

Converging Paths: Settler Colonialism and the Canadian Choral Tradition

by

Lukas Sawatsky

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
The University of Manitoba  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS – Music Research

Desautels Faculty of Music  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg

Copyright © 2025 by Lukas Sawatsky

## **Abstract**

This thesis resists the grand narrative of Canadian music history by examining Canadian choral works through a settler colonial theoretical framework. I specifically focus on the politics of translation and the relationship between text and music. I exemplify my methodology in this thesis with a brief discussion of R. Murray Schafer's *Miniwanka: Moments of Water* (1971), explaining how his use of Indigenous words constitutes a form of extractive composition, or a use of Indigenous culture undertaken without the consent of those to whom it belongs in a settler-colonial context. I then apply this methodology to my primary case studies: Imant Raminsh's *Along the Flower Trail: Earth Chants* (1982) and Andrew Balfour's *Nagamo* (2022). Both works engage with the politics of translation: Raminsh sets Indigenous song in English translation, and Balfour sets English texts translated into Cree and Ojibway. I contrast Raminsh's extractive methods with Balfour's unsettling methods to point the way towards a reinvigorated musical practice that avoids reifying settler colonialism. These close readings provide methods to further understand Canadian music history and its close relationship with settler colonialism.

**Keywords: Canadian Choral music, Settler Colonial Theory, Andrew Balfour, Imant Raminsh**

## **Acknowledgments**

In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, I would like to acknowledge the land I live and work on, as well as the people who have helped me most along this journey.

I acknowledge that I live and work on Treaty 1 territory, the original lands of Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Anisininewuk, Dakota Oyate, and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. As a settler on stolen land, it is my duty to uphold the rights of the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island to live on their original lands. This paper is the distillation of two years of scholarly work: it is meant to unsettle our perceived notions of historical narratives that reify settler colonial ways of thinking. In writing this thesis, I contribute to dismantling settler colonial thought in music scholarship, and to point the way towards genuine Reconciliation with the people of Turtle Island.

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of the Desautels Faculty of Music and its wonderful professors. Special thanks to Dr. Colette Simonot-Maiello, my thesis advisor and guide throughout my degree. Thanks also to my advisory committee, Dr. Andrew Deruchie and Professor Melody McKiver, for helping me figure out how to write about R. Murray Schafer, Dylan Robinson, and much else. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my family for keeping me (mostly) sane throughout the writing process: my parents Wendi and Alex Sawatsky, my sister Marianne Sawatsky, her partner Abe Ullman, and Dola (my dog). Finally, I'd like to thank anyone who took time out of their day to peruse this thesis (don't you have anything better to do?).

To Birgit and Kyla

**List of Figures**

Figure 1. Description of “Clear the Way, I Come” .....	26
Figure 2: Measures 1-6 of “Pleasant It Looked (Winnebago)” .....	33
Figure 3: Measures 57-62 of “Two Dream Songs (Wintu)” .....	36
Figure 4: Measures 1-21 of “What Pow’r Art Thou” .....	56-57

## **Table of Contents**

Abstract .....	i
Acknowledgments.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
List of Figures.....	iv
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction to Settler Colonial Studies .....	1
The Grand Narrative.....	5
Unsettling The Grand Narrative.....	7
Methodology .....	8
<b>Chapter 2: The Consequences of Salvage Ethnography: Imant Raminsh (b. 1943) .....</b>	<b>19</b>
The History of Salvage Ethnography .....	21
Salvage Composing: Raminsh’s <i>Earth Chants</i> .....	28
<b>Chapter 3: “It has been a beautiful Ispiciwin”: Towards Resurgence in Canadian Art Music .....</b>	<b>39</b>
Dylan Robinson’s Framework of Encounter.....	41
<i>Nagamo</i> : Overview and Form.....	52
Text-setting in The Era of Reconciliation.....	55
Postscript – Performance Context of <i>Nagamo</i> : A Case Study in Material Change .....	61
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>68</b>



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In the wake of the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2008-2015), scholars of Canadian art music have begun to reexamine the grand narrative of Canadian music history: a set of historical narratives created by 20<sup>th</sup> century musicologists that frame musical practice within the context of establishing a Western European art music culture in Canada without directly acknowledging those narratives as overtly colonial. Implicit in this re-examination is how this narrative interacts with the ongoing abuse inherent in the Canadian settler colonial project, or the systematic attempts made by the Canadian government to suppress Indigenous sovereignty through the elimination of culture, family, and life. In that vein, this thesis will provide a critical reading of two works of choral music through a settler-colonial lens. Central to both case studies is the setting of text, and part of my settler colonial reading must account for the long history of state organized disruption of Indigenous language education as a part of its genocide of Indigenous people. Because of this, my readings of these works foreground the inequality of power between settler and Indigenous culture, both historical and ongoing. Both case studies engage with Indigenous texts. Imant Raminsh's *Along the Flower Trail: Earth Chants* (1982) sets English translations of Indigenous song, and Andrew Balfour's *Nagamo* (2022) sets translations of English songs into Cree and Ojibway. As I demonstrate in my readings of these works, the relationship between the music and the text models relationships of power between Indigenous people and settlers, both through the music itself and with the underlying politics of translation that the texts rely on. These works provide conflicting models: the extractive model—a model of composition based on the systematic (or industrialized) appropriation of Indigenous culture in the service of articulating a national history—as articulated by Raminsh, and a model that unsettles those extractive practices—that questions the

very foundations of the national project and advocates for new ways of relating between settlers and Indigenous people—as articulated by Balfour.<sup>1</sup> Through these readings, I provide strategies to further understand Canadian choral music through the lens of settler colonial studies.

### Introduction to Settler Colonial Studies

This thesis relies on the theoretical framework of settler colonial studies. This discipline arose out of nascent critiques of post-colonial thought. Fayez Sayegh’s 1965 monograph *Zionist Occupation in Palestine* is one of the earliest academic critiques of post-colonialism. While he does not use the term settler colonialism, opting instead for Zionist colonialism, Sayegh’s description of the Zionist state’s repression of Palestinians contains all the necessary markers of settler colonialism. Sayegh’s critique is rooted in the dissonance of the simultaneous wave of decolonization following World War II with the increasing severity of the colonial situation in his country. Sayegh writes that the people of Palestine were faced with not only a colonial threat, but a combination of threats that included the

forcible dispossession of the indigenous population, their expulsion from their own country, the inplantation [sic] of an alien sovereignty on their soil, and the speedy importation of hordes of aliens to occupy the land thus emptied of its rightful inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> I use terms such as “extractive” in this thesis to draw attention to how settler colonial societies perceive land as a pool of extractable resources, and how that relationship fundamentally shapes the perspectives adopted by that society in various forms of art. In this same vein, the term “unsettle” also applies to situations beyond my musical focus, referring to the reversal of the settlement process: the repatriating of colonized land back to Indigenous peoples.

<sup>2</sup> Fayez Sayegh, *Zionist Occupation in Palestine* (Research Center, Palestine Liberation Organization, 1965), 5.

Sayegh thus points out a key aspect of this new understanding of colonialism: not only does this political arrangement deprive Indigenous people of political control, it also deprives them of their “elemental right to exist on [their] own land.”<sup>3</sup>

Such a definition of colonialism rooted in occupation of land proved important in analysing the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in North America, Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> The 1960s saw an upswell of political organization that resisted the efforts of the American and Canadian government to assimilate Indigenous people. The Canadian government published the White Paper in 1969, a document that advocated for the elimination of the Indian Act and the assimilation of Indigenous populations into the greater Canadian citizenry. In response, leader of the Indian Association of Alberta Harold Cardinal wrote the Red Paper of 1970, which explicitly argued for the model of political relations grounded in the signed Treaties.<sup>5</sup> Vine Deloria, Jr’s 1969 book *Custer Died for your Sins* also resists this assimilatory politics by advocating for a modern Indigenous society grounded in tribal identity.

Throughout the 1990s, similar critiques began to emerge from settlers in the colonies. American scholar Eric Cheyfitz’s 1991 book *The Poetics of Imperialism* looks at the history of colonial relations with Indigenous people, mapping how colonial rhetoric and translation practice built a racist image of Indigenous people. This history continues into the 1990s onward with the rise of neoliberalism. Despite Cheyfitz’s change in focus, the neoliberal society he finds himself

---

<sup>3</sup> Sayegh, *Zionist Occupation*, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Steven Sailata’s 2014 article “Inter/Nationalism from the Holy Land to the New World: Encountering Palestine in American Indian Studies” is a good exploration of the shared settler colonial experiences of Palestinians and Indigenous people. Sailata is primarily interested in how the historical experience of both peoples can illuminate and problematize the question of national liberation, or how the process unfolds in scholarly contexts.

<sup>5</sup> Cardinal also published a lengthy rebuttal of the White Paper in his 1969 book *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians*, in which he denounces the “buckskin curtain:” the layers of racism and bigotry that block advancements in Indigenous rights.

in still pursues the settler colonial project. The neoliberal paradigm is a function of the settler colonial imagination. In getting rid of other viewpoints or subsuming them into the dominant worldview, the settler colonizer arrives at the natural endpoint of such a process: a world in which no more progress is possible, with no alternative viewpoints to comprehend.<sup>6</sup>

Cheyfitz's critique of American politics suggests the necessity of applying a settler colonial reading to modern Western society, one which Patrick Wolfe approaches in the Australian context.<sup>7</sup> Wolfe's writings in the 1990s created the first solid theoretical foundations for settler colonial studies. In this, he borrows from Maxime Rodinson's 1966 critique of Israel entitled *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?*<sup>8</sup> Wolfe's critique of the Australian government's relationship with Aboriginal peoples served as one of the earliest formal attempts to understand Australia's lasting colonial legacy. Wolfe points out that the Australian nation state is driven by a desire for the land itself, not simply the surplus value generated by that land.<sup>9</sup> Wolfe thus posits what he calls the "logic of elimination": the social relationship that is formed in this political context between Indigenous people and settlers wherein the settler is purely focused on the displacement of the Indigenous person from their land. Settler colonialism thus diverges from colonialism, in that the Settler colonial state is less interested in the labour value supplied by the colonial subject than in the land on which they live.<sup>10</sup> Settler colonialism can also be

---

<sup>6</sup> Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (Oxford University Press, 1991), xiv.

<sup>7</sup> For a more involved unpacking of settler colonialism and its relationship with translation, see Cheyfitz and Harmon's excellent chapter in the *Routledge Handbook of Translation: Eric Cheyfitz and Alex Harmon, "Translation and Colonialism,"* in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Politics 1st edition*, ed. Jonathan Evans and Fruela Fernandez, Routledge, 2021: 270-286.

<sup>8</sup> Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?*, translated by David Thorstad (Monad Press, 1973).

<sup>9</sup> Patrick Wolfe, "Nation and Miscegenation: Discursive Continuity in the Post-Mabo Era," *Social Analysis*, 36 (1994): 93, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23171805>.

<sup>10</sup> For further study regarding settler colonialism and its historical and political contexts, see Wolfe's in depth writing on the logic of elimination in his 2006 article "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native."

distinguished from traditional colonial relationships by its interaction with Indigenous populations. In his “Introduction” to the *Journal of Settler Colonial Studies*, Lorenzo Veracini writes that settler colonialism is a continuing project that seeks to “supersede the conditions of its operation.”<sup>11</sup> Unlike colonial projects, which seek to reproduce the same relations of power, settler colonialism seeks to assimilate (and thus eliminate) Indigenous cultures into settler society. The end point constantly yearned for is one in which the binary distinction between Indigenous and settler is destroyed, with the settler becoming Indigenous as a result.

Later writings build on the settler colonial framework by suggesting ways to resist or dismantle settler colonial politics, known as decolonization. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang’s 2012 article “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor” lays out a working definition of decolonization based on the repatriation of land back to Indigenous people; the article is uniquely suited to North American discourses, due to their framing of the issue through the unique history and politics of the American/Canadian settler colonial projects. They argue that any statement that moves away from that fundamental call cannot be considered decolonial. Tuck and Yang describe settler colonialism as operating on the alienation of Indigenous people from their land, an act which requires “profound epistemic, ontological, [and] cosmological violence.”<sup>12</sup> The settler colonial project then must operate on several levels: not only through physical alienation, but also cultural, political, and economic alienation. Tuck and Yang contribute to settler colonial discourse by pointing out ways in which settlers obfuscate their complicity with settler

---

<sup>11</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, “Introducing,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 3.

<sup>12</sup> Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 5.

colonialism using language. This article acts as an important and practical guide on how to read against settler colonial-originated narratives.

### The Grand Narrative

My interpretation of the music discussed in this thesis relies on an understanding of the grand narrative of Canadian music history. This term refers to the musicological construction of a historical narrative describing the establishment of Western European art music culture in Canada, from Confederation to the present. To understand how my reading critiques this narrative, I present a summary here. The grand narrative of Canadian music history was constructed by historical musicologists, performers, composers, music teachers, and writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who sought to establish a narrative to explain the development of Western European music culture in this country. As Beverley Diamond demonstrated in her 1994 article “Narratives of Canadian Music History,” in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, history textbooks covering Canadian music largely focussed on classical music practice in major urban areas, centering mainly white and male composers.<sup>13</sup> The narrative begins with the emergence of a classical tradition in the earliest metropolises of the Canadian nation with the beginning of amateur performing ensembles. Notions of progress are frequently used to describe the professionalization of these early groups into symphony orchestras, opera houses, and other performance institutions.

---

<sup>13</sup> Diamond revisits these questions surrounding Canadian music history and narrative construction in “The Power of Stories: Canadian Music Scholarship’s Narratives and Counter-Narratives” (*Intersections: Canadian Journal of Music* 33, no. 2 (2013): 155-165, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1032701ar>) and “Struggling Towards Decolonization in Canadian Music Schools” (*MUSICultures* 48 (2021): 366-379).

As the narrative goes, the 20th century saw the rise of the national question, or what a distinctly Canadian classical music might sound like.<sup>14</sup> Ernest Gagnon (1834-1918) was one of the first Canadian composers who sought to develop a national musical style. In his 1989 article “Ernest Gagnon on Nationalism and Canadian Music: Folk and Native Sources,” Gordon Smith outlines Gagnon’s connections to the ethnic nationalism inspired by Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) that was foundational to the musical traditions of 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, and demonstrates how these ideas informed Gagnon’s attempts to create a national Canadian music rooted in the extraction of folk culture. In fact, Gagnon travelled to France in the 1850s to study how European composers created national musics based on the collection of folksong to use as raw materials.<sup>15</sup> Gagnon also saw the inclusion of Indigenous themes as a viable method to create a Canadian classical music. Ethnographers jumped on this idea, collecting a variety of folk materials. Through their efforts, they created a pool of extractive resources that could be used by composers to create a nationalist aesthetic. Smith cites two works: *L’incantation de la jongleuse* (1862), a dramatized encounter between French settlers and Iroquois and *Stadaconé: Danse sauvage pour piano* (1858), a piano work that makes prodigious use of Indigenous rhythms.<sup>16</sup> The use of Indigenous sources became increasingly common in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as indicated by Elaine Keillor’s documentation of this phenomenon in her 1995 article “Indigenous Music as a Compositional Source: Parallels and Contrasts in

---

<sup>14</sup> Similar trends can be found in other settler colonial projects. Assaf Shelleg’s monograph *Theological Stains: Art Music and the Zionist Project* (Oxford University Press, 2020) traces a similar history in the classical music canon of Israeli art music. He specifically points out how Zionist narratives of diasporic return to the land undergird much of the Israeli art music tradition, and how it in turn strengthens the Zionist state’s nationalization of theological histories.

<sup>15</sup> Gordon Smith, “Ernest Gagnon on Nationalism and Canadian Music: Folk and Native Sources,” *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* 17, no. 1 (1989): 33-34, <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/MC/article/view/21739>.

<sup>16</sup> Smith, “Ernest Gagnon,” 34-36.

Canadian and American Music.”<sup>17</sup> Keillor also provides a systematic overview of this trend, which I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter. Keillor’s article in turn became the basis for an expanded list of music inspired by Indigenous sources at the Canadian Music Centre.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, as Diamond asserted in 1994, the development of a Canadian classical tradition went hand in hand with the desire to be recognized on equal footing with Western European art music.

This understanding of Canadian music history is still adhered to by many scholars, composers, and performers. Hilary Apfelstadt’s 2014 survey of Canadian choral music repeats many of the main characteristics of the grand narrative: the emphasis on urban centres, the focus on British and French compositional trends, and the progression from undeveloped amateur ensembles to professionalized music institutions.<sup>19</sup> Within this narrative, Apfelstadt delineates three musical characteristics belonging to Canadian choral music: “folk music, nature references, and compositional trends that are incorporated into so-called ‘art’ music.”<sup>20</sup>

### Unsettling The Grand Narrative

The grand narrative is limiting in a variety of ways, including how it excludes and marginalizes different voices within the bounds of a national narrative, and how it values musical traditions only insofar as they can enrich the classical tradition. This insight is not new. Seminal works such as Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) suggest an interpretation of history based on the racialized Othering of various peoples in the service of empire. More broadly, throughout the

---

<sup>17</sup> Elaine Keillor, “Indigenous Music as a Compositional Source: Parallels and Contrasts in Canadian and American Music,” in *Taking a Stand: Essays in Honour of John Beckwith*, ed. Timothy J. McGee (University of Toronto Press, 1995), 251.

<sup>18</sup> Jeremy Strachan, “Music Inspired by Aboriginal Sources at the Canadian Music Centre” (Canadian Music Centre/Centre de musique canadienne, 2005).

<sup>19</sup> Hilary Apfelstadt, “Canada’s Choral Music Development,” *The Choral Journal* 54, no. 8 (2014): 35-36, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23646271>.

<sup>20</sup> Apfelstadt, “Canada’s Choral Music,” 36.

