

Colloquy

Early American Music and the Construction of Race

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American Music and Racial Fantasy, Past and Present¹

RHAE LYNN BARNES and GLENDA GOODMAN

An ideology of racial difference is baked into American music history. The staggering diversity of music heard in the sixteenth through nineteenth

This colloquy began as an interdisciplinary workshop held at the University of Pennsylvania, October 11–12, 2019, sponsored by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, the University of Pennsylvania Vice Provost Office, and the School of Arts and Sciences. Two participants published their essays elsewhere: Moriah, “Greater Compass,” and Fulton, “Year of Jubilee.”

1. Our thanks to Jack Hamilton, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, Sandra Graham, Christopher J. Smith, Caitlin Rosenthal, and Katharine Gerbner for reading an early iteration of this essay.

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centuries, as waves of colonization, forced migration, enslavement, expulsion, and immigration brought different peoples into prolonged and often violent contact with each other, created lasting ideas and praxes of musical alterity. This holds true across genres and contexts. Native peoples and European colonists heard each other's music foremost as indicators of indelible difference and secondarily as signs of friendliness or danger. Enslavers perceived threats and conspiracy in African and African American singing, drumming, and dancing, and regulated against them. Belief in Euro-Americans' racial superiority found support in the pious and genteel repertoire that was popular among white citizens in the early United States. Nineteenth-century blackface minstrelsy, which promoted white supremacy and has been held up as a paragon of US musical ingenuity and US racism, reflects racialized musical fantasies, ideologies, and practices that had been coalescing for centuries.

This colloquy aims to advance the conversation about music and the construction of race by foregrounding case studies of marginalized music makers in America before the advent of recorded sound. The prominence of the color line ca. 1900 has made recognizing the diversity and fluidity of prior American racializations difficult.² Take the much-studied phenomenon of blackface minstrelsy: before the racially reductive Lost Cause narratives that erroneously reframed the Civil War as a valiant fight for states' rights (rather than the expansion of a white supremacist empire), before the legal and psychic perversions of Jim Crow, before the racialized market segmentation of the recording industry and the incomplete triumphs of the Civil Rights Movement, there was a *pan-racial* and *ethnic* minstrel culture in the sheet music, newspaper advertisements, sporting print culture, broadsheets, and commercial photography that constituted the era's mass media.³ In their live performances, minstrel troupes burlesqued in blackface, redface, and yellowface to exert social control not only by playing off against each other caricatures of Black Americans, Chinese Americans, and Indigenous peoples, but also by deploying gender-bending stereotypes while mocking Irish, German, Italian, and Jewish Americans.⁴ Recognizing minstrelsy's broader stakes

2. The color line is famously identified and analyzed in DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk*. For a recent reconsideration of this framework, see Stoeber, *Sonic Color Line*.

3. The pervasiveness of minstrelsy in mass media continued into the era of recorded sound: some of the first wax cylinder recordings were minstrel songs, released in the 1880s and 1890s; see, for example, UCSB Cylinder Audio Archive, Edison Amberol: 64, "Elks Minstrels" (1908), <http://www.library.ucsb.edu/OBJID/Cylinder1610>. On the commodification of racial stratification in US popular music, see Morrison, "Race, Blacksound," and Miller, *Segregating Sound*. Although falling outside the period considered in this colloquy, it is worth remembering that much vaudeville and sound recording also featured ethnic and religious stereotypes, including, prominently, those associated with Jewish and Irish immigrants; see Kenney, *Recorded Music*.

4. See Barnes, "Darkology"; Lane, "ImpersoNation"; and Yang, *Peculiar Afterlife*. For a rich inquiry into Chinese immigrants' contributions to American musical life, despite Exclusion, see Rao, *Chinatown Opera Theater*.

helps to reframe the horrors of the Jim Crow era as part of America's "Greater Reconstruction," a term that captures the coincident traumas of the US imperial project of westward expansion and racial exclusion, including the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), the annexation of the Kingdom of Hawai'i (1898), and the mass murder and imprisonment of Native Americans in the reservation system following the Wounded Knee Massacre (1890). A limiting framework that retrospectively views much of American culture through a Black-white binary has prohibited scholars from grappling with the truly astounding range of racialized musics produced before the twentieth century.

Dismantling the Black-white binary requires us to locate our discussion of music and race in the period prior to 1900. It also requires a geographic reorientation away from the coastal and urban United States, regions whose concert life and music publishing industries have received the lion's share of scholarly attention. This colloquy's geographic scope builds on important recent work on music and cultural history in the American West, along what is now the United States–Mexico border, the American South, and the Caribbean.⁵ Working from these regions, the essays that follow unpack myriad racial constructions by considering American music through Spanish, French, African, and Indigenous sources, languages, and lived experiences.

