FINDING THE “INDIAN” IN AMY BEACH’S THEME AND VARIATIONS
FOR FLUTE AND STRING QUARTET, OP. 80

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Music that is categorized as part of the Indianist movement in American music (ca. 1890-1925) typically evokes Native American culture, ritual, story, or song through compositional gestures. It may also incorporate Native American tunes. Amy Beach (1867-1944) is considered to have composed five Indianist works, but her Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80 has not been included as one of them. This thesis rethinks categorization of the piece, seeking the “Indian” in it through examination of its gestures, instrumentation, and relationship to contemporary Indianist compositions.
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Amy Beach (1867-1944) was one of the first successful American composers educated entirely in the United States, and is considered to be the first successful American woman composer of large-scale art music.¹ She has been the subject of renewed interest in recent decades because of the success of her music during her life, as well as her status as the first successful American woman composer. Treatises on her life and works continue to grow in number, and her compositions appear with increasing frequency on concert programs and in new recordings. The primary aim of this thesis is to reconsider Beach’s Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80. The piece has been recognized since its premiere for its skillful integration of flute and quartet, but it has never been evaluated with respect to its inspiration. It is not considered one of Beach’s folk-influenced compositions, despite musical characteristics that suggest Native American music and culture: it is based on her earliest “Indianist” composition and seems to evoke Native American imagery through gestures and instrumentation. I hope that drawing attention to the piece’s connections with the “Indianist” movement in American music (ca. 1890-1925) will provide a different listening framework for this piece than it has been traditionally afforded.

In order to adequately contextualize and evaluate the Theme and Variations, a great deal of background on the “Indianist” movements in the nineteenth century is necessary. Chapter 2 thoroughly examines the term “Indianist” because it is

infrequently defined in musicological and historical writing, despite its recurring appearance in them. In addition, there does not appear to have been any attempt to determine the term’s origins until now. Chapter 3 extensively explores the intertwining history of literature and music on Native American themes. While articles and dissertations on “Indianist” compositions regularly cite such literature as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *Song of Hiawatha*, there seems to be very little study of the connection between the “Indianist” movement in music and that in literature. In the exploration of that relationship and the examination of the major contributors in both fields (James Fenimore Cooper, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Comfort Fillmore, Antonín Dvořák, Edward MacDowell, and Arthur Farwell), this thesis highlights imagery used to depict Native Americans and Native American culture during the nineteenth century. In doing so, it establishes one context for Amy Beach’s “Indianist” compositions. Chapter 4 addresses Beach’s interaction with the “Indianist” movement in music and provides a summary of her five compositions commonly considered part of it. Finally, Chapter 5 focuses on the Theme and Variations. It provides background information for the piece, as well as a discussion of its instrumentation and other kinds of musical gestures. Because Michael V. Pisani and Adrienne Fried Block have written extensively on the “Indianist” movement in music and on Amy Beach, respectively, their work provides the foundation for this thesis. Their books and articles are routinely cited in writings on the “Indianist” movement in music and on Amy Beach.

On a final, technical note, I use the term “theme” in this thesis to denote evocation of Native American music, story, ritual, or culture. I use “tunes” or “songs” to refer specifically to Native American music or song transcriptions. I have made a
concerted effort to avoid any other use of the term, but some instances do occur. On occasion, I use it to refer to a composition’s structural melodic material, and in Chapter 5, I use it to discuss the “theme section” of the Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80. In addition, some quotations of writing by Burnet C. Tuthill, John Tasker Howard, Charles Wakefield Cadman, Amy Beach, Myrna Eden, and Adrienne Fried Block, use the term “theme” to refer to Native American song. I clarify all exceptions to the established definition in footnotes.
CHAPTER 2

“INDIANIST” DEFINED

“Indianist” is a problematic term whose definition depends on the particular field of study and the context in which it is applied. It has its origins in ethnology and has been used to describe nineteenth- and twentieth-century activists who advocated government policies supporting the rights of indigenous peoples.2 In Latin America, the term continues to be applied to political movements advocating the rights of native populations. For instance, it is used to refer to indigenous groups of people in Bolivia who have campaigned increasingly since the 1980s for social and political reform, and who assert cultural identity distinct from that of the dominant (and sometimes oppressive) populations.3

Some nineteenth-century researchers of native North American life and culture can be classified as “Indianist” because of their deep concern for Native Americans’ social and economic well-being. Alice Cunningham Fletcher (1838-1923), for example, has been noted for working on behalf of Native American rights and education; her efforts were a direct result of her extensive study of the Omaha of Nebraska.4 In many cases, researchers who became activists as a result of their studies can be classified according to their particular field of study as well. For example, Alice Fletcher may be

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called an Indianist ethnomusicologist, though “ethnomusicologist” is anachronistic in her case, because of her particular emphasis on Omaha music.\textsuperscript{5}

The term “Indianist” has been frequently applied to nineteenth- and twentieth-century Latin American literature, including that of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru, that often detailed the struggles and oppression of indigenous peoples.\textsuperscript{6} The term does not appear to have been applied as frequently to North American literature or authors, presumably because they differed in motivation. Following the War of 1812, North American authors began to incorporate Native American characters and stories into their writing in order to generate a sense of American nationalism and an epic American past, rather than to support an oppressed population.\textsuperscript{7} North American literary trends and motivations are discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.

In contrast to its lack of association with North American authors, the term “Indianist” seems to be a commonly accepted label for North American composers who incorporated Native American songs, or depicted Native American characters, stories, or rituals in their music. Given the term’s original political and activist connotations, it does not seem to be an appropriate label. As authors did, many composers intended to establish an American musical identity through incorporation of Native American songs

\textsuperscript{5} This discussion is in response to Pisani’s definition of “Indianist,” in which he speaks of a “gap” between ethnomusicologists and Indianists (activists). \textit{Imagining Native America}, 167.

\textsuperscript{6} See, for example, Gerald E. Wade and William H. Archer, “The Indianista Novel Since 1889,” \textit{Hispania} 33 (1950): 211-20; and Ralph E. Warner’s review of \textit{The Indian in Brazilian Literature} by David Miller Driver in \textit{Hispanic Review} 11 (1943): 175-77.

\textsuperscript{7} “Character” in this thesis refers to people (often fictional or fictionalized) in nineteenth-century literature and music. “Nationalism” in this thesis refers to cultural identity based on American citizenship rather than common history or ancestors. It was expressed in the nineteenth century in the attempt to create American, as opposed to European, literature and music through distinct subject matter and sounds.
and themes. Several others became fascinated by the native music’s beauty and exotic appeal. Composers’ motivations are more fully addressed in Chapter 3.

It is uncertain how the term came to be applied in a musical context. It does not appear in Louis Elson’s one-page discussion of Native American music, and the closest John Tasker Howard comes in his history of American music is when he uses the phrase “Indian compositions” in his explanation of Arthur Farwell’s (1872-1952) compositions. Gilbert Chase seems to be the first to speak of an “Indianist” movement in American music. He used the term to refer to a “transitory” phase in which composers, including Farwell, Charles Wakefield Cadman (1881-1946), and others, incorporated Native American material and subjects for nationalistic purposes.

Richard Crawford does not use the term in his later history of American music, but authors of essays in The Cambridge History of American Music do. Today the term can be found in theses and dissertations, such as those by Frederik E. Schuetze (1984) and Deborah Margaret Osman (1992). It appears with less frequency in articles. When it is used, the term is either left undefined, or is defined and adapted to suit the needs of the writing.

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8 By the early twentieth century some composers were more politically aware. Pisani names Arthur Farwell and Charles Wakefield Cadman, among others, as examples of composers who “displayed a social consciousness resembling that of contemporary writers.” He considers these composers “social realists” as opposed to “Social Darwinists” because they were “motivated in part to counter the dangerous social effects of prevailing anti-Indian policies.” Pisani, “The Indian Music Debate and ‘American’ Music in the Progressive Era,” College Music Symposium 37 (1997): 24.


10 Michael V. Pisani, e-mail message to the author, June 6, 2007. See Pisani, Imagining Native America, 185 for further detail on Chase’s use of the term.


In her article, "‘Breathing the Indian Spirit’: Thoughts on Musical Borrowing and the ‘Indianist’ Movement in American Music," Tara Browner defines an “Indianist” composer as “any American who used Native American music as source material for art music on a consistent basis (as opposed to just once or twice) between 1890 and 1920.” This thesis uses Browner’s definition as a foundation, with some changes. Since compositions incorporating Native American music and material often represented only a small percentage of a composer’s works, as with Edward MacDowell, Amy Beach, Arthur Farwell, and many others, it makes more sense to talk about “Indianist” compositions and composers of “Indianist” music, rather than “Indianist composers.” Therefore, an “Indianist” composition is any American art music written between 1890 and 1920 that used Native American music (typically transcriptions) as source material, integrated Native American stories or rituals into compositions, or employed compositional gestures typically associated with Native American music, regardless of the composer’s inspiration or political awareness. For the purposes of comparison, “Indianist” will be applied to literature in the same manner. In this thesis, “Indianist” writing is any American literature written between 1812 and 1860 that included Native American characters, incorporated Native American stories or ritual (typically taken from studies by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft (1793-1864), George Catlin (1796-1872), and others), or portrayed in Native American culture or society. From this point forward, “Indianist” will no longer appear in quotation marks for the sake of readability.

CHAPTER 3

INDIANIST MOVEMENTS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the preface to *The White Man’s Indian*, Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., uses wave imagery to illustrate recurring periods of fascination with Native American culture: “White interest in the American Indian surges and ebbs with the tides of history. While White [sic] fascination with things Indian never entirely fades, it has easily discernible high and low points.”¹⁴ This wave metaphor provides a useful analogy for nineteenth-century American arts, in which two major surges of interest in Native American life and culture occurred. The first began in literature shortly after 1812, and the second began in music around 1880. Both periods were prompted by recognition of poor living conditions on reservations and in Native American communities, by increased academic and government study of Native American life, by significant legislation and military encounters with Native Americans, and by a collective yearning among white Americans for national identity.

The Wave in Literature

Literary culture in America received a boost following the Revolutionary War as writers strove to create a national identity separate from European tradition. However, it was not until after the War of 1812 that Native American subject matter became prevalent. Articles in American periodicals urged writers to incorporate American elements, such as the country’s landscape and indigenous population. John P.

McWilliams identified two essays from the 1815 issue of the *North American Review* as the rallying cry for heroic, national writing using Native Americans as subject matter. Both essays assessed the Revolution as too recent to provide a basis for serious literature and instead pointed to the “distant past,” correlating Native Americans with the ancient Greeks.15

Individuals such as Henry Rowe Schoolcraft (1793-1864) and George Catlin (1796-1872) undertook significant study of America’s indigenous cultures in the 1820s and ‘30s. Schoolcraft, an explorer and ethnologist, was assigned as a federal agent to several tribes near Lake Superior around 1822.16 A significant number of his Native American studies focused on the Ojibwa after he married the granddaughter of an Ojibwa chief in 1823.17 Schoolcraft’s most significant studies include *Algic Researches* (1839) and *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, 6 vols. (1851–57), both of which directly influenced Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s epic *Hiawatha*.18 *Algic Researches* was published again in 1856 under the title *The Myth of Hiawatha*.