1990s, musicologists such as Susan McClary, Philip Brett, Suzanne Cusick, and others became increasingly interested in mapping material and political realities onto their cultural critiques, and especially issues of race and gender. In Canada, the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) echoed developing critiques of the grand narrative of Canadian music history and underscored the need for a decolonial ethos in musicological discourse. The work of the TRC lay the groundwork for a new generation of musicology that deconstructs narratives of music history through the lens of settler colonialism and foregrounds Indigenous voices and experiences.<sup>21</sup> My reading of Canadian music also rejects this colonial structuring of music history. As a settler on Treaty 1 territory, I believe it is crucial that I dedicate myself to deconstructing the systems of settler colonialism and white supremacy, and to move towards a renewed relationship between Indigenous people and settlers grounded in the Calls to Action of the TRC.<sup>22</sup>

### Methodology

Composers engaged in extractive practices do so in a variety of ways: through melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation and text. Elaine Keillor delves into each of these areas in her 1994 chapter “Indigenous Music as a Compositional Source.” Keillor begins by describing the two ways in which Canadian composers use Indigenous melodies, either by directly representing recorded Indigenous song, or as inspiration in the composition of new music, including as the

---

<sup>21</sup> This work is well under way. The most prominent scholar dedicated to deconstructing the Canadian classical music canon and pointing a way forward for Indigenous musics is Dylan Robinson, whose work will be discussed in conjunction with Balfour’s music in Chapter 3.

<sup>22</sup> The aims of this project fall under Calls 13-17, which focus on language revitalization as a crucial part of the Truth and Reconciliation process. I expand on the content of these Calls later in this chapter (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, Government of Canada, 2015, [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2015/trc/IR4-8-2015-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/trc/IR4-8-2015-eng.pdf)).

source for musical themes and simple motifs.<sup>23</sup> Extraction of rhythm usually corresponds to a strong recurring duple beat, like the drumbeat generally associated with many First Nations. Settler composers largely ignored the harmonic dimension in their extraction of Indigenous music: Keillor writes that “[a]ll North American indigenous music is basically monophonic,” and that composers generally tended to “rely on open fifths and/or fourths” to avoid prescribing a particular harmony to it.<sup>24</sup> In other words, many composers felt that they needed to come up with their own ways of ascribing harmony to Indigenous song as existing transcriptions and recordings of these works lacked a kind of harmony they could reliably exploit. Instrumentation followed a similar logic, as composers began by focussing on voice and piano music or simply an individual voice, which most closely resembled Indigenous song practice. This would change throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with more focus being placed on chamber genres; wind and drum textures were heavily favoured in this genre, as they again corresponded to settler perceptions of Indigenous music. Finally, texts were usually used that were previously translated into either English or French, with some vocables being used as a refrain. Keillor writes that these translated texts frequently communicated a view of Indigeneity distorted by a form of “Noble Savagism”: the perception of Indigenous people as possessing a primitive code of ethics and laws that so-called more civilized people should respect.<sup>25</sup> Some composers used Indigenous text in their original language, but this was not as common. Louis Applebaum (*Inunit: from the*

---

<sup>23</sup> Keillor points out that many of these melodies also have similar intervallic patterns, mentioning one instance from Gagnon’s *Stadaconé* which makes use of a rising sixth, followed by a stepwise descent: Keillor, “Indigenous Music,” 195-196.

<sup>24</sup> Keillor, “Indigenous Music,” 199.

<sup>25</sup> Keillor, “Indigenous Music,” 202; the idea of the “Noble Savage” is not new: at least as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, writers such as Jean Jacques-Rousseau and John Dryden wrote about Indigenous people as fulfilling an “idealized concept of uncivilized man, who symbolizes the innate goodness of one not exposed to the corrupting influences of civilization.” This distortion figures prominently in narratives surrounding salvage ethnography, as I demonstrate in the next chapter (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Noble Savage,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, April 24, 2019).

*Eskimo*), Peter Hannan (*Trinkets of Little Value*), Harry Somers (*Kuyas*; from *Louis Riel*), R. Murray Schafer (*Snowforms*), and others used original text sparsely in their music, but these examples are dwarfed by the corpus of music that set translations (and broadly speaking, imprecise or distorted translations).

Settler-colonial extractive practices, as described above, are thus complex and multi-faceted and can be found in every aspect of the music-making process.

My methodology relies on interpreting the interactions between text and music within the framework of settler colonial theory. A typical aspect of extractive composition is the collapsing of Indigenous worldviews through the process of textual translation. It is through the translation of Indigenous cultures that settler colonial paradigms assert their cultural authority. The act of translation from Indigenous languages into the languages of the settler serves to collapse the ontologies of Indigenous cultures centered around reciprocity and stewardship, and to ultimately assimilate those people into the greater settler colonial culture embodied by resource extraction and capitalist exploitation.<sup>26</sup>

Frantz Fanon's writings explored how colonial powers used speech and language as tools by which to reinforce their cultural hegemony. Fanon's lived experience as a colonial subject in Martinique (having assisted in the decolonization of Algeria) aided his analysis. In his 1952 work *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon considers language a central organizing principle whereby colonialism exerts its authority. Fanon asserts that "to speak means being able to use a certain

---

<sup>26</sup> As a representative example, consider "Unsettling the Land: Indigeneity, Ontology, and Hybridity in Settler Colonialism" from the 2020 special issue of *Environment and Society: Advances in Research*. Burrow, Brock, and Dove highlight the differences in settler and Indigenous ontologies as they relate to land use: settlers tend to think of land as a resource to extract while Indigenous people conceive of the land as a living being that needs to be taken care of.

syntax and possessing the morphology of such and such a language, but it means above all assuming a culture and bearing the weight of a civilization.”<sup>27</sup> The act of speech thus responds to the unequal relationships of power between colonizer and colonized, privileging the languages and ontologies of the empire while marginalizing the languages and ontologies of the oppressed.<sup>28</sup> Frantz Fanon thus provided crucial analyses in the 1950s on the connections between translation and colonialism.

Indian scholar Tejaswini Niranjana’s 1990 article “Translation, Colonialism and [the] Rise of English” applies Fanon’s writings on language on the post-colonial discourse. The article examined the power dynamics at play in the introduction of English language education in India. Niranjana refers to Charles Trevelyan’s account of the impact of the English language in India, where she ruminates on how “The steam boats, passing up and down the Ganges, are boarded by native boys, begging, not for money, but for [English language] books.”<sup>29</sup> Niranjana uses this image to argue that translation “shapes, and takes shape within, the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism,” that what is at stake here is the representation of the colonised, who need to be produced in such a manner as to justify colonial domination, and to beg for the English book by themselves.”<sup>30</sup> Niranjana, like Fanon before her, is concerned with how the representation of the colonized by the colonizer reifies cultural and historical hegemony. The process of translating creates the idea of the Other, implicitly structuring cultures according to the static, unchanging language of the translator. Niranjana writes about how the Hegelian

---

<sup>27</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. trans. Richard Philcox (Grove Press, 1967), 17-18.

<sup>28</sup> Glen Coulthard’s 2014 book *Red Skin, White Masks* applies this critique to what he calls the “politics of recognition” that marginalizes Indigenous politics: Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt9qh3cv>.

<sup>29</sup> Tejaswini Niranjana, “Translation, Colonialism and Rise of English,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 25, no. 15 (1990): 773, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4396163>.

<sup>30</sup> Niranjana, “Translation,” 773.

notion of historical progress came to be used as a weapon to “historicize” Indigenous cultures.<sup>31</sup> The colonial subject thus finds themselves permanently consigned to pre-history, unable to fully articulate themselves without the assistance of Western modes of thought.

Settler colonial societies have needed to adapt to account for the rise of neoliberalism and the rapid globalization of international capitalism. These societies have done so by embracing an aesthetic of multiculturalism, a manoeuvre that recognizes Otherness, even celebrates it, without respecting the diverse worldviews these communities come from. As a result, settler colonial projects have continued in the guise of various socially progressive efforts, ultimately obfuscating the continuation of the very same politics of alienation and displacement. In her 2018 book *Translingual Poetics: Writing Personhood Under Settler Colonialism*, Sarah Dowling uses a Coca-Cola ad to illustrate the phenomenon of what she terms settler monolingualism. This ad proved especially infamous for how it dared to translate “America the Beautiful” into a variety of different languages, including Spanish, Tagalog, Mandarin, and Farsi.<sup>32</sup> The point of the ad was to show the diversity of American society, a maneuver that while seemingly tolerant, marked what Dowling describes as a “move away from practices of outright suppression of differences and toward neoliberal strategies of management.”<sup>33</sup> The differences between languages presented in the advertisement never seriously unsettle the greater hegemony of the English language, or American culture. Instead of these different languages touching on cultural difference or differences in worldviews, each speaker emphasizes the importance of American culture. Dowling writes that “patriotism and participation in capitalism—or, enjoying Coca-

---

<sup>31</sup> Niranjana, “Translation,” 773.

<sup>32</sup> Sarah Dowling, *Translingual Poetics: Writing Personhood Under Settler Colonialism* (University of Iowa Press, 2018), 1.

<sup>33</sup> Dowling, *Translingual Poetics*, 2.

Cola—are framed as fundamental similarities, while differences of language and ethnicity are represented as mere surface-level variations, disconnected from the distribution of material resources and institutional power.”<sup>34</sup>

Central to the construction of this monolingualism is the settler-led genocide of Indigenous peoples. English, like Tagalog, Farsi, and others, are immigrant languages. This reality cannot coexist with the positioning of English as the “natural” language of the settler colonial nation. American and Canadian settler colonial societies constructed, as a result, historical narratives that deflected blame from their genocidal actions. As Dowling asserts, these stories “suggest[ed] that the original languages spoken on this continent simply could not flourish, that they were constitutionally incompatible with settler modernity and therefore vanished.”<sup>35</sup> Multilingualism is thus inextricably connected to the greater project of American cultural superiority. Dowling argues that colonial societies must claim multiculturalism for themselves as a strategy to prevent the transformative politics of plurality that would otherwise threaten the hegemony of settler nations. Cheyfitz’s own advocacy for a “difficult politics of translation” as opposed to “another politics of translation that represses these difficulties” should then be understood as resisting neoliberal multiculturalism, where cultural difference is seen as an obstacle to “harmonious living” (or subservience to capital), and instead as the beginning of a transformative politics.<sup>36</sup>

Tuck and Yang’s 2012 work “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor” engages with the politics of translation through their critique of the rhetorical misuse of the term decolonization in

---

<sup>34</sup> Dowling, *Translingual Poetics*, 2.

<sup>35</sup> Dowling, *Translingual Poetics*, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism*, xvi.

the Canadian/American context. The politics of translation play a role in how decolonization is defined. A decolonization that refers to the "repatriation of Indigenous land and life" necessarily includes the revitalization of Indigenous languages because these languages contain ontological realities of Indigenous life.<sup>37</sup> A metaphorical decolonization suggests that Indigenous land and life is not restored. Tuck and Yang's concern stems from trends in education scholarship that treat the term decolonization as a catch-all term for any social justice issues, a reference to the complications that arise out of grafting this term (originally used to describe the post-colonial context) to apply to a context in which post-colonial politics are not as relevant. Metaphorization serves the interests of settler colonialism, as it is this redefinition of the term that resists the specific political calls to action that decolonization requires.<sup>38</sup> Tuck and Yang assert that the metaphorization of decolonization can be located in discreet rhetorical maneuvers that they call "settler moves to innocence:" ways in which settlers can conveniently avoid the greater demands of decolonization.<sup>39</sup> By recontextualizing the demands of repatriation of land as metaphors, settlers can co-opt and eliminate calls to action based in land repatriation. These rhetorical manoeuvres also assist in increasing settler control over how Indigenous stories are told: another crucial step in claiming Indigenous land for the settler colonial power. It is no coincidence that the recent explosion of research pertaining to Indigenous language revitalization projects are so frequently associated with reconciliation in Canada, especially as articulated in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Calls to Action published by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.<sup>40</sup> These projects are largely necessary due to the intergenerational harm enacted on Indigenous peoples through

---

<sup>37</sup> Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," 1.

<sup>38</sup> Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," 1.

<sup>39</sup> Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," 1.

<sup>40</sup> Both Calls to Action advocate for the acknowledgment of language rights as central to the rights of Indigenous people, and to enact an "Aboriginal Language Act" that prioritizes "preserv[ing], revitaliz[ing], and strengthening... Aboriginal languages and cultures." Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Calls to Action*, 2.

settler society. One example, Onowa McIvor's 2012 dissertation "*ikakwiw nîhiyawiyân: I am learning [to be] Cree,*" focusses on the lack of adult speakers of Indigenous languages as a crucial barrier to the wider dissemination of these endangered languages. McIvor states that Indigenous people find themselves unable to speak their ancestral language for several reasons, including "geographic dislocation from home territory, adoption outside the culture, migration or urbanization of the family unit, or severance of language continuation between generations."<sup>41</sup> To state it plainly, the reasons McIvor describes correspond to the way educational, cultural, and political institutions have shaped the policy of the Canadian government to help eliminate literacy in Indigenous languages. These revitalization projects are ultimately vital to the continued existence of Indigenous people and communities. Through the revitalization of the languages of Turtle Island (in stark contrast to the Canadian colonial project which alienates Indigenous people from their language and culture), Indigenous people can assert their sovereignty in words that are truly their own.<sup>42</sup>

To illustrate how my methodology works, I begin with a brief look at R. Murray Schafer (1933-2021). Schafer is perhaps the most recognizable composer in connection to Canadian music: his work over the decades radically redefined what Canadian music could sound like. His impact is felt throughout sound studies, musicology, and even in the visual arts. His career is notable for how it straddles multiple generations of Canadian music and scholarship, stretching from the overtly colonial representations of British and French music in the 1950s all the way to

---

<sup>41</sup> Onowa McIvor, "*ikakwiw nîhiyawiyân: I am learning [to be] Cree,*" PhD diss., (The University of British Columbia, 2012), 1.

<sup>42</sup> Researchers have worked on this since the 1990s, including Nancy C. Dorian, Mary Hermes, Candace Kaleimamoowahinekapu Galla, Lorena Sekwan Fontaine (Maiigun Geezhik Iqway), and others. However, Indigenous communities throughout Turtle Island have been committed to this work for decades, outside of the academic context.

the post-TRC era of decolonial musicology. As such, Schafer remains an important figure when discussing Canadian music history.

Robin Elliott's tribute to R. Murray Schafer after his passing is an interesting example of the grand narrative framing, which is primarily focussed on the search for a distinctly Canadian sounding music. Elliott portrays Schafer in a heroic/mythic frame, a common aspect in the canons of European art music history, especially in the wake of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Elliott begins this narrative by framing Schafer's life as a quest, frequently employing mythical tropes and heroic signifiers to strengthen his case:

At the age of eight he developed glaucoma in his right eye, and the eye had to be removed... More pertinent to Schafer's story, though, is Wotan the Wanderer from Wagner's *Ring* cycle, who sacrificed an eye to drink from the well of knowledge. Schafer has often been compared to Wagner, and Schafer's *Patria* cycle of music theatre works can be thought of as the Canadian *Ring* cycle, so the comparison with Wotan is apt.<sup>43</sup>

Elliott's narrative structures Schafer's travels throughout Europe as continuing this search for Canadian music. Paradoxically, Elliott describes Schafer's Europhilia as a function of his trying to locate a Canadian sound, albeit within the international trend "that held the music of Schoenberg and his pupil Webern to be the one true path forward."<sup>44</sup> Central to Elliott's narrative is Schafer's frustration as he interacts with various European traditions.<sup>45</sup> As he comes across the music of Mozart and the folksong tradition in Western and Eastern Europe, Elliott emphasizes that Schafer is unwilling or unable to bring those traditions back home with him.<sup>46</sup> Instead,

---

<sup>43</sup> Robin Elliott, "R. Murray Schafer (1933–2021)," Institute for Music in Canada, Accessed June 27, 2025, <http://uoftmusicicm.ca/2021/08/16/r-murray-schafer-1933-2021/>.

<sup>44</sup> Elliott, "R. Murray Schafer (1933–2021)."

<sup>45</sup> Elliott also tries to associate Schafer with other European thinkers as a form of pilgrimage. Elliott takes care to let the reader know that one of Schafer's odd jobs as an English teacher at a school in Trieste was the same position as was held by James Joyce.

<sup>46</sup> Referring to Schafer's rejection of the folksong tradition, Elliott casts aspersions on this method by quoting Schafer's 1961 "The Limits of Nationalism in Canadian Music," in which Schafer describes Canadian settlers as philistines with little appreciation for any culture. Interestingly, Elliott leaves out Schafer's writing on what he calls

Elliott positions Schafer's return to Canada as coinciding with his establishing a new pedagogical system. Elliott describes Schafer's pedagogical work as revolutionary and emphasises his return to "first principles," which further separates Schafer from his European cultural background. Elliott's narrative of Schafer paints an image of an exuberant ideologue whose contributions to Canadian music fit within the grand narrative. However, much like the grand narrative itself, this story of Schafer ignores the deeper ethical and political issues that run through his work. Ultimately, Schafer's frequent use of Indigenous aesthetics as connected to the land is part of a greater process of extraction as a method to create a Canadian classical music.

Scholars have primarily critiqued Schafer's multi movement work *Patria* for its use of Indigenous words, affects, and song, as well as its positioning of outdoor spaces. Tyler Kinnear's 2018 article on the aesthetics of echoes in Schafer's *Princess of the Stars* questions the colonialism present in the piece. Kinnear specifically points out the dissonance between the venue (Banff National Park) and how the material Schafer draws upon comes "exclusively [from] the Indigenous cultures of the Plains and Eastern Woodlands people of Canada and the United States."<sup>47</sup> This careless mismatch of Indigenous culture and land points to a form of cultural appropriation, one in which the author's understanding of Indigeneity is assimilatory—merely representations of colonial land and culture. In this, Kinnear echoes Waterman's critique of the *Patria* cycle. Written in 2001, Waterman's article "*Patria* at the Millennium" directly

---

"Our truly indigenous and uncounterfeiting [sic] folk music... the music of our Indians and Eskimos." Schafer has little regard for this music as well: not only does this music not represent Canadian society for "ethnic and historical reasons," it is also apparently unsuitable for serious musical projects. Schafer goes on to equate Inuit throat singing with "Sir Winston Churchill clearing his throat.": R. Murray Schafer, "The Limits of Nationalism in Canadian Music," *The Tamarack Review* 80, no. 18 (1961): 72, [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_tamarack-review\\_winter-1961\\_80\\_18/page/72/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_tamarack-review_winter-1961_80_18/page/72/mode/2up). Dylan Robinson's 2020 book *Hungry Listening* further unpacks these comments by Schafer.