Racial fantasy is a productive trope that brings together the disparate conversations about race that are engaged by this colloquy. The world-building power of the racial fantasy animates much of the history and historiography of race, racial representation, music, gender, class, and sexuality in American culture. "Racial fantasy" is related to Ronald M. Radano and Philip V. Bohlman's definition of the adjacent term "racial imaginary."⁶ But whereas Radano and Bohlman emphasize ideological constructions, "fantasy" draws attention to the intersection of affect, desire, and power as expressed in both musical and embodied registers.⁷ As a tool of white supremacy and violent racism, racial fantasy pervaded the institutions and practices of American musical performance: laws, sonic conventions, set designs and costuming, and performance practices all helped to conjure an independent, white American national identity.⁸ Racialized forms of musicking admittedly provided sites for creative expression, community building, resistance, relief from the oppressive conditions of labor, joy, and pleasure. By the nineteenth century, for instance,

5. This extends the "vast early America" envisioned by a range of scholars including Claudio Saunt, Anne Farrar Hyde, Daniel K. Richter, Andrés Reséndez, Vincent Brown, and Karin Wulf. See, in particular, Gould, Zaggarri, et al., "Forum."

6. Radano and Bohlman, *Music and the Racial Imagination*, 5.

7. Thanks to Emily Owens for conversations that were germinal for the ideas explored here.

8. Eric Lott argues that understanding the ways in which white Americans' racial fantasies manifested whiteness is a "matter of the greatest consequence in the history of America's racial cultures and their material or institutional transactions": Lott, *Love and Theft*, 4. Jacqueline Rose fruitfully applies fantasy to the state, writing "there is no way of understanding political identities and destinies without letting fantasy into the frame": Rose, *States of Fantasy*, 5.

racialized and ethnicized “cheap amusements” offered essential social sustenance to the laboring working class. But as numerous cultural historians have argued, these entertainments perpetuated racist caricatures and stereotypes while fleetingly suspending the moral stigma associated with the physical delights of music.⁹ Departing from this scholarship, the aspect of racial fantasy we wish to focus on is not the escapism of popular urban amusements, performances, and nightlife that gave a brief but pleasurable reprieve from the repressive social order imposed by urban reformers and employers, as well as by both mainstream Protestant family values that centered on protecting purity, and Jewish and immigrant communities’ concerns about maintaining cultural traditions. Instead, we present racial fantasy as a framework that productively probes the pleasure, terror, joy, anxiety, humor, mourning, plotting, desire, longing, and ideas of purity or authenticity located in the musical minds and affective registers that shaped race culturally in the four centuries of intercultural encounter that preceded the twentieth century. Foregrounding the affective and ideological formations of racial fantasy invites us to peer beyond the material lives of historical actors, past where the paper trail ends, and gives scholars a tool for thinking beyond archival limitations.

Our proposal, that scholars hear American music history through the filter of racial fantasy, grows from an innovative scholarly understanding of the role of fantasy in broader racial constructions and imaginings that emerged in the 1990s. Scholars of US culture such as Philip J. Deloria, Saidiya Hartman, Walter Johnson, Eric Lott, William J. Mahar, David Roediger, Michael Rogin, Jacqueline Rose, and Shane White and Graham White, and cultural critics like Greil Marcus, tackled histories of transgressive and paradoxical racial desires using fragmentary evidence that promoted racial caricature visually, musically, and in embodied performances.¹⁰ Focusing particularly on the nineteenth century, these scholars called attention to the ways in which white masculine fantasies fostered racial constructions that superseded class and ethnicity by enacting Black, Latinx, Asian, white, and Indigenous identities. These enactments took place in daily life, on the stage, and, crucially, in the explosion of printed mass multimedia, including sheet music, the circulation of which codified visual and musical stereotypes in the period before sound and film recording.¹¹ In every part of the globe that was touched by minstrelsy, fantasies served to advance white male status. In the Americas broadly, and the United States in particular, racial fantasies helped

9. Signature examples of this scholarship include Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*; Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*; and Hunter, *To “Joy My Freedom.”* For a recent revision, see Hartman, *Wayward Lives*.

10. Deloria, *Playing Indian*; Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*; Johnson, *Soul by Soul*; Lott, *Love and Theft*; Mahar, *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask*; Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*; Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise*; Rose, *States of Fantasy*; White and White, *Stylin’*; Marcus, *Mystery Train*.

11. Other media, such as photography, newspapers, and playbills, performed the same function as sheet music in this respect; see Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*.

to fashion a white identity that contained anxieties about domination and difference by projecting desires for racial and sexual conquest and transmutation.¹²

Violence is key to racial fantasy. In the early nineteenth century, as the United States found its footing as a white nation-state on stolen land built with kidnapped labor, racial fantasy consolidated in popular culture, music, and theater as a nativist tool of mass media that aimed to subjugate, eliminate, or assimilate those who were not identified as white, all in the name of “Americanization.” Amid the overlapping forces of Indian Removal, manifest destiny, the slave market, and racial representation on the stage, music galvanized “more rarified fantasies of what it meant to be a white man.”¹³ White men could purchase fantasies not only in the form of sheet music and concert tickets, but by purchasing enslaved human beings who could be forced to perform for the rest of their lives, their musical efforts propelling forward a racist culture and political economy. Violent performances are everywhere in the historical record. Katrina Dyonne Thompson argues that long before the mass commercialization of the minstrel show, a product of the North, global tourists flocked to scenes of enslaved performance.¹⁴ (Some of those tourists included blackface superstars E. P. Christy and T. D. Rice, who stole elements of performances given by enslaved musicians.) The musical talent of kidnapped and enslaved violinist Solomon Northup, for instance, was harnessed and packaged in the human showroom to drive market value up while perpetuating the perverted fantasies that white enslavers held of themselves and of their own social mobility, benevolence, and mastery through seemingly genteel practices related to music, culture, and ownership.¹⁵ In such cases, we can recognize how the performance of racial fantasy co-constitutes *structures* of racial fantasy, with devastating real-world consequences.¹⁶

