her own identity and relationship with Native American culture and music is symbolized at the beginning of the opera. In an attempt to perpetuate this culture, her father before his death asks her to continue the traditions of their race as he places an amulet on her neck, a small abalone shell hung on a necklace of beads. This becomes the emblem of her new contract with her people and symbolizes her peoples' survival.

Molto maestoso

Paul *3*

I am Lieutenant Paul

a tempo

Mer-rill — of the brig "Lib - er - ty," from the U-

nit - - ed States.

cresc. possibile

Example 4. *Natoma*, Act I, mm. 911–18³⁹

He then warns her about the encroaching stranger, in poetic cadences that come straight out of *Hiawatha*:

Father: From the clouds came my first father; out he stepped upon the mountain. Soon there came an awful famine, and his people paled with hunger. . . . Then he went down to the ocean, where the waters roll unceasing, and he prayed unto the Spirit, to the spirit of the mountain, to the Spirit of the waters. And lo! His prayer was answered. . . . In the old age of my father, all my brothers had departed, lost in battle with the stranger.

Natoma: Then my father called me to him, and he said to me, "Natoma, Thou the strongest, thou the eldest, shalt succeed to my dominion. On thy neck I hang the token. Guard the token in thy bosom, as a deed of gift and plenty, from the Spirit to his people.

N. *dolente* The

eyes of my peo - ple were cold and dark;—

(coming centre) *pp poco rit.* The eyes of the stranger were soft— and

p sfz *p* *poco rit.* *pp*

Meno mosso

N. blue,

pp dolciss.

Example 5. *Natoma*, Act III, mm. 196–204⁴¹

This passage is in a minor key, with an ostinato of successive eighth notes, and a thirty-second note followed by a double-dotted eighth-note pattern,⁴² which became Herbert's cliché gesture in reflecting Native American music and more specifically *Natoma's* occasional "primitive" authoritative nature.⁴³



Example 6. *Natoma* theme⁴⁴

This motive, Example 6, is emphasized in relationship to Natoma's sense of authority, inspired by her father's request for her to carry on the traditions of Native American culture, which awakens within Natoma a conflict between protecting Barbara and her own culture and religious values. This motive also symbolizes the conflict between Spanish and Native American cultures, a conflict that comes to a head toward the end of the opera when Natoma's values and respect for her traditions are pitted against European colonialist expression. Natoma, initially portrayed as deferential, eventually becomes enraged by both American and Spanish intrusions and the uncertainty of her race's future, as she declaims her sense of power and entitlement while rebuking the "stranger" and others like him: "False have I been, false to myself, false to my father's teaching, false to my people's faith. Manitou! Hear me! I have awakened! I will go to my people. The voice of my father is calling 'This land is ours!' We will rush from the mountain like the lightning; like the thunder; every stranger and his house shall lie buried beneath our anger. In my breast I hold the token and the gift shall be unbroken from the Spirit to his people." (Example 7)

She reacts to encroaching Anglo-American colonization as well as Spanish imperialism—an illustration of fixed and emerging social hierarchies. She observes both the Spanish mistreatment of as well as Anglo-American attitudes toward Native Americans. Natoma finally relinquishes her indigenous spirituality and adopts Christianity when Father Peralta, the local Spanish priest and social uplifter, contests her Native American religion head-on by revealing monotheism to her, thereby persuading her to assimilate into one of his culture's dominant traditions: "The eyes of Madonna are looking into thine; she holds out her arms to thee; she will take thee unto her great heart; she will lift thy soul until it joins the spirit of thy Father, thy father in the clouds above the mountain."

At this critical moment Natoma then acknowledges that her agreement with her dead father has broken down. Barbara kneels in church with her suitor Paul. Natoma relinquishes her father's amulet by placing it around Barbara's neck. The allegorical coronation signals the shifting of power from Native American tradition-bearers to Colonials old and new, those surrounding her with wealth and colonialist expression. Barbara's lyrical melodies

ff tutta forza

N. hear me! I have a-wak - ened!

ffp *ffz* *ffz*

N. I will go to my peo - ple. The voice of my

ffz *ffz* *ffz*

N. father is calling, "This land is ours!" We will rush from the

ffp *ffz* *ffz*

N. moun - tain, like the lightning, like the thun - der, Ev'ry stranger and his

fff *mf animando* *ffp animando*

Example 7. *Natoma*, Act III, mm. 254–67⁴⁵

accompanied by major seventh chords suggest her comfortable identity as the inheritor of Spanish colonialism and the educational and religious advantages that this inheritance brings. Herbert's identifying musical devices during this scene reveal Barbara's role, as well as the death of Natoma's Native American spirituality as she acquiesces to Barbara and her religious tradition. The music then trails away from that associated with Natoma's Native American identity. The minor key, successive eighth notes, a thirty-second note followed by a double-dotted eighth note motive, pentatonicism, open fifths, a dirge-like tempo, and Natoma's vocables change to hymn-like passages in common time with steady quarter notes, mild polyphony, a major key, and a Latin text to *Te lucis ante terminum* and *Laudate Dominum sanctus* (the former a seventeenth-century hymn for compline published in the Roman Breviary, Example 8). Natoma fully assimilates the Catholic tradition as she walks through the convent doors at the opera's conclusion. She becomes a martyr for her dying race, transmuting the "vanishing race" theory, which dominated thinking about Native Americans at the time of the opera's inception, into one in which the race lives on, albeit invisibly as part of the larger American "race"; that is, the disappearance of the Indian is understood as a logical extension of Manifest Destiny.

Although Natoma represents the other in Herbert's opera, she is also a uniquely enigmatic and contradictory character. She is dedicated and deferential to Barbara, so much so that she is willing to commit murder for her even though Barbara's marriage to a "stranger" is fundamentally more threatening to Natoma's traditional world. Natoma is othered and yet participates in the othering of others. She is unsure of herself at times, but then also acts decisively at critical moments. In other words, she shows herself to be unpredictable and therefore human.

Herbert's work speaks to the relationship among the various cultures in his opera's world: Natoma's Native American traditions, Paul's representation as Anglo-American military power, and Barbara as recipient of Spanish imperial privileges and colonialist wealth. The coronation of Paul and Barbara at the end of the opera becomes a metonym for the marriage of imperialist powers within the colonies and Natoma's acquiescence to defeat by these powers through assimilation.

The mixture of cultures in *Natoma* fits into a larger discussion of colonial agendas, racial identity, ethnic diversity, and migration into and within North America dating back at least a century before Herbert and Redding's day. But it was also an attempt to describe the process of change taking place, not only for Native Americans during the early part of the twentieth century, but

(Two Friars open main door of church. Choir enter organ-loft)

Organ

Piano tacet

Chorus

Tenor I (17th Century)

Tenor II

Bass I

Bass II

Te lu - cis an - te ter - mi - num, re - rum Cre - a - tor, po - sci - mus, re - rum Cre - a - tor, po - sci - mus, re - rum Cre - a - tor, po - sci - mus, re - rum Cre - a - tor, po - sci - mus,

Example 8. *Natoma*, Act IV, mm. 440–52⁴⁷

also for various other cultures within the United States at the time. Fletcher, Farwell, and Baker attempted to document what appeared to be the disappearing traditions of Native Americans in the wake of continued immigration into the United States. These traditions either became part of an idealized landscape for artists and composers, or anthropological curiosities to scholars who wished to document these rites before they disappeared.

For Herbert, it was the former. Perhaps Herbert was himself the ultimate other. Born in Ireland to a Protestant family, he grew up in London with his grandfather and then moved to Germany and Vienna for professional training before spending the rest of his life in the United States. Herbert was consistently the outsider within these cultures while striving to be assimilated into first English, then Continental European, and ultimately American communities. With *Natoma*, he represented himself as a composer of grand opera to an audience more familiar with his lighter operatic works. *Natoma* was not a huge success due, in part, to a weak libretto, but Herbert was nonetheless appreciated for his operettas by America, a citizenry that comprised many groups, all seeking acceptance in a country searching for its own unified identity. Herbert's *Natoma* became one answer to that call.

NOTES

¹ Scholars such as Michel Foucault, the Frankfurt School, and other postmodernists have argued that the process of othering concerns knowledge and power to achieve a particular political agenda with the goal being domination. This is the context in which this article will use the term. Palestinian scholar Edward Said considered this topic anthropologically and sociologically in his book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), where he discusses Verdi's *Aida*. Musicologist Paul Robinson followed suit in his essay "Is *Aida* an Orientalist Opera?" *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 5, no. 2 (July, 1993), 133–40, as did Ralph Locke in his article "Constructing the Oriental 'Other': Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila*," *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 3, no. 3 (November, 1991), 261–302.

² These include Arthur Nevin's *Poia* (1910), Victor Herbert's *Natoma* (1911), Frederick Converse's *The Sacrifice* (1911), Mary Carr Moore's *Narcissa* (1912), Charles Cadman's *Daoma or The Land of Misty Water* (1912), William Hanson's *The Sun Dance* (1913), Henry Hadley's *Azora, Daughter of Montezuma* (1917), Cadman's *Shanewis* (1918), and *The Sunset Trail* (1922), Moore's *The Flaming Arrow* (1922), Eugene Farner's *The White Buffalo Maiden* (1923), Francesco DeLeone's *Alglala* (1924), Alberto Bimboni's *Winona* (1926), Earle Blakeslee's *The Legend of Wiwaste* (1927), Charles Skilton's *Kalopin* (1927), Eleanor Freer's *The Chilkoot Maiden* (1927), Hanson's *Tam-Man-Nacup* (1928), Bruce Knowlton's *Wakuta* (1928), Skilton's *The Sun Bride* (1930), and Moore's *Los Rubios* (1931).

³ G. W. F. Hegel's (1770–1831) notions regarding cultural progress concerned finding meaning and direction in history in which "history" is understood as a process moving toward a specific condition, the realization of human freedom. Hegel viewed

the history of the world as a narrative of various stages, perceiving countries such as China and India as static and therefore “prehistorical,” which I would argue, he would have applied to Native American culture. Hegel inferred that there is a reason that certain countries were conquered, which could not be fully comprehended until the evolution of history had been completed. His philosophy set out to discover the rational within the real instead of fixing the rational upon the real. See Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (1837), trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956) a book based on lectures he gave from 1822 to 1831.

Charles Darwin (1809–82) in *The Descent of Man* (ideas conceived in 1830s, book published 1871) viewed people he saw in South America as part of a “savage race,” humans in a more primitive state of civilization, as opposed to those living in more “evolved” civilizations in Europe and America.

⁴ Other Indianist operas before 1900 include Ferdinand Kauer's (1751–1831) opera in one act entitled *Inkle and Yariko* (New York, August 8, 1798), in collaboration with Josef Alois Gleich (also see Joice Waterhouse Gibson, “A Musical and Cultural Analysis of *Inkle and Yariko* from England to America, 1787–1844,” PhD dissertation, University of Colorado Boulder, 2011); John Bray's (1782–1822) *The Indian Princess, or La Belle Sauvage*, an operatic melodrama in three acts with a libretto by M. Nelson Barker (Philadelphia, April 6, 1808); Luigi Arditi's (1822–1903) opera in three acts entitled *La Spia* (New York, March 24, 1856) based on James Fenimore Cooper's *The Spy*; Lucien H. Southard's (1827–87) *Omano* (Boston, 1858); and Eduard De Sobolewski's (1808–72) *Mohega, or The Flower of the Forest* (1859).

⁵ Joseph Kaye. *Victor Herbert: The Biography of America's Greatest Composer of Romantic Music* (New York: G.H. Watt, 1931), 213.

⁶ Victor Herbert, *Natoma* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1911).

⁷ James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (N.Y.: T.Y. Crowell and Co., 1896); Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha* (Dansville, NY: F. A. Owen, 1905).

⁸ Ralph P. Boas and Katherine Burton, *Social Backgrounds of American Literature* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1933), 68.

⁹ The Indian estate diminished from 150 million acres before the Dawes Act to 104 million acres by 1890, 77 million by 1900, and 48 million by 1934; in 1934, Franklin Roosevelt repealed the Dawes Act. Ironically, the Dawes Act stimulated much protest from the Native American population, culminating in the Wounded Knee Massacre on December 29, 1890. On that day, near Wounded Knee Creek on the Lakota Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, in what was to be the last battle of the American Indian Wars, American troops went into the camp to disarm the Lakota. It has been claimed that during the process a deaf tribesman named Black Coyote was reluctant to give up his rifle. A scuffle over the rifle escalated and a shot was fired. The American troops opened fire, killing men, women, and children, as well as some of their own troopers. By the time it was over, at least 150 men, women, and children of the Lakota had been killed and twenty-five troopers died.

¹⁰ Joseph Emerson Smith, *The Story of Mesa Verde National Park: America's Sublime Antiquity Has the Lure of a Mystery Greater than the Ruined Cities of the Old World* (Denver, CO: Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Company, 1910); reprinted in Philip Jenkins, *Dream Catchers: How Mainstream America Discovered Native Spirituality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 66. This phenomenon

coincided with artistic movements in Europe, including Exoticism and Primitivism, which celebrated cultures that seemed mysterious or removed in space and time.

¹¹ Reuben Ellis, ed., *Lawrence—Stories and Stone: An Anasazi Reader* (Boulder, CO: Pruett, 1996), 154; reprinted in Jenkins, *Dream Catchers*, 66.

¹² The Czech composer Antonin Dvořák attended this event.

¹³ Gilbert Chase, *American Music, From the Pilgrims to the Present* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 395.

¹⁴ Theodore Baker, *Über die Musik der nordamerikanischen Wilden* (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Haertel, 1882).

¹⁵ Social Darwinism, in which biological science was applied to sociology and politics, emerged in the United States during the 1870s. Ernst Haeckel's *Welträtsel* ("Riddle of the Universe") of 1899 brought social Darwinism to a wider American audience.

¹⁶ Edward MacDowell's pupil, Henry Gilbert, suggested MacDowell read Baker's thesis, and MacDowell employed some of Baker's collected material into his music. See Harry D. Perison, "Charles Wakefield Cadman: His Life and Works (PhD dissertation, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, 1984), 61.

¹⁷ This had been presented at the 1893 International Anthropological Congress in Chicago. Alice Cunningham Fletcher, "A Study of Omaha Indian Music," *Archaeological and Ethnological Papers of the Peabody Museum*, vol. 1, no. 5 (June, 1893), 1–57, 79–152; the book is entitled *A Study of Omaha Indian Music*, with John Comfort Fillmore (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, 1893).

¹⁸ John Comfort Fillmore (1843–98) was a music theorist and musician who grew up in Connecticut and studied at Oberlin College in 1865. He was a professor of music at Oberlin for one year (1867–68) and then served for ten years as a professor of music at Ripon College (1868–78); from 1878 to 1884 he held a similar position at the Milwaukee College for Women. He was a founder of the Milwaukee Music School (1884), and was its director until 1895, when he accepted a position at Pomona College in Claremont, California. Fillmore was one of America's leading music theorists. His books include *History of Pianoforte Music* (1883) and *New Lessons in Harmony* (Philadelphia: T. Presser, 1887). He was a co-author with Alice Fletcher of *A Study of Omaha Indian Music* (1893).

¹⁹ Fletcher, *A Study of Omaha Indian Music*, 1–57, 79–152; reprinted in Perison, "Charles Wakefield Cadman," 64.

²⁰ Fletcher, *A Study of Omaha Indian Music*, 292.

²¹ S.v. "Amerindian I: Pan-Indian Movement, *New Grove Online*.

²² Charles Cadman, "The Idealization of Indian Music," *Musical Quarterly* 1:3 (July 1915), 389.

²³ Victor Herbert, untitled article, *New York Times* (January 22, 1911), n.p.

²⁴ The Wa-Wan Society of America was established in 1905 with a board consisting of George Chadwick, Charles Loeffler, Arthur Foote, Frank Damrosch, and Lawrence Gilman. The first issue disseminated the policies and purposes of the society, challenging members to promote the cause of American music; the second issue

listed specific ideas for the study of American music and suggested lesson plans for this purpose, while citing representative works by American composers. The January 1907 issue changed its focus from a previous appeal to professional and highly developed amateur musicians to a publication geared to the "general music lover and amateur of no great technical attainment." Farwell combined the Wa-Wan Press with the American Music Society in Boston in 1908 to form the National American Music Society. Four bulletins were published as a result: June, October, and December of 1908, and March 1909. In 1909, Farwell moved to New York and joined the editorial staff of *Musical America*, but he continued publishing the Wa-Wan Press until 1912 and then turned over the press to Schirmer. See Evelyn Culbertson, *He Heard America Singing: Arthur Farwell: Composer and Crusading Music Educator* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1992), 165.

²⁵ Wa-Wan Press, vol. 2, part 1 (March, 1903), introduction, pp. 18–19. Farwell created the Wa-Wan Press in 1901 and produced two volumes of music, one vocal and one instrumental, each quarter through 1912, as well as the *Wa-Wan Monthly*, a magazine devoted to the promotion of new American music created in line with Farwell's ideas. Each musical volume contained an explanatory introduction to its contents. A complete facsimile reprint edition of the Wa-Wan Press compositions and essays, edited by Vera Brodsky Lawrence, was published in five bound volumes by Arno Press and the *New York Times* in 1970.

²⁶ The journal began monthly publication (twelve editions per year) in January 1907. Instrumental compositions published in the Wa-Wan Press include Stanley Avery's *Eskimo Love Song*; Harvey Worthington Loomis's *Lyrics of the Red Man*, Op. 76, Book I for piano (1903), with the following movements: "Music of the Calumet," "A Song of Sorrow," "Around the Wigwam," "The Silent Conqueror," and "Warrior's Dance." Book II includes "Prayer to Wakonda" (Offering of the Sacred Pipe), "On the War Path," "Ripe Corn Dance" (Harvest Ceremonial), "Evening at the Lodge," "The Chattering Squaw," "Scalp Dance," "The Thunder God and the Rainbow," and "The Warrior's Last Word." Carlos Troyer (1873–1920) had the following published in the Wa-Wan Press: "Ghost Dance of the Zunis" for piano (1904); "Hymn to the Sun: An Ancient Jubilee Song of the Sun-Worshippers, With Historical Account of the Ceremony and the Derivation of Music from the Sun's Rays," a song with piano accompaniment (1909); "Indian Fire-Drill Song as sung by the Mojave-Apaches While Revolving the Fire-Stick," a song with piano accompaniment ("Uru Kuru," 1907); "Kiowa-Apache War Dance" for piano (1907); *Traditional Songs of the Zunis*, all songs with piano accompaniment with English and Indian texts with the following movements: "Zunian Lullaby and Incantation," "The Lover's Wooing, or The Blanket Song," "The Sunrise Call," and "The Coming of Montezuma," "The Festive Sun Dance of the Zunis," and "The Great Rain Dance of the Zunis." Arthur Farwell's works in the Wa-Wan Press include his piano solo entitled "American Indian Melodies" (1901) "Dawn," Op. 12 for piano solo and revised for orchestra (1902); "The Domain of Hurakan," Op. 15 for piano (1902); "From Mesa and Plain: Indian, Cowboy and Negro Sketches" (1905) for piano "Ichibuzzhi," Op. 13 for piano (1902); and "Impressions of the Wa-Wan Ceremony of the Omahas," Op. 21 (1906).