<sup>47</sup> Tyler Kinnear, "Echo and the Recovery of the Past in R. Murray Schafer's The Princess of The Stars," *Intersections* 38, no. 1-2 (2018): 49, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1071673ar>.

challenges the cultural assumptions of the work, writing that “For cultural critics... *Patria* presents an essentialized worldview disturbingly out of touch with current Canadian society.”<sup>48</sup> Writing about *Princess of the Stars*, Waterman points out that Schafer’s view of Canadian art music (of being genuine representations of the land and Indigenous mythologies) proliferates the myth of *terra nullius*, the idea of an “unproblematically unpeopled land where the ‘Indians’ are always your (suddenly legitimate) ‘ancestors’ rather than modern people with current concerns.”<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, Dylan Robinson begins his exploration of Indigenous sound studies in his 2020 book *Hungry Listening* by foregrounding Schafer’s racist assessment of Inuit throat singing.<sup>50</sup>

To show how I apply my methodology, I turn to a smaller example of these colonial currents: an early choral piece entitled *Miniwanka: Moments of Water* (1971). As evidenced by the title, along with Schafer’s program notes, he is clearly interested in simulating the waterways that proceed from the lake into the Pacific Ocean:

Miniwanka is an imitative piece describing the various states of water. The text consists of words for water, rain, stream, river, fog and ocean, in the following North-American Indian languages: Dakota, Wappo, Crow, Chinook, Achumawi, Otchipwe, Salish, Natick, Klamath and Luiseno... The effect of the total piece should be to chronicle the transformations of water, from rain... to streams... to quiet lakes... to broad rivers... to the ocean.<sup>51</sup>

My reading of the piece conflicts with more traditional readings that emphasise Schafer’s growing concern with environmental themes by focussing on Schafer’s use of Indigenous words.

---

<sup>48</sup> Ellen Waterman, “*Patria* at the Millennium,” *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 6 (2001): 22, <https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.3138/topia.6.21>.

<sup>49</sup> Waterman, “*Patria*,” 28.

<sup>50</sup> Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 1.

<sup>51</sup> R. Murray Schafer, *Miniwanka: Moments of Water* (Arcana Editions, 1971), 1.

In doing so, I echo Lee Veeraraghavan's concerns about the dangers of cultural extraction. In her 2017 Ph.D. dissertation "Dirty Ears: Hearing and Hearings in the Canadian Liberal Settler Colony," Veeraraghavan writes how Schafer's use of Indigenous words in *Miniwanka* as non-signifying, or unable to communicate the breadth of their historical and political history due to their being employed by a settler composer.<sup>52</sup> Schafer's simulation of states of water by using Indigenous words from various First Nations, much like *Princess of the Stars*, empties their original meaning and renders them down into mere sounds. Through Schafer's use of these words, the Indigenous framing and perspective is hollowed out and replaced with Schafer's meanings. Thus, Schafer's use of Indigenous words, even if those specific words are thematically resonant, ultimately "dismantle[s] the capacity of indigenous words to signify" their history.<sup>53</sup> Schafer's use of these words thus alienates them totally; it separates them from the grammatical context which determines their meaning, the land they were created to signify, and from the people who spoke these words originally. By doing this, Schafer also alienates these words from their original territories, further reifying the collapsing of their diverse perspectives and worldviews: indeed, the very ontology by which they exist. As a result, Schafer's environmental concern with the land functions as part of an extractive compositional process on several levels as outlined above. By employing Indigenous words and concepts, Schafer ultimately reflect a concern and compassion for *Canadian* land, one which happens to have Indigenous people living on it.

---

<sup>52</sup> Lee Veeraraghavan, "Dirty Ears: Hearing and Hearings in the Canadian Liberal Settler Colony" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2017), 113, Scholarly Commons, <https://repository.upenn.edu/handle/20.500.14332/29562>.

<sup>53</sup> Veeraraghavan, "Dirty Ears," 115.

In the next chapter, I examine the role translation plays in the settler colonial project. I connect Imant Raminsh's *Along the Flower Trail: Earth Chants* (1982) to the destructive legacy of salvage ethnography. As I demonstrate, Raminsh's setting of various song texts collected by ethnographers collapses the various ontologies that created the texts, furthering Canada's settler colonial project. I begin by discussing how language is an indispensable tool of the settler colonial project, serving to restrict the flow of Indigenous ontologies through the totalizing lens of translation. I connect this relationship to the legacy of salvage ethnography, using Tuck and Yang's concept of the settler move to innocence to describe its coloniality. I explain the context surrounding the texts Raminsh uses in his work. I demonstrate that Raminsh sets these texts according to his understanding of the English translation, as well as the aesthetic expectations of the Western art music tradition, and that Raminsh's musical choices serve to degrade the cultures from which these texts originate. I end by suggesting sites of resistance to settler-colonial translation.

In the final chapter, I explore one case study in which the legacy of settler-colonial musicking is turned on its head. I look at Andrew Balfour's *Nagamo* (2022) as a potential response to the relationship between the Canadian choral tradition and settler-colonial thought, and as a refusal of the taxonomy of musical encounter as set forward by Dylan Robinson. I begin by establishing the current situation facing Indigenous musicians in Canada today, emphasizing the struggle for sovereignty over their own stories and music, against settler appropriation. In that vein, I turn to Dylan Robinson's *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* to question his conception of Indigenous sovereignty. By working with his taxonomy of musical encounter as described in Chapter 3, I show that his model of how Indigenous song interacts with Early Music risks preventing Indigenous musicians from enacting sovereignty over

their own music. I contrast Robinson's taxonomy with Dawn Avery's model of Indigenous modernity, predicated on the Indigeneity of the composer as the operative condition from which music created by them constitutes an articulation of Indigeneity. Finally, I turn to *Nagamo* as an example of another refusal of Robinson's framework. I show that this project, uniquely resonant with Andrew Balfour's identity, presents a new path forward: one in which the settler-colonial paradigm gives way to a new pluralistic relationship.

## **Chapter 2: The Consequences of Salvage Ethnography: Imant Raminsh (b. 1943)**

This chapter examines one way in which the evocation of Indigenous culture in Canadian classical music presupposes the denial of Indigenous sovereignty. I begin by examining Herbert Joseph Spinden (1879-1967), an American scholar whose translated anthology of Indigenous poetry, *Songs of the Tewa*, served as partial inspiration for a cycle of choral music by Canadian composer Imant Raminsh, entitled *Along the flower trail: Earth Chants*. Spinden's view of Indigeneity is heavily influenced by his status as a settler ethnographer. In his introduction to the anthology, Spinden evokes the trope of the Noble Savage with his complimentary language about the "Redman":

The Redman's social restraints kept the resources of the New World intact against our coming. His distinguished skill set up some of the best standards of craftsmanship. His patient husbandry won for us our most important crops. Better still he demonstrated that upon a wise use of leisure saved from the pursuit of food and mere necessities rest those intellectual, artistic and religious commonwealths which are the crown and glory of mankind...<sup>54</sup>

Spinden's evocation of the hardiness, craftiness, and industriousness of Indigenous people exists with the clear delineation that their existence naturally prefigures the coming of the settler. The belief that Indigenous societies were destined to be dominated by strong Western societies emerged from ideas about Indigenous people's supposed inability to adapt to settler modernities (rooted in a primitivist notion of the pure and naïve Indigenous subject). This understanding feeds into the phenomenon of the "salvage paradigm" (of which salvage ethnography is the paradigm's practical application), the dominant understanding of Indigenous people and culture throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century among scholars in that field. Ethnographers active during this period laboured under the idea that Indigenous ways of life were destined to fade into

---

<sup>54</sup> Herbert Joseph Spinden, *Songs of the Tewa* (The Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts, 1933), i.

nothingness under the wheels of modernity: the ongoing colonization of frontier land.<sup>55</sup> As this process continued further west, and as the land began to be “developed” (borrowing the vocabulary of Western capitalism), ethnographers throughout Canada and the USA began to feverishly “collect” Indigenous cultural artifacts, believing that their remained little time before these cultures went extinct. As a result, these ethnographers engaged in nigh-industrial levels of “collection,” taking from Indigenous people their art, pottery, ceremonial and cultural implements, and their music.<sup>56</sup> Central to the claims made by the salvage ethnographers is what Tuck and Yang refer to as the “Settler adoption fantasy,” the position wherein “the Native (understanding that he is becoming extinct) hands over his land, his claim to the land, his very Indian-ness to the settler for safe-keeping.”<sup>57</sup> Ultimately, settler ethnographer operating within this paradigm continued the settler colonial project through their appropriation of Indigenous culture.

This chapter examines how many Canadian classical composers, empowered by voices like R. Murray Schafer’s, came to enact direct harm against Indigenous peoples through the process of extraction: the unauthorized use of Indigenous songs, rhythms, ceremonies, and stories in the service of creating the Canadian classical music tradition. One such example of this harm comes from 1982, a choral cycle entitled *Along the Flower Trail: Earth Chants* written by

---

<sup>55</sup> James Clifford’s 1989 essay “The Others: Beyond the ‘Salvage’ Paradigm” summarizes several scholarly trends that contribute to this ahistorical rendering of Indigenous people and suggests ways to change scholarly approaches to account for this.

<sup>56</sup> This fundamental imbalance of power between Indigenous people and settlers can still be seen today in the modern copyright system, as Trevor Reed examines in his 2021 article “Fair Use as Cultural Appropriation.” Reed argues that the fair use system as it currently pertains to the copyright system is limited in its ability to protect Indigenous culture; it ultimately highlights the dissonance between the copyright system—which views copyrightable works as confluences of ‘mere’ aesthetics—and the purpose of Indigenous culture—which falls outside the boundaries of ‘mere’ aesthetics. Ultimately, what is considered “fair use” is dictated by the ontology of the settler nation state, not Indigenous nations.

<sup>57</sup> Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 14.

Imant Raminsh. The piece is notable for its setting of Indigenous song texts collected by ethnographers working throughout the United States and Canada. By not properly contextualizing his sources in his own work, Raminsh continued the salvage paradigm and thus distorted the cultural output of these various cultures, giving authority to settler colonial narratives that force Indigenous cultures onto a lower rung of relevance. I begin by examining the history of salvage ethnography, focussing on how translation plays a particular role in it. I assert that translation is a crucial part in the enactment of the salvage paradigm, that its collapsing or erasing of Indigenous ontologies assimilates these texts into the dominant settler colonial ontology. I demonstrate that Raminsh's musical treatment of these translations reflects its colonial ontology. By treating the text as a generic building block in his choral project, Raminsh creates an image of Indigenous culture under the ownership of the dominant settler colonial authority, a naïve subject ultimately fated to be crushed under the wheels of "progress."

### The History of Salvage Ethnography

The phenomenon of salvage ethnography simultaneously arises out of, and intensifies the effects, of settler colonialism: it satisfies the fantasy "in which the Native (understanding that he is becoming extinct) hands over his land, his claim to the land, his very Indian-ness to the settler for safe-keeping."<sup>58</sup> In practice, this collection of methods and attitudes justifies settler colonial control of the land by assisting in the ideological erasure of Indigenous ontologies and relationships with the land. By being unable to properly translate Indigenous ontologies into the settler language, the ethnographer thus claimed to have found proof of the supposed primitivity of the Indigenous subject, erasing whole ontologies as a result. The illusion of the primitive,

---

<sup>58</sup> Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization," 14.

historical Indigenous subject thus enables well-meaning settler ethnographers, researchers, and artists to extract cultural knowledge from Indigenous people, an unequal act that further exacerbates the institutional harm enacted on them. This perspective gained credibility as a reaction to the expanding power of the settler colonial nation state's ability to dictate reality. The collapsing of Indigenous ontologies through translation acted as yet another weapon in the war against Indigenous sovereignty. At the same time, salvage ethnography accomplishes the historicizing trend previously described by Niranjana, and Tuck and Yang: the consigning of Indigenous knowledge to history, with no political or material power in the present. This harm could be used by ethnographers and other researchers as evidence of the supposed endangering of Indigenous cultures, a situation wherein protocol and understanding of these cultures could be safely ignored in the name of preserving cultural practices. As these researchers travelled to and worked with Indigenous cultures, they gradually accumulated archives of recordings, transcriptions, and writings. Through the copyright system, these researchers lay claim to their field recordings, essentially robbing Indigenous cultural practices from the same people for whom they professed to care.<sup>59</sup> Ultimately, colonial translations of Indigenous stories subsume the ontologies which generate those stories into the greater colonial imagination.

One of the more extreme cases of salvage ethnography's erasure of Indigenous ontologies can be found in the life and work of Frances Densmore (1867-1957), one of the most important

---

<sup>59</sup> Scholars such as Robin R. R. Gray, Angela R. Riley, Cortelyou Kenney, and others have written about the harmful effects of copyright law for Indigenous communities. Gray specifically points out how Indigenous people find themselves frequently needing to demean themselves to museums and other institutions to even get a chance to begin the repatriation process; Gray terms those in positions of power "gatekeepers," settlers who determine the authenticity of the repatriation request: Robin R. R. Gray, "Repatriating Indigenous Cultural Heritage: What's Reconciliation Got to Do With it?" IPinCH, March 25, 2014, <https://www.sfu.ca/ipinch/outputs/blog/repatriating-indigenous-cultural-heritage-what-s-reconciliation-got-do-it/>.

early ethnographers in the field of “Amerindian music.”<sup>60</sup> Her studies took her from the Pacific Northwest all the way down to Florida. Her writings were widely published by the Bureau of American Ethnology: they published over a dozen monographs of Densmore’s work.<sup>61</sup> Her importance as an ethnographer should not be overlooked, but just as urgently, it should be noted that her work operated within the framework of salvage ethnography. In *Un/common Cultures: Racism and the Rearticulation of Cultural Difference* (2010), Kamala Visweswaran addresses growing concerns around Densmore’s ethnographic legacy as connected to the institution of settler colonialism. Visweswaran connects Densmore to a generation of white, female ethnographers that furthered colonial harm in her chapter “‘Wild West’ Anthropology and the Disciplining of Gender”. Visweswaran specifically examines Densmore’s turn of the century work *The Plea of Our Brown Brother*. She writes how Densmore frames Indigenous people in mythological terms, how it “recall[s] ‘Rousseau’s ‘noble savage’ and reaffirm[s] the inseparability of Native Americans from nature.”<sup>62</sup> Densmore accomplishes this by portraying Indigenous peoples as akin to children, in contrast with the manhood of the White race. Visweswaran concludes that this rhetorical positioning “romanticized Native American life in a field of discourse that displaced questions of genocide and survival into talk of ‘change’ and ‘passing ways of life.’”<sup>63</sup> More importantly, however, is how Densmore’s understanding of

---

<sup>60</sup> This term is taken from the reference entry on Densmore in the Oxford Dictionary of Music (Willard Rhodes, “Densmore, Frances,” *Grove Music Online*, 2001). For the purposes of this project, I find it important and valuable to examine briefly the life of one of the most important salvage ethnographers, even though she mostly conducted her work in the United States. Enough literature has been devoted to her that it provides a useful case study to comprehend this phenomenon. I do not mean to imply that the American and Canadian experiences of salvage ethnography are identical, instead to explore how this worldview functions according to similar relations of power.

<sup>61</sup> The 2015 book *Travels with Frances Densmore: Her Life, Work, and Legacy in Native American Studies* edited by Joan M. Jensen and Michelle Wick Patterson (University of Nebraska Press, 2015) provides an in depth look at Densmore’s writings and studies.

<sup>62</sup> Kamala Visweswaran, *Un/common Cultures: Racism and the Rearticulation of Cultural Difference* (Duke University Press, 2010), 35.

<sup>63</sup> Visweswaran, *Un/common Cultures*, 37.

Indigenous culture is organized around the notion of the settler adoption fantasy. For Densmore, Indigenous people are simultaneously of the land and the precursor to settler life. Densmore's positioning of Indigenous people as naively sharing their wisdom with settlers, in addition to the argument being blatantly ahistorical, cunningly implies Indigenous people have little to no control over their cultural history, undercutting their cultural authority. Densmore thus allows herself to act as the central authority on the cultures she studies. Despite the guidance given to her by numerous community members, their relative sovereignty only extended to teaching Densmore about their culture. After that, Densmore became the sole voice on these cultures. Densmore's work as an ethnographer is not singularly unique, but indicative of greater attitudes surrounding Indigenous cultural sovereignty. As her prolific work throughout the early and middle 20<sup>th</sup> century shows, the field of ethnography was focussed on extracting Indigenous cultural items under flawed assumptions about the extinction of Indigenous peoples.

Raminsh's careless setting of salvaged texts ultimately reifies the scholarly authenticity of the translation, helping to erase those Indigenous ontologies. One of these texts, "Clear the Way, I Come" (listed as the Sioux war song in the Raminsh), is found in Frances Densmore's 1918 work *Teton Sioux Music*. Densmore's writings on the song neatly demonstrates how attaching scholarly authenticity to these texts risks legitimizing the ideological project under which these texts operate.<sup>64</sup> Densmore's description of the Sioux war song, rather than referring to the protocols or the context in which she was allowed to hear this song, tends to a strictly musicological description of the song (see fig. 1). Densmore describes the song purely through the lens of Western theory, focussing in this case on the A minor triad as a central organizing

---

<sup>64</sup> Densmore, *Teton Sioux Music* [Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 61], (Government Printing Office, 1918), 351.

point. The issues with this characterisation are manifold. For example, the silencing of Dakota and Lakota perspectives and the particularities of their singing traditions blatantly ignores the protocols under which this song should be performed. But this was not written for Indigenous people, rather the mostly white community of ethnographers and musicologists. Understanding the audience Densmore wrote this for yields a troubling revelation: her insistence on describing this song in the verbiage of Western theory frames the song in a way that makes it easier for composers to use in their works. Not only does Densmore disrespect the songs she records, but she also renders them down, commodifying them in such a way that further enables settler-led musical extraction.<sup>65</sup> As a result, her scholarship is essential in understanding the settler-colonial currents that inform classical music in North America.

