

## ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: NATIVE CLASSICAL: MUSICAL MODERNITIES,  
INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES, AND  
A *KANIENKÉHA* (MOHAWK) CONCEPT OF *NON:WA*  
(NOW)

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In this dissertation I explore how Indigenous methodologies that foreground cultural advocacy, revitalization, and education can be articulated using Indigenous language and cultural metaphor in research on North American Indian composers.

Toward this end, I apply the Kanienkéha (Mohawk) concept of “non:wa” or “now” that also refers to three modes of perception—the now of the past, the present, and the future—toward understanding the intersection of innovation and tradition in classical Native music. This research joins the existing discourse that critiques binary oppositions separating Indigenous tradition (as past) and innovation (as present and future). Through interviews, fieldwork, and musical analysis, I illustrate Native values of interconnectedness, relationality, continuity, politics, and soundscapes in the processes of Native composition as well as the resultant works, I explore how these, in turn, may be understood through the application of Indigenous research techniques.

In collaboration with a cohort of contemporary musicians, I look primarily at two Navajo composers—Raven Chacon and Juantio Becenti—and examine my own work as a composer, performer, and ethnomusicologist of Kanienkéha descent to explore the following questions: *How can the topic of classical Native music best be served by using Indigenous methodologies in fieldwork, research, and representation* and *What is classical Native Music and is it different from other contemporary classical music styles?* Drawing on the teachings of Indigenous *dotahs* (elders/teachers), the scholarship of ethnomusicologists, and examining oral and written tradition while using language and cosmology as cultural metaphors, I present a variety of possibilities for looking at Indigenous music through Indigenous eyes. Rather than offering a set of conclusions, I offer a set of tools for discussion and reflection: 1) how we might understand a definition of classical Native music; 2) how we are part of a modern movement of artistry; 3) how our creative processes reflect Indigenous sensibilities; 4) how specific composers are contributing to that movement; and 5) how Indigenous language, metaphor and worldview are a powerful and applicable epistemology for research.

NATIVE CLASSICAL: MUSICAL MODERNITIES, INDIGENOUS RESEARCH  
METHODOLOGIES, AND A *KANIENKÉHA* (MOHAWK) CONCEPT OF  
*NON:WA* (NOW)

By

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## Kiokieren:ton (Introduction)

My primary field of research has been North American Indian music and culture, primarily that of the Rotinonhsión:ni (Iroquois) in New York and Canada, as well as contemporary First Nations composers throughout the United States and Canada who are writing classical music that is often referred to as classical Native.<sup>1</sup> In my research on composers, I started with the following research questions: *How can the topic of classical Native music best be served by using Indigenous methodologies in fieldwork, research, and representation* and *What is classical Native Music and is it different from other contemporary classical music styles?*

While researching contemporary classical music by Native American composers, I was struck by the necessity to begin with my own Rotinonhsión:ni culture and experience, incorporating elements from Indigenous belief systems and values into my fieldwork, research, analysis, and representation in order to engage with my first question, and to employ Indigenous techniques in my fieldwork; in the collection, compilation, and organization of data; musical, cultural, and academic analysis; interview style; and representation of this material. Fortunately, scholars and theorists in ethnomusicology continue to have a sensitivity toward this aim of developing diverse

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<sup>1</sup> As mentioned in Chapter Four, the term Classical Native was coined by Georgia Wettlin-Larsen and Howard Bass as part of the Classical Native programming at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (2006). Terminology, descriptors, and capitalization for various terms such as Native American, North American Indian, and NDn are discussed later in this Introduction. According to research done by language specialist Callie Hill, *Rotinonhsión:ni* is often spelled as Haudenosaunee by non-Indians and the Cayugas. The Kanienkéha version is spelled *Rotinonhsión:ni* and it means the housemakers. Now that the Cayugas have a standard writing system they write it *Hodinǫshshǫ:nih*. Slight differences in spelling such as *rotinonhsón:ni* and *rotinonhsyón:ni* differentiate it from we don't make the house and we set up the house. (email correspondence with Callie Hill, director of Mohawk Language program at Tyendinaga, August 26, 2013). The term *Iroquois* is the English/ French term for the Rotinonhsión:ni, but due to its derogatory nature is rarely used among the Rotinonhsión:ni.

theories and methodologies, as demonstrated by our engagement with a variety of disciplines, including historical, sociological, political, psychological, linguistic, performance, musical analysis, ethnographic, and economic theories, to name a few. This makes the job of an ethnomusicologist interested in Indigenous theory especially fruitful and compatible, if not daunting.

My diverse heritage, education, and professional life have allowed me to access an understanding of multiple worlds. Of Kanienkéha (Mohawk) descent, I wear the turtle clan, participate in Longhouse ceremonies and work on revitalization projects on several Rotinonhsión:ni reserves in Canada, including Six Nations of the Grand River, Tyendinaga, and the Oneida Settlement.<sup>2</sup> I did not grow up on a reserve, but began relearning my Rotinonhsión:ni culture in my teens thanks to many teachers who took me under their wing. Slowly these teachings have become a way of life. This worldview has become part of everything I do, including my work as a musician, professor, and ethnomusicologist. Having studied at The Manhattan School of Music and New York University, I was able to work with some of New York City's finest composers and with classical and new music ensembles as both a cellist and a composer. Thus my experience has enabled me to bring a multi-faceted approach to my work and research. NPR journalist Virginia Prescott, describes the twin position that I occupy as follows:

Rarely are performers as at home at Lincoln Center as they are in a Longhouse. Composer, cellist, vocalist, educator and Grammy-nominated performer Dawn Avery is equally comfortable with either. Working with musical luminaries from Luciano Pavarotti to Sting, Dawn spent years

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<sup>2</sup> The clan system is a matrilineal inheritance taken from the animal, bird, or fish life to establish and explain spiritual, social, economic and political codes. The primary clan groups for the Kanienkéha today consist of the turtle, bear and wolf clans. Each clan has distinct characteristics, roles, and responsibilities. The Rotinonhsión:ni originally lived in longhouses with approximately forty people to a unit. Today they are used as ceremonial and social centers and the Rotinonhsión:ni who participate in ceremonies are referred to as Longhouse people.

honing her musical talents, collaborating and performing with Grover Washington, Jr., R.C. Nakai, Glen Velez, Larry Mitchell, Joanne Shenandoah, David Darling, Ustad Sultan Kahn, Sussan Deyhim, Karsh Kale, Baba Olatunji, Reza Derakshani, John Cage, John Cale, and Mischa Maisky. Of Mohawk descent, Dawn's Indian name is Ieriho:kwats and she wears the turtle clan.<sup>3</sup>

In the process of working on this dissertation and going back to my cultural teachings, it has become apparent to me that we are part of many identities and that a binary approach to understanding myself and others is often inaccurate. Perhaps it is better to understand ourselves as multi-cultural beings in all our complexity, beings who may give primacy to different identities at different times, with some of these identities continually in the forefront of who we are.

#### ***Dotahs (Elders) – Consultants***

Of my Kanienkéha teachers, the primary consultants for this research have been Jan Kahehti:io Longboat, Tom Sakokweniúnkwás Porter, Frank Tehahen:te Miller, Mike Kanara'tano:ron Jock, many of my Kanienkéha teachers and friends at the Mohawk Community Kanatsioharé:ke. Oneida linguist and cultural specialist who trained me in Longhouse ceremonies, Ray Taw^te'se John, is one to whom I refer most often in terms of cultural teachings and language dissection. I also refer to interviews that I had with singer/cultural specialist Sadie Buck (Cayuga) from Six Nations territory. The primary composers that I researched have been Raven Chacon and Tio Becenti, both Navajo Diné. I include my own work as a composer of Kanienkéhaka descent along with the work of composer Brent Michael Davids (Mohican). I also refer to works by other classical Native composers Louis Ballard (Quapaw), Barbara Croall (Anishinaabe), Jerod

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dawnavery.com/2013/index.php/about-dawn>

Tate (Chickasaw), George Quincy (Choctaw), Timothy Archambault (Kichespirini), Ron Warren (Echota Tsalagi), and RC Nakai (Navajo Ute).

### ***Summary of the Dissertation***

This dissertation is organized into seven chapters organized around three major units. The introduction and first two chapters contain the literature review and provide explanations for terms and underlying conceptual metaphors. The second section, which consists of chapters three through five, is devoted to specific musical examples, composers, compositional processes, and analysis. The third unit, chapters six and seven, deals with methodologies and provides a summary of my findings.

### **Kiokieren:ton (Introduction)**

Here, in addition to introducing my research topic, I discuss the concept of employing “re” words from the perspectives of Absolon (2011), Diamond (2011), and Frisbie (SEM Conference 2013) by looking at how words such as re-search, re-new, re-claim, and re-vitalize bring the past into the present to affect the future. Hyphenating these words may enable the reader to pause and reflect upon the cyclical nature of research on Indigenous topics by ethnomusicologists. Such hyphenation has become a common practice for many scholars of Indigenous methodology. Rather than become cumbersome in its reading, it may enable readers to pause as they remember scholarly connections with the past, present, and future. Ultimately, I have chosen not to use the hyphenation.

Through the eyes of Indigenous scholars and through a historical perspective, I look at what Beverly Diamond, Canada Research chair and ethnomusicologist, calls

“Names Matter!” (Diamond 2008:3-4) in reference to various terms employed as descriptors for original peoples, including Native Americans, North American Indians, Ndns, and Indigenous people. Like many scholars, I have chosen to capitalize these terms just as one capitalizes European and American. By Indigenous, I am referring specifically to people who share similar economic, social, spiritual, and political issues as original peoples who have been colonized by settler populations. Although I refer to work from Indigenous Maori and South American scholarship, I also use the term Onkwéhon:we (the Mohawk word for original peoples) since I am talking primarily about people and values from North American Indian populations, and I frequently refer to my own culture as metaphor. As part of the Introduction, I look in detail at various viewpoints on why names matter and for stylistic reasons employ many terms interchangeably.

When describing Native cultures and values, I prefer to use the term “cultural” as opposed to “traditional,” since these values are being lived today. This is also a term that the Rotinonhsión:ni incorporate. Next I briefly mention the importance of decolonizing all peoples, not just as part of current political, social, and cultural activism for Native communities, but for all people. Lastly, I discuss Wilson’s concept of research as ceremony as part of an Indigenous methodology.

## **Chapter One: Owenn’shón:’a (Words) – Literature Review**

In the literature review, I first present what Kaniénkeha elder Longboat calls “orature” referring to both oral tradition and oratory. I then list and explain how literature from a variety of disciplines was especially beneficial for this research process. Scholars represented in the section “Indigenous Theory and Methodologies” include Taiaike Alfred, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Shawn Wilson, Beverley Diamond, Leroy Little Bear, and

the Delorias. In “Ethnomusicological Theory and Methodologies” I refer to Victoria Levine, David Samuels and Steven Feld, among others. Victoria Levine, Charlotte Frisbie, Frances Densmore, and David McAllester are among those mentioned in “Scholarship on Native Music.” “Compositional Practices and Modernist Aesthetics” includes works by Marc Gidal, Stan Bennett, Peter Holtz, Dylan Robinson and Alex Ross. The last section in my Literature Review examines works by Michel Foucault, Clifford Geertz, and Nadia Serematakis.

## **Chapter Two: Ensatenenhstasonteron ne Kanikonri:io (Adding to the Rafters With a Good Mind)**

Chapter Two begins with an explanation of the *Kaieneràko:wa* (The Great Law of Peace), a document which all Rotinonhsión:ni people are expected to live by. I use its basic concepts of peace, strength and a good mind as springboards for the incorporation of Indigenous methodologies. I look at concepts taught through the *Guswenta* (two row wampum treaty belt) that help explain possibilities for the co-existence of Native and non-Native ideas.

As I write this dissertation in the field of ethnomusicology, I am conscious that ethnographic writing “is reflective of our own lives and cultural practices” and that “the nature of this interpretation is less of a ‘truth’ and more of a reflection and comparison filtered through” my own culture (Thomaselli, Dyll, and Francis 2008:348). This auto-ethnographic concept is alluded to in Chapter Three as one of the many concepts taught in the *Kaieneràko:wa*, and is also a part of a common Indian understanding that we do not own knowledge.

Lastly, I explain linguistic techniques of cultural syllabic dissection incorporated by Rotinonhsión:ni language specialists that lend to a deeper understanding of culture and history. I apply Indigenous language as metaphor to explain specific concepts in ethnomusicology.

### **Chapter Three: Tékeni—Two Worlds, Many Borders: A Look at Classical Native Music Through Indigenous Eyes**

In Chapter Three, I continue to use Indigenous metaphors and concepts to illustrate my research by providing a more thorough explanation of classical Native music, incorporating fieldwork questionnaires, interviews and specific information about several North American Indian composers. Employing the concept of twinness taken from the Mohawk creation story, as well as similar ideas by Diamond, Cronk, and van Rosen, I extend the metaphor of complementarity while employing the work of Deloria, Little Bear, and Smith to look at how Indigenous and musical ideas are revealed in the compositions themselves. I look first at Quapaw elder Dr. Louis Ballard, who was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1971 for his octet “Desert Trilogy,” and at one of his most renowned works, “Incident at Wounded Knee” (a piece he wrote in 1973 when Native people and members of the American Indian Movement stood trial for protests in Pine Ridge, SD), and then at some of the most recent premieres at the National Museum of the American Indian’s Classical Native programming, including those of Chacon, Becenti, Nakai, Davids, Tate, Croall, Warren, and Archambault. In addition, I analyze “Táágo De’zá” by Raven Chacon and an excerpt from Tio Becenti’s “Cello Suite” and an excerpt from my own piece “Decolonization.” In this chapter, I incorporate a concept of

*tékeni* taken from the Kanienkéha understanding of twinness as I introduce specific musical examples. I begin to answer what may differentiate Native classical composition from other contemporary classical musical forms and how our research can reflect Indigenous scholarship. I look at several theories and stylistic choices that some modern anthropologists and ethnomusicologists (e.g., Browner, Frisbie) use as they help reclaim and reflect the Indigenous viewpoint. Definitions are explored throughout this dissertation. Specific to this chapter are explanations of the terms classical and Native answered by Native American composers through my earliest fieldwork questionnaires.

#### **Chapter Four: A Kanienkéha Concept of *Non:wa* (Now) as Applied to an Understanding of Indigenous Modernities and Compositional Processes**

In Chapter Four, I begin by examining definitions of the concept of Indigenous modernity in greater detail by referring to the work of Kanienkéhaka scholar, professor, and activist Taiaiake Alfred, former director of the Harvard University Native Studies Department and member of the Blackfoot Confederacy Leroy Little Bear, Creek-Cherokee professor of Native literary criticism at Emory University Craig S. Womack, and others.

I continue to use cultural language analysis to understand Indigenous modernity and compositional processes while exploring the role of composition as a tool for revitalization and as a creative expression of Indigeneity. I look at how performance technique, creative compositional processes, and musical content may serve as important expressions for innovation and “ndn-ness.” I also incorporate theories on compositional processes developed by Marc Gidal, Peter Holtz, Stan Bennett, and Julius Bahle. While a growing discourse on Indigenous methodology has developed in Native literary

nationalism and Indigenous studies, insufficient work has yet to be done on how Native composers conceptualize Indigenous-centered creative practice. My dissertation explores how Indigenous methodologies that foreground cultural advocacy, revitalization, and education can be articulated using Indigenous language and cultural metaphor. Toward this end, I apply the Kanienkéha concept of non:wa or now to refer to three modes of perception—the now of the past, the present, and the future—toward understanding the intersection of innovation and tradition in classical Native music. This research joins the existing discourse that critiques binary oppositions separating Indigenous tradition (as past) and innovation (as present and future). Through interviews, fieldwork, and musical analysis, this chapter illustrates Native values of interconnectedness, continuity, politics, and soundscapes of Native composition and how these, in turn, may be understood through the application of Indigenous research techniques. Another interesting resource for Indigenous creativity explored in this chapter is the information gathered from dreams as an integral compositional process and resource for music-making by Native peoples.

### **Chapter Five: Táágo Dez'á (Three Points): A Look at Indigenous Transmission and Notational Practices**

In Chapter Five, I offer a stylistic continuum of several Native composers and explore political, cultural, and musical implications behind their notational and transmission practices. I do this by focusing on a variety of transmission styles in the work of Mohican composer Brent Michael Davids and myself, and then discuss work by Raven Chacon while incorporating Davids concept of music as a “generative process.” I work with several notational experiments to better understand and explain visual representation through examples taken from Chacon’s “Yellowface Song,” a piece that

was not originally notated. Returning to Chacon's composition "Táágo Dez'á" by exploring notational perspectives, I then introduce works of other Native composers in order to present a continuum of Indigenous and European approaches to graphic and notational representation. Working in great detail to explore concepts that may be applied to other classical native compositions, I looked at 1) three types of transcriptions; 2) three points of analysis; and 3) three responses to the work. Taken together, they may give us a multifaceted picture of an Indigenous compositional process. I place notational approaches by Indigenous contemporary composers in an historical framework beginning with early bark musical symbols and ending with recent experimental compositions as explained in Victoria Lindsay Levine's introduction from *Writing American Indian Music: Historic Transcriptions, Notations, and Arrangements*.

## **Chapter Six: Ieriho:kwats (She Digs Deeply Into Her Roots to Learn)**

There are many similar concepts throughout what is commonly referred to as Indian Country, but my own culture is the foundation from which I may develop new ideas to share with others. I bring together languages of Indigenous and academic worlds explaining first what are commonly known as "Indigenous methodologies and research techniques" and then applying them to "classical native" music.

Indigenous scholars have in the past tried to use the dominant research paradigms. We have tried to adapt dominant system research tools by including our perspective into their views. We have tried to include our cultures, traditional protocols and practices into the research process through adapting and adopting suitable methods. The problem with that strategy is that we can never really remove the tools from their underlying beliefs. Since these beliefs are not always compatible with our own, we will always face problems in trying to adapt dominant system tools to our use. (Wilson 2008:13)

Compatibility requires complex understandings of various perspectives while negotiating how paradigms may work together or when one might need to look out how a master narrative may affect Indigenous research tools. Scholars such as Barz and Cooley (2008), Clifford (1986), Kisliuk (1998, 2008), Myerhoff and Ruby (1982), and Wong (2008) have also looked at similar problems and offer reflexive approaches to ethnography as a possible solution, “to redress the insufficiencies of colonial ethnography that positions the ethnographer outside the study community in an Archimedian vantage point from which to view and represent the Other” and “rejects the modern-era science paradigm that conceives of human culture as wholly objectively observable.” (Barz and Cooley 2008:19-20).

Bagele Chilisa, Professor of Research Methodologies at the University of Botswana refers to these as “culturally responsive indigenous research methodologies” (2012:159). I employ them by making reference to language and cosmology as metaphors and keys to valuable cultural knowledge.

The Indigenous methodology and ethnomusicological approach to research techniques that I have begun to develop are primarily thanks to the work of Smith (1999), Wilson (2008), and Diamond (2011). Briefly, they are as follows: 1) the application of concepts of interconnectedness or relationality; 2) references to Indigenous ways of knowing in the development of ideas; 3) using oral tradition and storytelling to present material; 4) being of service to the community through collaboration and accountability; 5) providing healing and growth for one’s self and others; 6) remaining process oriented and offering ideas and knowledge rather than solid truths. Many of these concepts are employed by researchers from a variety of disciplines and have been of particular interest

to ethnomusicologists including themes of reciprocity, sensitivity to properly representing the voices and ideas of those being written about, power imbalances in fieldwork's colonial legacy, along with collaboration with consultants. This is also discussed in Chapter Three.

### **Chapter Seven: Haknonhsra'ra:kwa (Medicine Bundle)**

In the last chapter, I offer the metaphor of the medicine bundle, in which different ideas are tied together. They are contained in this bundle, intentionally classified not as conclusive truths but intentionally as a Native sensibility of contribution rather than deduction. I offer many tools for discussion and reflection in this bundle, such as: 1) how we might understand a definition of classical Native music; 2) how we are part of a modern movement of artistry; 3) how our creative processes reflect Indigenous sensibilities; 4) how specific composers are contributing to that movement; and 5) how Indigenous language, metaphor and worldview along with contemporary ethnographic methodologies can combine to form a powerful and applicable epistemology for Native research. I return to the concept of relationality through research on two Native American compositional residency programs: the Native American Composer Apprentice Project and the Native Composer's Project. Lastly, I explain how my process of research, as Wilson attests, was indeed ceremonial and comment on how contemporary ethnomusicologists have incorporated similar concepts in their work.

#### ***Rotinonhsión:ni Definitions and Language***

I primarily use definitions, words and concepts from my own Rotinonhsión:ni languages, Kanienkéha (Mohawk) and Hon'yote'a:ka: ho'w^:na Oneida) because they

reflect my own life and cultural practice and are an important part of Indigenous methodologies. I employ my own Rotinonhsión:ni languages as “a mechanism to resist the homogenization of indigenous people” (Hoefnagels and Diamond 2012:55) by referring to the specificity of my own culture while talking about many cultures, once again using language as metaphor.

As part of Indigenous research methodology, our life experience and worldview are considered a transparent place from where we can start and are useful tools for cultural metaphor. Margaret Kovach, Professor of Education at the University of Saskatchewan has written about how she bases her epistemology on her Plains Cree knowledge.

I chose to center Plains Cree knowledge in my methodology. Being Cree, I have an understanding of its epistemological premises and subsequent methods and protocols. A common response has been to ask how a researcher can privilege a specific tribal epistemology and still have meaning for other Indigenous cultures beyond that specific tribe. Little Bear states, “there is enough similarity among North American Indian philosophies to apply concepts generally” (2000:79) Thus, when considering Indigenous epistemologies, Indigenous people contextualize to their tribal affiliation. . . as a researcher, I will be following Plains Cree traditions (because that is my tribal affiliation), other Indigenous people will understand that though the specific custom and protocol may vary, the underlying epistemology for approaching the research is known. (Kovach 2009:37-8)

### ***Using Language as Cultural Metaphor***

“The old people used to say, the culture is in the language” (Longboat, presentation, 19 August 2013). I have found this to be true, especially in my work with Rotinonhsión:ni elders John, Longboat, Miller, and Porter, from whom I have been taught cultural meanings behind words in Kanienkéha and Hon<sup>^</sup>yote'a:ka: ho'w<sup>^</sup>:na:.

In a profound sense our language determines us; it shapes our most fundamental selves; it establishes our identity and confirms our existence, our human being... there are hundreds of Native American languages on the North American continent alone...As there are different languages, there are different ways of thinking...deeply different ways of looking at the world . . . the difference between Native American and European worldview is vast. (Momaday 1997:103-4)

Worldview is embedded in the languages. As often as possible, I introduce a word from “the language” as a metaphor for various research topics:<sup>4</sup>

Language expresses the patterns and structures of culture and consequently influences human thinking, manners, and judgment. Culture is lived, and language, through all its manifestations, projects that life, giving it form and texture. In traditional oral societies, some forms of language are proverbs and metaphorical sayings which uphold and legitimize the value systems of a society. For research problems to be understood within the value systems of the researched people, it is important to incorporate their language into the research process. Language analysis is commonly used by poststructural researchers, interpretive researchers, and those using a critical analysis perspective. It is also an important technique that needs to be emphasized in postcolonial and indigenous societies, where research problems have for a long time been defined from the perspective of Western-trained researchers who use Western languages to define the research problems. (Chilisa 2012:131-2)

Like place, language locates culture. Although John and Miller have had their words transcribed and Longboat (2010) and Porter (2008) have published articles and books, most of my knowledge from them has been through our oral tradition of gathering information. Michelle Kisliuk, Professor of Music at the University of Virginia wrote how metaphor is a useful tool for bridging the gap of experience to explanation in ethnographic writing:

The use of metaphor raises the question of whether we can presume to translate experience from one domain into another possibly foreign one. But ethnography itself is such a translation—we’re already in that game in other words. By moving directly into the realm of metaphor we boost the risk of missing the mark ethnographically or obscuring rather than clarifying experience. (Kisliuk 2008:197).

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<sup>4</sup> I often refer to “the language” or “the culture” which are expressions commonly used by Rotinonhsión:ni people that refer to our original language and culture.

In addition to employing language and cosmology as cultural metaphor, I use Kanienkéha as descriptors and titles:

Whenever possible I use terms from Indigenous languages, out of respect for the people's struggle to free their minds. In the past twenty years, many Indigenous people have rejected the definitions imposed on them by white society. Today we recognize the significance and symbolic value of terminology, and the use of our own recovered languages is important not only for the purposes of communication but as a symbol of our survival. (Alfred 1999:xxv)

Several elders with whom I have studied express the preference of replacing colonial language with Indigenous language by using Kanienkéha and the word

“Mohawk” is in fact an Anglicized version of an archaic Algonkian word meaning “cannibal monster”... Aside from the insult—identifying ourselves with an Algonkian/English word is simply disrespectful of the language given to us by the Creator. Our own word for ourselves is “Kanien'kéhaka” meaning “people of the flint.” It is a proud and honourable word. (Alfred 1999:xxv)

### ***Re-words***

In addition to words from Rotinonhsión:ni languages, I now mention briefly Indigenous concepts that correspond to scholarly terms taken from the English language; for example, the word "research" may be seen in an Indigenous context as “re”search or research in which we are searching again or going back to our people, our heritage, our music, and our concepts to explain something vital in our lives today. This further explains hyphenating the terms re-search, re-newal, and revitalization to emphasize them as cyclical and process oriented rather than coming from the past. Diamond writes that “the issues that connect all these 're' words is how memory and history are constituted and represented or denied . . . ways in which the past is mobilized to address the present and the future” (Diamond 2011c:124). Kathy Absolon, who teaches in the field of

Aboriginal Study in Canada, encourages Indigenous scholars to re-discover knowledge of the culture, lost to colonialism, from our own location, and writes:

Terms that reflect Indigenous ways of collecting and finding out are searching, harvesting, picking, gathering, hunting and trapping... I now hyphenate the word research, meaning to look again. To search again from our own location and to search again using our own ways as Anishinaabek is Indigenous research. (Absolon 2011:21)

Many historians do this as well to differentiate historical research from more scientific research. Other ethnomusicologists have played with the prefix “re” as demonstrated in *Shadows In the Field* (2008), configured as “(re-) presenting” by Cooley and Barz (2008:11), and “re-presentation, re-formation” by Kisliuk (ibid.:185).

Absolon’s understanding and spelling of research reflects a search for meaning and knowledge from our own locations, rather than the locations of the settlers. Andrew Judge, a scholar of language revitalization and Indigenous methodology at Western University, Ontario, remarked on this concept of research and renewal:

It is the idea that you are searching from your place, so the research is a search from your place and the way I envision it is as our understanding of knowledge like your circular wampum that has many strands, but we can only choose one strand to pursue according to our gifts, because if we choose according to someone else’s vision, we will not achieve what we are capable of achieving in the time that we have. (Personal communication, 19 August 2013, Andrew Mkomose Judge)

Revitalization refers to that same vitality as efforts to renew our Indigenous languages, cultures, education, and health are being made in Aboriginal communities throughout the world. Re-newal also refers to bringing our culture back anew as a cyclical and continued process of understanding.

As many ethnomusicologists and cultural specialists know, we never truly lose a culture: knowledge-carriers hold the seeds, but we must plant and nurture them so that

they may continue to grow. As I continue to put my mind back on the good path (Chapter Two), I have been advised not to use hyphenation throughout my dissertation as it may serve as more of a distraction than as a reminder of why this work is being done, but I bring it up again to remind the reader to pause in the consideration of these concepts.

***Onkwehon:we Iontsiats (Native I Call Myself)***

The terminology used for describing North American Indian people is vast and complicated. I have looked at several viewpoints on this topic from the work of Wilson, Alfred, Means, Diamond, Tate, Kovach, and Smith. Wilson, a Canadian scholar currently at Northern Rivers University in Lismore, Australia, prefers the term Indigenous:

A growing awareness of the similarities of experiences of Indigenous peoples worldwide has reshaped the terminology used to define their own lives. No longer are tribally specific or local terms such as Indian, Metis, Inuit or Native (as used in Canada) or Aborigine or Aboriginal (as used in Australia) inclusive enough to encompass a growing resurgence of knowledge that encompasses the underlying systemic knowledge bases of the original peoples of the world. The term Indigenous is now used to refer to that knowledge system, which is inclusive of all. (Wilson 2008:54)

Oglala Sioux activist and prominent member of the American Indian Movement (AIM) Russell Means's response to this issue is based on different historical reasoning:

I abhor the term Native American. It is a generic government term used to describe all of the indigenous prisoners of the United States. I prefer the term American Indian because I know its origins. The word Indian is an English bastardization of two Spanish words, *En Dio*, which correctly translated means in with God. As an added distinction the American Indian is the only ethnic group in the United States with the American before our ethnicity. At the international conference of Indians from the Americas held in Geneva, Switzerland at the United Nations in 1977, we unanimously decided we would go under the term American Indian. We were enslaved as American Indians, we were colonized as American Indians and we will gain our freedom as American Indians and then we will call ourselves any damn thing we choose. Finally I will not allow a government, any government, to define who I am. (Means 1996)

Diamond mentioned earlier in reference to “Names Matter!” has written about the complexity of this topic in which she discusses terminology acceptable in the United States, such as tribe, Indian, North American Indian, and Native American, and terms particular to Canada, such as First Peoples, First Nations, and Aboriginal. She notes that terminology changes with new awareness and what she describes as encounters. Her thoughtful understanding of the topic stresses the variety of possibilities and how Indigenous communities need to be consulted and considered:

Place names have often changed, particularly as local names in indigenous languages have been reclaimed to replace colonial names...Embedded in those names is a concept of place and selfhood that is fundamental to the definition of traditional indigenous knowledge. Replacing names in colonial languages with names in indigenous languages is part of the process of asserting a vision of modernity for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people. The shifts in naming practices are strongly indicative of the encounters that have shaped the histories of each community or culture. (Diamond 2008:3-5)

Alfred, Kanienkéhaka professor of political science at the University of Victoria in Canada, puts the historical factors for all the terms together in a section entitled “Terminology,” from his book *Peace Power and Righteousness*:

“Indian” (it should be noted that the area now known as “India” was still called “Hindustan” in the fifteenth century; the term “Indian” as applied to indigenous Americans is derived from Columbus’s original name for the Taino people he first encountered, “una gente in Dios” or “Indios,” meaning “a people in God”: “India” is also a legal term, and in common use among indigenous people in North America); “Native” (in reference to the racial and cultural distinctiveness of individuals, and to distinguish our communities from those of the mainstream society), “American Indian” (in common use and a legal-political category in the United States), “Aboriginal” (a legal category in Canada; also to emphasize the primacy of the peoples who first occupied the land), and “indigenous” (in global contexts, and to emphasize natural, tribal, and traditional characteristics of various peoples). All are quite appropriate in context and are used extensively by Native people themselves. (1999:xxvi)

I think it is interesting that of all the terms he discusses, the word indigenous is not capitalized, and I imagine it is because Alfred refers to it both as a descriptive title and as an adjective. Many scholars of Native studies use the term Indigenous interchangeably with Native, capitalizing them both.

When deciding on a name for the North American Indian Cello Project, I consulted several members of the First Nations Composers Initiative (FNCCI), who believed that it was most correct to call ourselves North American Indians rather than Indian or Native American. Kovach uses the term Indigenous to refer to Native peoples and culture, Aboriginal to refer to specific Canadian contexts such as Aboriginal rights, and Indian when referring to Indian populations as defined in the Indian Act (Kovach 2009:20).

Scholarly writing refers to individual tribal affiliations, but also an emerging global movement of Indigenous people—what Ronald Neizen, professor of legal and political anthropology at McGill University refers to as a relatively new designation in North America (Neizen 2003). Philip J. Deloria, Professor of American Culture at the University of Michigan discusses the rewriting of tribal histories, leaving us to wonder how one might do justice to the variation among hundreds of tribal and community histories while at the same time reaching for general patterns concerning such things as colonialism and empire in North America (Deloria 2004:11-12). Only recently have historians turned toward cultural analysis as a possible ground for considering Indian-non-Indian relations in broad terms. Further stating the case for a larger Indigenous framework, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Professor of Indigenous Education at the University of Waikato in New Zealand explores the concept of sovereign nations as part of an

international shared community (Smith 1999).

Smith has an interesting explanation for indigeneity as an Indigenous international community that is a social movement reflecting

both a huge diversity of interests and objects, of approaches and ways of working, and a unity of spirit and purpose . . . The movement has developed a shared international language or discourse which enables indigenous activists to talk to each other across their cultural differences while maintaining and taking their directions from their own communities or nations. The international social movement of indigenous peoples is at all levels highly political. (Ibid.:110)

I refer to this global concept of a shared Native American sensibility by employing a variety of terms and select from those applied to Indians in the United States since most of the composers that I research are not from Canada.

Due to the complexity of the issue, and in respect for the diverse opinions of the scholars cited, along with the desire to have interchangeable terminology in terms of writing preference, I use several terms that I capitalize as adjectives that describe “belonging to a specific people.” When writing about a specific culture, I use the original language or tribal affiliation. More specifically, I use Wilson’s and Kovach’s Indigenous, FNCCI’s North American Indian, Means’ American Indian, and Diamond’s and Alfred’s *Onkwehon:we* (Native). I apply a newer term “Ndn,” short for Indian, employed by many contemporary Native artists in North America.<sup>5</sup> Using a newer sonic pun seems appropriate given my/our query as to how we represent ourselves as Ndn composers, scholars, ethnomusicologists, researchers, and performers.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, “NDN Kars” a popular song by Keith Secola and songs by A Tribe Called Red.

## *Decolonizing All Peoples*

The intent of this research has been multi-layered and continues to reveal possibilities and information. I have three primary goals. Firstly, to finish my Ph.D in Ethnomusicology from the University of Maryland. Secondly, to represent Native American music, particularly that of classical Native composers. Thirdly, to add to the rafters of Indigenous scholarship that may make my people and ancestors proud. This is an act of decolonization that is first important for Native peoples, but is in fact crucial for non-Natives as well. I do sincerely believe that until all the people on Turtle Island (i.e., North America) acknowledge Indigenous values, rights and lands—beginning first with knowing how vibrant we are as sovereign societies and land holders and as important and valuable history keepers, along with values of democracy that were in part developed by the Rotinonhsión:ni people—the world will never heal, nor grow to its fullest potential.<sup>6</sup>

Privileging indigenous languages and thought structures, respecting the knowledge and learning processes of oral culture bearers, and revisionist history might all be considered projects that affirm the agency and strength of indigenous cultures. But...decolonization is arguably needed more among populations who were historically the privileged, the colonizers. Here, I suggest that the new concepts of embodiment might be the most transformative. It is audiences whom the indigenous creators of these recent works are inviting into a new relationship. (Hoefnagels and Diamond 2012:56)

## *Research As Ceremony*

In his book *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (2008), Shawn Wilson likens the Indigenous research process to Indigenous ceremonial practices.

“Research by and for Indigenous peoples is a ceremony that brings relationships

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<sup>6</sup> Many of the democratic principals in the US Constitution were taken from Iroquois confederacy ideologies. See Wagner (2001), Shannon (2008), George-Kanentiio (2000), Grinde (1995), Burton (1988).

together” (Wilson 2008:8). He stresses the importance of Indigenous research techniques and methodologies “conducted in our communities” to follow “our codes of conduct and honour our systems of knowledge and worldviews” (ibid.). I have experienced research as ceremony that Wilson so eloquently describes:

The purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships or bridge the distance between aspects of our cosmos and ourselves. The research that we do as Indigenous people is a ceremony that allows us a raised level of consciousness and insight into our world. Let us go forward together with open minds and good hearts as we further take part in this ceremony. (Ibid.:11)

Ethnomusicologist Nicole Beaudry wrote about the transformative aspect of ethnographic research: “the fieldwork experience and its introspective correlate accelerate personal growth . . . my experience as a field researcher in Inuit, Yupik, and Dene cultures parallels my growth as an ethnomusicologist and as a human being (Beaudry 2008:225).

The closing of the Rotinonhsión:ni Thanksgiving address is a fitting ending for this introduction as it is in line with an Indigenous concept of ceremony with the idea of offering up information for collaboration. Nón:wa Wenhniserá:te tóka othé:nen sonke’nikónhrhen í:se ki’ne’ ien’sewatahsónteren eh káti’ niohtónhak ne sewa’nikòn:ra. (Now today, if anything I forgot, you then, you continue. There let it be our minds.)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Closing of Thanksgiving Address which is often recited by Rotinonhsión:ni people as a daily morning ceremony, thanking all of creation for the elements in the natural world.

## **Chapter One: Owenn'shón:'a (Words) – Literature Review**

### ***Oral Tradition***

Oral tradition is considered one of the most important resources for Indigenous research. Longboat refers to it as “orature” and includes oratory with oral tradition and oratory while placing it in equal importance to written literature.

The oral tradition of the American Indian is a highly developed realization of language...In the oral tradition words are sacred...The oral tradition demands the greatest clarity of speech and hearing, the whole strength of memory, and an absolute faith in the efficacy of language. (Momaday 1997:104)

A big part of my literature review thus consists of orature. Words and knowledge are taken from elders, ceremonies, songs, workshops, experience, and teachings. Whether transmitted through songs and dances done while gardening together, words spoken during my ceremonies, teachings over coffee at the kitchen table at Six Nations, Oneida Settlement, or the Kanatsioharè:ke Mohawk community, oral tradition is one of the most profound educational archives that I have collected on paper and in my mind for this dissertation.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Literature Review***

I have provided subheadings for organizational purposes, but the work of many authors can fit into more than one category. The categories are as follows: Indigenous Theory and Methodologies written by Indigenous scholars: Ethnomusicological Theory and Methodologies written by contemporary ethnomusicologists: Scholarship on Native

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<sup>1</sup>Six Nations and Oneida Settlement are both Rotinonhsión:ni Indian reserves located in Ontario Canada.

Music which refers primarily to historical scholarship: Compositional Practices and Modernist Aesthetics written by composers, philosophers, and music critics: and Additional Scholarship includes work by philosophers, anthropologists, and sociologists.

### ***Indigenous Theory and Methodologies***

Many of the authors have employed innovative approaches to Indigenous research, while developing specific theories geared toward an Indigenous methodology. In the following paragraphs, some of these scholars' work will be discussed. A central theme in their work is identifying what is important for conducting Native research, including the following: a) employ indigenous self-determination by consulting the community before doing research to find out what their research agenda and needs may be; b) contribute to the community; c) be indigenous or come from that community; d) work specifically with Indigenous worldview, language and elders; e) avoid hierarchal, individualistic structures by working collaboratively in community; f) work in relationship to people, places, things, past, present and future; and g) work with forms of analysis and representation that reflect the specific community. Although many of these ideas overlap with other ethnographic techniques and can easily be employed by many cultural groups, they are being developed as a theory that has grown specifically out of a Native worldview and the needs of Indigenous people, and are initially tailored to each individual Indigenous group.

Smith and Wilson (1999 and 2001) as well as Kovach (2009) write about the importance of doing collaborative work that is relevant to the community, Indigenous research techniques and accountability to be important aspects to concepts of relationship in Indigenous work. Chilisa writes about Indigenous methodologies situated in a

“historical, cultural, and global context“ (Chilisa 2012: back cover). She looks at the concept of relationality in terms of ontology in Africa, Australia, and Canada, looking at relations with the environment/land, the cosmos, and spirituality, as well as at relational epistemologies and axiology.

Gregory Cajete, Tewa author and Professor at the University of New Mexico’s College of Education, writes that to understand the unique societal way of experiencing art one must “recognize the inherent ceremony of art as an ongoing dimension of an Indigenous education process. Indigenous artisans select the features of what is being depicted that convey its vitality and essence and express them directly in the most appropriate medium available” (Cajete 2000:46). Indigenous artists tend to create by giving primary agency to human experience and Indigenous worldview even while incorporating a diversity of styles, genres and intellectual theories.

He goes on to say that there is a ceremony of art that “touches the deepest realms of the psyche and the sacred dimension of the artistic creative process that transforms something into art, but also transforms the artist” (ibid.). “Creativity and transformation are interrelated in every context or act of art creation . . . In this way, art became a process of spiritual training” (ibid.:47-48.). I expand this concept of a cultural, (i.e., ceremonial) transformation not only to the creation of Native music, but to most work that involves Indian worldviews, including that done by Indigenous theorists, scholars, teachers, writers, gardeners, artists, health care professionals, and policy makers.

Among the authors who stand out as having developed or employed successful Indigenous research techniques, particularly in the field of Native American scholarship, I have chosen several who are not only well-known in their field, but whose work I have

also applied to my own. Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, Kanienkéhaka activist and professor of political science at the University of Victoria in Canada, discusses ways that Native Americans may transcend the effects of colonialism both as individuals and collectively, thus implementing meaningful change, transforming society, and regenerating native cultures. His work, considered radical in his approach to theory and politics, deals with the power of change while seriously looking at the effects of colonization on Reservation and Reserve life today. I borrow from *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (1999) and *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (2005) specifically in the context of Indigenous centered definitions.

Of particular interest here are some ideas of Little Bear (Blackfoot), founding Director of Harvard University's Native American Program on "Jagged Worldviews Colliding" (2000:77), in his article of the same name from the book *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (Battiste 2000). He writes about the intersection and integration of discourse between Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and worldviews. The last section of the book is pertinent to my work as it discusses Indigenous research practices, revitalization, and contemporary Indigenous knowledge. Essays from this volume deal with issues of representation in reference to colonialism and post-colonialism among Indigenous peoples.

The ideas of one of the first well-known Native scholars, activists, and philosophers, Sioux author Vine Deloria, are addressed in a collection of essays (Bilosi and Zimmerman 1997) about Indians, anthropologists, and ethnographic study, in a dissection of living Native American cultures. Addressing Deloria's critical approach, both Native and non-Native scholars show how controversial the issue of Natives'

disregard for anthropologists still is, and offer some solutions for a new anthropological scholarship. Of particular interest is the chapter by Deloria himself in which he talks about the history of anthropological research, with possible solutions for a contemporary approach to anthropology and ethnography.

Vine Deloria's son Philip Deloria, professor of history and the Director of the American Culture Program at the University of Michigan, has continued the family tradition as a Native scholar and historian in two of his works, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (2004) and *Playing Indian* (1998). In the former, he writes about contemporary and historical cultural expectations and anomalies about Indians, and also includes individual essays on violence, representation, athletics, technology, and music. There are many preconceived and misconceived images of Indians propagated by both Indians and non-Indians. The younger Deloria explores the non-Indian expectations and imagined Indian portrayals by focusing on the lived experiences of certain Natives, including performers. This is an extremely important work on the portrayal of Native American culture and stereotypes. It was interesting to read Diamond's insight on how the "anomalies" that Deloria writes about "sometimes provide the exception to the rule that proves the rule, and the 'unexpected,' which might engender new rules of encounter" (Diamond 2011a:34). Deloria's chapter on music was extremely useful in how he described sonic expectations and markers, along with a history of Native American classical musicians. *Playing Indian* describes the "imagined" identities expected and portrayed by non-Indians, including Indian heroes, new age Indians, and ethnographic Indians. He explores ways in which Americans have used Indian symbols, describing the non-Indian construction of the Indian. The theoretical analysis of how we construct

Indian-ness was useful to my research, as are his specific historical and contemporary examples.

As mentioned in the Acknowledgements, Beverley Diamond's writings and mentorship have been essential to my dissertation research. Of her many articles and presentations, I will mention three in particular. In the forthcoming *Native American Ways of (Music) History*, she looks at a history of Native American song and dance traditions within a variety of frameworks, from individual conceptualizations of memory and Euro-American expectations of Indigenous history as ahistorical to Indigenous understandings and the work of aboriginal culture bearers, theorists, and historians. In writing about history she addresses topics of historical agency, repositories of memory, encoded historical objects, geography, and layered understandings of history. Her contemporary approaches to Indigenous understandings and working with culture bearers are a large part of what I hope to emulate in my work. Secondly, I use the concept of twinness or complementarity from *Visions of Sound: Musical Instruments of First Nations Communities in Northeastern America* (1994) by Diamond, Cronk, and von Rosen in relation to my research presented in Chapter Three. Their attention to sound as sociological, physical, historical, political, and spiritual signifier was also useful in my work and aligned with an indigenous worldview. Lastly, Diamond's writing in *Aboriginal Music in Contemporary Canada: Echoes and Exchanges* (2012), edited by Hoefnagels and Diamond, was valuable in terms of understanding cultural modernity.

*Decolonizing Methodologies* by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Professor in Education and Director of the International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education at the University of Auckland, is the most important in terms of incorporating Indigenous

theory and research methodologies. This book is most useful for understanding Indigenous research techniques and “colonized” methodologies. As a leading scholar of Indigenous theory, her work has been vital to my research and analysis and in the development of possible Indigenous research strategies introduced here and especially in Chapters Four and Six. Also of interest are her use of Foucault to explain the philosophical and historical base of a Western research paradigm along with her frustrations and solutions for implementing Indigenous research, but even more importantly her design and implementation of several successful Indigenous research paradigms.

*Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities* (2004), edited by Choctaw historian, writer, and Professor of History at Northern Arizona University Devon Mihesuah and Shawn Wilson, an Opaskwayak Cree writer who works in health care at Northern Rivers University in Australia, is a collection of essays that offer “innovative approaches to incorporating Indigenous values and perspectives into the research methodologies and interpretive theories” (ibid.:back cover) in a variety of scholarly disciplines. Some topics of interest with respect to my research include cultural resource management, decolonization and the recovery of Indigenous knowledge and I am especially inspired by the dedication of the editors to empower Indigenous people through academia.

In his book *Research is Ceremony* (2008), Shawn Wilson describes an Indigenous research paradigm in which relationship, accountability, community participation, data collection, forms of analysis, and representation of information are explored through an

Indigenous worldview. This book was very important to the theoretical premise of my research as well as to how and why I conduct fieldwork and represent my findings.

Lastly, I will mention Margaret Kovach, professor of education at the University of Saskatchewan, who explores critical analysis from a Native American perspective and the effective use of narrative in the presentation of research in her book *Indigenous Methodologies* (2009), and Bagele Chilisa, a Professor at the University of Botswana where she teaches research methodologies. Chilisa explores educational Indigenous methodologies from around the world in her book *Indigenous Research Methodologies* (2012). Her focus on a model that employs the Medicine Wheel influenced me in my work, particularly in Chapter Six.

Examples of reflexivity, dialogic interview styles, “the Indigenous voice,” and collaboration that I hope I have emulated in my own work include writings by Denzin, Diamond, Francis, Smith, Thomaselli, Vander, Van Rosen, and Wilson. The *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (2008) edited by Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith contains several articles by international authors from a variety of disciplines writing about emerging Indigenous methodologies, new critical theories and pedagogies, and Indigenous ethics and discourse and its impact on qualitative research. It is particularly important for my work in Indigenous research, fieldwork, and dissertation-writing techniques; more specifically, I have been influenced by the chapter by Keyan Thomaselli, Lauren Dyll, and Michael Francis that sets out a culture-based plan for fieldwork combining custom and culture, tradition and science to accommodate several generations. The authors define auto-ethnography as a form of scientific inquiry that includes the researcher and the researched in dialogue with each other while developing a

critical personal narrative while in the field.

Scholars who write about the modern Indian intellectual, several of them scholars of Native literary criticism, include the Delorias and Craig S. Womack in *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective* (2008) and *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (1999). Referring specifically to “tribal literary canons” (ibid.:329), Cook-Lynn (2008) strongly expresses the necessity for rediscovery and reclamation of Indigenous knowledge and tradition.

Kimberli Lee, in her article “Heartspeak from the Spirit” (2007), analyzes the work of several Native musicians of popular music. She writes about how music serves as a powerful and accessible site of resistance and activism. Although forms and styles are continually changing, Native American song has often served to transform and educate on a variety of levels. She discusses the many reasons that new Native music and genres have been developed and used as a vehicle for change and tribal expression.

### ***Ethnomusicological Theory and Methodologies***

The research of many contemporary ethnomusicologists reflects elements of Indigenous theory, and their work includes fine examples of suggestions made by Indigenous theorists. Because of my interest in how language and worldview can be used as metaphors for a variety of research themes within my topic, I am especially intrigued by the work by David Samuels, Associate Professor of Music at New York University. He specializes in ethnomusicology and linguistic anthropology, music and semiotics, and Native American music and poetics, and has worked extensively with contemporary music and “Indianness” on the Apache reserve. Employing linguistic and musical

practices from the San Carlos Apache Reservation, Samuels explores new concepts of cultural identity validating traditional Apache equally with contemporary Apache musical genres as authentically North American Indian. Samuels's use of linguistic and Indigenous methodologies, as well as his representation of Native American culture and music, are at the forefront of my own research interests.

A fieldwork interview about the revitalization of traditional singing in Maliseet and Passamaquoddy communities is written in dialogic style by Franziska Von Rosen, an ethnomusicologist who is the editor or author of several of the works included in my bibliography. In "Drums, Song, Vibrations: Conversations with a Passamaquoddy Traditional Singer" (2009), from *Music of the First Nations*, she notes that her style of writing was "first pioneered in ethnomusicology by Judith Vander" (Van Rosen 2009:54). An exploration of an elder's journey of music revitalization in her community, changed gender roles, and tradition and innovation, as well as the use of songs from various aboriginal communities, are all important to my research as I have come to understand another level of intertribal cooperation.

### ***Scholarship on Native Music***

Among the many historical studies of Native music are Densmore, Fenton, Fletcher, Frisbie, Herzog, Kurath, McAllester, Merriam, Nettl, and Roberts, all of which have been particularly useful in regard to dreams, music, and the creative process for Indigenous artists, all discussed in Chapter Five. In "the Study of Indian Music" (1915), Densmore writes about the variety of song types, her process in collecting Indian music, and some general information in regard to her musical analysis of songs, including intervallic structures and scales. This article is interesting from a historical perspective,

including her four reasons for intense study of Native music: to preserve, to incorporate Native themes for composers, to further understand what she calls an intuitive melodic knowledge, and to better understand the Indian. Through the various interviews, recordings, and fieldwork experiences, discussed in her article “Musical Composition among the American Indians” (1927), Densmore documented means of inspiration and processes of creativity for musical composition among North American Indians, including music received in dreams, communal composition, and inspiration from personal experience or community need. Although short, this work is interesting in terms of putting a traditional compositional practice into a historical and comparative perspective with current compositional practices among contemporary classical Native composers.

Valuable writings on musical and descriptive analysis in relation to indigenous analysis techniques include the bi-musical theories of Browner (2000 and 2009), the descriptive style of McAllester (1954) and Bear and Theisz (1984), the interview style of Vander (1996 and 1997), the concepts of complementarity and twinness suggested by Diamond and Cronk (1994), specific notations given in Levine (2002) and Sauer (2009), and the variety of examples and explanations given by Tenzer (2006).

Tara Browner, a UCLA Professor of Ethnomusicology who specializes in Native North American music and dance, Native North American contemporary music, musical imagery of Indians in popular culture, and Indigenous concepts of music theory, discusses issues of appropriation, stereotypes, musical spheres, and sonic culture in terms of the Indianist movement and its classical composers in her “Breathing the Indian Spirit’: Thoughts on Musical Borrowing and the ‘Indianist’ Movement in American

Music” (1997). Of particular interest is her article “Making and Singing Pow-wow Songs: Text, Form, and the Significance of Culture-Based Analysis” (2000) in terms of her development of a culture-based analysis of music using bi-musicality and interview processes that could serve ethnomusicologist/ musicians, as well as the native population from whom the music came. Her bi-musical premise was useful as a descriptive analysis particularly in Chapters Two and Four.

David McAllester (1954) used his fieldwork on the Navaho Enemy Way ceremonial to explore cultural values through an analysis of musical behavior and musical repertoire. This work is useful for putting my research into a historical context. In addition, his graphic notation system, developed for his informants to read is of special interest in terms of composition. Bear and Theisz (1984) used a collaborative method, reflective of earlier Indigenous research agendas, in a volume of Lakota songs that are presented in an interesting way, akin to the bi-musical concepts of Tara Browner and the complementarity or twin-ness of Diamond, Cronk, and von Rosen. All of these authors experiment with Indigenous modes of research and ethnographic representation.

Ethnomusicologist and composer Judith Vander’s fieldwork with five Shoshone women singers is presented in an award-winning format consisting of transcriptions, analysis, audio recordings, interviews, and imagery while connecting the Shoshone Ghost Dance to the culture of the Great Basin (1996,1997). Her reflexivity, interview style, and the way in which she presents and organizes her fieldwork and transcriptions along with her variety of formats were useful as I organized this dissertation.