Catlin was a self-educated artist concerned with recording Native American life before it vanished. He began extensive travels around America in 1830 and observed many different Native American communities, but predominantly those of the Great Plains. His five hundred drawings and paintings circulated throughout the United States

15 John P. McWilliams, “Red Satan: Cooper and the American Indian Epic,” in *James Fenimore Cooper*, ed. Robert Clark (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1985), 147. McWilliams also writes, “The more the Indian resembled a Homeric warrior, the more clearly American writers could be sure that their land had known an heroic age,” 145.
17 Richard Crawford, 391.
and Europe between 1837 and 1845. Catlin’s depiction of nations living on the Great Plains led to their becoming the paradigmatic representation of Native Americans in both literature and music in the nineteenth century.\(^{19}\) Catlin completed some research on Native American culture in addition to creating his pictures. He published a two-volume book in 1841 called *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*.\(^{20}\)

The new studies by Schoolcraft, Catlin, and others coincided with particularly tragic events in Native American communities. Outbreaks of smallpox epidemics decimated many Native American populations in the 1820s and ‘30s, as European and American traders brought smallpox with their goods. In 1837, for example, ninety percent of a Mandan tribe perished from smallpox within a matter of months.\(^{21}\) Trouble between Native American nations and the American government erupted in 1830 with the Indian Removal Act, which reversed decades of diplomatic agreement by giving President Andrew Jackson the power to seize desirable land even from peaceful Native American nations and to relocate them to unwanted land further west. Until that time, nations were considered autonomous and their land could not be forcefully taken from them. The Five Civilized Tribes in the Southeast, which included the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole, Cherokee, and Creek, particularly opposed the new legislation.\(^{22}\)

Several thousand from these nations were uprooted from their land and forced to march

\(^{19}\) Berkhofer, 89.


\(^{22}\) These nations were the major Native American communities in the Southeast and were given the title “Five Civilized Tribes” in the early nineteenth century. For more information, see "Southeast Indian," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* (Accessed July 27, 2007), <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-57730>.
west by the United States military. Their journey is today referred to as the “Trail of Tears.”

American writers began to incorporate Native American characters and themes in their work, prompted by periodical articles like those in the *North American Review*, by newly published research of Schoolcraft, Catlin, and others, and by events like the Trail of Tears. One of the most successful writers to do so was James Fenimore Cooper. His best known work, *The Last of the Mohicans*, was published in 1826 as part of the *Leatherstocking Tales* series. Set during the French and Indian wars, the plot followed two half-sisters who became lost in the wilderness and were captured twice by a band of Iroquois led by the fiendish chief Magua. Main characters included Natty Bumpo, a white man who dressed and lived like a Native American; Chingachgook, a Mohican chief; and Chingachgook’s son Unca.

*The Last of the Mohicans* exhibited several of the recurring images in nineteenth-century American literature. Two paradigmatic representations came directly from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European writing, that of the “Noble Savage” and the “demon.” The “demon,” exemplified by Magua, was a brutal character who often participated in bloody coups and scalpings. The “Noble Savage,” portrayed through the characters of Chingachgook and Unca, was a Native American who, though “primitive,”

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25 Ibid.
had admirable moral and physical qualities that included bravery, dignity, handsomeness, and strength.

“Noble Savage” imagery was vital to epic national literature because such literature relied on the notion of Native Americans as ancestors. This is striking: dominated peoples around the world have not uniformly been considered ancestors by their subjugators. No doubt, the idea stemmed from America’s unique situation in which the conquerors themselves were culturally divided and so felt compelled to create a history based on the land they shared. Harry J. Brown called this process the “attempt to forge a national mythology.” Reinventing America’s past through romanticized portrayal of indigenous populations, and connecting that history with America’s present, seemed to validate America as a significant, autonomous nation.

Another representation in Cooper’s novel was the extinction of Native American nations. This image conveyed the notion that Native American culture had to recede into the past in order for the new American nation to flourish. The portrayal of a “doomed” society giving way to a fledgling one also seemed to justify the shift in land ownership and the sometimes violent methods of land acquisition.

Indianist novels continued to be produced in the years following the Last of the Mohicans, but the most influential nineteenth-century American epic appeared almost two decades later. Begun in the summer of 1854, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem The Song of Hiawatha was an immediate success and influenced generations of authors, artists, and composers. It was modeled on the Finnish Kalevala and,

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28 See especially Harry J. Brown, 30-33, 46.
according to David R. Godine, was “Longfellow’s attempt to do for the American Indian what the Kalevala had done for Finland: to define, and to a degree, to create a national identity.” Longfellow was greatly influenced in his portrayal of Native American life by Schoolcraft’s and Catlin’s writings, Catlin’s paintings, and John Heckewelder’s study, History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States (1818).

The Song of Hiawatha was a mythological story in which Hiawatha, the main character, was a “Noble” figure. A combination of characters from history and legend, Hiawatha was depicted as a prophet sent by Gitche Manito, the Master of Life, to bring unity to all tribes. Hiawatha’s father, Mudjekeewis, was the Father of the Winds of Heaven. His grandmother, Nokomis, who raised him from an infant, was the daughter of the moon. Toward the end of Hiawatha’s extraordinary life, the “Pale-face,” a monk and his companions, arrived on American shores amidst the warm welcome of Hiawatha’s tribe. Hiawatha retreated into the sunset shortly thereafter, a gentler representation of death and extinction than that given in The Last of the Mohicans.

The Christianization (and often assimilation) of Native Americans was a recurring image in Indianist literature. It was borrowed from European writing, which frequently portrayed the conquering and Christianization of native peoples as beneficial to them. Edward Said describes: “A Western conquest of the Orient was not conquest after all, but liberty.” While Americans did not emphasize conquest as liberty in their literature and music per se, persistent imagery of Christianization, in addition to representations of “demonic” beings and depictions of Native Americans walking into the sunset,

29 Longfellow, “Publisher’s Afterward,” in Hiawatha, 273.
reinforced for the American public the conviction that seizing ownership of the American continent was not only reasonable, but inevitable. For this reason, many Indianist novels and compositions fit into Said’s definition of Orientalist art works: “texts that happily co-existed with or lent support to the global enterprises of European and American empire.”

*The Song of Hiawatha* was exceptionally popular after its publication in 1855, owing in part to Longfellow’s reputation at that time as the premiere American poet. The poem inspired satire and parody, as well as musical settings in sheet music and parlor songs. The first musical performances based on Hiawatha occurred as early as 1858. American composers inspired by the poem included Robert Stoepel (1821-1887), Louis Coerne (1870-1922), Edward MacDowell (1860-1908), and Arthur Foote (1853-1937). European musicians, similarly fascinated with the story, included Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912) and Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904).

By the time of the Civil War, Native Americans were no longer sources and subject matter for sophisticated writing and were instead relegated to popular culture in the form of dime Western novels. Technological advancements fueled the frenzy for dime novels in the late nineteenth century. Lower paper costs, innovations in printing technology, and the developing railway system made them both cheap and accessible.

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34 Berkhofer, 95.

to the general public. The authors of dime novels modeled plots and scenes on earlier nineteenth-century works, such as Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*. Native American characters continued to adhere to the “Noble” and “demonic” paradigms, depending on the ethnicity of the novel’s villain, and they always remained secondary to the cowboy hero. Dime novels also adopted and standardized the setting of the American West, which they borrowed from such earlier literature as *The Last of the Mohicans* and *Hiawatha*. The perceived bond between Native Americans and the American West had developed after the close of the western frontier, and it was later adopted by many composers, including Farwell, Cadman, and Aaron Copland (1900-1990). The popularity of affordable and entertaining dime novels enabled the success of Wild West shows such as that of Buffalo Bill.

The Wave in Music

Conflicts between white Americans and Native American nations escalated after 1850 but declined by the 1880s, following prominent Native American defeats such as the surrender of Chief Joseph in 1877. Two government-sponsored policies were implemented in the 1880s for the purpose of assimilating Native Americans following these events. In 1887, Congress passed the Dawes General Allotment Act, which assigned Native Americans tracts of land if they were evaluated as adequate farmers and granted them United States citizenship. Any land remaining after the allotment was sold to the American public. Assimilation was also attempted through government-
sponsored schools, such as the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, established by Captain Richard H. Pratt. These schools aimed to Americanize Native American youth by forcing them to speak English, cut their hair, and wear non-Native clothing styles. They did not allow youth to return home when school recessed in an effort to keep them from what was seen as regressing.\(^{39}\)

As a result of the government’s efforts, Native Americans were increasingly viewed as a disappearing and past culture. Popular artists and photographers of the day, as well as ethnologists, anthropologists, and musicians worked to record it before it vanished forever.\(^{40}\) Studies were aided by technological advancements, such as the wax cylinder. Invented by Thomas A. Edison in 1877, the cylinder revolutionized the recording of music.\(^{41}\)

In 1882, the American scholar Theodore Baker (1851-1934) wrote a dissertation for the University of Leipzig called \textit{Über die Musik der nordamerikanischen Wilden} that was the first of its kind. His predecessors had concentrated on customs and rituals within specific Native American communities, but Baker attempted a comprehensive study of Native American music’s general characteristics.\(^{42}\) Ten of his transcriptions were his own, collected at the Seneca reservation in New York during the summer of 1880. Two transcriptions and one pictograph came from Schoolcraft’s \textit{Historical and Statistical Information}. Baker obtained an additional twenty-two from the Carlisle Indian

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\(^{40}\) Berkhofer, 96-102.


\(^{42}\) Browner, 265.
School in Pennsylvania. Baker’s dissertation was not translated into English until 1976 and so was not widely known in America in its time. However, transcriptions published in the dissertation did influence American compositions following Edward MacDowell’s incorporation of some of them into his Second (Indian) Suite, op. 48.

In 1888, the anthropologist Franz Boas (1858-1942) published a report titled The Central Eskimo, which contained several transcriptions of Inuit songs, for the Bureau of Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Boas continued to publish writings for the next several decades and frequently collaborated with the ethnologist Alice Cunningham Fletcher and the musician and theorist John Comfort Fillmore (1843-1898). Fletcher published an influential report on Omaha music in 1893 titled A Study of Omaha Indian Music. Francis La Flesche, a man of Omaha, Ponca, and French lineage, and Fillmore aided Fletcher with this and other studies. La Flesche helped Fletcher understand the ritual basis for the music she collected, and in some cases also became a source of Native American songs. Fillmore harmonized eighty-nine of the ninety-three transcriptions published in the study. Henry Krehbiel (1854-1923), an authoritative critic in New York, disseminated scholarly information to the general public via articles in the New York Tribune. His articles included transcriptions, Native American legends, and pictographs. He even included a

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bibliography of current research at the end of his first article in 1899 for more inquisitive readers to pursue.\textsuperscript{46}

The different intervals, scales, and rhythmic organization of Native American music as compared to Western art music made transcription a challenge for anthropologists, ethnologists, and other researchers. Transcribers determined their methods of how best, or how most authentically, to represent the music within the confines of Western notation according to their conception of the music. For example, several scholars identified microtones in Native American tunes. Some, such as Benjamin Ives Gilman (1852-1933), considered the microtones to be intentional, while others, such as Francis Densmore (1867-1957), were less certain.\textsuperscript{47} Franz Boas clearly believed them to be significant; he placed a symbol over particular notes in his transcriptions to indicate a lowering of pitch.\textsuperscript{48} Fillmore, on the other hand, deemed microtones to be the result of undeveloped pitch-matching skills and so did not include them in his transcriptions.\textsuperscript{49}

Regardless of what seemed to be pitch distortion to some, many transcribers heard Western harmonic progressions and tonic-dominant relationships in Native


American music, and their transcriptions reflect this. Fillmore’s four-part realizations were perhaps the most significant because of the controversy they inspired and because of their great influence on later Indianist compositions. The widely read *A Study of Omaha Indian Music* included Fillmore’s analysis of Native American music’s scales and, as he perceived, implied harmonies. He deduced that Native Americans had a “latent harmonic sense” and concluded that their tunes were built on major and minor pentatonic scales. He developed a system of harmonization in his transcriptions to accommodate the tunes’ frequent shifting from one mode to another within a single song. Since Fillmore subscribed to a Darwinist perspective of music and considered Native American music to be in an early stage of Western art music, he believed his settings to be accurate. In support of his conclusions, he noted that Native American listeners were dissatisfied with monophonic renditions on the piano and that they supported his harmonized transcriptions as “natural and satisfactory.”