---

<sup>65</sup> The consequences of Densmore's ethnographic practice are not fully understood. One important example of the intergenerational harm Densmore is responsible for can be found in the 2015 work *Travels with Frances Densmore: Her Life, Work, and Legacy in Native American Studies*. In Judith Gray's chapter "An Archival Dilemma: The Densmore Cylinder Recording Speeds," she writes about how Densmore's song collections jeopardized Indigenous cultural knowledge. Shut behind the closed doors of the archive, Gray notes how the preservation efforts, designed to keep the recordings in good condition, further distorted them. She specifically notes how "When the Densmore cylinders came to the Library of Congress in the late 1940s, many of them were transferred to discs at too slow a speed" (365). As a result, "many copies of Densmore's recordings originating from Library of Congress collections reproduce songs at speeds slower than those of the original cylinders, often by a substantial amount" (365). Robin R.R. Gray, "An Archival Dilemma: The Densmore Cylinder Recording Speeds," in *Travels with Frances Densmore: Her Life, Work, and Legacy in Native American Studies*, ed. Joan M. Jensen and Michelle Wick Patterson (University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

## No. 136. "Clear the Way, I Come" (Catalogue No. 634)

Sung by BEAR EAGLE

VOICE  $\text{♩} = 112$ 

DRUM not recorded

The musical score consists of four staves of music in bass clef, 3/4 time. The melody is written on a single line with various note values and rests. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The second staff continues the melody. The third staff has a 2/4 time signature. The fourth staff returns to 3/4 time. The lyrics are:   
 Hay-ta yo wa-kan-yaj hi-bu we-lo e o hay-ta  
 a yo wa-kan-yaj hi-bu we-lo e ma-ka  
 kin mi-ta-wa éa wa-kan-yaj hi-bu we-lo e hay-ta  
 a yo o wa-kan-yaj hi-bu we-lo e - yo

## WORDS

han'ta yo.....	clear the way
wakan'yaj.....	in a sacred manner
hibu' welo'.....	I come
maka' kin.....	the earth
mita' wa.....	(is) mine
éa.....	hence
wakan'yaj.....	in a sacred manner
hibu' welo'.....	I come
han'ta yo.....	clear the way
wakan'yaj.....	in a sacred manner
hibu' welo'.....	I come

*Analysis.*—This melody is based on the minor triad A-C-E, though D and G frequently appear as accented tones. The song has a compass of 12 tones, beginning on the twelfth and descending steadily to the tonic along the tones of the second five-toned scale. It is minor in tonality, and about one-third of the intervals are minor thirds. The intonation was particularly good in this and the following song by the same singer. Three renditions were recorded, which are uniform throughout.

See plot of this melody on p. 419.

Figure 1. Description of "Clear the Way, I Come"

Salvage ethnographers were also active in Canada, which also coincided with renewed interest in the cultures of English and French settler communities. As Gordon Smith indicated in his 1989 article “Ernest Gagnon on Nationalism and Canadian Music: Folk and Native Sources,” Gagnon mostly collected French folksong around Montreal. Other collectors, most notably Marius Barbeau (1883-1969) collected folksong from wider sources. Barbeau was especially interested in Indigenous music, and recorded hundreds of songs from Huron and Salish communities.<sup>66</sup> Smith connects Gagnon’s nationalist ideas to the time he spent in Europe working with other folksong collectors.<sup>67</sup> In his approach, Gagnon echoes the 19<sup>th</sup> century European tradition of folksong collection in its similar extractive methodologies. Beverley Diamond’s deconstruction of the narratives surrounding Canadian music history in her 1994 article “Narratives in Canadian Music History” asserts that Canadian composers were more concerned with how Canadian music could be favourably represented to their European contemporaries than with how their methods impacted Indigenous peoples. As a result, the development of Canadian art music often ran over Indigenous culture, viewing it merely as another resource to be tapped for interesting musical ideas.

Indigenous scholars have only recently begun the work of righting the wrongs wrought by Barbeau and his contemporaries. Amy Parent/Noxs Ts’aawit’s article in the 2023 book *Scotland’s Transnational Heritage* describes her attempts to build a framework to repatriate the Ni’isjoohl Totem Pole from the National Museum in Edinburgh, Scotland. Parent/Ts’aawit demonstrates that the history of the theft of the totem pole is directly tied to Barbeau, acting as a representative of the Canadian government. She criticizes Barbeau’s legacy as an ethnographer

---

<sup>66</sup> Israel J. Katz, “Marius Barbeau, 1883-1969,” *Ethnomusicology* 14, no. 1 (1970): 129-142, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/850297>.

<sup>67</sup> Smith, “Ernest Gagnon,” 32.

as “powerfully undermin[ing] the Nisga’a and their efforts to assert their rights.”<sup>68</sup> Musical attempts at repatriation have also been undertaken, most notably Dylan Robinson’s repatriation of a Nisga’a mourning song from Harry Somers’ opera *Louis Riel* (1967). By taking the song out of the opera, Robinson brought the piece back to the culture from which it came, revitalizing Nisga’a musical sovereignty.

### Salvage Composing: Raminsh’s *Earth Chants*

While not much writing exists on the composer, I argue that what little we know about Raminsh’s life can help us understand where he fits in the history of the Canadian settler colonial project. Imant Raminsh was born in Latvia in 1943 and moved to Canada at the age of 5, shortly following the end of WW2. Raminsh’s homeland was occupied for the first five decades of his life: Nazi rule quickly gave way to Soviet rule; Latvia finally gained independence on September 6, 1991.<sup>69</sup> His musical training followed a similar contour as that of R. Murray Schafer: having studied at the University of Toronto, Raminsh moved to Salzburg where he was tutored in composition, violin, and conducting.<sup>70</sup> His training can be described as a synthesis of Canadian and European modes of thought, with a significant interest in the folksong tradition.<sup>71</sup> The European perspective majorly influenced Raminsh’s worldview. In a 2007 profile written by Mary Ingraham, she expands on Raminsh’s love for folk music:

---

<sup>68</sup> Amy Parent, Noxs Ts’aawit, with William Moore, Sim’oogit Duuk, “Afterword: Building Solidarity: Moving Towards the Repatriation of the House of Ni’isjoohl Totem Pole,” in *Scotland’s Transnational Heritage: Legacies of Empire and Slavery*, ed. Emma Bond and Michael Morris (Edinburgh University Press, 2023), 224. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctv32vqjgr.20>.

<sup>69</sup> Aivars Stranga, Peteris Gulyans, Arnold Spekke, Kazimierz Smogorzewski, James Bater, Romuald Misiunas, “Latvia,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, August 21, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Latvia>.

<sup>70</sup> Matthew Boutda, “Canadian Composers Interview Series with Imant Raminsh,” *Alliance for Canadian New Music Projects*, November 21, 2018, accessed March 30, 2025, <https://acnmp.ca/canadian-composers-interview-series-with-imant-raminsh/>.

<sup>71</sup> Matthew Boutda, “Canadian Composers Interview Series with Imant Raminsh.”

There is... something ‘comfortable’ in his music that even Raminsh has difficulty in explaining. He is renowned for his vocal music, particularly the choral works, and Latvian culture is strongly influenced by singing and community choirs. Folk songs are still popular in Latvia, and their uncomplicated structure and beautiful lyricism may simply have seeped into Raminsh’s musical language without notice.<sup>72</sup>

Central to Raminsh’s worldview is the notion of folksong as an elemental part of his cultural life. Another part of the interview suggests Raminsh’s supposed placelessness: Ingraham writes that “when he first began to compose, he didn’t feel the need to evoke his country of origin; everywhere he lived he had felt like an outsider.”<sup>73</sup> Much like R. Murray Schafer, Raminsh’s insecurities surrounding a lack of a cultural home to return to (other than one that could not articulate or act on its future, being administered by foreign powers) led him to seek out a point of identification that he had control over. This uniquely positioned him to create music in the service of continuing the Canadian tradition in choral music. While I focus on *Along the Flower Trail: Earth Chants* for the purposes of this project, it is crucial to consider that this work exists alongside several projects (including the *Songs of the Lights*, *Surrounded with Great Joy*, *The Great Sea*, and several others) which share Raminsh’s process of setting translated Indigenous texts that communicated a distorted Western worldview. Far from a one-off, this corpus of work points to a systemic attempt to create music in the Western style that relies on extracted text.

Imant Raminsh’s setting of collected Indigenous song texts translated into English in *Along the Flower trail: Earth Chants* reproduces the same settler colonial harm enacted by the salvage anthropologists. Central to this harm is Raminsh’s power as the composer to shape these song texts to fit the formal needs of his music. As a result, this project fulfills the worst

---

<sup>72</sup> Imant Raminsh, “Raminsh’s Cultural Influences: Latvia to Canada,” interview by Mary Ingraham, 2007, print, Accessed March 21, 2025, <https://collections.cmccanada.org/final/Portal/Composer-Showcase.aspx?component=AAIL&record=5f15f983-f7a1-4b4e-8e35-37d99ff49785>.

<sup>73</sup> Ingraham, “Raminsh’s Cultural Influences.”

characterisations of Frances Densmore and other salvage ethnographers, portraying these Indigenous perspectives as coming from a naïve and infantilized perspective, the final songs of a group of people forever confined to history. The centralized authority of the composer in this context acts as yet another mechanism in the settler-colonial project, further alienating Indigenous people from their stories, and ultimately their sovereignty.

Instead of questioning the premises on which the translation is built, Raminsh plays into the totalizing logic of the Western translation, flattening the history and worldview of Indigenous people. The original songs from which these translations are derived do not exist or are so far removed from the composition of this choral cycle that they have become totally irrelevant. This does not diminish the consequences of Raminsh's setting of these texts, but it does limit the horizons of this discussion. Without knowing exactly where these texts come from or what they were used for, I cannot suggest the intent of the composer in his settings. Instead, I focus on the assimilatory logic inherent in setting these texts as if they were mere poems, presented without context.

My concern with the choral cycle's careless parroting of Indigenous identity has a long history in Canadian culture. One example that has received much attention has been Harry Somers' use of a Nisga'a mourning song in his 1967 opera *Louis Riel*. The song has a well-established history, and its protocols are quite specific: the song is traditionally sung in mourning, particularly for the death of a chief. Somers' setting repurposes it as a Métis lullaby, on the basis that it merely sounded correct. In doing so, Somers alienated the song from its culture, its original language, and its original context. Dylan Robinson recounts his experience presenting on the opera in 2010 in *Hungry Listening*, noting the unwillingness of the audience to consider the idea of cultural appropriation as symptomatic of an "adherence to the Western

ontology of song as ‘just song’ rather than the more-than-aesthetic Indigenous ontologies of song as law, historical documentation, and medicine.”<sup>74</sup> As Colette Simonot-Maiello writes in her 2018 article “‘Decolonizing’ Riel,” the use of the mourning song in this context “collapse[s]... Canadian-ness and Indigeneity” in the service of a greater nation building effort.<sup>75</sup> Raminsh’s use of translated texts begins at this point: the assumption that Indigenous culture and custom are merely raw materials, from which the Western composer may innovate at length, regardless of the perspectives and viewpoints of the people to whom these words and songs belong.

*Along the Flower Trail: Earth Chants* is a setting of seven song texts from various Indigenous groups, with movements titled as follows: “The Lands Around My Dwelling (Eskimo),” “As My Eyes Search (Chippewa),” “War Song (Sioux),” “Love Song (Nahuatl),” “Pleasant It Looked (Winnebago),” “Upward Going (Tewa)” and “Two Dream Songs (Wintu).” A 2001/2002 recording of this work describes the genesis of the *Earth Chants*:

Raminsh has often chosen texts from Native sources that reflect attitudes of love and respect for nature. This set of seven songs, now called *Earth Chants*, was originally written in 1982 for the Vancouver Bach Choir under the title “Along the Flower Trail.” The texts are taken from English translations of originals in the Inuit, Chippewa, Sioux, Nahuatl, Winnebago, Tewa and Wintu languages.<sup>76</sup>

Raminsh sourced these English translations from John Bierhorst’s *In the Trail of the Wind*, published in 1971. Apart from the Sioux “War Song” and the Chippewa “As My Eyes Search,” there are no surviving transcriptions of the texts Raminsh uses in their original language. The

---

<sup>74</sup> Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 161.

<sup>75</sup> Colette Simonot-Maiello, “‘Decolonizing’ Riel,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 87, no. 4 (2018): 73, 10.3138/utq.87.4.09.

<sup>76</sup> Jon Washburn, “Notes on the Music,” Liner Notes for Raminsh, Imant, *Earth Chants: Music of Imant Raminsh*, Vancouver Chamber Choir, CBC Radio Orchestra, Jon Washburn, conductor, recorded September 14 & 15, 2001, and April 2 & 20, 2002, CBC Records SMCD 5219, 2002, streaming audio, accessed January 15, 2025, Naxos Music Library, 3.

texts in Bierhorst's book are taken directly from a variety of ethnographers, including Knud Rasmussen and Dorothy Demetracopoulou; Bierhorst only records the translation, not the original languages.<sup>77</sup> The one exception to this is the Sioux "War Song," comprising the third movement, that was previously discussed as a translation written by Frances Densmore.<sup>78</sup> Raminsh's understanding of these texts extends only to the labels provided by Bierhorst. Raminsh's lack of knowledge regarding any other aspect of these songs leads him to reproduce the same cultural harm committed by the salvage ethnographers. By ignoring the way these translated texts leave out crucial cultural information, Raminsh cannot avoid commodifying these texts, using them according to what he needs his music to say.<sup>79</sup>

Raminsh's setting of Indigenous texts translated into English erases the context and protocol surrounding them, reflecting the ways in which these texts were originally collected. In addition to his aesthetic choices, Raminsh's structuring of these song texts ignores their connection to Indigenous spirituality, culture, and politics, reconstituting them as 'mere' poetry which serves the desires and needs of the composer. Such a process is inevitable, owing to the fact that all Raminsh has to work from is the English translation. As a result, Raminsh's text setting reflects his understanding of the English; he reifies the poetics of the Western world.

The fifth movement, "Pleasant it Looked," is a setting of an etiological Winnebago myth recounting the creation of the world. The song text is as follows:

---

<sup>77</sup> John Bierhorst, ed., *In the Trail of the Wind: American Indian Poems and Ritual Orations* (Farrar Straus Giroux, 1971): 5, 12, 49, 62, 77, 100, 126, 133.

<sup>78</sup> It's important to note that Densmore's scholarship is suspect. The words of the song as recorded in the previous example are poor representations of the language itself; the words are more phonetic than linguistic. Very little can be inferred by examining Densmore's notes.

<sup>79</sup> While my analysis focusses on the interaction between text and music, it's important to note that Raminsh uses stereotypical rhythmic devices in his text setting. In the third movement, "Sioux War Song," Raminsh sets the text using an obvious drumbeat motif, and in "Upward Going," the sixth movement, Raminsh begins the piece using a similar motif.

Pleasant it looked,  
 this newly created world.  
 Along the entire length and breadth  
 of the earth, our grandmother,  
 extended the green reflection  
 of her covering  
 and the escaping odors  
 were pleasant to inhale.<sup>80</sup>

The choir repeats lines of text first sung by a soloist. Right from the outset, Raminsh infantilizes the narration of this text by specifying that the soprano soloist sing as a boy soprano (see fig. 2).<sup>81</sup> The movement revolves around Raminsh's development of the A Phrygian mode: The initial melodic theme is harmonized with this mode, Orientalizing the myth and rendering its rhetorical power down into an easily consumed product. Raminsh's harmonic choices, combined with the relationship between the soloist and the choir, paints a troubling picture. The effect of these compositional choices renders an image where a naïve child-like figure imparts their knowledge to a crowd of incredulous people. This representation implicitly furthers the worst arguments of salvage ethnography, suggesting a racist notion of immature and highly suggestible people, requiring an authority figure to guide them.

---

<sup>80</sup> Bierhorst, *In the Trail of the Wind*, 5.

<sup>81</sup> Imant Raminsh, *Along the Flower Trail: Earth Chants*, Unpublished manuscript, 1982: 21, <https://collections.cmccanada.org/final/Portal/Music-Library.aspx?component=AAEY&record=756e8886-6d1a-4b91-82e3-757d98a68baf>.

5. PLEASANT IT LOOKED (WINNEBAGO)

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 60$   
IMITATING A  
BOY SOPRANO

S Solo

S II

A II

PLEASANT IT LOOKED, THIS NEWLY CRE-A-TEO WORLD PLEASANT IT LOOKED, THIS PLEASANT IT LOOKED, THIS PLEASANT IT LOOKED, THIS

Figure 2: Measures 1-6 of “Pleasant It Looked (Winnebago)”

Other movements in the work show how Raminsh distorts the meaning of the text to suit his compositional purposes. The sixth movement, “Upward Going,” has unclear origins. In *In the Trail of the Wind*, John Bierhorst cites Herbert Spinden’s *Song of the Tewa* as the source of this text. Spinden describes this song as such:

This song is from the Flood Myth and is sung by Urn-tu-sendo, Walking Stick Old man, who may be described as the Tewa Adam. When the flood comes his daughters, the Blue Corn Girls are floated upward to the sky in a basket and after adventures in the Sky World are lowered again to earth by the Spider Woman.<sup>82</sup>

Absent in this description is why Urn-tu-sendo is singing this song: whether he is singing this from the perspective of his daughters or from his own perspective. Perhaps he is narrating his daughters, and this is sung by them.<sup>83</sup> Spinden’s description thus muddles the meaning of the text. Instead of giving the reader a cohesive understanding of an aspect of Tewa culture, Spinden’s continual evocation of Western concepts and ideas in the text erase the particularities

<sup>82</sup> Spinden, *Songs of the Tewa*, 120.