### *Compositional Practices and Modernist Aesthetics*

In terms of research done on the compositional processes of creative artists, I have used the research and theories of Marc Gidal (Professor of Music and Musicology at the School of Contemporary Arts, Ramapo College), Stan Bennett (former Professor of Human Development at the University of Maryland), Peter Holtz (Researcher at the Center for Teacher Education, Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany), and the work by psychologist and researcher Bahle.

In their introduction to the collection *Opera Indigene: Re/presenting First Nations and Indigenous Cultures* drama teacher Pamela Karantonis and ethnomusicologist Dylan Robinson write that rather than being understood as an “incongruous pairing of cultural traditions,” opera—or, in my case, the broader category of classical Native music is “used to express and reassess cultural traditions” (Karantonis and Robinson 2011:1). Through a variety of essays, Indigenous modalities are explored in “continuing processes of historical redress” (ibid.) as a diversity of Indigenous voices make the choice to express traditions through classical music (ibid.:4). “*Opera Indigene* considers how the boundaries of cultural traditions and Indigenous worldviews” are explored through the use of classical musical genres (ibid.:5), and several authors focus “on the potential that hybrid styles and juxtapositions may have as a decolonizing strategy” (ibid.:7). Diamond, in the second chapter of the book, comments on how the performance of Indigenous opera may succeed in “decolonizing opera audiences” in terms of socio-economic effects, production, and performance (ibid.:31). Her idea that opera—and again I look at this in the broader category of classical Native music—may be a “contact zone” in Mary Louise Pratt’s sense of a space where “subjects previously separated by geography or history are

co-present” (ibid.:32, citing Pratt 2008:8) can be understood in terms of musical styles, instrumentation, or sonic signifiers, as well as in terms of composer/performer/audience.

### ***Additional Sources***

Additional theorists whose work may be applied to reflexive and Indigenous approaches to theory and research include Foucault in his *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–77* (1980), about how sovereign theory no longer applies to modern issues including new discourses on power, domination, economics, politics, psychology, and sociology. Foucault discusses how by using one particular issue or theory one may actually weaken it. Many of these ideas, especially those on pages 78-108, intersect particularly well with Indigenous theory.

Laurel Richardson’s (2003) criteria for creative analytical practices (CAP) ethnography include the expectation that the first action should be participation as reciprocity as a means of looking at how well “The work construct(s) participation of authors/readers and performers/audiences as a reciprocal relationship marked by mutual responsibility and obligation” (Richardson in Hesse-Biber 2005:773). She also writes about “performative writing” that works as a “dialogue between self and world” (ibid.:766). “The dialogue asks how, in life worlds that are partial, fragmented, and constituted and mediated by language, we can tell or read stories . . . as a window to understanding the relationships between self and other or between individual and community” (ibid.). Richardson suggests that we write partially, reflexively, and citationally as a strategy for writing that is not interested in mastery but in creating a dialogue with “authors, readers and subjects written/read” (ibid.) “All we can do, in effect, is engage in dialogue” (Thomaselli, Dyll, and Francis 2008:361). “Norman Denzin

(1997) brought to our reflexive capacity a new dimension of inquiry: how to relate our present concerns to the wider social structure of theoretical debate between the various proponents of different strategies that First and displaced peoples can develop" (ibid.:2008:358).

Browner's combination of both "insider" or "native" concepts with "outsider" or "Western" terminology suggests that an ethnographer continue using "analytic categories to further comparative discussion even while he commends the practice of using indigenous terms for narrative categories" (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995: 226). In combining the theories of "interpretative anthropology" with bi-analytical theory and postcolonial theory, both Kisliuk (2001) and Browner (2000) were able to present a varied ethnographic accounts grounded in the beliefs and concepts of the "insider." Becker discusses the need to try out a variety of methods and theories to find a combination that works with the research at hand (Becker 1998:217).

Authors whom I have cited in terms of their research into music and dreams are psychologists Ross, Sand, and Jung, ethnomusicologists Herndon and Carter von Rosen, and anthropologist Tedlock. Dreams are an important site for creative process using Indigenous symbols.

In *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity* (1994), anthropologist Nadia Serematakis asks what has "happened to regional experiences that identify and shape culture? Regional foods are disappearing, cultures are dissolving, and homogeneity is spreading" (Serematakis 1994:1). She describes ways in which "sensory memories have preserved cultures otherwise threatened by urbanism and modernity" (ibid.:3). In addition, Seremetakis's work with memory, creativity, and

modernity has informed my work as a scholar, Longhouse participant, and composer. Since much of Native life has been colonized and has been passed down through oral tradition, much of the music and tradition relies on perception and memory as Native musicians embrace their traditional culture.

## Chapter Two: Ensatenenhstasonteron ne Kanikonri:io (Adding to the Rafters with a Good Mind)

### *Kaieneràko:wa (The Great Law of Peace)*

The *Guswenta*, a Two-row Wampum Belt consisting of two purple rows surrounded by white rows on either side and down the middle, was a treaty made in 1613 between the Rotinonhsión:ni people and the Dutch. Given to us as part of the *Kaieneràko:wa* (The Great Law of Peace), its two purple beaded rows symbolize an equal relationship of “brotherhood” between the Dutch in their ship and the Rotinonhsión:ni in their canoe.



The three elements that bind the treaty are friendship, peace, and an understanding that this agreement would last forever. It is in our canoe that we may “add to the rafters,” referring literally to the longhouse roof and figuratively to a place upon which we may add knowledge. In Kanienkéha *ensatenenhstasonteron* means more precisely that you will add to or continue the rafters. One way that I have been taught to live the two-row wampum today is by following my path as an Onkwehon:we woman while honoring academia, and looking at Indigenous scholarship within a university context while researching, representing, collaborating, and disseminating research in ways that respect both worlds but are grounded in Rotinonhsión:ni culture.<sup>1</sup> I am “privileging indigenous languages and thought structures, respecting the knowledge and learning processes of

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oral culture bearers” (Hoefnagels and Diamond 2012:56), while writing predominantly in English and as part of an established dissertation process.

In keeping with my purpose of adding to the rafters, I am not trying to find a middle ground in terms of mixing the two cultures together or coming between the two rows. I envision the white center of the belt as a kind of grey area in which dialog, questions, new information, and ideas that are dynamic and alive may travel. However, the two lines never meet. During the dissertation writing retreat for Native scholars Lori Quigley (Seneca), Dean of the Esteves School of Education at The Sage Colleges, referred to a teaching she received about the Guswenta: “You can’t straddle one foot in the big ship and one in your canoe, or you will fall in the middle” (Quigley, 19 August 2013 discussion group, Kanatsiohare:ke).

Another understanding of the Guswenta comes from Mike Jock, Kanienkéhaka elder from Akwesasne and one of the founders of the American Indian Movement, who explained that the two boats should

not interfere with the other, stay in your canoe, and stay in your ship and never intertwine with each other. We follow the Great Law and that’s how we walk on this earth. How much you follow those teachings. We never try to impose our laws on one another, we go down that river together. But they have never upheld their end of the treaty. To this day they have not upheld what they said they were going to do. They are always trying to sink our canoe. Of course, no one can totally do it. You still get in a white man’s car and come home. (Personal communication, September 30, 2013)  
proselytizing

Although according to the Kaieneràko:wa, Rotinonhsión:ni people do not believe in proselytization or imposing law other than in our own territories with our own people, it surely occurs. The fact that we utilize modern technology and conveniences and are cosmopolitan in our life styles is probably one of the most important points Jock is

making in the above quote. We participate in a world that does not have clear-cut binary divisions.

Jock adds another perspective to understanding the *Guswenta* by referring to the two rows as alive and ancestral: “How do you care for the living, if you don’t have the dead to teach you. There are two sides the living and the dead, you have to respect both of them. They both teach you” (ibid.). Oneida linguist, teacher, and traditional longhouse speaker Ray Taw<sup>te</sup>’se John takes this concept a step further when he explains another cultural consideration for understanding the Two-row Wampum.<sup>2</sup> He explains that there are water rows (white) that represent the spirit world and physical rows (purple) that represent the earth. He uses the *Guswenta* as a teaching about balance, roles, and responsibilities. Our culture is layered with meaning and varying interpretations.

I understand my work and this research as a coexistence of two (or more) separate entities that may not need to compromise, but may negotiate and learn from each other. My place is to incorporate varying elements with a discerning and good mind or *kanikonri:io*,<sup>3</sup> another founding principal of the Kaieneràko:wa. John’s first language is Hon<sup>yote</sup>:a:ka: ho’w<sup>na</sup>: (Oneida) which is one of the Rotinonhsión:ni languages, is similar to Mohawk. John explains a cultural dissection of the word for good mind, *kanikonri:io*: “*Ka* is the completed being of a creation; *ni* the small particle (of a creation); *kon(u)* allows the female to create; *ri(l)* everything is of equal value; *io (y)* the cycle is never ending” (email correspondence, 20 August 2013). This concept further

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<sup>2</sup> Ray Taw<sup>te</sup>’se John, who I will refer to as John for the remainder of the paper, is Oneida from Oneida Settlement, Ontario, and belongs to the Bear clan. He has been one of my primary teachers in language and culture and has trained me in longhouse ceremonies. It was from him that I received my Onkwéhon:we name and was returned to the turtle clan with Ray John Jr. as the representative who walked me through the Longhouse in my naming ceremony. John Sr. and I have worked on several language and cultural projects in both Oneida and Mohawk languages, but most of his teachings have been given to me in Oneida so I refer to both languages as cultural metaphor.

exemplifies the balance, mutuality, and importance of continuing creation, thus adding to our rafters.

As I began writing about my research on Native American classical music, I was reminded during the recitation of the Kaieneràko:wa and the discussions that followed that the stories we tell, the words we speak, and “the songs we sing help to remind us of our histories.”<sup>4</sup> These histories continue with us, for we as living people continue to carve out our histories in our stories, songs, compositions, and music-creating. A dance scholar critiqued the Aboriginal Dance Opera *BONES* in *Aboriginal Music in Contemporary Canada* and represented this concept as one that “imparted a vision in which both the present and the ever-present exist together” (Hoefnagels and Diamond 2012:53). The cyclical understandings and histories are dynamically interactive.

### ***Sakaha:ra' - Get Back on the Good Road***

The Rotinonhsión:ni people from whom I descend were given the Kaieneràko:wa (The Great Law of Peace) by a man named Deganawida, or the Peacemaker in English.<sup>5</sup> The speakers stressed three matters that the Peacemaker brought to us from Creation and that are to be attended to before all else – *Kanikonri:io*, *Skennen*, and *Kastenshera*. I have been taught that all of our actions be based on these three matters, including research and

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<sup>4</sup> Bob Antone (Oneida) presentation on De-colonization on August 16, 2013 that was given following the recitation of the Kaieneràko:wa which was recited over the course of five days at one of the Longhouses on the Oneida Settlement in Ontario, Canada in August 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Many of the words and concepts I use, such as *Kaieneràko:wa* are written in Kanienkéha (Mohawk). Many who practice the teachings of the Kaiwi:io (Code of Handsome Lake), advise that the name Deganawida never be put in print, but many of my teachers have said that is a Christianized and colonized concept that Kaiwi:io followers adhere to and that his name can in fact be put in print, just as we would mention it in speech.

dissemination. In English, they are translated as the good mind, peace, and strength, but many still translate them as peace, power, and righteousness.<sup>6</sup>

After one of the Kaieneràko:wa reading days, I went to visit my teacher John at his home. He was outside on his scooter tending to his garden of traditional plants and medicines, and soon after we approached he began talking about the Christianization of the English-language translation of those words and how righteousness is not a concept for the Rotinonhsión:ni. He explained that strength refers to getting back on the road when we fall down or lose our way, as humans tend to do. *Sakaha:ra'*, from his cultural perspective, means to put ourselves back on the road again: “We are created in balance [cycles] but sometimes our balance goes by the way side” (John email correspondence, 20 August 2013). Jan Kahehti:io Longboat, Kanienkéhaka elder, cultural knowledge keeper, and keeper of Indigenous medicines and seeds, remarked:

What I always heard, the way that old people always put it, was that we had to pick ourselves up and put ourselves back on the good road. That was our responsibility. We can't expect anyone else to do it for us. In other words, find our way back, using all those concepts; living The Great Law. (Longboat meeting, 23 August 2013)

John then began to explain how long ago the Kaieneràko:wa was recited outside, as he was now, and just a little at a time, with questions and comments regarding how it is applied in our daily lives.

Following that Oneida visit, I was driving to the Native dissertation writing retreat with Longboat when she talked about how she understood an Indigenous view of power as one of gathering a good mind with strength and peace and commented that it is different from that of a European worldview that historically involved dominance and control. In this brief encounter with the Kaieneràko:wa, I illustrate many concepts taken

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<sup>6</sup> For example in Taiake Alfred's book *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (1999).

from my Rotinonhsión:ni culture that are congruent with contemporary tenets in ethnomusicology, and hope to inspire others so that they may enrich our understandings: 1) the importance of experiential learning of culture starting with the sounds and concepts of language and ceremony; 2) trying to correct misconceptions that may arise through translation, different worldviews, and loss of culture; 3) the importance of working with our *dotahs* (elders, teachers, grandparents, knowledge keepers); 4) the importance of renewing our priorities using cultural practices no matter what we are involved in, and 5) the importance of community-based, collaborative learning.

It is helpful to understand these ideas in specific relation to sound and language. The Kanienkéha word for listen, *osatundah* is specifically translated to mean “put up your ears so your spirit can wake up.” The word *satakarehn:nen*, often translated as “prayer,” really means that “our spirit sends our consciousness or our vibration or our song into the universe.” Sound, vibration, and the concept of song are all related to spirit and cannot be separated in the Rotinonhsión:ni worldview. This is exhibited in the language and through our stories and music, and is an example of how easy it has been to misinterpret our language and culture.

When I asked Tom Sakokweniónkwaw Porter, Kanienkéhaka founder, director, and spiritual leader of the traditional Mohawk Community of Kanatsioharè:ke, about this, he replied that he believes that:

Kanienkéha is more detailed, technical and explicit than English, which is a couple of notches less in understanding, especially in terms of detail, emotion and feeling. Also, I think English words lack spiritual and historical events. It fails to connect the past with the present. Native languages do that. The past is always relevant in our language. (conversation, August 20, 2013)

He refers to the important concept that historical references are not only made in explanations, but are embedded in the syllables of our words. While all languages contain a variety of signifiers, it is interesting to note how carefully historical and cultural information is related through linguistic analysis of specific syllables in Rotinonhsión:ni languages. English words do not lack spiritual and historical explanation, but is not revealed in the most basic syllabic interpretations. Thus change and interpretation are connected to word choice. In Rotinonhsión:ni languages, the syllables where information is stored act as archives for both history and culture.

Throughout the dissertation, I dissect specific words as a means of understanding a Native worldview through the lens of Rotinonhsión:ni languages and concepts. Bonnie-Jane Iehnhotonkwas Maracle, Professor of Iroquois Studies at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario, and Kanienkéha teacher, talked about the importance of understanding the culture within the words: “the language is not separate from culture it encompasses our culture. When you learn our language, you also learn the traditions and stories” (personal communication, 20 August 2013). For example, the word *karennen* in Kanienkéha (Mohawk) or *hol^n^* in *hon^yote'a:ka: ho'w^:na:* (Oneida) is usually interpreted into English as song or music:

*ka* = rhythm or movement of the galaxy

*ren* = arc; cycle of movement around the earth; natural curve

*nen* = seed or source of the movement; whatever causes the movement

Thus, the English translation of song as a noun does not account for the deep, cultural implications of the word which is actually in relationship and movement. Of course literal translation into English is rarely possible since cultural information may not transfer in

the translation from many other languages. In addition, the historical understanding of our drumsticks originally being curved to follow the shape of the movement of our arm is stored in the syllable *ren*. Furthermore, one may see the Kanienkéha word *orèn:ta*, which refers to cosmos, cosmic consciousness, and spirit, as part of the word *karennen*. As one can see from the cultural dissection of this word, it is not an object, nor is it just about notes or sounds, but rather it has a multi-layered spiritual component reflected in our Indigenous culture that connects us to nature. If the rafters in the longhouse and the middle beads of the Guswenta are where this knowledge may move, then it is in the longhouse floor boards that this dissertation is grounded with an Indian worldview looking through Indigenous eyes.

When the Peacemaker was trying to bring up the mind of an evil Onondaga sorcerer named Thadodaho, he asked the Cayugas and the Mohawks to sing six songs that had the power to work on transforming his mind. He asked when singing that they do it to the best of their ability, so that he too could live the three great matters and join the people in getting back on the good road. This writing is one of the many songs I sing and I do it to the best of my ability. If there is anything I forget or leave out, may those who came before me and those who come after me continue the story, correct my mistakes, and carry on the best they can. Nón:wa Wenhnisera:te tóka othé:nen sonke'nikónhrhen í:se ki'ne' ien'sewatahsónteren eh káti' niiohtónhak ne sewa'nikòn:ra. (Now today, if anything I forgot, you then, you continue. There let it be our minds.)

## **Chapter Three: Tékeni—Two Worlds, Many Borders: A Look at Classical Native Music Through Indigenous Eyes**

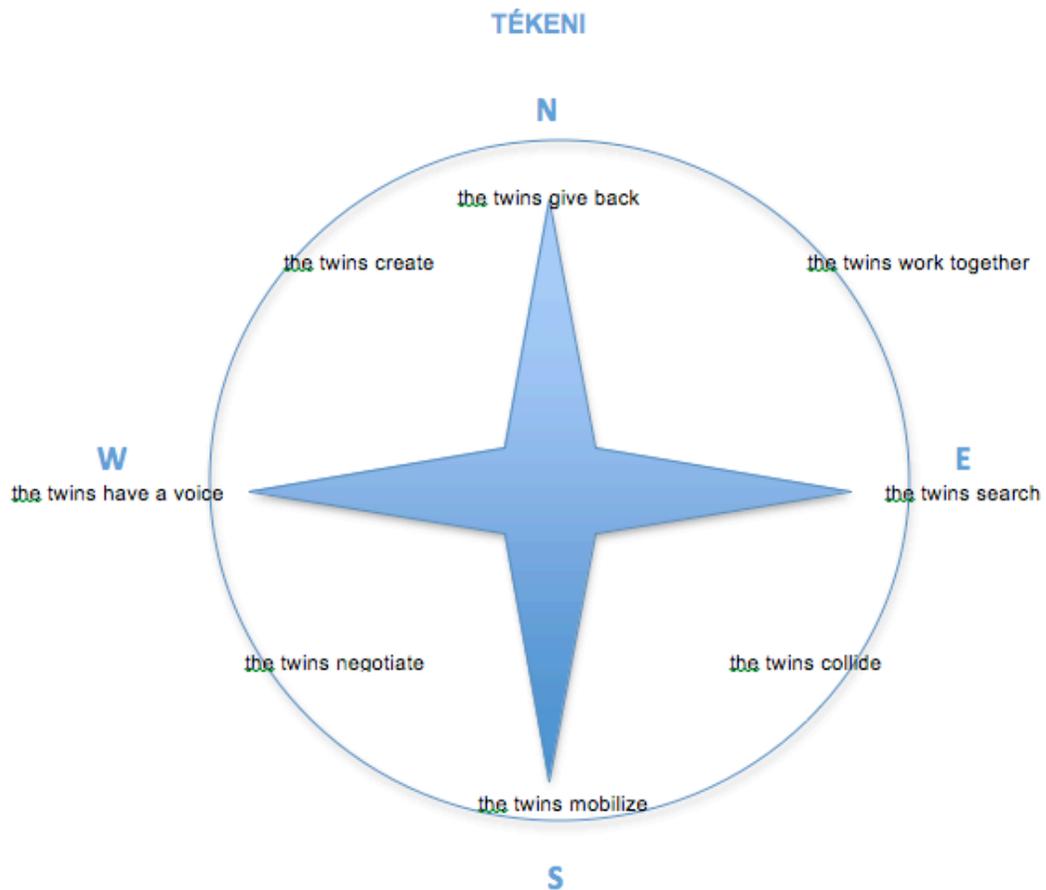
### ***ÉNSKA (1): Introduction, the Twins***

The Kanienkéha word for two is *tékeni*. It is believed that this word did not exist prior to colonial contact, because it wasn't necessary. If someone needed a blanket, they traded a blanket for something of equal value. There was no concept of two blankets in exchange for one musket, for example. The word two was invented out of colonial necessity by the Rotinonhsión:ni, taken from the creation story in which Sky Woman gave birth to twins (*tehnikhen*, from which came the word for two: *tékeni*). (The word now used for one, *énska*, comes from the word for Sky Woman, the first person [Porter 2008:81]). Each twin was given half the world's power. One had an easy birth and the other came out fighting, killing his mother in the process. This second twin was jealous of the first and often caused trouble. Porter wrote, "We don't like to refer to them as good and evil. We just say one made all these nice things that help us: and one always made the mischievous things, the one that was always like a prankster, rather than say 'the evil one'" (70). According to John (2008), many elements in our language and in the creation story represent a balance of male and female energies; the understanding of the twins as good and evil is a Christianized concept, as complementary energies are necessary for our development. "When we count, we are recounting the Creation story," says Porter (2008:81). The Rotinonhsión:ni have been able to retain their value system while creatively and resourcefully adapting to the needs that developed through contact and modernization. From a cultural perspective, a dissection of the word *tékeni*

provides us with more information about a worldview that has often been misunderstood. The syllable *te* in Kanienkéha means a duality and balance, *ke* stands for beings, and *ni* represents each particle of spirit which some elders interpret as DNA (John 2008). With this etymology, *tékeni* can be defined as the balance between two beings or particles of spirit working together.

My goal is to look at how Indigenous theory and research techniques may be used to explain classical Native music. I create a theoretical model based on the concept of twinning reflected in the subheadings that signal how this paper unfolds. Figure 3.1 uses a circle to show the flow, continuity and connectedness of each part of the process, which is not linear as one may go back and forth between “stages” in the process. Reminiscent of the medicine wheel, the twins are introduced in the East, where the process “begins.” “Enska (1): Introducing the Twins” represents the continued understanding and search for cultural knowledge; “Tékeni (2): the Twins Collide” asks how different worldviews co-exist; “Ahsen (3): the Twins Mobilize” as they learn who they are and what they need; “Kaieri (4): the Twins Have a Voice” as they become part of a global community; “Wisk (5): the Twins Negotiate” as they define expectations; “Ia:iak (6): the Twins Create” continuing innovation in modern times; “Tsia:ta (7): the Twins Give Back” to future generations; “Sha’te:kon(8): the Twins Transform” creating new methodologies. In addition, I examine some methodologies in use among modern ethnomusicologists in their attempts to reclaim and reflect an Indigenous viewpoint in the domain of academic scholarship.

Figure 3.1



I also reflect on ways that the “twinness” of my own experience influences my study of Indigenous classical music. As an “insider” to this research, being a cellist and composer of Rotinohsion:ni descent and a former advisory board member to the First Nations Composers Initiative (FNCI), I performed classical Native music premiered between 2006 and 2007 at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in a concert series dedicated to contemporary classical chamber music by Native American composers. My Kanienkéha name is Ieriho:kwats which means “she learns deeply by going back to her roots,” and I have indeed been fortunate to go back to my

heritage, including the study of my language and participation in culture-based healing and revitalization projects. I wear the turtle clan and participate in Longhouse ceremonies. Raised in multicultural suburban and urban environments, I have a conservatory training with a career as a cellist, composer, full professor of music at Montgomery College in Maryland, and scholar pursuing a doctoral degree in ethnomusicology at the University of Maryland. As a result, I am frequently called upon to cross borders of understanding. It is often through music that I am able to express this juxtaposition of worlds—what Little Bear calls “jagged worldviews colliding” (2000:85). It is part of what fuels my interest in the classical Native genre. However, I am cautious about defining myself as from two worlds as it places me in a binary position that limits my experience as a multicultural person. As mentioned briefly in the Introduction, I draw on multicultural competencies from my Rotinonhsión:ni heritage, Western classical music, and ethnomusicology, among many other influences.

The term “classical Native” was coined by Howard Bass, the former program director of NMAI, and Georgia Wettlin-Larsen, former program director of FNCCI, as a title for programming at NMAI in 2006 featuring works by Native American composers. The composers discussed in this paper are writing as part of this relatively new genre. Exploring levels of “twinness” or complementarity, I employ various methodologies of Indigenous scholarship as I look at what makes this new genre classical European, what makes it Native American, and where those borders may intersect. Two of the primary works I use for examples in this paper are compositions that I commissioned and premiered for the North American Indian Cello Project (NAICP) at the NMAI. I use them to illustrate the viewpoints of both Indigenous scholars and non-Native

ethnomusicologists who have devoted themselves to the ethical, political, economic, social, historical, critical, and philosophical treatment of Indigenous scholarship. Research compiled in this dissertation comes in part from fieldwork questionnaires distributed in 2007 and 2008, soon after the second series of performances at the NMAI (which featured works by composers who are mostly based in the United States).<sup>1</sup>

***TÉKENI (2): Two Worldviews, Twins Collide***

Little Bear describes a Native worldview as being “animate, imbued with spirit, and in constant motion, where interrelationships between all entities are of paramount importance, and space is a more important referent than time” (2000:82). He points out that “the philosophy, values, and customs of Aboriginal cultures differ from those of Eurocentric cultures” (ibid.:77). Some of these differences may be understood in terms of the complementary of the Rotinonhsión:ni “twins.” As an ethnomusicologist, I was initially trained in “Western” research strategies, including classification, comparison and comparative evaluation (Hall 1992:276-320); as an Indigenous person, I give primacy to concepts of interrelationships, time, space, and cosmology. For me, the creative articulation of these disparate perceptions is expressed using musical sounds and composition, as I wrote a piece for cello, voice and percussion about the experience of living in—and often between—two worlds. The work “In Two Worlds” (ca.1722/ 2006) by J. S. Bach and D. I. Avery is notated using the notes and phrasing of the *Sarabande* from “Bach’s Fifth Suite for Solo Cello in c minor”; I augment some of Bach’s rhythms and add notated parts for Native American rattle and hand-drum, along with a part for

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<sup>1</sup> IRB Application: #07-0678, University of Maryland, College Park. Responses to questionnaire henceforth referenced as (Questionnaires 2007).

Plains Indian falsetto style singing. The composition epitomizes the concept of “classical Native” in that the two musical sensibilities co-exist, and yet it is clear what part is “classical” and what part is “Native.” They do so without sacrificing or privileging one over the other. Each part like the purple beads in the two-row wampum can exist on its own as an individual piece of music with powerful musical statements. In co-existence, I think they sound beautiful and carry strong emotional weight, which to me raises many themes including how to live in two worlds, the possibility for mutuality and respect, and identity. In this work, two seemingly disparate musical traditions, whose musical sounds and concepts are not interlaced, can co-exist.

In my more recent works, I explore how sounds may be integrated on various levels in several ways: by experimenting with instrumentation such as playing the cello like a drum, or having chamber musicians play rattles in addition to their Western instruments; by using a concept of musical scrims in which one musical fabric shows through another like *pentimento*; by starting with an Indigenous melody that provides an essence or memory that becomes unrecognizable in its application; and by working with audience/performer expectations by planting performers in the audience or incorporating group participation in a classical chamber composition. As a performer, I am struck by the variety of Western and Indigenous techniques, sensibilities and sounds employed by classical Native composers. I value both styles of research techniques as I organize material in both circular and linear fashions. I carry tobacco and library books in the same bag, and have performed a Women’s Stomp Dance and Bartók in the same concert. I hope that I may continue to work at balancing both worlds, and I look forward to co-existence and integration, as the word *tékeni* and my Rotinonhsión:ni worldview promise.

This complementarity has often been appreciated in ethnomusicological studies of Native American music, and it is interesting to be part of the trend toward contemporary methodological and musical approaches, as well as having a place in which I may further understand the conflicts and intersections of Indigenous and European styles of learning.

Ethnomusicologist David Locke had this to say about the work of David McAllester, the anthropologist and Native music specialist: “David showed that it was possible to develop a cross-cultural understanding and that our field of ethnomusicology should aspire to see and hear and engage with the performance arts of other cultures from their points of view” (quoted in Marquard 2006; see also Frisbie 1986). McAllester was one of the first (as early as 1954) to incorporate what might be termed “Indigenous methodologies” in research on American Indian music, in that he presented musical transcriptions in two modalities: Western notation and a graphic notation designed specifically for Navajo readers to be used by Rimrock Navajo singers (1954). Today, rather than depending primarily on standard Western notation, many ethnomusicologists who specialize in Native American music include recordings or Internet access to recordings as part of their research (Vander 1997; Diamond 2008). The recordings complement transcriptions, lend an additional sense of authenticity, and give immediate aural experience of the work, as well affording accessibility to an audience beyond academe. By integrating standard Western notation and its musical analysis with the immediate experience (through audio recordings) of the subtleties in singing styles and forms, the sounds of stomping and beating of rattles, or the diverse vocal timbres, these scholars have modelled ways in which Western technology and Indigenous musical conceptualizations can complement one another.

Several ethnomusicologists have presented concepts of complementarity, bi-musicality, and/or twinness in their works. Diamond, Cronk, and von Rosen's use of the Anishinabe concept of complementarity or twinness in terms of First Nations music looks at the indispensable relationship between two parts, rather than ambivalence or resistance between two seemingly disparate cultures (1994).

Choctaw ethnomusicologist Tara Browner uses Indigenous approaches similar to those of some composers I discuss in this dissertation. Applying culture-based analysis in her work on North American Indian pow-wow music, she incorporates interviews, language, and concepts directly from the musicians and performers, asserting "the Native right to define and interpret their own culture for outsiders" (2000:214). She defines terminology through an Indigenous voice, and proposes a means of writing about Native music that is acceptable to both Indians and non-Indians, writing for both academics and natives and privileging neither: "Writing for two sets of readers—academic and Native—requires fluency and respect for multiple musical languages, and the ability to navigate a political minefield. In the past, most writings on Indigenous American music have been aimed at a non-Indian audience" (ibid.:215). Browner provides both Western European and Indigenous vocabularies for Native musicians to choose from, as well as transcripts for editing; she places herself within the narrative rather than above it, presenting Indigenous responses to the Western analysis. Her approach presents interpretations and material from both realms as equally valid; she sees "Indian and Western musical conceptualizations as a duality rather than as oppositional stances, [and] a meeting place between the two can be created, something that a Navajo friend of mine (also an academic) calls the Middle Way" (ibid.:231).

### *ÁHSEN (3): Ethnomusicology and Indigenous Research, the Twins Mobilize*

Little Bear wrote of the importance of understanding the differences between Aboriginal and Eurocentric worldviews as “a starting point for understanding the paradoxes that colonialism poses for social control” (2000:77). Although Indian mistrust of anthropologists and ethnomusicologists has been the well-known result of misrepresentation, misunderstandings, and exploitation (even if unintentional), the question of decolonizing the disciplines and their methodologies may not be rooted in misrepresentation. In 1969, Vine Deloria Jr. wrote, “Anthropology carries with it some incredibly heavy baggage. It is, and continues to be, a deeply colonial academic discipline, founded in the days when it was doctrine that the colored races of the world would be enslaved by Europeans, and the tribal peoples would vanish from the planet” (Bilosi 1997:211). After years of anthropological fieldwork on reservations, Indigenous scholars such as Deloria began to address the need for tribal guidelines in anthropology, compensation and appropriation, self-determination, sovereignty, and the importance of serving the community. Mistrust lingers as the difficult academic twin often still prevails.

One solution that some ethnomusicologists and Indigenous scholars have proposed is revisiting older texts to correct biases, add new theoretical concepts, or reassess music studied by earlier researchers. McAllester did it in his own work: he studied the Navajo over the course of several decades, regularly updating, expanding, and changing theoretical understandings of his research. Herndon and Heth were Native American pioneers, and there are now many scholars of Indigenous descent publishing in the field of ethnomusicology, including Hamill, Perea, Bissett Perea, Robinson, and Chretien; there are also many Indigenous scholars in related fields. Training Indigenous

researchers and scholars is now encouraged in ethnomusicology programs for students interested in studying the music of their Aboriginal communities. Meanwhile, work on “reciprocity and reflexivity, using devices such as collaboration and dialogic writing” (Becker 1991:394) can be seen in the collaborations by ethnomusicologists Frisbie and McAllester with Navajo practitioner Frank Mitchell (Mitchell 1978); research on the songs and dances of the Lakota by Ben Black Bear, Sr. and R.D. Theisz (1984); and interviews on the musical experience of five Shoshone women by Vander ([1988] 1996).

Ethnomusicologists have developed a range of other useful concepts such as a critique of power structures or problematization of objective versus subjective relationships (Sercombe, von Rosen, and Samuels in Browner 2009), or the varied approaches described in the recent collection of essays, *Opera Indigene: Re/presenting First Nations and Indigenous Cultures* (Karantonis and Robinson 2011). Aboriginal elders continue to correct mistakes of the past through their own cultural revitalization programs, consultations, research projects, interviews, curriculum development, classes, conferences, and writings. These elders serve as specialists, often in collaboration with scholars from inside and out of their communities. Just as sending a copy of one’s dissertation or book “back” is no longer adequate (Becker 1991:394), I would argue that the consults, edits, suggestions, and rewrites with our collaborators and consultants may also no longer be enough. An Indigenous perspective of knowledge dissemination involves checking with elders in addition to a circle of teachers/specialists. Taking it a step further, in most Indigenous societies one also checks with, and acknowledges, one’s ancestors. In my case, I summon ancestral guidance that is received through dreams, people, old recordings, teachings, or apparent “coincidences.” Wilson writes that as an

Aboriginal researcher, you are “answerable to *all your relations* when you are doing research” (2001:91; emphasis in original).

Deloria Jr. wrote of damage done by anthropological research to certain Indian communities in terms of respect, responsibility and cultural sovereignty. It is reason enough to argue that traditional cultural specialists (often elders) should review interpretations, analysis, and representations of material, even studies done with “insider” collaboration. Deloria observed:

Many Indians have come to parrot the ideas of anthropologists because it appears that the anthropologists know everything about Indian communities. Thus many ideas that pass for Indian thinking are in reality theories originally advanced by anthropologists and echoed by Indian people in an attempt to communicate the real situation. (1969:80-82)

Out of necessity, the twins correct and learn from what the other has done.

Many Aboriginals are concerned with researchers’ sometimes self-serving agendas for publication and institutional advancement, over a concern with serving the Indigenous community. As applied ethnomusicology expands, projects that closely involve Indigenous participants and that are fashioned in response to requests by Native communities are more congruent with Indigenous value systems and self-determination. Many projects have been designed to aid revitalization in Native communities, such as Victoria Lindsay Levine’s work with Choctaw music (1993) or recent repatriation projects led by Aaron Fox in Alaska and among the Hopi (Fox 2012). Some scholars have represented their material through the worldview and language of the culture for which it was written, such as Samuel’s attention to the Apache language, storytelling, song, and worldview as metaphor and powerful points of entry for analysis (2004), or Steven Feld’s use of traditional knowledge of birdsong as a metaphorical and sonic

entrance to an Indigenous Kaluli worldview and the connections between sound, memory, nature, and ceremony (1990). Given the current trends in applied ethnomusicology, the complementarity of the twins may prevail if balance and checks remain essential.

***KAIÉ:RI (4): Globalization, the Twins Have a Voice***

As I present my research on contemporary classical Native music, whose definitions are explored through fieldwork and analysis below, I look at aspects of shared Native American sensibilities in relation to cultural sounds, instruments, revitalization and preservation, colonization, and worldviews. As I mentioned in the Introduction, the primary sense of collective identity for most Indigenous groups is local, on the level of the community, tribe, or Native nation (Strong 2005:255), but I am looking here at what Neizen believes is an emerging global movement of Indigenous people, a relatively new designation in North America (2003). Deloria Jr. discusses the rewriting of tribal histories, leaving us to wonder how one might do justice to the variation among hundreds of tribal and community histories while at the same time reaching for general patterns concerning such things as colonialism and empire in North America (2004:11-12). Only recently have historians turned toward cultural analysis as a possible ground for considering Indian-non-Indian relations in broad terms. Further stating the case for a larger Indigenous framework, as mentioned previously in the Introduction, Linda Tuhiwai Smith explores the concept of sovereign nations as part of an international shared community (Smith 1999).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Once again, I refer to this global concept of a shared Native American sensibility by employing a variety of terms, including Native American, First Nations, Indigenous, Aboriginal, Indian, North American Indian and Native, all capitalized as adjectives that describe “belonging to a specific people.”

This introductory research explores how Indigenous methodologies that foreground cultural advocacy, revitalization, and education can be articulated using Indigenous language and cultural metaphor. I use biographical material, personal interviews, musical compositions, storytelling, accountability and relationality, language, personal experience and a variety of theoretical approaches. I consider ten North American Indian composers, five of whom I worked with closely as part of the NAICP, and with whom I continue to consult on questions of representation. It is my hope that this work will serve the Native classical community of musicians as well as the rich worlds of contemporary classical music and Indigenous ethnographic scholarship.

In the following program notes from 2007 for the Smithsonian’s week-long concert series featuring classical Native musicians, I wrote a description about the program and why I felt it was important:

The first Classical Native program was at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in November 2006 thanks largely to the vision of Howard Bass and the First Nations Composers Initiative. For the first time I was performing with talented Native American musicians who shared a socio-political and spiritual perspective. Our music, though each very unique, perhaps came from a similar place—one of being with nature, with conflict, with reclamation, with community, with intelligence and with spirit. The Classical Native program, as I understood it, was not just about exploring the rich contributions that Native people are making to the world of contemporary classical music, but also a meeting ground for Native musicians to explore our world as living artists; thus, collaborations, deep respect, and rich musical friendships began. (Avery 2007b)

During the classical Native programming, questions began to surface, such as “how do we define ourselves?” “What makes classical music *Native*?” and “what makes Native music *classical*?”

I sent out questionnaires to a small contingent of composers and performers who were involved in the first two series at the NMAI,<sup>3</sup> and who expressed interest in research in this field and in my collecting some of the comments that were made throughout the week. Many of us had the feeling that we were part of history in the making and hoped to see the information disseminated and pursued, thus situating composers and their music in a larger public arena. I issued questionnaires to the composers who were involved in the NAICP at that point, including R. C. Nakai, Raven Chacon, George Quincy, Tim Archambault, and Brent Michael Davids.

My research is inspired by Dr. Louis W. Ballard's (1931-2007) mission to disseminate Native American music of many genres and his desire to understand the impulses that inform it. He is widely thought of as the first composer of classical Native music and a pioneer in the field. Firmly established in the world of European classical music, he was also a strong advocate for Aboriginal perspectives. He supported the study and composition of Native American music through scholarly writing and research, wrote symphonic and operatic commissions along with other musical scores and publications, and worked in education curriculum development. Ballard wrote, "It is not enough to acknowledge that American Indian music is different from other music. What is needed in America is an awakening and reorienting of our total spiritual and cultural perspective to embrace, understand and learn from the Aboriginal American what motivated his musical and artistic impulses" (2004).<sup>4</sup>

The composers I contacted either directed me to their personal websites or emailed me biographical material to be incorporated into program notes. Some of them

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<sup>3</sup> Although I issued similar questionnaires to audience members, this study focusses on the Indigenous agenda of self-determination as Native composer participants begin to define "classical Native."

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.omhof.com/Inductees/tabid/56/ItemID/25/Default.aspx>

represent themselves with a strong Indigenous emphasis, by including kinship and community ties, clan, values, and graphics tied to their Indian communities, while others follow a more Western version by listing public accomplishments from a résumé.<sup>5</sup> Most combine the two paradigms but introduce their tribal lineage before anything else.

Indian composers are often introduced as anomalies (Deloria 2004), but as the biographies attest, Indians have been active for some time in contemporary classical music. Ballard (Cherokee and Quapaw), often called the “father of Native American classical music,” is known for melding Native American melodies, rhythms, and instruments with classic Western orchestral music. His symphonic, operatic and chamber works have been performed by leading ensembles throughout the world. He served as musical educational specialist for the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools nationwide, and his composition guidebook, *Native American Indian Songs* (2004), remains a standard text.

R. Carlos Nakai (Navajo Ute), a premier Native American flute performer, has recorded and travelled around the world performing classical works with major orchestras, including those of Philadelphia, Buffalo, and Tucson, as well as the California Symphony Orchestra. He provided me with this information from his website:

[Nakai] brings a unique artistry to performances in the symphonic and chamber music traditions. His melding of the Native American flute with European classical music requires an artistry that understands two disparate musical traditions while mastering the technical demands of both.<sup>6</sup>

Raven Chacon (Navajo Dine) is a well-known composer of chamber music and a performer of experimental music, having studied with James Tenney, Morton Subotnick,

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<sup>5</sup> The Aboriginal graphics found on Raven Chacon’s website serve as links to the rest of his page. Brent Michael Davids’ website’s front page shows an all-American diner whose windows serve as links.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.rcarlosnakai.com/>

and Wadada Leo Smith. He provides not only information about his work-life, but also presents his ironic humor and political leanings:

Raven Chacon is a sound artist with a wide understanding of classical music instruments, but less so of some of the people who play them. He has worked as an educator, performer, junk-builder for Discovery Channel, and as a non-spiritual advisor. He carries the burden of an MFA from the California Institute of the Arts in Music Composition, and takes advantage of it by playing in many bands for free (including: the Death Convention Singers, Tenderizer, Mesa Ritual and KILT). Raven currently co-operates the Rio Grande Satanical Gardens performance space in central NM as well as the *Sicksicksick* micro-record-label. He hides out anywhere between Albuquerque, NM and Los Angeles, CA with stations at Phoenix and the Navajo Reservation.<sup>7</sup>

George Quincy (Choctaw) was born and raised in Oklahoma. He earned two degrees at The Juilliard School, where he later taught and became musical advisor to Martha Graham. He is published by Foxborough Jr. Music in New York City, and his works are recorded on both the *Albany* and *Lyrichord* labels. He has written many operas and vocal works whose libretti often reflect his desire to correct historical inaccuracies:

Throughout his childhood, his Juilliard years and later, Mr. Quincy believed his lyrical gift was rooted in his Choctaw blood while his analytical talent came from his white Western education. His music presents an emotional and cultural fusion of classical and Choctaw in a personal artistic journey.<sup>8</sup>

Timothy Archambault (Kichesperini) studied music theory at Brown University and holds a Bachelor's degree in architecture from the Rhode Island School of Design. As a Native flute performer, he has recorded on the *Opus One* and *Lyrichord Classical* labels. According to the program for the NMAI classical Native program of 2007:

His repertoire consists of early 20th-century American Indian flute music and new compositions by American Indian composers. Tim was the first flute player in history to perform the old "warble" technique in new

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<sup>7</sup> <http://theendofbeing.com/raven-chacon/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.georgequincy.com/about.html>

classical compositions. As a Hereditary Senator of the Kichesipirini Algonquin First Nation, he is currently working on reestablishing its musical heritage through community-based instructional websites in conjunction with North American ethno-musicologists. (NMAI 2007c)

Brent Michael Davids (Mohican) has won numerous awards and commissions; his music has been performed by the Kronos Quartet, the Miro String Quartet, the Joffrey Ballet, and the New Mexico, Phoenix, and Mankato Symphony Orchestras. Most recently, the Dakota Music Tour featured a full concert of Davids' orchestral works with the Dakota drum group Maza Kute. His work ranges from pieces for symphonic orchestra fully notated in Western style to works for string quartets notated using Indian symbolism and a graphic notation of his own invention. He holds degrees in music composition from Northern Illinois University and Arizona State University. Davids focuses on the influence of his Native heritage in the biographical page of his website:

When American composers are described as “native” the definition is not usually as accurate as when applied to Brent Michael Davids, an American Indian and enrolled citizen of the Mohican Nation. He has consciously and deliberately focused on his Indigenous heritage, honoring its unique qualities in a contemporary setting. He blends Eurocentric techniques of classical music with Native musical traditions in a way that is never glib or facile, but rich in resonance. (Davids 2012b)<sup>9</sup>

As their biographies show, the composers speak of fusion or melding of musical worlds that are part of a complementarity, perhaps in response to the “jagged worlds colliding” of which Little Bear spoke. Chacon, in particular, uses humour to describe his life, as when he calls his MFA training a burden. Several composers have worked with educational initiatives, reflecting their sense of responsibility to the community.

Other classical Native composers who were not part of the Smithsonian concerts but whom I mention throughout this paper have studied at such places as the Cleveland

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.filmcomposer.us/Bio%20Folder/bio-short.html>

Institute of Music, Northwestern University, University of Tulsa, Manhattan School of Music, and the University of Toronto; they have worked with renowned composers and conductors such as Darius Milhaud, Donald Erb, Helmut Lachemann, John Cage, Charles Wuorinen, Henry Brant, Chinary Ung, Bela Rosza, Michael Tilson Thomas, Peter Maxwell-Davies, and Dennis Russell Davies; and their works have been performed worldwide by ensembles including the Baltimore and San Francisco Symphonies, with commissions from the Canada Council for the Arts, Glenn Gould Foundation, and the Ford Foundation (among others). As can be seen, Indigenous composers are an important part of an intellectual modernism and they continue to carry forward the work of many teachers.

As a Native composer myself, I refer to my own creative process as well as my performance experience with the composers of these works. My compositions frequently employ Indigenous instruments and themes, and experiment with audience, genre, and audio boundaries. As a cellist and vocalist, I have been privileged to premiere many works of Native composers, and to work with such great composers as Phillip Glass, John Cage, and Charles Wuorinen. On the one hand, I participate in the role of insider being of Kanienkéha heritage as well as a composer and performer of new music. On the other hand, I am expected to be an outsider in my role as a scholar who collects, analyzes, and researches information, which I am then expected to present it in an objective manner. However, I believe that it is impossible to be an outsider. Of course, I am outside or separate from the personalities and worldviews of each of the composers I write about, and there are times where I feel like I am far apart from an understanding of myself and my own music, but ultimately I aim to get as deeply inside the music and cultural

understandings of that music as I can. Once I connect with another individual and with musical sounds, I am inside. WISK (5): Defining Expectations in Classical Native, the Twins Negotiate

An interest in establishing but also questioning the cross-cultural validity of definitions has been familiar territory for ethnomusicologists. When I began my research, I decided to focus on how we define ourselves as Classical Native musicians, concentrating on what, for us, made the music we were composing and performing *classical*, and what made it *Native*:<sup>10</sup>

During interviews, impromptu discussions, and panel discussions, and in the analysis of the answers to a questionnaire that I circulated, I found that the responses addressed issues of stereotypes, notation, technique, training, and elitism, as well as European and Native American expectations. Are the borders fluid? Can both twins travel freely across these borders without colliding?

In response to the first question, “What makes classical Native, *classical*?” R. C. Nakai, Navajo Ute flutist wrote:

The ambiguous, non-specific and Eurocentric term “classical” refers to music that conforms to certain established standards of form, complexity and musical literacy as exemplified in the Western European discipline of theory and practice. Classical Native could be defined as Amerindian Indigenous music that is inclusive of and incorporates certain standards of expression from the Western European discipline of theory, practice and technique peculiar to solo or group harmonization in technical works performed in mixed ensembles of instruments of Native ensembles and European orchestra. (Avery Questionnaire 2007)

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<sup>10</sup> I hope to issue additional questionnaires to other North American Indian composers, such as Jerod Tate, Barbara Croall, Juantio Becenti, who were not part of the original *NAICP*, and also to review audience reactions by similar questionnaires.

Raven Chacon, Navajo Dine sound artist, doesn't like the term classical Native because it "sounds a bit too much like 'noble savage'" (ibid.). For George Quincy, "classical" was "the old Choctaw music I heard when I was growing up" (ibid.).

I went to Juilliard to study piano . . . when I decided to become a composer, all that old music came back to me and I knew what my roots were and I knew what I wanted my music to sound like. I never studied composition for that reason; I wanted to have my own sound indicative of Choctaw, not European classical. (Quincy 2012)

Tim Archambault provided a lengthy definition of classical music that I excerpt as follows:

A broad term that usually refers to music produced in, or rooted in the traditions of Western art, ecclesiastical and concert music, encompassing a broad period from roughly the 9<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. European classical music is largely distinguished from many other non-European and popular music forms by its system of staff notation. . . . Classical Native embodies the musical complexities of North American Indian music traditions within a written form of notation. (Avery Questionnaire 2007)

Brent Michael Davids prefers the term "concert music,"

because "classical" gets confused between music designed for concerts and the period of the classical era. Concert music is anything intended for concert presentation, no real stylistic or genre stipulations for me. I suppose one largely defining feature might be some type of musical notation, but that isn't always the case. (Avery Questionnaire 2007)

Nakai's "non-specific Eurocentric term" for classical music is reflected in his hybrid compositional style that incorporates traditional Native chant and flute melodies, jazz harmonies, and improvisational directions with standard notation and classical forms.

Chacon's questioning of the term "classical Native" can be seen as he challenges conventions of notation and instrumentation in his work. Quincy's definition takes a twist as he speaks of the traditional sounds of his youth and his fear of losing the Choctaw sounds of his heritage if he engrosses himself too much in the European forms.

Archambault's description of classical in Native American music as embodying "the musical complexities of North American Indian music traditions within a written form of notation" is exemplified in the imagery and sounds reflected in some of his fully notated scores. Brent Michael Davids defines the classical of "classical Native" music as that "intended for concert presentation" and often represented in musical notation.

Many of the composers challenge elitism and stereotypes as they negotiate their place in the world of contemporary music. Nakai is interested in "bridging traditions," and sees himself as a cultural ambassador when he introduces classical Native compositions to his fan base as primarily Native flute aficionados and new age music followers. He bridges traditions, in part, by combining new age styles, jazz harmonies, and classical orchestration with traditional Native American flute and chant melodies, while using contemporary chamber music instrumentation and notation. His concerts are often formal affairs, from box office to printed programs, attire, demeanor and concert hall setting. His programming, however, is far from conventional, with improvisation that breaks the usual bounds for both Native flute and classical chamber music. Nakai's perspective on the classical Native genre is somewhat reactionary, even as he challenges audiences by presenting music that is accessible, and in its hybridity privileges a commercial style of writing over a modernist approach to contemporary classical music.

Raven Chacon is at the top end of the scale in terms of challenging elitism and stereotypes with his unusual sounds and invented instruments. His piece "Yellowface," performed in the First Nations Composers Initiative concert at the Montgomery College World Arts Festival in 2007, was written for yellow balloon, voice, microphone, and live electronics. Wearing a dress shirt and black jeans, Chacon presented a formal demeanor

typical of a “downtown” chamber music event, but as he set up on the floor and began singing into a yellow balloon while manipulating live electronics to capture the nuances of breath and sound on microphones placed inside the balloon, it became clear that this was not your usual chamber music selection. Reminiscent of John Cage’s experimental electronic works and Laurie Anderson’s performance-art events, this work was not notated, but had a very intentional musical structure with specifically developed source material. Raven’s vision of expanding and testing boundaries is apparent not only in his compositions, but also in his choice of venues and programming. As a speaker, he is articulate and equally unconventional.

In many ways, George Quincy is at the opposite end of the continuum from Raven Chacon in terms of normative expectations for classical music composition and presentation (with Nakai, Davids, and myself, perhaps somewhere in the middle). His works are staged and performed in conventional chamber music venues by some of New York City’s finest chamber ensembles, and recorded by independent chamber music labels. His music is fully notated and his orchestration employs dense instrumentation, extreme registral changes, and rich harmonies. As is typical in modern music performances, he is often asked to introduce his piece or to take a solo bow from the audience. As a pianist, he sometimes performs his own work as part of an ensemble under the direction of a conductor. His concert attire is formal black, but a red tie or a red feather in his lapel adds an unexpected Native touch. The topics and libretti of his chamber operas include Native themes, such as his retelling of the Pocahontas story in his opera *Pocahontas at the Court of King James I*.

Archambault's career as an architect has led him to challenge spatial relationships on stage and to look at the aural implications of those relationships. In his 2007 work "Anoki" for solo violoncello and Algonquin disc rattle, he requests that the rattle player be quite a distance from the cellist, arranged according to the acoustics in the hall. In one concert, the disc rattle player was situated stage right and approximately ten feet behind the cellist, and in another the disc rattle player was situated on the balcony and walked slowly downstairs to the back of the hall where she completed the piece.<sup>11</sup> In addition to questioning boundaries of space and sound, Archambault employs Native instruments such as the Algonquin disc rattle and Native flute within fully notated compositions.

Davids is a prolific composer of symphonic and chamber works. His scores often incorporate classical chamber music conventions, from orchestration to notation, but add unusual instrumentation or theatrical elements, such as the quartz crystal flute, pow-wow emcee, and Native dancers of his *Pow-wow Symphony* (2011). Attired in formal black, he often adds his signature top hat with hand-crafted Indian beadwork on the rim. His work is performed on Indian reservations and concert halls, always with a serious concert ambiance. Davids defies expectation through instrumentation and themes, yet meets it with skillful technique, concert settings, and promotion.