²⁷ Joseph Redding letter (November 5, 1909); published in Edward N. Waters, *Victor Herbert: A Life in Music* (New York: MacMillan, 1955), 374–75. Redding was found through an offer of one thousand dollars to an American who would provide a suitable libretto for Herbert. See Waters, 369–70; also see Joseph Kaye, *Victor Herbert: The Biography of America's Greatest Composer of Romantic Music* (G.H. Watt, 1931), 212.

- ²⁸ Author unknown, "Cadman's Shanewis," *Musical Courier* (March 28, 1918), 28.
- ²⁹ Pisani notes that there were no convents in California before 1850 and most Catholic missions had been disbanded by civil decree by the early 1830s, but that missions before this time were safe havens for Native American women. He also notes that Anglo-Americans settled in Mexican California between 1833 and 1850.
- ³⁰ The Metropolitan Opera had one primary competitor during the opening decade of the twentieth century, the Manhattan Opera Company, run by impresario Oscar Hammerstein. Because the Metropolitan Opera had produced its first American opera in 1910 with the production of Frederick Converse's *The Pipe of Desire*, Hammerstein subsequently tried to compete by hiring Victor Herbert to compose an American "Grand Opera."
- ³¹ *The New York Times* (February 26, 1911), 8.
- ³² Lawrence Gilman, "Natoma Endorsed by New York for Its Music, Alone," *Musical America* (March 4, 1911).
- ³³ Meredith Wilson, *And There I Stood With My Piccolo* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1948), 49–53.
- ³⁴ Giacomo Puccini, *La Fanciulla del West*, Franco Capuana and Orchestra e coro dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Rome; recording jacket: Decca, 421595-2, p. 41. "Wowkle dire: Meglio tenere coperta noi per bimbo. [Billy:] Nostro bimbo! Domani chiesa cantare. Come fil d'erba è il giorno che all'uomo diè il signor scende l'inverno al piano l'uomo intristisce e muor."
- ³⁵ Herbert, *Natoma*, 273.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 214.
- ³⁷ Puccini also incorporated José Castro, a biracial character, in *La fanciulla del West* ("Girl of the Golden West"). Castro is described as a "mestizo greaser" of European and Native American descent who is in Ramirez's gang. During the Colonial period, mestizos became the majority group in Spanish-speaking parts of Latin America, when various colonies became independent from Spain.
- ³⁸ Herbert, *Natoma*, 84.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 72, 177.
- ⁴⁰ Herbert's librettist, Joseph Redding, adds his comments about the character of Natoma in relationship to the decline of two societies: "I have a basis for giving [Natoma] beauty, simplicity and ideality: in a letter written by Vescanio (one of the earlier Spanish explorers) to the King of Spain in 1603, he speaks of the California Indians, particularly those from the mountains, and refers to the beauty and dignity of the Indian women. In several of the letters written by the early mission Padres to the Viceroy of Spain and to the Pope himself, they refer to the comeliness, the cleanliness and the intelligence of the California Indian girls to me. Natoma is somewhat allegorical in that she epitomizes the pathos and heartache of the disappearing race as against the influx of the Aryan tribes. . . . The work shows that two characters are virtually obliterated: the devil-may-care and romantic Spaniard and the Indian." See Joseph Redding letter (November 5, 1909), reprinted in Waters, 374–75.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 300.
- ⁴² Herbert, *Natoma*, 34–43.

⁴³ Michael Pisani notes that this melody was already published by Ernest Kroeger as an orchestral work in *March of the Indian Phantoms* (1904), which had its premiere at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. It was then popularized by an arrangement made on an Ampico piano roll. Pisani further suggests that this melody is similar to the Dakota nation's "Song of the Dog Society," as collected by Natalie Curtis and published in *The Indians' Book* (1907); he also maintains that the extract forms the basis for the "Tobacco Dance Song," recorded at the Crow reservation in Montana (1910) by Thurlow Lieurance and later quoted by Lieurance in his *Indian Suite for Piano*. See Pisani, *Imagining Native America in Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005) 263.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Herbert, *Natoma*, 306.

⁴⁶ See Edward Curtis, *The North American Indian: The Complete Portfolios* (New York: Taschen, 2005). Curtis wrote about Native Americans at the beginning of the twentieth century, when he believed them to be a vanishing race, a view echoed by many scholars and government officials at the time. His ideas were based on several theories, including the idea that Manifest Destiny had been accomplished and the frontier successfully captured. This was coupled with the social Darwinist concept that the wars between Native Americans and Euro-Americans had been an evolutionary one between a so-called primitive culture and a more advanced Euro-American one. Since Native American identity was associated primarily with its culture and less with physical appearance, Curtis claimed that Indian culture had been conquered and was therefore disappearing.

⁴⁷ Herbert, *Natoma*, 320.

Melanie Shaffer

Paul Robeson's Iconic Timbre and the Negotiation of Signification

Paul Robeson, one of the most extraordinary African American cultural figures of the twentieth century, stood himself, and supported his people, on two strong pillars: his speech and his song. Robeson was loved around the world for his concerts of spirituals and folk songs, his work on the stage (most famously in *Show Boat* and *Othello*) and his film acting, notably in *The Emperor Jones* and *Sanders of the River*. Robeson's voice also resonated with the political causes that opposed slavery and oppression and sought to relieve human suffering, which he observed both at home and abroad. He not only made his living with his voice, but he was vocal about his convictions. It is thus unsurprising that almost every mention of Paul Robeson attempts to describe the Voice, its timbre and effect. Expressing themselves in often grandiloquent and poetical terms, audiences, reporters, fans, friends, and family seem almost at a loss for an appropriate vocabulary. Robeson's timbre—that quality that most often eludes satisfactory description—is what the public and critics tried repeatedly to concretize, because for them, Paul Robeson was signified by his voice.

Once the voice became a signifier of Robeson, it necessarily also indexed everything he did and stood for. Robeson's voice was a synecdoche, one aspect of him that came to represent his entire being. Acknowledging that every person's voice—with all its constituent aspects—is unique and serves to identify one specific individual does not undermine the significance of the voice functioning as an especially weighty sign in Robeson's case. Rather, considering that Robeson was not easily categorized by any single action, activity or occupation—he succeeded brilliantly as a scholar, professional athlete, political orator, multilingual singer, and charismatic actor—the fact that his timbre came to signify *every* aspect of such a complex character indicates just how distinctive his voice must have been.¹

Spectrogram analysis reveals Robeson's voice as quantifiably unique, distinct from his contemporaries in consistently characteristic ways, and it provides a qualitative, concrete vocabulary for Robeson's timbre. From this we can develop a rationale to explain how his voice functioned so strongly as icon and index.² Through this vocal indexicality one can better understand inconsistencies and conflicts in Robeson's self-identification and the artificial ways the public essentialized Robeson as both artist and political activist.

Robeson's voice came to function as iconic on two main bases: its distinctiveness from the voices of his most noteworthy contemporaries and the similarity between his speaking and singing voice. Comparing Robeson's voice with the voice of Jules Bledsoe, one of Robeson's most notable contemporaries and his predecessor in the role of Joe in Kern and Hammerstein's *Show Boat* (1927), is revealing. In Robeson's live 1928 Drury Lane rendition of his now emblematic "Ol' Man River," the harmonic profile of his timbre is reliably strongest in the first four harmonics (sometimes more), a group of midrange harmonics, the twelfth to eighteenth, and an upper band of harmonics reaching all the way up to the twenty-fourth (Figure 1).³ These upper harmonics frequently reach above 3,000 Hz. When the middle band of partials is not present, the lower and very high harmonics remain equally spaced and equally strong. For example, on the low note of the phrase "just keeps rolling along," harmonics 1 through 7 are strong, with the next loudest being

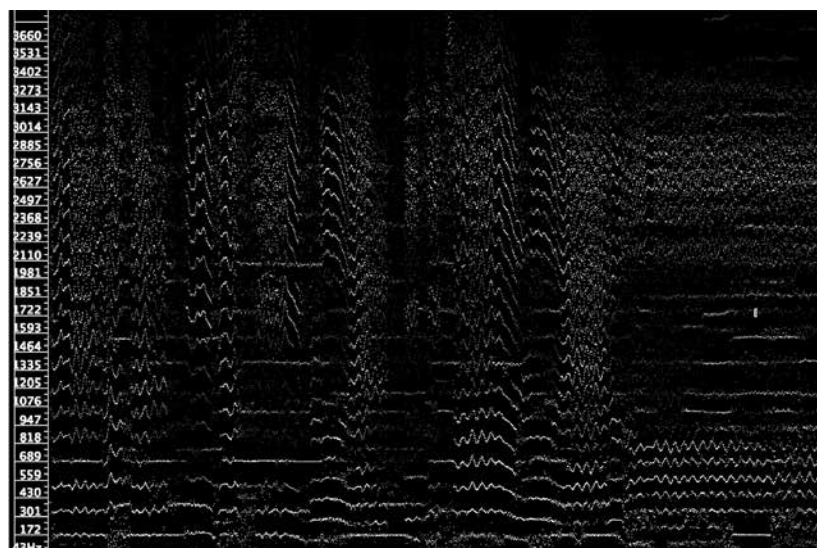


Figure 1. Paul Robeson, "Ol' Man River," text corresponding to the notes: "...say nothing. He just keeps rolling, he keeps on rolling along."

the twenty-second to twenty-fifth partials. In comparison, Jules Bledsoe's timbre is characterized by a strong presence of all of the first twelve harmonics.⁴ Like Robeson, an upper and lower band of harmonics is sometimes emphasized, but when this array is notable, the upper band never reaches above the eighteenth harmonic, much lower than Robeson's, and the upper harmonics are weaker and more diffuse (Figure 2). The apex of Bledsoe's frequency content registers at 2,800–2,900 Hz, again notably lower than the upper limit of overtones in Robeson's voice. Upper overtones add brilliance and ring to a sound, so Robeson's timbre is characterized by strong lower harmonics, which one would expect of his lauded, deep bass, but also by the bright, nasal carrying power and ring from the high partials.

Though "Ol' Man River" was unquestionably Robeson's most well-known song, his early concerts consisted largely of spirituals, a genre pioneered as solo repertoire by Roland Hayes, whose voice can also be beneficially compared to Robeson's in their shared genre.⁵ Roland Hayes's timbre in an unaccompanied performance of "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" is characterized by prominent lower harmonics, from the fundamental to about the fourth overtone.⁶ His timbre is rarely characterized by prominent upper partials, and when they are present, hardly any occur above the ninth partial and they are then usually accompanied by a loss of strength in the lower harmonics (Figure 3). Like Hayes's, Robeson's rendition of "Were You

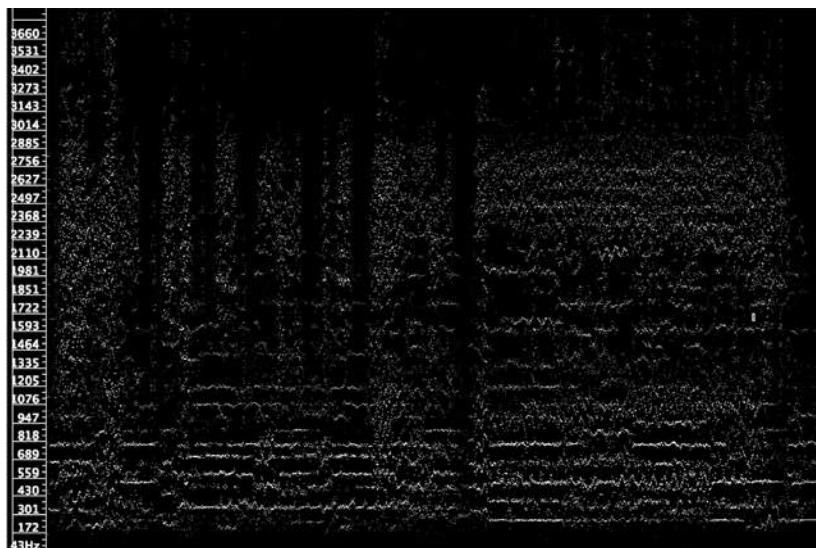


Figure 2. Jules Bledsoe, "Ol' Man River," text corresponding to notes sung: "...say nothing. He just keeps rolling, he keeps on rolling along."

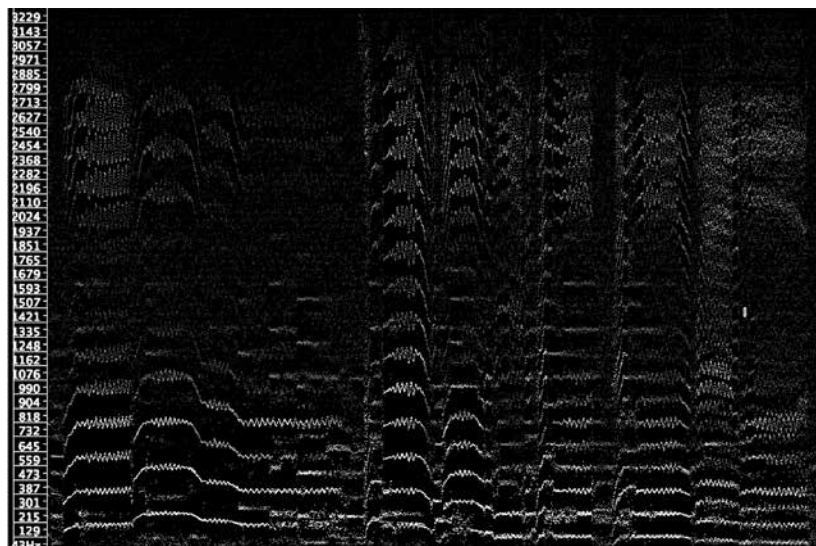


Figure 3. Paul Robeson, “Were You There?” corresponding text: “Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.”

There” features strong lower harmonics, usually the fundamental through the fourth or fifth.⁷ However, as we saw with “Ol’ Man River,” Robeson’s voice shows an almost constant emphasis on a band of upper partials, usually an additional three to four overtones in the range of the tenth to sixteenth partials. Also, unlike Hayes, whose lower harmonics decrease when his higher harmonics increase, even Robeson’s lowest pitches maintain a high degree of lower resonance while registering some of the highest overtones of the performance. For example, the harmonic profile of the final word, “tremble,” the lowest note in the song, displays the strong presence of the fundamental to the seventh harmonic as well as upper harmonics in the range of the twentieth to twenty-fourth overtones (Figure 4). A related comparison illustrates that while Robeson’s timbre frequently emphasizes frequencies up to 2,700–2,800 Hz, there are few significant frequencies in Hayes’s voice above 2,200 Hz (and often the average is lower).

One might contend that because Hayes was classically trained, the main differences in his and Robeson’s timbre in spirituals could be chalked up to the sound-aesthetic of training and performance in a specific genre. Comparing Hayes’s and Robeson’s performances of two Schubert songs, however, reveals that their timbral identities remain consistent across genres. Hayes’s timbre in a performance of “Nacht und Träume” contains an even emphasis of, on average, the first five harmonics.⁸ Regardless of pitch, when Hayes

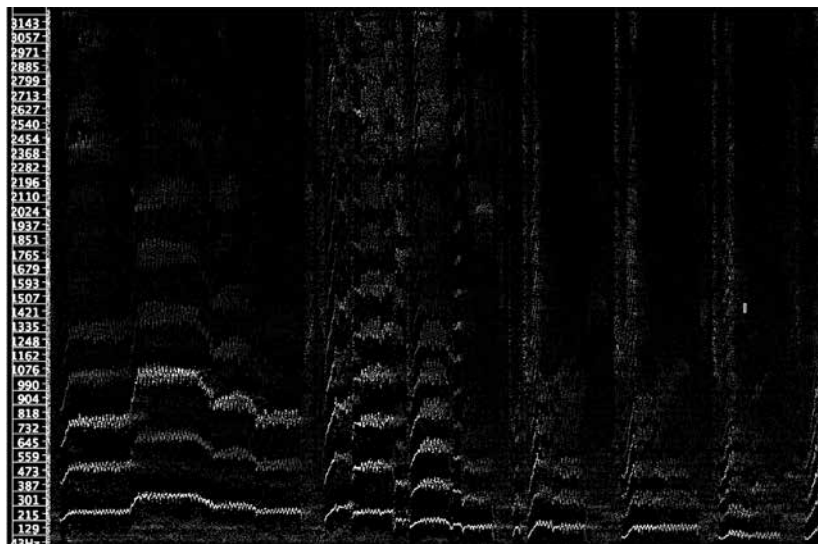


Figure 4. Roland Hayes, “Were You There?” corresponding text: “Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.”

sings *piano* or *pianissimo*, the higher harmonics decrease significantly, a characteristic also observed in “Were You There?” (Figure 5). Robeson’s rendition of “Lullaby/Wiegenlied,” sung in both English and German, registers prominently in the first four harmonics, marginally less than Hayes’s, but also displays a nearly ever-present, isolated group of upper partials, congregated around the fifteenth overtone (Figure 6).⁹ Regardless of genre then, a separation between strong lower frequencies and strong, very high frequencies seems to consistently characterize Robeson’s timbre.

Because Robeson’s voice is different *in the same way* from each of his contemporaries, it takes on a signifying function more strongly than other voices might. Of course any distinctive voice can serve as an iconic sign; that is, in the semiotic terms of Charles Peirce, it can resemble or identify its source. But Robeson’s timbre not only identifies him as Paul Robeson, one of many talented African American male singers, but as an individual distinct from a collective. His voice is therefore more strongly iconic of him and of him-and-not-them than other voices might be, further adding to the list of ways the public had to identify Robeson as an individual instead of a type.