<sup>83</sup> For that matter, is it Uru-tu-sendo or Urn-tu-sendo? Spinden uses both spellings without distinguishing them. I leave it to the reader to determine if this is a misspelling or not.

of the Tewa worldview.<sup>84</sup> Raminsh's setting of "Upward Going" thus employs common word painting tactics. Raminsh creates a contrast between three phrases: the two juxtaposed phrases "Yonder comes the dawn" and "The Universe grows green," and the contrasting line "The road to the Underworld/Is open!" Raminsh contrasts the first two lines with the third line through a direct modulation from E minor to Eb minor. The sudden modulation casts a "shadow" on the choir, which is then augmented through the extreme drop in the bass part. This simplistic interpretation serves the aesthetic needs of the Western composer, who associates death and the underworld with titanic depth, of dark and morose harmony. This interpretation leaves no room for the particularities of the Tewa song, for any alternative meaning. What arises out of this setting is an aesthetic object that reifies Western aesthetics while erasing the specific ideas of the Indigenous text.

Once these Indigenous songs are translated into English, the composer can freely employ them for any rhetorical purpose they require. The final movement of *Earth Chants* recklessly fuses Tewa and Wintu texts together with no regard for the differences in origin, purpose, or perspective. The title of the piece, "Two Dream Songs," also implies another combination deemed necessary by the composer: the fusing of two separate Tewa Dream Songs. The setting of these two songs highlights their rhetorical contrast, a consequence of the choices made in their translation. Raminsh begins by setting the first Wintu dream song:

Where will you and I sleep?

At the down-turned jagged rim of the sky you and I will sleep.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> Spinden's description of Walking Stick Old man as the "Tewa Adam" is yet another symptom of the damage wrought by this translation; Spinden thus distinguishes this character as an imitation of a Western figure, and thus not as authentic.

<sup>85</sup> Bierhorst, ed, *In the Trail of the Wind*, 133.

Notably, Raminsh sets this first line of text according to the motif found in movement one, “The Lands Around My Dwelling”:

The lands around my dwelling  
 Are more beautiful  
 From the day  
 When it is given me to see  
 Faces I have never seen before.<sup>86</sup>

This musical reference to the first movement is a reckless move by Raminsh. By carelessly combining two radically different texts, Raminsh seems to imply that the musical structure is more important at this moment than respecting the specific cultural context of these two texts. Raminsh once again treats these texts as replaceable commodities, serving the needs of the music rather than standing on their own as cultural texts. Raminsh ends the first line on a quartal chord comprised of G#, C#, and F#. As Raminsh sets the next line, it becomes clear that the F# was a suspension. The end of the second line of text resolves into a C# minor chord. Raminsh contrasts this morose poem with an ecstatic rendition of the second Dream Song:

It is above that you and I shall go;  
 Along the Milky Way you and I shall go;  
 Along the flower trail you and I shall go;  
 Picking flowers on our way you and I shall go.<sup>87</sup>

The choir suddenly modulates into D major, dotted rhythms pick up the pace of the text, and the soprano soloist returns, gradually making their way up to a high Bb. This movement grows ever

---

<sup>86</sup> Bierhorst, *In the Trail of the Wind*, 49.

<sup>87</sup> Bierhorst, *In the Trail of the Wind*, 100.

greater, until the section gives way to a reprise of the first motif of “Upward Going” (see fig. 3).<sup>88</sup>

Figure 3: Measures 57-62 of “Two Dream Songs (Wintu)”

Understanding this inclusion in context, Raminsh matches the apparent direction of the second Dream Song (“It is above that you and I shall go”) with the upward movement of “Upward Going.” Raminsh ignores the differing contexts of both song texts, and of course he does: these texts tell him nothing of the diverse worldviews and ontologies of these people. He cannot help but base his understanding on the particularities of the English text. Through this process, the perspectives of the Tewa and the Wintu disappear, and in their place stands a caricature of their culture. The bittersweet character of this final movement is entirely an invention of the composer, achieved through the careless smashing together of wildly different texts. This movement thus stands as a monument to the Western compositional tradition, one in which texts are regarded as objects to be distorted, melded according to the composer’s wishes.

<sup>88</sup> Raminsh, *Along the Flower Trail*, 33.

Raminsh's use of texts derived from salvage ethnography fulfills the precepts of the grand narrative of Canadian music history. Raminsh's unethical use of Indigenous song texts helps to create a Canadian sound, one which is nurtured and amplified through the careless use of Indigenous culture. In so doing, Raminsh aligns himself with the settler colonial imagination, one in which Indigenous people are simultaneously historicized and rendered politically inert, converted into sites of extraction. Much like the ethnographers that collected these texts, Raminsh's setting translates these texts into commodities. Raminsh thus demonstrates how Indigenous music should be treated: by stripping them of their original context, by ignoring the voices of those to whom the songs belong, ultimately using them as raw materials in the construction of more Western music.

Recent scholarship has begun to unsettle the power dynamics attendant in settler colonial translation. Cutcha Risling Baldy's 2015 article "Coyote Is Not a Metaphor: On Decolonizing, (Re)claiming and (Re)naming 'Coyote'" examines scholarly mistranslations whereby the figure of Coyote First Person "[is falsely] compared to and identified with 'trickster' characters."<sup>89</sup> Baldy uses this mistranslation as a vehicle to discuss how imperfect translations (what he terms "colonial parallelisms," in this case the universalizing of this specific character) limit Indigenous sovereignty by metaphorizing the specifics of Indigenous culture, preventing new ways of thinking and living that might disrupt the mechanics of settler colonialism. And in "'The Songs are Alive': Bringing Frances Densmore's Recordings Back Home to Ojibwe Country," Tim Powell, in conversation with Lyz Jaakola, advocates for a renewed understanding of the

---

<sup>89</sup> Cutcha Risling Baldy, "Coyote Is Not a Metaphor: On Decolonizing, (Re)claiming and (Re)naming 'Coyote,'" *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 4, no. 1 (2015): 1.

Densmore-collected wax cylinders as what Jaakola describes as “living spiritual beings.”<sup>90</sup> “Awareness of such transformative powers,” writes Powell, “allows us to perceive more clearly what still needs to be done to decolonize archival systems of knowledge.”<sup>91</sup> This perspective is echoed by Jeremy Dutcher, a Wəlastəkwewiyik singer and composer whose compositions foreground the music of his ancestors as received through the medium of ethnographic recordings. As Dutcher recounts in “Sonic Rematriation: An Interview with Jeremy Dutcher,” his exploration of the Canadian Museum of History’s wax cylinder collection has radically changed the way he works in the music industry, valuing “process-oriented and research-focused [approaches] – as opposed to the music industry, which is more consumptive and fast-paced.”<sup>92</sup> This change in turn problematizes the traditional role of the museum, suggesting that Indigenous works housed in these institutions need to be “engaged with by [Indigenous] artists... elders... and speakers” in the service of cultural revitalization.<sup>93</sup> In the present, there is a need for a translation practice that goes against previous paradigms of translation, one that distorts itself as it translates rather than the reverse.<sup>94</sup> The next chapter is a potent example of this type of practice, one that strives for a deeper understanding rather than force its own worldview on another voice.

---

<sup>90</sup> Lyz Jaakola, “‘The Songs Are Alive’: Bringing Frances Densmore’s Recordings Back Home to Ojibwe Country,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Musical Repatriation*, ed. Frank Gunderson, Robert C. Lancefield and Bret Woods (Oxford University Press, 2018): 579, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190659806.013.32>.

<sup>91</sup> Jaakola, “‘The Songs Are Alive,’” 580.

<sup>92</sup> Jeremy Dutcher, “Sonic Rematriation: An Interview with Jeremy Dutcher,” *Acadiensis* 53, no. 1 (2024): 157-179, <https://id-erudit-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/iderudit/1116759ar>.

<sup>93</sup> Dutcher, “Sonic Rematriation,” 162.

<sup>94</sup> For a broader examination, see Lawrence Venuti’s 1995 book: Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* (Routledge, 1995).

### **Chapter 3: “It has been a beautiful Ispiciwin:” Towards Resurgence in Canadian Art Music<sup>95</sup>**

The Canadian Indigenous Classical Music Gathering began in 2019, initiated by Cree/Mennonite musician Cris Derksen.<sup>96</sup> Originally an informal space for discussion at the Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity, the program began to delve into group writing and editing.<sup>97</sup> At stake in these gatherings was the ability of Indigenous people to tell their own stories through classical music and other means. In my conversation with Melody McKiver, they emphasized the frustration they and others felt over the highly lauded Royal Winnipeg Ballet’s (RWB) staging of *Going Home Star*, a ballet premiered in October 2014 that explicitly explored the intricacies of Truth and Reconciliation through the story of a young Indigenous woman.<sup>98</sup> Neither the composer nor the storyteller was Indigenous: composer Christos Hatzis (b. 1953) is a settler working at the University of Toronto, and writer Joseph Boyden’s (b. 1966) own claims to Indigenous heritage later came under serious scrutiny.<sup>99</sup> In other words, this ballet—partly inspired by accounts of Survivors of residential schools—was effectively produced exclusively by settlers, with the profits of the project going to those same settlers.<sup>100</sup> That this project received direct funding from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission stung even more.<sup>101</sup> In

---

<sup>95</sup> Andrew Balfour, “Nagamo,” Redshift Music, Bandcamp, Accessed December 4, 2024,

<https://redshiftmusicsociety.bandcamp.com/album/nagamo>.

<sup>96</sup> “Roundtable on Indigenous Musical Sovereignty,” Orchestras Canada, accessed June 27, 2025,

<https://oc.ca/en/resource/roundtable-on-indigenous-musical-sovereignty/>.

<sup>97</sup> Much of this information comes from conversations I had with Melody McKiver, one of the signatories and drafters of the Statement of Indigenous Musical Sovereignty. My later discussion of Dylan Robinson’s framework of encounter also owes a large debt of gratitude to Prof. McKiver’s insight and suggestions.

<sup>98</sup> “Compositions: *Going Home Star: Truth and Reconciliation*,” Christos Hatzis, accessed June 27, 2025,

<https://christoshatzis.com/music/71>.

<sup>99</sup> Jorge Barrera, “Author Joseph Boyden’s shape-shifting Indigenous identity,” *APTN News*, December 23, 2016,

<https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/author-joseph-boydens-shape-shifting-indigenous-identity/>.

<sup>100</sup> Janet Smith, “Royal Winnipeg Ballet steps into painful territory with *Going Home Star*,” *The Georgia Straight*, April 6, 2016, Accessed April 10, 2025, <https://www.straight.com/arts/671651/royal-winnipeg-ballet-steps-painful-territory-going-home-star#>.

<sup>101</sup> Martha Schabas, “Winnipeg ballet *Going Home Star* puts Truth and Reconciliation in motion,” *The Globe and Mail*, January 29, 2016, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/theatre-and-performance/winnipeg-ballets-going-home-star-puts-truth-and-reconciliation-in-motion/article28458551/>.

2019, the members of the Indigenous Classical Program gathered at the Banff Centre to draft a statement asserting their cultural sovereignty over their stories, and asking settlers to reflect on how they engage with Indigenous people:

As Indigenous creators, we value our non-Indigenous collaborators and creative partners. We invite partnership across all levels (librettists, orchestrators, performers, producers, curators, artistic directors, etc.) and insist that when telling stories that are specific to Indigenous experiences that we as Indigenous creators are granted authority and full oversight on how our Indigenous communities are portrayed... As Indigenous artists, we seek to represent our peoples truthfully and in our full complexities. We too ask ourselves if we are the right peoples to tell these stories – and recognize that we as Indigenous creators do not always have the positionality to tell every Indigenous story.<sup>102</sup>

As previously discussed, avant garde composers such as R. Murray Schafer rationalised a logic of theft in the service of creating a Canadian musical tradition, a logic which was continued by the like of Imant Raminsh, Christos Hatzis, and others. As such, these Indigenous composers point a new way forward, one in which Indigenous people are empowered to tell their own stories for their own communities.

Over the last 20 years, and especially since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report in 2015, Canada has been witness to a new generation of Indigenous artists, musicians, and composers.<sup>103</sup> This is especially true in Manitoba, the site of the first of the numbered Treaties. Foremost among Indigenous artists in the province, Andrew Balfour (b. 1967) has

---

<sup>102</sup> “Indigenous Musical Sovereignty,” Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance, Accessed March 5, 2025, <https://ipaa.ca/indigenous-musical-sovereignty/>.

<sup>103</sup> It is important to note that this “phenomenon” of increased Indigenous-led musical projects, in addition to influence from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, is related to decades-long trends in Canadian arts funding, which gradually began to agitate for the increased inclusion of non-Western voices, especially Indigenous. For further reading on this topic, Parmela Attariwala’s 2013 dissertation “Tuning Into the Effects of Multiculturalism on Publicly Funded Canadian Music” and Carlyne Sumner’s 2022 dissertation “Musical Networks and Cultural Policy in Canada from 1945 to 1982” explore in depth the change in Canadian arts funding decades before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Parmela Attariwala, “Tuning Into the Effects of Multiculturalism on Publicly Funded Canadian Music,” PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2013.; Carlyne Sumner, “Musical Networks and Cultural Policy in Canada from 1945 to 1982,” PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2022.

quickly gained national recognition for his choral music that explores the intersections of Indigenous song and Anglican choral music. This chapter will examine, as a case study, Balfour's 2022 work *Nagamo*. By exploring his identity as a Survivor of the Sixties Scoop, Balfour's music balances his personal experience having grown up in an Anglican household and his later reclamation of his Indigenous identity.<sup>104</sup> Balfour's use of Anglican choral music and Indigenous text and song in this context becomes something more than a simple mixing of both traditions, but a decolonial vision for the future of Turtle Island. I argue that Balfour's fusing of Anglican chant and Indigenous soundscapes renders a vision of society marked by cooperation rather than settler violence.

I begin by discussing current decolonial music scholarship, paying special attention to Dylan Robinson's 2020 book *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*. I discuss how this scholarship does not account for reclamation, or the reclaiming of settler-originated aesthetic models and genres by Indigenous people for their own storytelling purposes. I use this notion to analyse *Nagamo*, paying attention to how Balfour's "reverse translations" articulate the various cultures that make up his identity. I conclude by discussing *musica intima*, the ensemble that premiered the piece, and speculate on ways in which the structure of the choir itself represents the themes of cooperation in *Nagamo*.

#### Dylan Robinson's Framework of Encounter

Much like Andrew Balfour's musical practice, decolonization as an ideology rejects the politics of purity, instead striving to move toward hybrid modes of existence. In the 2022 book *Indigenous Resurgence: Decolonialization and Movements for Environmental Justice*, Paul

---

<sup>104</sup> Balfour, "Nagamo," Bandcamp.

Berne Burow, Samara Brock, and Michael R. Dove provide a compelling description of how decolonization could look:

The work of decolonization operates at this nexus where different modalities of land coexist, often uneasily or in conflict with each other. Therefore, decolonization cannot simply be the rejection of one modality of land for the other, but rather follows an uneasy path to maintain a hybrid assemblage of ontologies, with all their attendant affordances and limitations.<sup>105</sup>

*Nagamo* (2022) is foundationally rooted in the interaction between settlers and Indigenous people. Crucially, Balfour's exploration of what it means to be Indigenous includes settler identities. His Indigenous roots do not ignore the Western art music he has come to love: instead, he actively uses it to further explore his identity. *Nagamo* is relevant for its refusal to accept one essentialized identity, instead exploring multiple currents of identity simultaneously. In doing so, it also refuses Dylan Robinson's musical taxonomy of encounters between Early music and Indigenous song.

Published in 2020, Dylan Robinson's *Hungry Listening* was very enthusiastically received. Along with enthusiastic reception in wider academia, the book won the Monograph Prize, the Ann Saddlemyer Award, the Best First Book Award from the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, and the Labriola Center American Indian National Book Award. In this book, Robinson attempts to delineate the borders of a new discipline he calls Indigenous Sound Studies: a way of engaging with Indigenous-led music that implicitly rejects the colonial histories present in ethnomusicology and other music disciplines. The phrase hungry listening itself describes how settler colonial attitudes toward music centre an extractive impulse, an

---

<sup>105</sup> Paul Berne Burow, Samara Brock, and Michael R. Dove, "Unsettling the Land: Indigeneity, Ontology, and Hybridity in Settler Colonialism," in *Indigenous Resurgence: Decolonialization and Movements for Environmental Justice*, ed. Jaskiran Dillon (Berghahn Books, 2022): 69, <https://doi.org/10.3167/9781800732452>.

attitude that justifies wholesale consumption of music rather than reflecting on the diverse ontologies that make up different music practices. Since 2020, scholars have tried to wrestle with the ramifications of this book. In her 2022 article “A (Global) History of What? Three Challenges in Contemporary Music History Writing,” Maria Semi considers how our ordering of music history and privileging of certain Eurocentric traditions and their ontologies essentializes other traditions. Semi asserts that our Eurocentric worldview precludes us a specific understanding of the various roles music plays in various societies. She specifically highlights how music can act as a legal document in some contexts or traditions, referencing *Delgamuukw v the Queen*, a 1997 court case in which “a judge... dismiss[ed]... it [the song] as being a mere musical performance, thus having only aesthetic but not legal value.”<sup>106</sup> Andrew W. Chung’s 2023 article “Songs of the New World and the Breath of the Planet at the Orbis Spike, 1610: Toward a Decolonial Musicology of the Anthropocene” reinterprets the Anthropocene as coinciding with the beginning of settler colonialism in the New World, suggesting a decolonial understanding of the history of music in the Anthropocene as one that intersects with anti-racist and anti-capitalist practices.<sup>107</sup> And Erin Johnson-Williams’ 2023 article “Valuing Whiteness: The Presumed Innocence of Musical Truth” advocates for a change in musicological practice aimed at deconstructing “how its own proclivity for metaphorization has long accompanied and perhaps reinforced the (predominantly white) racial makeup of [the] discipline,” opening up

---

<sup>106</sup> Maria Semi, “A (Global) History of What? Three Challenges in Contemporary Music History Writing,” *Acta Musicologica* 94, no. 2 (2022): 242, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/873275>.