In my own work, I try to break concert/audience expectation by including audience members or planting performers within or around the audience, and by including Native instruments and language, and imitated sounds. For example, my piece entitled "Fringe" (2007) includes the narration of a poem written by Mohawk/Tuscarora poet Janet-Marie Rogers, and I teach a stomp dance melody to members of the audience

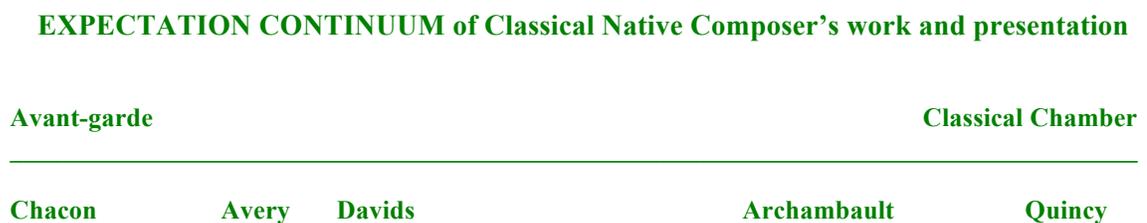
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<sup>11</sup> The first performances were at Montgomery College and NMAI in 2007 with Steven Alvarez playing the Algonquin disc rattle and myself on violoncello. The second performance referred to above was at the North Dakota Museum of Art in 2012, with Thirza Defoe on disc rattle and me on cello.

to sing with rattles as they dance in a circle around the chamber musicians who are playing a fully notated score. In this work, I am asking everyone involved to question the concept of marginality and boundaries by locating the fringe sonically with the audience. Most of my concerts are in formal concert settings, and I often wear black concert dress, accessorized with Indian jewelry or a ribbon shirt, but I break with concert expectation in the way in which I engage the audience through spoken explanations of the music and culture, and by having them participate.

In Figure 3.2, I place the composers in a continuum based on conventional expectations of classical compositional techniques, instrumentation, source material and topics, concert demeanor, and concert venue. I label one end “avant-garde” as having the smallest degree of compliance with conventional expectations; the other end I label as “classical chamber” as it meets more conventional classical music concert hall expectations.

**Figure 3.2**



Current definitions of contemporary concert music by non-Native critics, philosophers, and composers use the terms “modernist music” and “new music” to describe newly composed works.<sup>12</sup> They have not come up with a widely accepted

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<sup>12</sup> From an historical perspective, the term “new music” is presumed to have come from the German “Internationale Gesellschaft für neue Musik” (The International Society of New Music), while the term

definition of modernist music, in part due to the variety of categories encompassed (atonal, serial, minimal, spatial, avant-garde, experimental), the difficulty of defining modernism itself, and the hybridity often apparent within it.<sup>13</sup> I explore several definitions and their pertinence for classical Native composers.

### ***Modernist music as it reflects cultural, political, and social issues***

Alex Ross, music critic for *The New Yorker*, says that “new music” is “twentieth-century classical composition... a largely untamed art, an unassimilated underground” whose composers have “infiltrated every aspect of modern existence” from politics, economics, revolutions, emigration and “deeper social transformations that reshaped the landscape in which composers worked” (2007:xii-xiii). Similar to ethnomusicologists Merriam (1977), Herndon and McLeod’s concept of “music as culture” ([1979] 1981), Griffiths discusses the idea that modern music is a reflection of society. He cites the German philosophers Adorno and Hoffmann on “composers, as members of society, who could not avoid dealing in their music with society’s tensions, and inevitably, in increasingly complex and divided societies, increasingly complex music would arise” (2006:97).

While both Indigenous and non-Indigenous thinkers see social issues reflected in the music of our times, the actual “issues” of Indigenous composers reflect their very different history. Native composers identify the legacies of colonialism as they explore

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“contemporary music” comes from the English title for its counterpart organization, the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) (Adorno 1963:249). Current definitions of contemporary art music by Adorno, Duckworth, Ross and Griffiths refer to music from the turn of the twentieth century through the present and include the expression of modern existence through sounds that can be differentiated from the musical eras preceding it.

<sup>13</sup> Examples of hybridity can be heard in Gershwin’s “Rhapsody in Blue” with its jazz influences in a classical piano concerto or folksongs used in various works by Bartók.

current issues of identity (Avery, “In Two Worlds”), politics (Davids, *Last of the Mohicans*; Ballard, *Incident at Wounded Knee*), land and cultural reclamation (Archambault, “Anoki”; Ballard, “Katsina Dances”), the environment (Croall, *Caribou Song*), retelling and correcting historical information (Avery, *Manahatin*; Ballard, *Portrait of Will Rogers*; Quincy, *Pocahontas at the Court of King James I*), language revitalization (Croall, *Noodin*). They incorporate sounds of the past with those of the present (Chacon, “Yellowface”; Nakai, “Colorado Summer”), balance between two worlds (Davids, *Pow-wow Symphony*), and address cosmology (Avery, “Ohen:ton Kariwatekwen”; Croall, *The Four Directions*). Many of these overlap in several categories, and many also address Native concepts of materialism, humor, and hope for future generations.

#### *New soundscapes and a break from traditional technical expectations*

Boulez defines contemporary music in more technical terms than those above: “Contemporary music implies an approach involving new instrumental techniques, new notations, an aptitude for adapting to new performance situations” with no “standard forms” like those of Beethoven or earlier composers (Boulez and Foucault 1985:7,10). John Cage shocked the music world with his philosophies and work as an experimental composer, and his description of music as random noise (1939). As mentioned earlier, unconventional instrumentation, sounds, and forms are of particular interest to Indigenous composers. The composer, performer, author, and teacher William Duckworth says of new music that its “composers focus on elements beyond melody and harmony” and “incorporate a multitude of new sounds into their music” (1999:xvi). Their

work reflects life, he says, and new music is an “aural portrait of the twentieth century” for future generations (ibid.:xxii).

New sounds using newly invented instruments (such as those of Chacon and Davids), the use of Native instruments, and new performance techniques all abound in classical Native music. Examples are Croall’s composition with wind sounds using branches fanned in the air, or blown through mouthpieces removed from the instrument; Chacon’s use of plucked quarter-tone double-stops on the cello that sound like electronically manipulated pow-wow drums; or my use of *col legno* on the cello to depict percussive drum rhythms, and key clicks on woodwinds to depict rattle sounds. A variety of instruments and twentieth-century performance techniques are applied in Native composition to accommodate the diversity of timbres that are part of the Indigenous composer’s soundscape.

### *Hybridity*

Martin Stokes, in his “Music and the Global Order,” writes about hybridities of interaction and exchange:

All music is, of its very nature, hybrid. In this view, all music bears the mark of interactions and exchanges between as well as within groups, and to declare otherwise is absurd. Purity of musical expression is not possible. Even in societies in which extraordinarily strenuous efforts are made to disavow their social, cultural, and historical entanglement with others, an exception often is made for music. (2004:60)

Stokes’ comment resonates with Little Bear’s observation that “No one has a pure worldview that is 100 percent Indigenous or Eurocentric; rather, everyone has an integrated mind, a fluxing and ambidextrous consciousness, a precolonized consciousness that flows into a colonized consciousness and back again” (2000:85).

“Classical Native” music may be considered a hybrid form like all classical music that has been influenced by other musical forms.<sup>14</sup> However, many of the composers discussed here have worked hard to position themselves as vibrant composers of contemporary classical music, and they may not appreciate the term “hybridity” being applied to their work, in that it may seem to lessen their status as serious composers. That being said, classical Native music by its very nature has many influences. Three of the five composers talk about fusion of musical traditions in their biographies, and it can certainly be heard in the work of all the composers, including the narrative works of Avery, Croall and Davids, the film scores of Chacon and Davids, the chamber music of Davids, Nakai, Tate, and Quincy, the storytelling of Ballard, Croall, and Quincy, and the use of melodic source material in orchestral works by Avery, Ballard, Davids, and Tate. Given this research and my experience, I define music as sound, with intention, that reflects the physical, psychological, spiritual, cultural, and intellectual world of its creator/composer and those who participate in and with those sounds. Clearly my definition has been influenced by my multicultural background as a Native, classical musician and ethnomusicologist. Titon offers another definition of music that also mixes his experience as a musician and ethnomusicologist, while specifically addressing its cultural construction and consciousness:

In my view, music is a socially constructed, cultural phenomenon. The various cultural constructions enable people to experience it as patterned sounds, aesthetic objects, ritual substance, even as a thing-in-itself. But to say that music is a culturally constructed phenomenon does not mean that it has no existence in the world, for like everyone I know, I experience my world through my consciousness, and I experience music as a part of my lifeworld. (Titon 2008:30-31)

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<sup>14</sup> This is demonstrated by the nationalist borrowings of Beethoven, Dvořák, and Tchaikovsky, the folk song settings of Smetana, and Brahms, or the “oriental” and jazz influences heard in Debussy.

If music as Titon attests is culturally constructed, then once one understands Indigenous cultures, one may further understand cultural significance in classical Native music.

The definition of “classical” in most of the questionnaire responses emphasizes European classical training, the use of notation and instrumentation, and elements of style that differentiate the music from traditional, popular, or folk music (categories as problematic as “classical”). All the composers discussed here have written for typical orchestral instruments in standard notation and have incorporated Indigenous instruments and sounds into their works. They have also written music that reflects modern life, experimenting with form, notation, sound, harmony, melody, pitch, and other technical aspects taken from historical European classical music. Many of the composers gave questionnaire responses that might situate them in the public and conservatory sphere of acceptable musical practice, concentrating on training, written traditions, and instrumentation. Definitions by the non-Native philosophers, critics, composers, and conductors lean more toward the idea of breaking from European “classical” forms, instrumentation, sounds, and styles, and they tend to stress expressive content. Although many North American Indian composers have used experimental elements in their music, it is important to note that some—perhaps in order to establish themselves as viable musicians in the world of classical music—have emphasized older, Eurocentric definitions of classical music.

Philip J. Deloria looks historically at activities that were perceived as “anomalies” for Native Americans and sees them as unexpected means of opening up new ways of thinking. He writes, “Indian performers used expectations to gain entrée into positions in which they were able to participate in shaping the particular form of the modern”

(2004:14). To illustrate, he cites the 1910 concert tour by the Indian String Quartet during which they performed a program called “Sweetest Music of the Masters and Wild Melodies of the Primitive Indian” while wearing either tuxedos or full Indian regalia (ibid.:207-9). Similarly, the contemporary artist Arvel Bird performs Indian melodies mixed with Scottish songs on the violin and wears a costume that is both Native and Celtic in design.

After a *North American Indian Cello Project* recital in Maryland, I was asked by an audience member “where are your feathers and why aren’t you playing real Indian music?” Surely, I did not meet his expectations of what Indian music should sound like, nor did I dress appropriately. Although most of the contemporary composers I write about resist a romanticized Indian presentation of their music, most use some sort of Indian marker to present themselves on stage, such as noting kinship ties or tribal affiliation in program billing, introducing themselves in their language, or wearing Indian jewellery or hair styles. Some composers, however, resist such modes of self-representation. Raven Chacon may use Navajo symbols in his notation, but he will not explain them to you; he may refer to Navajo chant in a piece of music, but will never sing it outright. Becenti referred to the textures and dynamics of Beethoven and the dissonance of Stravinsky when describing his “Cello Suite,” before acknowledging the Navajo cadences or rhythms clearly present in the music (personal communication, 3 November 2008). The twins negotiate borders of authenticity and representation in a modern world.

The second question I posed to the composers was: “How do you define Native in the context of classical Native? What makes classical Native music, ‘Native’?”<sup>15</sup>

Nakai comments on Native culture and its integration with European musical form:

Native refers to Indigenous expressions in the context of ceremonial, social, spiritual or personal music and derivations there of that are peculiar to an individual’s or group’s cultural expressions significant to their traditions through time immemorial... Classical Native is an expression of an Indigenous Amerindian composer, arranger or instrumentalist who applies the usual practice of the Western European discipline to derivations of songs, melodies, portions of sacred music traditions or innovations utilizing Native and European instruments. This activity builds upon the premise of culture and tradition which conveys an inclusive ingenuity of a Native composer into works representative of artistic and thought-provoking endeavors that may be representative of one or more Indigenous Amerindian communities. (Avery Questionnaire 2007)

Raven Chacon replied to the questionnaire, “The only native element of the concert is the blood of half of the performers/most of the composers. This is enough for me.” He says, “other than the instruments and notation used, my music does not have much to do with classical music. This is the music that follows more the tradition of American Indian music” (ibid.). He does not see American Indian music as relating to classical music and resists creating sounds that are recognizable as either Native *or* classical. He never directly quotes melodic material from his Navajo tradition but encourages improvisation within determined forms. The trickster-like play that Chacon seems to love in his performances and compositions is reflected in occasionally contradictory comments. During a festival panel about classical music at Montgomery College in Maryland (part of the 2007-8 World Arts Festival program that featured

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<sup>15</sup> I will not attempt to address the highly charged political question of what it means to be Indian or “Indian enough”; nor am I able to address each tribe’s definitions and requirements. Interesting research on concepts of “sound quantum” is being done by Jessica Bisset-Perea.

contemporary Native American Music), he said that not only does he not write classical music, he doesn't even like it; but he has great respect for the instruments. Despite the provocative comments, I find Chacon's music to be well within the definition of contemporary classical music in terms of notation, innovation, instrumentation, and theoretical discipline in pieces such as "Táágo Dez'á" (2007) or on his compact disc *Overheard Songs* (2006) (ibid.).

Quincy described "Native" as involving "the feeling of the music that harks back and forward to our roots" (ibid.), while Archambault said:

Native is another broad term that originated late at the end of the twentieth century to define the Indigenous/aboriginal peoples of the Americas. One of the contested issues with the term Native is that it does not distinguish between anyone born in the Americas before or after the European conquest. This results in anyone being Native and the loss of the tribal names and identity specific to American Indians prior to European contact... The term Native in the context of Classical Native music would refer to all of the particular music produced by Indigenous tribes of the Americas before and after European contact that is written within a notational system prior to being performed. (Avery Questionnaire 2007)

For Brent Michael Davids, "Native" means "any Native writing concert music, creative Native concert music. It might have what are traditionally seen as Native influences, or it may not" (ibid). Like Chacon, he considers personal heritage, not compositional style, to be the defining factor.

Most of the composers resist sounding "Native" by avoiding direct melodic references, pentatonic scales, and the stereotypical sound of the "tom-tom" (Deloria 2004:14), but several have experimented with notation incorporating symbolism from their ancestral history, such as the Algonquian birch-bark song scrolls studied by Archambault, or the graphic notation designed by Davids for the Kronos Quartet in "The Singing Woods" or his feather-shaped score for "Mohican Friends." Chacon uses Navajo

symbols in several of his works, including “Táágo Dez’a” for solo cello and voice, and several works on his chamber music CD, *Beesh Naalnishi*, the cover of which features real dirt from the Arizona earth (originally placed inside the spine of the jewel case). The twins negotiate places of resistance.

There are many iconic sounds, often “translated” for new instrumentation that might be identified as the Native elements in classical Native music. Sounds of the drum are depicted by the *col legno battuto* rhythms in my own “Decolonization,” the dense double stops by Becenti in his “Suite for Solo Cello,” and the quarter-tone stops in Chacon’s “Táágo Dez’a.” The water drum is heard in Quincy’s “Choctaw Nights,” and the Native flute in Nakai’s “Whippoorwill.” Musical themes from pow-wow music are heard in Warren’s “Songs and Dances of the Three Sisters” and Davids’ *Pow-wow Symphony*.

What seems to be important to most of the Native composers who answered the question about the term *Native* in classical Native music is the expression of worldview and culture in terms of values. Croall, for instance, writes about global climate change in her piece *Messages (Mijidwewinan)*, and teaches children Odawa values through storytelling in her piece *Stories from Coyote*. Specific traditions are expressed in Davids’ “Ancestor Giveaway” for chorus and in my chamber piece “Ohen:ton Kariwatekwen” (which includes a recitation of the Rotinonhsión:ni Thanksgiving address). Many works incorporate several of these elements within one composition, such as Chickasaw composer Jerod Tate’s flute concerto *Tracing Mississippi*, recorded by the San Francisco Symphony. He says it is “a remembrance of the old country my family lived in and incorporates traditional songs and dance rhythms, along with American Indian percussion

instruments” (2012). Many of the composers have created new soundscapes combining traditional Native American musical elements within fully scored symphonic and chamber compositions. Works may incorporate primarily contemporary classical elements—whether they be instrumentation, as in the symphonic compositions of Ballard, Croall, Davids and Tate, or the chamber music of all of the composers—and concert performances are part of classical music programs held at symphony halls, university recital halls, and performing arts centres. European musical notation or musicianship is employed as composers incorporate musical forms, dynamics, tempi, metric modulation, orchestration, and other compositional devices. I believe that Chacon’s statement about Native blood being “enough” depicts his worldview and cultural values. He stresses the importance of creative freedom and individual expression not bound to a specific premise of Native expectation, while recognizing his connection to his Navajo family, ancestry, and culture. It makes clear the need to be free of Eurocentric and Indigenous stereotypes, allowing for artistic freedom and innovation apart from expectation. Clearly questions of terminology, representation, and politics are still being explored as we attempt to define classical Native. The twins continue to define and redefine their position.

Native musicians in all genres, from rock and roll, jazz, reggae, hip-hop, and pop to classical, are part of the process of decolonization, dispelling stereotypes and representing Indians as living, innovative artists, and often they have cultural, political, economic, and social agendas. In their ground-breaking book *Opera Indigene: Re/representing First Nations and Indigenous Cultures*, editors Pamela Karantonis and Dylan Robinson write about Indigenous artists’ use of new music as an interface to

extend cultural practices that are relevant to the lives of Indigenous artists and the audiences themselves (2011:12). As can be learned from this book and the compositions highlighted throughout this dissertation, the concert works in this genre express more than the music itself. Sonically and intellectually disciplined and aesthetically interesting, this musical style may be differentiated from other contemporary classical categories in much more than the blood quotient of the composers. Inherent in the soundscape of North American Indian music are specific sounds or sentiments that are symbols of pride, customs, values, and lineage. These sounds are diverse and have included bird songs, Plains falsetto style singing, Rotinonhsión:ni bone rattles, hand and water-drums, country slide and blues guitar, electronic distorted pow-wow drums, and traditional Indian source material—to name a few.

I also see vital issues of relationship to community as inherent in Indian music—what we say musically and how it is interpreted, along with our individual voice that is part of the greater whole in our communities and in “global Native America.” The concept of relationship often goes beyond self-determination and Indigenous representation to embrace social responsibility for the greater good of all. This can be seen by the fact that most of the composers are involved in community service, composer residency programs, and education, as well as archival and recording projects. This is discussed further in Chapter Four.

The diversity of definitions and points of view of the composers with whom I have worked reflect not only our individual personalities and artistry, but the values and traditions of many North American Indian nations. As a group we are able to publicly dispel stereotypes through the composition and performance of contemporary classical

Native music, and show ourselves as a creative and modern people dedicated to our communities. We are accustomed to crossing borders.

***IÁ:IA’K (6): Classical Native, the Twins Create***

In this section, I explore two works with respect to the composers’ vision as reflected in the way the composers represent and define themselves in the classical Native sphere. One is a work by Raven Chacon that I premiered; the second is one of my own compositions. I will also look at some approaches that address cultural themes and reflect old or new soundscapes.

Several classical Native concepts are illustrated by Chacon’s composition “Táágo Dez’á,” which means three sides or points.<sup>16</sup> He describes it: “Written in 2007 for singing cellist, each song is different in the way that the performer is directed to learn them. Respectively, she will learn by using guided improvisation; by ear; or by reading standard notation. It is also important that she interpret the songs to accommodate her style of playing” (Chacon, interview, 2 May 2013). This work explores three methods of notation: standard images for improvisation, and oral (where the cellist listens to a pre-recorded CD). These methods are both musical experiment and political statement on the role of linguistic, pictorial and aural modes of transmission. In my analysis of the piece, I consulted with elders and musicians, drew from my own experience as the performer of “Táágo Dez’á,” and referred to Indigenous language and metaphoric concepts. I focus on three Indigenous concepts to illustrate the importance of relationship, sovereignty and experience to the process of what we might call Indigenous creativity. By relationship, I

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<sup>16</sup> I commissioned the work as part of the North American Indian Cello Project, with a grant from the First Nations Composers Initiative project supported through the Ford Foundation's Indigenous Knowledge, Expressive Culture grant program of the American Composers Forum.

refer not only to collaboration and reciprocity, but the concept of being in relation to a variety of aspects of creating music including the actual sounds, instruments, composer, performer, culture, inspirational connections, history, values and audience. By sovereignty, I mean the boundaries and concepts brought forth through Indigenous values that permeate the musical work. By experience, I refer to concepts of time, technique, process and product that illustrate an Indigenous worldview, different from some Western notions of time, particularly in music, but also as an example of experiential Indigenous performance events.

Song One, subtitled “*like a chased animal*,” is notated in both Navajo Dine graphics and Western notation as seen in Figure 3.3. The specific meanings of the graphics were not revealed to me, the performer, but I was asked in the notes in the score to “interpret the graphics in any way,” but in “the same way during rehearsals and performances . . . particular graphics should be performed similarly throughout the song, not by improvisational methods, but rather the content should be decided upon after becoming familiar with the adjacent measures.” These directions require that I create a relationship to the piece as both a composer/improviser and a performer/ cellist, and that only through being in relationship with its specific Navajo Dine symbols and musical notation am I able to contribute and thus complete or share the work. The process requires that I get to know parts of Chacon’s world, while bringing in my invited interpretation of that understanding. In this section of the piece, there is a balance between Chacon’s world as an Indigenous composer and my role as an interpretive cellist/ performer. There are also limits to how far either of us may go. We are “twins” in the dual roles each of us plays in the creation of a performance of this work. In a sense,

there are three or more points of reference in the process of experiencing this piece: Chacon's notation and directions in which he claims his Native sovereignty and compositional prerogative, my interpretation and performance with which I endeavour to respect his sovereignty, and the audience's experience of the work. The score notes for this section state, "The feeling of time is very loose and free. When something is not possible, pitch can be sacrificed to make it possible" (Chacon 2007). Again in relationship with the performer, Indigenous values are determined by the composer, who makes time flexible and pitch a secondary consideration, in contrast to the dominant priority in classical contemporary performance that stresses accurate pitch and very specific rhythms. Chacon encourages a collaborative process, beyond the performer interpreting the work, by encouraging the performer to contribute specific musical ideas to the musical event; he claims sovereignty by setting parameters of performative creativity that are very different from those of the European tradition. The relational understandings vary from performance to performance as my personal relationship with the piece and myself change over time.

Figure 3.3: Musical excerpt from *Song 1* of *Táágo Dez'á* by Raven Chacon

**Táágo Dez'á (2007) by Raven Chacon (Navajo Dine)**

The musical score consists of five systems, each with a voice line and a violoncello line.   
 System 1: Voice line starts with the instruction '1. like a chased animal' and a tempo marking of 90. The violoncello line has a 'single ricochet' instruction.   
 System 2: Voice line has the lyrics 'yah - ah'. The violoncello line has a '(vib.) glide fingernail against string' instruction.   
 System 3: Voice line has the lyrics 'ah - ah'. The violoncello line has a 'port.' instruction.   
 System 4: Voice line has the lyrics 'ah - ah' and 'yah - ah'. The violoncello line has a 'port.' instruction.   
 System 5: Voice line has the lyrics 'ah - ah'. The violoncello line has a 'port.' instruction.   
 Handwritten annotations include 'ol legno' in the first system, 'sul pont' in the second, and '15ma' in the third. A swastika-like symbol is present in the first and second systems. A '15ma' marking is also present in the third system.

Performing Chacon's work brought to mind the work of Wilson who, in his *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, notes that it can be more effective to tell a story than to explain the context, background or meaning of a story to people from another culture, but that too much explanation can be seen as disrespectful to people of the same culture (2008:7). Tew<sup>^</sup>te:se' Ray John, the Oneida elder, educator, musician and linguist, gives the example of his grandson learning about a hot stove. "You can explain it until he's blue in the face, but once he gets near that stove, he feels the heat and

will learn. Of course, you stay with him and don't let him get hurt, but only through the experience will he really learn" (John, interview, 2008).

The second song in Chacon's piece, "shy, for a singer," subtitled "I am looking for my grandfather . . ." was to be learned by ear and made into my own version, thus incorporating the Indigenous value of oral transmission as a viable alternative to notation. The pre-recorded CD enclosed in the back of the score is never actually played in performance. When asked about his creative process in making the CD for this work, he explained that he recorded himself on guitar and voice, as he sang from part of a recording of a woman singing a traditional song called "Looking for my Horse." Afterwards, he digitally deconstructed his version of the recording by applying pitch-shifting and time-stretching and reduced it from 16-bit to 4-bit. This deconstructed recording of an old Navajo song was then put on a CD to be further filtered and interpreted by the performer. Again Chacon notes in the score for this movement that "pitch is less important than other parameters of the music," which I took to mean an emphasis on sound textures, the sounds of the Navajo language for which he supplies a specific (untranslated) sentence, accents, dynamics, tempo, and form. In the process of learning this section and especially in its performance, the music serves as an amplifier of intention and an underlying ambiance for the exploration of feeling and expression. Once again, as a performer, I was asked to be in relationship with the sounds in a different way—not only through interpretation, but in direct relationship and experience. As the performer, I experienced being shy and looking for *my* grandfather rather than trying to transmit the composer's view. During a rehearsal with Chacon coaching, I remember crossing a "threshold" from trying to get all his ideas and notes "right" to an experience

of looking for my grandfather and ancestors, asking them to come into the room, and feeling my physical voice become tentative with feelings of searching for those who came before me and may remain lost. “Looking for my grandfather” and “shyly singing” are open to a variety of interpretations based on history, culture, and lifestyle, all apart from artistic training. The intention is more important than musical technique. The process and experience is more important than a technically perfect end product.

The emphasis on process resonated with something I was told in an interview with Sadie Buck, Seneca elder, musician and cultural specialist from Six Nations Territory. She said:

For Rotinonhsión:ni people, and a lot of traditional people that I have heard, it's not the end product, it *is* the process. ... The end product never has to be perfect. I mean if you can get it perfect, all the better, but if it's not perfect, that's ok, because they did the process; because for Indigenous people, the purpose is to get it done, it's practical, it's functional. So it doesn't have to be the prettiest thing in the world, as long as it works, because everything has a job. So if you're creating a song for the seeds, if it works, if the seeds grow, then that's the job, it's done, it's finished, you don't have to have to be the prettiest song in the world, whatever your definitions of pretty are, by your culture or by people. (Interview, 16 July 2011)

She went on to say, “you can kill intention, through training, to have a perfect note. Don't train out of you what presence you bring to it” (ibid.). In Buck's collaborative opera, *BONES*, the emphasis was on the process not the product—the intention, not the sounds.

The third section or song of “Táágo Dez'á” is fully notated, and Chacon combines sounds and concepts that may be considered ancient, such as percussive drum-like sounds and Navajo syllables, with sounds that are extremely “modern,” like densely plucked chords on the cello. In exploring the concepts of tradition and innovation—often seen in

Native American arts as oppositional—I apply the Kanienkéha concept of *now* or *non:wa* that refers to three modes of perception—the now of the past, the present, and the future—toward understanding the intersection of innovation and tradition in classical Native music. When I asked Sadie Buck about her concepts of modernity, she said:

I guess for me “modern” is relative. Today I’m modern, tomorrow I’ll be modern til tomorrow, yesterday I was modern for yesterday, because I still sing the same songs they sang two thousand years ago. So, how come I’m not modern? I am modern. I’m here, I’m there. This is the way it is. So what do we think is changing? Sure we don’t wear buckskin anymore, but does that make a difference? Culture is in your mind. It’s what you make it as a people. So we’re not stuck in having to stay in a leather outfit. Even now when we go to longhouse, our outfits are the same form as our original outfits, but they’re made of cloth. (Ibid.)

In the last section of Chacon’s piece, I pluck fully notated unison, quadruple stops that incorporate quarter-tones, while singing various Navajo sounds and syllables. The quality of the percussive plucking is reminiscent of distorted, electronic pow-wow drumming found throughout Chacon’s electronic music inventions. Although he weaves traditional values and sounds with twentieth-century musical techniques in all three movements, I focus on the idea of interwoven material here. I pronounce syllables from the Navajo Dine language, singing them using tritones and *portamento*. I play steady percussive beats on the cello incorporating quarter-tones and slides. Fully notated in Western European notation, this movement sounds contemporary while invoking an ancient Native sensibility without making any specific Indigenous utterance. It fuses pieces of old and new to create something to be played for the future. To Sadie Buck, the fusion of small pieces taken from various Aboriginal sounds is one way of getting “a traditional essence in a contemporary song” (ibid.).

In my own piece “Decolonization,” written in 2006 for solo cello and voice, I experimented with melodic fragments from “American” music, including a Yuman healing song, a Rotinonhsión:ni women’s stomp dance, a Cherokee peace chant, and newer Western songs such as early American blues, the United States national anthem, and Christian plainchant. I wrote it after hearing a talk by Mohawk elder Tom Porter in 2006 at the Kanatsioharè:ke Mohawk community as part of a language and cultural immersion program, when he discussed the question “How do you decolonize the colonized?” His lecture mixed storytelling, humor, compassion, myth, history, and current solutions to the issue.

In “Decolonization,” I too mix a variety of thematic elements, and ask many questions through the music: questions of borrowing and appropriation, questions of what is considered “old,” or “American,” for instance. Missionary and European influences act as melodic fragments interrupting each other—colliding, as it were. Musical example in figure 3.4 shows one section of this through-composed piece that employs a Rotinonhsión:ni women’s stomp dance transcribed by Kurath (2000 [1964]) played in an up-beat tempo with *detaché* bowing, interrupted by Jimi Hendrix’s version of “The Star-spangled Banner” played using *sul ponticello* and *glissandi* to emulate guitar distortion. The intent of this section is to depict the distortion of values, of representation, of government treatment, and of identity in an attempt to activate a decolonization of our imaginations and to try to answer Tom Porter’s question. The sonic intensity of the national anthem, interrupted by what in contrast seems to be a melodically pleasing stomp dance, is ironic because the stomp dance was once considered “savage” by colonial administrators and banned by church and government residential school

policies.<sup>17</sup> Additional irony lies in the fact that responses to Hendrix’s 1969 Newport Folk Festival and Woodstock performances were varied and extreme: some were shocked and saw it as blasphemous, some saw it as a protest against the war in Vietnam, while others saw it as support for the war. Following a performance of my piece, an elderly gentleman who was unfamiliar with Rotinonhsión:ni stomp dances and Jimi Hendrix’s music, said to me, “Wow Dawn, that’s really political.”<sup>18</sup> Even without the knowledge of the pieces from which I borrowed, he understood the political intention.

Figure 3.4: Musical excerpt from *De-colonization* by Dawn Avery

The musical score consists of three staves of music in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff is marked 'mp' and includes the instructions 'slightly slower', 'playful', and 'arco'. The second staff begins with 'mp', includes 'sul pont' and 'ord.', and is marked 'f Hendrix style' and 'mp'. The third staff begins with 'f', includes 'sul pont' and 'ord.', and is marked 'mp'.

Although not all classical Native works are so blatantly political, I think they all contain political, social, and historical undertones that set them apart from other works of contemporary classical music. We create in relationship to our history and the world

<sup>17</sup>“It is observed with alarm that the holding of dances by the Indians on their reserves is on the increase...I have, therefore, to direct you to use your utmost endeavours to dissuade the Indians from excessive indulgence in the practice of dancing. You should suppress any dancer...” sent by the Deputy Superintendent General, Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, 1921 (quoted in Longboat and Avery: 2010).

<sup>18</sup> I quickly remedied that by providing him with several Hendrix recordings.

around us, as music critics and philosophers have said of new music composers as a whole.

Many Native composers have set themselves apart by writing pieces that deal with Indigenous cultural, historical and traditional topics. Examples include one of the earlier classical Native pieces by Ballard, *Incident at Wounded Knee*, and his *Koshare* ballet based on Hopi legends.<sup>19</sup> More recently, Croall wrote *Stories from Coyote* (2000), based on traditional Indian trickster narratives and scored for orchestra and Native storyteller, as a teaching tool for children's audiences.<sup>20</sup> Quincy's operetta *Pocahantas at the Court of King James I* (2007), recounting the visit of Pocahantas from an Indigenous perspective, was premiered by the Queen's Band ensemble in New York City and released by Lyrichord in 2008. Davids' *Pow-wow Symphony* (1998), scored for orchestra and a comic Master of Ceremony, "introduces orchestra music to Indian audiences in a familiar way, and brings an understanding of the pow-wow to audiences already familiar with orchestra music" (Davids 2012a). Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate (Chickasaw) describes a chamber piece written in 1994 and scored for solo timpani, strings, and piano as follows: "The music of 'Oktibihah' is based on a Chickasaw Snake Dance song (directly quoted at the beginning) and follows the story line of the creation of Lake Oktibihah in the old Chickasaw Nation, Mississippi" (2012). An essential connection to the land is depicted by Indian artists in paintings, weavings, pottery, storytelling, poetry, short story, film, jewelry, and music.<sup>21</sup> Living close to nature and concerned with the land, Croall often composes works that incorporate sounds of nature by playing European

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<sup>19</sup> Premiered in 1974 by the Minnesota Orchestra and performed in 1999 by the American Composers Orchestra in New York.

<sup>20</sup> Also arranged for chamber orchestra. It was premiered with narration by Jeff Legacy.

<sup>21</sup> As Diamond puts it, "The expression of that *physical* experience of the landscape is so central to [Indigenous] philosophy, music, culture" (1994:19).

classical instruments in innovative ways. She creates sonic and visual expressions of wind with clarinets, for instance, or by having percussionists wave branches for instrumental accompaniment.

Experimenting with sonic borders, composers often employ a mixture of Native and non-Native instruments or idioms. Echota Tsalagi composer Ron Warren wrote “Songs and Dances for the Three Sisters” (2007) in honour of the three sacred creations—beans, corn and squash. It is scored for cello, rattles and non-operatic voice, and incorporates pow-wow rhythms and songs. Archambault’s “Anoki” (2007), a short piece in which the cello part is reminiscent of Bach’s Prelude in G major, recalls the hunting traditions of the Algonquin by scoring for Algonquin disc rattle and solo violoncello. My own *Manah-atin* (2006) is an Indigenous version of the sale of Manhattan, scored as a Native flute concerto with Western flute ensemble and narration taken from a speech by the Wappinger Indians (Wappinger Nation 1841). Davids uses Native American instruments and instruments of his own design in his work *The 1920 Last of the Mohicans –Suite* (2003) scored for full orchestra, electric guitar, Indian flute, crystal flutes and assorted percussion (and written as a new soundtrack for the 1920 film of the same name). All these works combine rich sounds from Euro-American and Native American cultures to create a new complementary soundscape.

Ties to nature, tradition, social responsibility, and kinship are emphasized in many classical Native composers’ works and are often the purpose behind their writing. The works often serve a function beyond “sonic utterance”; they are tools for education, revitalization, and knowledge. “Not only are songs ‘texts,’ but they are also active sites that can and do bring about change,” says Tate. “I view them as valid Native texts for

serious study in a variety of academic venues, from the classroom to national conferences.”<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the commissioning, programming, and recording of classical Native works has brought recognition and success to composers and their communities. Although pieces of music may stimulate dialogue and inspire a desire for change, it is not probable that the compositions in and of themselves bring about change. But I believe that they are important in that, through them, we as creative people may serve to repair, even if in the smallest way, centuries of mistrust, misunderstanding and abuse. The twins remember where they came from as they forge ahead.

***TSIA:TA (7): Composing for Future Generations, the Twins Give Back***

Beginning with Ballard and his creation of the first Native American band program for children and his development of curriculum and educational materials teaching Native American music in the classroom, it has been important to Aboriginal composers to help young American Indians find a voice in music, including classical composition. Davids was the first composer to develop a composer residency program for native youth, the Grand Canyon Music Festival's Native American Composer Apprentice Program (CANOE), in which he, Tate and Chacon have been composers in residence. Tate was also composer in residence for the Chickasaw Summer Arts Academy and the American Composers Forum/Joyce Award community outreach program. Student works have been performed and recorded by the ETHEL string quartet (2010). I have been privileged to direct the Native Composers Project (NCP), a culture-based project in which students compose an original song in their language and traditional song style, arrange a contemporary version of that song, then compose a string quartet using their

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.jerodtate.com>

song as thematic material. Works from this project were released as a CD to raise funds for Tyendinaga language revitalization programs.<sup>23</sup> All of these programs provide classical composition instruction for American Indian students and feature their works in public performance and recordings.<sup>24</sup> I look at the importance of these programs as an aspect of Indigenous relational accountability at length in Chapter Four.

### ***SHA'TÉ:KON (8): Methodologies, the Twins Transform***

In the drive for Indigenous peoples to control their reality through self-determination, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, renowned researcher and professor of Maori and Indigenous education, specifies a non-sequential development that is an important aspect of Indigenous research and representation. She talks about Indigenous goals of self-determination in research as involving a circular process “of transformation, of decolonization, of healing and of mobilization” (1999:116). She sees these processes as being incorporated into practices and methodologies. In relation to classical Native music and performance, transformation can be understood as the spark of interest to create original pieces of music; decolonization as the process of learning to use the tools of creativity and musicianship to present Native perspectives on issues that are central to one’s history and life; healing as composers apply their own Indigenous knowledge to their compositions; and mobilization when one creates pieces of music, shares those works, and sees oneself as a creative being. My research on classical Native music is

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<sup>23</sup> “Tahatikonshóntíe Raotirenná’shón: Songs for the Coming of Faces” (Okenti Records, 2012).

<sup>24</sup> The Banff Centre for the Arts has also organized programs in Aboriginal arts since the mid 1990s. The Aboriginal Women’s Music program, directed by Sadie Buck, was one of the first of these and is regarded by many as one of the most effective means of empowering creative Native women.

done with both accountability and relationality in mind, as I consult and collaborate, serve, collect data, develop theory, and explore Aboriginal linguistic and metaphorical perspectives. The twins continue their cyclical journey across many borders, in relationship to each other and to creation itself.

## **Chapter Four: A Kanienkéha Concept of *Non:wa* (Now) as Applied to an Understanding of Indigenous Modernities and Compositional Processes**

“Today I’m modern, tomorrow I’ll be modern ‘til tomorrow, yesterday I was modern for yesterday” (Buck 2011). This statement by Sadie Buck, one of the leaders in the Rotinonhsión:ni traditional singing society called Six Nations Women’s Singers, is indicative of a prevalent Native American understanding for a concept of modernity. During the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting for the Society of Ethnomusicology (2012) in New Orleans, I was privileged to be part of a group of scholars who specialize in research on contemporary music by First Nation’s artists, many of whom are themselves Native American, where we discussed music in the context of Indigenous Modernity. Many questions were raised including what we thought Indigenous and modernity meant and whether Indigenous Modernity was an accurate term to describe what we were currently writing about. This led me to an exploration of the terms Indigenous and modernity through interviews and research with several Indigenous scholars and elders, many from my own Rotinonhsión:ni culture. After this initial examination, I look at how several Native composers may conceptualize Indigenous-centered creative practice and how Indigenous creativity may be articulated using Native language and cultural metaphor. Although it is impossible to attach a purely Indigenous sensibility to the creative process of Indigenous “music-creating artists,” our expression may be particular to an Indigenous experience. Of course in contemporary life it is impossible to isolate any specific “identity” construct since we meet with other cultures through the communities we live

in, the media we watch or read, the places we travel and the friends and colleagues we have. So, identifying an “an Indigenous experience” is a conscious decision to foreground a particular experience or groups of experiences that have may serve as important signifiers for Native culture that often reflect social values, spirituality, and political awareness. In that regard, I apply the Kanienkéha concept of “now” or “*non:wa*” referring to the now of the past, the present, and the future, toward understanding the intersection of innovation and tradition in the creation and performance of contemporary classical Native music. Although I only use the word *non:wa* as a descriptor for this concept, it actually can be better described through three words in Kanienkéha. Longboat described this concept in a class at the Mohawk community, Kanatsioharè:ke: “As Indigenous people, we don’t have past, present, and future. All we have is now. *Oksa* is the first now which means something just happened, *non:wa* is the second now that means right at this moment, moving the energy of *oksa* forward and if we don’t learn *oksa* and *non:wa*, we won’t have for *onhwehn* which is the third or next now” (Longboat, presentation, 20 August 2013).

### ***Definitions of Modernity***

Along with Buck’s understanding that “modern is relative” to the time period in which one is living her concept of modern is seen as dynamic, as it travels through time with us; so innovation and new creations are part of a time continuum that includes the tradition of the past and affects the future (Buck, interview, 16 July 2011). Longboat refers to this idea in terms of contemporary music and language: “The language is timeless, so for me, I don’t really believe that we are offering music in a contemporary way because it’s only bringing back the time to now” (Longboat, interview, 12 January

2012). Bringing back the time or bringing forward the time to now is indicative of a worldview that is cyclical, in which the nows of the past and future are always experienced as part of the present. One may understand contemporary classical music conceiving of it as part of a “Western” linear worldview in which we move forward, making improvements and progressing into the future whereas the concept of *non:wa* sees moving forward as cyclical as one takes from the past for the future and back again. Although I prefer to allow for some differences among concepts of time, Little Bear’s association with linearity and singularity of purpose are often considered part of progress: that is, change and discovery in which one may or may not learn from the past, but where forging ahead in the present and often statically ignoring the future are valued. Of course, this does not characterize the mindset of many modern-day Western composers, just as the Indigenous mindset that Little Bear describes as cyclical and in connection to the land as being the source and reason for continuity and creativity may not characterize all Native composers. However, these qualities have been given primacy in the current cohort of North American Indian composers: “The Earth is where the continuous and/or repetitive process of creation occurs. It is on the Earth and from the Earth that cycles, phases, patterns—in other words, the constant motion or flux—can be observed. Creation is a continuity. If creation is to continue, then it must be renewed” (Little Bear 2000:78). Although he goes on to cite the importance of renewal ceremonies, retelling of stories, and resinging of songs, I see newly composed works and pieces of art as part of this “maintenance of creation” (ibid.) especially since they are all part of creation. The cyclical phases of process are valued above the linear movement of progress Longboat often tells a story of a gentleman who visited her at her healing center and lodge on Six

Nations territory in Ontario, Canada. She remembers him asking her how she could be traditional when she lives in such a nice house with a gas stove and gets water from a spigot in her kitchen. She replied that water is water and is no less precious, no less “traditional” if it comes out of spigot than if she goes down to the river. “The concept of sacredness is never lessened by other means, so the fire is still sacred no matter who lights it and how they light it. It doesn’t lessen the concept of sacredness in our Indigenous knowledge base” (Longboat, personal communication, 23 August 2013).

“In an epistemological way, tribal peoples are not disrupted by either the notions of modernity or postmodernity. In a recent lecture on modernity, in which she argues for multiple modernities at different historical junctures, Susan Stanford Friedman described her curiosity about the very term ‘modernity’ in tribal languages. I do not believe there is any such word in Muscogee, but I suspect that if there is, it is probably ‘pickup truck’” (Womack 2008:276). “We weren’t modernized when the white man came here, we were harmonized!” (Jock, personal communication, 7 July 2013). This statement by Jock reflects another definition of modernity for many Native Americans, one of contact and colonization where modernity is seen as the demise of first peoples, including loss of culture, land, language, family, traditions, and livelihood due to genocide, governmental assimilation policies, relocation and removal, residential schools, and adoption. Many see a return to harmonization as requiring revitalization and political activism, including the restoration of language, land, and cultural traditions while fighting for sovereignty to reclaim what was stolen and almost destroyed:

We [Native Americans] are facing modernity’s attempt to conquer our souls. The conquest is happening as weak, cowardly, stupid, petty, and greedy ways worm themselves into our lives and take the place of the beauty, sharing, and harmony that defined life in our communities for

previous generations... The challenge is to find a way to regenerate ourselves and take back our dignity. Then, meaningful change will be possible, and it will be a new existence, one of possibility, where Onkwehon:we will have the ability to make the kinds of choices we need to make concerning the quality of our lives and begin to recover a truly human way of life. (Alfred 2005:38)

Although many Onkwehon:we or Native peoples believe that so-called “modernity” started with contact, still others refer to a slightly later time of governmental assimilation. When I asked Mike Jock what a “modern” Indian is, he spoke specifically to the effects of assimilation and residential schools, but believes total modernity (aka assimilation) will be present in the next generation:

I believe that the next generation is considered modern Indians because they are totally assimilated into the next culture. It's the assimilation that you really want to look at and each and everyone of us has a different level of assimilation. It depends on how much spirituality we've had in our life time, how much education you have. Stuck in between two worlds, modernization would mean total assimilation. Some of us are more fortunate because we were raised in a traditional setting, with traditional teachings, culture, language, our ceremonies—we're the ones who are stuck in between. You can pinpoint it with the creation of the Carlisle School. That's the era when it all started. We weren't modernized when the white man came here, we were harmonized! We lived in harmony with nature and the Creator's gifts that he gave us. Everything lived in harmony, until they came across that water (Jock, personal communication, 7 July 2013).

Obviously, an idyllic concept of harmony in the past is inaccurate in terms of war, famine, weather, and other disasters that disrupted the harmony in the history of the Rotinonhsión:ni. However, when looking at current disruptions that he sees as a direct effect of colonization, Jock went on to tell me the story of a movie he had watched about men in four-wheelers who were having a great time riding through the woods, and how when they finished it looked like a bulldozer had come through, destroying one-hundred acres of land for a good day of fun. Here Jock used a current documentary as a

storytelling metaphor to make his point about the disastrous effects of modernization.

Porter has referred to Kanatsioharè:ke as the reverse Carlisle school, where he has helped develop language and cultural immersion programs.<sup>1</sup> He continues to farm and conduct ceremonies in traditional ways in an attempt to reduce the costs of materialism and modernization, which he blames for the break-down of culture and family, especially due to the advent of casinos, crime, and drug and alcohol abuse among Native youth.

John uses humor to succinctly give his answer: “modern is only convenience in modern times...come on, ha:nyo'. Ask me something with relativity . . . ha,ha” (John email, 12 April 2013). To him, the concept of modernity is not only defined as a preoccupation with convenience by the dominant white culture, but is also manipulated to conveniently suit their needs. He went on to talk about the question in regard to First Peoples, and referred to in Mohawk spelling as mentioned earlier as Okwehon:we and in Oneida as Hukwehu:we' (“original peoples” hon^yote'a:ka: ho'w^:na:) in which he brings back the non-delineation of past, present, and future or the timelessness mentioned earlier by Jan Longboat, while concisely stating an important aspect of the Rotinonhsión:ni worldview: “This question re: hukwehu:we', we don't change whether we are in our original dress or modern clothes, our minds never escape our loyalty to CREATION!” (ibid.) Once again, everything and everyone participates as part of creation.

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<sup>1</sup>Kanatsioharè:ke is built on land in the Mohawk Valley, NY that was bought back by the Mohawks in 1993, “To promote the development of a community based on the traditions, philosophy, and governance of the Rotinonhsión:ni, and to contribute to the preservation of the culture of people as a framework for a blend of traditional native concerns with the best of the emerging new earth friendly, environmental ideologies that run parallel to these traditions. To conduct programs in the culture & traditions of the people; to foster an active accumulation of spoken Mohawk language by members of the community; and to continue the oral traditions, stories, songs and dances in the unique spirit of the Mohawk path.” [www.mohawkcommunity.com/home/missionstatement.html](http://www.mohawkcommunity.com/home/missionstatement.html), accessed July 10, 2013. The Carlisle Indian Industrial School was a residential school that operated between 1879-1918 . It's primary aim was to uphold the governmental, assimilationist policy to “Kill the Indian, Save the Man.”

A more specifically political stance on the concept of “modernity” is given by Taiaiake Alfred, Kanienkéha scholar, author, and political activist, who endorses Indigenous peoples’ movements that have been emerging globally over the last thirty years in a fight against modernity and for what he calls “de-culturation,” in which Indigenous cultures may bring back their cultures by working “*against* the state and *for* the reemergence of Onkweh:we existences as cultural and political entities unto themselves. Onkweh:we are in relationships with Settlers, but are not subsumed within the state and are not drawn into its modern liberal ideology of selfish individualism and unrestrained consumption” (Alfred 2005:133). Many Onkweh:we see materialism, consumptionism and individualism as some of the dangerous by-products of colonization, having replaced spirituality, collectivism, environmentalism, and community values that were central to Native life. Alfred cites areas in the world that have or have had powerful Indigenous movements dedicated to change—including Ecuador, Bolivia, and the Zapatista movement in Mexico, as well as movements in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—but he also makes us aware that many contemporary indigenous-state negotiations on issues of land claims and self-government are still “defined in the context of colonial structures in the framework of Euroamerican values and cultures” (ibid.:134). Might another definition for modernity by many First Peoples be congruent with sovereignty, reclamation and reemergence?

Within the context of Euro-American culture, most of us have been taught that modernity began with the Age of Enlightenment, and many continue to define modernity as a linear progression through the scientific revolution, globalization, cosmopolitanism, travel, and technology. The Oxford Dictionary of English online refers to modernity in

terms of technology, but also cites Hobbes: “the quality or condition of being modern: *an aura of technological modernity* a modern way of thinking, working, etc., contemporariness: *Hobbes was the genius of modernity.*”<sup>2</sup> Since we are writing in English, are part of mainstream society, and live in a world of scholars, it does make sense to look at the etymology of the English word by going directly to its Latin roots, “from Latin modo, *in a certain manner, just now*, from mod̄.”<sup>3</sup> As we look at its Latin roots, it is more akin to the Rotinonhsión:ni concept of non:wa mentioned earlier. Alongside these definitions, a primary function of the word modernity was to distinguish the period of antiquity from that of modernity, or *antiquus* and *modernus*. Applying both “original” language definitions, perhaps there is another way of looking at modern as a “certain manner,” as the “now” that we all would like to live in, and as a time of “harmonization.”

I would like to propose another definition for modern, one based on history and tradition, one that reflects cyclical dynamism. Perhaps modern can be seen as a state of mind and practice that we continue to seek as part of the continuum of “now.” As a Rotinonhsión:ni woman, I have been taught to live according to the Great Law of Peace, and part of that is *kwanikonri:io*—keeping a good mind, living with values that may sustain my community and those around me. In my perhaps idealistic understanding, modernity may be a condition in which we live in a certain manner in harmony with the natural world and each other. The Iroquois Confederacy protected over two-hundred Indian nations dedicated to international peace, but it came after much violence against many of those nations. In his discussion of historic times of warring and cannibalism

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<sup>2</sup> [www.oxforddictionaries.com/us](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us).

<sup>3</sup> [www.freedictionary.com](http://www.freedictionary.com)

among the Rotinonhsión:ni, Tom Porter wrote: “All over the world, what happened is that people began to lose their spiritual knowledge and the things that gave them tradition and their ceremonial life. And this is what happened to the Iroquois people again. When people neglected their spiritual things, ceremonies and so forth, then turmoil and chaos became the rule of the day. And so this is exactly what happened again” (Porter 2008:274). In a talk about our current time of unrest, Porter said he believed that we should bring the Great Law of Peace to Iraq and Afghanistan. He believes not only that the Iroquois nations are in trouble, but also that we are in danger globally and can all share teachings of peace to bring us through these difficult times (Porter, lecture, July 2013). I suggest that we are being reminded to work once again toward a reemergence of modernity through living peacefully with one another and the natural world. The relationality of the term "modern" as used in this context refers to historical time periods and geographic locations that may have adopted the principles of The Great Law. Although somewhat naïve and certainly flawed, my examination of modernity combines concepts discussed above with the positive remembrances of Onkwehon:we harmonization and the need for reclamation and change which can be done by looking at the cycles, phases, and patterns inherent in the past, present, and future, thus allowing us to live as modern people in a multicultural and historical context. Modernity requires dynamic creativity. If modern, now, *non:wa* is indeed cyclical, then we need to work with it as a living entity that interacts with the past and the future.