Complex rhythms in Native American song further tested the limits of Western notation. Natalie Curtis Burlin (1875-1921) attested to the music’s rhythmic intricacy in *The Indians’ Book*, saying, “No civilized music has such complex, elaborate, and changing rhythm as the music of the American Indian.” Fillmore used polyrhythms and unusual meters to capture the music’s rhythmic complexity. More frequently, however, he underpinned melodies with a persistent, rhythmically accented eighth-note

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50 See Schuetze, 38-9.  
51 Richard Crawford, 402, and Osman, 10-11.  
52 Fillmore in Fletcher, 61.  
53 Pisani describes Fillmore’s method “modulating harmonization.” *Imagining Native America*, 217-221.  
54 Fillmore in Fletcher, 61. See also Pisani, “Exotic Sounds,” 318-324.  
pulse, which Pisani credits for the “rhythmic rigidity” that came to represent Native American song in later compositions, particularly those depicting war dances.56

Some American composers had written music inspired by Native American themes before the 1890s. Anthony Philip Heinrich (1781-1861) is considered to be the first American composer to incorporate Native American subjects in large orchestral forms.57  His first composition of this kind, *Pushmata, a Venerable Chief of a Western Tribe of Indians*, was written in 1831. A primary difference between compositions such as Heinrich’s and many written later in the century was the incorporation of Native American songs, which became available with the new studies and recordings.

The number of compositions on Native American themes significantly increased after 1890, in large part because of the availability of song transcriptions and recordings. Some composers were attracted to what they heard as exotic features of the tunes and were intrigued by their compositional possibilities.58  Several composers incorporated Native American tunes and subjects in an effort to establish national identity, in the same manner that authors had attempted to earlier in the century. They believed incorporation of Native American musical material could produce a distinctly American sound. Antonín Dvořák, invited to the United States by Jeannette Thurber in 1892, helped promote this perception.

Antonín Dvořák’s first exposure to Native American culture was Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show in the spring of 1893. The Show, a popular reenactment of the Native

56 Pisani, *Imagining Native America*, 221-2.
57 Howard, 242.
58 Howard writes, “Often [American composers] have had no purpose other than to take melodies, which they thought were beautiful, and to treat them in a way that would emphasize their beauty, or their native character,” 437. Broyles arranges composers in a continuum with composers like MacDowell representing “the user in search of exotic material.” Broyles, 253).
American way of life and of conflicts between Native Americans and white Americans, featured primarily Oglala Sioux. More extended and personal contact occurred in Spillville, Iowa during the summer of 1893, where Dvořák saw performances by and became acquainted with the performers in the Kickapoo Medicine Company, which had set up temporary residence near his home. The Company, like Buffalo Bill’s Show, was highly commercialized, selling herbal remedies allegedly of Native American origin (though they were in fact manufactured in Connecticut) in addition to their shows.

Dvořák most likely did not see music and dance of a particular tradition at the performances, as the Company included Iroquois, Pawnee, Sioux, Ojibwa, Cherokee, and Peruvian Indians. As a result of his interactions with the members of the Kickapoo Medicine Company and with Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, Dvořák came to identify Native American song as a promising basis for American national music. He told the *New York Herald* in December of 1893: “Since I have been in this country I have been deeply interested in the Music of Negroes and the Indians. The character, the very nature of a race is contained in its national music. For that reason my attention was at once turned in the direction of these native melodies.” At that time, he perceived the music of the two cultures to be “practically identical.”

Dvořák’s Symphony, no. 9, op. 95 (commonly called the “New World” Symphony) did not quote any Native American melodies, but its second and third movements were based on images found in Longfellow’s *Hiawatha*, a work that had long interested

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60 “Dvořák on His New World,” *New York Herald* (December 15, 1893). “Character” in this quote refers to “nature of a race.”

61 Ibid.
Dvořák. He was quoted in the *New York Herald* as saying, “The scherzo of the symphony was suggested by the scene at the feast in ‘Hiawatha’ where the Indians dance, and is also an essay I made in the direction of imparting the local color of Indian character to music.” Subsequent compositions from Dvořák’s tenure in the United States likewise incorporated Native American culture and music. The *American* Quartet, op. 96, adapted Native American songs and dances that Dvořák heard saw during the summer of 1893. The String Quintet in E-flat, op. 97, likely used a Native American tune he heard in Spillville, Iowa.

Edward MacDowell strongly disagreed with Dvořák’s support of Native American music as a basis for American music. Fundamentally, he rejected the idea that incorporation of folk music necessarily equaled nationalist composition. In a lecture on “Folk Music” at Columbia University he said, “Before a people can find a musical writer to echo its genius it must first possess men who truly represent it – that is to say, men who, being part of the people, love the country for itself: men who put into their music what the nation has put into its life.” MacDowell referred to the practice of using another culture’s folk tunes in composition, such as Moszkowski writing Spanish dances, or Grieg writing Arabian music, as “tailoring.” On the other hand, Native American life stimulated MacDowell’s imagination. He spoke of the “manly and free rudeness of the North American Indians” in his lecture on folk music. In reality, MacDowell had no authentic contact with Native Americans during his life and based his perceptions of

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62 “Dvořák on His New World,” *New York Herald* (December 15, 1893). “Character” in this quote means the traits or qualities of Native American culture.
them on descriptions he read in *Hiawatha* and other published sources.\(^{65}\) As a result of his viewpoint on national composition and of his lack of contact with Native Americans, MacDowell’s Indianist compositions did not express nationalism as much as his interest in the culture’s perceived exotic qualities. Tara Browner explains: “Though MacDowell was clearly interested in Native cultures (his curiosity about Indians had led him to Baker in the first place), he saw Indian melodies as exotic raw materials that expressed shared universal human emotions, not as products created from a specific musical tradition with its own aesthetics.”\(^{66}\)

Native American culture, seen through Longfellow’s eyes, appealed to MacDowell long before Dvořák’s American visit. As early as 1887 he considered composing a tone poem on *Hiawatha*, though that project never materialized. He first encountered song transcriptions in 1891 when Henry F. B. Gilbert, one of his students, gave him a copy of Baker’s dissertation.\(^{67}\) MacDowell’s Second (*Indian*) Suite, op. 48 incorporated tunes he found in that document. The suite was begun in 1891 but not completed until 1895.\(^{68}\) It consisted of five movements, titled “Legend,” “Love Song,” “In War-time,” “Dirge,” and “Village Festival,” and of these, the “Dirge” remains perhaps the best known. The piece made a significant impact on later composers, including Amy Beach, and it was one of MacDowell’s own favorites among his compositions.\(^{69}\)

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\(^{65}\) Richard Crawford makes a connection between MacDowell’s perception of Native American culture and his idea of medieval Europe, saying the “representation of the universal” appealed to him more than data or experience, 385-6.


\(^{67}\) Richard Crawford, 382. See also Gilbert Chase, *America’s Music*, 363.


\(^{69}\) Edward MacDowell. Quoted in Gilman, 70-1.
In contrast to MacDowell, Arthur Farwell (1872-1952) accepted Dvořák’s pronouncements and created a publishing firm, the Wa-Wan Press, at the beginning of the twentieth century with the specific purpose of disseminating national and folk-influenced music. He believed that publishers in the United States emphasized European models to the detriment of American music, and he encouraged composers to submit their works for publication through him. The Wa-Wan Press had two primary goals: to support American composition of any kind, and to showcase American compositions that incorporated what he referred to as “American folk-material.” The Press was named after the Omaha’s Wa-Wan ceremony, a five-day, village-wide ritual promoting peace that was expressed through song. The name “Wa-Wan” meant “to sing to some one.” The Press operated from 1901 to 1912, when it was sold to G. Schirmer.

Farwell himself had a keen interest in Native American music, which he first encountered in 1899 with Alice Fletcher’s *Indian Story and Song from North America*. His first Indianist compositions were harmonized piano arrangements using transcriptions from this collection. Among other topics, these *American Indian Melodies* depicted war, as in *Approach of the Thunder God*, and Native Americans’ recognition of their status as a doomed nation, as in *The Song of the Ghost Dance*. At first, Farwell was interested primarily in Native American subject matter: their “legendary” culture and

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the “expressiveness” of their music. Only later did Dvořák’s call for nationalism take root.

Until 1903, Farwell’s information on Native American culture came mainly from published literature and Fletcher’s recordings. His compositions reflected his limited contact in their Romantic textures and harmonies. Beginning in 1905, Farwell’s compositions became less dense, and harmonically more experimental. The change corresponded to increased contact with Native American music as he traveled across the country giving lecture-recitals. On his trips, he met many composers interested in Native American music, such as Gilbert (who introduced MacDowell to Baker’s dissertation), and ethnologists and archaeologists, including Alice Fletcher and Charles F. Lummis, who made several wax cylinder recordings of Native American music in the Southwest. Noteworthy examples of Farwell’s simpler style include Impressions of the Wa-Wan Ceremony, op. 21 (1905), Pawnee Horses and Navajo War Dance in From Mesa and Plain, op. 20 (1905), and the Hako String Quartet, op. 65 (1922). For his Wa-Wan Press and for his deep interest in Native American music, Farwell has been considered a pivotal figure in the move to incorporate Native American music and subjects in American compositions.