<sup>107</sup> Andrew J. Chung, “Songs of the New World and the Breath of the Planet at the Orbis Spike, 1610: Toward a Decolonial Musicology of the Anthropocene,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 76, no. 1 (2023): 57–112, <https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2023.76.1.57>.

radically new forms of interpretation such as the notion of hungry listening.<sup>108</sup> *Hungry Listening* has, as a result, had an outsized impact on current musicology.

At the heart of Robinson's *Hungry Listening* is a taxonomy that risks marginalizing Indigenous participation in classical music. I focus here on how Robinson employs this taxonomy in chapter 3, "Contemporary Encounters Between Indigenous and Early Music." His musical taxonomy in Chapter 3 describes various forms of interaction between settler and Indigenous musicians, composers, and audiences. However, Robinson's exploration of the ways early music and Indigenous song encounter each other risks reifying essentialized notions of Indigenous identity. One of the sources of this troubling approach arises from Robinson's unwillingness to engage with differing aesthetic interpretations which drive various music projects, instead relying purely on his or other's subjective interpretations/listenings. In addition, Robinson's framework flatly refuses Indigenous use of Western aesthetic models in any context, from assimilation to reclamation.

Central to Robinson's critique of projects that make use of settler and Indigenous aesthetic models is the notion of the encounter. Despite clarifying that his use of the term relates primarily to the power relationships around the first century of colonial expansion, the term cannot help but flatten the complex history of settler-Indigenous relations—which has changed dramatically over the centuries with, for example, the formation of post-contact Indigenous groups such as the Métis—into an ahistorical (and rigidly racialized) vision of two separated groups with no historical experiences between them. As a result, Robinson's use of the term

---

<sup>108</sup> Erin Johnson-Williams, "Valuing Whiteness: The Presumed Innocence of Musical Truth," *Current Musicology* 109-110 (2022): 49, <https://doi.org/10.52214/cm.v109i.8729>.

encounter cannot avoid being deliberately ahistorical. Robinson's taxonomy consists of four models of musical encounter:

The first is integration, following the examples of Gabriel Sagard-Théodat's Haloet and Saul's narrative of métissage; the second is nation-to-nation music trading and reciprocal presentation, following the example of Captain James Cook's encounter with the Nuu-chah-nulth. To these two models I add a third, a model that combines the two modes of encounter, enacting a progression that begins with extended musical trading and concludes with a single composition that demonstrates integration. Finally, a fourth model avoids integration in favor of structures that allow for a coexistence of difference that refuses integration.<sup>109</sup>

Robinson's first model of encounter is "integration," a term that he critiques for how it "models forms of assimilation rather than rough aggregates of difference and sovereignty."<sup>110</sup> Robinson's first discussed case study in the framework of integration is an opera entitled *Giiwedin* (2010), co-composed by Algonquin-Anishnaabe librettist Spy Dénomme-Welch and Jewish-Hungarian composer Catherine Magowan. The opera examines the expanding conflict between settlers and Indigenous people in the years after the signing of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 through the eyes of Noodin-Kwe, "who represents seven generations of historical and traditional knowledge."<sup>111</sup> Robinson frames the work as telling an Indigenous story within the genre (and the musical idiom) of Baroque Opera, thus demonstrating an "integration". It is important to note that Robinson bases his critique of this work on "...the imagined audiences that music organizations envision, or with the public they seek to constitute through the work's beacon," along with his own perception of the work, but doesn't pay attention to the relevant musicological context of the music he studies.<sup>112</sup> Robinson's implementation of this critical

---

<sup>109</sup> Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 122-123.

<sup>110</sup> Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 117.

<sup>111</sup> "Giiwedin," *Unsettled Scores*, April 8, 2010, Accessed March 20, 2025. <https://unsettledscores.com/portfolio/giiwedin>.

<sup>112</sup> Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 125. Critical approaches similar to this one had been already discussed by Joseph Kerman back in his 1991 article "American Musicology in the 1990s." Writing about the potential for a paradigm

interpretive methodology is hampered by his lack of engagement with the deeper aspects of *Giiwedín*'s creation. In other words, Robinson's inability to grasp the reasons behind the specific musicological choices undergirding *Giiwedín* ultimately limits his powers of cultural criticism.

Robinson's critique of Spy Dénoimmé-Welch and Catherine Magowan's opera rests on the notion that their use of early music aesthetics "served to elide and undermine the disruptive potential of the narrative to unsettle the received history of violence against Indigenous people and the strength of Indigenous resistance to this violence."<sup>113</sup> He bases this critique on Joseph K. So's interview with the composers, published in the Spring 2010 edition of *The Music Scene*. In the interview, Dénoimmé-Welch and Magowan say that they wrote the work "accessibly in a way that pleases us, and others."<sup>114</sup> Robinson chooses to end his investigation there, using that interview quote as the basis for an extended discussion on the role baroque music plays as "Muzak," or pleasurable music that can distract from the deeper political aspects of a given work. Robinson treats baroque music as a discreet commodity, something that can be included and removed at will. I find it odd that Robinson did not look further at Spy Dénoimmé-Welch's writings about *Giiwedín*—in addition to his work as a librettist and composer, Spy is also a respected scholar. Had he done so, he would have uncovered a number of thematic connections between the opera and its baroque idiom. Around the same time as the So interview, Dénoimmé-

---

shift in the field of musicology, Kerman suggested that "the most fruitful grafts upon recent musicology have come not from other music disciplines; rather they have come from areas of thought outside of music, in the humanities and social sciences," thus creating a much richer context for the musical work to aid in critical interpretation. Joseph Kerman, "American Musicology in the 1990s," *The Journal of Musicology* 9, no. 2 (1991): 132, <https://doi.org/10.2307/763549>.

<sup>113</sup> Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 126.

<sup>114</sup> Joseph K. So, "Giiwedín: Aboriginal Voices in Opera," *The Music Scene*, Spring 2010, 5, <https://unsettledscores.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Giiwedín-LaScena-2010.pdf>.

Welch was interviewed by Jon Kaplan from *now*. In this interview, Dénommmé-Welch explains why he envisioned this story being set with a baroque opera aesthetic:

“The baroque element is appropriate, given that at the time of contact opera was just starting to thrive in Europe,” explains the librettist... “Much of the libretto places Noodin-Kwe at a point of personal contact with European civilization, so the connection is a clear one. For me, the baroque sound has to do with textures and colours that make an Old World connection and link the story to an older time.”<sup>115</sup>.

The baroque aesthetic is not a placeholder that “allows hungry listening to ingest Indigenous trauma,” but is thematically relevant to the plot, dramatizing Noodin-Kwe’s “first contact” with the settlers threatening to tear her family apart.<sup>116</sup> Dénommmé-Welch expands upon this idea in his 2011 dissertation “Anishnaabe-Nagamon: Decolonizing Historical Ruptures and Healing Dissonant Sounds in the Opera *Giiwedín*.” Dénommmé-Welch advances the concept of hybridity, or the combination of aesthetic/narrative forms, in a way that produces dissonance. For Dénommmé-Welch, such an approach can “possibly be an effective and strategic tool for decolonizing notions of ‘authenticity.’”<sup>117</sup> Dénommmé-Welch and Magowan’s use of baroque music in this context serves to disrupt the audience’s expectation of how this story could be told, creating a rhetorical dissonance between the aesthetic of the music and the story. As a result, Dénommmé-Welch and Magowan constitute something approaching what Dawn Avery refers to as “Indigenous modernity.” Her 2018 chapter in *Music and Modernity among First Peoples* discusses how modernity in classical music written by Indigenous peoples does not need to rely on culturally-coded Indigenous sounds, that they should instead “grapple with the question of

---

<sup>115</sup> John Kaplan, “Preview: Giiwedín,” *now*, April 7, 2010, Accessed March 5, 2025, <https://nowtoronto.com/culture/preview-giiwedín/>.

<sup>116</sup> Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 126.

<sup>117</sup> Spy Dénommmé-Welch, “Anishnaabe-Nagamon: Decolonizing Historical Ruptures and Healing Dissonant Sounds in the Opera *Giiwedín*” (PhD diss., York University, 2011), 27.

how to render Indigenous thought in musical form.”<sup>118</sup> Dénommé-Welch and Magowan’s use of baroque music in this context serves to embody an Indigenous perspective that “refuses the direct quotation of traditional music and what we might consider a hegemony or normativity of Indigenous sound worlds.”<sup>119</sup> Robinson’s assessment of the work as complicit in the digestion of Indigenous trauma by the settler imagination thus forecloses on the ability of Indigenous composers to use (or reclaim) settler originated aesthetic models for their own use.

Robinson’s framework tends to deprive Indigenous musicians and artists of their creative self-determination through his characterisation of their role in these projects. His discussion of the *Four Seasons* concert is emblematic of this tendency. This work was billed as a new perspective on Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons*, featuring re-orchestrated sections for the Chinese pipa (played by Wen Zhao), the Indian sarangi (played by Aruna Narayan), and newly added sections for Inuit throat singers Sylvia Cloutier and June Shappa.<sup>120</sup> Robinson’s description of Cloutier and Shappa’s throat singing in the work implies a lack of control over their singing tradition. Robinson contrasts their “remarkably metered” singing with “an extended two-minute solo passage for the sarangi, demonstrating the unique pitch-bending capabilities of the instrument,” aiming to demonstrate a divide between the relative importance of one musician over the others.<sup>121</sup> Robinson moves on to discuss how Cloutier and Shappa’s singing did not carry the traditional markers of Inuit throat singing, by which he means the “extreme diversity and virtuosity... of vocables” and the “improvisational vocal virtuosity... [of] exchanging vocal

---

<sup>118</sup> Dawn Ierihó:Kwats Avery, “Native Classical Music/Non:wa (Now),” in *Music and Modernity among First Peoples of North America*, ed. Victoria Lindsay Levine and Dylan Robinson (Wesleyan University Press, 2018): 218.

<sup>119</sup> Avery, “Native Classical Music,” 217-218.

<sup>120</sup> Trish Crawford, “Tafelmusik revisits The Four Seasons: A Cycle of the Sun,” *Toronto Star*, March 6, 2014, [https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/tafelmusik-revisits-the-four-seasons-a-cycle-of-the-sun/article\\_97434b92-6f90-5d73-afdb-076a7a60211f.html](https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/tafelmusik-revisits-the-four-seasons-a-cycle-of-the-sun/article_97434b92-6f90-5d73-afdb-076a7a60211f.html).

<sup>121</sup> Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 139.

motives” in competitive throat singing.<sup>122</sup> What emerges out of this critique is a troubling lack of interest in the agency of the singers themselves. By lamenting the lack of traditional markers of Inuit throat singing, Robinson risks prescribing a rigid aesthetic expectation onto these singers, foreclosing on Cloutier and Shappa’s efforts to modernize and innovate their singing tradition. When discussing the documentary made for the project, Robinson quotes Cloutier’s statements on how Canadian settler-colonialism systematically repressed Inuit cultural practices, and expresses her hope that her work can influence the next generation of Inuit people. Cloutier is motivated to spread knowledge of Inuit throat singing, not only as a musical practice but one that exists under the sovereignty of Inuit people. It is Cloutier, not Robinson nor anyone else in Tafelmusik, who is in control of her singing. Regardless of the appearance of one instance of her singing practice, her use of throat-singing is emblematic of her own cultural sovereignty. Robinson’s implicit hierarchization of each performer in the ensemble misunderstands the fundamental point of the project: rather than focussing on who has more “screentime” in the work, he should be looking at what effect is created through the cooperation of each party.

Robinson’s assertion that these projects do, in fact, end up unsettling notions of collaboration, is testament to the project’s success, not its failure. Recounting firsthand experiences listening to the remounted project in 2014, Robinson mentions how Cloutier and Beatrice Deer did not entirely fit into the overall texture. Robinson notes that “from the perspective of asserting cultural difference, one might instead assert that this lag refuses integration.”<sup>123</sup> Robinson senses the supposed dissonance between the throat singers and the rest of the ensemble but does not consider that this dissonance is only possible through the very same

---

<sup>122</sup> Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 140.

<sup>123</sup> Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 143.

cooperation that he criticizes. This dissonance, like Dénommé-Welch's notion of hybridization, advances Indigenous cultural sovereignty in a way that enthusiastically engages with other musical traditions without the power imbalances that have traditionally accompanied settler-led attempts to incorporate Indigenous musical practices.

Robinson's final case study, Dawn Avery's "Sarabande," is positioned as the optimal way for Indigenous music to coexist alongside early music practice. The 2007 work consists of Bach's Sarabande on cello, alongside "Iroquois bone rattle and hand-drum parts with Plains Indian falsetto singing, both performed by Steven Alvarez (Mescalero Apache)."<sup>124</sup> Robinson's description of the work's two aesthetic models as "occupy[ing] the same space but... not fuse[ing] together into a seamless amalgamation" misunderstands the ongoing evolution of Indigenous identity and culture.<sup>125</sup> By positioning Indigenous culture as something that refuses to engage with any other practice beyond the superficial, Robinson implicitly advocates for a return to a metaphorical Indigenous history where colonization never happened. Such a vision sidesteps the real, practical concerns of the present-day to restore Indigenous musical, cultural, and material sovereignty.

In Robinson's "Listening to the Politics of Aesthetics: Contemporary Encounters between First Nations/Inuit and Early Music Traditions" in Hoefnagels and Diamond's *Aboriginal Music in Contemporary Canada* (2012), essentially an earlier version of Robinson's third chapter of *Hungry Listening*, Robinson discusses how Balfour's 2010 project Medieval Inuit avoids "th[e] paradigm of musical inclusion through conformity to Western art music."<sup>126</sup> Robinson avoids

---

<sup>124</sup> "In Two Worlds by Dawn Avery and J.S. Bach," Bandcamp, Accessed March 20, 2025, <https://dawnavery.bandcamp.com/track/in-two-worlds-by-dawn-avery-and-j-s-bach>.

<sup>125</sup> Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 143.

<sup>126</sup> Dylan Robinson, "Listening to the Politics of Aesthetics: Contemporary Encounters between First Nations/Inuit and Early Music Traditions," in *Aboriginal Music in Contemporary Canada: Echoes and Exchanges*, ed. Anna

discussing Balfour's use of Anglican choral music, choosing instead to focus on the variety of extended techniques, which create an "otherworldly quality" in the performance.<sup>127</sup> Again, Robinson ignores the basis of this dissonance, writing that these techniques succeed *in spite* of the traditional setting, rather than *because* of it. Robinson's assessment of the work thus ignores half of the relevance of the project, treating the choral tradition as an unfortunate and unnecessary aspect of the work rather than considering how the choral idiom Balfour works with is relevant to the cultural fabric of the piece, and reflective of the composer himself.

Robinson risks devaluing the concept of reclamation as a response to Western colonialism as a viable pathway towards further Indigenous sovereignty. As part of his writing on how *Medieval Inuit* problematizes integration, Robinson describes how the concert "shift[ed] the context of the event from aesthetic engagement to a focus upon historical and present challenges facing the... Inuit performers'... communities."<sup>128</sup> As an example, Robinson notes how Madeleine Allakariallak "related her community's struggle to rebuild St Jude's Cathedral in Iqaluit, which was destroyed by arson in 2005."<sup>129</sup> As Allakariallak recounts, this building is far more than a simple church, but a "nerve centre for the community... [and] a precious part of the heritage of the Inuit people."<sup>130</sup> The politics of reconciliation in Iqaluit fall outside of the scope of this chapter, but it is necessary to note that what Allakariallak is describing is the reclamation of an institution that was once used to suppress Inuit people and their culture, into an important cultural centre. If such a symbol of Western colonialism can be claimed and transformed by the

---

Hoefnagels and Beverley Diamond (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012): 238, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780773587120-016>.

<sup>127</sup> Robinson, "Listening to the Politics of Aesthetics," 238.

<sup>128</sup> Robinson, "Listening to the Politics of Aesthetics," 239.

<sup>129</sup> Robinson, "Listening to the Politics of Aesthetics," 239.

<sup>130</sup> Robinson, "Listening to the Politics of Aesthetics," 239.

people originally harmed by it, why can't the same thing happen in music? Robinson's unwillingness to contend with this process in the music he critiques ultimately forecloses on possible futures of Indigenous sovereignty. To illustrate this, I turn now to Andrew Balfour's *Nagamo*. This project, far from a simple reinterpretation of early music, stands as a re-envisioning of settler-Indigenous relations that rejects essentialized interpretations of Indigenous culture. Ultimately, the work draws on both Indigenous and Anglican music traditions in a manner that refuses the asymmetrical power dynamics of settler colonialism. It is through this collaboration that Balfour posits a future that has fundamentally changed the organization of power in a way that ensures the continued flourishing of Indigenous people and their cultures.

#### *Nagamo*: Overview and Form

*Nagamo* can be broadly understood as a modified contrafact that replaces several early choral music texts with Indigenous texts.<sup>131</sup> The list of movements is as follows:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Title/Composer of Sourced Work</b>
"Four Directions"	Ojibway	"Te lucis ante terminum"/Thomas Tallis (1505-1585)
"Ambe Anishinaabeg"	Ojibway	"Gloria in Excelsis Deo"/Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623)
"O Lord, Make Thy Servant Elizabeth"	English	William Byrd (1540-1623)
"Pakaskitawew"	Cree	"Hear My Prayer, O Lord"/Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

---

<sup>131</sup> In the classical tradition, a contrafact is a piece of music built on a pre-existing chordal progression. For a deeper discussion of the contrafact tradition, see Robert Falck's 1979 article "Parody and Contrafactum: A Terminological Clarification": Robert Falck, "Parody and Contrafactum: A Terminological Clarification," *The Musical Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (1979): 1-21, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/741378>.