### ***Definitions of Indigenous***

As I continue to investigate important terms from an Indigenous perspective, it is important also to look at how some define Indigenous as in Indigenous peoples. I choose

to start with my own Rotinonhsión:ni languages whose structure and emphasis is on relationship. In Kanienkéha, the language structures and meanings emphasize relationships and descriptions. The word for Indigenous reflects a specific relationship to a people. The word Onkwehon:we refers to Indigenous (people's) dance or Indigenous (people's) song, but also to Native Americans. John dissected the syllables of the word for Native or Indigenous, onkwehon:we by explaining them from a cultural perspective; revealing its true meaning as human being.

Onkwehon:we  
(a) on- is combined forces united,  
(b) k(i) spirit of a being, [in fetus form]  
(c) we- is the growing development of fetus until birth  
(d) hon: - is the newborn entering the physical world  
(e) we - is the maturation of new human being!"  
(John, email, 14 April 2013).

The word is dissected the same way in Kanienkéha with a slightly different spelling, and is often translated into English as first peoples or original peoples.

Jock defines Onkwehon:we (Kanienkéha spelling) as “we’re just human beings that’s what we’re called in our language—Onkwehon:we, kanienkéhaka, all we are is what the creator created. We’re all tied back to the earth. We all go to the same place and are all created from the same place” (Jock, telephone conversation, 14 April 2013). Alfred looked at Onkwehon:we from the perspective of cultural heritage when he wrote in his book, *Wasase Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*, “It is a big question. What is being Onkwehon:we? From what I’ve been told, and from what I’ve seen in all the time I’ve spent among Onkwehon:we all over the world, ‘Being Onkwehon:we’ is living heritage, being part of a tradition—shared stories, beliefs, ways of thinking, ways of moving about in the world, lived experiences—that generates identities which, while

ever-changing and diverse, are deeply rooted in the common ground of our heritage as original peoples” (Alfred 2005:139).

Theoretician and founding figure of postcolonial criticism Edward Said (2002:69-74) refers to culture as participation in an ongoing dynamic process of change “that revolves around people’s attempts to answer certain crucial questions about themselves in the public life of a community, questions such as how the central traditions of a people are held onto, what is considered as tradition, and how a people’s history is read” (Quoted in Alfred 2005:139). Traditions of the past are brought into the present to be acted out in the future, and they continue to construct history, thus going back again. Alfred refers to this dynamism as a “self-conscious traditionalism” in which people interact with their history, consistent with Onkwwehon:we teachings that go “beyond reflective practices to an actual political and social engagement with the world based on consensus arrived at through broad conversation among people who are part of that culture” (ibid.:140). Alfred and Said see culture and indigeneity as practice. This practice is part of what I view as part of the dynamism of Indigenous modernity.

Political scientist Isabel Altamirano recognizes the problematic nature of defining Indigenous when there are so many different societies, but also looks at what important aspects are shared:

There is not a unique indigenous identity, because indigenous peoples are diverse. However, there are many common things in the way we all see our culture and history. I think there are several elements that are common to indigenous peoples . . . The most evident element is that indigenous peoples have a strong relationship with their land and territories; they see them as the social space where they recreate themselves, so land and territory are not only commodities. To indigenous peoples, religion and culture are linked to their natural contexts. The role of elder is something shared among indigenous peoples too . . . To be indigenous is to have a sense of community as whole, a sense of exchanging and talking until we

all have a similar vision of where we are going. To be indigenous is consensus and is reproducing certain ways of doing things. Being indigenous is to have a collective memory of our myths, the ramifications of our concepts, and of what is behind our language. (Quoted in Alfred 2005:142)

Many have defined Onkwehono:we or Indigenous as original people (Alfred 2005:20) who share similar histories and challenges that now unite us in common causes and challenges, most importantly a healed society for future generations.

Indigenous modernization, then, may be part of a process of working toward and accomplishing a revitalized, respectful society based on traditional beliefs. Harkening back to Little Bear's concept of shared worldviews, we can also apply this to understanding Indigenous modernity as he sees us as having a swirling consciousness from Indigenous to colonized and back again; "a precolonized consciousness that flows into a colonized consciousness and back again" (Little Bear 2000:85). Little Bear further elaborates that the clash of worldviews is "at the heart of many current difficulties with effective means of social control in postcolonial North America . . . that suppresses diversity in choices and denies Aboriginal people harmony" (ibid.). Two points may be made here: if we, as Native peoples, are not 100 percent Indigenous or Eurocentric in terms of worldviews, then would it not stand to reason that non-Indigenous people do not also live 100 percent in their worldviews? Whether conscious or not, all people are living on land that belonged at one time to a Native population. All people are connected to the land they live on, to oral tradition, to ancestors known and unknown.

I think that North America will never truly reach its potential until its original people, including land and culture, contributions and influences, struggles and persecution are recognized, not through an award or apology—although that may be part

of the process—but as a consciousness that is understood by all, including the dominant culture. This is not to say we need permission or assistance, but that this land and its people cannot be at peace until all people on Turtle Island live with a swirling consciousness grounded in Aboriginal worldviews on which this melting pot called North America is founded. Non-indigenous people must take on more than commercialized Indian folklore and the occasional visit to an Indian pow-wow and incorporate belief systems that may allow us all to live in peace, harmony, relationship and respect. An integrated mind of Indigenous and European understandings is part of what has allowed both a diversity of artistic and musical genres for Native Americans to express themselves and the quagmire that “modernity” has offered, specifically through its sonic, lyric, instrumental, social, psychological and political content.

In the classical Native movement, it is particularly interesting to see first the diversity of music-making choices that artists have chosen within the frame of contemporary concert music as a medium of expression, and in relation to their position that is often understood as an anomaly: the North American Indian classical musician. Philip J. Deloria refers to the “sound of Indian” as being fraught with specific expectations of Indianness which most Indian classical performers and musicians refuse to perpetuate (Deloria 2004: 187-188). Alice Fletcher, wrote, “Among the Indians, music envelopes like an atmosphere every religious, tribal, and social ceremony as well as personal experience” (ibid.:276).

This leads to my second point that there is an appealing freedom of expression in the diversity of styles among contemporary classical composers. Songwriters, hip-hop artists, blues bands, and all popular music-making genres for Native artists for the most

part adhere to a prescribed style, albeit enormously creative, whereas classical styles are enormously varied, from performance art, avant-garde and symphonic, and a variety of hybrid styles. “Innovation still trumps imitation in the art-music world” (Gidal 2010:56). The classical concert frame, then is a place where not only are styles diverse, but the genre is being questioned, in part because of its association with elitism and European roots. The political, social, and historical implications of this idea cannot be explored in this dissertation. Of course, I am sure most singer-songwriters and hip-hop aficionados have great diversity within their chose genre. The difference here may lie in the questioning of the classical music genre by most of the Native composers.

As definitions contradict, overlap, and inform each other, it is the engagement that is dynamic and of most interest to me. It is the dynamism that Said and Alfred refer to that I wish to focus on in terms of tradition informing innovation and innovation informing tradition. I can apply this to the music of today’s Native classical artists to show how it may influence creative processes, pieces, and performances. It is interesting to note that dictionary definitions for modern and modernity also include the word “modernism,” as in the modernist movement of contemporary classical music.<sup>4</sup> However, I am looking primarily at the composers and ideas that shape contemporary Western classical music, most notably of the postmodernist movement. The concept of *non:wa* includes not only music of the distant past, but also music of the early twentieth-century into the twenty-first century. I will be looking at Indigenous theories and applying the concepts of Indigenous modernity as I continue to present my research on modernist classical Native composers.

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<sup>4</sup> Oxford dictionary online definitions of modern and modernity also include “modernism” i.e. modernist movement of contemporary classical music

What do these definitions have to do with music? Or, as John Cage, one of my primary influences, used to ask, is it all music? Words, even academic language, can sound and feel like music: the sounds of thoughts, the click of the computer as I type these words. A variety of concepts about music are part of the dynamic movement of “modernity,” and the variety inherent in the term Indigenous, which in turn is as diverse as the composer’s creative process.

### ***Music-creating Artists***

The word "composer" has been controversial in relation to modernist music. This is due to the variety of styles, crossing of genres, and notational practices. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the responses to the questionnaires I sent to composers showed that most believed that the music had to be notated in some fashion in order to be called “classical” composer. Peter Holtz, Doctor of Psychology and Assistant Professor at the Institute of Education, University of Jena, Germany, referred to composers as “music-creating artists” (Holtz 2009:207). His description allows for a flexibility of genre and style, as well as creative process, whether it be improvisational, collaborative, electronic, graphic or notated.

As mentioned earlier, it is impossible to attach a purely Indigenous sensibility to the creative process of Indigenous “music-creating artists,” in part because the medium we are writing in is often European based and because no one has escaped the influence of colonization, as Little Bear suggested. In a study of several Latin American composers, Marc Gidal, recipient of the Jorge Paulo Lemann Fellowship from the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University and currently Associate Professor of Music and Musicology at Ramapo University, wrote how specific

locations and eras prove inseparable from a composer's experiences and actions. He used cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz's assertion that "it is still the case that no one lives in the world in general . . . everybody, even the exiled, the drifting, the diasporic, or the perpetually moving, lives in the same confined and limited stretch of it—'the world around here'" (Geertz 1996:262 in Gidal 2010:47) and demonstrated how the work of Tania León, composer and conductor, incorporated music from Cuba into her compositions. She makes direct references to rhythms, dance, and melodies from her culture in pieces such as "Indígena" (1991) based on a *comparsa* melody and carnival theme, *rumba guaguanco* accompaniment in "A la Par" (1986), or the Yoruban Batá tradition in her pieces "Batá" (1985) and "Rituál (1987). "León began integrating her deep-seated knowledge of Cuban music and themes of Cuban culture into her compositions—as she had done and still does with many traditions" (Gidal 2010:52). For León, as for Native composers, musical enculturation includes not only—and sometimes not even predominantly—the music of one's own culture, but involves many influences that may reflect a composer's society and those that may be sought out by a composer.

In terms of a compositional creation, Gidal refers to this as "cross- cultural competence" (ibid.:59). All of the music reflects our enculturation, how we live inside any society and the influences of that society, sonic or otherwise. British music critic Paul Griffiths frequently writes about the idea that modern music is a reflection of society, and refers to German philosophers Adorno and Hoffmann saw "composers, as members of society, who could not avoid dealing in their music with society's tensions" (Griffiths 2006:97). Contemporary classical music, then, is a reflection of modern life portrayed in the music of our time, not just the music of our individual cultures, but a merging of

many ideas and even genres. This merging of ideas can be seen from an Indigenous perspective as the cyclical phases of creation, while still adhering to ideas of Gidal and Holtz that all “creating-artists” have “cross-cultural competence” inherent to being human and interacting with other people where globalization has affected the compositional process. Levine wrote about this in “American Indian Musics, Past and Present”... “Native American processes of musical change include the adoption or adaptation of music performed by other peoples, the blending of indigenous and external idioms” (Levine 1998:19). All of these compositional processes can be understood through an Indigenous worldview as relational and cyclical. Again referring to Little Bear, “no one is 100% colonized.” I understand this to mean that all people, Native and non-native have been affected by Indigenous consciousness. It is part of the land and ancestry on which we live, with the past always present in the future.

Some composers avoid direct references, some have not been brought up in their original ethnicity, some purposefully disengage from their communities, and some may go back to their roots, creating varying degrees of specific conscious and subconscious cultural references, but the ethnicity in which they were enculturated remains. The conscious and subconscious worldview that is incorporated in the work of Native American composers is what interests me as it appears in an assortment of ways and on various levels. Gidal differentiates between direct references or overt musical borrowing and internalized sounds or accents.

Starting with the most obvious, the term “overt musical borrowing” is problematic because it may be used in several ways: a) considered unoriginal; b) an arrangement rather than a “real” composition; c) an Indianist stereotype; or d) appropriation. I think

that in discussing “overt” or direct musical borrowing, we should distinguish direct reference in which a composition may be disrespectful and artistically suspect from one that may be respectful and artistically enhance a piece of music. Although the composer may be giving a piece of music to the world, she or he is not actually returning something that they borrowed. Interesting, too, is the question as to whether borrowing from one’s own culture may be understood or heard differently borrowing from someone else’s culture?

Returning to the concept of *non:wa*, how can borrowing be consistent with now? In Eurocentric modernity, borrowing from the past may not be consistent with innovation, but in Indigenous thought the present and the future are one with the past, or at least are characterized by returns to the past. Therefore, an Indigenous composer may be seen as bringing sounds forward into the present as a natural continuation to be heard in the future. The bigger issue is that per Deloria’s ideas about Indian expectations, many outsiders expect Native American composers to reference the past. But whose past? And why might an outsider assume that those references mark “identity” rather than relationality?

When is the enculturation of the various influences in which we live borrowing or artistic license? This idea of borrowing or referencing is quite simple when the “other” misappropriates, but may cause a different set of problems when someone purposefully borrows from their own culture. An old European concept of conquering as well as Western concepts of consumerism, both of which consider taking as profitable on many levels, may be applied here, but when we borrow from our tradition, it implies *ownership* by someone else. Of course, Western copyright laws attempt to respect ownership, but it

is problematic as a system and does not address tribal or cultural ownership. Is this a distinctly “modern” worldview? Cultural borrowing assumes that we are taking from somewhere else, as if it is not inherently ours rather than the music of our community belonging to the people and without individual ownership. Native songs learned in dreams, given to an individual by the spirits are then given to the community and a rarely associated with the person who brought it to them. Carefully guarded song knowledge is often transferred to a family or a group of people. Borrowing often implies that we are going to return it, perhaps in this case as a new piece of music. Most Native composers are cautious about borrowing from traditional songs for cultural propriety, but also for reasons of original creativity. For now, I prefer to use the terms direct and indirect referencing.

Being a composer whose work is often considered ironic by scholars who have discussed my music, I employ direct references in my chamber composition *Fringe* (2008/2010) in which I purposely juxtapose old and new, traditional Indian song with contemporary classical orchestration. *Fringe*, scored for violin, cello, vocals, hand-drum, pow-wow drum, rattles, and brake drums, and featuring audience participants playing rattles and singing an Iroquois stomp-dance, is part of a mixed-media collaboration. The placement of the singers around the periphery of the theatre is part of the exploration of marginalization. The piece consists of a layering of textures, representing the many aspects of living within overlapping worlds, along with many ways of looking at marginalization as the audience dances around the margins of the theater. Thanks to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian’s Expressive Collaboration Grant, the concept of varied textures along with diverse artistic

and native sensibilities in regard to “the fringe” are powerfully expressed in the poetic narration, entitled “Distractions/ Misconceptions” written for this work by Kanienkéhaka /Tuscarora poet and performance artist Janet-Marie Rogers. A similar strategy for exploring marginalization was used in a film by N’iaka’Pamux/Secwepemc filmmaker Chris Bose uses footage from the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s about British Columbia’s Indian residential schools, Vancouver Harbor, early pow-wows, and everyday aboriginal life before children were removed. This archival footage shows different aspects of the Canadian aboriginal experience. Ideally, the film should be shown on the walls around the theatre—in its margins, partly projected onto the bodies of the audience/dancers (Avery 2010: Program notes).<sup>5</sup>

In an interview I did with Rebecca Draisey-Collishaw, I explained that:

The idea of *Fringe* is that I wanted people to have a performative experience of what it means to be in, on or witnessing the fringe. And to me what that means is something very different than for somebody who isn’t Native . . . The Women’s Stomp Dance, is a work that is used publicly in which Native and non-Native may participate in. It’s about Native pride . . . So to have people singing and dancing that song on the periphery or the margins of the theatre is that they are literally on the fringe . . . there is a lot of beauty and power in the fringe, especially if we hold onto our traditions . . . that’s part of the political implication of that. The fact that the audience and chamber musicians are in the middle with everyone else walking around them is that you can’t really forget that we’re there, that we have held the space for centuries and you will always hear us. (Draisey-Collishaw 2010:4)

The refrain taken from a popular women’s stomp dance is taught to the audience with occasional doubling of parts of the chamber orchestra, but the direct melodic

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<sup>5</sup>A new second version of *Fringe* was written in January 2010 for students of the Memorial University New Foundland World Ensemble. Scored for vocals, flutes, clarinet, trumpet, contrabass, rattles, and piano, the work includes the poetic/ narration. Vocalists can teach the chorus to a few audience volunteers, and should still be dancing in a circle stomp dance around the periphery of the performance space. The visit at MUN was made possible by the director of the MMAP Centre at MUN, Dr. Beverley Diamond and the Dean of Music, Tom Gordon for which I am very grateful. This trip was also made possible by a sabbatical opportunity from Montgomery College. A translation of the words should not be included in any programs, but can be given orally if someone asks.

borrowing stops there, as I composed original music scored for this occasion.<sup>6</sup> Draisey-Collishaw wrote about the work in terms of European and Native distinctions. “The students were essentially divided into two ensembles: a chamber group who, along with the audience represented the western centre, and a chorus of singers and female pianists who represented the Indigenous fringe. The differences between these two groups were underscored in their tonal language” (ibid.:7). Although it appears that there is a “Western center,” the musicians were actually front of center and the fringe at many times became a dominant distraction. The piece was written employing concepts of what Draisey-Collishaw referred to as dissonant bi-tonality, but what I conceived of, and I believe the audience heard, as expanded harmonies, where the singers in F major are joined by the chamber orchestra in d minor, creating 7ths and 9ths. Although it may take a moment to take all the elements in and to hear them rub against each other, I believe a blending harmonious process occurs for all when the piece is performed correctly. I also enjoy the intensity of juxtaposing tonalities, melodies and timbres against one another and sometimes choose to emphasize the dissonance.

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<sup>6</sup> 3 soprani, 6 pianists, 4 flautists, 2 clarinetists, 1 violinist, and 2 double bassists, along with rattle parts.

**Figure 4.1** Excerpt from *Fringe* score that was rearranged for student performance at Memorial University, Newfoundland in 2010. Note top lines quote a Rotinonhsión:ni Stomp Dance, while the bottom lines infer a different harmony and timbre.

Fringe 9

The musical score for Figure 4.1 consists of the following parts and markings:

- S (Soprano):** Melodic line starting at measure 42.
- Sh (Shaman):** Percussive line with vertical strokes.
- Fl. 1 (Flute 1):** Melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mf*.
- Fl. 2 (Flute 2):** Melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mp*.
- Fl. 3 (Flute 3):** Melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mp*.
- Fl. 4 (Flute 4):** Melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mp* and a *simile* marking.
- B. Cl. (Bass Clarinet):** Rested part.
- Vln. I (Violin I):** Melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mp* and a *simile* marking.
- Cb. (Cello):** Bass line with a dynamic marking of *mp*.

Once the audience and performers get used to these differences occurring simultaneously, it may sound integrated, especially when heard as a minor seventh chord. I'm not sure if the audience hears the orchestration, melodic overlaps or harmony as integrated, and ultimately that is not my aim, but I do see the intensity and integrity of both worlds living side by side as important and wondrous, especially when they both live with clear intention and are individually respected.

I not only asked the audience to move beyond the normal concert expectation and concert hall boundaries, but I also manipulate the performers boundaries. The clarinetist

and violinist were asked to imitate sounds of Plains-style falsetto singing on their instruments and each instrumentalist was required to improvise an eight-measure solo—“a skill that falls outside of most classically-trained western performers’ comfort zones” (Draisey-Collishaw 2010:9). Draisey-Collishaw notes that improvisation is a Western-derived technique, a claim with which I disagree. Improvisation enabled the students to look at what

constitutes legitimate music – a priority expressed in Dawn’s statement that she wanted students to come away from the experience of performing *Fringe* with the understanding that there are other ways of playing music, just like there are other ways of being in the world and thinking in the world. (Ibid.)

Students were given historical recordings and a demonstration to learn stylistic elements, fully notated parts and scores, and a spoken description of the work in a historical context, thus learning aurally through imitation, classically through note-reading, and orally about context. Some parts of the piece were taught to the performers through imitation, and others through conducting from a score. Draisey-Collishaw questions whether the fringe is at the center, among the classical European-trained musicians playing “classical native” music, or around the margins with a predominantly white audience participating in a stomp dance. She also questions whether my intention as a composer was understood by the performers and audience. Although I may have specific political and psychological intents, my hope for the work is that performers and audience are given an experience that crosses unusual boundaries of sound, space, expectation, and politics while raising questions and even confusion in the midst of community involvement. Draisey-Collishaw concluded that in rehearsals and performance of the piece, “Meanings were negotiated, misunderstandings occurred, and

new understandings emerged” (Draisey-Collishaw 2010:21). This is a satisfying result for me as a composer and educator. Since I was not raised on a reserve, my interest in learning may be understood as from the outside in, although if looking at dreams and ancestral memory, may also be understood as from the inside outward; yet another aspect of the *non:wa* concept. My use of a Rotinonhsión:ni stomp dance that I was taught as an adult was brought into my work after years of European classical training as a cellist, conductor and composer. Once again, my Onkwehon:we name, Ieriho:kwats, means she digs deeply to learn about her roots. In this piece, I placed direct musical referencing of a Rotinonhsión:ni melody over direct musical referencing of a classical European based education to further question levels of authenticity and a complexity of understandings.

In the case of Chacon and Becenti, they were both raised on Navajo reservations and do not claim direct referencing but often explain Navajo concepts in their works. Chacon uses direct cultural references in his works, while Becenti often looked back on his works to later explain what was “Navajo” about them. Another way of looking at direct musical referencing might be from a psychological perspective to differentiate two processes of composition as “conscious” and “subconscious” references, but I think this, too, misses the mark. Indigenous composers, Indigenous creating artists, create indigenously as it is not possible for anyone to create any other way. It is who we are, whether it is overtly experienced as Indigenous by outsiders—a non-Indigenous audience—is another interesting question, especially to Native artists who sometimes seek outside recognition. The issue is more complex than a reflection of our ancestry, history, and enculturation as artists make choices and listeners will understand those choices and those idioms variably.

Gidal further posed the question as to what he called the other extreme in contemporary classical music by avant-garde composers who use no “overt musical borrowing,” and asked, “What about their music sounds ‘Latin American’ if their unmistakably abstract styles lack explicit references to Latin American popular and folk music?” (Gidal 2010:64) In between those two extremes, he looked at musical “accent” in which “regional aesthetics” are revealed without direct musical borrowing. He concludes that most of the composers in his study believe that they share this “accent in their compositional writing. In talking about local and regional accents, Béhague sees an accent as being identifiable to listeners of what he calls Latin American art music: “The Latin American composer cannot escape revealing some aspects of that context” (Béhague 1979:354). But León sees the accent as a more “subtle metaphor” (ibid.). “I speak with an accent, so my music might have an accent, which might not be understood by many people. And if the accent has to happen to be roots or folklore or whatever you want to call it at some point, fine” (Gidal 2010:64). Those from the Latin American composers collective, *áltaVoz*, describe their music as “fine art with a Latin American flavor” (ibid.:64).

The interdisciplinary arts collective *Postcommodity*, of which Chacon is a member, is a collaborative performance-art group that has specific political and social agendas. Taken from their website they explain that as Native artists, they hold:

a shared Indigenous lens and voice to engage the assaultive manifestations of the global market and its supporting institutions, public perceptions, beliefs, and individual actions that comprise the ever-expanding, multinational, multiracial and multiethnic colonizing force that is defining the 21st century through ever increasing velocities and complex forms of violence. *Postcommodity* works to forge new metaphors capable of rationalizing our shared experiences within this increasingly challenging

contemporary environment; promote a constructive discourse that challenges the social, political and economic processes that are destabilizing communities and geographies; and connect Indigenous narratives of cultural self-determination with the broader public sphere.<sup>7</sup>

The artists in this group are drawing from the past to create politically charged installations in the present as they bring their Indigenous ways of knowing into the future. The name of the group obviously refers to the political and economic nature of their activist creativity as it refers not only to economic markets, hedge funds and trading of commodities such as oil, gold and silver, but also refers to the Federal food distribution for low-income Indian communities on reservations.

This group, known for its art and sound installations, may not use specific Indigenous melodies, but does have a strong political and activist initiative in all that they do. Although in the work analyzed by Gidal they show varying degrees of “accent,” I believe that accent is misunderstood when seen as something added like a spice or an afterthought. To continue with a food analogy, what is really happening is a rich stock that was made of many ingredients to create a base for everything else. Even the twist on accent that León gave is curious, as she is viewing English as the main language that is then spoken with an accent.

I think it is the other way around for the composers who grew up in their culture—the music is informed first by their inherent cultururation and then by their cultural competence, where outside influences are added; whether obvious to the listener or not, it is there. From the perspective of the cyclical *non:wa* concept, we begin first with who we are as our worldview and sounds from our cultures are reflected in our music, that may then be turned into political, social or educational function in the public

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<sup>7</sup> <http://postcommodity.com/About.html>

sphere, which many composers' hope may be an instrument of change and renewal. For example, in *Fringe* I incorporate a Stomp Dance from my culture and invite the audience to actively participate in my cultural soundscape, but then my cross-cultural competence adds the chamber ensemble. This is further complicated by the fact that the role of the chamber ensemble switches between accompaniment and juxtaposition, while a poem about contemporary Native issues is narrated in English the dominant language. The work as mentioned earlier is meant for public performance for all audiences to make people think about their own perceptions.

In some of the work by *Postcommodity*, symbols and metaphors from the collaborators Indigenous worldviews are found in the sculptures, installation designs, locations, and sounds, while electronics and technology reveal their cultural competence and the political statements are a means of creating social change. In addition, Chacon and Becenti may use subtle ideas that incorporate Navajo symbols or cadence in their chamber compositions something Gidal would refer to as “accent,” but his concept of “accent” is not an extra-musical one that can be added on to a composition, but rather it permeates, it is inherent. Euro-American dominant culture does not and did not begin first, but was added on and created *after* the Indigenous cultures we are talking about. I argue that it permeates all we do, not just music by composers from specific areas, but also in our historical doctrines (such as the Iroquois assistance with the Declaration of Independence, Constitution and Suffrage movement, or the agricultural and ranching techniques of the Southwest). Although, as Little Bear said, no one is 100% colonized, I venture to say that everyone has been affected by Indigenous consciousness. It is in the

land we live on, and the past is always present in the future. How and if it is acknowledged or abused, and by whom, are still being negotiated.

León has written music that uses obvious references to her culture while also borrowing from other traditions, including those of Europe and Asia. Some Native composers use specific “borrowings” and themes for their works, although at varying degrees of recognisability. The concept of borrowing is appropriate here as she is employing ideas taken from cultures outside her own. When asked how much his heritage played into his work Chacon answered:

There is a culmination of musical experiences I’ve had whether it’s Navajo music, or popular music, or rock music, or whatever, that influenced me all up to a point and then from there, I think I found sounds that I wanted to work with and then developed instruments and techniques and systems to make those happen. So, at a certain point I kind of just dropped everything...As far as consciously trying to quote Navajo music or anything like that, I don’t do that, I don’t do anything like that. It’s, more just like using the tools like the vocables, so maybe, maybe some kind of scale that might be found in Navajo music, but other than that, I never quote anything used in Navajo music. (Chacon, workshop, Nov 2013)

Becenti also does not quote Navajo music per se, but his attention to Navajo form, balance, and cadence is an important part of his writing. He has emphasized that his music is really about form and balance, both of which he has explained as being important Navajo concepts, and has frequently referred to the formulaic content of Navajo ceremonial music as being something that influenced him in terms of both. When describing his emphasis on structure and form in his “Cello Suite,” Becenti said the following:

The grounding Navajo cadence is usually in groups of four, mimicking the Navajo what’s above me, below me, behind me, and all around me. The Navajo religious system is not as free, it’s shamanistic, but its very structured and is dictated down to the last note, or whatever. The cadence

is used throughout and the music is always in fourths . . . I guess one of the reasons the Navajo system is so regulated is that it's dissipating what they would call evil and they do it in that way. Navajo music is ceremony, ceremonial music is what I'm referring to. The cadence is always in fours, even the stanzas are always in fours – the groupings, sets of fours, and it's very repetitive. A Navajo typical performance goes on for nine days which is I think a reflection of that repetitiveness. I've seen pages where it's really just one idea, but it's over and over again because you have to do it in four directions, four cardinal directions and it's very regulated in that sense. But the whole purpose of that in my opinion is to dispel tension or evil and that's how I use it here is to release tension, to bypass it. And sometimes I just put it in and you wouldn't know it (like in the second movement, it's just four dotted half notes tied together so it sounds like one long fermata, you wouldn't know. On paper you can tell it's four.) So I use it in pretty much the same way as a device to dispel tension in the music. Not just as a device for superficial reasons, it has a purpose. (Becenti, interview, 5 November 2013)

Both composers employ Navajo concepts in their music as part of their sonic choices, values, and processes, even if they do not directly quote from Navajo song because they are Navajo. The idea of “cultural borrowing” is not overt in terms of taking Navajo chant or song as that is kept in a separate category by both Becenti and Chacon, but permeating cultural concepts are inherent in their works.

Many of my works employ specific cultural melodic and sonic material, such as instruments (rattles, stomping, and drums), along with concepts and language that are Onkwehon:we. I have also used instruments from other cultures such as Noah bells from India, slit drums from Africa, or Tibetan cymbals in my chamber piece “Trance Music” that explored meditative traditions in various cultures. One of the most direct borrowings was in a piece I wrote for violoncello and string orchestra, in which I used an excerpt of a Lakota melody as source material for development and dissection as harmonic, rhythmic, and textural material in which it is not recognizable to the ear, but an excerpt of the

melody is stated once toward the end of the piece.<sup>8</sup> Although the entire piece is based on this short excerpt that I transcribed from an old cassette that was included as part of a book by Black Bear, Sr. and Theisz, the melody is not recognizable as an arrangement, but is used rather as a compositional tool kit of sorts, and is thus dissected and disguised beyond recognition. The process of composing in this case was a logical deductive process based on compositional techniques, rather than a spontaneous, inspirational process. One such technique is the use of timbral effects as an expression of cultural emotion and sonic experience. “A variety of twentieth-century string techniques are employed to create a range of timbres, emotions and dynamics, including: *col legno batutto*, *ricochet*, repeated harmonic *glissandi*, false harmonics, and *Sprecht stimme* in the solo cello line” (Avery, program notes, 2011b). Both direct and indirect musical references are used in “Cante Tinz’a.”

This “accent” or “subtle cultural flavor” as well as the sonic and cultural “borrowing” is worth exploring as being part of both the product and process of composition by Native composers. A cultural flavor or indirect reference and direct cultural understanding may be expressed in actual pieces, in the explanation of pieces, or as a tool for preparing the performance of pieces. Marcia Herndon quotes a Hupa singer’s process for making a song: “I have made two songs for the White Deer Dance. When I made them, I would go out by myself and sing them low so nobody could hear them. Then I sang them next time there was a White Deer Dance. Then people knew them; they were my songs. I would sing them again and again” (Herndon 1982:18). This

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<sup>8</sup> Upon request of the Mankato Symphony orchestra who was touring and honoring Lakota territory, they asked me to write a piece that honored the Lakota. I chose to refer to a melody from *Cante T’inza* a genre of songs called “brave heart” or “strong heart” songs from one of the original soldier societies of the Lakota. This work is based on a few of the melodic, rhythmic and spoken word motives from a traditional *cante t’inza* recorded by Ben Black Bear, Sr. and R.D. Theisz. Avery, program notes, 2011b.

alludes to one of many processes used by a traditional singer, in which he went into nature to gather inspiration and enjoy solitude for creating new songs which he then brought back to share with the community. People know these songs as his “compositions” and participate with him in the repetition of them. Although this process is for traditional song writing, there are elements that are shared by the Classical Native “music-creating artists” I have studied. Most of the composers have agreed that a contemporary “classical” composition is one that is notated,<sup>9</sup> but many have also composed experimental works that fall outside of that domain and yet I believe are still part of a “Classical Native” “genre.” In collaboration with *Postcommodity*, Chacon created “P’oe iwe navi ûnp’oe dînmuu (My Blood is in the Water) – 2010” as a

Mixed-media installation, sculpture with sound. (mule deer taxidermy, wood poles, water, amplifier, drum)... a commissioned Indigenous response to Santa Fe’s 400th anniversary memorializing the mule deer as a spiritual mediator of the landscape and pays tribute to the traditional processes through which Indigenous people put food on the table – which is an act of decolonization against the dominant culture’s process of commoditization, demand/supply and convenience. The work functions as a semiotic vehicle of continuity, connecting past and present through uninterrupted processes of Indigenous culture and community attached to this landscape. With blood dripping from the hanging deer carcass onto the amplified Pueblo drum, the piece becomes an ephemeral time-keeping instrument relaying the history and intonation of this land.<sup>10</sup>

I was not able to see and hear this piece live, but on a *Postcommodity* video of the work, I was struck by the musicality of the work in terms of emotional impact, rhythm, pitch, timbre, and resonance.<sup>11</sup> The timbre is one of a deep pow-wow drum or timpani and sound as if they are being struck by a yarn mallet to a low pitch that is somewhere between a C and a D. Although pitch was not dominant factor concern in the creation of

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<sup>9</sup> See Tekeni article (Avery 2012) about Classical Native that includes definitions and understandings with interviews by several CN composers.

<sup>10</sup> <http://postcommodity.com/MyBloodIsInTheWater.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M86drs2pLOg>

this work, the pitch vibration, along with its repetition and resonance, create a deep low rumble that I experience in the pit of my stomach. The sound of the amplified drum holds an intensity equally powerful to that of the visual and political effects of the sculpture. This use of repetition of pitch that is in between Western tempered frequencies, as well as the indeterminate stretching of time is reminiscent of a work for string quartet by minimalist composer Phil Niblock.<sup>12</sup> One experiences a stretching of time where the drops of blood land on the drum at indeterminate times leaving the listener waiting for the next sound while experiencing the silence between sounds, yet the silence is gently filled with people talking in the background or the wind moving the bushes in the performance area. Furthermore, space, the sounds, and visuals of the performance space and sculpture change and are an integral part of the performance. As mentioned in the quote from *Postcommodity*, there are many levels to an Indigenous concept of time, history, space, and this work is a perfect example of the concept of *non:wa* where an innovative work connects the past and present.

Again in explanation of his “Cello Suite” Becenti uses Navajo concepts to explain why he breaks with form and how important structure is in his compositions and his culture. His incorporation of Navajo spirit lines (geometric patterns) reflects his regard for form and structure in his music where *non:wa* is revealed in the swirling existence of old and new:

In Navajo we realize a concept it's called a spirit line – basically it's just geometric patterns in Navajo weaving, it's very linear, but there's a spirit line that's broken in one space, so that thoughts can move freely in between. It's purposely left unfinished that one line, so it can allow thoughts to move. It's imperfect I guess. So, I guess that's what it would be like for me because it doesn't have to be perfect. There's enough of it (structure) in there. For example, the pizz at the end of the recitative No.

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<sup>12</sup> I premiered one of his string quartets in Potsdam, Germany with The Soldier String Quartet in the 1980s.

2, breaks with the form of the whole piece because it's structured to mirror one another. The first sounding of what it would be mirroring is played with the bow, so technically it would also need to be played with the bow, but in the spirit of that what I just said, I don't need to be that strict about it. That's just a way of looking at it. I like the pizz as well, how it sounds. (Becenti, interview, 9 Nov 2012)

Becenti also looks back at a work and describes it to others using Navajo metaphors, often taken from the natural environment: "So, the first little piece is more dissonant and the second is more tonal. That's just a contrast. So it's really about contrast, balancing out contrast. So the three movements and the two interlocking inner movements, it seems stronger, or more stable, like a piece of stone" (Becenti, interview, 10 November 2013). Both composers use "overt" cultural references to create "subtle cultural sounds," where culture permeates the works and tradition is inherent. In an interview by Alfred with Teyowisonte, a young warrior from Kahnawake, he asks him about Little Bear's concept of being "de-cultured" by colonization: "now what we're trying to do is re-evolve back to that great state. This effort is reinforced by traditional teachings because through them we learn that everything happens in cycles. Everything begins and ends and turns into the same thing again. This is the way of the world" (Alfred 2005:276). Not only does it once again bring us back to an Indigenous concept of "*non:wa*" or "modernity," but it also emphasizes the fact that tradition informs our present to assist us in creating our future.<sup>13</sup> For many Native peoples, learning and living our traditions strengthens our ability to be truly successful today. By going back and bringing tradition forward, we are strengthened in the "modern" world. It is a vital aspect in the essence of Indigenous contemporary art and life.

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<sup>13</sup> Many studies of cultural memory emphasize something similar, e.g. Connerton, Boym, Pilzer.

### *Compositional Processes and Non:wa*

Can compositional processes reveal an Indigenous sensibility? Stan Bennett, Associate Professor Emeritus, College of Education at the University of Maryland, interviewed eight contemporary classical composers about their process of musical creation. Both Bennett and Gidal were informed by the extensive work on creative composition process done in the 1930s by Bahle, who identified two types of composers: the “working type” who uses a rational compositional plan for form and motivic material, and the “inspirational type” who does little planning and relies on improvisational techniques (Bahle 1938:313-322). According to Anishnaabek composer Barbara Croall's description of her writing, she seems to categorize herself as an inspirational type:

Even though I've had some degree of Western training, which I respect and have found enriching, I come from a very strongly intuitive way of thinking and creating. I don't think methodically about what I'm doing, I realize after the piece is done. For Aboriginal people, when you create something, it first comes from the heart, from your feelings and emotions. I'm not saying that artists from other cultures don't think that way, but many already have theoretical systems that create a see-sawing tension between intuition and theory. Songs that I learned and sang were not written down, it was all oral tradition, same with prayers and stories, it's all through listening. Writing things down came later, when there was a need to document these things, and the documentation was done by first contact Europeans.<sup>14</sup>

Holtz explains Bahle's “working types” as those who “consciously construct musical work, tend toward experimentation, and judge the results of their work with artistic reasoning.” If we use Bahle's concepts, composers of this type might include Bach, Beethoven, and Reger, while the “Inspiration type” create their music in an unconscious eruption of creativity. Only in later stages of the compositional process does rational reasoning come into play. Examples of representatives of this type are Schubert,

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<sup>14</sup> [http://www.thewholenote.com/wholenote\\_oct\\_02/composer.html](http://www.thewholenote.com/wholenote_oct_02/composer.html)

Berlioz, and Tchaikovsky” (Holtz 2009:208-9). Holtz concluded in his study that “most musicians experience an alternation between phases of intuitive inspiration and phases of deliberate rational construction during the creative process” (2009:207). These categories deserve closer scrutiny. Interestingly, as early as 1927 Frances Densmore divided Native American musical works into two categories: those that were “received in dreams,” which she also referred to as “inspirational,” and those that she called “composed songs,” that were usually made up to a “regular rhythm” and that which had a core idea that “was a *thought* on which the mind of the would-be composer was concentrated” (Densmore 1927:383). She wrote about songs that were made collaboratively or alone, while swinging, walking, or drumming to create a regular rhythm. Her differentiation seems to separate songs that were received in a completed form from songs that had to be worked out. Although similar to Bahle in terms of differentiating inspiration from work, they both consist of creative inspiration. These binary categories are problematic as the complexities of the creative process are overlapping and work in the past, present and future.

When asked to describe his compositional process, Chacon said that it varies according to the situation and original inspiration or motivation for the piece. He seems to believe that rational reasoning comes into play almost immediately and works in conjunction with the germinal creative spark:

It changes every time. A lot of times— more than not— it’ll start off with a title or an idea. Not necessarily a story or a narrative. Almost never is it a story. The title generally has nothing to do with the piece, ever, but that’s the first motivation to start and finishing a piece. Other than that, it might be a process or system that sets the entire piece into motion. Other times it’s a group of people I’m collaborating with. Sometimes it’s all of that and it’s put into motion and I have to go back and find a way to pit myself into it. There are all different kinds of processes; whether it’s a recording

project or a written, notated composition, or just an improvised performance situation. (Chacon, interview, Nov 2012)

It seems that for many of the composers that I have worked with, the process may be individual to each creative project, even if each person has some specific values and practices that they bring to each composition:

I could safely say that with most of the notated pieces that I have written, the instrumentation and the performers are considered foremost. From there, an explanation of new sounds will be the main concern or motivation for writing the piece. That is usually going to determine the form rather than a series of content being thrown together and the form being an afterthought. The form usually comes about as a result of one or a few of the sounds that I come up with. There are other kinds of conceptual symbols or ideas that get relayed through the piece in different ways. For example, the cello piece for you was a triangle, so the number three was a big motivation and determined the form of the piece. I liked what you were saying, that the number three also came up with each point representing the composer, the performer, and the audience. Three was a consideration for everything that was done in the piece. If ever there was a wall I came upon, three would be the answer for that. (Ibid.)

Although as far as Chacon is concerned the number three has no cultural significance, he used three to explore three methods of notation that have political implications having to do with Indigenous standpoints: standard notation, symbolic images for improvisation, and oral learning (where the cellist is asked to listen to a pre-recorded CD). These methods are both musical experiment and a political statement on the role of linguistic, pictorial, and aural modes of transmission. It is here that Chacon's Indigenous "trickster" presents himself, as he frequently experiments, putting questions or issues out for debate rather than offering answers. He has called himself a non-spiritual advisor who likes to offer questions regarding spirituality, rather give answers.<sup>15</sup>

In my piece "Decolonization"(2006), I offer political questions as to government policies, along with questions of de-colonizing. I often bring music to audiences to pose

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<sup>15</sup> <http://theendofbeing.com/raven-chacon/>

questions about the misconceptions of culture and my identity, ultimately in an attempt to break open and shift stereotypes. Through the use of indirect and direct musical referencing, I incorporate what are considered “American traditional” songs (blues, national anthem, chant) with “Native American traditional” songs (Apache, Yuman, Cherokee, Rotinonhsión:ni) to create a sense of irony, but also to once again merge past and present for future implication:

This work was composed after hearing a talk by Kanienkéhaka elder, Tom Porter, at the Kanatsioharè:ke Mohawk community where he discussed the question, “How do you decolonize the colonized?” His lecture was mixed with storytelling, humor, compassion, myth, history, and current solutions. In this work, I too mix a variety of thematic elements in which I borrow or am inspired by musical themes from First Nation music, such as a Yuman healing song, Iroquois women’s dance, and a Cherokee peace chant, while also borrowing from newer Western songs, such as early American blues and the National Anthem, as well as Gregorian chant. This piece asks many questions. (Avery 2007b)

In workshops on the piece, I ask participants what they hear as traditional and as contemporary? Of course, both the stomp dance and anthem can be considered traditional, while the performance of such can be contemporary. I introduce the audience to my cello, which is from 1780, and as they figure out its age, they conclude that it falls in the traditional category, when I remind them that to an Ndn, this is a “modern” invention brought over from Europe. The relativity of time and definition comes into play.

The compositional process alternated between the inspiration of borrowed musical elements and used a storytelling, through-composed form, but employed specific rational manipulations of compositional technique on the borrowed melodies. Each composer tends to begin with an idea, emotion, or circumstance for the piece, and the compositional process tends to be dictated by each individual work and circumstances

upon which they are creating the work. Again, this reminds us of the interplay or alternation between inspiration and working types put forth by Holtz.

Max Graf, Austrian musician and critic, did one of the earliest, comprehensive studies on the psychological process of composing, published in 1947. He described four steps in the musical composition process in which he organized the process in a linear manner, but noted that the phases overlapped, worked with each other, and often made a complete circle back.<sup>16</sup> Based on the work of Graf, Bennett came up with his own stages for the process of composing that also overlap and inform each other: The Germinal Idea, Sketch, First Draft, Elaboration and Refinement, Final Draft Copying, and Revision. Bennett's "germinal idea" and Graf's "productive mood" where "subconscious themes, melodies, or ideas break through to consciousness and are seized by the conscious mind" (Bennett 1976:4) are what most interest me in terms of understanding an indigenous compositional process. What inspires Indigenous composers? Is it any different from what inspires other contemporary composers, and how does it show up in the actual compositions and performances of the works?

Bennett sees the "germinal idea" as central to the composing process, and divides it into external and internal events; for example, an internal event may be an emotional state, or it may be an inspiration that occurs as the result of an altered state of consciousness, while an external event may be an environmental occurrence (talking, activity, climate change), another work of art, or an improvisation on a musical instrument.

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<sup>16</sup> 1. Productive mood where "subconscious themes, melodies, or ideas break through to consciousness and are seized by the conscious mind," 2. Musical conception, 3. Sketch which is often attempted at same time as #2, in which the composer works with "stenographic excerpts of the musical idea rather than finished pictures," and 4. composing process consisting of "condensation and expansion of the musical figures evoked during musical conception." Bennett, 1976:4.

In an interview with Chacon about his sound installation piece “Singing Toward the Wind Now/ Singing Toward the Sun Now,” he explained that it initially seemed to fall into the second category as it was inspired by the environment of Canyon de Chelly and the inspiration of the electrical towers, but upon reflection he acknowledges that his concepts of the giant monsters and Navajo deities call to question his emotional and subconscious experiences with his own mythology. The work was commissioned by Time New Mexico as a land art piece on the reservation where Chacon grew up. The installation began in 2012 and consists of a series of four sound sculptures that are about eight feet high, some of which have sound generators, solar panels and wind harps to create sound:

That’s a piece I’ve been thinking about since I was a child. There were these giant monsters walking through the desert. That had always been a story in my head. Those were symbols, or signs, that a bigger being was watching over you for better or worse. I call them monsters, but I wanted them to be symbols of the Navajo Reservation rather than encroachments. It was my decision to make them a council where they would speak together, as if they were disguised as these monsters. You could stand by them and listen to them; learn from them. That was a mythology I’ve thought about for a long time . . . They’re designed obviously after electrical towers, but for me I think the electrical towers also look like Navajo deities called yeis and so they take on these designs that I believe maybe were foreseen sometime in the past. And have come to actualization in the present . . . The shapes are very geometrical. One looks like a stalk of corn, one looks like a lightning bolt, and two look sort of like figures. It’s possible that someone had seen those in the past and had drawn them. Part of the mythology in it is that these shapes were influenced by Navajo geometry. I’m not really sure how people thought of the shapes for the electrical towers. Some of them even look like heads with earrings hanging from their ears. The shapes are just fascinating to me (Chacon, interview, November 2012).

**Figure 4.2** “Singing Toward the Wind Now/ Singing Toward the Sun Now,”



(<http://timenm.com/Artists/ravenchacon.html>, accessed April 28, 2013)

Using Gidal’s model, the work does not include “overt musical borrowing,” nor is it simply an “accent” or “subtle cultural flavor,” and “cross-cultural” competency also misses the complex understanding of this work. Chacon takes his current life experience and inventive experimentation with sound, while bringing in mythology of the past and creating something that does not recreate the past, but allows it to reemerge. The present sculptural commission swirls back, connecting to the past, and comes back again, promising future sounds as different conditions cause ever-changing sounds to occur. Chacon sang specific sounds that the sculpture made during varying conditions, “the sound changes when the sun shines, when it’s cloudy and when birds fly through them”

(Chacon, Workshop November 2012). The work interacts with the reservation's past, present, and desire for the future: "Singing Toward' is a recognition of beauty amongst encroaching technological 'monsters'. The geometries of the Diné people crawl onto these 'monsters' to reclaim them and shift them back into structures which will serve our people" (ibid.) His Indigenous worldview is the work; it permeates the work, not as "accent," nor as "overt musical borrowing." This particular piece is reminiscent of the work of John Cage, who invented some of the earliest electronic music devices and left chance to serve as a guiding "conductor" in most of his works.

I would like to elaborate on the juxtaposition of disparate cultural elements within one piece based on the inspiration of a piece I have recently started to compose. I attended the exhibit "Identity by Design" in March 2007 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in which they had several Ghost Dance outfits on display. Being in front of those dresses moved me to tears and I was frozen in front of them for some time. When I moved away from them and turned the corner, there was a beautifully designed scrim that gave the effect of ancestors coming back to us as they danced on the plains. This internal (both emotional and altered state of consciousness) experience inspired me to begin working on a new piece in which Western sounds of a Bach Air begin seeping through a soundscape of contemporary Native American composition. The technical workings of this compositional process are external, while the inspiration and basic groundwork remain internal. The emotional and inspirational grounding of ancestral connection and the soundscapes and Indigenous ways of knowing of my Rotinonhsión:ni culture are in the foreground, while my conservatory education as a classical musician influence the work by pushing through the compositional scrim thus

reversing the illustration at the Smithsonian. Inspiration came from my Indigenous sensibilities and was then worked out, in large part, using my European-based training. Swirling pasts and presents into future compositions underlies the compositional process.

On the opposite side of the spectrum is a work by Becenti that is fully notated and uses Navajo ideas that are unrecognizable to the listener. Becenti's subtle cultural accents are part of what Bahle, Gidal and Bennett call the germinal or productive phase of his compositional process, during which time "subconscious themes, melodies, or ideas break through to consciousness and are seized by the conscious mind." (Bennett 1976:4, referring to Graf). Using his "Cello Suite" again as an example, Becenti used various metaphors to describe to me how I might perform the piece, such as his comments about how the "faster movement is comical and exaggerated like some of the Navajo characters," or an instruction to play like "how a chant would start," play as if you are "singing," "play cello as if playing strong drums" (notes taken during rehearsal with Becenti, 8 Nov 2012). His cross-cultural competency is demonstrated in "employing things you'd associate with traditional diatonic music and aspects of dissonant music such as tritones, sevenths" (ibid.). Some of Chacon's performance notes for "Táágo Dez'á" included instructions in the first song to play as if "always being chased," and in regard to the Navajo symbols used in the same section, he said:

There's different designs in here like arrows, and this one is more what some of you may call Swastika, but that's not what it is - a symbol used in Hopi and Navajo meaning migration, this is symbol means a lot of different things to different tribes, but was unfortunately stolen for different reasons, so that's what it means. But again just because it means migration in some indigenous tribes, Dawn's able to interpret it however she wants - maybe some kind of circular movement or whatever she wants to use for that symbol." (Chacon, workshop, Nov 2012)

In the second section of Táágo Dez'á, Chacon suggested, “imagine being scared, looking for your grandfather, like in a desert, at night.” He instructs me to draw on my own memories and my own sense of the past. For the triple stopped pizzicati in the third section, he suggested I play so it sounds like “distorted pow-wow drums,” and at the end of the same movement, he suggested I fade like “the sound of a breeze” (rehearsals with Chacon, Nov 2008). In addition to using cultural metaphors in the writing of their pieces, both composers gave rehearsal notes that used specific cultural references and metaphors as they coached rehearsals of their works. While at a book-writing workshop for a new book about modernities in First Nations Music, Heidi Senungetuk (Inupiat Alaska Native scholar and musician) presented her thoughts about performing contemporary music on the violin. Although she explained her experience of playing a piece by a non-native contemporary composer George Rochberg, I think my slight digression is important to mention here as it beautifully illustrates her Native worldview as she learns, performs and experiences music:

In recent years I've been performing a suite of Caprice Variations for solo violin from the American composer George Rochberg, and reinterpreting the titles into Iñupiaq language: *Moderately Fast*, *Fantastico* becomes *Niqsaneaq*, or Seal Hunting, and *Poco Agitato ma con molto Rubato* becomes *Ikit, Kumait*, Lice, Bugs. My intention in providing a reinterpretation of the titles of each variation is to show the audience what I'm thinking about, what images or ideas inspire me to make music out of the notes provided by Rochberg. Our Indigenous thinking is on the inside of everything that we do, even though at times it may look like some form of assimilation on the outside. (Senungetuk, workshop presentation, 13 November 2013)

This refers more to the performance process than the compositional process, but these processes may reflect important intersections between the compositional process of the *past*, the performance process of the *present*, and the audience's experience of the music

in the *future*. I am interested in pursuing this topic more in the future, but cannot give it much attention in this dissertation.

Ron Warren, Echota Tsalgi Cherokee composer, performer and educator, wrote about his compositional process that also demonstrates improvisational and working concepts: “The line between composition and improvisation has become less distinct for me, although I do think more consciously about larger shapes and gestures when composing than I generally do while improvising” (Warren, email, 18 May 2013).

Chacon’s process of composition is based on collaboration and improvisation, which he often refers to as experimentation. This experimentation in compositional process also changes from performance to performance, depending on the piece. When asked about his creative process, he said:

It changes every time. A lot of times, more than not, it’ll start off with a title or an idea. Not necessarily a story or a narrative. Almost never is it a story. The title generally has nothing to do with the piece, ever, but that’s the first motivation to start and finish a piece. Other than that, it might be a process or a system that sets the entire piece into motion. Other times, it’s a group of people I’m collaborating with. Sometimes it’s all of that and it’s put into motion and I have to go back and find a way to put myself into it. There are all different kinds of processes: whether it’s a recording project or a written, notated composition, or just an improvised performance situation. (Chacon, interview, November 2013)

As mentioned in more depth in Chapter Five, Chacon uses intentional improvisation that is determined largely by the sounds as the piece itself changes and evolves with each performance. At first he was concentrating on using the membrane of a balloon as a sound device, then he experimented with filling the balloon with CO<sub>2</sub> to direct the sound. In a later version, he was able to shake a rack of shells with the sound going through the balloon and into microphones by way of transducers, so the balloon was acting as a generator for activating physical motion. This piece shows how he might

develop an instrument and rehearse a piece over time. The sound of it is the initial consideration: “There may be other processes of generating sound from an instrument or an instrument might change after experimentation. My pieces are performances more than anything. They are intended to be seen rather than just heard. It is very visual. The instruments are odd enough to get your attention and make you want to watch” (ibid.).