The shift in Farwell’s compositions from dense Romantic textures to simpler, thinner ones can be seen in compositions by Amy Beach and others. Romantic settings and harmonies predominated before the twentieth century and are particularly

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74 Ibid., 78-81.
75 Browner, 275-6.
77 Thomas Stoner, Editor’s Introduction to Wanderjaher of a Revolutionist, 5-11
78 Broyles, 252.
noticeable in the works of Dvořák, MacDowell, Fillmore, and others.\textsuperscript{79} Though Romantic language was not abandoned after the turn of the century, the practice shifted because of composers such as Farwell and Charles Wakefield Cadman (1881-1946), who is remembered today for such compositions as the Indianist opera \textit{Shanewis}, or \textit{The Robin Woman} (1918). Cadman believed that in order to incorporate Native American song accurately, a composer needed to be familiar with Native American history, culture, and legends, and if possible, to hear the music “on the Reservation amidst native surroundings.”\textsuperscript{80} Tara Browner suggests the compositional shift was also influenced by researchers’ increased focus on the cultural context for the music after 1900. She writes, “Baker’s monograph used a German musicological methodology layered over a non-Western repertory; it contained little tribal-specific cultural information. Ethnographic sources that became popular among composers after the turn of the century included, however, detailed descriptive narratives about Native life and song context [as with Fletcher’s work].”\textsuperscript{81}

The practices of composing on Native American themes and incorporating Native American music into compositions did meet with some resistance. Some people questioned the musicality of Native American music. Louis Elson wrote skeptically in 1900, “As for any direct influence upon American musical art to be exerted by a music that is on the lower savage plane, we have grave doubts; as well expect the Esquimaux, or the Bushmen of Australia, to become the foundation of the opera of the future.”\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{79} See Pisani, “Exotic Sounds,” 292-304 for a particularly thorough examination of MacDowell’s Second Suite.
\textsuperscript{81} Browner, 266.
\textsuperscript{82} Louis Elson, 271.
Others were doubtful about the Americanness of indigenous music, a perspective John Tasker Howard summed up in his history of American music: “To select Indian tunes because they are useful is one thing. To choose them for nationalistic purposes is a different matter entirely, for they are American in the geographic sense alone.”

Likewise, some composers, such as Edward MacDowell and Amy Beach, did not support the idea of American-sounding music based on Native American melodies and subjects, though they did use them for other reasons. (Amy Beach’s viewpoint is examined in Chapter 4.)

As an outspoken supporter of national music founded on Native American music, Farwell encountered a great deal of criticism, which he addressed in such essays as “National Work vs. Nationalism” (1909). The essay defended his appreciation of Native American music and culture, as well as his decision to use it in his compositions.

Cadman also expressly supported Native American music as a basis for national composition in “The ‘Idealization’ of Indian Music” (1915). His essay was a response to European criticism that composers could not write national music on tunes and cultures that were not their own.

In spite of the support by Farwell, Cadman, and others, the move to incorporate Native American music and subjects into Western art music lost momentum in the mid-1920s. Later twentieth-century composers such as Henry Cowell, Elliott Carter, and Philip Glass did make periodic use of Native American material, but the frequency and

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82 Howard, 415.
85 Cadman, 387-95.
ways in which material was used never again equaled that of the years between 1890 and 1925.  

Conclusions

The move to incorporate Native American culture in music differed greatly in support, motivation, and methods of appropriation from the one that had occurred in literature fifty years earlier. In literature, incorporating Native Americans appears to have been widely accepted by authors as well as the general public. Questioning the merits of such borrowing did not occur to the same extent as it did in music. Immediately following Dvořák’s 1893 suggestion to use “native melodies,” musicians vigorously debated not only which cultures best represented America’s, if any were indeed representative, but also the value of classical music based on indigenous music. Furthermore, significant American writers such as Cooper and Longfellow intentionally mythologized indigenous cultures in their works in order to establish an epic American identity. Composers’ motivation, on the other hand, diverged according to personal compositional philosophy. MacDowell explicitly rejected nationalistic “tailoring,” and incorporated Native American tunes and themes because of his own interest in the culture, the music, and the values they seemed to represent. Yet his music, particularly his Indian suite, greatly influenced subsequent composers such as Farwell, who enthusiastically supported folk borrowing as a basis for American music.

To a large extent, differences in motivation between writers and composers account for their differing emphases on source material. Nineteenth-century authors relied on studies by Schoolcraft, Catlin, and others for knowledge of Native American

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86 Levine, 28-9.
rituals and customs. But because literature mythologized America’s past, it looked beyond Native American language and storytelling tradition for expression. For example, though Longfellow’s *Hiawatha* was based on Schoolcraft’s, Catlin’s, and Heckewelder’s studies, the poem itself utilized the structure and meter of Finnish poems rather than Native American stories or speech patterns. More research is needed to determine the source of Native American legends in literature. It remains to be seen whether such stories in *Hiawatha* as the acquisition of the peace pipe or Hiawatha’s teaching of pictographs are actual Native American legends, are based on Native American legends, or are Longfellow’s attempts to write Native American legends using the writings of Schoolcraft and others.

Unlike authors, musicians regularly incorporated source material. Several prominent composers relied on the studies of Fletcher, Boas, and others for transcriptions of Native American song, in addition to descriptions of rituals and customs. Even when a composer did not use transcriptions, his or her music often evoked indigenous music through gestures gleaned from transcriptions. For instance, regularly rhythmic and accented pulses found in Fillmore’s realizations can be heard in many compositions evoking Native American song.

Finally, literature and music often appropriated Native American culture differently. At least in paradigmatic novels and poems like *Last of the Mohicans* and *Hiawatha*, authors seemed less concerned with authentic representation than with romanticized versions that fit their intended portrayal of America’s past. Many authors incorporated typical depictions such as the “Noble Savage,” the “demon,” and the “Plains Indian” in their works. Some musicians likewise used romanticized imagery.
MacDowell, for example, has been noted for his imaginative representations of Native Americans, which were a result of his lack of first-hand interactions with them. However, many composers after the turn of the century became concerned with more authentic portrayal. Farwell changed his compositional style in an attempt to set tunes in a way that paid homage to the original use and meaning, and Cadman wrote articles on the proper method in which to accurately set Native American tunes.

In spite of their often dissimilar methods of appropriating Native American culture, the Indianist movements in literature and music were inextricably linked. As an American scholar raised on the east coast, Baker presumably would have been aware of popular fascination with Native American culture, would have been familiar with the number of musical settings of *Hiawatha* as well as its original poetic form, and would have been at least partly motivated to preserve a vanishing culture, since he collected many of his transcriptions at the Carlisle Indian School. If any one American composer can be seen as a direct link between the movement in literature and that in music, it is MacDowell. He was inspired by Longfellow’s *Hiawatha* and used Baker’s collected transcriptions as the basis for his influential *Indian* Suite. Dvořák can also be identified as an important link, though he was not American. He, too, was inspired by *Hiawatha*, and he depicted scenes from the poem in his “New World” Symphony. In addition, Dvořák was tremendously influenced in his perceptions of Native American people and culture by Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, which came directly out of the dime-novel fad.

The Indianist movements in the nineteenth century were influenced by comparable events and shared imagery. Indianist authors and composers were interested in a way of life they presumed to be disappearing, were concerned with
important, new legislation and military conflicts, and yearned for national identity that distinguished their country from Europe. The imagery they used in novels and compositions, which includes the “Noble Savage” and the “demon,” the paradigm of Native American living on the Great Plains, the western frontier, and the setting sun or extinction of a nation, reveal their view of Native Americans as both exotic strangers and ancestors. It was in this century-long history of imagery and cultural perceptions that Amy Beach began to compose Indianist music.
CHAPTER 4

AMY BEACH’S INDIANIST COMPOSITIONS

Background

In 1893 Chicago hosted the World’s Columbian Exposition, a World’s Fair that had lasting effects on Amy Beach’s folk-influenced compositions. She visited the fair on two separate occasions. Her first trip coincided with its commencement in May 1893, when her Festival Jubilate, op. 17, which had been commissioned for the event, premiered.87 Beach visited the fair a second time between July 5 and July 7 to play in the Woman’s Musical Congresses. Both visits, but particularly the second, provided the opportunity for her to hear authentic Native American music. On either one, she might have strolled through the exhibits and listened to music performed by Native Americans. Though no evidence exists to indicate she did so, it is a likely possibility due to the popularity of the Native American exhibits.88 According to articles in Chicago and Boston newspapers, Beach did attend several presentations and sessions on Native American music during her second visit to the Fair. These were held in the same building and on the same days as the July Musical Congresses.89 Beach certainly heard Fletcher read her paper, “Music as Found in Certain North American Indian Tribes,” and witnessed its accompanying demonstrations by La Flesche.90 It is possible she also heard Fillmore’s “Indian Music Technically Discussed,” Krehbiel’s address

89 Beverly Crawford, “Folk Elements in the Music of Amy Beach” (Thesis (M.M.), Florida State University, 1993), 24.
called “Folk Song in America,” which discussed Native American and African American songs, and Elson’s presentation on America’s early music history titled “Early Phases of American Music.”

The year 1893 was significant for Amy Beach’s compositional development for another reason. This was the year Dvořák premiered his Symphony No. 9, op. 95, “From the New World,” and publicly stressed that the foundation of America’s music should lie in its folk music. Beach responded to Dvořák’s support of African American song in a letter printed in the Boston Sunday Herald one week after his statement appeared in the New York Herald:

I cannot help feeling justified in the belief that they [African American melodies] are not fully typical of our country. The African population of the United States is far too small for its songs to be considered “American.” It represents only one factor in the composition of our nation. Moreover, it is not native American…. The Africans are no more native than the Italians, Swedes, or Russians.

She felt similarly about Native American music, an opinion she expressed in 1915:

“Indian … themes must ever remain to a great extent foreign to our innermost feelings.”

Nevertheless, Beach responded to Dvořák’s call for national music by incorporating folk elements for the first time in her next major composition. This was the Symphony in E minor, op. 32 (Gaelic), begun less than a month after the premiere of Dvořák’s “New World” Symphony. In some ways, this symphony can be seen as Beach’s first attempt at nationalist composition. As she conveyed in her letter in the

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92 “American Music: Dr. Antonin Dvorak Expresses Some Radical Opinions,” The Boston Herald (May 28, 1893), 23. Beach uses the word “themes” in this instance to refer to Native American songs.
94 Block, Passionate Victorian, 88.
Boston Sunday Herald, Beach believed a nationalist style should derive from music based on one’s own cultural heritage or experience:

We of the North should be far more likely to be influenced by old English, Scotch or Irish songs, inherited with our literature from our Ancestors.... It seems to me that, in order to make the best use of folk songs of any nation as material for musical composition, the writer should be one of the people whose songs he chooses, or at least brought up among them.  

Indeed, her symphony incorporates several Irish songs, all of which provide foundational material for the movements. Beach was of Anglo-Irish descent, and Irish music had long been a part of America’s musical life, particularly following the publication of Irish Melodies, which first appeared in 1808. The similarity of the Gaelic Symphony to Dvořák’s “New World” Symphony seems to posit the former as a counterstatement to the latter, as Block has observed. She wrote, “Both were written according to their composers’ own recommendations for creating an American national style; both were set in the same key; both used pentatonic themes; both featured oboe and English horn solos in the slow movements; and both combined folk idioms with late Romantic, German-inspired harmonies.” But where Dvořák drew from Native American and African American culture in his “American” symphony, Beach looked to her own cultural heritage.