Doris Evans McGinty and Wayne Shirley suggest that reports of Robeson’s vocal quality may have dominated press coverage because reviewers were unfamiliar with the form and repertory of his concerts. However, it could be

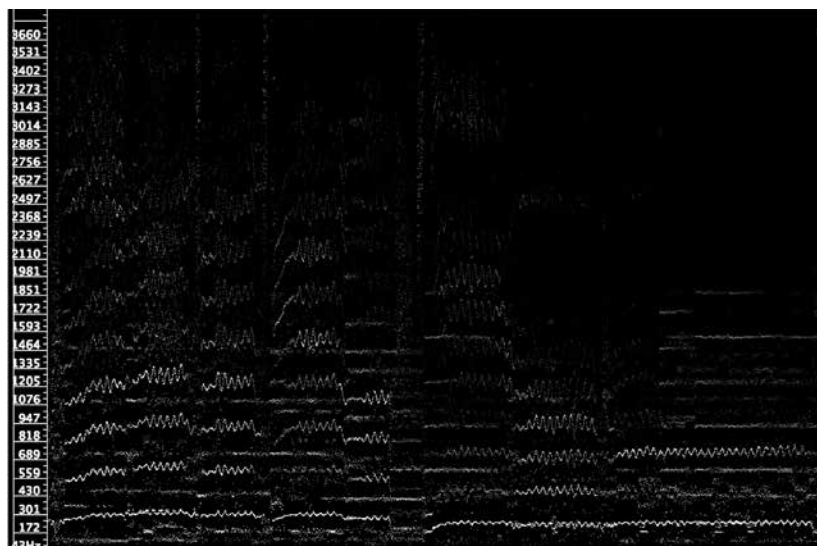


Figure 5. Roland Hayes, “Nacht und Träume,” text under the notes: “der Menschen stille, stille Brust.”

argued with equal force that the impression made by his voice simply overshadowed the reaction to any other element of the performance.¹⁰ Critics describe his voice with “phrases such as ‘a voice in which deep bells ring,’ and ‘deep and rolling bass.’”¹¹ One especially noteworthy review in the *British Musician and Musical News* praised Robeson for his evenness and control in moving through the registers of his range, describing his voice

as always lyrical; it flows like a deep river which has not a ripple on its surface. He has a wonderful range. His low tones are full, round, mellow, rich as velvet. His entire scale is perfectly and artistically graded. His command of the nasal element is so perfect that he might be a tenor in extreme altitudes.¹²

During his lifetime, Robeson became almost as well known for his political activism and speechmaking as he was for his singing, thereby adding speech as a second vocal identifier of Robeson. Evidence of this dual renown is clear from the fact that descriptions of Robeson’s voice are equally emphatic about his speaking as well as his singing. The *London Sunday Times* referred to his speaking voice, when he played the lead role in Eugene O’Neill’s *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*, as “like the sighing of the wind through cedars.”¹³ His son, Paul Robeson, Jr., described with similar sensuousness his father’s voice as he experienced it as a child: “His speaking voice ranged in pitch from a deep velvety bass to a high baritone that sounded like a tenor. . . . The

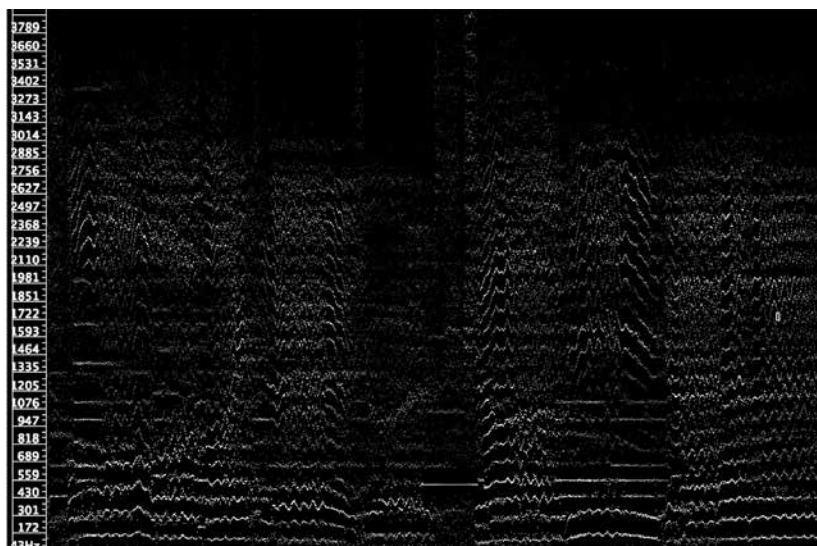


Figure 6. Paul Robeson, “Lullaby/Wiegenlied,” corresponding text: “All thy blessings, all thy pleasure, shall be gathered.”

tone could envelop in a soft caress, probe tentatively, command peremptorily, dismiss contemptuously, or lash angrily.”¹⁴ For Paul Robeson, Jr., the inherently song-like quality of his father’s speaking identified the man as *his* father and formed his earliest memories of him. The comments of Amanda Aldridge, the daughter of nineteenth-century African American actor Ira Aldridge and a vocal coach for Robeson during his run as Othello in London, serve as a particularly relevant example here because she refers to both his speaking and his singing in the same sentence.¹⁵ In a letter to Robeson’s wife Essie after hearing him on the radio, she wrote, “How wondrously beautiful Mr. Paul’s voice sounded just now. And how absolutely distinct his softest tones in both singing and speaking were . . . it is a most beautiful voice.”¹⁶ The *Kansas City Times* praised Robeson for his exceptional ability to “inflect” music and text, a verb that implies that careful attention was being paid to the words in a musical context.¹⁷ While descriptions of his singing voice often take prominence in reviews, the critical language used to describe Robeson’s speaking is strikingly similar in tone.

Robeson’s speaking was not only acclaimed with similarly imagistic language, but was also distinct from his contemporaries’ speech in the same ways. This is evidenced by Robeson’s performance of a monologue from *Othello* at his “comeback” concert at Carnegie Hall in 1958, compared with James Weldon Johnson’s recitation of his own poem “Creation” from *God’s Trombones*.¹⁸

Once again, the upper harmonics in Robeson's voice are more distinctively present than in his contemporary's. Robeson's speech emphasizes the first three harmonics (interestingly with less emphasis on the fundamental than second to third partial) as well as a group of three or four upper partials in the range of the twelfth to thirteenth harmonics (Figure 7). Johnson's speaking timbre registers prominently in all of the first ten or eleven partials. His voice essentially encompasses the same harmonic range as Robeson, but with evenly weighted partials throughout, whereas Robeson's upper harmonics are distinctly separated from his lower harmonics (Figure 8). Again, in exactly the same way as his singing voice, Robeson's timbre was specifically distinct from his contemporaries' speaking timbre. Both modes of Robeson's vocal-ity were independently strong and unmistakably linked to him. Hence each reinforced the other, intensifying semiotic significance.

Indices, according to Charles Peirce's schematic, are defined as signs that "signify through co-occurrence with their object in real-time situations."¹⁹ Voices are therefore not only iconic, but also often indexical of the people they belong to. The power of an index is that once the co-occurrence of sign and signified is established, the sign can reference the original "signified" even without co-occurring with it or even it being present at all. The index can then take on new layers of meaning while still carrying the old meanings with

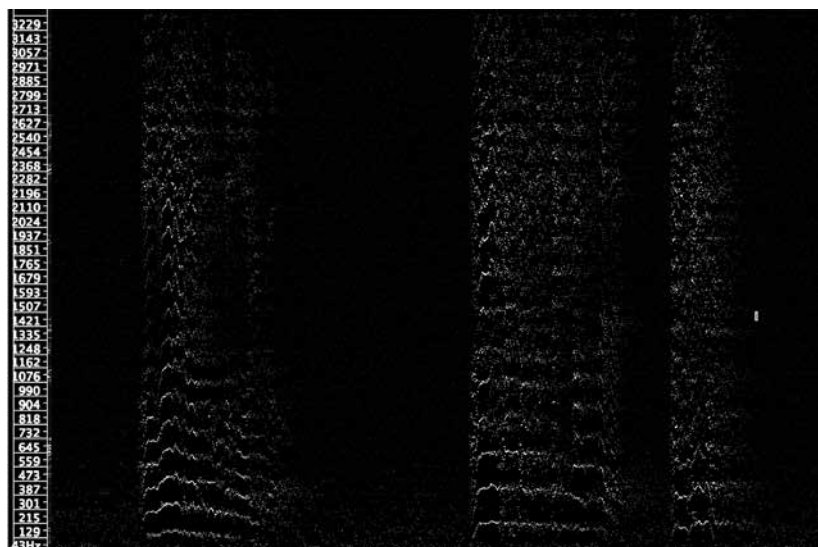


Figure 7. Paul Robeson, *Othello*, Act V, scene 2: "A word or two before you go. I have done the State some service, and they know it!"

it. Explicating Peirce in terms of music, Thomas Turino explains, “the affective power of musical indices is the fact that they are able to condense great quantities and varieties of meaning—even contradictory meanings—within a single sign.”²⁰ Because Robeson's speaking voice was iconic of his singing voice and vice versa, his speaking timbre indexed his singing timbre, and thus his speech brought with it the significance and meaning of his singing. Even more significantly, his singing voice carried with it the layers of meaning of his speaking voice, indexing all the contexts where his speaking voice was present. Therefore everything Robeson the person did added another layer of meaning to be carried by the index of his timbre.

Furthermore, even without song or speech, Robeson's strong, imposing visual presence in films and photographs signified the embodied voice. Likewise the vocal timbre evoked the body. The signifying process chains, snowballing meaning; Robeson's voice indexed his whole person. Therefore his image and all his actions brought with them the layers of meaning of his singing and speaking. Reciprocally, and more importantly, because Robeson engaged the world as both artist and activist in speech and in song, his vocal timbre in any context became indexical of political activism, and eventually specific political opinions.

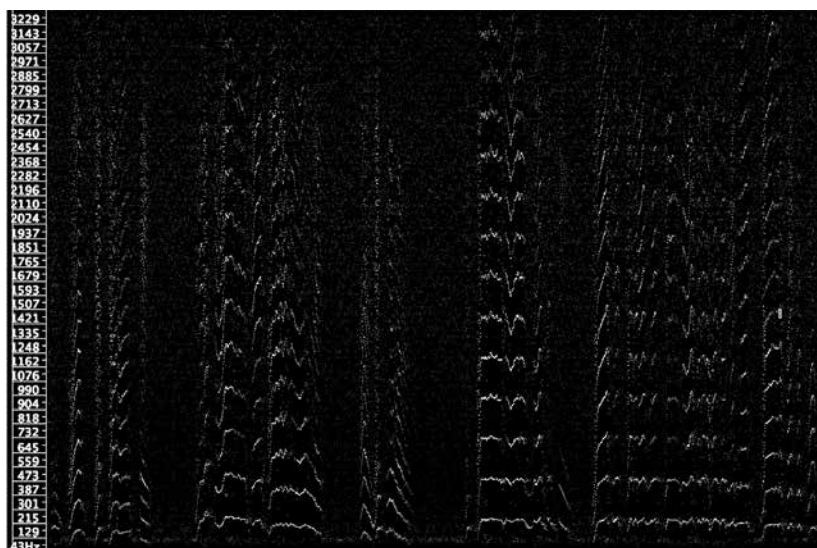


Figure 8. James Weldon Johnson, “God’s Creation” text: “God stepped out on stage/He looked around and said, ‘I’m lonely. I’ll make me a world.’/And far as the eye of God could see, darkness covered everything, blacker than a hundred mid-nights down in the cypress swamp.”

Robeson's fame exploded throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and he viewed his role in the cause of African American freedom as a high artistic calling.²¹ Though he had always been an advocate for people of his race, his increasingly international fame, especially during his time in England, introduced him to thoughts and work of others who were making minority voices heard around the world.²² Robeson became more deeply involved and vocal in anti-fascist, anti-racist, and anti-colonialist causes throughout the later decade.²³ After the Second World War Robeson's increasingly visible political persona and his association with Communists or other left-wing individuals and organizations—not previously a problem for his audiences—led inevitably to confrontation with conservative forces in the United States and stoked conflicted reactions among his fans. The government became wary of him, as it was of many intellectuals, artists, and performers. Working-class fans in Britain, where he resided for over a decade, thanked him for both his artistry and race advocacy, but many Americans, who knew him chiefly as a calm and confident but apolitical figure, did not appreciate his extra-artistic endeavors.²⁴ It is in the context of such a highly charged political environment during the late 1940s that we see how Robeson's voice gradually solidified as an index, carrying layers of meaning he could not manipulate.

The signifying depth of Robeson's voice, which indexed all his speaking and singing anytime his iconic timbre sounded, casts light on some of the seemingly naïve comments of those who granted or withheld invitations for Robeson to perform. Governmental authorities, booking agents, and venue hosts often appeared to view Paul Robeson the political speaker and Paul Robeson the singer as separate people, seemingly threatened by the former but not by the latter. Some, while strongly objecting to Robeson's political presence in the 1940s and '50s, wished to retain him as the beloved artist they knew from earlier days. Robeson's growing political passion was for him a natural and necessary posture for an artist, but his public did not always understand why Robeson had to complicate art with political baggage. In fact, later in his career, many welcomed Robeson to their venue/town only if he would sing and not speak. In 1947 Robeson was allowed to perform a concert in Toronto on that condition. Also in 1947, the Board of Education in Albany, New York, attempted to cancel Robeson's concert, but was overruled by state Supreme Court Justice Isidore Bookstein. Though the judge declared it unlawful to cancel the show based on unverified allegations about the performer's Communist sympathies, Bookstein required Robeson to "confine himself to his musical program."²⁵ This stipulation implied a belief that the Communist Robeson was completely distinct from the musical Robeson. Similarly, in 1949 as Robeson performed a concert tour of Jamaica and Trinidad, the

FBI followed close behind to make sure Robeson was not engaged in any “non-musical function[s].”²⁶ The British government, also concerned about this trip, considered banning Robeson from the West Indies, but withdrew its opposition, “confident that he was only going to sing.”²⁷ Such reasoning implied that as a singer, Robeson’s supposed communist leanings were innocuous, whereas these same beliefs overtly expressed in a political speech were grounds for governmental intervention.

The situation changed dramatically in 1949, when Robeson made an unplanned appearance in Paris at the World Congress of Partisans of Peace, an organization founded on opposition to armed conflict, but believed by some to be a front for Soviet propaganda. Robeson’s support for Russia’s communist system, largely influenced by his positive experience there as a person of color, was reiterated as part of a brief talk that nevertheless made world headlines. After his infamous 1949 Paris speech,²⁸ in which he was misunderstood as speaking for all African Americans on issues of war and peace around the world, an editorial in *The New York Times* echoed the government’s wishful thinking, pleading that his fans “want[ed] him to sing, and to go on being Paul Robeson” and not to make speeches, which the pundit saw as a career mistake.²⁹ Even without the underlying fear or outrage at Robeson’s political statements, the editorial shows how people felt emotionally connected to what they saw as Robeson’s *true* identity: his singing and not his activism. As another sign of this bifurcated attitude, the State Department was rumored to be offering a cessation of their surveillance of Robeson if “he returned to ‘art’”—implying that a turn toward art was a turn away from politics.³⁰ A year later, in 1950, State Department officials, spurred on by the rising anti-Red hysteria, offered Robeson an unacceptable deal: either sign a statement promising to give up speechmaking when traveling abroad or forfeit his passport. Once more, authorities concerned with the content of potentially anti-American speeches appeared not to consider the possibility that Robeson’s concerts alone could communicate an unflattering image of the United States to the world. Yet their fear of his political sentiments and a possibly hidden agenda alone were enough to justify confiscation of Robeson’s passport, completely closing him off from all international performances from 1951 to 1958, a significant segment of his singing career. Even after Robeson clearly identified himself as a Communist sympathizer—events no longer left room for anyone to believe him solely an innocuous performer of traditional spirituals and folk songs—public figures still appeared to betray a divided view of Robeson’s identity. As late as 1956 he was allowed to extend his North American tour to perform in Sudbury, Ontario, but only on

the condition that he agreed “not to make any unauthorized public addresses or appearances.”³¹

At first glance such distinctions may seem naïve. How could these artistic gatekeepers believe that Robeson’s speeches were ideologically dangerous but his songs were not, considering the cultural origins and the overtly activist trappings of so many of them? Robeson was hardly shy about voicing his political beliefs, his sympathies for the common folk of all nations, and their music. He consistently made explicit the interconnections between his liberationist ideals and the music he sang. During the 1930s a growing awareness of human suffering in every country he visited fed an idea that was to become a credo: that artistic neutrality in the face of oppression was an untenable stance. As he famously declared in 1958, “The artist must elect to fight for freedom or slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative.”³²

By the 1950s, it seems clear that the authorities saw themselves as involved in a not so subtle game of damage control. They preferred to let Robeson sing—but to keep his mouth shut once the music stopped. Were these bureaucrats really so unaware of his impact to have believed that the music by itself could remain pure and innocuous, incapable of meaning, and thus separate from speech? While his critics’ remarks could be charitably explained as a form of denial enabling a nostalgic view of a beloved artist (or as a means to avoid the public unrest that could result from banning a popular performer), it would seem that the multilayered, signifying timbre of Robeson’s voice, indexing both his political and musical endeavors, offers a more complete explanation. Government officials, members of the press, and a variety of public spokespeople were made deeply uneasy by the complicated nature of Robeson’s speaking and singing voices, that *could not be divided*.

Additional comments from government functionaries and the news media make this tension more explicit, revealing the underlying rationale behind the statements just cited. In 1948, after the Canadian government barred Robeson’s entrance to the country on account of his supposed Communist beliefs, an official of the Canadian attorney general’s cabinet said, “I would be reluctant to see Robeson, the singer, refused entry to Canada but it is going to be difficult to separate him from Robeson, the political propagandist.”³³

The delusion that the two spheres of Robeson’s life could ever be separated was beginning to crumble in the popular press as well. In 1947 the *Peekskill* (NY) *Evening Star* ran an article encouraging the town’s leaders to stop Robeson from performing his scheduled concert not because they objected to “his magnificent voice, which thrilled millions,” but because his beautiful singing

was corrupted by its mixture with political speech.³⁴ During Robeson's 1952 concert tour, several towns across the country tried to prevent his visit to their region or performance hall, with Robeson's previous political actions and statements cited as the reason for the ban.³⁵ During the height of Senator Joseph McCarthy's xenophobic crusade in a country further stressed by the unresolved Korean conflict, the speaking Robeson directly implicated the singing Robeson; there was essentially no separation between the two vocal expressions, and thus the conflated voice had to be dealt with as a unity. During Robeson's further appeals to the State Department to regain possession of his passport in 1955, Leo A. Rover, federal district attorney, suggested that the court would be "naïve . . . to believe that Robeson's intention" was "merely to sing and merely to act."³⁶ Both the impetus to divide singing and speaking and the inability to do so are implicit in Rover's statement.