“Laudibus in Sanctis”	Latin	William Byrd (1540-1623)
“What Pow’r Art Thou” (from <i>King Arthur</i> )	English/Ojibway	Henry Purcell (1659-1695)
“Trapped in Stone”	Scots Gaelic	Andrew Balfour (b. 1967)
“Reges Tharsis”	Latin	William Byrd (1540-1623)
“Da Pacem, Domine”	Latin	Alfonso Ferrabosco (1575-1628)
“Miserere”	Latin	William Byrd (1540-1623)
“Ispiciwin”	Cree	“Drop, Drop Slow Tears”/Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)
“Omaa Biindig”	Ojibway	Andrew Balfour (b. 1967)

Andrew Balfour describes the project as such:

*Nagamo* is a reimagining of history. By taking choral music of the Elizabethan masters and other later choral music, I have reshaped the thoughts behind the texts, by changing the Latin to Ojibway or Cree perspectives. These are not direct translations of the sacred texts, rather a more Indigenous perspective of spirituality, but keeping the beauty of the polyphony intact.<sup>132</sup>

Balfour's use of the Anglican choral tradition in *Nagamo* is a perfect example of how Robinson's interpretive lens, rooted in the notion of the encounter, is unable to accurately perceive modern Indigenous-led music projects. Balfour's vision, resisting easy solutions of assimilation or integration, problematizes our notions of settler-Indigenous relationships. As a Survivor of the Sixties Scoop—a spectrum of genocidal child welfare policies from 1951-1991 which forcefully

---

<sup>132</sup> Balfour, “Nagamo,” Bandcamp.

removed Indigenous children from their homes—in which Balfour was removed from his biological family in Fisher River Cree Nation and raised by a settler family involved with the Anglican Church, Balfour’s music explores interactions between Indigenous spirituality and the Anglican choral tradition.<sup>133</sup> Balfour’s metaphorical first contact, then, should be understood as embodying settler-Indigenous relationships. In other words, few others could create this project, regardless of their compositional ability. Balfour’s unique juxtaposition of Indigenous text and Anglican choral music rejects the essentializing force of Dylan Robinson’s taxonomy, presenting a vision of Indigeneity whose cultural sovereignty exists irrespective of the varying frames it uses to communicate. This project ultimately empowers Indigenous people in their struggles against settler-colonialism, opening new possibilities for co/existence. Andrew Balfour makes his intentions regarding *Nagamo*’s use of Indigenous text and Western musical forms clear in a March 2023 interview with Classic 107:

...this is my Ispiciwin, my journey, to understand my past along with my future, of trying to understand both my language—which I don’t know—so this helps me to discover for myself. But also I think it establishes a relationship between Indigenous people that have certain rituals as well that can be actually melded with the Western world, and I think that that is part of the healing process as well because I know that part of this music is my—you know—I learned how to read music through this era, and as a little boy singing Byrd or Tallis or Gibbons, even going to England several times and understanding “this is a beautiful art form,” but let’s bring an Indigenous perspective or Indigenous lens into this music.<sup>134</sup>

Balfour is less interested in trying to resolve his cultural identity than in exulting in the juxtaposition of his multiple identities. The result is a project that can act as medicine:

I think [*Nagamo*]’s medicine, it’s healing. I also think it’s an art form in itself in terms of using Indigenous languages. None of us speak the language but we’re trying to represent

---

<sup>133</sup> Erin Hanson, “Sixties Scoop,” Indigenous Foundations, University of British Columbia, Accessed August 22, 2025, [https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/sixties\\_scoop](https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/sixties_scoop).

<sup>134</sup> Classic 107, “A different history: Andrew Balfour’s ‘NAGAMO’ presented by musica intima,” Youtube, Winnipeg, MB, March 15, 2023, 6:56-7:45, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91pIrdWYIfM>.

it as best we can. We're working with Indigenous artists across the country as part of the *Nagamo* project, along with youth choirs... we're actually spreading this medicine across the land which I think is important.<sup>135</sup>

Despite his relative inability to speak Cree (as he is a survivor of the Sixties Scoop), Balfour's identity is never brought under investigation. In other words, his status as an Indigenous person is not dependent on a specific form of literacy. It is his journey towards discovering his culture and his identity that truly matters.

### Text-setting in The Era of Reconciliation

"What Pow'r Art Thou," the fifth movement of *Nagamo*, presents a fascinating representation of settler-Indigenous relations. This work is a reinterpreted version of an aria of the same name found in Henry Purcell's *King Arthur*, with libretto by John Dryden. At this point in the semi-opera, a Cupid has decided to wake the spirit of Winter, the Cold Genius. As he wakes, he implores the Cupids around him to let him "freeze again to death," to fall back asleep.<sup>136</sup> The Cold Genius's speech is heightened through the use of mordents (or shakes).<sup>137</sup> The resulting effect is that of deep cold; the Genius cannot help but shiver. Balfour's reinterpretation involves replacing the orchestral part with the choir, singing text in Ojibway. By texturing the previous orchestral part, Balfour elevates the accompanimental character of the orchestra, unsettling the original relationship. The Purcell piece is clearly split between the soloist and the orchestra. The soloist provides the melody, and the orchestra the harmonic underpinning. While both parts are necessary for the piece to function, the melody is clearly given the most importance: the melody is the only part that is texted. The orchestra rhetorically

---

<sup>135</sup> Classic 107, "A different history," 8:06-8:34.

<sup>136</sup> John Dryden and Henry Purcell, *King Arthur or The British Worthy*, arr. John Alexander Fuller-Maitland (Boosey & Co., 1897), 56-59.

<sup>137</sup> Dryden and Purcell, *King Arthur*, 57-59.

prepares the audience for the introduction of the melody; as such, the power dynamic between the melody and the harmony is skewed in favour of the melody. This power dynamic becomes unsettled as the orchestral part becomes texted (see fig. 4).<sup>138</sup> Balfour adds Ojibway text to the choral part, totalling three words in all: Biboon, Apiitadin, and Gawaji. As described in his pronunciation guide, each word holds within them the following ideas:

In the winter (Biboon)  
 it is so cold (Apiitadin)  
 he can't move/freezes to death (Gawaji)  
 it is so cold (Apiitadin)<sup>139</sup>

The responsibility and power required to “tell this story,” then, is spread out among every member of the ensemble. Despite the seemingly harmonious exterior of the piece, the overlapping linguistic interplay is never resolved. Both parties, the soloist and the choir, recount the aria through their own lens. As a result, neither party can be said to possess the sole privilege of communicating the text. In fact, the way they communicate is completely incommensurable: the choral part communicates in one word the makeup of an entire formal section, one in which the soloist slowly sounds out the English text.

---

<sup>138</sup> Andrew Balfour, “What Pow’r Art Thou” (*musica printima*, 2022), 3-4.

<sup>139</sup> Balfour, “What Pow’r Art Thou,” 7.

## What Pow'r Art Thou

Music by Henry Purcell (1659-1695)  
Text by John Dryden

Arr. Andrew Balfour  
Ojibway text by Andrew Balfour

1 *p*  $\text{♩} = 70$  *sim.*

Soprano  
Alto

Tenor  
Bass

Bi - boo - n, Bi - boo - n, Bi - boo - n, Bi - boo - n,

5

S/A

T/B

Bi - boo - n, Bi - boo - n, Bi - boo - n, Bi - boo - n,

9 *mp*

Bar.  
Solo

S/A

T/B

What Pow'r art thou who from below hast made me

Bi - boo - n, Bi - boo - n, Bi - boo - n,

4

12 *mf*

Bar. Solo  
rise un-wil-ling-ly and slow from beds of e - ver - last - ing

S/A  
Bi - boo - n, Bi - boo - n, Bi - boo - n, Bi - boo - n,

T/B

16

Bar. Solo  
snow See'st thou  
*mf* *sim.*

S/A  
Bi - boo - n, A - pii - ta - din, A - pii - ta - din, A - pii - ta - din, A - pii - ta - din,  
*mf* *sim.*

T/B

19

Bar. Solo  
not how stiff, how stiff and won - d'rous old far, far un -

S/A  
A - pii - ta - din, A - pii - ta - din, A - pii - ta - din, A - pii - ta - din, A - pii - ta - din, A - pii - ta - din,

T/B

Figure 4: Measures 1-21 of “What Pow’r Art Thou”

Balfour's compositional voice resists essentialized notions of what Indigenous art should sound like, instead grounding his Anglican cultural experiences within his Indigenous identity. Balfour represents his dual identity directly in "Pakaskitawew." This piece is another adaptation of a Purcell choral work, "Hear my Prayer, O Lord." Balfour engages in the same formal practice as "What Pow'r Art Thou" by condensing the formal text sections in single word representations. The original Purcell work sets two discrete statements to music: "Hear my prayer, O Lord" and "And let my crying come unto thee."<sup>140</sup> In the place of the English text, Balfour employs two Cree words: Pakaskitawew and Mawihkatamowin. The viewpoint inferred by the Cree text suggests the incommensurability of the two sides of Balfour's cultural identity, specifically the difference in power dynamics as represented in both song texts. The English song text is positioned from the perspective of the supplicant. Their sorrows are directed towards their God, without the confirmation that their God is receiving their prayer. By contrast, the Cree text begins from the perspective of the Creator. The first word translates to "S/he hears her/him", and the second word translates to "crying/mourning."<sup>141</sup> The Cree text thus acts as an answer to the question posed in the English text.

As he sets the Cree text to Purcell's music, Balfour makes it clear that he is uninterested in flattening the inconsistencies in his identity. The contrasting Cree text fits into Purcell's counterpoint quite satisfyingly. The Cree text does not line up with the English text in syllable count or emphasis, yet Balfour moves the text around so that the text stress is consistent in the Cree text. Balfour's notion of reconciliation does not fall into the assimilationist ethos advanced by the government of Canada, wherein differences between settlers and Indigenous people are

---

<sup>140</sup> Henry Purcell, "Hear my Prayer, O Lord," ed. Rob Baldwin (Creative Commons License, 2010).

<sup>141</sup> Andrew Balfour, "Pakaskitawew" (musica printima, 2022), 10.

resolved within the greater hegemony of the Canadian nation state. Balfour instead emphasises the points of meeting, the places where settlers and Indigenous people can sympathize with the other's perspective. As a result, the music defines itself culturally as a mutual respect between two groups, rather than a mixing of musical styles.

This mutual respect is further entrenched in Balfour's reinterpretation of Orlando Gibbon's work "Drop, Drop Slow Tears," entitled "Ispiciwin." The English text of this work juxtaposes humankind's yearning for redemption from sin while lamenting their complicity in that sin. This juxtaposition is summed up in the final line of the text. In it, the speaker entreats God to not "let [your] eye see sin, but through my tears."<sup>142</sup> Faced with the enormity of humankind's ability to commit sin, the speaker resolves that this sin should be primarily seen through the lens of humankind's inability to change their nature. Balfour's retranslation responds to this yearning for redemption from Christian sin by evoking the smudging ceremony. For this piece, Balfour wrote two verses of text. The first verse is as follows:

Ispiciwin  
 Ispiciwin Tapwe  
 Ispiciwin Pawatawawin<sup>143</sup>

Ispiciwin is the Cree word for journey. Balfour modifies the meaning of the word with each repetition, modifying its original meaning to focus on truth (Tapwe) and dreams (Pawatawawin). The second verse describes a smudging ceremony, a ritual of cleansing with smoke from sage to purify the space in which it is performed:

Kiyanaw (Us)

---

<sup>142</sup> Orlando Gibbons, "Drop, drop, Slow Tears," ed. Noel Jones (CPDL, 2006).

<sup>143</sup> Andrew Balfour, "Ispiciwin" (musica printima, 2022), 4.

Wekimakasikan (Smudge)

Kihewataniy (Eagle feather)<sup>144</sup>

Following this verse, the first verse is repeated before a final run-through without text. What arises out of this is a spiritual journey. The choir must begin the piece “unclean,” before being rejuvenated through the smudge. The final singing of the text moves past the headspace occupied by the choir at the beginning, signaling a moving forward.

I assert that the final hummed section cements the dissonance at the heart of settler-Indigenous relations. The music, sung without text, implies the text of both the Cree and the English, without trying to resolve to either one. Balfour’s “Ispiciwin” thus re-imagines how settler and Indigenous spiritualities can interact with one another. In essence, Balfour imagines a new system of power relations where both spiritualities can co-exist and engage in dialogue without the power imbalances of colonization.

Despite appearing as another project where Indigenous and European early music are mixed (as critiqued by Dylan Robinson), *Nagamo* acts as a metaphorical celebration of both traditions, without diluting either one. Through the lens of the Anglican choral tradition, Balfour synthesises his Indigenous cultural identity into music that proudly celebrates both parts, without resolving their differences. Through this, Balfour looks towards a world where the settlers and Indigenous people can exist without settler colonialism.

#### Postscript – Performance Context of *Nagamo*: A Case Study in Material Change

The ensemble that presented this project, *musica intima*, is itself a case study on how power can be structured differently in musical practice. *Musica intima* is a choral ensemble based

---

<sup>144</sup> Andrew Balfour, “Ispiciwin,” 3.

in Vancouver, the stolen territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔl (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. Throughout their existence, they have engaged with a variety of different repertoires, including renaissance, baroque, and contemporary music. They describe themselves as “Canada’s first professional collaborative vocal group,” referring to their unique approach to choral performance.<sup>145</sup> Musica intima does not rely on a single conductor leading the choir: they instead utilize a small group of “leaders” in each voice part. While this concept is not unique to musica intima, it resonates deeply with this project and with the politics of post-TRC Canada. These leaders are the primary directors of the group, indicating entrances, tempo changes, and anything else required in the moment. However, in these performances almost everyone takes part in leading the choir. As a result, the ensemble is entirely run by the singers, for the singers. This radical redistribution of musical responsibility results in performers whose musical roles are far deeper and more nuanced than the simple recollection of musical material; they become even more responsible for the way their music is communicated, and for the ethical ramifications of their performance. Throughout the de-emphasis of hierarchical relations, this choir becomes uniquely equipped to explore what it looks like to live in a decolonial society. Ultimately, this ensemble’s focus on collaborative performance and compositional responsibility uniquely positions them to communicate Balfour’s vision of settler-Indigenous relations.

The unique performance practices of musica intima are not simply an eccentric outgrowth of the amateur choral tradition, but an embodied and materially grounded model for future reconciliation-centered musical collaborations. As part of their tour of *Nagamo*, the ensemble

---

<sup>145</sup> musica intima, “Who we are,” musica intima, Accessed March 25, 2025, <https://www.musicaintima.org/who-we-are>.

held several workshops throughout each city they visited and brought local and university groups into the performances to work with the choir. In Winnipeg, *musica intima* held a workshop from March 13-15, 2023, with the University of Manitoba Singers.<sup>146</sup> The effect of their collaborative approach was not lost on the student singers: many of them, including myself, remarked on how this approach improved their vocal health, allowed them to communicate better with their peers, and how they ultimately enjoyed the experience far more than the traditional choral structure they were used to. This experience was also noted by Jacob Gramit of *musica intima*. In a *Classic 107* interview from March 2023, Gramit described the effects of these collaborations:

...we've had wonderful times working with young singers, and I think we've reshaped their worlds in a lot of ways. It's so wonderful: people are flocking to Andrew after every workshop wanting to say how much impact this has had on them, and that's absolutely the goal we had when we set out on the adventure."<sup>147</sup>

This approach to choral performance could become a fruitful area of research, especially in how it empowers each individual singer.<sup>148</sup> In time, this model of choral performance could act as a material representation of the reconciliation process.

---

<sup>146</sup> I had the privilege of taking part in this workshop, and of performing alongside *musica intima* in the concert proper.

<sup>147</sup> *Classic 107*, "A different history," 11:58-12:16.

<sup>148</sup> Robin Jean Freeman's 2022 thesis "Learning to Listen: Collaborative Approaches to Choral Musicking" theorizes *back talk pedagogy*, a practice in which singers are empowered to discuss the music with the director in the rehearsal process: Robin Jean Freeman, "Learning to Listen: Collaborative Approaches to Choral Musicking" (PhD diss., Columbia University), 2022.

## Conclusion

As I demonstrate throughout this thesis, Canadian classical music is part of the settler colonial project in that it uses Western art music as a tool for Canadian nation building. Ultimately, it is very important to understand how the stories we tell about our communities and our country reflect this deeper understanding. This thesis focused on two contrasting case studies as examples of compositional practices that either reified or unsettled our perceived histories through the interactions between text and music, and through the politics of translation. The first case study, Imant Raminsh's *Along the Flower Trail: Earth Chants*, operated within the extractive paradigm of salvage ethnography. By setting translated Indigenous texts without proper adherence to protocols, Raminsh reified settler colonialism through his musical setting of the text and erased Indigenous ontologies embedded in these texts. By contrast, Andrew Balfour's *Nagamo* used translated English texts to communicate a holistic vision of intercommunication and Reconciliation between Indigenous people and settlers. Ultimately, these case studies show how the politics of translation and text setting model how composers view certain social relations. I turn now to consider some ways in which this research could be expanded or built upon.

Imant Raminsh is a fascinating choral composer, one whose work has been under-examined by music scholars. No one yet has published any close readings of his choral works, save some mentions in choral education circles.<sup>149</sup> Raminsh's music holds significant potential for how it interacts with Indigenous culture and art in relation to environmental themes. Several

---

<sup>149</sup> Dylan Robinson cites Raminsh's "Nootka Paddle Song" (1984) as one example for which the composer consulted Canadian ethnomusicologist Ida Halpern (1910-87), who, like Densmore, was working in the salvage paradigm. Robinson's citation hardly approaches a systematic enquiry but there is potential here for further research.

of his compositions would prove amenable to this work: the *Songs of the Lights*, the *Northwest Trilogy* (especially the “Nootka Paddle Song”), *Surrounded with Great Joy*, *The Great Sea*, and others. Expanding further on Raminsh’s text setting practices in those contexts would further reveal and problematize his settler positionality and explore his Latvian ethnic identity.