On the other hand, composing for the sake of creating an American sound and being restricted to a particular style were never part of Beach’s compositional philosophy. She outlined her position in an interview with Edwin Hughes in 1915. She

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96 Charles Hamm, Yesterdays: Popular Song in America (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), 44.
97 “Theme” here refers to structural melodic material.
acknowledged the potential of utilizing American poetry on American subjects, such as Longfellow’s *Hiawatha*, but she was quick to clarify that American composers should not feel limited to such material:

> I may say that there is a great deal of untouched material for musical inspiration in the works of our American poets. When we see an English composer, Coleridge-Taylor, giving a musical setting to *Hiawatha*, one would certainly think that our native composers should find numerous springs of inspiration in the poetical works of their own countrymen. I do not mean to indicate that American subjects or the work of American poets should be the sole source of inspiration for American composers, for as I said before, I am opposed to all restrictions of this sort, and I believe that the American composer must have the world as his field of work.\(^9^9\)

For Beach, the incorporation of folk elements expanded the gamut of possibilities, opening up new avenues in harmony and form. Eden suggested that Beach used folk tunes that intrigued her aesthetically rather than nationally: “[Beach] seems to have had no other purpose than to take folk melodies that she considered beautiful, and treat them in a way that would emphasize their beauty, heighten their native character, and describe the sentiments of the people from whom the themes were derived.”\(^1^0^0\)

Howard concurred:

> [Beach] has used folk-songs in many of her works.... Yet she never feels that she is writing nationalistic music when she uses national songs. She merely adapts for her own purposes melodies she happens to like.... She has used bird calls, Eskimo songs, Balkan themes, anything that happens to appeal to her. But she is not an Eskimo, nor a Balkan, and she knows she is not writing Eskimo or Balkan music.\(^1^0^1\)

Beach’s comments on the inspiration for her *Gaelic* Symphony, published in an article prior to a 1917 performance of it, support the conclusion:

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\(^9^9\) Hughes, 13.  
\(^1^0^0\) Eden, 198. “Character” in this quote means the traits or qualities of cultures.  
\(^1^0^1\) Howard, 347.
I can ascribe no particular reason for my choice of Gaelic subjects for the symphony other than having been attracted by some of the wonderful old tunes in a collection of Gaelic folk music.\textsuperscript{102}

Even if Beach had attempted to compose folk-inspired national music with the Gaelic Symphony, hers was a short-lived endeavor. By the time of her death, she had drawn from eight different cultures for her folk-influenced compositions: Scottish, Irish, Balkan, Italian, Austrian, Native American, African American, and Cuban.\textsuperscript{103} Clearly, she was more inspired by musical material than by nationalistic impulses.

In addition to her interaction with Native Americans and Native American scholars at the Chicago Fair, Beach had personal connections with some pivotal nineteenth-century composers and researchers. There is no evidence Beach and MacDowell knew each other well, but they did have a mutual appreciation for each other’s music. Beach performed MacDowell’s music in several of her concerts, and she especially admired his Second (Indian) Suite, op. 48.\textsuperscript{104} She spoke highly of it in a letter to Marian MacDowell, with whom she became close friends following Edward’s death in 1908:

The performance [of the Indian Suite] was wonderful. Pages could not describe the intense fire, brilliancy, - sudden fascinating changes from one second to another – the marvelous pianissimos and equally thrilling climaxes. Each moment was a triumph, but the Dirge was even finer in its tremendous breadth and elemental grandeur than all else… I felt that I must send you even a few words about this rendering of the great work, the one great musical epic of our Indian life.\textsuperscript{105}


\textsuperscript{103} Based on Beverly Crawford, 107. Crawford lists Eskimo and Omaha separately; I have chosen to group them under the heading “Native American” because Beach referred to them together in her letter to the Boston Sunday Herald. “Native American” also includes “An Indian Lullaby,” whose origin is uncertain.

\textsuperscript{104} Jenkins, 23, 62, 120, 128.

\textsuperscript{105} Amy Beach to Marian MacDowell, March 8, 1908, Beach Correspondence, Beach material in the Arthur P. Schmidt Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
The Suite had a particularly strong influence on Beach’s own, later Indianist compositions.\footnote{Block, “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes,” 147-8.}

Beach did know Farwell. She performed her *Variations on Balkan Themes*, op. 60, at a meeting of his American Music Society in 1907, during the height of his activities with the Wa-Wan Press. Block hypothesizes that Beach may have given Farwell a copy of her newly composed *Eskimos*, op. 64, at that time.\footnote{Block, “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes,” 148.} Block also conjectures that Beach knew Densmore, who lived for some time in Boston and had studied composition with John Knowles Paine and piano with Carl Baermann, Beach’s own piano teacher.

In light of Beach’s compositional philosophy as expressed in interviews and letters throughout her life, it is possible to know that Beach’s compositions on Native American themes were not an overt attempt to write American music. She expressed this clearly in an interview in 1915:

> There is of course a possibility of making use of Indian airs, as a number of works by American composers have already proven, but as for their forming a basis for a national “school” of musical composition, in the sense that Russian folk-songs do to a certain extent in Russian music, this is quite out of the question. We are all Europeans by descent, and therefore these Indian airs can never really become a part of us.\footnote{Hughes, 14.}

Neither was her goal to preserve Native American songs and culture. As was the case with Irish themes in the *Gaelic* Symphony, Beach incorporated Native American tunes and subjects in her compositions because of an attraction to the tunes themselves and culture in which they originated, and because of the compositional possibilities they suggested for her.

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108 Hughes, 14.
Compositions

Beach’s earliest composition evoking Native American culture was a four-part song for women’s chorus titled “An Indian Lullaby.” The song was published in 1895 by Bryan, Taylor and Co. and became the third song in op. 57 in 1904. “An Indian Lullaby” is the only anonymous text in op. 57. Beach’s poet friend, Agnes Lockhart Hughes, wrote the texts for the other two. “Only a Song” and “One Summer Day,” the first and second songs in the set, concern nature, roses, and love. “An Indian Lullaby” is the only song whose text can be considered to evoke an indigenous culture. However, in spite of phrases such as “mighty spirit” and “Mother pine,” its text is not likely to be authentic. Judith A. Gray, reference librarian at the American Folklife Center, considers the usage of these terms atypical.

The music of “An Indian Lullaby” follows traditional European rules for harmony and voice leading, and it contains no known Native American song transcriptions. It is modal, but it uses complete scales rather than the gapped or pentatonic ones associated with Native American music. It does not contain open fifths, regularly accented rhythmic figures, or other such gestures typically found in Indianist compositions, and its “rising arpeggios” contrast with typical Native American songs.

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110 There is correspondence between the two women located in the “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach” collection at the University of New Hampshire, and an article on Beach written by Hughes in the clippings files at the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center (“Mrs. H. H. A. Beach: America’s Foremost Woman Composer,” Summons, October 1911). Beach was also godmother to Hughes’s son, Lockhart Beach Hughes (Block, Passionate Victorian, 212).
111 Merrill writes that op. 57, no. 1 was composed for the Southern Music Teachers’ Association, 14. Text for both poems can be found in Agnes Lockhart Hughes, Told in the Garden (Boston: [s.n.], 1902); accessible in electronic format through Literature Online (LION) (Cambridge, [England]: ProQuest Information and Learning, 2002), no. 16, 46.
112 Block, Passionate Victorian, 208.
114 Block, “Amy Beach's Music on Native American Themes,” 149.
which tend to begin on or near the highest note and end on one of the lowest.  

Considering the relatively few studies of Native American music published by 1895, Gray suggests “An Indian Lullaby” may have been Beach’s own impression of “Indian song,” gleaned from her perusal of the few, pivotal reports that had been published by that time.

Though it is difficult to ascertain what inspired Beach’s use of the text and particularly its incorporation into op. 57, one possible hypothesis is its subject matter. Nature is a common subject in her compositions, especially her songs. Edith Gertrude Kinney wrote in an 1899 article in The Musician, “Nature in itself appeals to her more strongly than any creation, and the woods, the ocean … are her greatest sources of delight.”

It is also unclear whether Beach believed the text of “An Indian Lullaby” to be authentically Native American, though the title uses the word “Indian” and the cover on the first publication shows pictures of wigwams. If so, one wonders about the influence on her and her intentions in setting it. Her letter rejecting Dvořák’s proposal to found an American school on Native American music had been published only two years before, and it might seem that Beach was rethinking her response to him in setting a text she perceived to be Native American. She could not have been influenced to compose the lullaby by MacDowell’s treatment of Native American subjects or by Baker’s transcriptions through MacDowell’s compositions. Though

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115 Letter from Judith A. Gray to Adrienne Fried Block.
116 Letter from Judith A. Gray to Adrienne Fried Block.
MacDowell was in the midst of composing his *Indian* Suite, he did not premiere it for another year.¹¹⁹ Nor could Beach have been influenced by Farwell, who did not found his Wa-Wan Press until 1901. Perhaps in composing “An Indian Lullaby,” Beach was merely reinforcing her own compositional philosophy. The composition of “An Indian Lullaby” overlapped with her work on the *Gaelic* Symphony, which premiered in 1896. In both pieces, then, she appears to have been exploring the possibilities of folk and folk-inspired material that she found personally intriguing.

Despite the text’s unknown origin and Beach’s uncertain motivation for composing the piece, “An Indian Lullaby” has long been considered an Indianist composition. It is noteworthy in that it is the only composition of Beach’s commonly accepted Indianist pieces that does not include transcriptions of Native American song. It is, however, consistent with Beach’s song settings of folk text at that time. Three Songs, op. 12 (1889), and “Shena Van” from op. 56 (1904) contain such musical gestures as the Scottish snap to indicate their Scottish connections, but the primary folk element in both is the text.¹²⁰ There are no borrowed tunes in these works, either.

In her 1893 response to Dvořák, Beach wrote, “Were we to consult the native folk songs of the continent, it would have to be those of the Indians or the Esquimaux.”¹²¹ She followed through on her statement in 1906 with the composition of *Eskimos*, op. 64. Her second Indianist composition, *Eskimos* was a piano piece for children in four movements: “Arctic Night,” “The Returning Hunter,” “Exiles,” and “With Dog Teams.”

¹²⁰ Beverly Crawford, 38-51.
¹²¹ “American Music: Dr. Antonín Dvorak Expresses Some Radical Opinions,” *Boston Herald* (28 May 1893): 23. It is interesting to note that Eskimo melodies were considered “native,” though Alaska had only been part of the United States since 1867 and did not become a state until 1959.
Beach took the melodic material almost entirely from Boas’s transcriptions in *The Central Eskimo*, a study of the Eskimos of Labrador.\(^{122}\) The movements incorporated eleven tunes, including “Song of a Padlimio” in “Arctic Night;” “The Returning Hunter” in ‘The Returning Hunter;” “Song of the Tornit,” “The Raven Sings,” and “The Fox and the Woman” in “Exiles;” and “Oxaitoq’s Song” in “With Dog Teams.” The other five tunes she used did not have titles.\(^{123}\) Beach set the original pentatonic tunes with Romantic harmonies and added effects such as appoggiaturas, chromaticism, and augmented and diminished chords.\(^{124}\) She believed that rather than destroying the Native sound, the addition of Romantic harmonies and characteristics enhanced them.\(^{125}\) Her Romantic settings mimicked Farwell’s treatment of Native American tunes in his compositions between 1901 and 1905, as well as MacDowell’s use of Baker’s transcriptions in the Second (*Indian*) Suite.\(^{126}\)

Shaped by the borrowed tunes, *Eskimos* contains several gestures typically associated with Indianist compositions. “The Returning Hunter” exhibits overall descending phrase contours (Example 4.1) and has rhythmic accents throughout (Example 4.2). “With Dog Teams” contains snap figures (Example 4.3), regular rhythmic accents (Example 4.4), and a shifting pulse that indicates unmetered rhythm in

\(^{122}\) Eden, 212.