Even after Robeson's passport was restored to him in 1958 the U.S. ambassador to India, Ellsworth Bunker, took a cautious line about Robeson's divided political/musical persona. Anticipating potentially embarrassing scenes during Robeson's planned visit to India that year, Bunker permitted Americans on the embassy staff to attend Robeson's concerts, but not any political events at which he might speak.³⁷ The ambassador's concession implies an understanding that by then music and politics were *inextricable* in Robeson's voice; he reasoned that audience members were free to leave a concert should Robeson make offensive comments toward the United States in the middle of the musical event.³⁸

At the time of the House Committee on Unamerican Activities hearings in July 1949, pioneering African American baseball player Jackie Robinson had become what in many ways Robeson had been for the previous generation—a handsome, gifted, and articulate icon of his race, someone whom all Americans could admire and respect as long as he avoided culturally divisive issues. Robinson's statement about Robeson serves as a poignant example of the tension between enjoying Robeson's music and being implicated, by association, in the political meanings it indexed. When called upon (or pressured) to give a statement against Paul Robeson, Jackie Robinson declared that he was "too much invested in 'our country's' welfare . . . and future to throw it away because of a siren song sung in bass."³⁹ Robinson's carefully crafted statement is predicated on the foundational acceptance of the indexical power of Robeson's singing voice to signify his political activism and alleged Communist allegiance. Robinson claimed not to be duped by the multilayered signification of an iconic voice.

Turino's explanation of the power of musical indexes to simultaneously carry contradictory meanings is substantiated by these equally contradictory responses to Robeson. Whether stemming from a fear that Robeson's politics may "slip in" with his singing or that the singing Robeson was the speaking Robeson, these numerous examples show the struggle many people worked through to navigate Robeson's thickly indexical timbre.

The government, the press, and the public were not the only entities acknowledging (openly or not) the indexicality of Robeson's voice and using it as a basis for their decisions to accept or reject him. Robeson himself used equally inconsistent rhetoric to talk about identity. In various turns throughout his career, he emphasized his role as artist, as political speaker, and as singer-activist; his various statements on matters of identity do not follow a simple trajectory. I would suggest that seeming contradictions and shifting stances around self-identification are not so much conscious evasions as Robeson wrestling with the reality that his voice had become a multivalent index that he was unable to control. By using his voice for both artistic and political endeavors, Robeson created the initial signifying relationships. However, with indices, once they are established, the index carries all previous signifiers with it even when it functions in a new context. Therefore, once his voice had begun to index political activism in general and, as time went on, specific unpopular points of view, Robeson could not simply sing a concert without that sound carrying political significance, even if he had no wish to advance a political agenda in a given event. In this sense, Robeson lost control over his own image, over how his own voice signified. Though he conceived of his role as freedom-singer, and his mission to "interpret the negro soul" so as to uplift the status of his people, his shifting rhetorical emphases on the political, racial, or artistic elements of his identity show how he continually attempted to navigate and evade the solidified conflation of the multiple meanings of his voice, both embracing and rejecting himself as sounding index.⁴⁰

According to McGinty and Shirley, from 1929 onward Robeson began adding more and longer spoken interpolations between songs, "highlighting their relationship to the universal sufferings of mankind," indicative of the sociopolitical worldview that framed Robeson's concerts.⁴¹ Retrospectively speaking in 2001, Robeson's son recalled his father's considerations about films he would or would not participate in during the mid-1930s, a critical turning point for the father, and dates Robeson's "decision to use his artistry as political weapon" to that time.⁴² Yet just a few years later in 1938, Robeson openly and consciously separated his political activism from his artistic career by declaring that he was not going to sing at his political appearances, "except

for an occasional song or two sung a cappella,” nor speak during his concerts because the audience was coming to “hear him sing, rather than to air his political beliefs.”⁴³

This distinction seems clearly motivated by an understanding that his speaking and singing voices were by that time already heard as the left and right sides of the same stereo sound system, signifying each other, and signifying him in full. The son interpreted the father's move toward formal, less obviously political concerts as a means by which to enable his return to the United States—to end a long residence in England—wary of the coming war in Europe.⁴⁴ Robeson at some level understood that his singing indexed his political activism and vice versa, so made attempts to de-emphasize their conflation in order to ease his acceptance in the United States. Yet in simply singing the spirituals, he was bound to be *heard* as his full self. His concerts shorn of any deliberate speech making still functioned semantically.⁴⁵ The songs may have lacked direct modern political messages, but they were invoked with the iconic timbre of Robeson's voice which, functioning as an index, carried with it the political shading most recently associated with it.

Robeson's son, commenting about his father's 1939 tours of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, declared, “the concerts became political demonstrations without a single speech from Paul.”⁴⁶ Another ten years down the road, Robeson, feeling frustrated and limited to “singing pretty songs” announced a two-year performing sabbatical to focus solely on political speeches. At first glance a move to explore separating his speaking and singing, this decision also concedes Robeson's inability to avoid singing and speaking concurrently. He said he would sing only when he could “sing what he please[d],” indicating that had he the freedom, he would sing what he pleased and communicate his political message in that medium.⁴⁷ Though remaining consistently true to his ideals, Robeson frequently shifted his professional demeanor, often vacillating as he struggled with how his voice, whether sung or spoken, should accurately reflect his beliefs and ideals. Indeed, Paul Robeson, Jr., looking back from his own mature perspective, realized the difficulties his father had had to face trying to fill “simultaneously . . . the inherently conflicting roles of artist and prophet.”⁴⁸

Robeson's attempts to grapple with the inflexible indexicality of his voice are perhaps seen most clearly in the late 1950s after his passport and right to travel were finally restored. As his biographer Martin Duberman explains, Robeson wanted to regain control of his public image and sought to take the focus off of his time in Europe. In order to re-establish credibility as a race activist for African Americans at home, he accordingly reduced his public

commentary on the Soviet Union. Negotiating the established indices of his voice not only on musical and political grounds but on racial ones as well, Robeson wished to restore his image as “a race man’ *and* an artist,” suggesting that how he viewed himself in 1958 was a reiteration of his past self-identity.⁴⁹ Despite the public’s now decidedly skeptical stance, Robeson’s calculated efforts to manipulate suspicions are evident in his contemporary comments to reporters as reported by Duberman, who glosses them:

In San Francisco he told a reporter, “I am sorry now that I quit the concert stage because of politics. . . . Any ‘politics’ in the future will be in my singing,” leaving the surprised reporter—who apparently could not distinguish a tactic from a conviction—to conclude, prematurely, that Robeson was now “more interested in musicology than in politics.” In Portland, perhaps to avoid such simplicities, he told an interviewer, “I’m here as an artist”—but was also careful to add, “My political position is precisely the same now as it has always been.”⁵⁰

Similarly, when Robeson and Essie traveled to England in 1958 (for the first time in many years), Robeson told the press, whether truthfully or to avoid trouble, that he was going overseas as an artist and would not discuss politics.⁵¹

Lastly, we can see Robeson’s struggle with the consequences of his multi-signifying voice not only in his shifting claims of identity and purpose in his career, but also in his ideas about the blurred boundaries of speech and song. Robeson viewed his speaking voice and singing voice as components of each other. Early in his career he claimed his work with a voice teacher would also benefit his speaking voice because, “The voice means three-fourths of the battle; the singing voice helps the speaking voice.”⁵² Even more tellingly, when a reporter claimed he could tell that Robeson must have a rich singing voice because of his speaking voice, Robeson replied, “It happens that my speaking voice is part of my singing voice.”⁵³ The speech-like quality of his singing voice was what Robeson conceived of lending authenticity to the role of “folk” singer. Robeson often transposed his songs down to lower keys than their originals—into a relatively unstressed register for him—because he understood this pitch placement to be more “natural,” which is to say, natural to *his* voice. He expressed this idea overtly when he declared, “I am a folk singer. And I sing in my key.”⁵⁴ What Robeson thought of as “his key” seems to be that which was closest to his speaking range.⁵⁵ Yet again, Robeson conflates speaking and singing and integrates them both into his identity by associating their characteristic tonalities and ranges. Robeson’s concern that his singing voice stay closely connected to his speaking voice

in order to maintain the relaxed appearance of a folk singer implies he knew that if his voice came to signify “high” art, he himself would be seen as more elitist, hence less a part of the people whose approval he sought and whose causes he fought for.

In addition to desiring his singing voice be inflected by his speaking voice, Robeson also tried to inflect his speaking voice with his singing. While rehearsing *Othello* on Broadway in 1943, Robeson pushed himself to develop as an actor, “to be constantly careful not to make my lines too musical, not to sing my lines, but to *speak* them musically.”⁵⁶ Robeson’s desire to blend his two voices, while struggling to maintain a balance between them, is evident in the comments of the acting coach for *Othello*, Margaret Webster. She complained that Robeson’s speech was “‘sonorous and preachy,’ with admixtures of ‘the slight artificiality of an opera singer.’”⁵⁷ Critics who were unimpressed by the production seem to have agreed in their criticism of Robeson; their comments consistently point to his spoken lines as being overly inflected by singing. His portrayal of emotion was described as “coming out as strained declaration, or as ‘song,’” his lines as monotonous “organ tones,” and his voice as being used for “meaningless organ effects.”⁵⁸ For these critics, Robeson’s timbre, quantitatively similar in both speech and song, oversignifies. The song-like inflection indexes music and Robeson as a concert performer, thus detracting from his voice’s ability to be heard as emotionally engaged speech and he himself to be seen as an actor rather than a musician. Just as Robeson struggled to guide the way his voice came to function as index of his politics, not allowing him to form his image and career at will, so his critics seemed to wish Robeson’s voice could escape some of the musical indices it carried with it in order to produce a more satisfactory theatrical performance.

The name Paul Robeson immediately evokes the sounds of a deep, smooth bass. Low harmonics combined with a unique high resonance, consistent throughout his register, color the especially iconic timbre of his singing and his speaking. Because his timbre was so unique, setting him apart from his contemporaries, and because his speaking and singing were unique in similar ways, they came to signify each other as well as the man himself. His voice, no matter how or in what context it sounded, indexed the man, his body, and everything he had done with it. The often seemingly naïve or contradictory comments and beliefs about Robeson, his critics, and the authorities regarding Robeson’s speaking and singing are evidence of their recognition of the multilayered signification of Robeson’s voice. Robeson’s sometimes shifting objectives and his attempts both to unify and to separate his speaking and singing show his ongoing struggle to navigate within and around the indexical force of a voice whose semiotic density was beyond its own possessor’s

control. While perhaps expressing the theatrical commonplace, that people perform more successfully when they do not overthink their part, Robeson's self-evaluation of his best performance seems to sum up the collective experience of negotiating the unstrippable, signifying layers of his timbre. Robeson claimed he gave the best concert of his career in 1929, when he "sang the songs and forgot [his] voice," something he knew few of his listeners could ever do.⁵⁹

NOTES

¹ Hazel Carby, *Race Men* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 50–61.

² All spectrograms were produced using Sonic Visualizer 2005–2013 Chris Cannam and Queen Mary, University of London.

³ Paul Robeson, "Ol' Man River," recorded May 15, 1928, *Paul Robeson: The Complete EMI Sessions, 1928–1939*, Warner Classics, July 21, 2008, mp3.

⁴ Jules Bledsoe, "Ol' Man River," recorded 1928, Mat. Ga 3670, Decca K 631, www.youtube.com/watch?v=auU1GZJpT5A.

⁵ Jordan Goodman, *Paul Robeson: A Watched Man* (London and New York: Verso, 2013), 4.

⁶ Roland Hayes, "Were You There," *The Art of Roland Hayes*, from Smithsonian Collection of Recordings R 041, recorded in 1954, Preiser Records, June 1, 1990, mp3.

⁷ Paul Robeson, "Were You There?," recorded February 15, 1933, *Paul Robeson: The Complete EMI Sessions, 1928–1939*, Warner Classics, July 21, 2008, mp3.

⁸ Roland Hayes, "Nacht und Träume," *The Art of Roland Hayes*, from Smithsonian Collection of Recordings R 041, recorded in 1954, Preiser Records, June 1, 1990, mp3.

⁹ Paul Robeson, "Wiegenlied," *Paul Robeson Live at Carnegie Hall*, recorded in 1958, Vanguard Records May 24, 1990, mp3.

¹⁰ Paul Robeson, Jr., *The Undiscovered Paul Robeson* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2001), 205.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 211–12.

¹² Swindall, Lindsay. *Intersections in Theatrics and Politics: The Case of Paul Robeson and "Othello,"* (PhD dissertation, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2007), 74.

¹³ Robeson, Jr., 96.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁵ Doris Evans McGinty and Wayne Shirley, "Paul Robeson, Musician," in *Paul Robeson, Artist and Citizen*, ed. Jeffrey C. Stewart (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 112.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Robeson, *The Undiscovered Paul Robeson*, 215.

¹⁸ Paul Robeson, monologue from *Othello*, *Paul Robeson Live at Carnegie Hall and American Black History*, and Master Classics Records, Jan 1, 2008, mp3. First recorded in 1929 (JWJ Modern Soundscapes, Noelle Morrisette).

¹⁹ Thomas Turino, "Signs of Imagination, Identity, and Experience: A Peircian Semiotic Theory for Music," *Ethnomusicology* 43:2 (Spring–Summer, 1999), 235.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Robeson, Jr., 175–77.

²² Goodman, 9–11.

²³ Robeson, Jr., 287.

²⁴ Goodman, 28.

²⁵ Ibid., 117; Martin Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 318–320.

²⁶ Ibid., 336.

²⁷ Goodman, 24.

²⁸ Ibid., 34–58. The telling misquotation that shocked American readers was Robeson's alleged assertion that American Negroes would refuse to fight the Soviet Union in a future European war. His use of the pronoun "we" caused many African Americans to object, insisting that Paul Robeson did not speak for them in matters of such patriotic weight.

²⁹ Duberman, 349.

³⁰ Ibid., 382.

³¹ Goodman, 224.

³² Paul Robeson, *Here I Stand* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 52.

³³ Goodman, 188.

³⁴ Ibid., 119.

³⁵ Duberman, 402–03.

³⁶ Goodman, 219.

³⁷ Duberman, 472.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Goodman, 106.

⁴⁰ Frank Lenz, "When Robeson Sings," *Association Men* (July 1927): 495–96; Franklin Mortimer, "Art in Astoria," *Screenland* 27 (October 1933): 84.

⁴¹ McGinty and Shirley, 113.

⁴² Robeson, Jr., 284.

- ⁴³ Robeson, Jr., 284, 314, 324.
- ⁴⁴ Robeson, Jr., 314.
- ⁴⁵ Lenz, 495–96.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 323.
- ⁴⁷ Duberman, 317.
- ⁴⁸ Robeson, Jr., 334.
- ⁴⁹ Duberman, 457.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 454.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., 464.
- ⁵² Quoted in Robeson, Jr., 141.
- ⁵³ Goodman, 250.
- ⁵⁴ Duberman, 236.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 647, note 7.
- ⁵⁶ Duberman, 275.
- ⁵⁷ Quoted in Duberman, 271.
- ⁵⁸ Quoted in Duberman, 278.
- ⁵⁹ Robeson, Jr., 159.

Thomas Riis

“Just as necessary and valuable as any of the regular sciences”: Music at the University of Colorado in its Early Years

*Editor's note: It seems appropriate, as the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the American Music Research Center in 2017¹ and the centenary of the College of Music at the University of Colorado Boulder in 2020 approach, that we look back at the state of musical affairs when the university was founded. The summary told here is heavily indebted to Grant James Klausman's unpublished PhD thesis, "A History of the University of Colorado College of Music, 1877–1951," submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Colorado and approved in 1967, as well as the first of two monumental historical volumes by William E. "Bud" Davis, entitled *Glory Colorado!*, which covers the years from 1858 to 1963, published in 1965. My goal in this article is to present basic information concerning the place of music in general when Colorado was barely more than a thinly settled territory, the formation of the College of Music, and growth in relationship to the university at large. I will introduce a cast of influential characters in the early years, and finally draw attention to several significant landmarks and their relationship to the wider social context of music making in American institutions of higher education at the time.*

The mining settlement of Boulder was organized as a town in 1859. This rough-and-ready creekside encampment had sprung up and rapidly increased in size with the report of the discovery of gold in the nearby foothills. As the short-lived "gold rush" subsided and the likelihood of quick riches faded, many new residents who found the region along the Boulder Creek to their liking—and the nearby Arapahoes unthreatening—turned to farming, ranching, and raising families. The first school building erected in Colorado was

reportedly located in the town of Boulder, thus boosting its early reputation as a frontier town that nevertheless placed high value on learning. On October 31, 1861, the first territorial legislature of Colorado chose Boulder, over seven other towns that sought the prize, as the site for the future University of Colorado. Of course, assigning the university to Boulder was not the same as providing the resources needed to actually build a school; lack of funding prevented the university from opening for business for another sixteen years, the year after Colorado achieved statehood in 1876. Until 1884, the entire college—all classrooms, a chapel, the residence of college president Joseph Sewall and his family, and housing for the building's caretaker and his wife—were located in a single solitary building, now known as Old Main. In the words of Jane Sewall, the president's daughter, her family's first impression of the university was of

. . . a huge brick building topped by a cupola, rising in the distance. It loomed before us gaunt and alone in the pitiless clear light. No tree nor shrub nor any human habitation was in sight. Vast expanses of rock and sagebrush were its only surroundings.²

During the first years of the university the instruction on offer was devoted chiefly to preparing the few dozen admitted students to become teachers

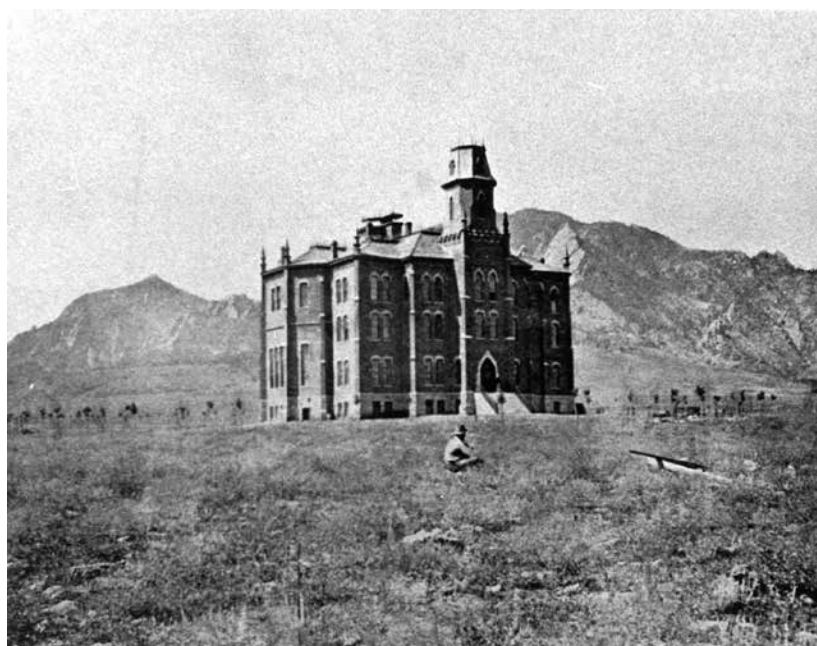


Figure 1. Old Main, circa 1879. Courtesy of University of Colorado.

to supply public elementary and secondary schools. Informal musical activities took place among residents of Old Main, and the prospects for more music were increased with the acquisition of a square piano for the chapel in December 1882; student singing was promptly added to daily services. Formal instruction in music commenced a few months later when the Board of Regents allowed a “musical department” to be created. This modest effort was short lived—the first instructor, R. L. Kent, apparently failed to please—and curricular designs articulated by teachers and planners at the time faded from the record after three years.³ Music teachers came and went; their services for private lessons were paid directly by the students, so instructors were not treated as salaried employees. The still small and struggling campus boasted only seven bachelor of arts graduates in June 1886. Faced with financial challenges and ebbing support from the Board of Regents, President Sewall submitted his resignation that same month but remained at his post until a successor could be moved into place. The coming of former regent and public school superintendent Horace M. Hale as the second president in May 1887 signaled the beginning of a more prosperous and enterprising era for the university, including activities associated with music. Hale’s arrival also underlined the position of the university as linked to the growth of pre-college education on the Front Range.