Music scholars are just beginning to write about Andrew Balfour and his work. I am certain that in the next decade, Balfour’s music will play a substantial role in our discussions of Truth and Reconciliation in classical music. There is a considerable body of work already: Balfour has composed several choral cycles, an oratorio, and an opera. A forthcoming album from Dead of Winter entitled *Nôtinikêw* centers the voice of an Indigenous veteran in WWI and explores themes of dispossession and service.<sup>150</sup> Each of these works is, despite Balfour’s traditional choral sounds, incredibly dense, involving an enormous amount of teamwork both within the ensemble and with many language and story keepers. Future studies on Balfour’s music regarding his interaction with English early music, his use of protocol, and his focus on community work are urgently needed. Luckily, he is in the prime of his career, workshoping his music (not only his compositions but the English renaissance choral music he grew with) all over Canada. It would be ideal to begin working on a preliminary survey of Balfour’s life, focussing on his works in the context of Canada’s settler-colonial history, and especially against the backdrop of the Sixties Scoop and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

R. Murray Schafer’s choral works deserve a closer look, especially at how these works intersect with his interest in music education and Canadian nationalism. I’ve struggled greatly with understanding the man (something shared with most music scholars, I’m sure). I believe

---

<sup>150</sup> I had the privilege of working together with Dead of Winter on recording this piece and saw firsthand how Balfour worked with the choir.

that his life and career align very closely to each phase of the grand narrative as conceived of in 20<sup>th</sup> century Canadian musicology. Few scholars have begun to approach a systematic examination of Schafer through a settler-colonial theoretical framework. With the amount of writing presented to us, I believe that it would be possible to explore Schafer's life, each phase of his career, through this framing. In so doing, we would construct a new narrative for Schafer, one which aligns with the settler colonial foundations of the Canadian nation state. Such a systematic historical analysis would be crucial for scholars of Canadian music to further distinguish settler colonialism in the works of other composers.

Finally, I've focussed mainly on how to further contextualize both Raminsh and Balfour, as neither are very well known in academic contexts. I believe that their compositional focus is partly to blame. As evidenced by the paucity of scholarly work on choral music in Canadian musicology, little effort has been made to apply close readings to the works of these primarily choral composers. This is a missed opportunity. Choral music is generally considered as less relevant than other staged works like the opera genre when discussing musical nationalism. This comes as no surprise: Western classical choral traditions predominantly arise out of the Christian church and are perceived as only having relevance in that sphere. Music scholars have also traditionally neglected this area due to the perception of its strong connection to amateur community singers and schoolchildren. In my home province of Manitoba, the choral tradition is hugely important. Dozens of community choirs dot the city of Winnipeg, including Mennonite church choirs, Jewish folk choirs, Queer choirs, and everything in between. Almost every community in Winnipeg has its version of at least a community choir. I believe that the idea that choral music is only relevant in amateur community settings is incorrect. Choral music is important when asking questions about nation *because* it is so connected to community and

education. I have demonstrated throughout this thesis that far from a quaint style of music, choral works deal with dense layers of signification and politics in each phase of creation: from the gathering of texts to interactions between text and music, to the work of the choir itself in performing it. More importantly, however, is its cultural significance. If we care about understanding Canadian music and its settler colonial foundations, we need to begin with that music which is most community oriented.

## Bibliography

- Apfelstadt, Hilary. "Canada's Choral Music Development." *The Choral Journal* 54, no. 8 (2014): 34-41. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23646271>.
- Attariwala, Parmela. "Tuning Into the Effects of Multiculturalism on Publicly Funded Canadian Music." PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2013.
- Balfour, Andrew. *Nagamo*. redshift music. Accessed December 4, 2024. <https://redshiftmusicsociety.bandcamp.com/album/nagamo>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Ispiciwin." Vancouver: musica printima, 2022.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Pakaskitawew." Vancouver: musica printima, 2022.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "What Pow'r Art Thou." Vancouver: musica printima, 2022.
- Barrera, Jorge. "Author Joseph Boyden's shape-shifting Indigenous identity." *APTN News*, December 23, 2016. <https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/author-joseph-boydens-shape-shifting-indigenous-identity/>.
- Berne Burow, Paul, Samara Brock, and Michael R. Dove. "Unsettling the Land: Indigeneity, Ontology, and Hybridity in Settler Colonialism." In *Indigenous Resurgence: Decolonialization and Movements for Environmental Justice*, edited by Jaskiran Dillon. Berghahn Books, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.3167/9781800732452>.
- Bierhorst, John, ed. *In the Trail of the Wind: American Indian Poems and Ritual Orations*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 1971.
- Boutda, Matthew. "Canadian Composers Interview Series with Imant Raminsh." *Alliance for Canadian New Music Projects*, November 21, 2018. Accessed March 30, 2025. <https://acnmp.ca/canadian-composers-interview-series-with-imant-raminsh/>.
- Cardinal, Harold. *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians*. M.G. Hurtig, Limited, 1969.
- Cheyfitz, Eric, and Alex Harmon. "Translation and Colonialism." In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Politics* 1<sup>st</sup> edition, edited by Jonathan Evans and Fruela Fernandez. Routledge, 2021.
- Cheyfitz, Eric. *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan*. Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Chung, Andrew J. "Songs of the New World and the Breath of the Planet at the Orbis Spike, 1610: Toward a Decolonial Musicology of the Anthropocene." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 76, no. 1 (2023): 57–112. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2023.76.1.57>.
- Classic 107. "A different history: Andrew Balfour's 'NAGAMO' presented by musica intima." Youtube, Winnipeg, MB, March 15, 2023. Video, 21:16. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91pIrdWYIfM>.

- Clifford, James. "The Others: Beyond the 'Salvage' Paradigm." *Third Text* 3, no. 6 (1989): 73-78. DOI: 10.1080/09528828908576217.
- Coulthard, Glen Sean. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. University of Minnesota Press, 2014. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt9qh3cv>.
- Crawford, Trish. "Tafelmusik revisits The Four Seasons: A Cycle of the Sun." *Toronto Star*, March 6, 2014. [https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/tafelmusik-revisits-the-four-seasons-a-cycle-of-the-sun/article\\_97434b92-6f90-5d73-afdb-076a7a60211f.html](https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/tafelmusik-revisits-the-four-seasons-a-cycle-of-the-sun/article_97434b92-6f90-5d73-afdb-076a7a60211f.html).
- Dénommé-Welch, Spy. "Anishnaabe-Nagamon: Decolonizing Historical Ruptures and Healing Dissonant Sounds in the Opera *Giiwedín*." PhD diss., York University, 2011.
- Densmore, Frances. *Teton Sioux Music*. [Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 61], Government Printing Office, 1918.
- Diamond, Beverley. "Narratives in Canadian Music History." In *Canadian Music: Issues of Hegemony and Identity*, edited by Beverley Diamond and Robert Witmer. Canadian Scholars Press, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Power of Stories: Canadian Music Scholarship's Narratives and Counter-Narratives." *Intersections: Canadian Journal of Music* 33, no. 2 (2013): 155-165. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1032701ar>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Struggling Towards Decolonization in Canadian Music Schools." *MUSICultures* 48 (2021): 366-379.
- Dowling, Sarah. *Translingual Poetics: Writing Personhood Under Settler Colonialism*. University of Iowa Press, 2018.
- Dryden, John, and Henry Purcell. *King Arthur or The British Worthy*, arranged by John Alexander Fuller-Maitland. Boosey & Co., 1897.
- Dutcher, Jeremy. "Sonic Rematriation: An Interview with Jeremy Dutcher." *Acadiensis* 53, no. 1 (2024): 157-179. <https://id-erudit-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/iderudit/1116759ar>.
- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Noble Savage." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, April 24, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/art/noble-savage>.
- Elliott, Robin. "R. Murray Schafer (1933–2021)." *Institute for Music in Canada*, Accessed June 27, 2025. <http://uoftmusicicm.ca/2021/08/16/r-murray-schafer-1933-2021/>.
- Falck, Robert. "Parody and Contrafactum: A Terminological Clarification." *The Musical Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (1979): 1-21. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/741378>.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox. Grove Press, 1967.
- Freeman, Robin Jean. "Learning to Listen: Collaborative Approaches to Choral Musicking." PhD diss., Columbia University, 2022.
- Gibbons, Orlando. "Drop, Drop, Slow Tears," edited by Noel Jones. Choral Public Domain Library, 2006.

- “Giiwedin.” *Unsettled Scores*, April 8, 2010. Accessed March 20, 2025. <https://unsettledscores.com/portfolio/giiwedin>.
- Gray, Robin R. R. “Repatriating Indigenous Cultural Heritage: What’s Reconciliation Got to Do With it?” IPinCH, March 25, 2014. <https://www.sfu.ca/ipinch/outputs/blog/repatriating-indigenous-cultural-heritage-what-s-reconciliation-got-do-it/>.
- Hanson, Erin. “Sixties Scoop.” Indigenous Foundations. University of British Columbia, Accessed August 22, 2025. [https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/sixties\\_scoop](https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/sixties_scoop).
- Hatzis, Christos. “Compositions: *Going Home Star: Truth and Reconciliation*.” Accessed June 27, 2025. <https://christoshatzis.com/music/71>.
- Ierihó:Kwats Avery, Dawn. “In Two Worlds by Dawn Avery and J.S. Bach.” Accessed March 20, 2025. <https://dawnavery.bandcamp.com/track/in-two-worlds-by-dawn-avery-and-j-s-bach>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Native Classical Music/Non:wa (Now).” In *Music and Modernity among First Peoples of North America*, edited by Victoria Lindsay Levine and Dylan Robinson. Wesleyan University Press, 2018.
- Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance. “Indigenous Musical Sovereignty.” Accessed March 5, 2025. <https://ipaa.ca/indigenous-musical-sovereignty/>.
- Jaakola, Lyz. “‘The Songs Are Alive’: Bringing Frances Densmore’s Recordings Back Home to Ojibwe Country.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Musical Repatriation*, edited by Frank Gunderson, Robert C. Lancefield and Bret Woods. Oxford University Press, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190659806.013.32>.
- Jensen, Joan M. and Michelle Wick Patterson, eds. *Travels with Frances Densmore: Her Life, Work, and Legacy in Native American Studies*. University of Nebraska Press, 2015.
- Johnson-Williams, Erin. “Valuing Whiteness: The Presumed Innocence of Musical Truth.” *Current Musicology* 109/110 (2022): 43-73. <https://doi.org/10.52214/cm.v109i.8729>.
- Kaplan, John. “Preview: Giiwedin.” *now*, April 7, 2010. Accessed March 5, 2025. <https://nowtoronto.com/culture/preview-giiwedin/>.
- Katz, Israel J. “Marius Barbeau, 1883-1969.” *Ethnomusicology* 14, no. 1 (1970): 129-142. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/850297>.
- Keillor, Elaine. “Indigenous Music as a Compositional Source: Parallels and Contrasts in Canadian and American Music.” In *Taking a Stand: Essays in Honour of John Beckwith*, edited by Timothy J. McGee. University of Toronto Press, 1995.
- Kerman, Joseph. “American Musicology in the 1990s.” *The Journal of Musicology* 9, no. 2 (1991): 131-144. <https://doi.org/10.2307/763549>.
- Kinnear, Tyler. “Echo and the Recovery of the Past in R. Murray Schafer’s *The Princess of The Stars*.” *Intersections* 38, no. 1-2 (2018): 31–56. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1071673ar>.
- McIvor, Onowa. “*ikakwiy níhiyawiyân*: I am learning [to be] Cree.” PhD diss., The University of British Columbia, 2012.

- Niranjana, Tejaswini. "Translation, Colonialism and Rise of English." *Economic and Political Weekly* 25, no. 15 (1990): 773-779. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4396163>.
- Orchestras Canada. "Roundtable on Indigenous Musical Sovereignty." Accessed June 27, 2025. <https://oc.ca/en/resource/roundtable-on-indigenous-musical-sovereignty/>.
- Parent, Amy, Nox's Ts'aawit, with William Moore, Sim'oogit Duuk. "Afterword: Building Solidarity: Moving Towards the Repatriation of the House of Ni'isjoohl Totem Pole." In *Scotland's Transnational Heritage: Legacies of Empire and Slavery*, edited by Emma Bond and Michael Morris. Edinburgh University Press, 2023. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctv32vqjgr.20>.
- Purcell, Henry. "Hear my Prayer, O Lord," edited by Rob Baldwin. Creative Commons License, 2010.
- Raminsh, Imant. *Along the Flower Trail: Earth Chants*. Unpublished manuscript, 1982. <https://collections.cmccanada.org/final/Portal/Music-Library.aspx?component=AAEY&record=756e8886-6d1a-4b91-82e3-757d98a68baf>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Raminsh's Cultural Influences: Latvia to Canada." Interview by Mary Ingraham. 2007. Print. Accessed March 21, 2025. <https://collections.cmccanada.org/final/Portal/Composer-Showcase.aspx?component=AAIL&record=5f15f983-f7a1-4b4e-8e35-37d99ff49785>.
- Reed, Trevor G. "Fair Use as Cultural Appropriation." *California Law Review* 109, no. 4 (2021): 1373-1442. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27168513>.
- Rhodes, Willard. "Densmore, Frances." *Grove Music Online*, 2001. Accessed 26 Mar. 2025. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.uml.idm.oclc.org/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000007571>.
- Risling Baldy, Cutcha. "Coyote Is Not a Metaphor: On Decolonizing, (Re)claiming and (Re)naming "Coyote"." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 4, no. 1 (2015): 1-20.
- Robinson, Dylan. "Listening to the Politics of Aesthetics: Contemporary Encounters between First Nations/Inuit and Early Music Traditions." In *Aboriginal Music in Contemporary Canada: Echoes and Exchanges*, edited by Anna Hoefnagels and Beverley Diamond. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780773587120-016>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*. University of Minnesota Press, 2020.
- Rodinson, Maxime. *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* Translated by David Thorstad. Monad Press, 1973.
- Sailata, Steven. "Inter/Nationalism from the Holy Land to the New World: Encountering Palestine in American Indian Studies." *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 1, no. 2 (2014): 125-144. 10.1353/nai.2014.a843678.
- Sayegh, Faye A. *Zionist Occupation in Palestine*. Palestine Liberation Organization, 1965.

- Schabas, Martha. "Winnipeg ballet *Going Home Star* puts Truth and Reconciliation in motion." *The Globe and Mail*, January 29, 2016. Accessed April 10, 2025.  
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/theatre-and-performance/winnipeg-ballets-going-home-star-puts-truth-and-reconciliation-in-motion/article28458551/>.
- Schafer, R. Murray. "The Limits of Nationalism in Canadian Music." *The Tamarack Review* 80, no. 18 (1961): 71-78. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_tamarack-review\\_winter-1961\\_80\\_18/page/72/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_tamarack-review_winter-1961_80_18/page/72/mode/2up).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Miniwanka: Moments of Water*. Arcana Editions, 1971.
- Semi, Maria. "A (Global) History of What? Three Challenges in Contemporary Music History Writing." *Acta Musicologica* 94, no. 2 (2022): 227-244.  
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/873275>.
- Shelleg, Assaf. *Theological Stains: Art Music and the Zionist Project*. Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Simonot-Maiello, Colette. "'Decolonizing' Riel." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 87, no. 4 (2018): 73-82. DOI: 10.3138/utq.87.4.09.
- Smith, Gordon. "Ernest Gagnon on Nationalism and Canadian Music: Folk and Native Sources." *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* 17, no. 1 (1989): 32-39.
- Smith, Janet. "Royal Winnipeg Ballet steps into painful territory with *Going Home Star*." *The Georgia Straight* April 6, 2016. Accessed April 10, 2025.  
<https://www.straight.com/arts/671651/royal-winnipeg-ballet-steps-painful-territory-going-home-star#>.
- So, Joseph K. "Giiwedín: Aboriginal Voices in Opera." *The Music Scene* (Spring 2010): 4-6.  
<https://unsettledscores.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Giiwedín-LaScena-2010.pdf>.
- Spinden, Herbert Joseph. *Songs of the Tewa*. The Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts, 1933.
- Strachan, Jeremy. "Music Inspired by Aboriginal Sources at the Canadian Music Centre." Canadian Music Centre/Centre de musique canadienne, 2005.
- Stranga, Aivars, Peteris Gulyans, Arnold Spekke, Kazimierz Smogorzewski, James Bater, Romuald Misiunas. "Latvia." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, August 21, 2025.  
<https://www.britannica.com/place/Latvia>.
- Sumner, Carolyne. "Musical Networks and Cultural Policy in Canada from 1945 to 1982." PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2022.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. Government of Canada, 2015.  
[https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2015/trc/IR4-8-2015-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/trc/IR4-8-2015-eng.pdf).
- Tuck, Eve and K. Wayne Yang. "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1-40.

- Veeraraghavan, Lee. "Dirty Ears: Hearing And Hearings In The Canadian Liberal Settler Colony." PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2017. Scholarly Commons, <https://repository.upenn.edu/handle/20.500.14332/29562>.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. Routledge, 1995.
- Veracini, Lorenzo. "Introducing." *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1-12.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Visweswaran, Kamala. *Un/common Cultures: Racism and the Rearticulation of Cultural Difference*. Duke University Press, 2010.
- Washburn, Jon. "Notes on the Music." Liner Notes for Raminsh, Imant. *Earth Chants: Music of Imant Raminsh*. Vancouver Chamber Choir, CBC Radio Orchestra, Jon Washburn, conductor. Recorded September 14 & 15, 2001, and April 2 & 20, 2002. CBC Records SMCD 5219, 2002, streaming audio. Accessed January 15, 2025. Naxos Music Library.
- Waterman, Ellen. "Patria at the Millennium." *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 6 (2001): 21-44. <https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.3138/topia.6.21>.
- "Who we are." musica intima. Accessed March 25, 2025. <https://www.musicaintima.org/who-we-are>.
- Wolfe, Patrick. "Nation and MiscegeNation: Discursive Continuity in the Post-Mabo Era." *Social Analysis* 36 (1994): 93-152.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409.