\(^{123}\) Eden, 213-19. See also Block, “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes,” 149-150.


the original song (Example 4.4).\textsuperscript{127} The piece is also unique in Beach’s repertoire in that it is one of only two pieces to end on a minor chord.\textsuperscript{128}


![Example 4.1. Eskimos, op. 64, “The Returning Hunter,” mm. 1-14.](image1)

**THE RETURNING HUNTER**
(As found in “Eskimos: 4 Characteristic Pieces for the Piano, Op. 64”)

By AMY CHENEY BEACH

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![Example 4.2. Eskimos, op. 64, “The Returning Hunter,” mm. 36-9.](image2)

**THE RETURNING HUNTER**
(As found in “Eskimos: 4 Characteristic Pieces for the Piano, Op. 64”)

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\textsuperscript{127} In “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes” Block says, “These melodies [found in Arctic Night] are typically of limited range, with gapped scales, repeated notes, and occasional shifting groupings of the basic pulse suggesting unmetered rhythms,” 149.

\textsuperscript{128} Merrill, 18.

WITH DOG-TEAMS
(As found in “Eskimos: 4 Characteristic Pieces for the Piano, Op. 64”)
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Example 4.4. *Eskimos*, op. 64, “With Dog Teams,” mm. 25-34.

WITH DOG-TEAMS
(As found in “Eskimos: 4 Characteristic Pieces for the Piano, Op. 64”)
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The String Quartet (In One Movement) was begun in 1921, fifteen years after the completion of *Eskimos*, and revised in 1929. It was Beach’s first and only composition in this genre.\(^\text{129}\) The Quartet was not published during her lifetime and, for that reason,

\(^{129}\) Block, *Passionate Victorian*, 235-6, 305.
did not receive many performances until recently. Block has noted some mystery about the Quartet’s opus number; it has been designated op. 70, 79, and 89 at different points. Op. 89 is the accepted number today, but an earlier opus number could have a significant impact on the timeline of Beach’s Indianist compositions. If it was composed circa 1912, which an opus number of 70 would suggest, it would have come only six years after the composition of *Eskimos*, instead of fourteen. It would also have been composed while she was in Europe following the deaths of her husband and mother. Opus numbers of either 70 or 79 would place the Quartet’s genesis before that of the Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80, situating the latter after the most complex of Beach’s folk-influenced compositions.

As with *Eskimos*, all of the melodic material in the Quartet came from Boas’s monograph. Unlike *Eskimos*, none of the tunes appeared in their entirety in the Quartet, which allowed for greater motivic development. Beach did not cite the borrowed tunes in the String Quartet, though she had been quite conscientious to do so in her earlier folk-influenced compositions. Block has recently identified the three songs in the piece as “Summer Song” (Theme 1), “Playing at Ball” (Theme 2), and “Ititaujang’s Song” (Theme 3).

The String Quartet mimics several techniques found in MacDowell’s Second (*Indian*) Suite. As Block notes, like the Suite, the Quartet employs “recitative-like solos, unisons, ostinatos, and pedal points,” as well as the “modal and pentatonic melodic

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130 Block, “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes,” 156. See also Block, *Passionate Victorian*, 241-2.
131 Block, “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes,” 156.
132 Beverly Crawford, 90.
133 Block, “Quartet for Strings,” xxvii.
features of the borrowed melodies.” The Quartet uses a great deal of chromaticism, a feature of Beach’s later works, as well as “parallel chromatic voice leading in the inner voices,” another of MacDowell’s techniques.\textsuperscript{135} The Quartet is thinner in texture and harmony than many of Beach’s earlier compositions, and is less tonal due to its increased chromaticism. Block considers the Quartet characteristic of Beach’s mature style and calls it the “high point of her compositional use of folk and traditional repertories, as well as a turn toward a more progressive musical idiom.”\textsuperscript{136} Particularly noteworthy aspects of this piece are the fuga on “Ilitaujang’s Song” beginning at measure 263, and the more contrapuntal texture overall in comparison with Beach’s other compositions.\textsuperscript{137}

The Quartet does not have as many prominent Indianist gestures as Beach’s other Indianist compositions. It does have regular rhythmic accents, but they occur for no more than a few measures at a time (Example 4.5). It contains several snap figures (Example 4.6), but these come directly from “Playing At Ball” and are therefore not additions intended to project or enhance a Native American subject.

Example 4.5. \textit{String Quartet (In One Movement),} op. 89, mm. 25-6.

![Example 4.5](image)


\textsuperscript{135} Block, “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes,” 157-9.
\textsuperscript{136} Block, “String Quartet,” xii.
\textsuperscript{137} Though she expressed a great love for Bach’s music and knew it well from her transcriptions, Beach is not known for using a great deal of Bachian counterpoint herself. Merrill finds contrapuntal techniques in only eight of her compositions. Merrill, 19, 58-64.
Example 4.6. *String Quartet (In One Movement)*, op. 89, mm. 129-133.


Beverly Crawford wrote that this piece was the ultimate synthesis of folk and classical music: “In the String Quartet Beach finally succeeded in creating a work of classical music based on folk music that in a sense actually does sacrifice the original sound of the folk tunes by achieving the craftsmanship and quality of a work of classical music.”

Perhaps because of the synthesis, this piece was considered evocative of the American West and of Native Americans in Beach’s own time. Burnet Tuthill wrote in 1940, “The main theme is quite Amerind [American Indian] in feeling if not in derivation, and it is treated with a harmonic bareness that is suitable and gives the resulting sound a feeling of the open spaces of the great West.” At the time, Tuthill did not know of the incorporation of Inuit songs.

*From Blackbird Hills: An Omaha Tribal Dance*, op. 83 was composed in 1922. Like *Eskimos*, it was a piano piece for children. The piece incorporated an Omaha song

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138 Beverly Crawford, 97.
used for a children’s ring game called “Follow My Leader.” It was transcribed by Fletcher and came from her *Study of Omaha Indian Music*, which she presented at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893. Beach’s transcription came not from the Fair or from Fletcher’s study directly, but from a friend. Hazel Gertrude Kinscella recalled:

> She [Beach] spoke of her interest in primitive melodies as possible thematic material; and in view of this I sent her, after our return home to Lincoln [Nebraska], an Indian tune which was and is well-known among our local tribes. She then composed a work for piano upon this “air” which she dedicated to me.

As with *Eskimos*, *From Blackbird Hills* is set diatonically and in G major. It differs from the previous work in its sparser texture and its treatment of dissonance and chromaticism. This parallels Farwell’s shift from dense Romantic textures to thinner ones that incorporated more experimental harmonies and effects. The bass line in *From Blackbird Hills* contains frequent open fifths (sounded both apart and together; Example 4.7), and the tune has regular rhythmic accents (Example 4.7), grace-note snap figures (consistently in the first measure of the four-measure phrase, as in Example 4.7), and an overall descending phrase structure (Example 4.8). All of these gestures were commonly used in Indianist compositions to evoke Native American culture and music. Indeed, the piece was intended to evoke the spirit of the original Native American song and of the culture from which it stemmed, as Beach explained in

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140 Block, “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes,” 151.
141 Beverly Crawford, 73.
143 Block, “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes,” 152.
144 Chase and Bruce, “Arthur Farwell.”
a 1930 article in The Musician: “The left hand part suggests the Indian drum, and the jerky melody is typical of an aboriginal people.”

Example 4.7. From Blackbird Hills: An Omaha Tribal Dance, op. 83, mm. 1-15.

Example 4.8. From Blackbird Hills: An Omaha Tribal Dance, op. 83, mm. 37-41.

Composed in 1938, Trio, op. 150, for piano, violin, and violoncello was Beach’s last composition with Native American influence. Like the String Quartet, the Trio was not Native American in general sound. Rather, it was a pastiche of styles and materials that remain unsynthesized, in which “The Returning Hunter” and possibly “Song of Padlimio” played prominent roles. Block wrote,

Rather than striving for integration of borrowed and original materials, Beach in this work seems to revel in abrupt contrasts between styles… In the 1930s, eclecticism – especially in the compositions of Virgil Thomson and Charles Ives – had to an extent replaced the ideal of integration. [It is] possible that Beach was no longer interested in finding a more unified solution.¹⁴⁶

The Trio has three movements, but only the last two contain Native American, or possibly Native American, tunes. “The Returning Hunter” appears in the middle, scherzo section of the second movement. With the tune’s entrance, the texture becomes noticeably thinner. The tune originally appears in the same key as in *Eskimos*, but it quickly becomes chromatic. Pieces of the melody are passed between all four voices. Block suggests that the third movement may contain an adaptation of the “Song of a Padlimio,” also used in *Eskimos*. She cites the “succession of melodic thirds, the syncopated rhythm, and the final leap of a fifth” as the basis for her conjecture.¹⁴⁷ Beverly Crawford disagrees with Block, saying Beach’s “established pattern of using folk melodies… does not include any examples of derived material that is so different from the original.”¹⁴⁸

The Trio incorporates several other compositions by Amy Beach, including art songs and piano solos, so few sections in this piece contain Indianist gestures. As with *Eskimos*, regular accents, descending phrase contours, and the pentatonic scale in the

¹⁴⁶ Block, “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes,” 152-3.
¹⁴⁷ Block, “Trio,” 2.
¹⁴⁸ Beverly Crawford, 104.
second movement come from the borrowed melody (Example 4.9). In the third movement, the underlying ostinato and the melody’s syncopation seem to evoke Native American music, even if the melody was not derived from the “Song of a Padlimio” as Block suggests (Example 4.10). Felicia Ann Piscitelli notes the motivic, as opposed to lyric, quality of the themes, which was a characteristic of Beach’s Indianist compositions.¹⁴⁹ One important aspect of this piece is the use of the augmented second in the melody (Example 4.11). Very few of Beach’s compositions employed this interval; another is the Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet.¹⁵⁰

Example 4.9. *Trio*, op. 150, Movement 2, mm. 73-8.


¹⁵⁰ Merrill, 235.
Example 4.10. *Trio*, op. 150, Movement 3, mm. 5-9.


Example 4.11. *Trio*, op. 150, Movement 1, mm. 119-120.