In 1888, Boulder was blessed with the arrival of a singular musician whose skills as a scholar and administrator would help to lay the foundation for what would become the College of Music. Charles Hubert Farnsworth was born in Turkey in 1859, the son of Christian missionaries. As a boy he was educated at his parents’ home and for one year in the preparatory department of Robert College, an English-language school in Constantinople. At fifteen he spent a summer traveling across Europe before returning to the United States for what turned out to be a rather short stint—less than a full year—at Newtonville High School, outside of Worcester, Massachusetts, before giving up school to work in a dry goods store in Boston.⁴ Farnsworth suffered what seem to have been migraine headaches and severe eyestrain from an early age, and it appears that persistent pain, rather than a lack of scholarly application, was the root cause for his leaving school. Farnsworth’s doctor prescribed a long ocean voyage as the best way to ameliorate the headaches, and so, at the age of seventeen, he signed on as a watchman traveling aboard a vessel bound for Cape Horn, the lower tip of South America. He returned to land eight months later, refreshed but not completely cured—home in Massachusetts and determined to find “a definite occupation.”⁵ Having had some elementary keyboard lessons as a boy, he reapplied himself to the study of music and took lessons with a local teacher, Benjamin Dwight Allen (whose

daughter he would later marry), with the idea of following in his instructor's professional footsteps. By no means a narrow-minded fellow, he enjoyed reading and discussing poetry and classical literature, and later showed an interest in modern science as well. He read widely, consciously pursuing a regime of self-cultivation, and ultimately obtained a breadth of knowledge that would serve him well as he established himself as a teacher. Over the next eight years, between 1880 and 1887, he assumed the role of itinerant piano teacher and was hired to play the organ at services in the Salem Street Church in Worcester, Massachusetts. Klausman's dissertation summarizes Farnsworth's story well once he is en route to the West.

Increasing discouragement caused by his headaches and visual problems prompted [Farnsworth] to set off for Boulder, Colorado, in 1887 to visit a cousin, with the hope that a change of climate and altitude might bring him relief. Not long after his arrival there Farnsworth found himself in demand as a piano teacher and was soon providing instruction in comfortable homes as well as in miners' cabins, where the piano stood on a wooden platform raised from the earthen floor. During the summer spent in the East he went to a piano factory and learned to tune the instruments, putting his newly learned skill to use immediately upon his return to Boulder.

Farnsworth's work in the University apparently began in October, 1888 . . . and consisted primarily of conducting singing classes. At the close of that first year's employment the Board of Regents authorized the President to hire Farnsworth as Teacher of Music for the academic year, 1889–90 [Minutes of the Board of Regents, May 27, 1889]. That the student body was appreciative of instruction in music was indicated by the *University Portfolio* [the student newspaper]: "We are pleased to learn that Professor Farnsworth is to be with us another year and that he will continue to give instructions in vocal music."

Farnsworth's appearance in the *University Catalog* for 1889–90 was the first mention of a teacher of music since 1886. The description of the work offered in music that year was simply: "Classes in sight singing are formed; and after training in part music, a chorus will be organized for the study of classical music."

It appears, then, that Farnsworth provided instruction in those areas where there was a demonstrated need for his services. Unlike the earlier abortive attempts to establish a "conservatory," the curriculum under Farnsworth evolved from the students' musical wants, which were clearly made known in the early 1890s.⁶

Despite their hiring of Farnsworth, the university administrators were reluctant to revive a fully fledged music department or curriculum. But in the fall

of 1891 an eloquent statement on the subject appeared in the student news magazine:

When we consider the subject of music, does it not seem strange, and even a mistake that music is not introduced into our college curriculum and credited on the required college course? Surely two or three courses in music are just as necessary and valuable as in any of the regular sciences.

If we compare music with biology, botany, chemistry, astronomy or physics we fail to discern wherein any one of these sciences is superior in its power of training and developing the faculties. In truth, it seems that he who spends two hours a day in dissecting a bug, beetle, crawfish, angle worm or other harmless insect, or gazes into the starry firmament for hours in quest of a roaming planet, or laboriously hunts out the analysis of a plant from a complex table, or imagines the curves of transmitted sounds, or spends hours in drawing exact angles or microscopic sections, surely he would have gained no more by having learned the manipulation of the scissors, microscope or telescope than as though he should spend some of these hours practicing upon some musical instrument. For in music many of the faculties are trained at the same time. The senses of touch, hearing, and seeing as well as thinking in regard to execution are all successfully trained to act in perfect harmony and unison. He learns accuracy, precision, time, movement, melody, rhythm, etc., in a very effectual manner. By no other science could the body and mind be kept under closer surveillance than in the study of music. Nor is the study confined exclusively to finger manipulation; there is much to be learned, much brain work for a real musician. We do not think that a student should be granted six or seven courses in music any more than in any of the other sciences, but indeed, two or three courses are just as necessary to a student's curriculum of study in order to possess a full rounded and complete education as any other study now in the catalogue. And from what study can there be more enjoyment in after life, or what study will be remembered longer?

We maintain it must finally be recognized as to importance, so why not permit it now to be credited as college work?⁷

Sufficient interest in adding more music at the college led to the formal recognition of three credit-bearing courses in the 1892-93 catalog; Harmony and Acoustics were both offered in the first semester and Critical Analysis in the second. All were taught by Farnsworth. According to the catalogue, "The aim of the course in music is to prepare students for the appreciation of music. . . . Supplementary to the above work, but not recognized as counting for a degree, there will be opportunity given for the study of singing at sight.

Figure 2. The University Chapel, circa 1890; and The Glee and Mandolin Clubs, 1899. Courtesy of University of Colorado.



... Those who show sufficient ability in singing will be admitted to the Glee Club, which meets once a week for the study of a higher grade of music, giving a number of concerts during the winter.”⁸

The lack of course credit for concert performances or applied study of any kind is consistent with practices across the country at the time. Music was admitted to the university as a time-honored intellectual pursuit, rather than as a practical skill. Music classes were offered within the regular arts and sciences program for undergraduates, not as part of a separate school or college. The description’s emphasis on “a higher grade of music” for glee club participants is telling. Judging by the sort of songs found in typical college songbooks of the day, the authorities were undoubtedly anxious for students to curb their enthusiasm in public such that recreational activities accompanied by music such as the glee club not get out of control. Owing to the immense and growing national popularity of banjo and mandolin clubs whose ranks generally included singers, student bands associated with inter-collegiate sports, and informal singing among student societies of all kinds, music was rapidly becoming a major part of college life—whether or not it was included in formal studies. Communal singing on school grounds, or any other such practice that sought university sanction, had to conform to proper social standards lest the students or the university suffer in public esteem.

As he would reveal in interviews during his retirement, reflecting back on a lifetime of leadership in teacher education, Farnsworth was ever keen in this early period to apply systematic principles and practical techniques. He played examples at the piano and illustrated his historical lectures with lantern slides. As he explained to his biographer Charles W. Hughes, for harmony classes, “Simple hymn tunes were hectographed [duplicated in multiple copies], and analyzed so as to show the spelling of chords, their frequency, and the note which was doubled. Then the student made simple analyses himself and finally attempted four-part writing, at length composing a hymn tune.”⁹ Farnsworth’s inclination to proceed carefully, step by step, endeared him to his students who would themselves become future teachers. His gift for giving clear instruction undoubtedly recommended him to his peers and his superiors as well.

Klausman continues, “Farnsworth’s work was not confined solely to teaching in the University. He also taught music appreciation in the Preparatory School, which by 1895 was supported largely by the City of Boulder. Of considerably more interest, however, was Farnsworth’s work in the Boulder public schools, as it demonstrates the methodology of the period.”¹⁰ As Hughes again relates,

Up to this time Professor Farnsworth had never been in a graded American school, if we except his few months of student days in the Newtonville High School, nor had he witnessed music teaching in the schools. . . . Mr. Farnsworth visited [the classes taught by Wilberforce Whiteman (the father of Paul Whiteman) in West Denver schools] following him from room to room. Then, fortified by these observations [of Whiteman's use of the Tonic Sol-Fa sight-singing method] and provided with the newly published charts of the American Book Company he began the practical work in the Boulder Public Schools which had such tangible results as a performance by the eight grade of "The Heavens are Telling" [by Josef Haydn].¹¹

Seeing what Whiteman had accomplished in Denver apparently inspired Farnsworth and other supportive Boulder citizens, including the university's third president, James Baker, in 1895 to found an organization called the Society for the Advancement of Music. Its chief purpose was to superintend a school of practical music, both instrumental and vocal, which would serve the citizens of Boulder and whomever among the university students chose to take advantage of it. Farnsworth became its musical director, and taught music theory, music history, and organ. Four other instructors, all Denverites, were brought in to teach piano, solfège, singing, and voice culture. All were paid on commission. Private lessons, classes, and choral singing instruction were supplemented by a program of special lectures "given by the University faculty and knowledgeable townspeople on subjects [ranging from] Oriental and Greek Music, Indian and Folk Music, Catholic Church Music, The Madrigal, The Oratorio [to] Protestant Church Music and Opera."¹² Since the Boulder Public Schools provided the rooms needed to conduct lessons, the Colorado School of Music was run at no expense to the university. At the end of its first year, thirty-three students were enrolled, and the venture was deemed a success. The next three years saw enrollment grow to nearly eighty, accompanied by a move to larger quarters, a building that later became University Hill Elementary School.¹³

The establishment of the Colorado School of Music heightened local interest in music and encouraged more vigorous concert activity. The Boulder Choral Union, a festival chorus of townspeople and University students, was formed in 1893 and became the principal performing organization of the School of Music in 1895. On December 19 of that year the Choral Union presented a concert in the Boulder Methodist Church. The featured work was *Oratorio de Noël*, op. 12 (1863), by Saint-Saëns, with soloists brought in from Denver. In addition the chorus sang "Achieved is the Glorious Work," from Haydn's *The Creation*, three choruses

from Rubinstein's *Tower of Babel*, and "Matona Lovely Lady," by Lassus.¹⁴

The Colorado School of Music and its allied organizations—the Choral Union and a twelve-piece orchestra dubbed the Philharmonic Club, with extras hired from Denver—over the subsequent four years (1896–99) performed three substantial oratorios (Handel's *Messiah*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Haydn's *Creation*), the three most popular Gilbert and Sullivan operettas (*H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Mikado* and *The Pirates of Penzance*), and instrumental works such as Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony, Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony, and Beethoven's First Symphony, in arrangements suited to smaller ensembles. Along with a string of smaller recitals featuring vocal numbers and piano solos, these events encouraged a growing taste for concert music in the community at large; the school's commencement concert each year during the late 1890s was regularly noted in university publications.¹⁵

An attempt to establish an all-student band at the university in 1891 was apparently short-lived, since all mention of the group or any similar organization disappeared from campus publications for a decade. But the Glee Club cited in Farnsworth's curriculum most definitely did catch on—in a form that encouraged high-spirited behavior rather than concert formality.

Glee Clubs, commonly numbering twelve to eighteen men, were organized in the fall of each year. As each term progressed the club gradually pared in size to the number which would perform in the spring. In 1893 the Glee Club was composed of two men on each of the four parts. Included in the spring tour was the Banjo Club of one banjorine, one banjo, two guitars, and a cello; a Mandolin Club of two mandolins, two guitars, one violin, a cello, and an ocarina; and as a special feature, an ocarina quartet. Of course, many of the men were versatile, performing in two or more of the groups.

A social high point of each school year was the clubs' triumphal return from their tour to sing the final "home" concert. It was generally held in a hall or theatre in Boulder, as the chapel of Old Main would not nearly accommodate the throngs which attended the concert. In 1894, for instance, the home concert was held in Feeny's Hall on March 3 with an admission fee of thirty-five cents per person. Following the concert the clubs were given a reception by Prof. and Mrs. Farnsworth in their home.¹⁶

Providing light and amusing entertainment suited to a broad audience, the University Glee Club criss-crossed Colorado in annual spring tours—the first took place in 1892—which continued for more than thirty years. That these

were blatant ploys to advertise the university to prospective students and potential supporters was never denied. The tours were primarily self-supporting, with costs covered by the sale of concert tickets in each town along the route supplemented by donations and publicity provided by generous alumni.

The presiding genius over most of this activity, both institutional and extra-curricular, was Charles Farnsworth. Unsurprisingly, his achievements began to attract attention beyond Colorado's boundaries.

During the fall of 1899 Farnsworth took a semester's leave of absence from the University, his first since joining the institution eleven years before. He spent the period of nearly five months in the East visiting many universities including Yale, Harvard, Columbia, Pennsylvania, Oberlin and others, returning to Boulder the final week of January, 1900.

. . . In May of 1900 Farnsworth announced that he had received notification from Dr. James E. Russell, Dean of the Teachers College, Columbia University [and former resident of Boulder], that the position as head of the music department of that institution was available if Farnsworth wished to accept it. He did, of course, and submitted his resignation to the Board of Regents shortly thereafter.

In Farnsworth's twelve years with the University local music was raised from a position of frivolity to the status of true art. Farnsworth's appearance in Boulder in 1887 was most opportune from the standpoint of the University as well as from his own. He was the right person for the work that needed to be done, although the University has never since appointed to the music faculty a person with the questionable qualifications Farnsworth brought with him. His formal schooling at the time of his appointment could hardly have been considered the equivalent of a high school education, yet he demonstrated knowledge and ability which easily surpassed the requirements for a diploma or degree.

His interests extended far beyond the music classes in the chapel and the massed performances in local churches. Farnsworth was not merely the University music teacher, but was a member of the faculty who involved himself in many phases of university life. He was, for many years, an officer in the University Scientific Society, an organization composed principally of faculty members who lectured weekly on varied subjects, but usually those having to do with biology, chemistry or physics. A sampling of Farnsworth's lectures to the group include: "The Rational Element in Music,"

“The Nature and Musical Use of Rhythm,” and “Partials and Key Perception.”

As was mentioned earlier Farnsworth married the daughter of his former piano teacher. From her arrival in Boulder Charlotte Joy Farnsworth occupied the dual role of faculty wife and University student. She had attended Wellesley prior to her marriage and enrolled at the University of Colorado as a special student (one not assigned a particular class) in the 1890–1891 academic year. She was later elected a member of Phi Beta Kappa and received the Bachelor of Philosophy degree in 1897.

Less than a year before his departure from Boulder, Farnsworth indicated in an article written for a nationally circulated magazine [entitled simply *Music*] what he considered to be his principal task at the University and in the community.

“We have said that the musical problem is to awaken appreciation that shall grow into a sufficient desire. . . . What can a musician do better for the community he lives in than to encourage concerted work, especially of musical instruments, and to turn some of the energy that runs so freely towards Liszt rhapsodies into channels where more genuine musical feelings can flow?”¹⁷

Farnsworth felt that ensemble music, even with limited instrumentation, should be emphasized more than solo music, because in the former there is less personal element, a greater variety and sensuousness of tone color, and a heightened effect of climax. Whether he was correct or in error may be a moot point, but in carrying out his convictions Farnsworth firmly established a music department for the University of Colorado.¹⁸

Farnsworth’s move to New York could not have come at a better time. Among his colleagues at Columbia Teachers College was John Dewey, among the most highly influential of American estheticians, philosophers and teachers of the twentieth century. Farnsworth’s catholic interests and fascination with scientific principles applied to musical creation and appreciation fit hand-in-glove with Dewey’s understanding of art as lived experience. Farnsworth’s personal formation as an autodidact and his practical teaching experience validated Dewey’s fundamental belief in the necessity for active engagement of individuals in their own learning process. Both men shared a curiosity and enthusiasm for passionate education and explored wider questions surrounding human psychology.

Soon after his arrival at Columbia, Farnsworth developed one of the earliest bachelor’s degree programs in music education in the country. The fundamental concepts informing his curricular plan for elementary school music

instruction, showing many marks of Dewey-esque pragmatism, are explained in his book *Education through Music* (New York, 1909) [see this volume, pp. 65–87]. Farnsworth was elected to the presidency of the Music Teachers National Association in 1913, was awarded an honorary doctorate from Oberlin College in 1922, and remained at the forefront of American music education well into retirement in 1924, always informed by a receptivity to novel instructional ideas for young pupils. He compiled and published a book of folk songs with eminent English folklorist Cecil Sharp, and he explored the experimental ideas of musical rhythms as expressed through body movement articulated by Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, a system known as *eurhythmics*. Early on, he recognized the power of radio to spread the gospel of classical music through his work with the National Broadcasting Company's Music Appreciation Hour, a series of programs that ran from 1928 to 1942.¹⁹

While Farnsworth's departure from Boulder delayed the institutionalization of music at the University of Colorado—where such activities continued to take place within a modestly organized “music department” rather than a college—student musical organizations grew and flourished as instructors came and went. The arrival in 1905 of George M. Chadwick of Chicago (no relation to the contemporary Massachusetts composer George W. Chadwick) promised to lend a degree of stability, as he was hired to take “charge of the musical classes at the University and the training of the Glee Club.” Chadwick was introduced to the community as “a musician of wide experience,” and was touted as “having studied under eminent musicians in this country and in Europe.” His performance career had been extensive and he had held the post of organist at Cornell University for six years.²⁰ Although well qualified as a player of the first rank and a teacher of diverse musical skills, Chadwick proved something of a disappointment as an administrator during his tenure.