In conversation about improvisation and composition with Chacon, he mentioned that he doesn’t consciously compose “indigenously” or improvise “indigenously, but since that’s who is some of it may come through. His “Indigenous” focus is more dependent on the parameters of a specific project. A composer’s performance instructions may also stem from an Indigenous worldview as with the concepts of time and pitch in Chacon’s “Táágo Dez’á.” “The feeling of time is very loose and free. When something is not possible, pitch can be sacrificed to make it possible” (Chacon, 2007 Score). For the third section, he included program notes “This song follows a steady beat (unlike song 1), but should be loose and not precise. It is preferred that the pulse slightly speed up and slow down slightly throughout . . . It may be difficult to play some 3-note chords. In this case, the middle note of the chord is optional.” (ibid.). According to these performance notes, he considers time flexible and pitch a secondary consideration, in contrast to the norm in classical contemporary performance that stresses accurate pitch and very specific rhythms.<sup>17</sup>

Becenti’s concept of time is also flexible, but his notation for specific intervals is firm. In preparing for a presentation of piece that Becenti wrote, he came up with a Rainbow experiment to illustrate the intervallic structure of the piece. He usually begins

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<sup>17</sup> Having performed works under the direction of some of the Masters of twentieth and twenty-first century composition such as Wuorinen, Wolpe, Carter, Davidovsky, Glass, I found this to be true.

composing with a specific intervallic and pitch structure in mind, and that may then determine the form. Like Chacon and myself, form is usually determined by something external, whether it be pitch in the case of Becenti, history and sound in the case of Chacon, or cultural melody/memory in my case. Becenti uses a Navajo concept for balance in his use of dissonance and consonance: “The whole piece is really simple—it is based on tritones, sevenths, and the minor seventh chord, so all the material is derived from that. So, it starts out in the first movement, the Overture, all the material, all the little themes is stated, except for the minor seventh chord which is in the third movement and that gets explored after that as well” (Becenti, interview, 8 November 2012). His concept of intervallic tension and release was easily understood during a rehearsal coaching I had with him in 2009 when he said, ‘these dissonant intervals are sensual and sometimes even violent. They create tension and then there’s an octave—the cake. That’s the release. Let them have cake” (Avery fieldnotes after Skype rehearsal with Becenti, 2 February 2009). Again interested in tension and release, but in relation to time, I was instructed, particularly in the third movement, to “push and pull” the time in any way that kept the integrity of suspense and release, and to hold tied notes according to how long it felt right to settle.

Although Becenti’s style is very note-driven when compared to Chacon, who is perhaps more interested in sonic landscapes, both composers view time as flexible, something to be determined by the performer and the performance. Most of my works are conducted or are in a specific meter; the flexibility lies in the performers’ (which include the audience’s participation) interpretation and improvisation, as well as dictates of the performance space. Their concepts of time taken from their cultural worldview are

brought consciously into their contemporary compositions and are then brought into future interpretation by performers and audience.

Holtz acknowledged that it was difficult to research the compositional processes of composers in part due to the long timeframes involved. Bennett asked very specific questions of his composers with regard to process, whereas I left mine more open-ended. Some specific reasons for this were that I do not have enough composers to make a definitive study, and some of his questions, though interesting, did not seem necessary to me. Furthermore, some of the composers are relatively young in their career to be asked some of the questions that he posed in his studies, as self-reflection is not of primary interest to some of them and many of them do not have enough experience on which to reflect.<sup>18</sup> Bennett separated logical from emotional states as types of motivation for composers, and I did not want to guide the questions in that way, as I believe they can both work together in the compositional process and may not be clearly delineated. I preferred to ask the questions about specific pieces, with as little leading as possible. As a result, many questions were answered with reference to each individual piece, as it seemed that we did not have one set way that we composed; each piece had a life of its own, even in the compositional process. One issue in asking composers about their compositional process is that many of us really never think about how we do it, we just do it, but most composers could talk about what inspired them and what the “germinal”

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<sup>18</sup> Bennet’s questions, 5: 1. Can you recall when you first began composing? How did it happen? What stimulated it? 2. What kind of progression do you see in your music from the earliest to the present time? 3. Please describe in some detail the process by which you compose music. 4. Could you describe the conditions under which you composed your last piece of music? 5. What physical conditions seem to facilitate your composing? 6. What individuals have had the greatest impact on your music? What experiences have had the greatest effect on your music? 7. Are there particular emotional states that seem to elicit your best compositions? Is there a predominant emotional theme in your music? 8. To what extent do you employ logic in composing? That is, is composing primarily a logical, deductive process for you, or is it a more spontaneous process? 9. Why do you compose? How do you see the impact of your music on the world?

idea was that guided the piece. My concern lies with the question as to whether there are Indigenous creative and performative inspirations or methods of working, rather than with conducting a psychological study of the phases for composing a piece of music. “In any kind of musical activity (including listening to music, playing music *and* creating music), people develop a musical identity, which itself conversely influences a person’s musical activities” (Holtz 2009:209). This identity consists of the whole person as a social, cultural, and psychological being.

Lastly, I would like to briefly explore the experience of composing. Sabaneev, an early researcher in the psychology of musico-creative processes, believed that the tonal world of composers resembled the dream life of the ordinary person (Bennett 1976:3). Bennett looked at his concept of internal and external events in terms of the role that emotion had on composing, and he quoted Leonard Bernstein’s experience: “I wish I could convey to you the excitement and insane joy of it, which nothing else touches, not making love, not that wonderful glass of orange juice in the morning; nothing! Nothing touches the extraordinary, jubilant sensation of being caught up in this thing— so that you’re not just inside yourself . . . It’s madness and it’s marvelous. There’s nothing in the world like it” (Bennett 1976:11, from Bernstein 1970:283).

In response to Bernstein’s comment, Chacon wrote, “My work is not interested in conveying or relaying any personal emotions, nor emotions in general” (Chacon, email, 3 May 2013). Of course, his work often gets highly emotionally charged responses from exhilaration to rage. For example in an early performance of “Yellowface,” some audience members put their hands over their ears and were visibly upset after the performance, while others sat wide-eyed on the edge of their seats, cheering after the

performance.

Becenti responded to Bernstein's description of what composition meant to him in the following way:

Beyond all the intuition pseudo-spiritual nonsense, what music does for me simply is to satisfy. I've dedicated myself to music more than anything I ever have in my life because it is deeply satisfying. I recall the first time I heard my music performed for me by other people I quite literally had an out of body experience. I was 16 years old in high school and had never heard what I've written performed for me. A wave of absolute euphoria swept over me and I found myself looking down at myself and everyone else in the room. No experience before or since has approached the joy I felt in that moment. Making music is a constant source of satisfaction because I just find it so absolutely wonderful and it is a challenge to force the music into existence . . . I also like Bernstein's comment a lot as well, its very true. (Becenti, email, 2 May 2013)

Becenti's satisfaction reaches euphoria when the piece is realized in performance and as he composes, looks forward to the expectation of performance. In many conversations with him, it has become clear that he became hooked on composition at that first performance. I also had the pleasure of taking him to one of his first symphony orchestra concerts in which Marin Alsop was conducting a symphony by Beethoven, one of his favorite composers. His delight was apparent in this circumstance as well, showing that what is important is not just in the making of the music, but also the experience of music (ibid.).

When asked by graduate students at Memorial University to describe what composing is like for me, I said the following:

I love composing. It's one of my favorite things to do. Time stops when I compose. I forget to eat, forget appointments, forget to get the mail. It becomes all encompassing and I'm so inside the process that all else falls away . . . I go so out of body and into a dream or trance state, that when I lived in NYC, I couldn't cross the street safely after finishing a period of writing. I had to be extra cautious. Ray John suggested I burn sage afterwards to protect myself because I was too open, or too ditzzy, as he

liked to say. I learned to have a little ritual when I finished writing, to put everything away, very consciously, get something to eat, and take a long walk outside so I can get back to the world. I guess it's like a deep meditation. (Transcription of lecture for Kati Szego's class, April 2010)

Warren described how an intuitive process of creativity that involves a strong relationship to improvisation:

I don't feel like I am composing, but that I am open and hearing well what the music wants to be. This is when "plans" or "schemes" I might have made as a starting point usually get tossed aside. I enjoy improvising outside. When that is going well, again, I don't feel like I am really doing anything. I have the sense of being part of the soundscape as naturally as any bird or insect might be... The pat answer, I suppose, would be to say that my music making has become "more intuitive", but I don't think that is actually what has happened. I believe it would be more accurate to say that I hope to allow the music to emerge from what I hear when I am connected and in good relationship to what is going on around me rather than trying to control the music with my will or intellect or cleverness or technique, call it whatever you want. (Warren, email, 18 May 2013)

Our processes involve intuition, inspiration and varying degrees of improvisation that although very intellectual and technical, are a starting point in the creative process. Due to Becenti's primary focus on notes, he may be placed on the work type of music-creating, as mentioned earlier, while Chacon, Warren and I may lean toward the inspirational-type, who then add work type. This second type "does little preplanning, relying instead on improvisation; the emotional impact of the work is anticipated as the piece is being composed" (Bennett 1976:4). How composers think about how they compose connects with the compositional processes and types that Holtz, Bennet, Bahle, and Gidal suggest with Indigenous concepts of relationship, time and protocol as part of the process.

### *Music-creating through Dreams*

Another part of the “inspirational” type of music-creating is music given to composers and performers in dreams “The oldest Indian songs were said to be ‘received in dreams’ . . . by a supernatural visitant”” (Densmore 1927:393). In many traditions, including the Pima tradition, singers “derive songs partly from tradition, partly from the individual’s experience with the supernatural” (Herndon 1982:17). This fits in with Densmore’s description of “”composed songs” versus “inspirational” songs and adds another level to swirling consciousness and time, in which ideas go between dimensional space and time continuums. “For the Native American, music and dancing derive from the mythical time of the creation and the source of human life . . . In another type of thinking of Native Americans, the origin of music is not restricted to creation myths or the idea of traditions reaching back into the origin of human society. It is possible for the individual, at any time, to get in touch with higher powers and peak experiences. In dreams, revelations, or visions, the individual may either actively seek or passively receive not only confirmation and definition of his very personality, but also tools for survival and transcendence. Frequently, such material received is in the form of songs” (ibid.:12-13). Navajo teachers *Dinneh-kloth* and *Hasteen-baazhon* refer to dreams in the following manner: “for when we dream, that is the spirit inside of us speaking, and when we hear sounds in our ears, or feel a pricking in our throats, or a twitching of our nerves, or a popping in our noses; that is *Niltche B’yazh* (the Wind Spirit) telling us . . .” (Lincoln [1935] 2003:215)<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> This was told to Mary Wheelwright in unpublished fieldnotes (The Myth of Sontso, pp. 56-7, 1933) by *Yuinth-naizi* from near Fort Defiance who said the “myth came from a medicine man called *Dinneh-kloth*

Dreams and music have similar qualities and occupy similar psychological realms. Psychologists Gutheil, Nass and Noy concluded in their research that dreams and music have similar qualities and functions, “with potential for tapping preverbal, primary process thinking. Both experiences have been referred to as altered states of consciousness” (Sand and Levin 1992:163) and become a symbolic “language of the unconscious” (ibid.:172). Dr. Shara Sand, who wrote extensively on her research into dreams, consciousness and music, believes they work together as “powerful experiences of the self, often providing restorative and integrative functions. Both music and dreams consist of non-verbal communication and preverbal experiences which can provide crucial access to vital dimensions of self-experience that may otherwise be unexplored” (ibid.:163). Sand also writes about how music and dreams connect one to self and the concept of twinship that allows a sharing of that self with others through a sub-consciousness connection to music. Often the message in “dream-music” is both restorative and integrative. Its purpose may be to be shared by others as both dream and music, thus recreating the dream through music in the conscious world.<sup>20</sup>

Barbara Tedlock, in her *Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations* (1987), writes about the importance of dreaming for the Lacandón Mayas, Brazilian Kayapo, Rarámuri of Mexico, Zuni, and Inupiat among others. Jung suggested the “use of auxiliary artistic techniques such as drawing and automatic writing” as a method for consciously enriching the original dream experience. This has subsequently

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and later Hasteen-baazhon who lived up the Canyon de Chelly and died in 1907” (Lincoln: 1935, 2003:215).

<sup>20</sup> This was what I found in research I did on Women, Dreams and Music, by several music-creators who created music from dreams, including Uda Tengah of the Temiar in Malaysia, Joanne Shenandoah, Wolf Clan member of the Rotinohsion:ni and Beauler Dyoko, an Mbira musician of the Shona tradition in Zimbabwe.

undergone considerable elaboration within various media, including clay modeling, painting, and sandplay (Bernsohn 1968; Tucci 1969; Kalff 1980) and became an important aspect of other forms of psychology including Gestalt, psychosynthesis, oneirotherapy, and guided imagination (Tedlock 1987:9-10)). Strephon Kaplan Williams in his “Jungian-Senoi Dreamwork Manual” explains how art forms can be used to re-experience the symbology found in dreams and that symbols are interpreted from our specific past to give us information in the present that we may use to affect our future. “Cultural arts may serve to evoke archetypal energies, thus enriching our actual life experiences by creating more possibilities for expression” (Williams 1980:123). All of the composers with whom I have worked acknowledge that dreams are important resource for their music and that their sounds and symbols also reflect their heritage. Elyse Carter-Vosen in her work with Anishnaabek musicians said, “Dreams are deeply important. They are cosmological theory put into practice, pulled along/ through the fluid continuum from material to spiritual” (Society of Ethnomusicology presentation 16 November 2013).

In an interview I conducted with Joanne Shenandoah, wolf-clan member of the Oneida, Rotinonhsión:ni, she describes her dream/ music connection in Indigenous terms:

I believe all my music has been influenced by my ancestors and/or vision, so I am hoping that each song I write will have meaning to the person who listens.” When describing her work, she commented that her whole “Peacemakers Journey” recording came from a vision “where I asked my ancestors to help me with this recording. Primarily, songs of peace came to me. They all came in five days. I set the stage with candles and sweetgrass and sage. I made sure the rest of the world could leave me to my work for a few days. I spent the time with my hands to the universe and just asked for the songs to flow. (Shenandoah, email interview, 8 March 2005)

Shenandoah thinks that the songs composed for that work are different from the many others she has composed as they do not instruct or explain about peace, but are meant to manifest peace. In the process of remembering the music, she felt as if the songs became part of her and flowed easily through her. She also noted that the work has a universal source that she cannot take entire credit for, but is honored to have her name put with them.

When Joanne Shenandoah sings the songs she is brought to a place of “total peace,” similar to the place she experienced when “creating” the music. Audiences seem to respond in a similar way. Some “elders in Minnesota asked to see me after a concert once. They told me the songs from *Peacemaker’s Journey* were indeed songs of peace—same melodies they had already heard in their vision quests . . . not the same words . . . They told me these songs must be sung to bring peace to our world” (ibid.). They too experienced a sensation of total peace and an inner, non-verbal connection to the music. When asked if the feeling or experience of the dream came back to her when performing or teaching the songs, Joanne responded, “Yes, many times. Sometimes there are harmonies that seem to come from nowhere. The first time it happened, I thought it was the audience. It's happened about six times now” (Shenandoah, interview, 6 March 2005).

Studies of other Indigenous music-creating artists who incorporate dreams have been done among the Temiar and the Shona. Ethnomusicologist Marina Roseman also wrote about this concept of recreating the experience and purpose of a dream whose symbols are rich with their natural and cultural symbology. The *halaa*, or spirit mediums from the Temiar in Malaysia have the ability to dream songs they have received from spirit-guides who often take the soul of humanized form or natural entity, such as a

mountain, and are then able to “manifest the spirit-guides when later singing the given songs during ceremonial performances” (Roseman 1991:133-4). In performance, the song is taught the same way it was in the initial dream in a call and response format, one phrase at a time. The dreamt-song coaxes the participants into the dream as they become part of a spirit-possession by that spirit-guide and her song. This creates an important transformational communal experience of the dream as it is transmitted through group song. There is not an emphasis on a lead performer and teacher nor on the accompanying chorus, but on the spirit-guide and transmitted dream experience. Uda Tengah, spirit medium and healer received the song *Penhe:y* in a dream; it is from a genre of song that is given by the male spirit of the Perah fruit tree. Uda Tengah dreamt that the spirit wanted field-worker Marina Roseman and medicine woman Uda Tenga as his wives (one physical, one spiritual) so when Roseman returned home, she would remember Uda and her spirit-husband, the Perah-tree. The dream’s message through the song can be recreated by Roseman upon returning home.

As noted above, spirit sources of song are not uncommon in other cultures. This can also be seen in the music of Shona composer Beauler who became one of the first professional women mbira musicians as a result of possession by the spirit of her father whose spirit “instructed her to do so” (*Afamba Apota*, CD liner notes, 2000). All of the pieces recorded on her album *Afamba Apota* were given to her in dreams: “Her connection with the ancestral spirits is deep; through dreams, they have passed on all of the songs she plays” (ibid.).

When asked about music-creating and dreams from classical Native composers, Chacon answered that “much content comes from dreams and it is always a difficulty

transcribing these thoughts. I would say 30% of my work or ideas (including much text) comes from dreams” (Chacon, email, 3 May 2013). I have had several experiences of dreaming music.

In my trio “Konti:rio,” translated as wild animals from Kanienké:ha, I dreamt the entire piece seeing and hearing the notes and instrumentation. I woke up around 5 o’clock in the morning, and notated the entire piece on staff paper. It has some of the most interesting counterpoint that I have ever written, and although I had to work out some of it mathematically after the fact, most of the piece was notated exactly as in my dream. I could recall both the sounds of the music and the visual picture of the score from my dream. While remaining in a partial dream-state so as not to lose the information, I wrote the whole work down, from start to finish, on music score paper. To this day, it is one of my favorite “compositions” as I feel no personal ownership or criticism of the piece, having been transmitter rather than composer. When performing or hearing the work, it brings me a feeling of completion and centeredness. Chacon and I both received information (i.e., inspiration) that then had to be worked out, once again working within time continuums. This dream-state can also be thought of as an altered waking state, or more as literally from our dreams in sleep: “Dream and song are intimately connected” (Herndon 1982:14). Rather than receiving music or inspiration from dreams, Tio compares his music writing to dreams. He hears what he calls musical markers as harmonic material that a listener connects with emotionally and refers to them in terms of imagery. “Music does that, with musical markers. It creates imagery, just like dreams, I think how you remember things can be visual, imagery allows people to think better and imagine—music works that way as imagery and it allows your mind to wander” (Becenti,

interview, 9 Nov 2012). Altamirano said in an interview with Alfred, “To be indigenous is to use our dreams, not as a way of thinking about what we are not, but as a way to interpret our reality, our circumstances” (Alfred 2005:142) and as a means of expressing our reality through music.

Folklorist Amber Ridington used a reflexive, collaborative interview approach preferred by many ethnomusicologists and scholars of Indigenous research. She interviewed musician Garry Oker who “mixes traditional Dane-zaa dreamers’ songs with ‘modern sounds’ creating new music inspired by the songs (Hoefnagels and Diamond 2012:63). In the interview he talked about the dreamers who are a social institution for the Dane-zaa, as opposed to more individual dreamers in many other First Nation communities:

the dreamers’ [songs] that go back in time for many Dane-zaa people. Over the years, I’ve always heard other sounds, and because I play in the modern world, I really believe that we need to listen and hear the songs as we hear the world today... So those [dreamers’ songs] were my inspiration for recreating, or I would say, recomposing, these traditional songs . . . what I wanted to do was harness the healing power of these old songs, and then preserve it in a whole new way so that in the modern world people can understand these healing songs. These songs are not meant to be kept to ourselves. They need to evolve with the world as we hear it.” (Ibid.:63-4)

In this interview, Oker employs songs dreamt by others and adds his own dreaming to the work demonstrating a non:wa concept as he brings traditional songs into his contemporary works. Recounting the dream, he shares his “interpretation” or creative telling of the dream with others, and we experience the dream with him. Ridington does explain however that Oker’s use of these ceremonial songs is extremely controversial for many members of the community.

“Throughout time many famous artists, poets, musicians, scientists and writers

have acknowledged their dreams as a source of ideas and creations.”<sup>21</sup> Carl Jung proposed that dreams express collective unconscious memories and instincts shared by all people and are a means of connecting to the unconscious and spiritual realm. The thought process found in the composing of music is similar to that of symbolism and imagery that Jung discovered in dreaming. It is processed predominantly in the right hemisphere of the brain which is thought to regulate nonlinear and creative processing, or primary process thinking and is more emotionally holistic as opposed to the left hemisphere which is thought to be more linear and logical in its information processing, reflective of secondary processes. Although it has been found that the two are integrated and function in a complementary way, dreaming and music function predominantly in the right hemisphere. The sharing of music and dreams can create twin-ship, a feeling of sameness, of being "like" someone else, which provides a feeling of knowing and being known by (an)other. Dreams may be considered an important performance and place of music-creation.

Indigenous music-makers have always been modern in creativity and in performance both in the “now” of the past and the present; having a choice among a variety of musical genres may allow a reemergence of traditional ideas and sonic landscapes in new contexts for the future. Gidal, Bennet, Graf, and Bahle all discuss types of compositional processes in the context of culture looking at overt musical borrowing, accent, internal and external influences and working with what inspires us as creative artists. Sand, Jung, and Roseman talk about ways that inspiration that stems from dreams, a fundamental tool for many Indigenous artists. In some ways the creative process and inspiration for Indigenous artists is no different than music-creating artists

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.paralumun.com/dreamcreat.html>

everywhere. We are influenced and interested in the world around us, we work hard, we study, we are inspired and we are all enculturated as multicultural beings. But, European influences remain dominant in much of the music made today and in very important ways Indigenous creative artists claim a sovereignty of self-expression unique from that experience:

So what do we think is changing? Sure we don't wear buckskin anymore, but does that make a difference? Culture is in your mind, it's what you make it as a people. So we're not stuck in having to stay in a leather outfit. Even now when we go to longhouse, our outfits are the same form as our original outfits, but they're made of cloth, for practical reasons, [since] not everybody has access to all those materials, plus it's hot. Why would we want it to be hot? (Buck, interview, 2011)

The concept of *non:wa* is employed as an Indigenous metaphor for compositional technique, sounds, processes, and experiences by Native American composers and attempts to soften the binary configuration of historic and contemporary Indigenous thought and composition. Sadie Buck's practical and functional understanding of Indian culture and music alludes to the idea of a continuation of the past with technologies or materials in the present as we continue in the future.

## **Chapter Five: Táágo Dez'á (Three Points): A Look at Indigenous Transmission and Notational Practices**

### *Introduction and Stylistic Continuum of Composers*

In this chapter, I offer Indigenous forms of notation through historical representations and research into transmission, notation, and analysis, particularly of Navajo music, as an attempt to understand Native composer perspectives both first-hand and through the music itself. With this information, I explore transmission processes, while stretching the idea of what is commonly called transcription as I rewrite “Yellowface Song” using graphic plots, spectral analysis and staff notation. By aligning an Indigenous cultural perspective with ethnomusicological concerns, I may best serve the composers while considering Davids earlier reference to a “generative process of Indian ‘music-ing’” (Davids 2004:4) as a different way of looking at these processes. When examining the overarching generative processes, transmission may be understood to include notation, and possibly transcription, analysis, performance, and audience response.

I primarily focus on Chacon’s “Yellowface Song,” reintroduce “Táágo Dez’á,” and introduce works of other Native composers in order to present a continuum of Indigenous and European approaches to graphic and notational representation. A study on Native notational practices that employ cultural graphics cannot be complete without a discussion of the work by Mohican composer Brent Michael Davids as one of the earliest and foremost contributors to graphic notation using cultural symbols; in particular his “Desert Invocation,” “Mohican Friends,” and “The Singing Woods.” In addition, I will

introduce my own “Hano:wa” and “Sacred Symbols” along with Tio Becenti’s “rainbow experiment” as an exploration of different understandings from the viewpoint of composers, ethnomusicologists, and Indigenous artists. These works represent varying degrees on a spectrum of experimental notation with the plus sign being more experimental and the minus sign being the least experimental in terms of notation. Chacon is at one end as the most experimental and constant in terms of employing graphic notation and performance. He is followed by Davids who has employed some of the earlier graphic notations by a Native composer, mixing Native symbology with European staff notation, but who also frequently composes using conventional European notation. I place myself next, having minimally experimented with graphic notation using both European and Indigenous symbols as performance diacritics while employing cultural imagery, but composing primarily using conventional notation. In figure 5.1, I am followed by composers Ballard, Croall, Nakai, Warren, Tate and Archambault, none of whom use graphic representation in their music, but all of whom use specific Indigenous imagery and sound to guide performance understanding. To the far right is Becenti whose compositional interest lies primarily with pitch and as a result he uses standard European notation.

**Figure 5.1:**

**INDIGENOUS AND EUROPEAN VISUAL REPRESENTATION CONTINUUM**

Chacon      Davids      Avery      Ballard, Croall, Nakai, Warren, Quincy, Tate, Archambault,      Becenti



Although this continuum is in a line, this information could also be represented in a circle since the composers mentioned have sometimes changed their forms of transmission or have had overlapping representations related to the nature of individual performances, commissions, and events. These representations could also change according to the performers and the performance space. Placing circles below each composer with the names of various works and their visual components might be appropriate to illustrate the cyclical nature in their choices for notational representation. For example, Chacon's installations could be placed at the most experimental end of the spectrum with "P'oe iwe naví ûnp'oe dînmuu - My Blood is in the Water" (2010) and "Singing Toward the Wind Now/Singing Toward the Sun Now" (2013) as embodied graphics whose visual and sound elements are installed as sculptures followed by works including "Nilchi' Shada'ji Nalaghali" (2008) for "overly amplified piano," "Haasta'aadah" (2006), for wind ensemble, and "Táágo Dez'á" (2007) for singing cellist. Most of Chacon's works contain symbolic imagery that work with or guide the sounds.

Dauids has cycled back to graphic notation at various points in his career, including his earlier graphic works such as "The Singing Woods" (1994) commissioned by the Kronos String Quartet, "Mohican Friends" (1993) for mixed ensemble and youth choir, and "Desert Invocation" (2001) for crystal flute. His later works "The 1920 Last of the Mohicans" (2003) for the film of the same name; "Cello Chili" (2008) for cello and voice and employs graphics in program notes that serve as a guide for performance of the work, as well as "Trumpeting the Stone" (2005) and *Santa Fe 400<sup>th</sup> Symphony* (2010) which are informed by culture as they use Indigenous instruments and melodies as part of the orchestral fabric, but employ fewer graphics.

My own work that uses graphics includes “Hano:wa” (2013), scored for string quartet and solo instrument, and “Sacred Symbols” (2013), a work for any ensemble improvisation based on sacred symbology from around the world along with some very early pieces. “Service to the Earth” (2007) and “Fringe” (2008) for narration, rattles, drums and chamber orchestra do not incorporate graphic notation, but embody the visual through storytelling and a circle/stomp dance with rattles done around the audience by performers and audience participants, while “Cante Tin’za” (2011) violoncello concerto with string orchestra, employs a Lakota melody and my string quartet “Hohonkweta’ka:ionse (2010)” requires the performers to speak in Kanienkéha as part of the musical texture.

Ballard, Nakai, Warren, Croall, Quincy, Tate and Archambault all employ very specific cultural imagery that is embedded in the sounds and instrumentation of their works, having written operas, operettas, symphonies and chamber pieces in staff notation. Although the works may stand alone without specific knowledge of how culture informs them, there are very few pieces that do not employ Indigenous instruments or sounds recognizable to a knowledgeable listener as Native American. My primary research consultants represent the two ends and the middle of the continuum.

***Brent Michael Davids (Mohican)***

Brent Michael Davids, one of the foremost Classical Native composers, has employed visual images and theatrical representation on the page, in performance, and in his compositions since early in his career. His work “Mohican Friends” scored for youth choir, two soprano flutes, assorted percussion and pow-wow drum is notated in European notation on staves shaped like a feather. Rather than writing the instrument names in

words, they are indicated in front of each staff as pictures. The words are sung in the Mohican language. Davids explains that “The intent of ‘Mohican Friends’ is to acknowledge that everyone, our animals and our earth, deserve to be understood on their own terms, respected, and treated as cherished relatives. This music celebrates our relatedness and is dedicated to the Stockbridge Band of Mohicans”(Sauer 2009:59). The graphic representation of this work clearly reflects his intent through its instrumentation in which he employs both traditional Native American and European media, as well as through its lyrical content as a youth choir learns “introductory vocal sounds and words in the Mohican language” (ibid.). (See Figure 5.2, an excerpt from ‘Mohican Friends.’) The text further reveals some of the Mohican worldview when it emphasizes the “importance of good familial relationships” and respect (ibid.). Reflecting an important symbol in many North American Indian societies, the most dominant cultural image in the work is the shape of an eagle feather with a leather tie at its end in part of the score (measures 12-17). In addition, the power, grace and movement of the shape as the musical notes curve within the feather’s vane might also be interpreted by the performers as they read the piece, especially coming from and going into what might appear as squared-off staves of information.

**Figure 5.2** Excerpt from “Mohican Friends”



My own teachings about the eagle feather learned from the Rotinonhsión:ni culture may be of interest here and have certainly influenced my reading of the score. In 2009, I assisted John in preparing an educational presentation on the eagle feather. He taught me about the two sides of the eagle feather with the left and right sides being of the spirit world (although if one turns the feather over, they both become the spirit and earth worlds), joined together as they must remain together in order to be a human being with a good mind—*kanikonri:io*. In addition, he talked about the four directions in relation to the feather with the east at the top. The easterly and westerly directions are the physical world connected by the rachis. Furthermore, he taught me that the eagle is our most sacred of birds because it can fly the highest, going to the most sacred of realms to bring us back information from the Creator and Sky World. In the graphic notation by Davids, it is interesting that while perhaps it is easier to place staff notation with the feather placed on its side, to me it creates a feeling of solidity and movement having

placed North at the top and the spirit worlds on both top and bottom, with all the melodic material joined by the rhythms of the earth world. Davids use of the eagle feather is a symbol from many Native cultures and from a Rotinonhsión:ni perspective, I relate to it in a different way from most others. (See Figure 5.3 showing the eagle feather as taught by John.)

**Figure 5.3 Eagle Feather**

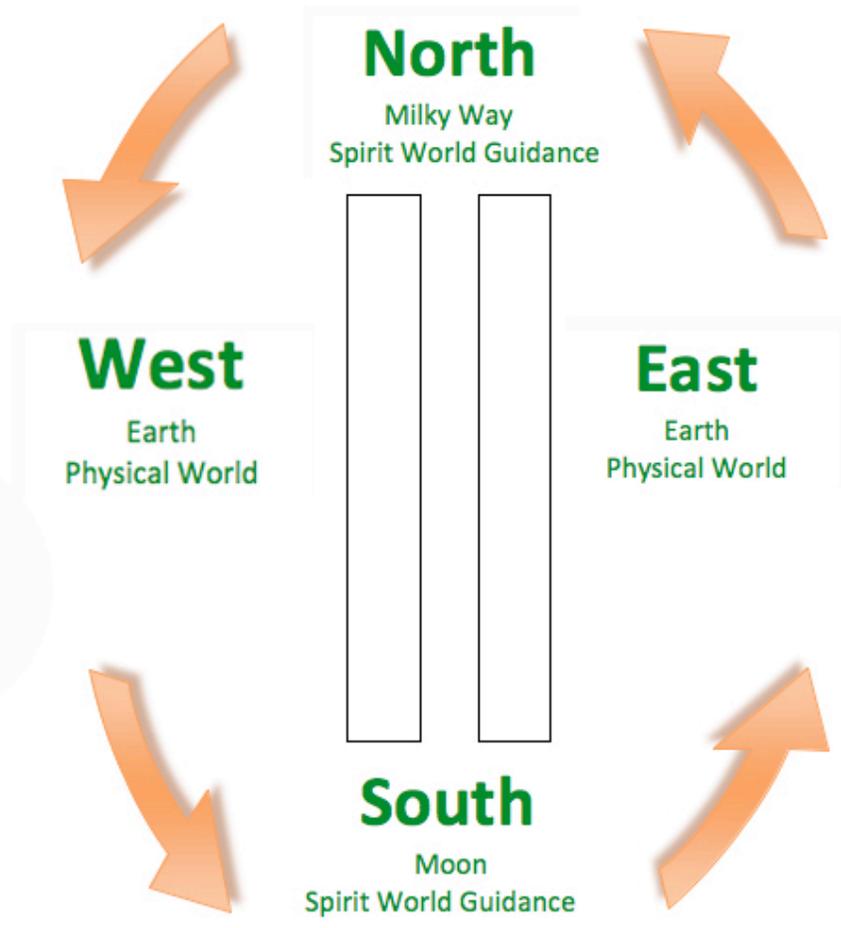
RAY JOHN – TEACHINGS – LONGHOUSE STAR CHARTS - ©2009, Ray John



John’s teaching is multi-layered as it can also be applied to the movement of song and dance in the Longhouse, as well as to the way the Rotinonhsión:ni Longhouse is organized. Longhouse benches and dances are arranged according to the direction of the teachings provided through the symbol of the eagle feather and include seating arrangements according to roles and responsibilities, clans, and gender. From the perspective of Indigenous methodology and *non:wa*, these traditional teachings help us

understand current compositions, and may shape future analysis of compositions and concepts for research.

**Figure 5.4** Longhouse Singing



## LONGHOUSE SINGING

Dauids frequently employs graphics within a composition, either by depicting instrumentation through pictures at the beginning of each stave of European notation or by inserting sections that employ specific graphics to generate the context and mood of the performance, such as the notated measures placed among the leaf graphics drawn in the opening movement as shown in Figure 5.5, “Tagwanko Saxan (Fall Wind)” from his

string quartet “Mtukwekok Naxkomao (The Singing Woods)” written for the Kronos String Quartet, Apache fiddle, percussion and prepared bows.<sup>1</sup> Figure 5.6 depicts the colorful hand-drawn cover of the work and reflects Davids connection to his own culture through storytelling, landscape, nature and sound, creativity in merging cultural experiences and influences, particularly through the Apache and European fiddles, and lastly his commitment to sharing his cultural understandings with all audiences. The Mohican title “Mtukwekok Naxkomao (The Singing Woods)” refers to “a triple meaning: the wood instruments of the Kronos, the Apache violin and the indigenous forest of Native America. The work . . . parallels the cycles of life as the various woods “sing” the seasons of the earth into existence” (Davids 1994:3).

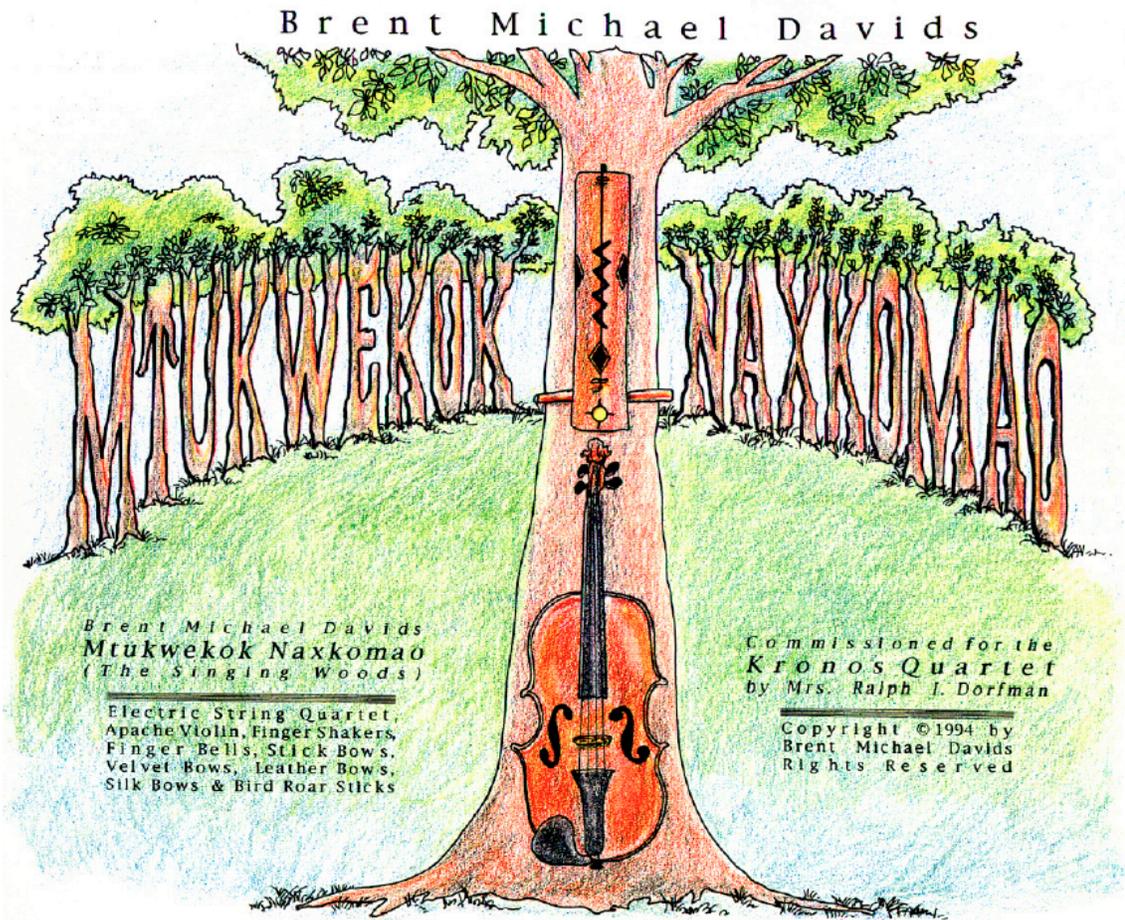
Figure 5.5 Tagwanko Saxan (Fall Wind)

1. *Tagwanko Saxan* (Fall Wind)  
*Freely*: (except when measured).  
 (off the string articulations).

The figure shows a musical score for 'Tagwanko Saxan (Fall Wind)'. It features three staves: Violin I (VI), Violin II (Va), and Percussion (C). The score is divided into three sections, labeled 1, 2, and 3. Section 1 starts with a tempo marking of 'mp' and a tempo of '♩ = 40'. Section 2 starts with a tempo marking of 'mp' and a tempo of '♩ = 40'. Section 3 starts with a tempo marking of 'mp' and a tempo of '♩ = 40'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and articulations. There are also hand-drawn illustrations of leaves and musical notes integrated into the score. A percussion part is shown at the bottom left, with a drum set icon and a tempo marking of 'mp'.

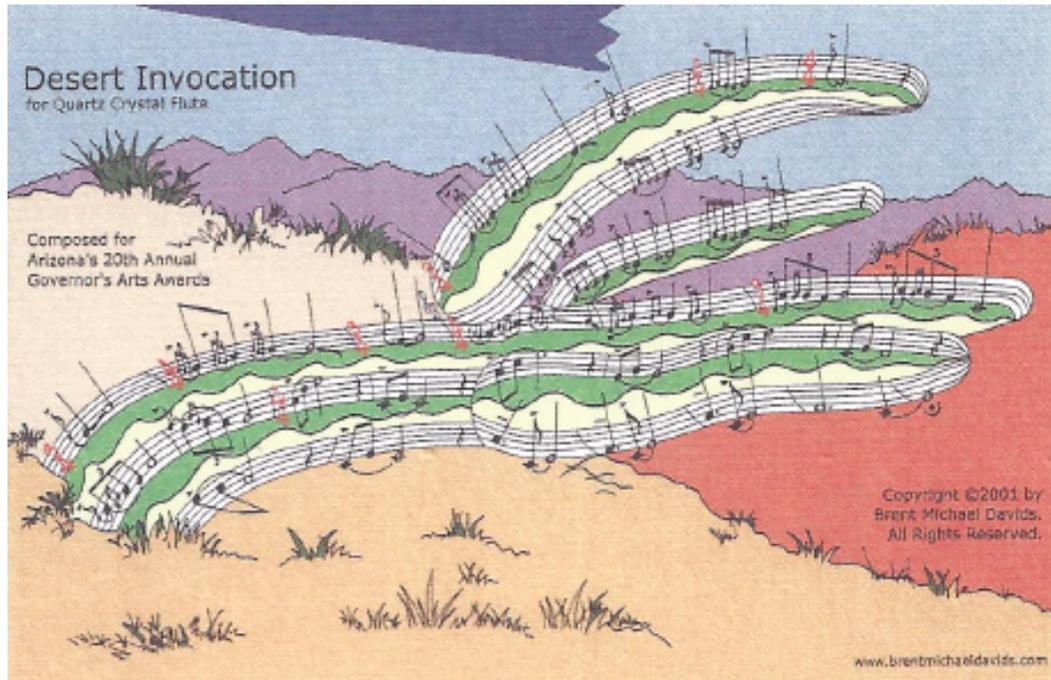
<sup>1</sup> Apache fiddle (known in Apache as *tsii' edo'a'tl* (wood that sings) is an early fiddle thought to be brought over by European settlers, consisting of a plant stalk, in this case Agave, with one or two strings, often made of horse hair, and played by a bow. The percussion for the piece consists of finger bells and finger shakers – both attached to the fingers so the string players can bow with the extraneous sounds of bells and shakers – as well as bird roar sticks. The prepared bows are an invention of the composer in which he replaced horse hair with velvet, leather, and silk, as well as employing just the stick without hair. Each bow creates a different timbre. The quartet is amplified for this piece.

Figure 5.6 Mtukwekok Naxkomaο (The Singing Woods)



“Desert Invocation” (2001) is not only a work whose graphic presentation is “a beautifully hand-notated and brightly colored portrayal of a saguaro cactus bowing in the desert” (ibid), but it is also scored for an equally beautiful quartz crystal flute of his own design. Davids calls the sheet music “‘picture notation’ or music that is shaped into pictures to match its subject matter. The one-page music has often been used as a visual poster, when not actually performed by the crystal flute” (ibid.).

**Figure 5.7** Desert Invocation



Davids's "Cello Chili" employs graphics in a different way using the subject matter to inspire a score that is notated on staves for violoncello and voice both performed by the same person. Other than his use of "x" noteheads to indicate spoken-style singing, Davids uses European rhythmic notations that shift within a 4/4 meter, articulation such as accents, staccato, and slurs, and Italian dynamic markings. What makes this piece especially interesting and amusing is the fact that the lyrics are taken from a fictitious recipe on which he directly bases most of the rhythms for the work. The text is not only about a "distinctly American stew made of green chiles and pieces of cello," but employs "two quotes from famed Cherokee humorist Will Rogers" who referred to chili as a "bowl of blessedness" and "advised that one should 'always drink upstream from the herd'" (Davids, Cello Chili Score). His recipe in Figure 5.8 portrays Davids humor that may also be referred to as Indian humor, albeit stereotypical, especially in its irony: these humorous elements include the title's alliteration along with

its subtitle “cooked up for Dawn Avery”; the incorporation of a recipe as a piece of music; the mixed use of chili ingredients with parts of a cello along with elements such as “powdered frogs,” often associated with a “witches brew”; the use of diary writings by a Cherokee Indian who became best known as a cowboy; the choice of topic for a solo piece that was commissioned, recorded and performed as part of the North American Indian Cello Project; and, lastly, his juxtaposition of rhythms that are cut and pasted to create shifting emphases based on language.

Figure 5.8 Cello Chili Cover



I have excerpted a section of the score taken from the last line of ingredients and analyzed how the rhythmic and melodic repetition of four roasted chiles, peeled and diced remains exactly the same, while the emphasis on where the words are placed within the time signature of 4 changes, along with the connecting material. Note that the phrase “Four roasted green chiles, peeled and diced” has the same rhythmic values every time,

but in measure 57 it begins on the fourth beat, in measure 60 on beat two and in measure 61 on the second half of beat four. As a performer, I play with the somewhat easier repetition of each phrase with accents placed on the same beats regardless of the time signature, versus a slightly new stress with each repetition, dependent on where the material falls in the measure.

**Figure 5.9** Excerpt from Cello Chili

*Cello* **CHILI** 5

57 Four roast - ed green chi-les, peeled and diced. Oo

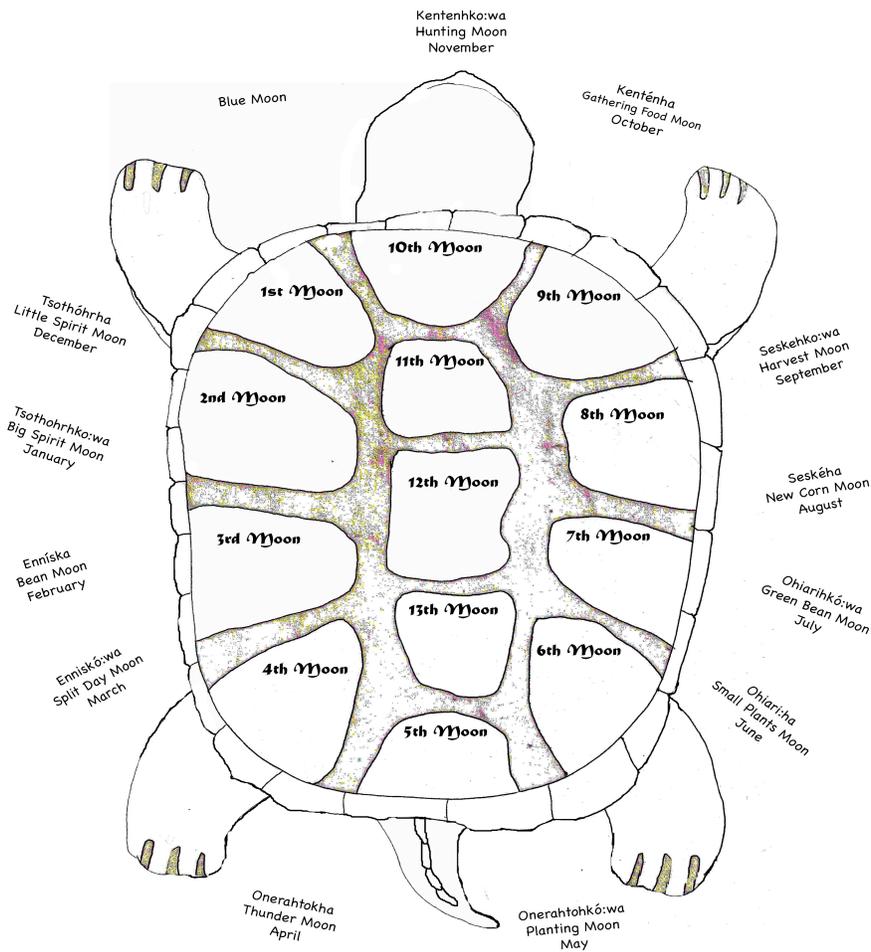
60 Four roast-ed green chi-les, peeled and diced. Four roast-ed green chi-les, peeled and

***Dawn Avery (Kanienkéha Descent)***

My own “Hano:wa,” a work in progress, employs the image of the sacred turtle whose back the Rotinonhsión:ni and other Indigenous cultures have used as a calendar with its costal and vertebral shell consisting of thirteen blocks representing the thirteen moons in a yearly cycle, and the smaller outside blocks on its marginal shell represent the twenty-eight days in a lunar (or monthly) cycle. In my work, twenty-eight measures are scored for string quartet. The measures are repeated with varying degrees of rhythmic augmentation and tempi, while a solo instrument and percussion instruments perform

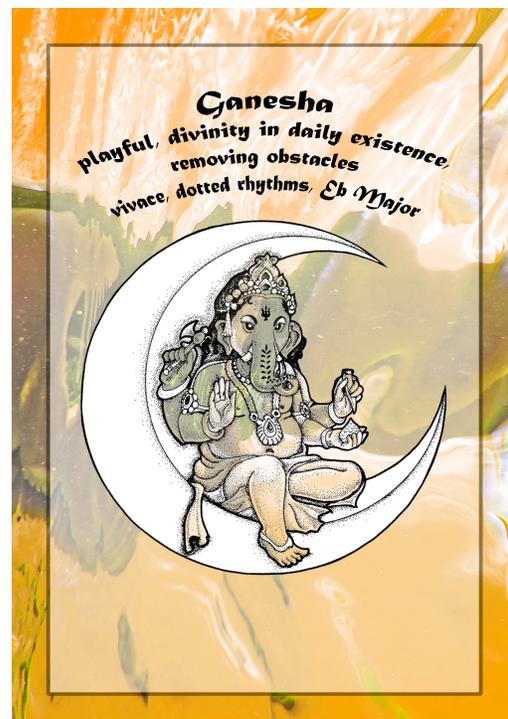
thirteen short melodies based on indirect and direct references to traditional songs. These begin at any of the lunar blocks and continue in the ordered cycle. Each melodic phrase block performed by the solosit and percussionist reflect a mood or traditional activity for that particular month. I designed the turtle calendar in Figure 5.10 from Rotinonhsión:ni teachings that I was given by both Longboat and John and used it as inspiration and a template onto which the score for “Hano:wa” will be placed.

**Figure 5.10** Hano:wa Calendar Template



“Sacred Symbols” consists of cards that depict a variety of sacred symbols and deities from around the world, including the lotus, cross, star of David, fire, moon and stars, Buddha, Ganesha, and the Hindu chakra system. Many of the images have additional musical requirements, including tempo, meter, key, dynamics, and pitch-sets with which different musicians may improvise. Sections of the piece can be performed in any order without a conductor, as a solo or ensemble piece of varying levels of experience, and in lengths determined by the musicians. See Figures 5.11a showing sample cards and 5.11b with performance instructions.

Figure 5.11a Excerpted Cards from “Sacred Symbols”



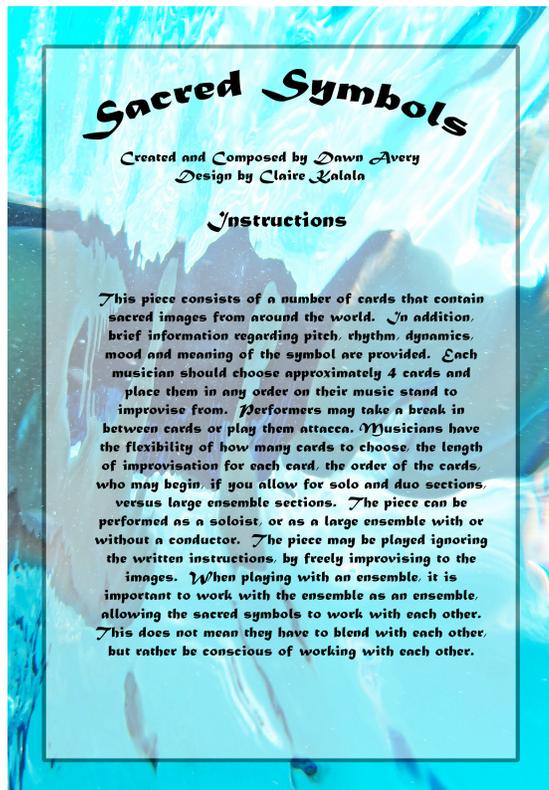


Figure 5.11b  
Performance Instructions for “Sacred Symbols”

SACRED SYMBOLS (2013)

*Created and Composed by Dawn Avery  
Design by Claire Kalala*

Both of these works employ graphics in different ways, reflecting both my cultural influences and the influences from different sacred traditions that I have studied and experienced. Most of my works, however, are written in standard notation and employ Indigenous instruments, extended techniques, and language all of which are used as sonic cultural signifiers.