In spring 1915, Amy Beach visited California for the first time. She toured for several months, making stops in major cities including San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Noteworthy activities included performances with Marcella Craft, visits to the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, where her *Panama Hymn* premiered on the opening day, and the Panama-California Exposition, where she was recognized with “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach Day” on June 28, and attendance at a meeting of the National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC). She fell in love with the West Coast that summer and returned several times throughout the year. She even bought a house and established residency in San Francisco. \(^{151}\)

On October 28, 1915, Beach performed her Piano Quintet, op. 67 (1907) with the San Francisco Quintet Club (later renamed the Chamber Music Society of San Francisco), to critical acclaim. Elias Hecht, flautist in the Society, demonstrated his admiration with a commission. Beach began work on what would become the Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80 soon after and completed the piece in July 1916. The Society premiered it in September of that same year. Newspaper reviews praised the composition and its performance:

> The theme, haunting and beautiful, had seven variations, each one exquisite in form. Technically, they were worthy the mettle of these star men [performers in the Chamber Music Society of San Francisco]. On the other hand, this notable work from a notable woman was worthily interpreted by this organization honored by the splendid American woman who has distinguished her sex and her country by her big achievements. \(^{152}\)

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The flute does not predominate, but blends with the strings, and the variations are so cleverly interwoven with fixed themes that they do not seem to be variations in the stereotyped sense. This blending of flute and strings is done so ingeniously that one is under the impression that the flute is not treated liberally enough, and only after some thought and investigation does one become acquainted with Mrs. Beach’s clever scheme.¹⁵³

Despite its positive reception in San Francisco, the Theme and Variations was not premiered on the East Coast until Beach’s seventy-fifth birthday celebration in 1942.¹⁵⁴

The Theme and Variations has long been recognized for its skillful interweaving of flute and quartet. It is typically categorized with Beach’s compositions for chamber ensemble but is not considered part of her Indianist œuvre. Musicologists tend implicitly to dissociate the piece from Native American affiliation, as articles by Burnet C. Tuthill and Adrienne Fried Block demonstrate. Describing the piece as Beach’s “romantic style [at] its best,” Tuthill contrasts it with her Quartet for Strings, op. 89, calling the latter “a work of quite a different stamp” due to its evocations of American Indians and of the “great West.”¹⁵⁵ Block, who has written extensively on Beach’s compositions, excludes the Theme and Variations from her considerations of Beach’s folk-inspired music. This is perhaps most noticeable in her article “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Jeanell Wise Brown, 286.
¹⁵⁵ Tuthill, 302-3.
¹⁵⁶ Block, “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes,” 141-166. In the article, Block does not argue against Native American themes in the piece; she simply does not include it in her discussion. She does address the relationship between the Theme and Variations and its instrumentation in Amy Beach: Passionate Victorian, which I quote on page 58 of this thesis, but she focuses on the European sound because the music and text in “An Indian Lullaby” are not authentically Native American.
The question of Native American influence in this piece should not be dismissed so easily. The Theme and Variations is a setting of and variations on Beach’s first Indianist composition, her four-part song for women, “An Indian Lullaby.” Though the song evokes Native American imagery primarily through its text, removing the words to transform it into a theme and variations does not divorce the piece from its indigenous influence. Rather, the relationship is retained by other means. The Theme and Variations begs reconsideration because of its connection to the Lullaby, its musical gestures, and its instrumentation.

The theme section of the Theme and Variations is a nearly exact transcription of “An Indian Lullaby.” 157 The three lower voices are altered somewhat, but the first violin lifts the song’s melody note-for-note, and the chord progressions mirror that of the song. The differences between the two pieces are due primarily to adaptation from one genre to another. For example, in the song’s alto II part, a rhythmic pattern on the A below middle C corresponds to the words “Sleep in thy forest…” (mm. 1-2). In the Theme and Variations, the four notes are merged into one long, held note to avoid extraneous repetition (Examples 5.1 and 5.2). Additionally, short insertions enhance the texture in the quartet medium. Measure 18 is an example of this; it does not correspond to any measure in the song (Examples 5.3 and 5.4).

Further differences between the two pieces include voice interchange and added neighbor notes, both of which appear throughout the theme section (see Examples 5.1 and 5.2). The former occurs for the first time in measure 7, when the soprano II line is shifted to the violoncello. This causes the two lower voices to move up: the alto I line

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157 Discussion of the “theme” section in this chapter refers to the first thirty-six measures of op. 80, on which the variations are based. It does not refer to allusion to or evocation of Native American music, story, ritual, or culture.
becomes the violin II part, and the alto II becomes the viola part. Added neighbor tones first appear in measures 9 through 10. In the song, the E in the alto II part moves upwards to the F only two times. In the Theme and Variations, the rocking motion more
than doubles with five oscillations from E to F. The latter alteration, occurring in kind throughout the theme section, makes this “sighing” motive significantly more prevalent here than in the song.  

Example 5.2. “An Indian Lullaby,” mm. 1-10.


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The second section of the theme (mm. 19-31) differs more dramatically from the song in its presentation than does the first section (see Examples 5.3 and 5.4). The second violin and the viola have increased motion compared to the song’s inner voices, again attained by insertions of short, scalar passages. There is occasional alteration in the chord progression in this section, but it diverges slightly. For example, in the Theme and Variations, a VII chord on the second beat of measure 20 leads to a V chord; the corresponding measure in the song (m.19) maintains a V chord (note the g-sharp). One additional difference in the Theme and Variations is the insertion of an open-fifth interval on A in the cello part that functions as a pedal. It begins at measure 17 and continues through measure 22. This is not present in the song.

Example 5.3. Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80, Theme, mm. 17-22.

Composers utilized several techniques to evoke Native American music and culture in their works. In addition to incorporating tunes, they drew from a wide variety of musical gestures. A number of these had been part of the musical language indicating the exotic long before the nineteenth century. Open fifths and drones appeared in Baroque music portraying pastoral scenes, and long-short-short rhythms (a half note followed by two quarter notes, for example) could be heard in music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Modality, augmented-second and lowered-seventh scale degrees, descending chromatic scales, abundant grace notes,
descending diatonic scale degrees (primarily \( \frac{3}{2} - 1 \)) most often appearing in short-short-long rhythmic patterns, and pentatonic scales, among other musical signs, evoked exotic and sometimes terrifying or savage “Others” in the music of Beethoven, Berlioz, Wagner, and many others.\(^{159}\)

Compositions imitated the contour and sound of Native American melodies through a narrow melodic range of approximately one octave that periodically extended a third to a fifth beyond, an overall descending phrase shape, and meter changes that felt steady because of underlying eighth or quarter note pulses.\(^{160}\) Additionally, composers incorporated gestures associated with other folk idioms: the Scotch “snap,” usually appearing as a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth, which had been previously associated with folk music of the British Isles and Eastern Europe; and melodies harmonized in open fourths and fifths, associated with Asian and Eastern European folk music.\(^{161}\) By 1915, composers routinely used these gestures to depict Native American themes.\(^{162}\) Many of them can be heard in the Theme and Variations.

It is possible to interpret the added cello part in the middle section of the theme, the previously mentioned open fifth on A (mm. 17-22), as an allusion to Native American music. Combining two gestures, it is a regularly recurring open fifth. The melody is uncharacteristic of Native American tunes, as noted in Chapter 4, but it does contain some perhaps circumstantial similarities. Though it perpetually undulates and only a minor third separates the initial and final notes, individual phrases throughout are

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\(^{159}\) See Table 5.1, 99-100, and Table 5.2, 116-9 in Pisani, “Exotic Sounds.” See also Pisani, “I’m an Indian Too”, 229-30; and Pisani, Imagining Native America, 231-3.

\(^{160}\) Perlove, 55-6.

\(^{161}\) Pisani, “I’m an Indian Too,” 221-2; Pisani, “Exotic Sounds,” 348 -9; and Pisani, Imagining Native America, 228-31. Pisani notes in the latter that audiences would have heard the open fourth and fifth melodies as “oriental” or “neomedieval,” rather than Asian or Debussian in their first use.

\(^{162}\) Pisani, Imagining Native America, 239.
marked by descent. In violin I, for instance, the melody begins on C (m. 1) and ends on E (m. 4), an overall descent of a minor sixth (Example 4.1). There are exceptions – for example, the first four measures of the middle section (m. 19-22), which ascends an overall fourth from B to E – but most of the melody’s phrases exhibit this downward contour (Example 4.3). It is a prominent enough characteristic that Laurel Kiddie Verissimo bases her analysis of its affect on it, determining the emotional content of the theme to be “pain,” and it virtually monopolizes Carolyn Marie Treybig’s analysis of the theme’s melodic structure.\(^{163}\) However, neither of these authors recognizes the descending phrase contours as Native American elements. In addition to its descending contour, the melody spans just over an octave, with its highest and lowest points separated by a minor tenth. Judith A. Gray concedes, “[Native American] lullabies are apt to have a smaller range than other genres and may, therefore, more closely approximate such a contour [the rising and falling of Beach’s melody].”\(^{164}\)

Further examples of typical gestures – particularly rhythmic ones – can be found throughout the variations. Descending chromatic lines appear frequently and prominently. Near the beginning of Variation I, violin I and the violoncello simultaneously descend chromatically, with violin II and the viola joining them periodically (Example 5.5). Between measures 19 through 21, the flute and violin I use the gesture as a sort of transition (Example 5.6). It is used similarly in the viola several measures later (m. 27) and handed to violin II (m. 30) and the violoncello (m. 32) at


\(^{164}\) Letter from Judith A. Gray to Adrienne Fried Block.
intervals of a fifth (Example 5.7). Descending chromatic lines also figure prominently in Variation IV, occurring in the violoncello between measures 20 and 41.

Example 5.5. Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80, Variation I, mm. 8-12.


Example 5.6. Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80, Variation I, mm. 19-21.

In the second variation, groups of four notes with an accent on the first or last note appear regularly (Example 5.8). A rhythmic ostinato underlies virtually all of Variation III (Example 5.9). Though it conveys the intended waltz genre ("quasi Valzer lento"), the pizzicato in the middle section (m. 19-26) makes the gesture briefly more percussive than gently dance-like. Significantly, the rhythmic pattern in this variation is short-long, produced by an eighth-note followed by a quarter-note. This is an augmented Scottish snap figure, a variant of a feature common to other Indianist compositions and to several of Beach’s folk-inspired ones. Another rhythmic ostinato is found in Variation V (Example 5.10). It begins in violin II at measure 28 and continues
almost constantly, traded between various voices, until measure 50. This rhythmic pattern crosses barlines and produces an almost disorienting effect when paired with the triplets in the violoncello melody.

Example 5.8. Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80, Variation II, mm. 15-21.

Example 5.9. Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80, Variation III, mm. 15-21.

Beach’s five other Indianist compositions exhibit similar gesturing. *From* *Blackbird Hills*, op. 83, for example, has prominent open fifths, and *Eskimos*, op. 64, has pervasive rhythmic groups with strategically placed accents. The most significant difference between the Theme and Variations and Beach’s other Indianist works is that it does not incorporate song transcriptions. Perhaps scholars have not categorized the piece as Indianist for this reason. Rather, thematic material in the Theme and Variations is original, composed over a decade before Beach first used Native American song. The difference in thematic basis between the Theme and Variations and Beach’s other Indianist compositions accounts for many of the dissimilar textures and sounds.
Those utilizing transcriptions have more repeated notes and a narrower, often pentatonic melodic range.