To Chadwick's credit, on his watch a chapel choir was formed, the Choral Society was expanded, the men's Glee Club continued its annual tours, and a separate glee club for the women students emerged, at least for a short period in 1905. Chadwick organized annual programs for commencement, performed duo recitals with his wife, a violinist, frequently played in public on many occasions, and continued to teach most courses in a curriculum which emphasized music theory (harmony and counterpoint, canon and fugue, composition and orchestration). But the curriculum varied hardly at all over the ensuing fifteen years even while campus buildings sprang up and the student population boomed. “Music was first offered in the Graduate School in 1909–10.”²¹ A series of summer courses was added to enhance the Music Education program beginning in 1914; over several summers these were taught by young “assistants” in music, by Chadwick himself, in 1917 by the



Figure 3. The Ladies' Glee Club, with Director Robert W. Stevens, 1905. Courtesy of University of Colorado.

eminent guest instructor Karl W. Gherkins, professor of public school music at Oberlin College, and in 1918 and 1919 by John Ross Frampton, professor at the Iowa State Teachers College.²²

Within a year of groundbreaking for the Macky Auditorium in 1909, Chadwick was charged by the regents to look into obtaining a pipe organ that would be suitable to the new venue. In 1912, however, all planning came to a halt when, despite initial enthusiasm, legal wrangling over Andrew Macky's estate temporarily stopped the source of financing; erection of the building was indefinitely postponed.

Although not necessarily reflecting the esteem in which Chadwick was held, funds provided to run the music department in his charge were always meager during the early years. Chadwick was compensated at a far lower salary than his fellow professors, presumably because the regents assumed (correctly) that he earned extra money paid directly by students to whom he gave private music lessons (often in university buildings) and thus deserved a lower state stipend. His annual salary in 1911 was set at \$1400, \$400 *lower* than the *minimum* amount for all other faculty at the rank of professor, whose pay scale ranged from \$1800 to \$2800 that year.²³

Unfortunately for Chadwick, as the university grew in size and enthusiasm for music, neither the funds nor the administrative leadership was available to

meet the department's need for more space. A colleague of Chadwick's, writing in the *Colorado Alumnus* in 1918, bemoaned, "We need a music building. The band practices in the top of the tower; there is no suitable room to sing in; the old chapel is now a theatre too small for voice work, and the auditorium is too large. We need a students' orchestra, we need a permanent chorus of mixed voices. We need a musical library. . . . [To] see the score of a standard work such as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, I have to go to Denver or borrow from some friend."²⁴

Chadwick requested and was granted a leave of absence for the academic year 1919–20. In October 1919, the Board of Regents voted to request his permanent resignation. Chadwick's dismissal was based fundamentally on practical grounds. Neither a fundraiser nor a program builder by nature, Chadwick severely lacked for entrepreneurial spirit despite all of his musical talent. While no one denied his scholarship or musicianship, the post-war boom would not come soon enough to keep George Chadwick in Boulder. It would remain for his successor, Dr. Frank W. Chace, to bring the music program back from the brink of dissolution and to establish a full-fledged performance-based curriculum leading to a bachelor of music degree. The designation "College of Music" was bestowed on Chace's department by the Board of Regents in 1920, the first year of George Norlin's presidency. Chace would also see to the design and acquisition of a grand pipe organ for the long-delayed opening of the Macky Auditorium in May 1923. It would also fall to Chace to lead his college into a building for its own exclusive use in 1925.

[To be continued.]

NOTES

¹ Sister Mary Dominic Ray, the original founder of the AMRC, achieved official recognition for the center from her home institution, Dominican College, San Rafael, California, in 1967. In 1989, as she neared retirement, the AMRC was moved to Colorado.

² Jane Sewall, *Jane, Dear Child* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1957), 41.

³ Klausman, iii, 14.

⁴ Charles W. Hughes, "Charles Hubert Farnsworth," *School Music* 33:163 (Jan.–Feb., 1933), 3. This article is based on personal interviews of Hughes and his conversations with Farnsworth after the latter's retirement in Vermont.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶ Klausman, 33–34.

⁷ *University Portfolio* 10:1 (October, 1891), 7.

- ⁸ *University Course Catalogue*, 1892–93, 61.
- ⁹ Hughes, “Charles Hubert Farnsworth,” 11.
- ¹⁰ Klausman, 41–42.
- ¹¹ Hughes, 11.
- ¹² Klausman, 44.
- ¹³ Davis, *Glory Colorado!*, I:93; Klausman, 43–44.
- ¹⁴ A review appeared in the *Silver and Gold* 4:14 (December 12, 1895) and reported in Klausman, 45.
- ¹⁵ Klausman, 47–48.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.
- ¹⁷ Charles H. Farnsworth, “Some Thoughts on the Musical Season in Boulder,” *Music* 16:4 (1899), 417.
- ¹⁸ Klausman, 55–57.
- ¹⁹ S.v. “Farnsworth, Charles Hubert,” *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). Vol. 3.
- ²⁰ *Silver and Gold* 14:1 (September 14, 1905), 5.
- ²¹ Klausman, 109.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 112–13.
- ²³ Klausman, 115–16. “By 1918 Chadwick was receiving \$1500, as Professor of Music. In comparison, F. B. R. Hellems, Professor of Latin, was paid \$3200; J. R. Brackett, Literature, \$3400; George Norlin, Greek, \$3200; . . . every Professor heading an individual branch of study earned at least twice Chadwick’s salary, with the exception of Professor Cole, in Psychology, who received \$2950.”
- ²⁴ J. Raymond Brackett, “The Chimes of Normandy,” *Colorado Alumnus* 8:5 (May 1918), 43.

Charles Hubert Farnsworth

Education through Music: The Fundamental Ideas

Editor's note: Charles Farnsworth (1859–1947) taught music at the University of Colorado from 1887 to 1900 and, as explained earlier in this volume, was one of the important creative forces in establishing the university's music program. After leaving Boulder, Farnsworth took up a position at Columbia University Teacher's College in New York, a post that he held until his retirement in 1924. The central concern of his career, stimulated by his work in Colorado, became the training of future teachers of music for the public schools. His first book, which beautifully illustrates the clarity of his thinking and the diversity of his experience outside of the bounds of public school systems at the time, is entitled Education Through Music. For a publication dating back to 1909 it is remarkably relevant for teachers nowadays in its articulation of general principles. Early on he recognized that teaching as a skill or art unto itself was different from mere knowledge of the subject matter, that the practice of music and the skill of teaching it were separate disciplines. He thus strove to be an inspiring teacher of teachers.

Farnsworth always speaks in nontechnical language, but insists that music should be taught systematically and precisely, stressing both its structure and its expressive potential equally. He frequently alludes to senses other than hearing and uses images outside of music to elucidate musical ideas. Pointing to the visual and plastic arts, theater, nature, and literature, as it suits him, in order for even the novice teacher to comprehend the gist of his thinking about expressiveness, beauty, form, and the creative process. While somewhat anachronistically optimistic about the "universal ability" of humans to "appreciate" a surpassingly brilliant "interpretative performance" in the Western Classical tradition, he is equally convinced that one's native musical culture—Farnsworth was born in Turkey and spoke that language as his mother tongue—is crucial in shaping taste and defining values. In chapter 5 he tells

a startlingly modern anecdote bemoaning a lack of connection between the ordinary world of work and the generally inadequate means by which colleges prepare students for it. Plus ça change. . . .

Chapter I: Principles of Teaching

About one percent of our population has a formal education beyond the age of fourteen.* The musical instruction that is given during this period is for most people all the training that they ever receive in the subject. Hence it is of the utmost importance that the little time given to music should be spent in the most effective way. This requires a consideration not merely of the musical ends to be reached, but of the capacity of the pupil and his musical needs, involving a cultivation of the desire for the beautiful in music, and direction for its gratification under the social conditions in which he lives. Such a broad view of the subject demands that sound principles be followed and that a rational plan of presentation be employed. It may be of help if at the outset the principles upon which the instruction is based be formulated, and the necessity for a plan of teaching presented.

[* In 1905–06 the number of children registered as attending public high schools in the country at large was eighty-eight hundredths of one percent of the total population; or, including the children studying at private secondary schools, over one percent of the population was taking secondary education. David Snedden, *Charities and the Commons*. April 25, 1907.]

It is not always easy to differentiate between a method employed, which is the way a thing is done, and the principle that it is intended to follow, which is a general rule of procedure constantly needing common sense for its application.

No one way of procedure is the right way under all conditions; but the principles that underlie the application should have stability. Without this, the goal cannot be reached. The principles are few and explicit; they are the result of the experiences of many, and of the application of physiological-psychological laws. The actual method pursued, however, will be determined by the character of the students and the conditions under which the work is done. A principle requires a way, in other words, a method, for its expression, but the wise teacher knows very well that to confuse the two is to crystallize the method, from which it is but a step to dogmatism and stagnation. Hence one is constantly testing principles in order to separate the method useful only in a given case from that which is always applicable.

The principles that have controlled the presentation in the following chapters are:

- 1 Experience should precede formal instruction.
- 2 Where it is lacking, the teacher should supply the experience necessary as a basis for instruction.
- 3 The teacher should organize this experience, so that, while a particular effect is observed and studied, its relation to the total effect shall not be lost.
- 4 The motive or impulse in artistic education lies in the desire of the individual to express himself.
- 5 The purpose of education through art is to quicken perception, clarify feeling, and stimulate initiative for the beautiful.

Of the five principles which the book emphasizes, the first demands experience as the prerequisite of all work. The second begins the teaching with management of experience, as for instance, in the rhythmic acting in the first grade, or the chord formation of the sixth, so that all the students in a class, not merely the talented few, shall possess the foundation experience for what is to be taught. The third takes the complex experiences that manifest the subject studied, as in this case music, and breaks them up by means of carefully arranged steps such as acting or picturing. In that way the particular experience, the nature of which the average student would otherwise be unconscious, is observed and felt, and made to form a basis for study, a definite object for notation. From the imitative song singing at the opening of the first grade work to the appreciation of the higher forms, the material has been so arranged that at every stage it shall relate to a definite preceding experience. In this way not simply a memory appeal will be made, but definite ideas developed, so vital, because of their relation to experience, that they can form a foundation for new ideas and through them lead to new experiences. This arrangement of the material with reference to experience renders it possible for the pupil to make a vital connection with great works of art, by means of which a deeper significance and an enduring worth are given to life.

Thus three of the five principles formulated deal with experience. The fourth is closely allied, for with reference to it the work has been constantly planned so as to insure such self-activity on the part of the individual as shall not be vague nor haphazard, since this would vitiate the ideas to be developed, but definite and systematic. For instance, the child in connection with the song carries on definite activities: he steps to the rhythm; he claps for duration; in speed work he is obliged to grasp the phrase as a whole; later, he follows the

separate sentences which make up the thought of the larger form with lines that show their number and relationship. In the creative work of song making and in writing what he hears, the induced self-activity vitalizes his experience. Finally, the fifth step still views the subject from the pupil's point of view; for it limits the field of study to that knowledge and skill which may be turned to practical use in the experience of the average man.

Turning now to the plan of teaching employed: this consists in presenting the material in topics thoroughly worked out in the logical relationship of their parts and dictated by the experience of the pupil. This requires careful preparation on the part of the teacher.

Spontaneity is often looked upon as the one ideal condition of instruction; the teacher is expected to be bubbling over with enthusiasm and knowledge, ready to adapt herself to whatever phase of the subject the humor of her pupils may present. Hence the use of the words "plan of instruction" referring to the way the work is presented, and implying that something more than mere knowledge of the subject is necessary for the teacher, has, on some persons, the effect of the traditional red rag. A lesson of such people is like an artistic performance whose death knell is sounded if any regulative element is introduced.

Yet, if we accept this conception of teaching as an artistic, rather than a scientific performance, owing to the personal and emotional elements involved, does it follow that there is no technique required for its realization? Not by any means.

An illustration from the field of art is appropriate. There is no doubt that a man like Paderewski enters upon his career with a remarkable natural endowment, but in spite of this he undergoes a rigorous technical training that only an iron will and strong constitution could stand. Yet all this training is simply to enable him to interpret a musical passage to his audience. He practices much in order that he may present something effectively to others. A teacher who should stop simply with the acquisition of the subject, and take no thought as to how it should be interpreted with reference to the needs of the particular class, would be doing the same thing that a Paderewski might who mentally grasped the thought of the composition, and knew just how it should be performed, but did not trouble himself to learn the technique necessary for its presentation. In other words, there is a difference between knowledge of a subject and the ability to put it before others. A great many people think that when an individual knows a subject he is prepared to teach it; but from the teaching point of view he is only ready to begin his professional preparation.

His peculiar technique, that which justifies his being called a teacher, lies in his ability to impart knowledge.

It is quite possible for a person to have a special gift for imparting knowledge, a sympathetic appreciation of the needs of the learner, enabling him to become a brilliant teacher after he has learned his subject. But even under these conditions such a person attains his skill, not at once but through the opportunities he meets in teaching.

As soon as he has finished learning his subject, a gifted teacher may give good lessons without any special attention as to how he shall teach; but though he may have had no pedagogical training, the fact that he is gifted in this respect has caused him to observe and learn from his own skilled teachers, so that he really has had professional training, though not of a formal nature. While it may be true that the teacher, like the artist, is born and not made, it is equally true that, as an artist, he needs professional training. Those who object to the planning of instruction are really denying the value of professional training for the teacher.

The teacher's training, like that of the artist, has two sides; one the actual doing of the thing, modeling in clay, painting on canvas, performing at the keyboard, actual teaching of children; the other, the thought, plan, preparation for action. The fascination that the sketchbooks of great artists, such as Beethoven or Leonardo da Vinci or Hawthorne have for us is that they show how these artists prepared for their work.

The plan stands in the same relation to lessons given, as the sketchbook of the artist does to his masterpiece. The teacher sketches his idea of how the subject should be developed, changes it, emphasizes now one aspect, now another, viewing it in the various lights of different approaches. He attains such a mastery over the presentation that he is able to play with the thing. He has developed a technique far beyond what is necessary: he has gained what the engineer calls a margin of safety. Now he comes to the class, not to reproduce something cut and dried, but to mold the minds before him through the very activity he draws out; like the sculptor who has a clear image he wishes to realize, and yet is open to every inspiration that may come to him as the figure emerges from the clay. The plan does not tie the teacher's hands; it frees them. It gives control of the situation by anticipating various possibilities that may occur. The plan book of the teacher is, then, the sketchbook of the artist. Let me not be misunderstood: I would not lay undue stress upon mere planning of topics to the neglect of such experience as one gets by actual teaching. Preparation must go hand in hand with execution. To

adapt a famous adage, planning without doing is, like theories without facts, vain; and doing without planning is, like facts without theories, futile.

While the work in the following chapter is presented in the form of stages and steps, implying a connected presentation of the subject under complete topics, they are not necessarily intended to be given in one lesson, but to be treated so connectedly that the whole will form a united impression upon the mind of the pupil. A large proportion of the actual lessons given will be those of review and application. These are left to the good judgment of the teacher. The greatest skill and closest thought is required when a new topic is being first presented. This is the birth of an idea in the pupil's mind. Whether it be deformed and sickly, or compact and healthy, depends largely on its first formation, hence the emphasis on the way the subjects are presented and the absence of directions for review and practice, which would be necessary were the book a manual of teaching and not a presentation of principles.

Chapter II: The Musical Idea

The satisfaction derived from music is more dependent on the way the tones are combined and employed than on the tones themselves. The direct stimulus to the senses is of itself entirely inadequate to account for the pleasure music gives.

A visit to a Chinese theater will convince the reader of the truth of this. He will find the acting intelligent, the color scheme effective. When the interpreter by his side translates the poetry it may appeal to him as good; but the music will be "sound and fury, signifying nothing." Ask the interpreter what the music means and he cannot put it into words. But the intelligent Ah Lee or Woo Sing appears to understand and enjoy it. Consider what this fact means. Here we have intelligent men, who in some of their arts are our superiors, listening with enthusiasm to what sounds to us like mere noise. We thus see how little we are affected by an appeal to the senses pure and simple. We do not appreciate Chinese music because we do not understand the principles and ideals that underlie its structure and interpretation.

Of all the arts, music is the least universally comprehensible. Painting and sculpture do not require even to be translated, because the objects on which the ideas of these arts are based are the same throughout the world. Trees, water, sky, and land are similar in Paris and Peking. A statue representing parts of the body put together amiss would be as wrong in one locality as in another. Poetry is translatable because the ideas of which it treats are more or less alike in Asia and America. Human nature is practically the same the world over. However much its manifestations may differ, there is a wonderful

similarity of experience. Love and hate, kindness and cruelty, are common to all dwellers on the earth. When the Chinese poet weaves these experiences into a drama, the ideas are intelligible to the Parisian listener. For a good translation can bring the Chinese poet in touch with a foreign audience, and in spite of the difference in style anyone may genuinely enjoy the Oriental poet's work. As soon as the barriers of language are removed, the Oriental and the Occidental can look over the dividing walls of custom and civilization and appreciate each other's art.

The reason that music alone of the arts is untranslatable is because the elements of music, tone grouping, and the manner of production by means of which specific musical ideas are expressed, do not exist in nature, but are the product of civilization and custom. Each race has its particular set of musical ideas, and the individual is familiar with them because he is born into them. His mother sings melodies that bring smiles of pleasure to his face or soothe him to sleep. He hears the little songs of his brothers and sisters. Unconsciously he learns the prevailing idiom of the musical language, and as soon as his faculties permit he begins to imitate and to produce the kind of music prevailing in his region, just as he talks French if he is born in Paris. Hence, when a specific piece of music is heard by those unfamiliar with the musical ideas which the piece embodies, no comprehension can take place. The design is not appreciated; only a more or less pleasing collection of sounds is heard. This is why Oriental music is incomprehensible and untranslatable.

Since ideas lie back of music just as they lie back of language, there is a similarity in the way they are acquired. In learning a language the child first utters incoherent cries and ejaculations; then he begins to use single intelligible words; then he adds more words and forms sentences. So with music; the child's incoherent calls and gurgles give place to definite groups of tones; then he attempts to sing, often with no better success than is attained when he tries to pronounce the words he hears. This learning of the sounds and forms of the music idiom depends, as does his learning of language, on what he hears and on how much he tries to imitate.

But the needs and wants of the child force him along faster in the mother tongue; he is constantly hearing it used, so that he has opportunity to connect the things said, and gains an idea of what is being talked about. If he is to get what he wants and be one with his fellows, he must talk, and talk freely. No such force impels him in music. The only reason a child sings is because he likes to sing. And many a child does not have much pleasure in singing; often he has not learned to control the throat so that he can sing what he wishes. There are people who cannot even hum an air or tell one tune from

another; while, on the other hand, there is the prodigy who plays and even composes before he reaches his teens.

The sensation of pleasure or displeasure that music induces has led to the statement that music appeals directly to the feelings. If this were true, music would be in the same class with perfumes. If a person should smell two unfamiliar odors, unless they were similar to some he already knew, so that he could say one resembled, for example, a rose or violet, he would be unable to describe the difference in such a way as to make it clear either to himself or to others. He could say that the two odors were different and that he liked one and disliked the other, but that would be all. The point is that while at first thought music seems to appeal directly to the feelings, it really does not do so, but reaches the feelings through ideas which deal with definite forms. These ideas relate to plan and arrangement and to the manner of performance, showing that the emotions music awakens result very largely from ideas of structure and interpretation.