### ***Tio Becenti (Navajo Diné)***

Due to Becenti’s primary interest in pitch, especially in his play between dissonance and consonance, it makes sense that he uses European staff notation for his works. As mentioned earlier, Becenti provides very little cultural information or

influence unless prompted. In addition, his titles with Western names, such as “Cello Suite” or “Solo Cello Piece” or “String Quartet” emphasize the instrumentation and call attention to the musical material rather than any cultural implications. Especially interesting, however, is his use of what he called the “rainbow experiment” in which he used colorful graphics to explain his intervallic concepts. This is also an example of how in describing his work he often engages the listener with storytelling cultural metaphors that are visual in nature. Becenti said,

I made a score of the music and I blew up the score so it was like room height – in three pages. But I’m talking about intervals because that’s really what it’s about. The intervals are naked in the first movement and it gradually gets more complex, and layered. And I can keep saying that, da,da,da,da,da. I can show them a score and it wouldn’t make any difference . . . But then I thought if I were to highlight these intervals and where I use them because the music’s not random. The music is chosen. It just didn’t happen. The notes are there for a reason. So I highlighted them, but then you get to the last movement and there’s this four-part dense chording, or writing; I mean all the intervals are in bunched chords. So if you highlight them, a rainbow would be a way to describe it, how it looks anyway. And you would see that, even if you didn’t read music, you didn’t know what intervals were, you didn’t know any of that, you could still sort of see what was going on if you were just looking at the colors. I used different color highlighters and I would highlight all of them – because in this piece the way I used intervals is just flat out stating them, little blocks, you can just draw a straight line, that goes from note to note. . . There were all these good looking colors, just basically lines and then in those clusters of chords with all the colors. Green for tritones, 7ths minor and major were another color, 2nds, 3rds, 5ths, octaves—each had their own colors. Horizontal and vertical movement to highlight that intervals are manipulated consciously as a visual exploration of motivic movement in music. Reiteration of all those intervals in different ways, in different settings, like a minor 7 chord is just two fifths on top of each other, but then I always use the word sensual and you get that in the little seconds. Well, I say that, dissonant music for me always seemed more sensual for me, more than tonal music ever was—there is a suspended nature, or unstable nature to these common intervals in dissonant music, whereas in tonal music you would resolve. So, in this type of music you don’t necessarily have to resolve any of it—you can leave it suspended, so there’s an innate tension in the music, that you can exploit, that for me, the expression is heightened quicker, more robust, than a lot of tonal

music, in my opinion and that's done by interval manipulation. So, I guess that's really the premise of the piece. Using the intervals, in different ways same intervals just used differently, and they come together in the dense core clusters. (Becenti, interview, 6 November 2013)

The comments above about the “rainbow experiment” of his piece were made after the composition of his work so that he might explain his compositional interests to any audience, using storytelling and visual methods. The color system for his rainbow experiment is provided in example 5.12a and an excerpt from the rainbow experiment applied to the end of section “III. Dirge” from his Cello Suite can be seen in Figure 5.12b.

**Figure 5.12a** Becenti's Color System

### COLOR SYSTEM

1. Falling half-tone and rising half-tone *pink*  
 The falling and rising half-tone is used traditionally throughout pan-tonal and extended tonal music and is used here to both release tension and increase tension.
2. Inverted half-tone *green*  
 This interval is a staple of pan-tonal music and is generally used alongside falling and rising half-tones.
3. Tri-tone *yellow*  
 This interval is also a staple of pan-tonal music and alongside the inverted half-tone and falling rising half-tone comprises the vast majority of intervals used in pan-tonal music.
4. Major and minor 7<sup>th</sup> chords *blue*  
 These chords are staples of tonal music (often considered to be “harmonious” rather than “dissonant”) and are used as a grounding element.
5. Perfect 5<sup>th</sup> *purple*  
 The perfect 5<sup>th</sup> is the backbone of tonal music and is used here to compliment all the mentioned intervals.
6. Major and minor 3rds *orange*  
 This interval is an integral part of tonal music construction and is used here to increase a sense of movement and is at times quite “sensual”.
7. Navajo cadence *Red*  
 In traditional Navajo music there is often a cadence of groupings of fours and the concept is applied here to balance the music.

**Figure 5.12b** Excerpt from “Cello Suite” with Rainbow Experiment



Once again, it is interesting to note that although Becenti has avoided any obvious reference to his Navajo culture in the title of the work, melodic content, program notes and description of the piece, when asked more specifically during interviews and in workshops and presentations he not only employs Navajo metaphors but also uses storytelling and visual narrative as a relational process to describe his work to non-musicians. No matter whether during the creative compositional process, collaborative inspirational process, performance, or an explanation of the piece, it is fascinating to notice how Indian composers use specific Indigenous concepts and imagery.

### ***Exploring Transmission Further***

In the first section of this chapter, I looked at how one may employ three points or *táago dez'á* to illustrate visual possibilities for transmission of cultural ideas using the works of Davids, Chacon, Becenti and myself as primary examples. Three types of representation or transmission of musical sound may be understood as 1) symbols (the

visual representations of pitch and rhythm), 2) visual sonic indicators (visual representations of other information), and 3) embodied sound (instrumentation and performance technique that carries complex cultural information that the elements of performance carry).

### *1) Sonic Symbols as visual representations*

The first group consists of symbols in notational and graphic writing that are first interpreted by the composer from sound into a symbolic system of visualization and are then further interpreted by the performer whose sounds are then interpreted by the audience. Perhaps compositional transmission can be considered a type of transcription, with ideas being interpreted by the composer through some type of representation. Typically, the ethnomusicologist has considered transcription to be a representational tool for a sound recording or live performance. In the case of a composer, one might consider transcription in a similar way, except rather than someone else's recording, the composer mediates his creativity and sounds through visual representation as a self-referential tool used to convey something to the performers. Going back to the concept of *non:wa* and Little Bear's idea of "swirling consciousness," the prescriptive and descriptive overlap into each other and swirl back again. Visual representation usually through a notative process has been the preferred method for archiving and allowing repeat performances of music, but with the advent of digital recording and midi technology it is often preferred as a more objective transmission over earlier subjective transmission.<sup>2</sup> In addition, when seen in this light, works of this type can be understood by applying a photocopying

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<sup>2</sup> See Nazir Jairazbhoy's article "The 'Objective and Subjective' View in Music Transcription" (1977) for more information on the topic.

analogy—with every additional copy being of a lesser quality than the original—or, from a more Indigenous perspective, this coming back to shared material can also be seen as a collaboration where each person’s voice becomes part of the whole, moving dynamically back and forth as in the *non:wa* concept discussed in Chapter Four. Of course, this viewpoint is shared by many across the globe in a digital age where copies are often the basis for new works in mash-up culture, rap, etc.

Levine refers to transcription as “Transforming performed music into a visual representation” (Levine 2002:xx). I would like to expand on that concept and take it beyond transcription to consider musical composition as *transforming musical sound into a visual representation*. Often referring to European notation, many of the comments made by Indian composers place the ability to notate music as a requirement for differentiating classical music from other genres. The composer is required to represent his sounds “to make the visual representations of the notation ‘come alive,’” and “the performer must interpret the music from the notation” (Lochhead 2006:70). Judy Lochhead, theorist, musicologist and director of the Graduate Program in Music at Stony Brook University writes of the importance of understanding visualization and music, particularly as a scholar who wishes to analyze and document music as transcription. In her article “Visualizing the Musical Object,” she looks effectively at concepts of notation through both European compositions and ethnomusicological fieldwork. “European notational practice provides a kind of recipe for the music. It symbolizes directly what we might think of as the “basic ingredients” of the piece—its pitches, dynamics, durations, instrumentation—which must be “cooked up” so to speak” but “notation does not directly visualize the music” (ibid.). Her analogy using a recipe

and cooking shed a different light on the possible politics of David's "Cello Chili," and further elaborate the concept of musical accent and interpretation mentioned in Chapter Four. Lochhead refers to Charles Seeger when she writes, "Prescriptive visualization: the composer writes symbols, whose references are predetermined by an interpretive community, that prescribes what sounds should be played" (ibid.). These include European notation and graphic notation even if "graphics establish a relatively more indeterminate relation between sound and symbol" (ibid.:72), but she acknowledges that "the performer must bring to bear a considerable and deep knowledge of 'the music'" (ibid.:70).

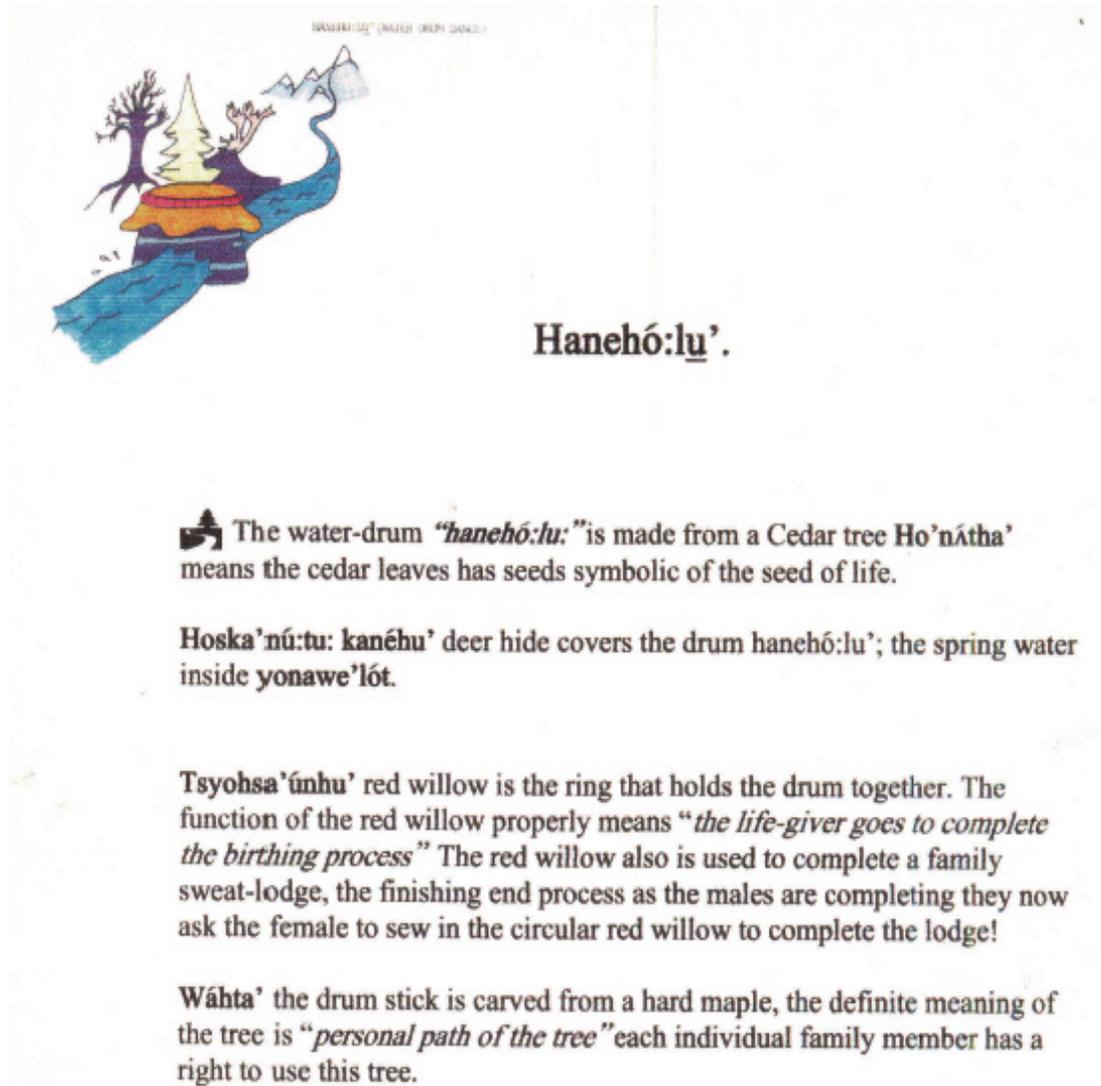
*2) visual sonic indicators (visual representations of other information)*

I call the second type visual sonic indicators referring to the use of program notes, graphics, and stories that inform the performer and the audience about the sonic and cultural landscape. Also included in this category are specific instruments that provide timbral and visual cues as cultural sonic indicators. This type gives specific descriptions through program notes, score notes, programmatic stories or artistic images as seen in the cover drawing by Davids from "The Singing Woods." Musical instruments may also be interpreted during performance as they are revered as objects that contain cultural memory and have cultural sonic significance, but since they also make the actual sounds which may not be connected visually on a recording, they may have different qualities in live performance and on a recording. As visual symbols, musical instruments are descriptors of culture when seen on a CD cover, in live performance, or on YouTube, but may carry a different weight when heard on a recording and not seen. Once again, there may be specific Indigenous perspectives for experiencing visual sonic indicators at a

musical event. For instance, during the recording of Quincy's "Pocahantas at the Court of King James I" he added a water drum in the final recording days of the work, in order to add a Native American sound within the European chamber ensemble fabric. Its recorded sound is considered a cultural sonic signifier by the composer and has deep significance in some Native communities.

In a private teaching I had with Porter regarding the water drum, I learned that after it is used in ceremony or in our social dances, it should be placed with reverence in a special bag. There is specific preparation for the drum prior to performance and after the performance where it should always be put away and never left out. John elaborated, "In ceremony or socials the 'drum' is a living item to be treated as another living presence" (John, email, 6 July 2013). As I prepared an educational pamphlet with John on the water drum, based on the Oneida language and culture, he explained how traditional teachings are embedded in every part of the drum, from the symbolic significance of every shape and color on the drum, the natural world from which the materials come from and the teachings of the deer hide, spring water, tree, red birch to the playing of the drum in social dances and ceremony. When I see and hear a water drum, I am filled with an understanding of my sacred history. (See figure 5.13, an excerpt from our educational pamphlet.)

Figure 5.13 Hanehó:lu: (Water Drum)



Quincy understood that the water drum was a Native signifier in both sight and sound, so when he began to attend a recording of his work in NYC by the Queen's Band ensemble, he asked me to Fed-Ex a water drum with instructions on how to use it, so he might add the sound to several movements of the piece. When the recording was completed, he returned the drum with a note saying that "it was a perfect addition for my piece." In the book *Visions of Sound: Musical instruments of First Nations Communities in Northeastern America*, Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen "explore the symbolism of

sound and image as expressed” in Aboriginal musical instruments and their interpretation, and “examine how such instruments facilitate interaction and relationship among all parts of the living world” (Diamond, Cronk, and Von Rosen 1994:1). Thus, the sound and image are fascinating elements as cultural teachers and signifiers.

“In the twentieth and now twenty-first centuries various musical, technological, and cultural changes have challenged this role of notation and have drawn attention to the function of ‘visualizing’ generally” (Lochhead 2006:70). Often referred to as visual learning, this type allows for both the performer and the audience to engage in a specific visual process in addition to a sonic experience. Bent and Hughes define notation as “a visual analogue of musical sound, either as a record of sound heard or imagined, or as a set of visual instructions for performers,” but as Lochhead acknowledges, “The authors don’t clarify in what sense musical notation is analogous to sound . . . the notation is not identical to the ‘music’”(ibid.:69). Like the first type, there is a meditated interpretation—by the creator, performer, audience, and space—in which notation becomes a type of transcription, as it “records a subjective intention” (ibid.:78).

*3) embodied sound (instrumentation and performance technique that carries complex cultural information)*

The last type of visual representation is embodied sound where the visual and the sound that I referred to in terms of the water drum, for example, interact with the performer as part of the musical work and engage with the audience, at least for as long as the sculpture or musical object continues to exist and perform. If one understands this as a generative process, it might be considered another type of transmission in which a composition through its instruments works in interaction not only with the music-creating

artist's creation, but also with the audience, the visual sound object and ultimately with the environment and event. For Native sound installations, these representations additionally engage with social and often political landscapes and time. "Challenges arise because technological and cultural changes have diminished or eliminated the role that traditional European notation plays in our efforts to comprehend various genres of music" (ibid.:78). This can also be understood in the actual creation and performance of music. Sound installations are on some level prescriptive (instructions for building the sculpture and how the sound devices will function and perhaps sound) and descriptive (program notes, reviews, interpretation with audience and performance space). The three types of visual representation in music that I have described overlap with elements of the prescriptive, descriptive and performative.

These three categories, which may in fact also be too limited a number, all refer to the transmission of specific cultural material through visual and sonic means, such as the cultural symbol of an arrow, a Rotinonhsión:ni bone rattle, the hint of drum sounds notated as *col legno* on a European staff, or a deer whose blood drips for us so we may continue to sustain ourselves. Referring to the study of music through visual mediation, whether it be European notation, Indian pictographs, spectral analysis, graphic symbology, wave forms, or words, confirms Lochhead's suggestion that "other types of visualizing be used to assist our efforts toward comprehension" (ibid.:71). She looks at map theory as a viable possibility for the analysis of music which I refer to as storytelling in my example in the second part of this chapter. I would like to apply her concept of "visualizing the musical object" (ibid.:67) to the actual music-creating process and the subsequent musical creations. Many types of visualizing and notational practices are used

to assist our efforts in music creation, often guided and/or reflecting specific Indigenous worldviews. Various types of visual representation are and have always been used as part of musical creation by Native people, whether it be the early birch-bark mnemonic records by the Algonquin, the pictographs of the Navajo, the European notation of Dr. Ballard, the graphic designs of Davids, or the sound sculptures of Chacon in *Postcommodity*. In addition, many of these visualizations and sounds may be understood as distinctly Native American and furthermore, cannot usually be separated as distinct experiences, just as music and dance are experienced in the Longhouse as an embodied, spiritual experience.

***“Táágo Dez’á” and “Yellowface”: A look at transmission, transcription, and notation***

I will now revisit certain concepts that Chacon used in his solo cello work “Táágo Dez’á” and employ them as a starting point for a more detailed analysis and transcription of his electronic performance work “Yellowface Song.” I gained a deeper understanding of that actual work by arranging it in a variety of ways as a compositional and transcriptive experiment with the composer.

In defining notation, analysis, transcription, and transmission, it may be beneficial to look at a native worldview in conjunction with the views of some influential ethnomusicologists. Explained earlier in Chapter Three, it is worth repeating that an North American Indian worldview as one that is “animate, imbued with spirit, and in constant motion, where interrelationships between all entities are of paramount importance, and space is a more important referent than time” (ibid.), may be seen in contrast to some of the value systems of the West that are seen as “linear and singular, static, and objective” (ibid.:82). Many in the discipline of ethnomusicology continue to

be interested in scientific definitions that we may often try to validate through fieldwork, and the testing of various multi-disciplinary theories. What may be a distinguishing factor in the discipline is our ever-changing, expanding and overlapping definitions and methodologies as well as our ongoing concern with how best to represent the other. Through analysis, notation, transcription and the arranging of the “Yellowface Song,” I have found interconnections that are circular rather than a set of final conclusions. As can be understood in the strong Navajo concept of the circle, information is continually gathered, interconnected, and reinterpreted. In “Táágo Dez’á,” Chacon experiments with modes of transmission and notational representation as three points referenced in three separate songs.

Ethnomusicologist Ter Ellingson defines musical notation as “the representation of music through means other than the sound of the music” (Ellingson 1992:153). He explains some of the concepts drawn by art historian Benjamin Ives Gilman and musicologist Charles Seeger who differentiate notation, a prescriptive shorthand “that prescribes the sounds that musicians are to perform” from descriptive notation or transcription as a shorthand description. Ellingson’s article “Notation” (ibid.:153-164) points out the diversity of techniques and experiments with musical representation of sound and where they meet in transcription. Bruno Nettl explains Seeger’s definition of descriptive notation as “the reduction of recorded sound to standard Western music notation” (Nettl 2005:75). He goes on to explain how difficult it is to separate transcription from description and analysis since transcription also tells us “how a musical performance we’re hearing changes from one moment to the next but, on the other [hand], what the characteristics are that endure throughout a piece or a song, such

as a tone system, a way of using the voice, and so on” (ibid.). The transcription then can also reveal style and musical vocabulary. In his chapter “Analysis of Musical Style,” Stephen Blum writes about the diversity of musical analysis, including comparative, folkloric, anthropological, mathematical, linguistic, melodic, structural, and performative. In his conclusion, he stresses the fact that we continue to “reshape our tools and our questions as we attempt to interpret some of the actions of musicians and some of the meanings of these actions” by engaging with the musicians (Blum 1992:213). English composer Vaughn Williams referred to notation being like a train schedule it gives you the time and destination without the scenery.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Chacon’s “Táágo Dez’á”***

Once again, but from a different perspective, I take a look at the cello piece by Chacon, “Táágo Dez’á,” whose title is used as an overall metaphor for this chapter. It seems important to revisit information about the specific context of notation while incorporating some of my interview material with Chacon. In the notes included at the beginning of the score, Chacon refers to the first section or song—he prefers not to use the word “movement,” —as “1 . . . *like a chased animal* (Chacon, “Táágo Dez’á,” Score, song 1) in which he asks the performer to imagine being chased by an animal “through a forest or something” (Chacon, interview, 16 April 2009). In the notes written at the beginning of the score, he specifically instructs the performer to interpret the graphics in any way they’d like, but to perform each graphic in a similar way each time: “These ‘graphic’ measures are not necessarily to be interpreted by improvisational methods, but rather the content should be decided upon after becoming familiar with the adjacent

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<sup>3</sup> Provine class discussion, *University of Maryland, MUET620*

measures” (Chacon “Táágo Dez’á,” Score, 4). This concept of familiarity and individual subtlety, although not unfamiliar to classical composers, is perhaps understood in a slightly different way by Indian artists. “This is not because Indians cannot create text and music with a ‘fuller’ content, in a Western sense, but because their aesthetic taste delights in repetitions with slight variations that are sometimes too subtle for the ears of outsiders to detect” (McAllester 1954:42). In addition, Chacon notes that the “feeling of time is very loose and free” and that “pitch can be sacrificed” (Chacon “Táágo Dez’á,” Score, 4). It is interesting that Chacon, a classically trained composer, finds pitch and rhythm to be the least important elements while Western classical composers often treat these elements as some of the most prominent and privileged material. His questioning of notational systems and representation also reveal more than just musical questioning, but may also reveal a deeper questioning of identity and place in the classical canon.

Figure 5.14 “Táágo Dez’á,” Excerpt from Song 1

The image displays a musical score for an excerpt from "Táágo Dez'á," featuring a Voice part and a Violoncello (Vc.) part. The score is divided into three systems, numbered 3, 9, and 11. The Voice part includes lyrics such as "yah - ah", "wah", "ah aht yah ah yah aht yah", and "ah - a' - yah - ah yah - a' - yah". The Vc. part includes performance instructions like "col legno", "mp", "port.", "mf", "slower", "faster", "vib. glide fingernail against string", "louder than last time", "ralse", "II. III. IV. ord.", "hermanics", and "col legno". The score is heavily annotated with handwritten notes and symbols, including a swastika symbol in the Vc. part. The annotations include "sub point", "col legno", "yah - ah", "mp", "port.", "faster", "vib. glide fingernail against string", "louder than last time", "wah", "ralse", "slower", "port.", "mf", "II. III. IV. ord.", "ah aht yah ah yah aht yah", "hermanics", "col legno", and "faster".

Chacon calls the second section “2. *shy, for a singer* ‘I am looking for my grandfather . . .’” he again states that “pitch is less important than other parameters of the music” (Chacon, “Táágo Dezá,” Score, 4). The song is learned by ear or by oral transmission through listening to an enclosed cd version, yet the player is instructed to create his/her own version. In rehearsal, Raven was most particular about the mood and the pronunciation of the Navajo vocables *Shicheii haash’too*. Although the piece is learned orally, it provides a means for individual interpretation and change within specific stylistic requirements of “feel,” created primarily through tempo, texture and pronunciation. Speaking of the importance of vocables in Navajo music, Frisbie notes that “while nonlexical, these vocables are as important as the words, and must be performed with equal care . . . The task is formidable and becomes more so once it is realized that in sung Navajo, one is dealing not just with vocables, but also with grammatical and poetic processes and devices which are utilized to fit the words to the music (Frisbie 1980:349).

The third section “3. quiet, but proud (like singing at night)” is fully notated and employs twentieth-century notation and performance techniques. “The first chord of the series is notated in full, then followed by rhythmic representations of the same chord. Each fully notated chord should be accented” (Chacon, “Táágo Dezá,” Score, 1). Although in this movement the composer requests a steady beat, he still requests that it be “loose and not precise” and asks that the pulse “speed up and slow down slightly throughout” (Chacon, interview, 16 April 2009). Notated in standard musical notation, the piece explores an unusual sonic realm not unlike distorted pow-wow drums used by

contemporary native drum groups,<sup>4</sup> while the accompanying vocal part requires difficult traditional Navajo pronunciation and unusual melodic leaps, at a soft dynamic throughout.

**Figure 5.15:** “Táágo Dez’á,” Excerpt from Song 3

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Voice and Violoncello. The Voice part is written on a treble clef staff and includes the instruction "3. quiet, but proud. (like singing at night) approx. ♩=60 freely". The Violoncello part is written on a bass clef staff and includes the instruction "establish beat and tempo as necessary/ until ready". The score features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The vocal line includes the word "yah" at the end. The cello part consists of a series of chords and rests, with some notes marked with 'x'.

All three movements deal with issues of change, expansion, subtle textures and sounds, individual expression, and innovation, as well as participation with the notation, audience, and instrument. Chacon’s comments on form, texture, sound, interpretation and representation may all reflect Indigenous concepts of identity as he claims this work as a modern Navajo composer. This work emphasizes individual expression for the performer while interacting with the composer’s notation. It also engages the listener as dynamics and repetition force one to listen for slight changes, and artistic innovation as Chacon incorporates features of both Navajo (vocables, concepts, oral tradition) and European music (instruments, concepts, notation). A cultural emphasis on paying attention that is usually understood in terms of landscape is perhaps used here in terms of soundscape, as his work may demand the listener’s attention through extreme dynamics, expanded and flexible tempi and unusual sounds.

<sup>4</sup>Electric pow-wow drums played through distortion pedals, such as those used by the band A Tribe Called Red and Ndn hip hop artists and classical performers also use electronics extensively.

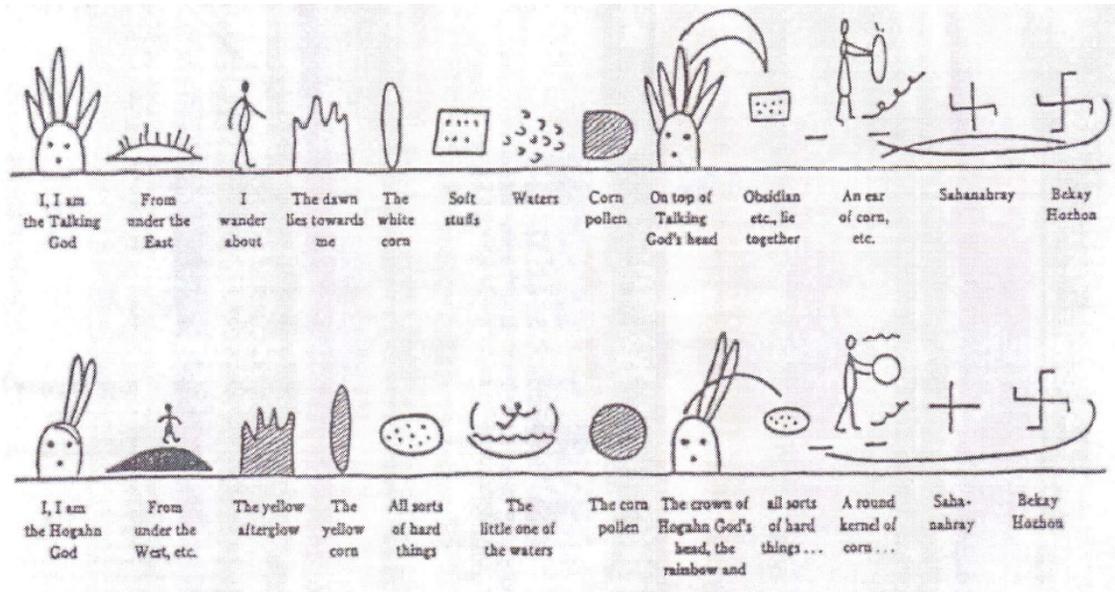
### *A Three-pointed understanding to “Yellowface Song”*

Coming back to “Yellowface Song,” I provide a graphic plot similar to that of the early Navajo musical pictographs, followed by another type of pictorial analysis of the piece that provides a more general view of the work and its technological requirements: next, I provide a spectral analysis with key moments of the piece to show form and amplitude; lastly, I show examples from an arrangement I did of the piece in staff notation, scored for European instruments. In a sense, these served as types of transcription in which I rewrote the piece based on two performances of Chacon’s electronic piece “Yellowface Song” so that I might better understand the work and the effectiveness of different types of transmission. I employ a similar concept to that of the Navajo *táágo dez’á* or three points, and look at three aspects within three main categories: 1) three main types of “transcriptions” or transmissions of the work: pictorial/prescriptive, descriptive, and an arrangement in standard musical notation; 2) three points of analysis of the work that may be impossible to distinguish: musical, cultural, performance oriented; and 3) three responses to the work: hating it, loving it, and a more nuanced understanding of the piece. The work itself is meant to be performed live and has not been notated in any way until now. Although there is no need for notation, it was my hope that my transcription might serve as an exploration from an Indigenous perspective, as well as an experiment into what different types of transmission can offer as a mediation between the composer and a combination of Indigenous and Western ethnomusicological and musicological methodologies.

In looking at some slices of history in the notation of Navajo music, the earliest published Indigenous example was notated in pictographs by the performer named Song

of Bead Chant Singer. McAllester explained that when the singer listened to recordings he recognized the melodies, but wrote pictographs to remind him of the order of the words. The words below were added later as a translation of the pictographs (Levine 2002:17).

**Figure 5.16** Song of the Talking God

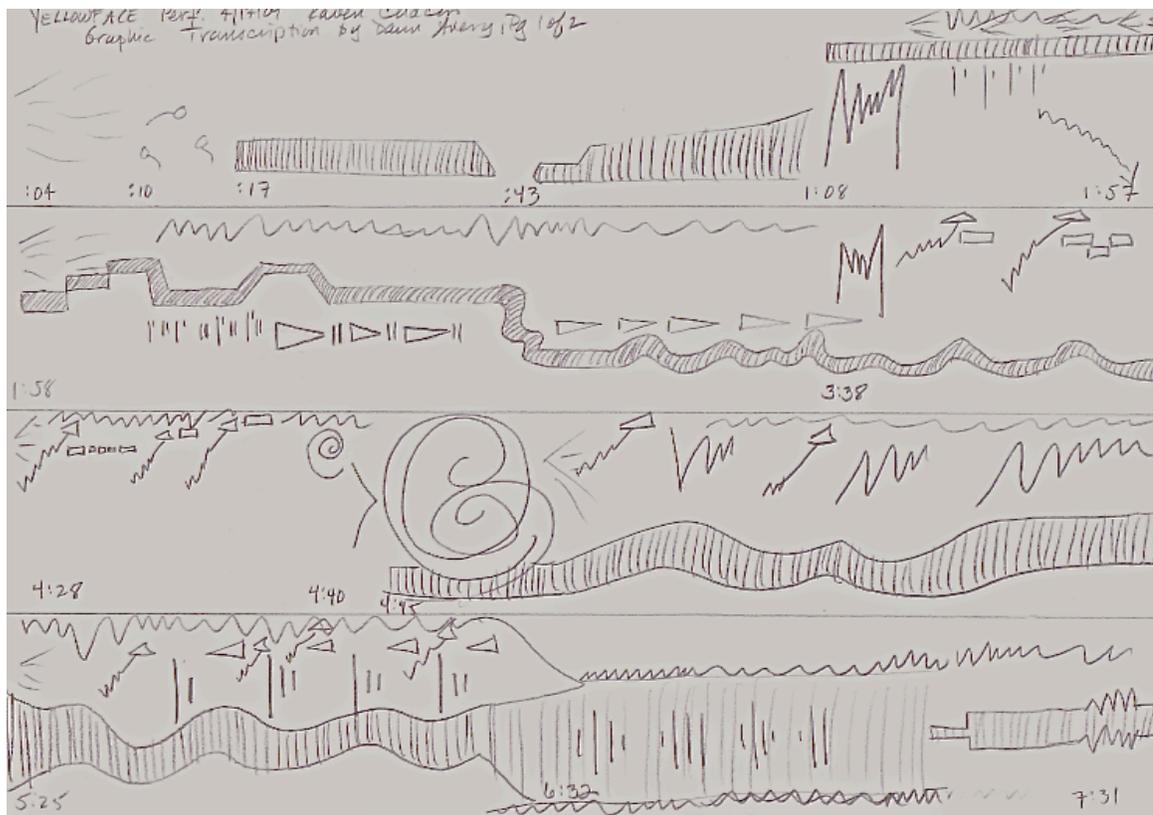


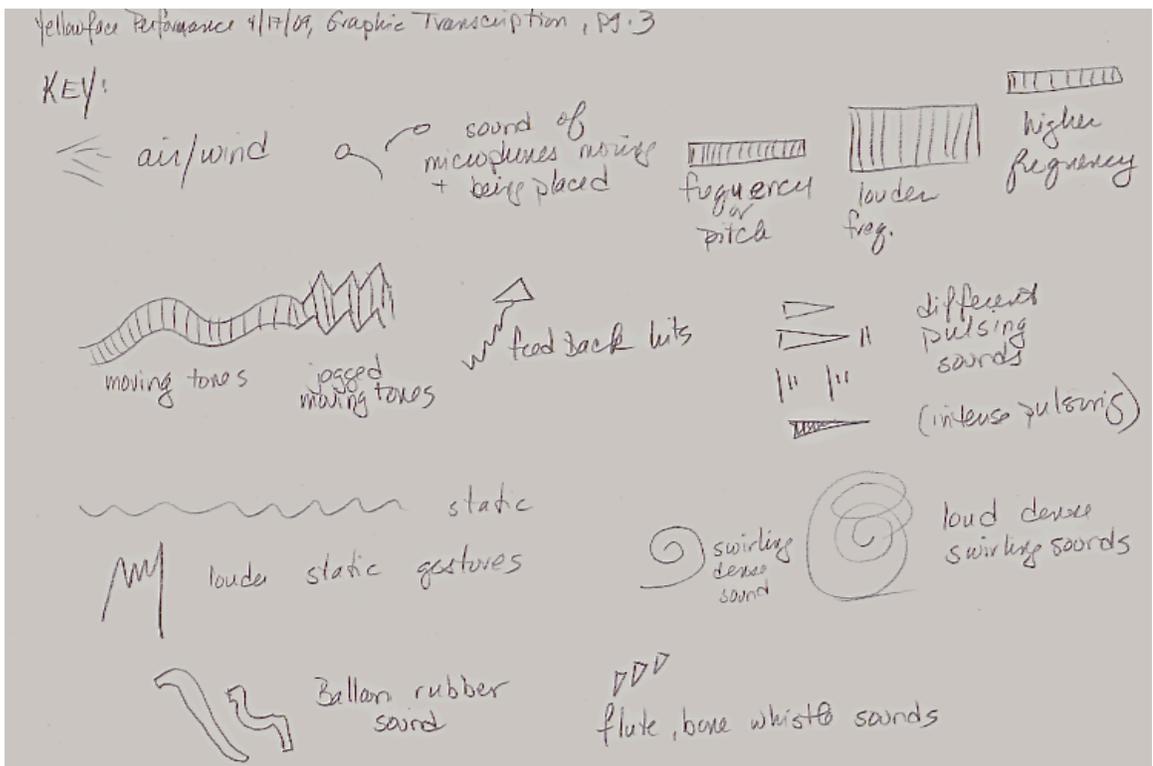
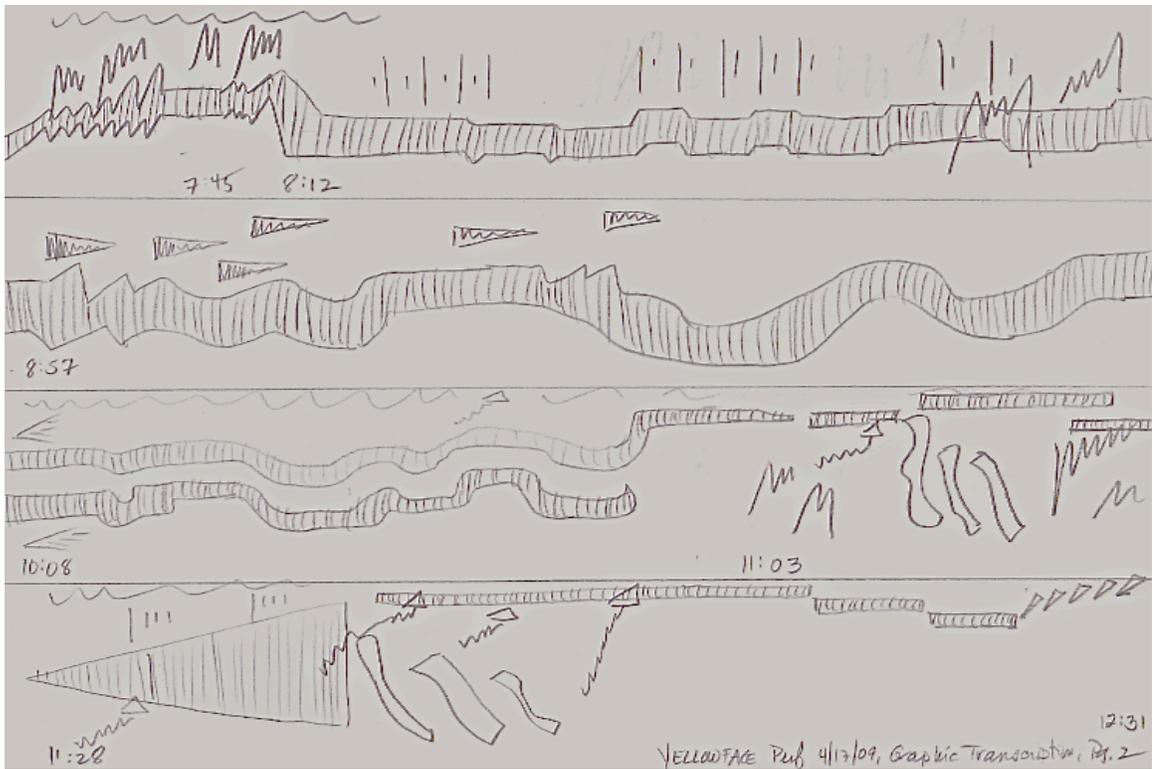
In an attempt to combine the storytelling pictographs by Song of Bead Chant Singer with Raven Chacon's graphic concepts, I came up with a graphic prescriptive and then descriptive representation for showing the overall form of the work; through pictures, I tell two stories about different aspects of the same work. The first story shows the overall sonic form with approximate seconds noted on a line below and the second story shows what the performer is doing with his electronic equipment as well as the adventures of the yellow balloon. Both transcriptions incorporate spatial notation in which musical events are placed in spatial relationships that indicate time.

### ***“Transcriptions” and Arrangements of Chacon’s “Yellowface Song”***

In Figure 5.17, the overall sonic sequence of sonic occurrences is shown through pictographs. As I listened to the piece, I began plotting the sonic structure through crude drawings that represent the overall sounds. I then made a list of the main sound groups so I could ask how Raven might depict them with pictures. The sounds that I distinguish as a main part of the piece are wind or air sounds, feedback, moving microphone sounds, sung chant, octave displacement, tones (high and lower frequencies), static, rubber balloon contact, and pulsing. Upon looking at my storytelling representation, Chacon said he would represent the music more by overall gestures than by specific sounds, to allow for more individual interpretation. I then modified some of my original pictures, connecting and overlapping more of the sounds.

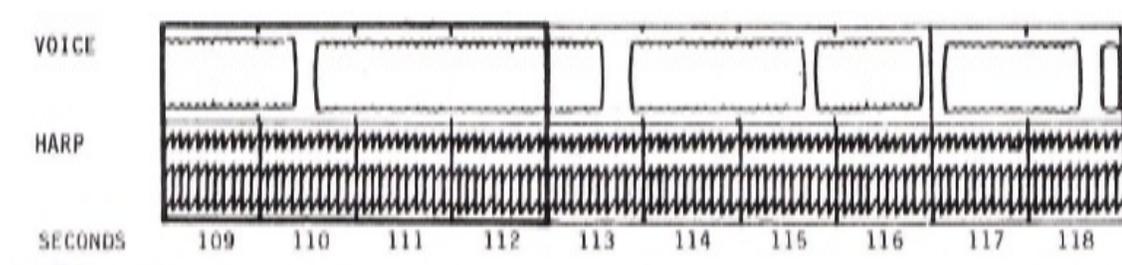
**Figure 5.17** “Yellowface Song” in Pictographs





I also explored the concept of graphic notation and textural analysis presented by ethnomusicologist Sue Carole DeVale as she transcribed several of Klaus Wachsmann's recordings of music from Uganda. She notes the effects of live performance on recordings and the differences in creativity in a comparative, graphic analysis of several recorded performances of the same work. She also depicts overlapping form and provides a variety of graphic representations that serve varying purposes. Figure 5.18 is one of her examples that is most similar to my overall sonic representation in that it notes overall texture of the voice and harp with a base timeline showing seconds. The harp is shown as continuous sound while the vocal stops and starts (DeVale 1985:295).

**Figure 5.18** DeVale Transcription of Music from Uganda



These transcriptions are perhaps most similar to the early Navajo transcription of Figure 5.16 in that they are prescriptive and might serve as event cues. I sent Chacon a pdf of my graphic representation, Figure 5.17, and in our follow-up interview he commented:

I used to work this way, and it seems the point is to get a different or reinterpretation back from this. Interpret a score, and try to transcribe the same way, but allow more individual interpretation. For example, I might use height, like a wave-form, placed in grid with frequency depicted by high or low placement and I might show a high loud pitch, as a wide graphic at the top of page. Width usually determines the amplitude or volume. Since it's commonly used, it would be interesting to hear a

beginner who was unfamiliar with any of the graphic representations to perform the piece or to have someone who is familiar with graphics, change the system so it was no longer familiar and then perform it. (Chacon, interview, 3 May 2009)

In these comments, we once again see Chacon's primary concern with innovation and experimentation, as well as some of his graphic considerations.

In Figure 5.19, I show the basic story of the yellow balloon and the electronic equipment through pictorial and European musical notation, along with English language labels. This type of description is probably more similar to the first section of Chacon's *Táágo Dez'á* where he uses graphics and notation and here I employ both graphics and notation in photographs of musical equipment with language and notation. It is questionable whether there is enough information for a performer to reproduce this piece given this "storyline," as it serves as more of an overarching analysis of the work and provides a photograph of the equipment and notation of the main chant that Raven sings into the balloon.

**Figure 5.19**  
Yellow Balloon Story

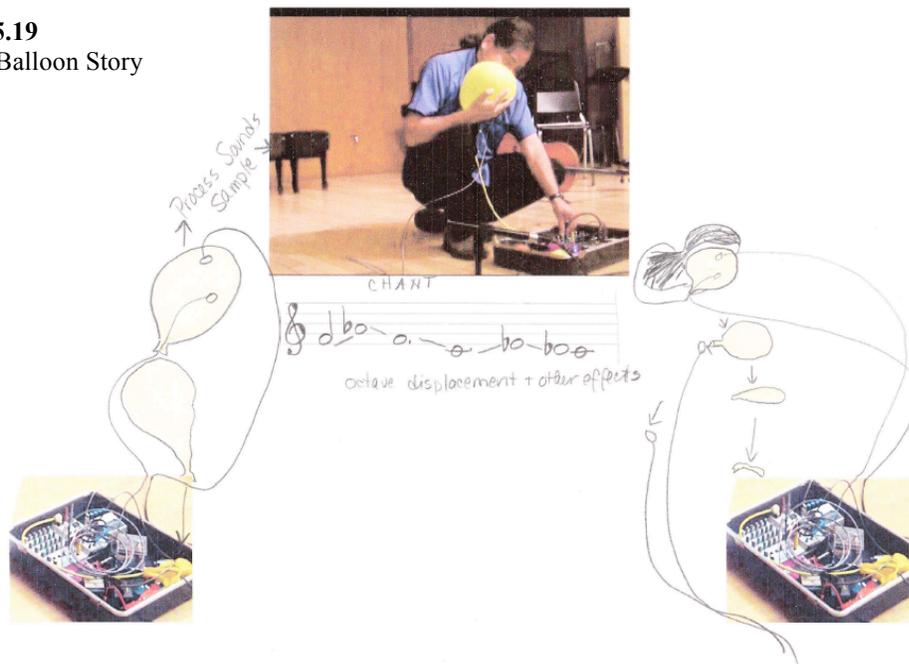
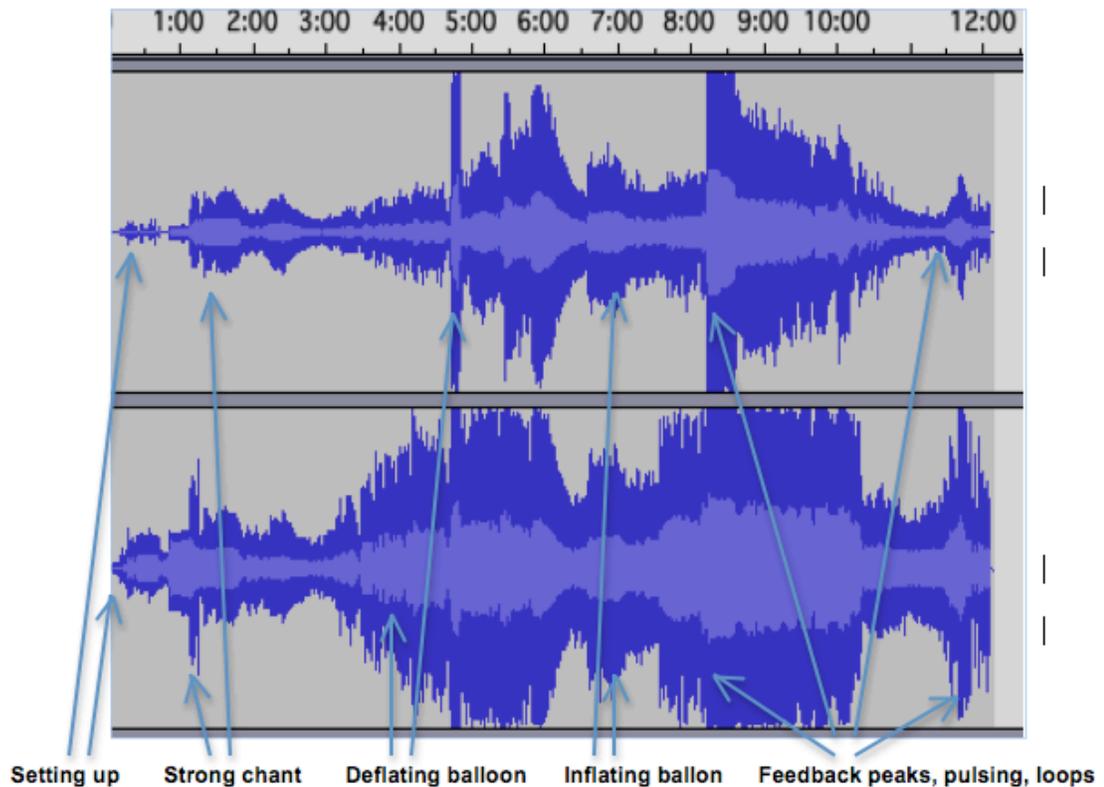


Figure 5.20 consists of a condensed printout of the waveforms for the whole piece from the Audacity computer program. This graphic confirms the overall shape of the piece which I could determine, in perhaps greater detail, by ear. This version could be used to indicate dynamics and intensity and as an event map with approximate durations.

**Figure 5.20**

“Yellowface Song”– Condensed Printout of Wave Forms for Entire Piece from April 17 Performance



These “transcriptions” are similar to the early “Song of the Talking God” Navajo transcription in that they might also serve the performer in terms of memory cues, but do not accurately depict rhythm, style, dynamics, performance technique, or tempo, nor do they enable someone to know how the piece sounds or is to be performed.

Often calling on Bartók for inspiration, I decided to continue this ethnomusicologist/composer experiment of Chacon’s “Yellowface” by arranging the

electronic work for chamber orchestra à la Bartók's *Jocul cu Bâta*.<sup>5</sup> The idea was inspired by a lecture that Robert Provine gave at the University of Maryland as part of his graduate ethnomusicology transcription class. The lecture showed how a fieldwork transcription of a Rumanian folksong that Bartók made as part of his extensive fieldwork was originally for two violins, then used as source material for a contemporary piano work and as material for a chamber piece scored for string orchestra and clarinet, and lastly as a piece for solo violin with piano accompaniment. Each version retained the original melody arranged for varying instrumentations and used different compositional forms. I employed that idea as inspiration allowed me to experiment and understand the sonic textures of "Yellowface Song" much more intimately.

The last example that I provide is written in European musical notation as an arrangement of the second performance of "Yellowface Song" on April 17, 2009, since it was the performance that Chacon preferred, due to sound limitations at the rehearsal on April 16, 2009, but I also incorporate to a lesser degree some of the sounds performed during the rehearsal for that performance. It was nearly impossible to separate the two when looking at my overall understanding of the piece, so my personal concepts of the piece as well as awareness of certain soundscapes were already in place after the first performance and are thus part of the work. I began with an arrangement of the opening of the April 16, 2009 rehearsal performance when the sound went through an amplifier that had a loud hum problem. Some of the melodic material was more interesting since there was stronger feedback control, but given time constraints and the composer's preference, I focused on the concert performance version for the final score. Although I reflect changeability primarily at 4'52" in the excerpt provided in this score, I will probably

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<sup>5</sup> Provine, "Bartók Transcription and Notation" lecture for University of Maryland, MUET620

reflect more on performance changeability by including specific improvisational gestures throughout the piece. Since every performance is different based largely in reaction to initial loop samples, volume and feedback, the piece is to a great extent premised on the fact that the musicians “rely on unintentional things to happen” (Chacon, interview, 3 May 2009).

When I asked Raven during an interview following his rehearsal performance “if I were going to notate this, like put it into music, what would you come up?” he replied that he’d probably first “set down what he was going to sing. That’s first and foremost what I hope people will hear is the song and the rest could be created by instruments, maybe strings, horns, woodwinds. Tell them to make loud noisy sounds out of it, I guess, but the melody would be notated” (ibid.). His answer encouraged me to continue my Bartókian experiment. When I asked Raven if he could sing a melody that might be used in the piece, he said “probably not.” The chant is improvised during the performance, and although it is a focal point of the work to the performer, it is developed in response to the performance situation. When asked about pitch centers that often came out of feedback, he noted that sometimes the song might come back over that pitch. In that case, pitch center is determined in an improvisatory fashion, working off the pitches formed out of feedback that were unpredictable and improvisational. This interview helped me in terms of making decisions as I arranged the piece. I determined an instrumentation based on the earlier knowledge that Raven enjoyed working with the Coast Chamber Orchestra, that clarinet was one of his favorite instruments, and that piano one of his least. The instrumentation that I confirmed with him consisted of the following: cedar flute, silver flute, clarinet, tuba, two violins, viola, cello, and percussion. In making an arrangement, I

found it necessary to first write a listing of events converting seconds into measures and noting gestural events seen in Figure 5.21.

**Figure 5.21:** “YELLOWFACE SONG”

Chart of Sound Events & Corresponding Measures for chamber arrangement by seconds from April 17, 2009 Performance Recording

OPENING 2’42” of piece:

second	measure	event
0”	0	air
10	10	tapping
15”	15	metal tapping
16”	16	low note
23”	23	swell, low note
28”	28	more air
34”	34	whish
42”	42	low note out
43”	43	high note
51”	51	swell high note
1’02”	62	swell air
1’07”	67	hits
1’09”	69	high feedback
1’10”-1’13”	70-3	fuss with pulsing
1’14”	74	pulsing
1’17”	77	silence in pulsing
1’18”	78	pulsing and air
1’30”	90	crescendo
1’39”-42”	99-102	glissandi down, pipe twirl, pulse out
1’47”-1’54”	107-114	fade high feedback
1’55”	115	g note
2’02”	122	g#
2’04”	124	a
2’10”	130	g
2’14”	134	pulse strong, and beating
2’25”	145	f
2’36”	156	fade pulsing
2’38”	158	low, growling, wavering note- d
2’40”	160	wavering eb
2’41”	161	wavering e
2’42”	162	low f

CHANT SECTION, 4’51” – 5’30” of piece:

4’51”	291	chant begins on low f
4’54”	294	ab chant
4’58”	298	f
5’03”	303	c
5’04”	304	eb
5’11”	311	short, high f, feedback

5'12"	312	fade low chant
5'14"	314	high feedback motive
5'16"	316	Db wavering low chant pitch
5'25"	325	low c chant
5'26"	326	strong pulsing

I then include my orchestration of the first 2'42" in Figure 5.22 and one of the chanting sections from 4'51" – 5'30" as Figure 5.23. I hope to finish the work along these lines and then have Raven edit, rewrite, and complete the work for possible performance.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 5.22 Orchestration of Opening Sections to "Yellowface"

YELLOWFACE SONG (2007)

SECONDS, tempo is flexible circa ♩=60

composed by Raven Chacon  
arranged by Dawn Avery

The score is for the piece "Yellowface Song" (2007) by Raven Chacon, arranged by Dawn Avery. It is in 4/4 time with a tempo of approximately 60 beats per minute. The score spans 17 seconds, with measures numbered 1 through 17. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Flute 1 & 2:** Both parts are marked "Blow through mouthpiece, taking breaks and overlapping with other instruments".
- Clarinet:** Marked "Blow through mouthpiece, taking breaks and overlapping with other instruments".
- Tuba:** Marked "mp" (mezzo-piano) in measure 17.
- Violin arco (top):** Marked "tap body of instrument in varying places with varying dynamics" and "random rhythms, never dense".
- Violin arco (bottom):** Marked "Two taps below bridge" and "as strings with chopsticks".
- Viola arco:** No specific performance instructions are visible.
- Cello arco:** Marked "tap body of instrument in varying places with varying dynamics" and "random rhythms, never dense".
- Percussion:** Includes parts for "perc" and "timp" (timpani).