Perhaps the use of her own thematic material rather than transcriptions reflects the nature of the 1915 commission, about which very little can be known. Repeated searches for a letter between Beach and Elias Hecht or the San Francisco Quintet Club have yielded no results. Consequently, it is uncertain whether Hecht requested an American composition, or whether the commission contained any stipulations at all. It is possible that Beach had been considering reworking “An Indian Lullaby” for some time, and that a special request or carte blanche from the Quintet Club provided the necessary opportunity. Nine years had passed since the publication of *Eskimos*, her most recent Indianist piece, and Beach’s comments on her compositional approach indicate she often ruminated on an idea for months or years before writing it down. Furthermore, recycling song material for larger works was not uncharacteristic of Beach. Among several other examples, her *Ballad*, op. 6 (1894) reworked her song “O my luve is like a red, red rose,” op. 12, no. 3 (1889); the first movement of her *Gaelic* symphony reused material from her song “Dark is the Night!”, op. 11, no.1 (1890); her Piano Concerto in C-sharp minor, op. 45 (1899) quoted from her songs, opp. 1 and 2; and her String Quartet, op. 89 incorporated several songs from *Eskimos*. While making a general hypothesis about the bearing of borrowed songs on their reworked forms would be premature, it does appear that in some cases there are connections. For instance, the songs in the Piano Concerto were all written around the time of her marriage and

165 In writing *Amy Beach: Passionate Victorian*, Adrienne Fried Block searched more extensively than I have been able to and found no such correspondence: “I did not find any such documentation [letters between the two] except what is in the biography.” Letter to the author, June 6, 2007.

may reflect her state of mind upon giving up concertizing for composing.\textsuperscript{167}

American music and music on Native American themes may also have been on her mind because of the musical events she attended and the composers she made contact with in California that summer. \textit{The Musical Courier} reports that Beach attended a “large reception tendered her by Charles Wakefield Cadman and Mrs. Cadman, at their home in Berkeley” on June 15.\textsuperscript{168} In addition, the NFMC meeting featured music by American composers, including that of Cadman, Farwell, and MacDowell.\textsuperscript{169}

Perhaps Beach’s non-reliance on transcriptions in the Theme and Variations merely has to do with the chronology and genres of her Indianist output. The compositions preceding and following the piece, \textit{Eskimos} (1906) and \textit{From Blackbird Hills} (1922), are piano pieces for children that differ markedly from it. In contrast to the Theme and Variations, the children’s pieces are relatively sparse in texture, and their thematic material consists almost exclusively of Alaskan Inuit song transcriptions.

Beach’s Indianist compositions did typically incorporate Native American songs; “An Indian Lullaby” was the sole exception. However, a number of Beach’s folk-inspired compositions used characteristic gestures and texts rather than songs to represent particular cultures. Three Songs and “Shena Van” are noted in Chapter 4. Others include the “Barcarolle” in \textit{Trois morceaux caractéristiques}, op. 28 (1894), \textit{Five Burns Songs}, op. 43 (1899), “Scottish Legend,” op. 54, no. 1 (1903), \textit{Tyrolean Valse-fantaisie},

\textsuperscript{167} Block, \textit{Passionate Victorian}, 59, 91 131-145, and 238.
\textsuperscript{168} “California Honors Mrs. Beach,” in \textit{The Musical Courier}, v. 70, no. 26 (1915): 15.
\textsuperscript{169} Block, \textit{Passionate Victorian}, 357, note 38.
op. 116 (1926), and, arguably, *Cabildo*, op. 149 (1932).170

A number of composers in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries similarly employed gestures rather than songs in their folk-inspired music. Block notes that Dvořák’s recommendation to incorporate indigenous material “stimulated composers to use [it], either by allusion or direct quotation.” Dvořák’s own compositions relied on gestures more than on songs to represent Native American culture.171 Beach’s contemporaries in the twentieth century also evoke Native American culture without incorporating tunes. Pisani writes, “From about 1900 to World War I … music publishers across the country produced dozens of descriptive instrumental character pieces. It was not always necessary for such works to directly quote Native American songs or dances. Many did. But some composers, like Victor Herbert or John Philip Sousa, were content to merely index features of Indian music in their character pieces.”172

One significant feature of the Theme and Variations especially supports its classification as an Indianist work: the presence and role of the flute. The flute is the most widespread melody-producing instrument in Native American communities. Several different kinds are used, including end-blown and duct flutes, and they serve different purposes within particular nations. In some places, flute music is also sung. In other places, particularly the southwestern United States, flute songs do not double as

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170 Beverly Crawford, 32-106. There is some dispute about the presence of folk melodies in *Cabildo*. Several musicologists, including Block in the *New Grove Dictionary of Opera* (“Beach, Amy Marcy,” *Grove Music Online* (Accessed July 1, 2007) <www.grovemusic.com>), cite their presence. B. Crawford disagrees with Block. She identifies Habañera and French contredanse rhythms and “folklike” melodies in the opera, but no songs (98).


172 Pisani, *Imagining Native America*, 213.
vocal songs but do resemble them in style.  

In many Native American communities, men play love songs on the flute. Composers were well aware of the flute’s prominence in Native American culture, even in the 1890s. Both Baker and Fletcher, among others, devoted several pages in their treatises to discussion of this important instrument.

American composers used solo instruments as well as solo flute passages to evoke Native American monophonic music. Edward MacDowell made particular use of these techniques in his Second (Indian) Suite (1895). The second movement, “Love Song,” had a prominent flute part, and the third movement, “In War Time,” began with a solo flute. The Indian Suite directly influenced Beach, who used several of MacDowell’s techniques in her own Indianist compositions.

In its entrance at the start of the first variation, the flute in the Theme and Variations shatters the already established Romantic atmosphere of the work as it ushers in the exotic with augmented seconds (Example 5.11).

Example 5.11. Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80, Variation I, mm. 1-7.


175 Baker, 61-3 and 91-2; Fillmore in Fletcher, 72-4, 151.
Augmented seconds are relatively rare in Beach’s compositions, appearing principally in her works that evoke particular cultures or that incorporate folk music. *Variations on Balkan Themes*, op. 60 and Trio, op. 150 are two of the few other instances. The unexpected and contrasting flute sound has prompted an assortment of labels from musicologists. The most common are some variation of the “gypsy minor.” Treybig calls it “Hungarian;” Block, the “gypsy minor;” and Merrill, “Arabic.” This seems an unusual designation, given the Theme and Variation’s relationship with an Indianist song and the relative lack of other Orientalist characteristics in the piece, such as unusual percussion effects on cymbals or the triangle. Verissimo alternatively calls the flute melody “impressionistic,” which is intriguing. Pisani notes Claude Debussy’s influence in MacDowell’s music, particularly in no. 6, “Indian Idyl,” of his *New England Idyls*, op. 62. Perhaps Beach used the *Idyls* as well as the *Indian Suite* as a model for her Theme and Variations. Beach herself admired Debussy, a fact Arthur Wilson observed in 1911: “I remember how at various times she [Beach] has spoken with a fine interest of the men who have developed new provinces in the combinations of tone, of Debussy and his music.” Perhaps Debussy’s influence is felt directly in the Theme and Variations. The flute does have Impressionist and Debussyian qualities, calling to mind such pieces as Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* (1895). Both begin with a chromatically descending flute melody, though Debussy’s flute lacks the augmented seconds of Beach’s. In addition to its startling sound, the flute

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177 Beverly Crawford, 53-4; Treybig, 36; and Merrill, 235.  
179 Verissimo, 34.  
180 Pisani, *Imagining Native America*, 222.  
introduces new rhythmic material. The dotted eighth followed by three sixteenth-notes recurs in each of the subsequent variations.

Over the course of the piece, the flute and its exotic intervals and new rhythms become slowly integrated into the quartet. In the fourth variation, the flute carries the theme for the first time, while the strings play running, often chromatic triplets. By the complex fifth variation, the cello has taken over and adapted the flute cadenza from Variation I (Example 5.12). Variation V ends with a repeat and extension of the flute solo; at one point, underneath flute trills, a pizzicato in the strings recalls the open A pizzicato from the theme (Example 5.13).

Example 5.12. Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80, Variation V, mm. 1-6.

Instead of an exotic-sounding flute playing with but kept separate from a European-sounding quartet, the sharing of material between the flute and the strings melds them together. Their synthesis can be clearly seen at the close of the sixth variation (Example 5.14). Here, the first 16 measures of the original theme return. The melody is unaltered in the first violin, but the lower string parts retain only fragments of their original form. Where the theme continued into the middle section in the original presentation, here the flute plays a segment of its exotic scale. Underneath lie three pizzicato A to E open-fifths that recall those in the theme section. It is significant to note that the pizzicato in the cello is always paired with the exotic flute part, except for in its initial appearance in the theme, suggesting a connection between the two.
Example 5.13. Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80, Variation V, mm. 109-116.


Example 5.14. Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80, Variation VI, mm. 118-128.

The synthesis of flute and quartet carries potentially significant political and cultural implications. Subsuming the exotic flute and its intervals into the quartet can be seen in two ways, both reflective of the relationship between indigenous cultures and white society in the nineteenth century. From one perspective, the strings’ adoption of the flute’s intervals and rhythms mirrors white America’s adoption of an idealized, Native past. The cello that opens Variation V with the flute’s intervals supports this viewpoint: it has claimed the exotic sounds as its own. From another, the interaction represents assimilation, as suggested by the flute’s role in the variations. In Variation IV, the flute enters at measure 13 with the quartet’s theme and does not incorporate prominent exotic intervals in any part of the variation. By contrast, the middle section of Variation V (*Presto leggiero*, m. 54) mimics the beginning of Variation IV, but here the flute juxtaposes thematic material with the exotic intervals (mm. 83-91, 96-105; the two are separated by four measures of rest; Example 5.15).

Example 5.15. Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, op. 80, Variation V, mm. 83-91, 96-105.

*Flute*

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It is as if the flute struggles against the quartet medium, resisting the loss of its initial sound. This analysis does not propose to dissect Beach’s political leanings or compositional intentions. It is included to suggest internalized views of the relationship
between Native and white Americans that had been perpetuated through imagery in literature and music in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though the Indianist movement waned in the 1920s, the images and perceptions from it continued to be perpetuated in music educators’ song anthologies and Hollywood movies until the 1950s.\textsuperscript{182}

Block writes, “The music [of the Theme and Variations], which is original with Beach, sounds more European than American, even though the flute suggests the frequently used Native American instrument.”\textsuperscript{183} In contrast to Block, I think the flute undeniably removes this piece from Western Europe and places it in America. If the piece were merely a quartet with exotic sounds and had no connection to a prior composition, the flute’s augmented intervals could hypothetically be connected to any number of cultural Others – such as gypsies, as many suggest. But since it is connected to an Indianist composition, and since it exhibits several typical Indianist compositional gestures, the exoticism must allude to Native Americans. The fact that the exotic intervals occur first, frequently, and most prominently in the flute further strengthens the relationship to Native American music and culture.

Nina Perlove writes, “In labeling [techniques commonly associated with Native American musical exoticism], it must be emphasized that it is not the presence of each trait alone that gives a work “exotic” meaning, but rather the surrounding context and combined impact of the material.”\textsuperscript{184} Despite its Romantic harmonies and the absence of song transcriptions, the Theme and Variations’ augmented seconds and its treatment

\textsuperscript{182} For films, see Pisani, “I’m an Indian Too,” 256-7. For music educators and camp counselors, see Levine, 29.
\textsuperscript{183} Block, \textit{Passionate Victorian}, 208.
\textsuperscript{184} Perlove, 55. Italics in the original.
of the flute together produce an effect of Native American exoticism. In addition, the compositional gestures heard in the piece are consistent with those found in Indianist compositions by Dvořák, MacDowell, and Farwell, with which Beach was familiar, and Beach’s manner of gesturing is similar to that heard in her other compositions that evoke folk music but do not include transcriptions. These aspects of the Theme and Variations strongly suggest evocation of Native American music and culture, and the piece should be recognized as part of Amy Beach’s Indianist oeuvre.
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