If a person had never heard *Dixie* or *Suwannee* [Swanee] *River*, when the two tunes were played to him he would have different feelings about them; he might like one and dislike the other. But, besides the difference in the degree of pleasure felt, he could point out a number of particulars in which the two differed. Even the average observer would feel the difference between the swing of *Dixie* and that of *Suwannee River*.

The fact that he could notice unlikenesses in the two tunes would show that there is a difference in the designs of which the tunes are constructed. Such differentiation is also impossible between odors. If all associations connected with the rose and the lily were blotted out, we could only say in comparing their odors that they were different. But if we compare the flowers themselves, we shall find that they present certain ideas. That is, each flower manifests itself in a certain way, the lily through its cup-shaped and the rose through its complex corolla. Our experience in observing the arrangement of petals, the color, the shape and the relationship of parts to a whole has produced the ideas *rose* and *lily*, and we are able to judge whether these ideas are adequately attained or not. So with the two tunes mentioned above. The different relationships of the parts to one another show different designs. We have ideas of them which cause us, if a part be slightly changed, to become conscious not only of the alteration, but of the nature of the effect it produces. These are the ideas of structure.

But there is another class of ideas, those pertaining to interpretation. *Dixie* and *America* might be so played that the listener would say one is jolly, gay, and lively; the other dignified and stately. This sense of difference is caused

by the way the tunes are performed. We can imagine *Dixie* played in the solemn style of *America*, and *America* played in the lively way suitable for *Dixie*. But such performances would awaken feelings of incongruity. We have, then, ideas of how a tune should be performed, ideas arising partly from the nature of the particular tune, and partly from the associations connected with it.

We have perceived how we can describe what we see in a rose or lily. This is due to the fact that the eye is able to recognize the relationship of qualities and parts to the whole. Thus we get not only the idea of the entire rose or lily, but also ideas of the component parts—stem, leaf, petal—that make up the complete idea, percept, or notion. The rose may be faded and dull, or it may be fresh and bright; each of these is a definite idea pertaining to the quality of the flower. The rose may be single or double, its petals may be round or oval; each of these is a definite idea pertaining to the structure of the flower. To be complete, the notion or idea of a flower must be a combination both of ideas of its structure and of ideas of its quality.

Similarly, a piece of music presents not only the ideas of structure and interpretation already referred to, which give the notion of the piece as a whole, but these in turn can be analyzed into a still further group of ideas which we shall term constitutive, because every definite musical theme or motive and its adequate production includes these essential factors. There are seven of these; four relating to interpretation, and three to structure. The four ideas upon which interpretation is dependent are:

- 1 Quality of tone,
- 2 Quantity or volume of tone,
- 3 Rate of movement,
- 4 Articulation (such as separation or union).

The three ideas essential to structure are:

- 1 Pulsation,
- 2 Duration,
- 3 Pitch.

The capacity to feel the effects of these seven constitutive ideas is essential to the adequate appreciation of music.

In developing the consciousness of these ideas it is necessary to analyze them; but this, while supplying a basis, by no means accomplishes all we wish in education. The true science teacher attempts not only to lead the children

to know something of anemones and buttercups, of butterflies and ants, but through this knowledge to strengthen the love for the nature life about them; the true teacher of English not only trains the children to speak and write correctly, but awakens in them a love for good literature. The teacher of physical training likewise aims not only to make the little people stronger, but to inspire in them a pleasure in graceful posture and motion. This aspect, the love for what is taught, while impossible without the knowledge of the subject for we cannot love what we do not know does not in all cases necessarily follow knowledge. But music teaching which does not awaken this feeling of delight is a failure.

Chapter III: Ideas as Related to Interpretation

It is the purpose of this chapter to describe the principles that deal with the way music is performed, that is, with the interpretation of music. . . .

Turn to the analogy of language. Listen to a schoolboy reciting the Gettysburg speech and compare his interpretation with the declamation of a finished orator. The words are the same—that is, there is no difference in the structure—but how unlike is the effect! The boy may have the better voice, yet beside the orator, his recitation of the words is mechanical and full of inflections betraying a lack of comprehension of the thought. The most striking difference between the two recitations is that while the orator brings out the meaning of the language, and causes us to see even more in the words than when we read them ourselves, the schoolboy's awkward presentation obscures rather than illuminates the thought.

It is clear, then, that comprehension of the speech is not communicated simply by the accurate repetition of the words. The orator, a mature man, has had wide experience; he has studied many great speeches and has learned to value them; he has read history and realizes what a powerful influence this particular speech had at a critical period in the life of the nation. All this background enables the orator, through inflection and tone color, to add an emotional value. Our preference for the orator's interpretation of the Gettysburg speech is due, then, to his clear discernment of its thought, and to his power to feel and express its worth. This second element, though often spoken of as emotional and temperamental, is more than this. The boy's delivery may have plenty of emotional color; in fact, the ludicrous character of such performances is very often the result of misplaced or exaggerated emotional effects. The interpretation of the speech is determined by the character and skill of the speaker and the wealth or poverty of his past experience. . . .

The popular notion of the process of musical interpretation is the very reverse of what we have been describing. The emotional element is supposed to come first, leading afterwards to a discernment of the thought. But when we ask what it is that awakens the emotions, unless we say that it is a spontaneous reaction to the sound, as is the sense of smell to the odor, we must admit that the emotions are aroused through ideas. Two steps are involved; first, realization of the structure of the idea presented; and second, appreciation of the significance of this idea or its interpretation, aided by previous musical experience.

This double discernment of the musical idea and its value to us goes on subconsciously, for our fundamental musical understanding, like our grounding in language, takes place so early in childhood that we are not conscious of the processes; we are sensible only of the result. The more musical a person is, the more intuitive will be the feeling of reaction. How common it is to hear a musician say: "I don't know how I do it; I feel it so." He does not realize that an intuitive reasoning is taking place which makes him perceive one form one way and another form another way. The reason for his feeling how a composition should be interpreted really exists, even though it is hidden from his conscious self, in his musical rationality. If we analyze the performances of musical people, we find that the manner of their interpretation grows in a logical way from the nature of the selection, and it is possible to formulate the laws that underlie the performance of a given work. Because the musician may be unconscious of these laws, it does not follow that they do not control his processes. . . .

While the average listener is not conscious of the constitutive ideas by means of which interpretative effects are gained, their influence upon the complete interpretation of the work is shown by the unanimous appreciation given a really musical performance.

It is told of an eminent concert pianist that he found his best critic in an acquaintance who could not even sing or whistle a tune correctly. Anyone can easily bring to mind instances of the quickness with which a musically uncultivated audience will respond to a genuinely artistic performance. Though they are not able to give an adequate reason for their preference, the power of the gifted player or singer is instantly felt and is summed up by the word "musical." This shows how universal and how definite are the ideas of interpretation, by means of which such sure verdicts are given even by nonmusical people.

We like the way one person performs a musical work and dislike another's interpretation of the same work, even when the performance by the latter is

technically correct, because the interpretation of the first has appealed to the ideal of the beauty contained in the music, while the second interpretation lacked that beauty. Our ideals are the result of our previous musical experience, and beautiful performances make us conscious of them. The awakening of such consciousness is often like a further self-revelation and gives us a rare feeling of exaltation. Hence the importance of developing musical ideas. These will be considered in Chapter IV.

Chapter IV: Ideas as Related to Structure

In marked contrast with the uniformity as regards interpretative ideas stand the ideas of musical structure, of which we shall treat in this chapter. Choice here is by no means so sure and definite. To illustrate this divergence, equally good presentations of two unlike compositions may be taken. Imagine two church choirs which are equally skilled in every way, but of which one gives historic music of the style of *Old Hundred* while the other sings the Gospel Hymn type. Each congregation is pleased with its own music. Now let these churches exchange choirs, while each continues to sing its own selections. The interpretative work will be equally good, but the effect on the audience will be very different. The first congregation will consider the songs of the second, vapid, silly, unchurchly, and impossible of conveying any spiritual meaning; while the second will think the music of the first dull and cold, without power to express spiritual fervor. This difference in preference is evidently not one of interpretation, for the choirs are equal in their ability to render their music effectively. But the content of the two kinds of music is totally different. They express different structural ideas which appeal, or do not appeal, to the different audiences. The kind of music we like is determined by our immediate environment. Whether we prefer the music hall type, or the work of great masters depends upon which we are in the habit of hearing, unless we are musically gifted and can enter at once into the greater inheritance.

The two recitations of the Gettysburg speech exemplify the importance of interpretation. We realized the necessity for the speaker's appreciation both of the speech and its setting. That he might recite it effectively it was essential for him to be able to value it. But if a speech lacks ideas, no amount of interpretative skill can make it affect us, for there is no vital meaning to express. More important than expression, or form, is the thought itself, or substance. In music, as in language, the idea is of supreme importance. A single tone heard by itself means nothing. Only the few who possess absolute pitch can identify it by name. Before it becomes meaningful it must be built up with other tones into a pattern or design.

We have seen that differences in preference are due to the memory of what we have been accustomed to hear, but there must be something in the structure to which memory can attach. A person who has heard *Dixie* and *The Star Spangled Banner* from childhood would not confuse the two, even though he were not able to state in words the different ideas the two tunes expressed; their difference would be as distinct in the consciousness as the difference between *Barbara Frietchie* and the *Biglow Papers*.

Let us examine the difference in the structural ideas of the two tunes. This requires us to consider the constitutive ideas of structure that unite in producing their specific effects. First, we can march to one tune, but we should have to waltz if we wished to move with the swing of the other. The grouping and emphasis of tone for the purpose of producing this feeling of pulsation, enabling us to move regularly to the swing of the tune, is technically known as the metrical element of music. The metrical element—for instance, two-four or three-four—can be thought of independently of these tunes. Meters are distinct ideas in themselves, modes of pulsation necessarily used to form a musical structure; but they have significance only as they constitute a definite element of music.

In the second place, we notice as we sing the two tunes that while we can keep a regular movement, the tones through which the pulses are manifested are not of regular length; some are long, even lasting over a pulse, and some are short so that several occur in a single pulse. This variation of the tones as to time duration is not arbitrary, but fits in with the regular pulsation of the metrical relationships, forming with them a rhythmic pattern or design. We find that the two tunes vary decidedly in this respect of duration. These duration values are not invented for these particular tunes; they are part of the inherent relationship in which tones are thought. In themselves they form a distinct group of ideas, but as in the case of pulsation, they gain their significance only when expressed in a given musical passage.

Finally, we have a third grouping of tones, which has to do entirely with the pitch of the sounds. Here, similarly, we find that the selection of pitches is not arbitrary, but consists of tones related in a definite way to what is called the keynote of the composition—its principal or most important tone. This key relationship is a distinct idea in itself, independent of the two others mentioned; yet, like them, not significant until it is combined with them. Such combination results in a definite piece of music whose type varies according to the way in which the constitutive ideas have been used.

To recapitulate, the complete structural idea of the two tunes, while felt as a sound motion or progress (for we speak of the way music “goes”), takes its

definite character in each tune from the three ways in which the ideas constitutive of structure are manifested: *first*, in relation to the regular successions of time, which is expressed by means of pulsations that throb in larger and larger units; *second*, in relation to the relative duration of the tones, which, fitting in with the pulsations, present a definite, rhythmic design; and *third*, in relation to the pitch of the tones, a selection of sounds with reference to a central or key tone, which vary with reference to the direction up or down and to the extent of change in each. These three ways in which tones are grouped unite to form the structure or design of a tune. This design is the idea the composer of the tune intended to represent. We recognize the force and character of the idea long before we analyze it; in fact, analysis into these constitutive ideas might hinder enjoyment at the time.

Disassociation between a musical passage and the specific idea it expresses cannot take place. All musical passages are specific; every combination of sounds, every tone group that conveys a musical thought can express only that particular tone thought, and it cannot be translated into words. Change any constitutive factor, such as the duration or pitch of any of the tones, and you express something different.

As soon as we realize that every musical form or tone group we hear is itself a concrete musical thought, and is the product of combining the three tone relationships, pitch, duration and pulsation, which are themselves constitutive ideas, we perceive how important it is to hear accurately these relationships. It is true that musical appreciation does not need to break up the tonal movement or progress into these three factors, but it is also true that any indefiniteness in perceiving these relationships must result in indefiniteness on the part of the listener as to the idea expressed.

For this reason the Kindergarten stage of mere sensibility without training in analysis for accurate hearing is inadequate. Yet most of us never advance beyond this childhood stage. Its limitations maybe formulated thus: first, experience is narrow, we learn to like few and poor varieties; second, experience lacks intensity, is weak and superficial. Most of us need development and widening of the early experience through opportunities for interpretation, and the making of this experience more sharp and vivid through training in hearing accurately the constitutive ideas.

The importance of directing and guiding musical experience will be seen if we keep in mind these facts: first, that while comparatively few make music, everyone who hears it takes part in it to the extent of his enjoyment; second, that the part taken by those who enjoy it is by means of the musical ideas that are presented; and third, that the musical ideas presented would be

unintelligible to the hearer unless his previous musical experience had made him familiar with similar ideas. The aim of music teaching in the public school being to give not only technical knowledge to the gifted few, but also a cultural training to the many, the teaching should consist of the experience that will widen and intensify the ideas of musical structure and interpretation, and thus lead to comprehension and enjoyment.

The following chapters suggest a way in which this may be done.

Chapter V: How Ideas Are Developed Through Experience

One of the editors of a large metropolitan daily says that while almost all the writers in the office are college men, and that, too, from a university that lays special stress on English work, yet it is practically necessary to teach these men to write after they enter the office. We know that they have had eight years of English in elementary and grammar schools, and four years of secondary school training; that they have specialized in English at college; and that the subject, instead of being divorced from actual life, requires daily practical exercise from childhood. Then, too, we must remember that the schools have almost entirely neglected the oral for the benefit of the written language. In the face of all these facts, the remark of the editor-in-chief that it is necessary to teach college graduates how to write—not academic English, but the common English of everyday life—seems strange. This can be accounted for, however, when we take into consideration that, while the true aim of schoolwork is to prepare for life, the immediate aim is the study of such subjects as reading, writing, and arithmetic. The teacher, with all his energies bent on accomplishing these definite activities, is liable to lose sight of the real end for which the studies are prescribed. Hence, while the children learn to read, write, and cipher, they do so under artificial conditions, and are instructed with a disregard for the application of these activities to living, so that the true aim of all their work—the participation in life—is lost. Therefore, owing to this radical difference in point of view, it is possible for a pupil to study English all his student life, and still be unprepared for the practical demands of newspaper work.

If this is the case in such a study as English, the difficulty is much more apparent in a subject like music, the practical exercise of which is but sporadic and occasional. To this disadvantage must be added the fact that the relation between the thing studied, as scales, chords, and all the complexities of notation, and the vital thing experienced as beautiful music, is difficult to establish even for musically gifted people. One can imagine, therefore, the state of mind of the large majority of the ungifted.

Take the study of harmony. There is hardly anyone who is not sensitive to its effects, yet it would be safe to hazard that not one in a hundred of those who write out the exercises of an average harmony book is able to make any practical connection between the knowledge and skill he has gained and his musical experience.

In the vast amount of knowledge that children gain spontaneously before school days begin it is the practical use of what is learned that causes them to absorb it. A rudimentary notion of current musical ideas has been unconsciously acquired by the average child who enters the first grade. He has picked them up just as he has picked up his mother tongue. If he is born in London, Occidental music sounds familiar to him; if he is born in Tokio, Oriental music.

In order to understand language, the child has need of a great background of language experience whereby, through a series of unconscious comparisons of the sounds

he hears, aided by the common points in the circumstances under which they are uttered, and through continual deliberate attempts to imitate the sounds, there gradually and all unconsciously dawn upon him their purpose and the method of using them. Thus he becomes conscious of the idea. In other words, his consciousness of ideas is the result of his attempts to make his experience practical.

The following illustration shows the necessity of applying language forms, such as words, to our experience in order to define ideas and make discrimination possible. A boy, who, on account of brain deficiency, did not imitate sounds, grew to the age of eleven without being able to talk. He acted like an imbecile, did not play with the other children, and expressed hunger and other elemental ideas only through signs, intelligible to no one but his parents. At eleven, the experiment of teaching him by Bell's visible speech was tried. The result was marvelous. The boy caught up with the other children; in fact, he advanced so rapidly that it was necessary to stop teaching him for a time lest his brain be overtaxed. The boy had the experience, the necessary senses, and evidently the brain capacity, but because of his inability to imitate sounds he had been unable to apply the symbols of language to his experience, and thus was left incapable of developing his ideas.

If we apply to music the thought of the preceding illustration, the first attempts of little children to sing will show how the experience is being acquired from which musical ideas may be developed. In his attempts at song, the child's voice goes up and down in pitch, it produces long and short tones,

it occasionally places emphasis, and successive outbursts produce a crude sort of rhythm. But this rambling la-laing, although it contains all the elements of music, and the fond mother may call it singing, cannot be termed music; for it presents no organic material. But let the child repeat a definite rhythm, expressed through tones showing key relationship, and the very fact that he can hold this unit and can keep repeating it shows that his previous, unorganized experience has been organized by means of this particular melodic form. His music at first may consist of this one figure, but soon others form and he shows preferences. He will need to hear but the first strain of *Little Bo Peep* or *Ding Dong Bell* to distinguish it.

In other words, he has gone through precisely the same process and has organized and used ideas in connection with these songs just as he did with the words *cat* and *dog*. But there is this difference that the child is probably more analytically conscious of the constitutive ideas that combine to form the notions of objects, because it is easier to think of phenomena presented in space than of those presented in time. In music, pitch, duration, and pulse changes all combined, succeed one another so subtly, as presented in time, that the memory is unable to hold them distinctly enough to permit the mind to compare them. However, the essential thing—their effect as registered in feeling—is just as distinct and definite for *Ding Dong Bell* and *Little Bo Peep* as it is for any visible objects.

Objection may be made to the preceding description as not applicable to the facts presented by extremely musical children. The musical child will produce organized musical effects in the form of melodies with apparently no more preparation than the newly hatched chick requires in order to peck. This means simply that the young inherit strong tendencies to do things which favorable external circumstances promptly set in motion. Because the child produces melody at once, it does not follow that experience and the forming of ideas have not preceded it; but that environment makes available an experience which immensely increases the effectiveness of his own.

Since language ideas are more universally employed than those of music, they are of great assistance in teaching music. By employing songs where language ideas already familiar to the child coincide with the musical ideas, he can lead to the proper musical interpretation. . . . Thus, if we choose an expressive song, and teach the child to sing it so as to bring out its thought, we can easily make him conscious of the reason for employing constitutive ideas, and develop in him an intelligent notion of good interpretation.