18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35

Violin I  
Violin II  
Viola  
Cello/Double Bass

bow with stick  
mp  
bow with stick  
mp  
bow with stick  
mp  
rub top of timpani head with hand in circular motion  
mp

36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53

*mp* *mf*

and skipping to m. 71

A musical score for the "Yellowface" Chant, measures 71 through 85. The score is arranged in two systems of staves. The first system consists of five staves: three treble clefs and two bass clefs. The second system consists of four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The music is written in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The first system features melodic lines with slurs and accents, and dynamic markings of *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The second system features a more rhythmic accompaniment with slurs and dynamic markings of *mf* and *col legno* (col legno). The measures are numbered 71 through 85 at the top of the first system.

Figure 5.23 "Yellowface" Chant

A musical score for the "Yellowface" Chant, measure 11. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The music is written in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The measure contains a melodic line with a slur over the notes and a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte).

Figure 5.24 “Yellowface” Chant arrangement

The image shows a musical score for an arrangement titled "YellowFace". The score is written for a full orchestra and includes the following instruments: Fl. 1, Fl. 2, B♭ Cl., Tuba, Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., Vc., Perc., and Timp. The score is in 2/4 time, as indicated by the "2" above the first staff. The key signature is one flat (B♭). The Fl. 1 part has a melodic line with a fermata over the final note. The Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 parts have a similar melodic line with a fermata. The Vla. part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Vc. part has a bass line with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Perc. and Timp. parts are mostly silent, with some light percussion indicated by short vertical lines.

I used this arrangement as a means of “transcribing” Chacon’s piece for another type of transmission, for I considered sounds that I recorded from his live concert, visual representation of the performance, interview material, and even tacet cultural knowledge as I made decisions about form, timbre, instrumentation, orchestration, dynamics, meter, melodic content, harmony, and tempo. I thought about spatially notating the work similar to the style of twentieth-century composer Henry Brant whose notation often provided

spatial locations on a page with approximate time markings in seconds, or sound cues, rather than measured metric markings with specific times. This would probably have been truer to the original performances, but given the musicians and the conductor that might be performing the work, I decided on a “free” tempo, while notating seconds in a 1/4 time signature, with each measure serving as a second. This format serves more as an organizational tool for alignment signals than as specific timings. The conductor is asked to vary the tempi as he/she wishes thus creating a spatial “feel” that is less metered. These fluctuations are not marked in the score as an experiment to encourage a sense of spontaneity with ensemble participation. It may be that while in rehearsal the conductor may find it necessary to give the performers specific tempo fluctuations that might also convince me to rework the score again. I have orchestrated this arrangement with the idea of performance in mind, but in the process of composing it became another form of music analysis, although originally intended as an arrangement for performance.

It would also be interesting to situate the performers spatially, using balconies or the back of the audience for certain players to enhance the effect of speakers placed throughout a performance space. Focusing primarily on timbre, I notate a variety of sounds in which the instrumentalist is asked to use his or her instrument to produce a variety of sounds in unusual ways, such as string players tapping the sides of their instrument to sound like the tapping of microphones being positioned on the balloon membrane and electronic wires and knobs being set up. The timpanist is asked to rub in a circular fashion to imitate the rubbing on the balloon. Flute players and clarinetist are instructed to blow through their mouthpieces to sound like air and the strings play long arco notes completely *col legno* so as to have a static and muted effect. Some liberties in

the arrangement of such a work are necessary, as it cannot be a completely imitative arrangement although in this version I do emulate many timbres, forms, pitches, and rhythms while staying within the basic time frame. I focus on the elements that the composer thought were important: certain gestures, the overall soundscape and the tune. Upon my initial hearing of the piece, I would not have primarily focused on the chanted melody, but after talking with Raven who said the melody was the most important part of the piece, I had to make sure that I, too, featured that in the work. One of the clearer melodic sections occurs at 4'51" on the audio example from the April 17, 2009 performance, and I have included an excerpt of that section in three forms: waveform, spectral plot and my arrangement. The melody is emphasized dynamically and instrumentally and at a climactic moment in the work. Raven hears the balloon and the voice during the start of the piece when he says "depending on the amps versus the monitors, the singing is the main source that overloads the system and affects the other sounds, including pulsing sounds, loops, octave displacement, and feedback" (Chacon, interview, 6 May 2009).

Although I have included cultural analogies throughout this dissertation, since this research is very much about the composer, providing an introductory look at a small body of work that may represent his "style," it is equally important to discuss some of his views on music in relation to culture, his biographical information, and the work of earlier ethnomusicologists on Navajo music in order to get additional contexts for his work. The short biography of Raven Chacon included in Chapter Three reveals his training in both Native and Western arts, his innovative interest in technology, and his interest in Native community. In panel discussions, Chacon often says that he does not

like to bridge the two worlds of Native and European music or even have the two come together intentionally. Rather, he embraces modernity by creating new genres. He claims that he does not use Navajo music in his composition. However, his work surely has a Navajo sensibility and reflects that enculturation. In David McAllester book *Enemy Way Music: A Study of Social and Esthetic Values as Seen in Navaho Music*, there are several descriptions of Navajo traditional music that apply to Chacon's work, such as the reference to complex rhythms being perceived as melody in various permutations, along with explanations of breath, both of which can apply to Chacon's "Yellowface Song," as rhythms created by the movement of microphones and cables and electronic effects, along with the blowing up of the balloon while chanting (that is distorted by the previous elements) helped determine the melody:

It seems that the rhythm is not a steady background for the melody, as in the case of most Western European music, but is as keenly perceived as melody for its combinations and permutations. In the chant music where the melody may be limited to two or three notes, the rhythm may be even more complex... Navaho music in general may be dominated by the chants, and prosodic rhythms and speeds have carried over... where extended texts are lacking... the melodic line in Navaho music tends to start high and move down, often over the course of an octave. Von Hornbostel has explained this direction of movement as the natural result of losing air in the lungs. As one breathes out in singing, it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain high notes, and so the result of any prolonged vocalization is likely to be a downward trend in melody." (McAllester 1954:74-5).

In addition, McAllester talks about pitch center as opposed to referencing specific keys. Free composition is a feature of traditional secular song that McAllester also spent a good deal of time analyzing. The features of rhythm, chant, air, pitch, and free form can all be understood in Chacon's "Yellowface Song." As can be seen in the work of Clyde Kluckhohn and Leland C. Wyman, *An Introduction to Navaho Chant Practice: With an*

*Account of the Behaviors Observed in Four Chants*, specific behaviors for chants are the primary focus of an entire area of study and are relevant to the performance art of Chacon, as the visual movement is determined by the emphasis on the chant.

“Microphones were designed to be inside my mouth to control feedback. I could do the same thing on a stand, but it’s more interesting and practical this way—more compact with no stand, looks more interesting, same with pedals” (Chacon, interview, 3 May 2009). As can be seen in the video of one of the performances that I recorded (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUMOvgcv5Cs>), the intensity with which he sings while moving the yellow balloon against his face has a powerful if not playful visual effect to which he has not claimed any other connotation. Perhaps in defining a Navajo sensibility along with innovation, his work may be considered part of a Navajo electronica or a Navajo avant-garde.

Chacon said in earlier interviews that he does not really like classical music, but has great respect for the instruments and their sound potential; this is one of the many reasons that he finds the term classical Native unsatisfactory, even for chamber music (Avery, “NAICP Panel Discussion,” November 2007). So, how can one define the music of Raven Chacon? Are final definitions important or are they part of what some may value as “linear and singular, static, and objective”? (Little Bear 200:82).

### ***Audience Reaction to “Yellowface Song”***

Now that I’ve looked at the composer and his music through an ethnomusicological lens, it is interesting to look at some of the responses from audience members, since the work is meant to be performed live in front of an audience and

Chacon performs in part to evoke audience reaction.<sup>7</sup> The audience's extreme reactions to the piece were obvious, as people either hated it (as demonstrated by the audience members covering their ears, leaving the recital hall, and talking about it after the performance; this was generally an older audience) or loved it (sitting forward in their seats, screaming and clapping afterwards, and talking about it after the performance; this was generally a younger student audience). When asked to describe the music or what type of music it was, some said they could not or explained what it was not; for example, some said, "it's not classical music, maybe it could be performance art, with sound, but is that music?" Others said it was exactly what classical music needed in terms of a new voice and innovation. One audience member pulled me aside and disturbingly said, "Now we now why we killed the Indians." She thought this was a clever joke, and I hope to write further on this topic as research post-dissertation.

The work itself was performed using both casual and formal styles. Chacon walked onto the stage as people were still talking and coming to their seats. The audience assumed that he was setting up, and it took about 30 seconds, with whispering from the audience asking, "has he started?" before they quieted down and paid attention. This was intentional on the composer's part as every sound is part of the piece, from turning on equipment to blowing up and deflating the balloon to placing microphones to electronic manipulation of the sounds. It also seems to me that this is part of the concept of listening

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<sup>7</sup> The piece was performed as part of the American Composer's Forum First Nations Composer's Initiative in collaboration with the Montgomery College Arts Institute's World Arts Festival concert series on April 17th, 2009 in the Montgomery College Recital Hall. The program consisted of a variety of genres of music, primarily "contemporary native classical," but also pieces that were more theatrical and improvisatory in nature. First Nations composers and performers came from all over the country and represented a variety of tribal affiliations. They included R. Carlos Nakai (Navajo/ Ute native flutist/ composer), Steven Alvarez (Mescalero Apache/ Athabaskan percussionist/ vocalist), Ron Warren (Echota Tsalagi Cherokee native flutist/ pianist/ composer), Lisa Long (Choctaw/ Cree western flutist), Brent Michael Davids (Mohican composer) and myself, Dawn Avery (Kanienkéhaka cellist/ composer).

and paying attention to the subtleties around you that I mentioned earlier. This concept can also be understood in John Cage's definition of music as chance or random sounds (Cage 1961). While I was studying with Cage, he showed us a video that he referred to as his "symphony" where he filmed a building being torn down by dynamite as we paid attention to the random sounds that took on form, tempo, timbre, and rhythm. Cage's unusual compositional concepts caused many to refer to him as a music-philosopher first and a composer second.

Chacon also plays with the unexpected, as a visual artist, as a composer, and also as a philosopher. During the performance of "Yellowface Song," he was crouched on the floor rather than positioned in front of a table or platform. He was dressed in what many musicians call "casual black" but with a hooded sweatshirt that is often associated with more "mainstream or popular" types of music. His demeanor was relaxed yet focused, and he became more and more serious as the piece progressed. He clearly knew what equipment and effects units he was performing on and had the technique to use them effectively as an instrumentalist. As the piece progressed into a strong chant section, his movements of holding the inflated yellow balloon against his face as he sang into it became more intense. An audience member, who is a student in the Montgomery Scholars program and has nearly completed an intensive year of multi-disciplinary study in "world" religions and philosophies, music, history and philosophy, commented: "The "Yellowface Song" by Raven Chacon was very intriguing. His use of sounds and materials was something I've never seen before. What struck me the most about this piece though was when the artist pressed the yellow balloon to his face, covering all of his features so that all you saw was yellow and hair around it. Whether it was intentional

or not, it struck me as highly symbolic and I immediately referred to the colonization of America when Indians were not viewed as people, but as aliens in their native lands with a different color face than their colonizers and oppressors” (Nauman, “Concert Performance Critique for MU111,” 17 April 2009).

When I asked Chacon if the piece is meant to tell a story or has an underlying philosophy, he replied, “Any philosophical ideas are not intentional—I don’t try to tell a story, but a lot of people wonder if I am. I hope there are enough things happening that maybe don’t fit that can tell a story or be understood in different ways than mine” (Chacon, interview, 6 May 2009). Analogies from the Navajo Wind songs examined by McAllester and oral traditions, desert landscapes, and ancestral voices, as well as native concepts of decolonization and musical sovereignty come to mind as additional stories that might be applied to the work. When asked what would happen if the yellow balloon broke, Raven Chacon responded, “I guess it could be called Greenface Song next time” (ibid.).

### ***Summaries—Transmission Processes and Visual Representations of Sound***

Visual representations of music—in this case, notation, graphics, or installations—often serve the purpose of archiving, triggering memory, or communicating. Definitions of musical representation in a visual format have been part of a creative and historical process. Composers and scholars have explored a variety of possible representations for the music they are creating or studying and I argue that the aims of both are similar in terms of sound transcription, whether it be from a composer’s head or an ethnomusicologist’s field recording. In the first section of this chapter, I looked at the visual representations of work by a variety of Native composers including

the elaborate and colorful graphic compositions of Brent Michael Davids, the European staff notation of Tio Becenti, the cultural and visual sonic indicators in my own works, and the embodied sound installations of Raven Chacon. The visual representations reflected in these works may be seen in various degrees as prescriptive, descriptive and performative, with these functions often overlapping or circling back to each other. Styles of notation are often chosen deliberately by the composer to suit a specific commission or performance event. It was especially interesting to look at new transcription and transmission taken from the Audacity software alongside those used by ethnomusicologists. They transcribe field recordings to gain knowledge, whereby the composer also transmits his concepts of sound and cultural knowledge, but they direct their notation to different users. These sounds are then further interpreted as part of what Davids called the “generative ‘music-ing’ process” by the listener. Composers and scholars alike understand the problems of writing down music as accurate modes of transmission, as well as the questions about the politics and values associated with oral versus written traditions.<sup>8</sup>

In the second part of this chapter, I employed the metaphor of the Navajo *táágo dez’á* or three points to specifically illustrate three aspects for transmission in the piece for solo cello of the same name, and then within three main categories in Chacon’s electronic work, “Yellowface Song.” These two pieces provide contrasting examples of Chacon’s work in the former could be considered chamber music while the latter might be placed in a performance art category. I chose to look at “Yellowface Song” as part of a personal transmission, analysis and transcription experiment. Working in great detail to

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<sup>8</sup> See Jaibairazy (1977) for more information on this topic.

explore concepts that may be applied to other Native classical compositions, I looked at 1) three types of transcriptions, 2) three points of analysis, and 3) three responses to the work. Taken together, they may give us a multifaceted picture of an indigenous compositional process. In applying my own personal responses to the works, Native composers and Native listeners often incorporate specific cultural references that differ from those of non-Native audiences. Indigenous concepts as cultural signifiers are embedded into analysis, response, and creation of Native classical musical works both consciously and subconsciously. Native American music-creating artists may create differently and our works may be understood differently by those who listen with specific cultural understandings.

### ***Three Sounds of Life***

The Navajo concept of *táágo dez'á* can be applied one last time to the Rotinonhsión:ni concept found in what we consider our original sounds of life. They are three sounds sung by the men in our Longhouses and can be best described as “huh – huh – huh—.” John provides a cultural explanation for each of the three sounds: “the first breath is in recognition of the ancestors in the plant life i.e., strawberries; the second breath represents the salt fluid that is an added protection for the fetus. The salt fluid breaks allowing the fresh water to cleanse the body, permitting oxygen intake. The third birth represents the deep breath of life *ha'tu:wa* that begins life's creation” (John email correspondence, 3 July 2013). To the Rotinonhsión:ni, sound and song not only represent life's creation, but are life's creation. The three original sounds that we believe were blown into the first human being bring us life and breath and remain the first sounds of any Rotinonhsión:ni newborn. When talking about the concept of music, we understand it

as a living process that stays with us throughout our life. Many Indigenous cultures throughout the world do not have a word for song or a piece of music, but rather for the process of making music. As mentioned in the Introduction, Davids wrote about Indian music as a process that is not fixed. “From an American Indian point of view . . . it is the process that is vital . . . Music is never a noun for American Indians, it is always a verb: ‘song’ becomes ‘song-*ing*’ and ‘music’ becomes ‘music-*ing*’ . . . When ‘song-*ing*’ occurs, life is *generated* by the process; in this way, Indian ‘music-*ing*’ is a *generative* process, birthing out the creation of life itself by performing” (Davids 2004:4). John talks about song and creation in the following quote: “In the beginning; after realizing the harmony in creation, a being went into song imperfect at first. Gradually the harmony became music for this being” (John email correspondence, 3 July 2013).

## **Chapter Six: Ieriho:kwats (She Digs Deeply Into Her Roots to Learn)—**

### **Methodologies**

#### ***“Relational Methodology”***

There are many ways of looking at relationality in terms of music making and research: how we relate with our community, our research participants, our ceremonies and dreams, our ancestors, sounds, language, culture, artistry, and creative processes, as well as how we engage with our readings and ideas, our elders and advisors, and our dissertation committee and university, to name a few. According to most Indigenous scholars, relationship is one of the fundamental elements of Indigenous research, and it drives every aspect of the process, holds us accountable, and keeps us connected to a greater purpose. Although one of the reasons for Indigenous graduate students to do research is to complete a dissertation and doctorate, our work is often defined by a greater purpose: to serve our community.

Kovach writes of the importance of “relational work” as an “engagement with Indigenous peoples, communities, and cultures” (Kovach 2009:172). She also employs the hyphenated “re-” in a description of what she calls “tribal-based research” as “relational methodology”:

Reemergent to Indigenous community and emergent to the academy, Indigenous inquiry is a relational methodology: its methods are dependent upon deep respect for those (or that) which it will involve, and those (or that) which will feel its consequence. In re-examining relationships that serve knowledge, Indigenous inquiry calls forth the inherent stewardship responsibilities. In both its procedure and consequences, Indigenous inquiry asks researchers to demonstrate how research gives back to individual and collective good. (Ibid.:174)

In an examination of relational methodology or concepts of relationality, it is reassuring to look at the emphasis ethnomusicologists place on relationships and community, particularly in collaboration. Many of the Indigenous theorists are working in areas such as health and education and are still working hard to explain many concepts in Indigenous methodology that many ethnomusicologists have put into practice. Of course, it never hurts to be reminded of important facets in what is sometimes referred to as “new ethnomusicology” (Barz and Cooley 2008). Judah Cohen, associate professor of musicology and Jewish studies at Indiana University, wrote about the importance of relationships between people, sound, and community:

We, as ethnographers and ethnomusicologists, are essentially chroniclers of relationships: between people at least as much as between people and sound. Although it is now relatively common for ethnographers to speak of the long-term relationships they hold with their informants/research partners, it is important to consider that these relationships also constitute encounters between communities. (Cohen 2008:166)

Once again, relationality can be specifically understood in terms of a) fully acknowledging cultural specialists and cultural connections to language, land, sound, people, cosmos, and worldview; b) collaborating on projects that serve the community and are chosen in accordance with community needs; c) checking information with elders and cultural specialists; d) developing relationships when gathering, analyzing, writing, presenting, and archiving your information.

*a) Acknowledging Cultural Specialists and Cultural Connections to Language, Land, Sound, People, Cosmos, Worldview*

Several years ago, John taught me that the Rotinonhsión:ni believe there are seven bird songs that trigger important cycles throughout the day. The first song is at dawn, and

its purpose is to awaken the natural world through its melodic resonance: the buds slowly open on the trees and bushes, the grasses gently move, the flowers begin to bloom, the leaves unfold and sway. The vibration of the bird songs allows all of life to vibrate and come alive. When I received my Onkwehon:we name in the longhouse, its vibration was introduced to all the people in the longhouse, for all the clans to hear, and to all of the natural world, including the waters, plant life, and animals, so that they would know my name and my vibration, and I might be supported in this life by all of creation. The turtle clan representatives walked me across the longhouse from fire to fire, singing for me as I received my name and had my clan returned to me. Songs are vibration with a purpose, whether in social dances, as educational tools, in ceremony, by the birds, or by composers of Native American classical music.

Music has a purpose: “For Indigenous people, the purpose is to get it done, it’s practical, it’s functional. So it doesn’t have to be the prettiest thing in the world, as long as it works, because everything has a job. So if you’re creating a song for the seeds, if it works, if the seeds grow, then that’s the job” (Buck, interview, 16 July 2011). This is indicated in Chacon’s “Táágo Dez’á,” written for the First Nation’s Composers Initiative as a political exploration of oral transmission, or his *My Blood is in the Water* as a sound installation for the city of Santa Fe with multi-layered political implications and teachings, David’s “Mohican Friends” uses language, storytelling, and visual imagery to teach some important Mohican beliefs, while his “Cello Chili” uses humor to tell a story about the life of Cherokee humorist Will Rogers and his connection to the land. Becenti’s Native sensibilities of Navajo cadence and drive come out in his music when he purposely creates using specific European tools of atonality and dissonance. I often use

my music as a political and storytelling tool by means of irony and unexpected juxtaposition, as noted earlier in “Decolonization” and *Fringe*.

Many other examples of music that uses specific Native worldviews or embody landscape, history, language, stories, myth, relationships, forms, and sounds are mentioned in Chapter Three. Here the concept of art for art’s sake does not apply, and thanks to my study of cultural and ethnomusicological theories, I believe that it never applies and is clearly demonstrated by the classical Native music I have researched. An artist’s worldview and emotion are part of what he or she creates, whether intentionally acknowledging that or not. By Indigenous worldview I refer to enculturation, including ancestral history and cosmology, and by emotion I refer to the energetic field of the creator along with the human component of creation. If the intention of the artist is to codify or obstruct worldview, than the emotional impact of the work would be different, and by purposefully ignoring one’s culture, one is still engaging with it. This is not to say that an Ndn cannot write a blues, for example, that appears to have nothing to do with his/her background and has no obvious reference to culture. While enculturation is inherent, sonic distinctiveness may not always be obvious.

*b) Serving the Community with Collaborative Projects Chosen in Accordance with Community Needs*

Our music is part of an important revitalization movement, as can be seen from the compositional residency programs mentioned in Chapter Four, such as The Composer Apprentice National Outreach Endeavor (CANOE), later renamed as Native American Composer Apprenticeship Program (NACAP), and the Native Composer’s Project

(NCP). The composers are committed to offering educational programs that nurture creativity among Native students.

In Chapter Four, I discuss the “unexpected” representation of Indians in a modern world and refer to the work of Philip Deloria who believes that the music of Native composers and our students does not fit within the racist stereotypes of the primitive ancient Indian, the savage sounds of the tomahawk, the exotic nearly extinct Indian, the spiritual new age Indian, or in the lyrics about the suffering Indian found in country and blues. “Indian sounds signify those expectations—primitivism and social evolution, violent conflict, indigenous nationalism, Indian disappearance, the romance of the forbidden exotic, the haunted American landscape, and a host of other anxieties, fears, and expectations” (Deloria 2004:184). Artistic creation outside of expectation—such as classical Native music, contemporary design, film making, and theatre—have moved “beyond Deloria’s “anomaly” category to the more socially transformative realm of the “unexpected” (Hoefnagels and, Diamond 2012:54).

As mentioned in Chapter Three, beginning with Ballard and his creation of the first Native American band program for children and his development of curriculum and educational materials teaching Native American music in the classroom, it has been important for composers to help young American Indians find a voice in music, including classical composition. Davids was the first composer to develop a composer residency program for Native youth, the Grand Canyon Music Festival's Native American Composer Apprentice Program (CANOE), in which he, Tate, and Chacon have been composers in residence. Tate was also composer in residence for the Chickasaw Summer Arts Academy and the American Composers Forum/Joyce Award community outreach

program. Student works have been performed and recorded by the ETHEL string quartet (2010). I have been privileged to direct the Native Composers Project (NCP), a culture-based project in which students compose an original song in their language and traditional song style, arrange a contemporary version of that song, and then compose a string quartet using their song as thematic material. Works from this project were released as a CD to raise funds for Tyendinaga language revitalization programs. All of these programs provide classical composition instruction for American Indian students and feature their works in public performance and recordings.

Ethnomusicologists Timothy J. Cooley and Gregory Barz write about “The New Fieldwork” (2008:14) in *Shadows in the Field* (2008). They refer to a chapter by Anthony Seeger, Emeritus Professor of Ethnomusicology at UCLA, where he wrote about public projects as legitimate forms of ethnomusicology that serve the communities we work with:

The communities we live with and study (and represent) should be considered when we record, document, and release archival and commercial recordings. Engaging public projects, he suggests, is not only a legitimate form of ethnomusicology, but the accompanying field research documentation can very well serve important functions for both the communities engaged and for the discipline of ethnomusicology. (Barz and Cooley 2008:17)

I have explored ways in which Native composers create works that reflect their cultural identities. Through the implementation of these various culture-based community programs, we can see Smith’s four stages self-determination for Indigenous people in action: transformation as programs meet the needs of various Native students, while exposing them to new ideas; decolonization as students are given specific tools for creative expression; healing as composers learn and experience their creativity in

conducive environments with specific goals in mind; and mobilization as works are created and publicly shared.

*c) Accountability: Checking Information with Elders and Cultural Specialists*

Wilson wrote this about accountability with research participants:

One method through which authenticity or credibility may be ensured is through continuous feedback with all the research participants. This allows each person in the research relationship to not only check the accuracy of the analysis but also to elaborate upon ideas and to learn from other participants. So they are not only given back the ideas they presented to review, they also get the opportunity to listen to and interpret concepts presented by others. Relationships in the research are built not only between researcher and individual participants but also among the participants themselves and the ideas that are being discussed. These are relationships that we can be held accountable to. (Wilson 2008:121)

Thanks to the immediacy of emails and phone calls, along with frequent visits with hard copies of writing samples, I was able to consistently check facts and work with varying interpretations. In addition, I have been privileged to work with many Indigenous scholars who gave varied opinions on the same topic, particularly in terms of culture and language. In the process of doing this research, the emphasis was on my relationship as a student who was being mentored by elders and cultural specialists, rather than me as a researcher with a list of questions. My teachers determined what I was to learn and how I was to learn it. They assessed what they thought I was ready to learn while also generously offering information that they knew I would be interested in. When I did have questions, they considered them thoughtfully often over periods of time. For example, often when I asked John a question, he would answer it throughout the week adding pieces to it as he gave the question careful consideration. On several occasions he said I was not yet ready to understand something. Nicole Beaudry, Professor of

Ethnomusicology at the Université du Québec à Montréal wrote about this in reference to her work with the Dene Indians where she acknowledges the information and knowledge given by elders had a clear progression with each visit to Canada's Northwest Territories:

The progression was clear. Not only did the elders assess that my mind was ready for more information, but they also believed that I was handling the information respectfully—an attitude expected of all of those learning, whatever their age. They were feeding my soul as well as my tape recorder. (Beaudry 2008:230)

Here Beaudry is not only talking about her relationship to elders and gathering information, but referring to herself as a student who is experiencing a transformation through those relationships.

Julie Cruickshank Professor of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia also wrote about the dynamics of collaboration being determined by Native American cultural specialists in Canada's North as she looks at changes in anthropological research:

Increasingly, aboriginal people have their own ideas about the kind of relationships they want to establish with an anthropologist. Their expectations include considerably more sustained participation from the ethnographer than was the norm in the past . . . The model being negotiated in some northern communities is one based on collaboration between participants rather than research "by" the anthropologist "on" the community. (Cruickshank 1988:30)

She also refers to continued contact and ongoing relationships within communities which are indicative of changing fieldwork models where researchers make several visits and sustain long-term relationships and projects in collaboration with the community's needs. More and more, cultural representatives are determining their own research agendas, how the research findings should be disseminated, and how they themselves should be represented.

According to Kovach, "Another way to keep good relations—*mi'yo-wicéhtowin*—within primary research is to ensure that research participants understand and accept how their teachings are represented. To that end, they must be given an opportunity to review their contributions and make changes wherever necessary" (Kovach 2009:48).

Relationships and ideas take time to develop, and I was afforded the opportunity of almost seven years to work on this topic. This allowed me to check and recheck information, but also to personally grow with the knowledge. Kovach wrote of the importance to "give ourselves time to integrate them [teachings and various forms of Indigenous knowledge] so that we can be of use to our community" (ibid.:50).

My teacher John would often jokingly say, "*wakatisisto:thane?*" (Has the light bulb come on?). In other words, "do you get it?" "Are the teachings I've been giving you for years coming together?" For example, I write about an eagle feather teaching in Chapter Five that I originally learned in 2008, but there were two main events in my life that allowed it to come alive for me, which as I mentioned earlier, is the point of our teachings. I was gifted an eagle feather in a ceremony by Jock in which he asked me to continue my contribution to Onkwehon:we music. I was greatly honored and was not sure what to do with the feather once it was given to me since Rotinonhsión:ni women do not traditionally carry eagle feathers. John explained to me that I was to use the feather in private ceremonies to understand my role as a musician, singer, and cellist. I have also used it in my role as a teacher and gatherer of knowledge for this dissertation. It was not until I wrote about a work by Davids in Chapter Five that I fully understood John's teaching, as it suddenly came alive as an internalized worldview in which spirit and earth

are always connected. “Taking this one step further allows research to be collaboratively analysed. We are all accountable to and analyse our shared relational reality together” (Wilson 2008:121).

Referring again to the Native dissertation-writing retreat, it was fortuitous that such a thing exists and that I was invited to participate during the final stages of writing the first draft of this dissertation. Although within the process of research and writing I have experienced moments of clarity and connectedness where research became ceremony, it was not until this week-long retreat that began each morning with a tobacco ceremony and continued each evening in an exploration of dreams that I felt the concept of research as ceremony in community. With every actual ceremony, power walk, lecture, sharing circle, meal, coffee break, hike, and field trip, we were in our research with each other, working out problems, reasoning, talking, debating, and sharing quotes, ideas, and topics. All of the researchers were dedicated to community-based projects and were writing using Indigenous methodologies. I was able to read sections of my dissertation to Longboat, who was one of the primary teachers at the retreat, and to go over language and specific cultural questions with Porter, who is the leader of the Mohawk community; the participants have continued an on-going dialog regarding our Indigenous research topics. More specifically, it was through this collaborative process that I was able to collect information about using the spelling "Rotinonhsión:ni" rather than "Haudenosaunee," and decided to incorporate the teachings of the two-row wampum.

Wilson talks about a process-oriented research strategy that “emphasizes learning by watching and doing . . . The relationship building that this sharing and participating entailed is an important aspect of ethical Indigenous research” (Wilson 2008:40). He

gives an example of the talking circle in which each member of the circle is given a chance to speak on a specific research topic, which is similar to the sharing circles that occurred during the retreat. The sharing I have had with composers over the years in panel discussions, concerts, interviews, and meals was also part of my “watching and doing.”

In terms of relationality to the participants, as a researcher one of the important tasks is how I represent participants:

Once individuals have agreed to share their story, the researcher’s responsibility is to ensure voice and representation. That participants check and approve the transcripts of the stories is essential for meeting the criteria of accurate representation as perceived by research participants . . . Reliable representation engenders relevancy and is a necessary aspect of giving back to community. (Kovach 2009:98-99)

Even though a concern for accurate information and checking with participants is practiced by many of today’s researchers, given the long history of inaccurate information and misappropriation by researchers and Native communities it remains important to keep this value in the forefront of our work. My research on Native classical music was done with both accountability and relationality in mind, as I consulted and collaborated, served, collected data, developed theory, and explored Indigenous linguistic and metaphorical perspectives with a good mind.

*d) Developing Relationships when Gathering, Analyzing, Writing, Presenting and Archiving your Information*

Relationships are fostered throughout a lifetime. Being an Indigenous researcher means I have gathered a lifetime of experience through dreams, family, friends, teachers, and enculturation, even though I came to most of my cultural teachings as a young adult.

I have been actively learning my Rotinonhsión:ni culture and languages for over thirty years and during that time have developed enduring familial relationships and connections within specific communities, including Six Nations, Tyendinaga, Kanatsioharè:ke, and Oneida Settlement, Ontario.

Now I would like to look at how fieldwork, analysis, representation, and dissemination (i.e., ethnographic representation as utilized in a dissertation) can reflect Indigenous goals for self-determination and work in a diversity of relationships that reflect Wilson's four roles of accountability:

I see Indigenous scholars putting into practice being accountable to our relations in four different ways. The first is through how we go about choosing the topics we will research. The second is in the methods that we use to “collect our data” or build our relationships. The third is the way in which we analyse what we are learning. Finally, we maintain relational accountability in the way in which we present the outcomes of the research. (Wilson 2008:107)

Firstly, I chose the topic of classical Native music because there was an interest and a need. Secondly, I chose to collect data using Indigenous “Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being and Ways of Knowing” (Martin 2001, cited in Wilson 2008:61).

Referring once again to Smith, Indigenous goals of self-determination in research involve a circular process “of transformation, of decolonization, of healing and of mobilization” (1999:116). She sees these processes as being incorporated into practices and methodologies, and explains them again in the context of a possible research strategy. Here, transformation may be understood as the commitment to conduct research with an Indigenous sensibility, integrity, and an inner strength—this is the only way in which you can proceed. Decolonization may be the process of learning to use tools of research and creating new tools of research in an Indigenous way to present Native

perspectives on issues that are central to Native history and life. This includes collaborations with communities on projects that are important to them, along with checking one's work and process with Native elders and community members. Healing may refer to the scholar/researcher who digs deeper and deeper into their roots (*Ieriho:kwats*) to apply their own Indigenous knowledge to research. Mobilization may refer to the compilation of research, the sharing of those works, and seeing oneself as a creative academic who is first an Indian. Researchers must know that research is never a final product, but part of a cyclical journey by the researcher and any who consult with them in their future work. The canoe and the ship of the two-row wampum belt continue their journey, forever.

By placing them in the Anishinaabek Medicine Wheel, these concepts work well, with the East being the place of idea and desire to explore Indigenous based research (Transformation), the South corridor to act on one's ideas research and analysis from an Indigenous perspective (Decolonization), the West the place of feeling where one can learn more about their culture and their communities (Healing), and the North the place where one asks how their work may exist in harmony with all of creation as it guides others and continues to grow through the guidance of others (Mobilization).<sup>1</sup> I interpret her concept of mobilization in terms of dissemination and change, rather than the gathering of allies as in an Anishnaabek perspective.<sup>2</sup> I have substituted mobilization for enthusiasm, which can also be referred to as action. In Figure 6.1, I place Smith's four

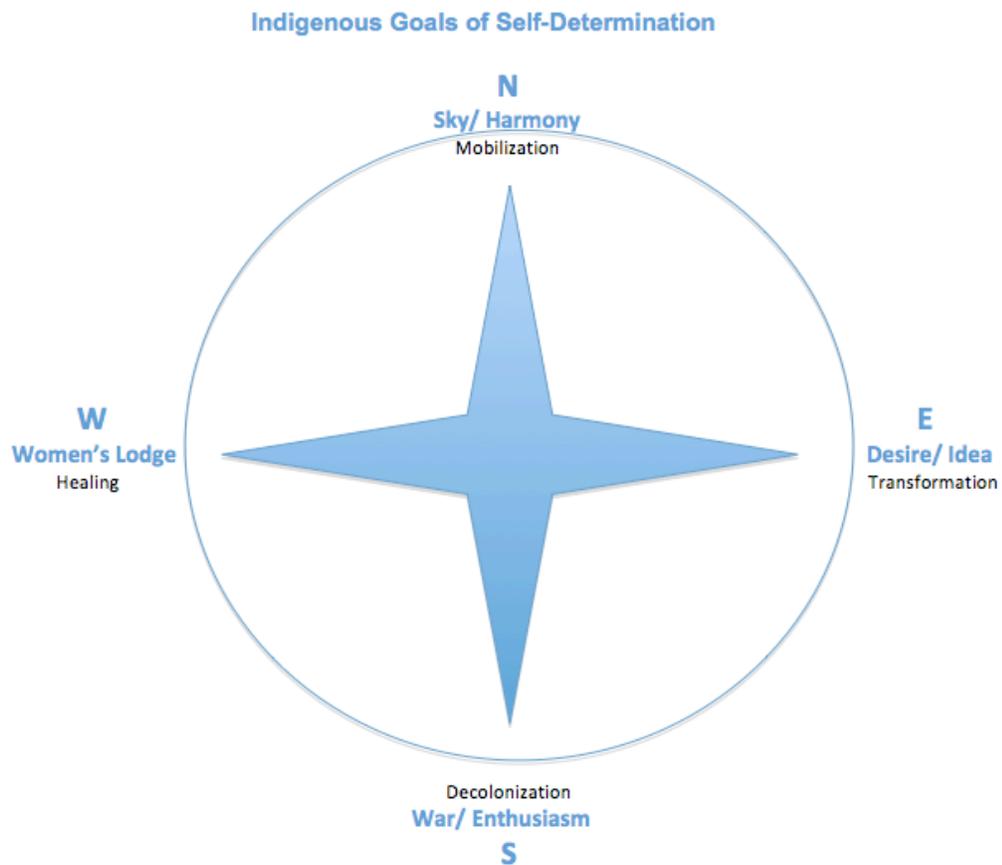
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<sup>1</sup> The corridor of the South is often referred to as Mobilization in the Anishinaabek tradition, but varies in different regions and with different Nations. It is sometimes understood as a place of war and mobilization in which one acts with enthusiasm. Smith uses the same term mobilization for her fourth stage, but with a different meaning.

<sup>2</sup> My training of the Anishinaabek Indian Medicine Wheel came from one of my teachers Dr. Rick Jarow (Vassar College, religious studies) who learned it through anthropologist Rosalyn Bruyere. Additional teachings on the wheel came from a Rotinonhsión:ni perspective primarily through Longboat.

stages of Indigenous self-determination on a medicine wheel that is loosely based on the Plains Indian wheel that the Rotinonhsión:ni perceive as the earth when seen as a macrocosm of understanding, or on a turtle island's back as a microcosm of North America.

**Figure 6.1**



**Figure 6.1:** This Indigenous Goals of Self-Determination graphic is loosely based on the Plains Indian medicine wheel in that it begins in the east and moves in a cyclical nature through the different directions, illustrating the non-sequential process of Linda Tuhiwai Smith's Indigenous goals of self-determination.

Smith's four stages and my four directions placed on the wheel depict a non-sequential development that is cyclical in nature, an important aspect of Indigenous research and representation. One may work beginning in the east and traveling around the

circle to the north, and continually go back again, revisiting and reworking processes. This can also be explained by the concept, discussed in Chapter Four, of non:wa, where what occurred in the past informs our present and future in a layered continuum. An academic also understands that the process of his or her work is not only linear, but in fact has a cyclical nature as well, just as its dissemination or publication is not a means to an end.

Porter asked, "why not let everyone learn Kanienkéha, we all learned English" (Porter lecture, 20 July 2011). Through the learning of any language, we learn important worldviews. Many academics learn through the worldview of the dominant culture. The application of Indigenous concepts to academia is not only rich with meaning but also a necessary component to completing a picture that has privileged a Western paradigm.

Graham Hingangaroa Smith, Maori scholar and educator on Indigenous research frameworks and what he calls decolonizing the academy, wrote:

More often than not, we are using Western ideas, lenses, and tools to help us engage with our own culturally shaped issues. We also now have the added value and option of being able to use our own tools and our own ways of doing things. It is not an either/or situation, and I think this is a really important point to emphasize. (Smith in Kovach 2009:89)

Many ethnographers acknowledge that ethnography is not an either/or situation and that a balance using many methodologies is most useful. I would like to add that Indigenous knowledge systems, particularly with regard to research techniques, may also be useful as tools for any academic, and may help to correct the European model that has been seriously out of balance. Concepts found in Indigenous worldviews, such as those having to do with elders, time, cycles, and revitalization, and relationality may enhance current and similar trends in the field of ethnomusicology. An understanding of this knowledge

may be not only historically accurate, but also particularly noteworthy in looking at any research in areas that contain a wealth of Indigenous knowledge from a living Native population. Granted, scholars may be wary of referring to Native concepts due to fear of misappropriation, but I am talking about applying concepts that include us as viable, intellectual beings who continue to contribute to intellectual and spiritual pursuits.

I now explore a model of Indigenous research techniques by referring once again to the Anishinaabek medicine wheel, and apply my own tradition with the four directions and seasons, and Rotinonhsión:ni roles and responsibilities. Beginning with the medicine wheel, I place fieldwork in the Eastern corridor where we begin with an idea and decide to take action; analysis in the South where we mobilize our allies and go to “war” with our work using our enthusiasm and motivation; representation in the women’s lodge of the West where we look at how this project may be good for us and others; dissemination of our work can be in the Northern sky that asks us to look at how this project is in harmony with all of life as we receive continued guidance. (See Figure 6.2 for an Indigenous research model applied to a medicine wheel.)

Figure 6.2



**Figure 6.2:** This Indigenous Research Wheel graphic is loosely based on the Plains Indian medicine wheel in that it begins in the east and moves in a cyclical nature through the different directions, illustrating the non-sequential process of research techniques applied by an Indigenous model.

Several scholars (Bopp, Bopp, Brown, and Lane 1989; Huber 1993; Battiste 2000; Gonzalez 2000; Walker 2001) have incorporated medicine wheels in their research, with the East representing the spring and a place of research preparation and new beginning along with spiritual aspects of experience including song, ritual, story, and interconnectedness to community; the South representing the direction of summer and the

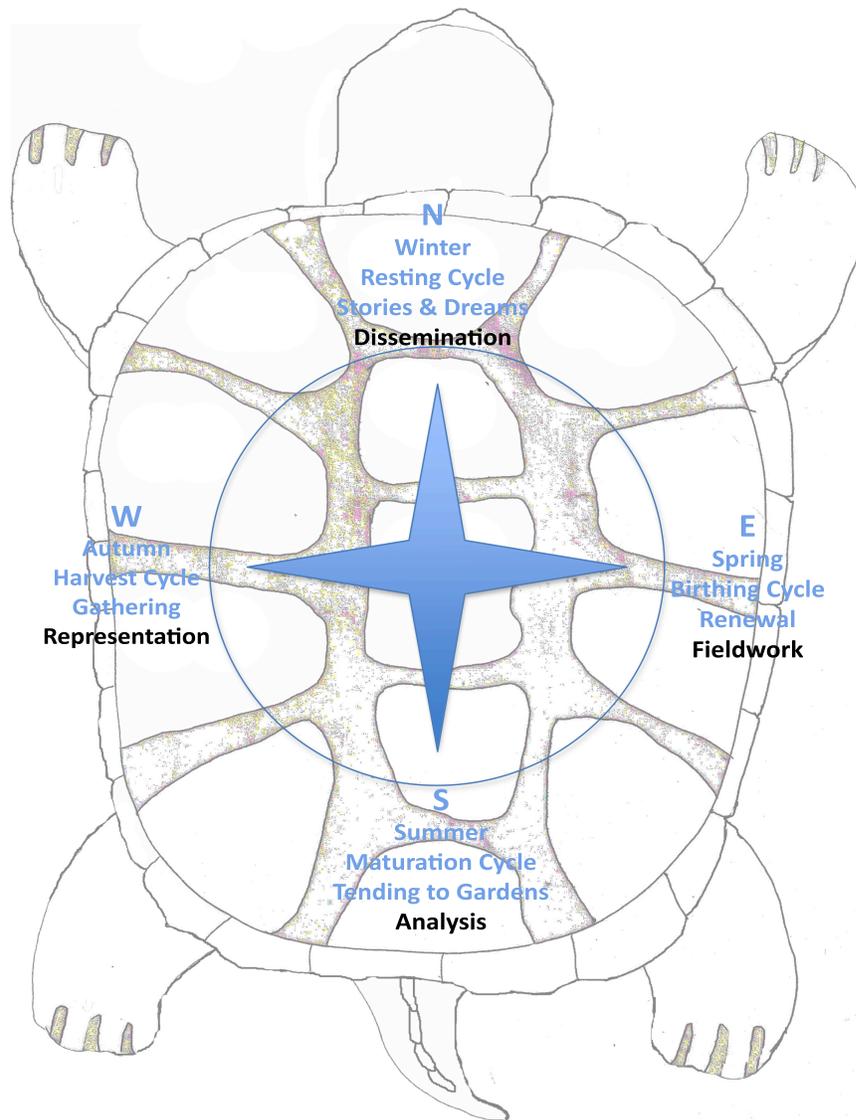
natural world where the researcher utilizes language, metaphor, and emotional response; the West being the direction of autumn where the researcher embodies knowing, connecting one's experience to knowledge; and the North being the direction of winter where "researchers work within the community to find solutions that are balanced and restore harmony" (Chilisa 2012:184).

Longboat's concept of a medicine wheel for the four seasons is similar to the understanding by Gonzalez in her work "The Four Seasons of Ethnography: A Creation-Centered Ontology for Ethnography" (2000). In my example, I have placed the directions on the turtle shell symbolizing the earth from a Rotinonhsión:ni perspective to correlate with the same four stages of research. According to teachings by Longboat, the spring or eastern side of the circle represents the birthing cycle, a time of renewal of life forces, and the time where seeds are planted and fieldwork is begun. The summer or southern corridor represents the natural propagation of life as the maturation cycle supports the birthing of all life and the continuation of life, correlating with on-going analysis and understanding in support of fieldwork. Autumn in the west is the place of the Harvest cycle, where we gather and give thanks for all that creation has provided. In terms of research, it is what where our ideas are collected into specific representations such as papers, compositions, art works, and presentations. The winter in the north is the place for the resting cycle so "mother the earth can replenish herself to prepare for the next three cycles, again, so that life may continue" (personal communication Longboat 25 August 2013). As a research paradigm, the north becomes a place of dissemination referring to archiving, published works, or developed strategies for sustainability. One

can see how Indigenous symbols may serve as points for understanding academic concepts that are multi-layered with significance.

Figure 6.3

### Indigenous Research Four Directions Wheel



I added to this example in Chapter Four when I discussed compositional processes and Chapter Seven when I discuss educational programs. Another possible

Rotinonhsión:ni model for the composition process and for research methodologies may require us to look at three points, or three groups, that define our traditional roles and responsibilities: Planters, Hunters, Gatherers. Within these three groups there are roles and responsibilities for each clan (John email correspondence, 25 July 2013).<sup>3</sup> The Gatherers represent the gathering of information and ideas or fieldwork; the Planters make the music-creation or analysis and writing; and the Hunters bring the “goods” to the community or presentation/ publication. A multitude of Indigenous perspectives, concepts, and metaphorical signifiers can be applied to academic research processes. Rich with meaning, layers of interpretation may be explored through the use of Ndn symbology, enabling the research story to unfold.

### ***REPRESENT: Ethnography as Performance***

In several contemporary ethnographies, writers have presented their research in a style that directly reflects the specific musical forms and culture that they are representing. This is communicated through the selection and interpretation of fieldnote excerpts that employ “reflexive, nonobjectivist scholarship” (Kisliuk 2001:23) and an

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<sup>3</sup> “Planters- Kutiy^'those' or kontiienthose, [ku-creators-ti-females are the go between-y^-implanted,t(e) dual role seed to maturity, ho-is the environment, se-transit. three separate clan groups: In hon^yote'a:ka: ho'w^:na: ,starting with the Turtles their name Thon^ha'k^thu' means [dualic role with the environment with path of seeds, when maturity of crops arrives the turtles harvest and saves the best seeds for re-planting of next years growth.

The wolf clan: Kanyukwe'nyo:tu: [the completed growth of spirit/maturity of crops, is dried for use.

The Bear clan: Watshat^tha'-[the crops are stored for the fall n winters use.]

Hunters: Lu'to:lats [the males with their families, leave for their hunting camps] this is the first family of the bear clan.

2nd family is the wolf clan Hotatshehta'-quiver holder, this family is the actual select kills male prey saving the females n young.

3rd family is the powerful turtles who packs and loads their kill and returns to the villages.

Gatherers: Wolf clan Tehoha'kw^tu'-[ever watchful that nothing gets wasted for the present and persevered for the future.]

Bear clan; Lanyatashate', [crafts the collected materials to be used in our ceremonies and for healing]” (John, email correspondence, 25 July 2013).

“interpretive anthropological” (Marcus and Fisher 1986:26) approach into their analysis, while structuring the composition of their books in ways that are similar to the organization of the music and culture.

In representing the BaAka, Kisliuk wrote an ethnography that reflects the polyphonic elements of the music and the nomadic life-style of its people. She refers to her work as a *performance ethnography* that I also see as a polyphonic “performance.”

Kisliuk writes in her Preface:

This book is also an effort in performance ethnography, in terms of both subject matter and the approach to writing. My aim is to show what I learned by revealing how I learned it, and I mean for the reader to learn along with me, moving deeper with each chapter into an expressive world defined by a given moment, with my particular experience as the ethnographic lens. (Kisliuk 2001:27)

Kisliuk’s narrative incorporates historical, political, social, theoretical, and religious information as she processes her individual fieldwork experience. Her method of combining storytelling, an explanation of her ethnographic process, and the analysis of a variety of research topics is done in a rich, multi-layered style similar to that of the counterpoint heard in the music of the BaAka.

While in the process of conducting my own fieldwork, I wondered if it was possible to understand how a subject’s musical and cultural style might assist us in how we perform the representation of one’s work and culture in our ethnographies. In addition to the use of reflexive and postcolonial methods, might we be able to present our research in a style that also reflects the forms that culture takes? And is this something to consider in the early stages of fieldwork?

In an ethnography by Tara Browner, she formats her work in an organization similar organization to that of the pow-wow (Browner 2004:90, Table 1), in which

specific events are separated into distinct categories to create the whole. She devotes each chapter to separate topics, including history, Western analysis, function, and transcribed interviews. The overall structure of her book is similar to the structural design of a pow-wow, as Browner employs a variety of techniques in her writing that differ according to how they work with the topic at hand. At times she integrates fieldnote excerpts to emphasize specific points and move her narrative along. At other times, she keeps the interview and the analysis completely separated, while at still other times, she explains some of her own Western musical observations and terminology to the interviewee, asking if this is also their understanding. Browner may detail Western musical analysis and transcription and later quote Native terminology gathered from interviews to explain topics, choosing what is the most effective way to present it on a micro-level, and I believe that it may mirror the types of definitions and variations that occur in the actual pow-wow songs themselves, also reflecting the natural world the songs narrate.

I am especially interested in how language and worldview can be used as metaphors for a variety of research themes. Illustrations of this strategy are found in work by David Samuels on contemporary music and “Indianness” on the Apache reserve, in which he employs the Apache concept of putting one thing on top of another in a “pun” —such as in the way language is used to refer to multiple things. Also of interest here is Steven Feld, in his research on verbal and musical genres among the Kaluli people work in which he used the actual layered sounds of the Kaluli birds as the metaphorical springboard for his ethnographic representation and analysis. These works inspired me to look at how the presentation of my work on Native American Indian music might be

reflected in a website, this ethnographic dissertation, papers that I write or deliver, and books I write, as well as in concert performances.

Similar to the organization and transformation of one's fieldnotes into an ethnographic performance mirroring a specific musical culture, Barbara Johnstone, Professor of Rhetoric and Linguistics at Carnegie Mellon University, discusses how communal values of a culture may be reflected in storytelling. She talks about a writer "drawing on the group's conventions for storytelling" (Johnstone 1990:228). Often my research notes and presentations are in a storytelling style, or begin with a story, while my use of language is often intended to engage the reader in a deeper cultural story.

I incorporate storytelling as one of the primary ways of imparting Indigenous knowledge, and emphasizing the importance of oral tradition over written tradition:

Stories and metaphor are often used in Indigenous societies as a teaching tool . . . stories allow us to see others' life experiences through our own eyes. This information may then be internalized in a way that is difficult for abstract discussions to achieve. (Wilson 2008:17)

Additional Indigenous ways of knowing include our songs, ceremonies, planting, and "cosmology, social life, values, and relationships" (Diamond 2008:12). This type of learning never felt like "data collection," as I was "in the field" as an Onkwehon:we woman to gather knowledge and support my elders. Although I filmed, photographed, took notes, and recorded, it was usually so that I might archive or prepare materials for elders and educational purposes. However, interviews, panel discussions, email correspondence, and several concerts with composers who were part of the *North American Indian Cello Project* were specifically prepared by me as part of my fieldwork.