On the other hand, what is done with reference to pitch, duration, and pulsation, or the ideas constitutive of structure, is not easily separated and made

distinct in the movement of the music. Hence no connection can be made between such a specific act and its effect in the musical impression; consequently no idea can be formed. What is needed to form such ideas is something that will guide the pupil's attention, so that, while he is feeling the swing and go of the music, he can at the same time observe a specific form or act, and notice its influence in the total effect he feels. This will enable the pupil to develop an idea of the specific act or form, so that he not only may learn the symbol that represents it, but also may use both the symbol and the ideas in recognizing or suggesting new form combinations and new ideas.

To aid in accomplishing this end, the work has been divided into four steps: observing, acting, picturing, and notation.

In the first step the child is led to observe that there is something in connection with the structure of the tune that is appropriate to what it expresses. This something may be separated into the three kinds of musical ideas already referred to: (1) the metrical grouping—the succession of pulses; (2) the grouping with reference to tone duration—long and short sounds; (3) the grouping with reference to pitch—popularly described in terms of space as *up* and *down*.

If the child has observed that there is a difference between the “go” of his slumber song and that of his marching song, we should lead him to discover the nature of this difference by letting him act what he feels—the second step—for there is a natural and intimate correlation between movement and music; they mutually define each other. One might not be able to tell the difference between a tune in three-part, and one in four-part meter, but if he tried to move to these, the movement itself would make him conscious of the difference. At the same time, movement with the music does not destroy the consciousness of the tone structure itself. The average listener may not be able to tell what constitutes the differences in tone length and grouping between *Yankee Doodle* and *America* but if he “claps” the sounds as he sings them, by concentrating his attention on what he is doing with his hands, he can, after sufficient trial, realize the metrical difference between these two songs. Thus the step of preliminary observation is made more intensive by combination with action.

When the ideas have become distinct in consciousness as forms of movement, we can define them still further by diagram, making the third step. Strong and weak pulses may be represented by large and small circles, long and short tones by long and short dashes, the idea of up and down by dashes of different elevation. Thus tone ideas have been translated into movement ideas, and these have been represented pictorially.

In each of these steps the music is being sung while a given tone relationship is being observed by means of action, picturing, etc., so that there is no break between what is felt as music and that which is representing one feature of its structure. We can now pass on to the final step, which is to change the picture of the tone relationships to the notation that represents the same ideas.

Thus the fundamental principle, the connection between what is felt and that which expresses it, is so systematically evolved by means of the four steps of observing, acting, picturing, and writing the symbols that the dullest pupil shall not be left behind.

We must not forget, however, that the act of appreciation itself is one that feels the beauty of all the parts as related to a complete whole; it is a synthetic and not an analytic act. Whenever we study a piece of music we are only preparing ourselves for appreciation. The objection so often made that the study of an art work by drawing attention to its mechanism destroys its imaginative appeal is well taken, for the analysis of a work of art involves a different mental process from its appreciation. One is the scientific attitude, the other the aesthetic. One cannot be substituted for the other. The individual, fully to realize his opportunity, must have the benefit of both methods of approach. One prepares him; the other gives him the fruition.

[Chapters VI through XVIII present detailed step-by-step plans for music instruction in grades one through eight. Chapter XIX is the final chapter of the book.]

Chapter XIX: The Broad and the Narrow View of Education in Relation to Music

The narrow view of music teaching produces two distinct types of work. The first emphasizes the intellectual element, and makes sight singing its goal. It has two advantages. The work lends itself to definite measurement; written exercises and singing tests show what it accomplishes; the world's coarse thumb and finger can easily plumb its results. It gets these results by utilizing the formal methods, and so is dear to the hearts of many teachers in systematized schools. It places its emphasis upon the eye rather than upon the ear; hence a larger number of the teachers of general subjects are able by its means to get results. This in itself would be of greatest importance if the results attained could be proved to have musical value in afterlife.

The second type, which emphasizes the emotional element, though diametrically opposed to that just described, is classified under the narrow view because it also is impatient to get results. It asks, "Why all this harrowing

and preparation for work? The pupils are already overstimulated to think. We want them to feel. Let us gather all the honey of feeling from the flowers of song, and trust to Nature for providing the blossoms." Supporters of this view are not merely those temperamentally emotional, but also philosophers and leaders of educational thought, who, feeling the significance and value of music and realizing how much it means to society, naturally think that the time spent in schools on music should be taken up with songs that will inculcate friendship, love of home, love of nature, of one's country, and of God. When the advocates of this type see the entire time of the singing period taken up with the practicing of scales and the other machinery of sight singing, and observe that the song material used is vapid, both musically and poetically, written down to the children in order to enable them to read the music, the song being treated as an exercise made interesting, they are naturally disgusted with the whole American effort at sight singing, and say, "Away with it all. Let us do as they do very largely in Germany. Let the teacher with violin in hand, lead the children, thus reducing the mental effort on their part to simple imitation and placing the whole emphasis on the emotional side."

They make the mistake, however, of valuing music only as a means. They fail to recognize that, being an art, it has beauty for its goal, and that beauty, like truth, must be sought primarily for its own sake. One who seeks beauty because it is good for his health or his morals has not the attitude towards it that will enable him to grasp it. For, however highly we may regard the by-product of artistic activity, art that is pursued for the by-products fails, because it ceases to be art. It is like the picture or the poem that, masquerading under the lion's skin of art, attempts to inculcate morals, love of country, or religion; sooner or later the unfortunate voice betrays the imposture. There are those who feel that as long as the imposition is not recognized the end justifies the means; but they fail to realize that the means become abortive because the true nature of art has been violated, so that it cannot exercise its forceful influence. Hence we fail, both of our ethical and artistic results.

Not only this, but this type of the narrow view, by seeing in art only its emotional worth, fails to recognize the necessity for the intellectual discipline that its genuine appreciation demands. Hence, those who hold it are impatient with any musical work that is not constantly bubbling with emotional fervor. They see no use in the concentrated effort, resembling that required in mathematics, which is so often demanded in a complete realization of a work of art.

A third objection to this type is that in emphasizing the social and collective aspect requiring expression, the field is narrowed and the motive weakened.

With reference to the former, while collective singing has value through its intensity, there is much less opportunity for its exercise than through those forms of musical expression that we

utilize simply by hearing, very largely in the field of instrumental music. While the ear training that results develops further ability for the same kind of activity, it does not necessarily prepare one for instrumental forms of expression. There are those who enjoy singing in choruses, but to whom instrumental music is meaningless a good example of the modern psychological view that preparation in one form of activity does not necessarily lead to the appreciation of an allied form, even though it be closely related.

Perhaps the most serious drawback is that it weakens the motive for musical activity through the disregard of the individual point of view. The individual sings patriotic or religious songs, not because he values the social worth of the emotions they awaken, but primarily because he loves to sing. When man is stirred with patriotic fervor, either in time of war or by some eloquent address, or under any stimulating social feeling, the social song comes to the front and is sung with vigor and enjoyment; but the average prosaic life does not offer sufficient opportunities for such expression. In an ordinary state of mind, a person will sing a patriotic or religious song for the attractiveness there is in the song; in other words, for what he feels is its beauty. The emotional type of narrow view, by disregarding the training in musicianship that will prepare the individual to see the beauty in music independently of all extraneous influences, destroys the strongest motive for musical expression and, as we have already said, defeats its own end.

Both forms of the narrow view emphasize important elements in music teaching. They stand in the way of a more comprehensive plan because of the truth they contain. It is right that early and definite results should be sought. The reputation both of the teacher and of the school system are largely judged by what they immediately accomplish. It requires self-restraint and discipline for the farmer to leave his field fallow when he might be getting crops. It takes a broad view to plow deep and fertilize well when the immediate harvest can be got with less effort. With the pressure for results upon her the teacher needs moral courage to allow time for preparing the pupils' minds, when by appealing directly to memory she can have not only the forms of knowledge repeated to her, but the processes as well, and so cleverly that only the most careful observer can detect the lack of genuine understanding. These quick responses are the product not of thought but of imitation. It is because we are deceived as to the results of the narrow view that it is often considered more effective than the broad, comprehensive treatment.

It is not only the intellectual and the emotional aspects of the narrow view that are obstacles to the successful carrying out of more comprehensive schemes of music teaching. There are practical objections.

The broader view demands special training on the part of the teacher and the exercise of the mind in discrimination through the use of the ear, an organ almost never used for discriminative work outside of music and the incidental phonics work in English. When we consider how little training in either of these the average teacher gets, it is not surprising that when she tries to deal with tonal ideas she should feel entirely unable to cope with the problem, like the proverbial hen with her brood of ducklings. Lessening this demand for special training is the fact that when music is taught in a truly educational way, it can easily be related to other forms of educational work carried on in a similar spirit. The teacher who for nature study and English requires individual observation and the formulation and expression of what is observed in cogent and effective manner, who makes all the geography, arithmetic, and writing grow out of the experiences of a pupil's daily life and knows how to make her work significant, will have little trouble in teaching music along the broad view, even though her musical training may not be extensive. It is certainly the experience of all supervisors that the teacher working along true educational lines will get better results in music than the merely musical teacher who, unable to analyze her own processes, gets only thoughtless and imitative results by leading the pupils with her voice.

Another objection besides the training required, is that the carrying out of the broad view does demand time. Music in many schools at present fails to get the time it needs, because, under the control of the narrow view it aims only at immediate results, and so does not exercise that lasting influence upon life which would justify those who arrange school programmes in giving it more time. If society and school authorities realized how much more the broad view would make possible of accomplishment, there would be no difficulty in getting either the training or the time essential for the work.

The broad view not only attains all that the narrow aims to accomplish, but adds two distinctive features: individual initiative and the communication of feeling. The development of individual initiative renders it possible not only for the act of producing music, but for the far more frequent act of hearing music, to involve an active cooperation of both the thought and the imagination of the pupil. By demanding thought and imagination, music causes the self to take such a real part in what is heard that throughout life a continual development ever widens and deepens the power for joyous experience.

The communication of feeling is brought about through the development of musical ideas which charge the sensuous beauty of music with the expressive qualities of language, not duplicating language where it is effective, but conveying the expression where language fails. When the reader considers how vital is language in differentiating man from the brute, he will feel the importance of this subtler language, which has the power of carrying man far beyond the limitations of speech. In terms of the aim of artistic education stated in the first chapter: the broad view represents an education through music that quickens perception, clarifies feeling, and stimulates initiative for the beautiful.

Frontier Figures: American Music and the Mythology of the American West

By Beth E. Levy. *California Studies in 20th-Century Music* 14. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2012.

In his Young People's Concert on American Music from 1958, Leonard Bernstein announced that "almost every country, or nation, has some kind of music that belongs to it, and sounds right and natural for its people."¹ For Bernstein, the art music of the United States was a special case, a coming-of-age journey. American music only became "American," he claimed, when, at some point toward the middle of the twentieth century, composers moved away from imitating European models and shifted toward the non-self-conscious incorporation of vernacular musics into (European) genres like symphonies, operas, and chorale preludes.² Eventually, he argued, American composers "just wrote music, and it came out American."³

Bernstein's central question—as he put it, that of "what makes certain music seem to belong to America" (and not to a European country)⁴—has long dominated American music historiography. As Richard Crawford has written, "no fact about the writing of American music history is more characteristic than the looming presence of Europe."⁵ That European shadow has made a stubbornly central objective out of defining American music as a monolithic entity—what Bernstein called a "melting pot,"⁶ one in which striking differences are folded neatly under an overarching American umbrella.

In her impressive book, *Frontier Figures: American Music and the Mythology of the American West*, Beth E. Levy continues to explore the questions that fascinated Bernstein, Crawford, and others. But she does so by refocusing the historiographical lens, zooming in on the diverse sounds often subsumed under the heading of American music. From its title alone, one might expect a study of how composers struck new paths to create a distinctly American (and thus non-European) sound by engaging with symbols and images of forests, prairies, and deserts. But rather than placing the work of composers such as Arthur Farwell, Virgil Thomson, Roy Harris, and Aaron Copland in

the service of a narrative about American music as a unified concept, Levy unsettles that narrative. She chips away at what she calls a “scholarly preoccupation with the overarching category of ‘Americanism’” and instead brings to light “specific decisions that composers have made about what could and should sound American (p. 17).”

For Levy, the West, real and imagined, was a fruitful venue for such artistic decision making. In *Frontier Figures*, she investigates relationships between art music and America’s frontiers from around 1900 to 1950. “Frontier” is, admittedly, a vague term, and one that points in many directions. Geographically, it is the constantly shifting area west of the Eastern Seaboard. Conceptually, as Levy writes, it reflects “new technology, political and demographic change, and large-scale shifts in aesthetic sensibility”—a set of changes crucial to understanding how music evolved in the first half of the twentieth century (p. 14). To explore the frontier, Levy generates pairings out of the composers named above and others, creating a series of case studies through which she examines a variety of compositions in the context of their connections to western history and mythology. With this case study model, Levy’s work complements books like Denise von Glahn’s *The Sounds of Place: Music and the American Cultural Landscape* and Carol J. Oja’s *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s*—each of which also treats a series of connected figures.

The first of Levy’s “frontier figures,” addressed in the book’s first two parts, are Arthur Farwell and Charles Wakefield Cadman—two musicians who confronted Native American music with starkly different motivations and results. Farwell, today better known than Cadman, is also the more “serious” of the pair—the one for whom borrowings of components from American Indian cultures carried spiritual significance. Cadman, on the other hand, generated what Levy portrays as a more superficial approach to Indianist music and imagery. His opera *Shanewis*, which appeared at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1918, employed (as Levy argues) such music in a stereotypical and exploitative manner, as shallowly etched local color in the service of operatic norms. At the end of part 2, Levy helpfully uses Cadman as a starting point for considering a diverse group of other composers and works inspired by the American West, including Victor Herbert’s *Natoma*, George Gershwin’s *Girl Crazy*, and Giacomo Puccini’s *Fanciulla del West*.

In part 3, Levy’s focus shifts away from American Indians and toward the connections between pioneers of European descent and the new lands they encountered. At the beginning of this portion of her study, Levy compares two works inspired by Carl Sandburg’s poetry. The first is by Midwestern-born

composer Leo Sowerby; his tone poem *Prairie* seems, as Levy suggests, both to celebrate technological progress and to eulogize pure, untouched landscapes—a more complex and realistic approach to the West than that of the Indianists, who conflated American Indians and the western terrains that the pioneers overpowered. (As Levy writes, those Indianist composers “had a tendency to treat natives and nature as a single entity—an unspoiled geography to be admired or a fearsome obstacle to be conquered [p. 15].”) The second work is by German-born composer Lukas Foss; his cantata *The Prairie* excised technological imagery from Sandburg’s “Prairie” and offered a more plainly and peacefully bucolic musical reflection of the American West than Sowerby’s tone poem.

Part 3 continues with another pair of composers, Virgil Thomson and Ernst Bacon, each of whom also composed works with similar titles but different implications. Levy’s discussion of Thomson’s score for Pare Lorentz’s 1936 documentary *The Plow That Broke the Plains* demonstrates how music productively complicates standard pioneer narratives—particularly when these narratives are attached to striking visual cues. Levy’s assessment of the film’s finale, in which Thomson has a *habañera* accompany the farmers as they move further west, is especially cogent. She uses evidence from Lorentz’s description of the scene, as well as Thomson’s own writings, to argue simply that “a casual conflation of Mexico and California under the ‘Latin’ rubric is all that Thomson would have needed to justify his tango (p. 203).” The narrator may well announce “On to the West!” but in Levy’s interpretation, Thomson’s musical choice suggests a more complicated and ultimately futile journey—one in which these settlers “were moving in the proper direction” but “had no Manifest Destiny to fulfill (p. 203).” With the next chapter, on Bacon’s opera *A Tree on the Plains*, the focus shifts to a more intimate venue—the pioneer family. In this case, religion emerges as an important theme, and Levy adeptly connects the overt spirituality of Bacon’s score with American and European pastoral traditions.

Parts 4 and 5 place the music and careers of Roy Harris and Aaron Copland in dialogue. This is a tantalizing pairing, as these two very different figures became, in some ways, the most celebrated practitioners of “Western” art music in twentieth-century America. (In his introduction to American music, Leonard Bernstein said of Harris that his music is of “the rugged West, full of pioneer energy.” He followed an excerpt from Harris’s Third Symphony with one from Copland’s *Billy the Kid*, which Bernstein, as have others, linked to the “great wide open spaces that our big country is so full of.”¹²) Authenticity surfaces as a major topic in Levy’s discussion of Harris, who was considered

by many to be the “Great White Hope” of American music. Harris’s personal connection to the West, Levy shows, gave his music a certain Americanist credibility but also nurtured a racially charged nationalism that ultimately diminished that very credibility. What we might call Harris’s westernness contrasted sharply with Copland’s more global outlook; for Copland, depicting the West was more an artistic challenge than a personal mission. Many have noted the seemingly amusing irony that a Brooklyn-born Jewish composer created music that seemed to capture America’s heartland. By contrasting Copland with Harris, Levy goes an important step beyond this irony, throwing into relief the “cultural collisions” (p. 335) that were an integral aspect of Copland’s western purview and that she detects in *Billy the Kid*.

As a series of case studies, *Frontier Figures* does not present a continuous narrative. But it still manages to tell a compelling story about American music from 1900 to 1950—what Levy calls a “shift from Indian to pioneer to cowboy imagery” and a concomitant “move from orient to occident” (p. 335). The beautiful prose and regular resurfacing of figures and themes throughout the book bring her story to life. The musical examples are carefully selected and lucidly discussed; they all support the major points of Levy’s analyses without drawing attention away from those points. The photographic illustrations—such as a still of grasslands from *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (p. 192), or an image of a brawny-looking Roy Harris with his convertible in an iconic Colorado landscape (p. 285)—establish strong connections between music and frontiers. Indeed, given the visual and interdisciplinary nature of Levy’s subject matter, and the prominence of iconography in shaping ideas about the American West, one might have wished for even more such graphics to augment her already illuminating investigations. Its insightfulness and reader-friendliness make *Frontier Figures* a crucial text not only for music historians, but for any student or scholar of American history or culture.

Reviewed by Matthew Mugmon

NOTES

¹ Leonard Bernstein, *Young People’s Concerts* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 2005), 33.

² On Bernstein’s argument, see Joseph Horowitz, “As Music Director: A Quest for Meaning and Identity,” in *Leonard Bernstein: American Original*, ed. Barbara B. Haws and Burton Bernstein (New York: Collins, 2008), 141–42.

³ Bernstein, *Young People’s Concerts*, 44.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵ Richard Crawford, *The American Musical Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 6.

⁶ Bernstein, *Young People's Concerts*, 51.

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