Upon the initial review of my fieldnotes, I began to understand a lot about the fieldwork process:

Initially, writing fieldnotes gives way to reading them: the ethnographer reads through all fieldnotes as a complete corpus, taking in the entire record of the field experience as it has evolved over time. He begins to elaborate and refine earlier insights and hunches by subjecting this broader collection of fieldnotes to close, intensive reflection and analysis. (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995:142)

I was encouraged by various professors and several readings on ethnographic fieldwork, to write down my personal biases and fears. Keeping an extensive dream journal in addition to my regular notes was extremely valuable in terms of working with that material with elders, in ceremony, and as music, and for gaining specific insight. Normally, one is advised to begin with preliminary research on the topic and the subject, not only for one's personal interest and preparedness, but also in respect for the subject. This also presented a quagmire of results, since so much of the historical material was dated and inaccurate, but of course these writings explain how things may have been understood at a particular point in time, as well as how the biases of those who compiled some of the earliest sources shaped their work. These older sources may be fascinating with shards of accurate information, but also contain misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and possibly outright propaganda. Even if one dismisses earlier ethnographies as not very useful, it is still important to know what came before and where to make changes. One can always learn from what came before. Many ethnographers have sought to resituate themselves in the "shadows of lingering colonialism" (Barz and Cooley 2008:8) and more recent ethnographies as mentioned earlier in this chapter have been extremely useful in terms of content and context.

It would have been nearly impossible to do justice to this research without a lot of time for concepts, ideas, and information to connect, allowing the circular movement it required to develop. Most of the ideas and many of the actual compositions are not

conclusive and remain a dynamic part of a continuum of understanding. I went through a similar process of establishing my role, boundaries, responsibilities, and expectations with the creating-artists and scholar mentors, as I did with my elders. Bringing my elders tobacco, food or other gifts before receiving a teaching, I often honored the composers and other mentors with meals, airplane tickets, performances, residencies, and recordings. In terms of the actual “fieldnotes,” I understand all of life as the “field,” so every note written, concept learned, and song sung became part of my field notes. When I did go to see elders, in particular, to ask them specific questions as part of my dissertation topic research, they usually wanted to go in an entirely different direction than I had intended, or would only give me a small piece of information, promising to come back to it when I was ready, or, thankfully, corrected misconceptions that I as the student had not yet fully understood. Fieldworkers report the need to be open-minded, improvisatory, and flexible: “fieldworkers usually enter the field with an open-ended sense of purpose; they tend to work inductively and may shift interests and outlooks as the research proceeds; practical exigencies may force extensive change of plans” (Thorne 1980:287).

I have personal and professional histories with many of the musicians, scholars, and elders with whom I have worked in the process of writing this dissertation. These experiences gave us relationality, preliminary information in which to form opinions, specific lines of questioning and learning, and expectations. As Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw wrote:

Rather than detracting from what the fieldworker can learn, first-hand relations with those studied may provide clues to understanding the more subtle, implicit underlying assumptions that are often not readily accessible through observation or interview methods alone. (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995:3)

Surprisingly, the process of conducting fieldwork, along with the process of analysis and writing, became similar to a process of performing and composing:

Relationality seems to sum up the whole Indigenous research paradigm...Just as the components of the paradigm are related, the components themselves all have to do with relationships. The ontology and epistemology are based upon a process of relationships that form a mutual reality. The axiology and methodology are based upon maintaining accountability to these relationships... An Indigenous research paradigm is relational and maintains relational accountability. (Wilson 2008:70-1)

In the process of collection, analysis, and writing, I realized that relationality was a much more important focus than anyone's separate roles as ethnographer, teacher, student, composer, performer, as long as I *honor all my relations* (i.e. relationships).

Questions to elders about music were posed very differently from questions to contemporary classical Native composers. Tara Browner's bi-analytical approach in her interviewing process was very helpful, and makes understanding and interpretation of both Western musical analysis and Native musical conception valid. For example, she asked questions in both Western theoretical language and English vernacular: "What is the tempo or speed of your songs?" "Do you compose/write/make songs?" (Browner 2000:131). In my interviews with Chacon and Becenti, I kept questions open-ended, and often gathered material from workshops and panel discussions where they were able to talk freely and at length on topics of their choosing, or through the process of email that enabled them to think on their answers.

### ***Research with Indigenous Specialists***

I consulted primarily with Native elders, composers, and scholars, and secondarily with ethnomusicologists and specialists in Native cultures, and I used books by Native authors, activists, and scholars, as well as those by non-Native intellectuals. I

listened to my dreams and participated in ceremonies, workshops, and retreats. My fieldnotes are not at all linear, but rather circuitous and overlapping, with arrows connecting various thoughts. In order to reflect the non-sequential process of my fieldwork in the linear document of this dissertation, I refer back to previous chapters, and use diagrams of medicine wheels to display cyclical processes and remind myself and others that there is no definite conclusion, nor answer to my questions; rather, this is an ongoing process of *non:wa*, or the “now” of the past, present, and future explained in detail in Chapter Four. Having worked with my elders for over twenty years, and especially in the process of writing this dissertation, I have slowly learned to comprehend what I can best describe as “circular thinking,” and my understanding of many teachings by some of my elders, including John, Longboat, and Porter, have begun to come full circle, often many years later. Although the concept of circular thinking is generally seen with a negative connotation, in my experience this process is very positive, but requires patience and time. Immersed in my culture, the challenge has been to present it in a fashion in which others may understand and benefit from it. I no longer believe that I am bridging two worlds, but rather looking at “Classical Native” or rather “Native Classical” through Indigenous eyes, and neither have I attempted to examine Native Classical music and musicians by adding Indigenous ideas as an afterthought. My indigeneity and that of the artists and scholars I explore came first.

### ***Ndn Time***

My fieldwork, interviews, and gathering of information were conducted using Indigenous methodologies, both consciously and not consciously. After the first few attempts at planning interviews and trips to Six Nations, Navajo Nation, and Oneida

Settlement, I realized I needed to be on Creator's time line and also on what is jokingly referred to as "Ndn time." Sometimes a trip to Six Nations led to weekly visits to Oneida Settlement, or a visitor from Akwesasne would come to visit me in Maryland, conducting a ceremony and teaching me new songs. When I least expected it, the answers came. I just had to be available in Creator's time. Anyone who travels may experience this, but concepts of scheduling, time, patience and how to negotiate those aspects of human experience vary from culture to culture. Elders in my own culture often reminded me of the need to slow down and that everything I needed to know would develop as I allowed concepts to become experiential. Ethnomusicologists also value experiential learning over time that connects one with self and society:

Gradually, over two years and more, shared experiences and defining moments helped me to situate myself. The actual writing of the ethnography was also a process of identity formation, one in which I could sift my experiences and frame them ethnographically. I returned to my research area after having written the ethnography, with a strong but ever-evolving sense of my place in that particular social landscape. (Kisliuk 2008:189)

### ***Music and Relationality***

Relationality in terms of music making may refer to the connection composers and performers have to dreams, inspiration, and the creative process as discussed in Chapter Four. It may also refer to the rapport with the performer, conductors, coaches, audience, performance venue, and recording engineers, as all of these relationships affect the music. The relationship of creative artist to transmission and notation has been explored in Chapter Five. Given the scope of this dissertation, I am not able to discuss other interesting and important relationships between the composer and their music, or

with to and the larger public, including publishers, record companies, institutions, and awards.

### *Song-ing, Music-ing*

Davids wrote about the idea of music as a process, rather than an object: “Music is never a noun for American Indians, it is always a verb; 'song' becomes 'song-ing' and 'music' becomes 'music-ing’” (Davids 2004:4). He adds that performance is a type of birthing that is generative in that it may affect life itself:

Indian “music-ing” is a generative process, birthing out the creation of life itself by performing . . . Music-ing” is considered a *generative* process, not a static one. In other words, what an Indian talks about by “song-ing” moves life in that same direction; what is sung about happens. What is spoken about begins to really occur. When “song-ing” occurs, life is *generated* by the process; in this way, Indian “music-ing” is a *generative* process, birthing out the creation of life itself by performing. (Ibid.)

Davids also refers to a concept of music evoking a response, or moving us in some way that is alive and participatory. He concludes by referring to other Native cultures:

“Indians have alternative *process-oriented* concepts, similar to the O’odhams ‘nei’ or the Yaqui’s ‘sewa,’ which encompass major realms of living experience; for Indians, what westerners call 'music' is seen as a tiny component of a greater process of communication involving all life” (ibid.:6). The English definition of music refers to it as a noun rather than a process, but there are many Westerners today who understand a concept of music as vibrant and active. Sadie Buck, Rotinonhsión:ni cultural specialist and singer from Six Nations, elaborates on the difficulty of translating concepts from Rotinonhsión:ni languages to English, specifically in terms of music and composer.

I write and compose music, but in our language we do not have a noun for that. We just “do” music. There is a verb that corresponds to “she can write a song.” It never becomes a noun like “songwriter” but always

remains a verb. In our language one never becomes a composer or an author, but in English you can say that. It is difficult to go from our language to English, as we do not have those concepts. (Hoefnagels and Diamond 2012:142)<sup>4</sup>

### ***Worldview***

Little Bear's "jagged worlds" colliding along with his concepts of swirling consciousness between colonization and indigeneity are concepts that are mentioned frequently in this dissertation with reference to his discussion of the difference between what he calls circular and linear worldviews in his article "Jagged Worlds Colliding" (2000). Tol Foster refers to Vine Deloria, Jr.'s 1978 article "Civilization and Isolation," where he writes about the contrast between Western and Native intellectual training, as cited by Womack:

The Western intellectual worldview, in dividing elements and building up hierarchies of knowledge, often ends up discounting and degrading "phenomena [which] do not fulfill our expectations" and thus "the opportunity to come to grips with another facet of reality escapes us." In contrast Natives, Deloria writes, focus on synthesizing seemingly disparate forces in their intellectual work, and "relatedness characterized their experiences of the universe." This model of "relatedness is a much better description of the Indian way of looking at the world," and it functions not merely as a generic philosophical principle, but as a materialist and scientific one." (Foster in Womack 2008:277 and Deloria 1978:140-1)

Of course, non-Native composers and performers function using a variety of "disparate forces in their intellectual work," but Womack makes an interesting point that the initial worldview of relatedness as a dominating principal for Native composers may differentiate processes of creativity. Hoefnagels and Diamond recently wrote about the value and difference of embodied culture as a characteristic of Native American

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<sup>4</sup>Ethnomusicologists studying Asia, Oceania, and Africa have discovered this same concept of music in other languages being referred to as part of a process, rather than as a product.

knowledge systems as “deeply embedded cultural reference points (hidden to outsiders)” that are “not ‘liminal’ but definitive of the differences between knowledge systems” (Hoefnagels and Diamond 2012:48).

Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, a Crow Creek Lakota Sioux writer and academic, wrote of the importance of looking at Indigenous knowledge in the context of the dominant “master narrative”:

Some of our creative expression has suffered the oppression of colonial intrusion, much knowledge is forgotten or ignored, and we as Native people have often been confused or disillusioned as to what it all means in terms of contemporary lives. Part of what has been going on in this intrusion is what I call “the master narrative” (i.e., the White man’s version of who we are as Native peoples.) This master narrative is everywhere, and it is blatant and it is in my view, at least, an arrogance that is unremitting... Much of what American Indian literary works have been doing has been to dispute that legacy of colonial intrusion, and in doing so mythic sensibilities are rediscovered and reclaimed. The “master narrative” is coming under closer scrutiny, and the return to tradition is becoming more important in the Native American Story.” (Cook-Lynn 2008:331)

## **Chapter Seven: Haknonhsra'ra:kwa (Medicine Bundle)**

In this final chapter, I come back to several concepts that are without final conclusion and thus follow an Ndn sensibility of contribution rather than deduction. Of course, all knowledge is interpretive, but rather than following an older research model from ethnomusicology in which quantitative results are valued, I follow a newer model in which ideas are examined and offered for further discussion. This is in line with a circular construction of non-finality and a concept of acknowledging how we understand what others have taught us. As Indigenous researchers, “we’re not professing that this is the way it is; we’re professing our relationship to that which we are seeing. It’s very true that we have a lot of different depths in our relationship to that knowledge” (Wilson 2008:110) and that the approach to gathering and understanding knowledge is interpretive rather than conclusive.

“In making meaning, the relational quality of tribal worldviews suggests a highly interpretative approach” (Kovach 2009:34). Again, the best theories in any tradition are interpretive. It is indeed the very definition of theory in many contexts. The difference here may lie in the fact that Indigenous theorists and ethnomusicologists are committed to recognizing interpretation as being shaped by enculturation and relational experiences of diverse kinds. This approach is rarely linear. By commenting on a series of concepts by scholars whose works I have employed throughout this dissertation and by taking another look at some of the models that I introduced in preceding chapters, I tie some of the ideas together in a type of interpretive medicine bundle, where ideas come together as an ongoing form of engagement. This type of ending, along with the ideas put forth in the preceding chapters may differ from a

dominant style in that it does not follow a linear process (i.e., describe what I wanted to do, describe how I did it, then describe what I found out) but rather a more cyclical pattern that introduces ideas or themes, then returns to them at intervals with different levels of understanding. (Wilson 2008:42)

This approach to writing can be difficult when you have a diverse audience. I have Indigenous scholars, as well as cultural specialists in the forefront of my mind while presenting material in such a way that suits academic scholarship. This is a challenge in that I choose to represent information in such a way that reflects Native scholarship and the people I have been privileged to learn from while adhering to the requirements of a dissertation and appealing to a non-Native academic audience. As Deborah Wong wrote, “I wrote for an academic reader though I could feel my relatives reading over my shoulder” (Wong 2008:83). Anthropologist, Donna Y. Young wrote about a variety of implied audiences, “Even as natives, we go where we don’t belong, we transgress borders. And that is the funny thing about “native anthropology” (Young 2005:208). She goes onto to say explain that Native scholars tend to write as outsiders and change their style of representation when writing for academic: “Even when we work at home we tend to respond and to write as if we were outsiders. That is, we continue to translate the ways of one group of people for another group of people. We don’t assume a native audience, we assume an academic audience” (ibid.)

Medicine bundles are a collection of objects that “symbolize a spiritual path. The use and nature of these bundles varies greatly among the various Indian Nations” (nativeamericannetroots.net, accessed 25 November 2013). Actual items contained in bundles may include herb and root medicines, musical instruments, sacred stones, weapons for protection, thoughts and prayers. I understand the word for medicine in

Kanienkéha *onon:kwa* to not only refer to plant medicines, but also to living with a good mind *kanikonri:io* (explained in detail in Chapter Two), in which one lives a good life in relationship to their community and *Kaieneràko:wa* (The Great Law of Peace).

Kanikonri:io also refers to the never ending cycle of creation and knowledge. Longboat uses the medicine bundle as a holistic metaphor in her teachings and explains it in the following way:

At first, people think it's just a physical bundle, but it's spiritual, emotional, mental and physical. So it's the teachings that become part of our bundle. As we learn, we are instilled with teachings that become part of our bundle. It's our responsibility to fill our bundle so that when we help ourselves or assist other people, we just pull from our bundle. We keep filling our bundle so we may keep giving it away. (Longboat personal communication 25 November 2013)

The teachings, research, knowledge, dissertation all become part of who we are and what we may give away.

Some of the thoughts that I would like to include in this bundle are 1) how we might understand a definition of classical Native music; 2) how we are part of a modern movement of artistry; 3) how our creative processes reflect Indigenous sensibilities; 4) how specific composers are contributing to that movement; and 5) how Indigenous language, metaphor and worldview have powerful epistemological applications for Native research. My interpretation of these ideas and concepts is explored in the following paragraphs.

### ***1) How we might understand a definition of Native classical music***

Here I return to one of my original questions, *How do we define classical Native music?* Just as definitions of and terminology for the concepts and words *Indigenous* and *music* vary, especially in the context of politics, history, place, and culture, definitions of

classical Native American music vary and will probably remain as dynamic as the innovative styles that exist within classical music at large and composers who hail from various Native American nations. However, I would first define classical Native American music by referring to it as North American Indian classical music, using an idea from Chacon that it music that is created by Native Americans, regardless of its sound, style, or sentiment. A definition of classical was defined by Native composers as being connected to European instrumentation and notation. Native American composition often comes with very specific characteristics influenced by an Indigenous worldview that shapes specific musical elements, processes or modes of dissemination. Specific Indigenous music elements may include instrumentation and sonic gestures from traditional styles or repertoires, along with political and emotional expression taken from specific cultural experiences, both traditional and contemporary. The choices noticed by music-creating artists in terms of inspiration from landscape, cosmology, a political event, or from material transmitted through a dream all reflect Indigenous sensibilities. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn writes about Indian writers, but I refer to any creative Indigenous artist.

So when you talk of history, myth and identity in the entire tribal literary canons and even in the so-called new Indian story, you are going back to origins . . . a specific landscape . . . (often referred to “vaguely in lit-crit studies as ‘a sense of place’”), and you recognize the importance of language, and you recognize the holy people and you recognize all of the creature worlds and sights and sounds of the universe which surround human beings and their lives. It’s an astonishing thing to ponder, especially if you are a writer. (Cook-Lynn in Denzin 2008:329)

As creative Indigenous artists, “Our Indigenous thinking is on the inside of everything that we do” (Senungetuk workshop 13 November 2013) and it is expressed on the outside in our artistic works.

Draisey-Collishaw (2010) wrote that a definition for Native classical music was elusive and in her opinion came down to lineage connection, rather than specific sounds, styles or processes. Granted this conclusion was part of a short project with limited exposure to classical Native music. With knowledge of more composers and their music, she may have understood the layered complexity involved in defining classical Native. I include her interpretation as it may be understood as an ingredient in the bundle, to define classical Native. As ethnomusicologists have long been aware, music is not simply sound, but is embedded with culture.

My conversations with Dawn about Classical Native music and how it should be defined, frequently involved me trying to identify musical, or processual, or stylistic elements as the basis of the label. I desperately wanted there to be some ‘universalizable’ aspect to this music that I could take as evidence of the efficacy of intercultural communication and musical production. In the end, however, defining Classical Native seemed to come down to issues of identity, or, as composer Raven Chacon bluntly put it, ‘the blood of half of the performers/ most of the composers.’ (Draisey-Collishaw 2010:qtd. Avery 6)

As mentioned in Chapter Four, a Native composer can write a minimalist piece like Phillip Glass or a twelve-tone work in the style of Charles Wuorinen and no one needs to know their cultural background. However, underlying the work is the person “inside” everything they do.

At present, I am aware of only a small group of Indigenous composers, numbering approximately fifteen. Although Ballard was composing in the 1960s, a larger group of North American Indian composers became publicly recognizable in the 1990s propelling the start of the First Nations Composers Initiative (FNCCI) in 2002. As mentioned earlier, Philip Deloria wrote about “the making and remaking of a spectrum of expectations” by a “recognizable *cohort* of Indian people engaged in a congruent

activity” as a kind of coherence “built around indigenous cultural production within a wider world” (Deloria 2004:229). The premise of FNCI was to foster classical Native composition and composers and bring the music into the public sphere. Of those composers, all have used sonic, musical, stylistic, and narrative elements coming from Indigenous cultures, and all have been deeply involved in giving back to our communities through specific music-related educational programs.

Contemporary Native American composers are sensitive in their use of direct reference of melodies from their own culture, employing themes as source material and inspiration. Dr. Louis W. Ballard eloquently described this sensitivity and his inspiration in his program notes for the cello/piano suite “Kacina Dances”:

Hopi mythology, religion and philosophy are just as complete and resplendent as that of other leading world religious orders. What we view is a unique way of looking at life, another facet of the eternal striving of mankind to search out the imponderables of conscious and unconscious existence. In short, here is a Native American People’s explanation for the natural phenomenon of life. Hopi Kacinas are deities, who are represented in doll-like form for the children and for the homes, but mostly importantly, they are also depicted in life-size paraphernalia for the many extant musico-dramatic ceremonies of these Pueblo-dwelling people where they serve to anthropomorphize the religious tenets of the culture. The ones represented here are the composer’s choices for inspirational purposes only. No religious significance is intended nor do these works violate it. My personal artistic response to such unique and mystical figures is my *raison d’être* for the creation of the music. Here is a musical perspective of a small segment of the Native American cosmos through specific musical tone portraits. My intent was to achieve a musically and culturally viable universal statement without violating the integrity of the indigenous milieu.<sup>5</sup>

My blatant use of a Rotinonhsión:ni women’s stomp dance from my own culture was intended to push physical, emotional and political boundaries, while placing a traditional, social song alongside European orchestration. Upon recent reflection, this

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<sup>5</sup> [www.nswmp.com](http://www.nswmp.com)

piece, “Fringe,” may serve as an example of the two-row wampum introduced in Chapter Two, in that both pieces did not interfere with the other, but coexist as strong elements. However, the melody does appear in the chamber music orchestration – not consciously, but again upon further reflection could represent misappropriation, treaty violations, or as was initially intended, support and dynamism from the sounds of original peoples to the audience as they sing, a return from the past into the present. Another interpretation of my use of melody can be seen in the Kanienkéha words that I incorporate into the score to serve as sound vibration and rhythm over various pitch sets in *Hohonkweta’ka:ionse* (2010) for string quartet. There is no borrowed melody, but the Kanienkéha language spoken by the instrumentalists provides rhythmic and vibrational remembrance that is used in a similar way to melody.

Becenti’s concept of a Navajo cadence and his sonic understanding of balance taken from his culture, along with his desire to compose about the “untethered” feeling he experiences on the Navajo Reservation today are ways in which he expresses his Ndn identity. Another work by Chacon and *Postcommodity* intended for the aboriginal community in Toronto is *Radiophonic is Territory (Nocturne)* “a large-scale architectural sound installation activated by a collaborative performance involving people from Toronto’s Indigenous community” in which radio waves were transmitted anonymously to a “confessional booth” inside a chapel that animated a sound installation of ropes inspired by Rotinonhsión:ni and Ojibwe geometry:

The confessions are intended to be individual, familial and Indigenous community responses to the history of institutional violence and colonization, to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and to the effort to reveal truth, while working towards healing and reconciliation.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.imagenative.org/newsdetails.php?id=189>

This work not only has historical, emotional, spiritual, psychological, and musical implications, but contributes to a powerful political arena. All of the works are examples of indigeneity expressed by Ndn composers through their music and performance art, as real experiences that employ the sonic past and the sonic present with an Indigenous sensibility.

In contrast, Deloria writes about the imaginary sound of the Indian, with signifiers of exoticism and primitivism in the use of tom-tom rhythms, pentatonic scales, melancholy minor chords, and pounding open fifths (Deloria 2004:183-201). These sounds have become part of an expectation of Native American music, and are part of the reason that Deloria cites as a hindrance to Indians inhabiting modernity (ibid.:217).

Although Native American classical music is part of a historical and successful continuum, it is still seen as one of Philip Deloria's "unexpected places":

If the general public is surprised by the concept of American Indians writing classical music, perhaps that's because Indian arts are often only thought of in traditional contexts: blankets, baskets, dancing, and drums.<sup>7</sup>

Part of my interest in this topic has been to continue to break stereotypes and to ground another aspect of our creative expression. Innovation and tradition have always been essential values for Native artists, as they are for many artists, so our participation in classical music makes sense, not as an anomaly as Deloria explains, but as another means of artistry and self-determination. Deloria carefully contrasts the unexpected from the anomalous in his book *Indians in Unexpected Places* (2004).

In a 1999 conversation between Diamond and Buck, Sadie Buck said, "We've created new works in a traditional sense with a public conscience and a public context"

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<sup>7</sup> [www.newmusicbox.org/articles/Native-American-Composers](http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/Native-American-Composers)

(Hoefnagels and Diamond 2012:145). Womack identifies many of the larger issues in being a Native artist, specifically in relation to Indian poets in his book *Red on Red* (1999):

The tribal poet finds himself or herself writing stuff read by non-Indians yet trying to write for his or her tribe, having to engage in the business of selling books through agents and publishers yet striving for cultural integrity, often living away from home yet retaining one's primary landscape in imagination and memory and transforming it into art, preserving one's culture for future generations yet trying not to give away anything one's community believes should not be shared, and on and on it goes. (Womack 1999:245)

## ***2) How we are part of a modern movement of artistry***

In writing about Native literary criticism, Womack wrote about contemporary Native American intellectualism and artistic achievement. He wrote about the pan-tribal and European influences as a means for self-determination in an important modern aesthetic:

Indian cultures as a source for artistic achievement and intellectual development rather than as an impediment to integration; the role of a pan-tribal artistic aesthetic fostered by exchange among Indians of various tribes and even an international perspective fostered by the study of European art and techniques; Indian control of things Indian in terms of teaching, interpreting, and creating art; the notion that Indian tradition could be a beginning point for improvisation in the arts rather than an end point; the belief that Indian artistic integrity could hold up when merged with European artistic practices; an exploration of the emergence of tribal viewpoints in English—which would all prove matters of vital importance to literature [art] and tribal aesthetics in the years to come. (Womack 2008:13)

In a discussion about Indigenous modernity, Senungetuk said, “we’re alive aren’t we?” (Senungetuk 2013) and Deloria wrote, “the entire world of the modern belonged and belongs—to Indian people, as much as it does to anyone else.” (Deloria 2004:232) Although to many this seems obvious when I am asked at the end of the performance for

the North American Indian Cello Project where my feather's were and why I did not play real Indian music, it is also obvious that the Indigenous modern is still not part of many people's expectations. Healing and revitalization in our own communities are significant priorities, but healing and knowledge are equally vital outside of Indian country—a decolonization on all fronts is essential. Deloria argues “that a significant cohort of Native people engaged the same forces of modernization that were making non-Indians reevaluate their own expectations of themselves and their society” (Deloria 2004:6).

I briefly acknowledge the artistic and creative processes available outside of Indigenous artistry in the fields of contemporary ethnomusicology and Indigenous methodology and refer to concepts of what Deborah Wong, Professor of Ethnomusicology at University of California, Riverside, refers to as “performative ethnography” (Wong 2008:78) understood through Denzin's model demonstrating political and performance engagement in ethnography (2003). “My path took me from performance to ethnography to autoethnography, but my deepest goal is a more powerful ethnographic practice for ethnomusicologists” (Wong 2008:79) My journey consisted of the same elements in which I travel between performance, ethnography, and autoethnography while going back and forth through Rotinonhsión:ni roots, thus grounding me in the present as I live the non:wa concept. I, too, continue to grapple with new methodological practices based on Indigenous concepts while incorporating the work from a variety of academic disciplines whose integration may become complementary rather than oppositional:

The problems with ethnography aren't new and haven't changed: they include the false binary of the insider/outsider, colonial baggage, and the empiricism still lurking behind a solidly humanistic anthropology and ethnomusicology. (Ibid:77)

In the quote above, Wong lists specific issues that remain as vital concerns for ethnomusicologists who continue to offer possible solutions, such as ethnographic representation, accountability, and collaborative research projects.

### ***3) How our creative processes reflect Indigenous sensibilities***

I looked at compositional processes in Chapter Four where Indigenous sensibilities may seem evident as we take inspiration from specific landscapes, such as the sounds from Canyon de Chelley in some of Chacon's installations and compositional samples; from dreams that serve as landscapes in my own "Kontiri:io" from which both sound and notation were discovered; or specific Navajo worldviews that are inspiring in a new mass about the American desert that Becenti has recently begun writing. However, as is the case in all classical music, the genre is rich with many styles and has become more difficult to easily categorize. One of my earliest pieces "Between Two Worlds" (2007), reflected my own struggle, but this binary is not necessary in describing the work of Indigenous music-creating artists. Unfortunately terms such as classical Native and Indigenous modernity may encourage binary oppositions.

A collaborative process is also often a valued component of the Indigenous creative process and composition is no stranger to that as can be seen in the work of Chacon with *Postcommodity*, Sadie Buck on the Dance Opera *BONES*, Nakai's involvement with performers in composing his classical compositions, my own *Fringe* in which I collaborated with a film maker and poet, or Becenti's new American mass in which he will work with a librettist and cultural specialists. As artists, we each express ourselves in different ways at different times, depending on a particular situation or

commission and given our creative preference at the time, but there is most often some kind of Indigenous and collaborative element apparent in our work.

#### ***4) How specific composers are contributing to that movement***

The works of Native composers are being performed, recorded and commissioned around the world by well-known orchestras, chamber ensembles and soloists. We are part of the international classical community, just as we are part of our own Indigenous communities.

A vital contribution by North American Indian composers is our involvement with a variety of educational programs for Native student composers and performers as was seen in Chapter Four, such as: CANOE, NACAP, and NCP. Thanks to these programs, composers are bringing yet another means of self-expression to students oftentimes in the home territories of the participants. Most of the Indian composers and performers of classical music left their tribal communities to study and to build their careers so for students to study: they usually had to leave their home communities and were not able to study with Indian composers and musicians (Deloria 2004:229). These programs have served as a public venue for both participants and teachers as a commitment to their work, their community and their future.

Dissemination is an important aspect as mentioned earlier as pieces are presented in prominent concert venues, such as concert halls, institutions, and theatres, as well as what might be considered Indigenous venues, such as festivals, deserts, pow-wows, and Indian cultural centers. A look at performance spaces would be a very interesting topic for research, as would dissemination in terms of music production and publication by

record companies, Internet sites, Facebook, YouTube, etc., but these topics are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

***5) Indigenous language, metaphor and worldview as applicable epistemology for Native research.***

Going back to the medicine wheel model as an Indigenous research strategy, both the Western and Northern corridors can be applied to the tékeni graphic from the section in Chapter Three called “the twins have a voice.” Elaborating on the last three concepts from that section, one can further understand “Ia:iak (6): the Twins Create” as continuing innovation in modern times; “Tsia:ta (7): the Twins Give Back” as dissemination for future generations; and “Sha’te:kon (8): the Twins Transform” as creating new methodologies.

In asking how Native Classical music be considered part of revitalization and reclamation, I can go back to the Navajo word used as the title for Chacon’s three part cello piece “Táágo Dez’á” along with the Northwestern, Northern, and Northeastern corridors on the original Research Model Medicine Wheel: Beginning in the Northwest by carrying on tradition, the North with Ndn’s as creative, political, social beings, and the Northeast with education, language and cultural revitalization. I am reminded again of Smith’s four Indigenous goals for self-determination in research as involving a circular process “of transformation, of decolonization, of healing and of mobilization” (1999:116). Restated from Chapter Three, in relation to classical Native music and performance, transformation can be understood as the creation of original pieces of music; decolonization as the process of creativity and musicianship to present Native perspectives; healing as the application of specific Indigenous knowledge to composition;

and mobilization the creation and public recognition of musical works as one understands that they are a creative being.

Harkening back to Davids' quote about the differences in Native American music being as "wide as the ocean," they may also be looked at on a continuum of how they use Indigenous processes and material.

As a group, Native Americans who write music churn out work in genres from classical to hip-hop, and those in the classical business write in styles from neo-romantic to electro-acoustic and pretty much everything in between. The composers' heritages run just as wide a gamut as their music. Chickasaw, Mohican, and Navaho are each quite different cultures under the umbrella term "American Indian."<sup>8</sup>

Once again, Chacon's collaborative approach to process and the way he uses sound and landscape might put him at one end of an Indigenous modality continuum while Davids use of graphics in notation might place him at that same end of the continuum for different reasons including his use of Native symbolism and language. In terms of the dynamism that I discussed in Chapter Four, Chacon's sculptural works might be considered Indigenous in that they often change and remain collaborative with the landscape and audience. Croall's use of traditional storytelling from her Anishnaabek culture, my use of narration from historical Indian oration and contemporary Indian poetry, and Ballard's use of lyrics and libretto on Native themes may be another configuration on the side of recognizable Indigenous representation. Becenti and Tate might be at the opposite end of the spectrum in terms of a more coded approach to their use of Native signifiers, although Tate has employed Native instruments and Becenti is interested in using Indigenous thematic material. The use of Native flute by Nakai and Warren may arguably place them in an obvious Indigenous category to most audiences,

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<sup>8</sup> [www.newmusicbox.org/articles/Native-American-Composers](http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/Native-American-Composers)

but once understood in historical context, one would realize that the flute is a relatively new Native signifier that has now become a new Indian expectation and stereotype.

## **Relationality**

Underlying Indigenous artistry and research methodologies are layered understandings of relationality with all of creation, community, culture, and creativity. Part of relational accountability is through serving the community with collaborative projects chosen in accordance with community needs. This is important to our relationship to future generations and accountability to our children's, children's children. Professor of Anthropology and Humanities Luke Lassiter wrote about the importance of collaborative models for research and advocacy:

The anthropology of indigenous peoples and related communities must move toward 'collaborative' models, in which anthropological research is not merely combined with advocacy but inherently advocative in that research is, from its outset, aimed at material, symbolic, and political benefits for the research population, as its members have helped to define these. (2005:xi)

Our music is often part of an important revitalization movement mentioned briefly in Chapter Three and can be seen through several compositional residency programs, such as The Composer Apprentice National Outreach Endeavor (CANOE), Native American Composer Apprenticeship Program (NACAP), and Native Composers Project (NCP). These are educational endeavors based to varying degrees on Indigenous worldviews and artistic sensibilities. The programs are understood as acts of self-determination in which the founders have chosen genres in which to create and direct in ways that follow Native protocols and encourage Indigenous expression through composition and instrumentation. Although we may pick and choose musical tools,

venues and instruments incorporated from outside musical genres, they are imbued with Indian sensibility, and the composers are committed to training Native participants.

The programs serve as a means through which we represent ourselves, to some unexpectedly, as Indians in a modern world, and they are part of a gift that drives us as creative beings who are also Native. Native American composition programs help “create a culturally rich music controlled primarily by Indian people rather than by white composers” (Deloria 2004:210) to solidify “a recognizable *cohort* of Indian people engaged in a congruent activity; the making and remaking of a spectrum of expectations” (ibid.:229). Rather than assimilating ourselves into musical modernism, we are exploring and choosing educational, compositional, and performance practices thus rebelling against the Western racial imaginary (ibid.:204-213). Although classical Native American Indian performers and composers have been in existence since the 1800s, classical Native music consists of Ndn representations that are, as Deloria explains it, still somewhat unexpected.

Beginning with Choctaw composer Ballard and his creation of the first Native American band program for children along with curriculum and educational materials about Native American music, it has been important for composers to help young American Indians find a voice in music, including classical composition.

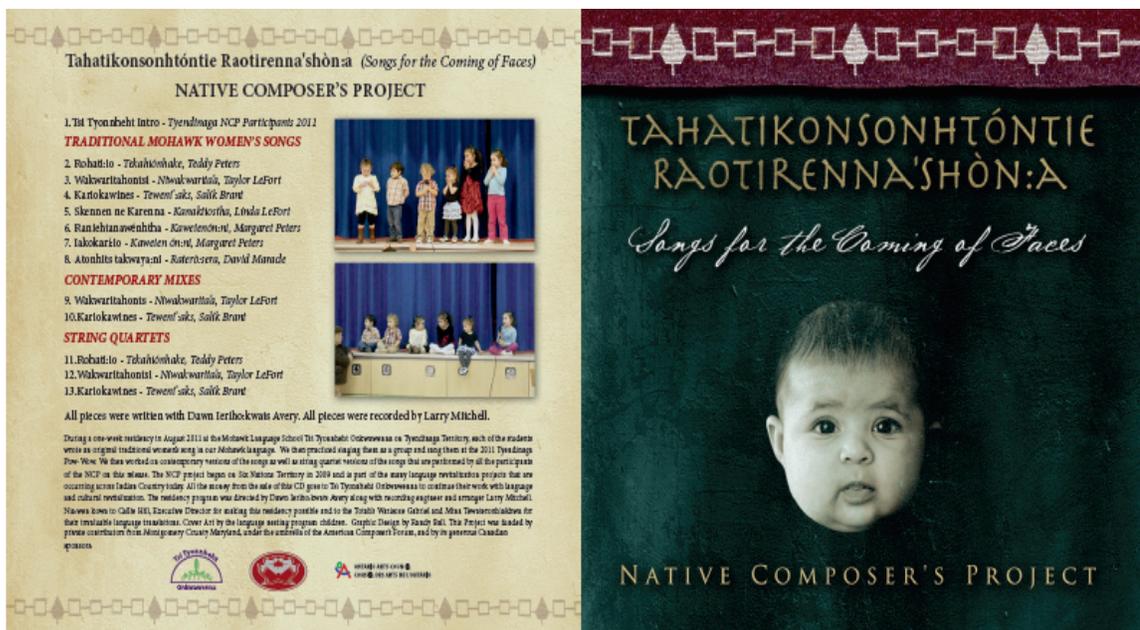
Dauids was the first composer to develop composer programs for native youth.

He wrote:

I started both NACAP (with Grand Canyon Music Festival) and CANOE (with ACF). They were/are essentially the same in methods. It's streamlined process teaching written comp to Native students, in about 5 lessons. Not everything is taught, no key signatures, little about form. Focused on string quartet as the chosen ensemble to ensure student success (it's hard to write something that would sound bad on a string

quartet). Students are Native. Much of it is taught orally, but written is emphasized. Native role modeling by having Native comp teachers. It's teaching western music though, not native, in order to expand the palette of techniques by which a native student can express their own nativeness (using western euro techniques and written music). (Davids, email correspondence, 21 September 2013)

Part of the mission of these programs is the vision of creating a pool of young Native American composers. Chacon has been the composer-in-residence for the past few years working with students selected from four area high schools many of whom complete the program with a performance of short, notated string quartet compositions.



My own program, the Native Composer's Project (NCP), is dedicated to educating Onkweh'on:we (Original Peoples) students to compose and sing traditional songs in their languages, thus adding to the traditional repertoire and providing original material for arrangements of new works in other contemporary genres, including pop arrangements and string quartets. The focus of this project is to supplement and sustain language and culture education through the creation of music. Although basic rhythms, lyric writing, melodic writing, and vocal skills are taught, only in longer residency

programs are compositional skills and performance technique taught. In many of the residencies, I write most of the music based on the input and original text of the participants.

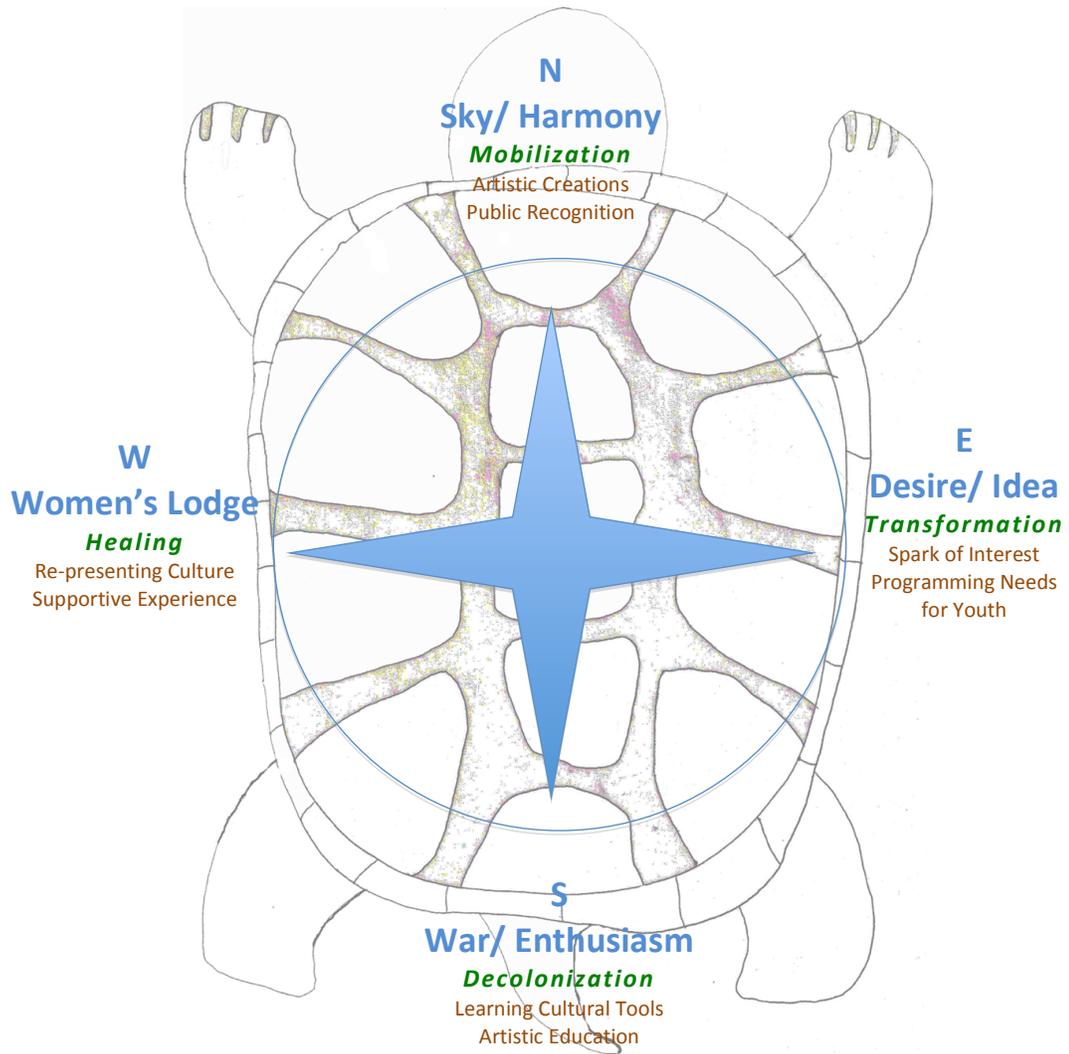
When asked about what she thinks the NCP has brought to the participants, Longboat said:

The women are healing from residential schools and one of the things is how the language was taken away from us and the main part of that language was song, singing in our language. We don't have any word for prayer, but Karennena means to lay down our song, so the vibration and sound of song is really our communication with Creator. As the women reclaim their identity as Onkwehon:we and First Nation's women, it gets them back to their roles and relationships in this beautiful life as part of a matriarchal society. So these songs are women songs. This brings them back to their indigenous way of life. (Longboat, personal communication, 21 September 2013)

Here, I am harkening back to Smith's four stages of Indigenous self-determination to compositional processes and programs placed on the turtle's back in Figure 7.3 to which I now add specific compositional processes and concepts.

Figure 7.3

Indigenous Goals of Self-Determination  
applied to compositional processes



Since relationship is the “good medicine” that ties this bundle together, I must also mention it again in terms of Indigenous process and research:

If the researcher is separated from the research and it is taken away from its relationships, it will not be accepted within an Indigenous paradigm...rather than goals of validity and reliability, research from an Indigenous paradigm should aim to be authentic or credible . . . the research must accurately reflect and build upon the relationships between the ideas and participants. (Wilson 2008:101)

Jeff Todd Titon, Professor Emeritus of Music at Brown University, writes about this same process of relating by comparing music-making to fieldwork processes that he refers to as a “friendship model” and acknowledges how even that term is too clinical. He explains it in terms of “visiting,” a term commonly used among Native populations:

“You have to know how to visit.” Visiting means treating others with respect, care, modesty, courtesy, exchange, and reciprocity. It means establishing a sound and hopeful relationship before “getting down to purpose” . . . Visiting, friendship: these are the products of a music-making epistemology, and they ground fieldwork in a musical being-in-the-world. (Titon 2008:38)

Wilson also writes about how the knowledge we gain comes out of the relationships that we have formed, so that knowledge is not owned by anyone, as it comes from our cosmology, creation, and all of the relations with whom we have convened:

How we look at the relationships that we form and the knowledge that we gain from these relationships. Because if knowledge is formed in a relationship, it can't be owned . . . That whole idea of “discovering” something is not there, as what you are doing is just creating a new set of relationships. The idea belongs to the cosmos, to all of the relations that it has formed, not to the individual who happens to be the first to write about it. (Wilson 2008:114)

John made an interesting point about sharing knowledge. He differentiated when knowledge was gender, tribe, or Onkwehon:we specific and when it could be shared with anyone who could benefit from such knowledge. As mentioned in Chapter Four, I once dreamt an entire song and told John that I thought it was the best music I ever wrote because I did not think that I wrote it—i.e. it came directly from Creation. He very firmly corrected me and said that is not taking responsibility for who you are and your gifts. John urged me to always give thanks to Creation, but to take credit for receiving that information and responsibility for sharing it with others. The sharing of knowledge and its appropriate dissemination have been of vital importance to contemporary ethnomusicologists, in particular to those scholars who advocate for Indigenous research, including Diamond, Frisbie, McAllester, Levine, Bisset-Perea, Perea, and Robinson, among others.

An “Indigenous research paradigm needs to be followed through all stages of research” (Wilson 2008:15). My Indigenous research techniques have included 1) relationships that were fostered in the gathering of fieldwork with composers and their works, teachers, books and orature; 2) analysis in which I used cultural metaphor and language; 3) accountability through which I checked and rechecked facts and Indigenous knowledge; and 4) reciprocity through dissemination of this material through the distribution of copies of this dissertation, publication, website, Internet, and CD access and by giving back through a variety of projects with elders Longboat, Jock, and John in which we consciously give and take with a generosity of spirit and a commitment to cultural education. Unfortunately, it was my hope to present this material using means other than a somewhat linear and entirely visual representation. I had designed a short

interlude on DVD to be included between each chapter with a short interview by each composer and an audio-visual excerpt to represent various works and concepts that I discussed, but constraints on the dissertation storage capabilities have kept me from including that. So, partly due to my own creative interests, I have employed language, metaphor, storytelling, graphics and musical examples to express Indigenous ideas in an Indigenous fashion. I worked at retaining a balance between Indigenous and academic writing techniques, although I have a problem with those distinctions, as both are obviously highly intellectual pursuits and should not be judged hierarchically:

To remain viable in academia, our research must be written, assessed, and published. By and large, individuals assessing our work will not be Indigenous scholars . . . The incorporation of narrative, story, and self-location found within Indigenous writing found within Indigenous writing is perceived as indulgent rather than being recognized as a methodological necessity flowing from a tribal epistemology . . . the flexibility of form necessary to present a holistic epistemology contests established norms of academic research writing. (Kovach 2009:83-4)

Since one of my goals has to been to look at how Indigenous theory and research techniques may be used to explain classical Native music, I had to look at Onkwehon:we music and its creators while “seeking out elders, attending to holistic epistemologies, and participating in cultural catalyst activities (dream, ceremony, prayer)” (Kovach 2009:50). As with all ethnographic research, “teachings come from many places” (ibid.), but Indigenous knowledge often comes from “communications with the natural world and ancestors, as well as knowing that comes through dreams, visions and intuitions” to form an integral part of the research process (Chilisa 2012:182). Coming back to my work consultation with elders, they further illustrate storytelling as an integral tool for Indigenous representation:

Elders never used to directly confront someone about a problem, or offer direct advice. Instead, the Elder would tell a story from their own life, about a time when they faced a similar situation or about the time when their grandmother used to do the same thing. It was up to the listener to piece together a lesson from the story and to apply pieces where they fit to help in the current problem (Wilson 2008:27-8).

Cora Weber-Pillwax, in her doctoral dissertation from the University of Alberta, set out principals that she believed were fundamental to Indigenous research, including concepts of interconnectedness, a research process guided by the heart, researching the reality of the lived Indigenous experience by looking at real people, not just ideas, and developing or proposing theories based on Indigenous forms of epistemology and in support of Indigenous communities and people (Weber-Pillwax 2003:49-50, cited in Wilson 2008:59-60). Her final premise for Indigenous research further illustrates many of my founding principles in the writing of this dissertation:

The languages and cultures of Indigenous peoples are living processes. Research and creation of knowledge are continuous functions for the thinkers and scholars of every Indigenous group, and it is through the activation of this principle that Indigenous university scholarship is conducted. Indigenous scholarship reflects inherited Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies and it is the responsibility of Indigenous researchers associated with a university to maintain and continuously renew the connections with our ancestors and our communities through embodiment, adherence and practice of these. (Ibid.)

This Indigenous research, as Wilson attests, has been a life changing ceremony. I bring you around the circle, not as an ending, but as a connection to ongoing ideas and processes. In reference again to the two-row wampum, the boats continue to move side by side, stirring the waters between them, and moving the waters on either side, expanding beyond to future generations and possibilities. As mentioned in Chapter Two the non-Native may come into the Indian canoe, as long as they uphold *Kaienereko:wa* and realize that they have no voice, until asked. In metaphorical terms, this allows the

Onkwehon:we artist and scholar to decide what we would like to take from other worlds, rather than being forced into assimilation:

The Native Americanist does not bury her head in the sand and pretend that European history and thought do not affect Native literature, nor does she ignore the fact that Native literature has quite distinctive features of its own that call for new forms of analyses. On another political level, Native Americans have the right, for whatever reasons they choose, to decide how to evaluate their literatures, just as white critics, for decades, have formulated schools of thoughts according to their own dictates. (Womack 1999:243)

An Indian world is “not the opposite of the Western world, *it is a world that must be judged by its own merits, in its own terms*” (Womack 1999:242).

Indigenous research *is* a life changing ceremony (Wilson 2008:60). As mentioned in the acknowledgments, I am grateful to all of my relations, including my relationship to this process in which I have indeed built stronger relationships and bridged the distance between aspects of the Onkwehon:we cosmos and myself. “The research that we do as Indigenous people is a ceremony that allows us a raised level of consciousness and insight into our world” (Wilson 2008:11).

Timothy Rice, Professor of Ethnomusicology at UCLA writes about the transformative experiences that occur during fieldwork (Barz and Cooley 2008:46-7) and Cooley and Barz write of Jeff Todd Titon in their introduction to *Shadows in the Field* by referring to a reflexive epistemology for ethnomusicology as an “experiential, dialogic, participatory way of knowing” that differs from older laboratory models of ethnomusicology (ibid:16). In regard to Professor of African and African American Studies in Ethnomusicology at Harvard University Kay Shelemay’s experience, “In a complementary process Shelemay experiences an integration of life and scholarship in fieldwork” (ibid:18). This complementarity that I frequently refer to as *tékeni* has been

expressed in my performance, composition, ceremonies, and research and has indeed been a transformative experience. Kisliuk writes about fieldwork and relationship in a similar way and questions whether a new term might be more appropriate:

Fieldwork *is* often intensified life, but part of a life-flow all the same, and it is inseparable from who we are. We might, therefore, begin to look for a term other “fieldwork” (field research, field experience?) that implies seriousness and rigor without a scientific/objectivist or colonialist connotation—incorporating the simultaneous vulnerability and responsibility of fully human relationships. (Ibid:184)

Lastly, I return to the nows of the past, present and future as a metaphor for Little Bear’s concept of swirling consciousness that allows us the possibility of learning from the past and applying it to the present, as we give to future generations who may then learn from their past. Shelemay writes about preserving tradition in the present for future generations, but also refers to a “chain of ethnomusicological transmission of tradition” among former students that are continuing to research in the same field, such as Marc Kligman and Judah Cohen. I am once again thankful to all of my teachers for imparting their knowledge so that I may continue and give to future scholars of Indigenous music and methodologies.

In my own future, I would like to expand this research to include more in-depth work with additional composers. I plan to continue my own work with the Native Composers Project and would like to attend the other programs and learn more about various educational and language projects for Native youth. I am currently working on the completion of a recording of works commissioned as part of the North American Indian Cello Project, including works by Chacon, Becenti, Nakai, Warren, Archambault, Davids and myself. It is my hope that I may continue to perform them and disseminate the wonderful work by Native composers. I hope to continue developing Indigenous

theoretical paradigms for use in ethnography of all kinds, particularly through community collaborations. I have not yet been able to apply Indigenous feminist theory and methodologies, many of which have come out of Indigenous health sciences, nor was I able to delve into theories from performance studies, performative ethnography, Native nationalism and literary separatism, but these may prove interesting. I hope to write a book that incorporates the research from this dissertation and apply some of those theories, as well as look into theories about cultural memory. As mentioned earlier, I would like to look more at audience and performer responses, recording and publishing, and composers in social media, along with information on compositional processes, particularly on dreaming. I am also interested in applying concepts from alliance studies (Diamond 2011b) and sound quantum (Perea 2013). For now, I have done the best I can do or to the best of my ability—*tsi nawahkwennio*—and have begun a medicine bundle to which future generations may contribute.

If I forget or leave out anything, may those who came before me and those who come after me continue the story, correct my mistakes and carry on the best they can, by adding to the rafters. We often end our Thanksgiving Address in the following manner: Nón:wa Wenhniserá:te tóka othé:nen sonke'nikónhrhen í:se ki'ne' ien'sewatahsónteren eh káti' niohtónhak ne sewa'nikòn:ra. (Now today, if anything I forgot, you then, you continue. There let it be our minds as one.)

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