Nineteenth-century historiography has, understandably, focused on the ramifications of white domination over Black people. But the Black-white binary would have been nonsensical to denizens of prior eras. When people

12. See Lott, *Love and Theft*, 266; White and White, *Stylin'*, 91; and Roberts, *Blackface Nation*. See also Lane, *Blackface Cuba*.

13. Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 88. Emily A. Owens argues that buying fantasies of consent, dependent on the forcible sale of human beings as “affective objects,” was central to fulfilling these racial fantasies: Owens, “Fantasies of Consent,” 76. With increasing immigration and ethnic diversity, other minoritized groups were subjected to additional forms of racism, particularly between the Page Act (1875), the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), and the Johnson-Reed Act (1924), each of which limited immigration; see Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, and Lew-Williams, *Chinese Must Go*.

14. Thompson, *Ring Shout*.

15. See Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, 79, and Dubois, *Banjo*, 147–48.

16. This observation follows Eric Lott’s call not only to examine how race and racism are structured *by* fantasy, but also to interrogate the fullness of race and racism’s “structures of fantasy”: Lott, *Black Mirror*, 9.

from different regions were hurled together by colonialism, forced migration, and the slave trade, they also confronted differences in religion, living customs, grooming and dress, gender relations and child-rearing, musical practices and preferences, and literacy and record-keeping. Seeking to justify exploitative practices worldwide, Europeans and Euro-Americans conscripted these differences to build a racial ideology of which a “natural” human hierarchy was a central tenet, with those of western European descent at the top.¹⁷ On metropolitan stages, operas and plays elaborated this fantasy.¹⁸ In drawing rooms, affluent and propertied white American women and men asserted their cultural superiority by emulating European tastes.¹⁹ Yet ideas about white civilizational supremacy came into being alongside concrete evidence that Europeans’ actual power hinged on relationships with non-European allies.²⁰ These relationships were multilateral and vulnerable to reversal. When faced with the limits of what was possible by force, the fantasy of European supremacy made for an appealing ideological compensation for American settler colonists. Before there could be the nineteenth-century racial fantasy of white men’s consuming desires, the fantasy of the eighteenth century had to construct the shield that reassured them that they were the most knowledgeable and influential people on earth, whatever the evidence to the contrary. This confidence became invaluable in the nineteenth century, bolstering the belief among white performers that mastering and authentically replicating the music of “lesser races” was possible.

Paranoia and terror were building blocks of colonial racial fantasy for white settlers, who were frequently reminded just how noncompliant those they dominated and sought to dominate were.²¹ Time and again, the shared social space of settler colonialism and the plantocracy gave rise to conflict.²² Although colonists committed the most violence by far, reports of Native American attacks and Black rebellions fueled contagious conspiracies. These conspiracies demanded the clear articulation of racial difference in which music and noise were critical for drawing the spatial and cultural distinction between

17. On these hierarchies, see Painter, *History of White People*, and Wheeler, *Complexion of Race*. For a historical account of the complicated way in which race was understood on the ground, see Shoemaker, *Strange Likeness*.

18. See Bloechl, *Native American Song*, and Dillon, *New World Drama*.

19. See Goodman, *Cultivated by Hand*, and Gordon, “What Mr. Jefferson Didn’t Hear.” For a contrasting and illuminating view of the way race was constructed as part of social status, see Ramos-Kittrell, *Playing in the Cathedral*.

20. For a classic account of such intercultural reliance, see White, *Middle Ground*.

21. The sizable body of scholarship on colonial America’s rampant paranoia and conspiracy includes Lepore, *Name of War*; Lepore, *New York Burning*; Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*; Demos, *Entertaining Satan*; Demos, *Unredeemed Captive*; Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman*; Larson, *Daughters of Light*; Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*; Brown, *Reaper’s Garden*; Taylor, *Internal Enemy*; and McConville, *King’s Three Faces*.

22. See Wolfe, *Traces of History*.

“us” and “them.”²³ From drumming in the Stono Rebellion to ubiquitous reports of war whoops in frontier attacks, accounts of violence circulated by word of mouth and in print. The line between fantasy and realism was often blurred: what colonists heard, what they believed they heard, and what they believed one *could* hear all converged to create the “savage slot” by which white Americans defined themselves.²⁴

Colonialist depictions of non-European music across time periods employ language that expresses sonic alterity. In face-to-face colonial encounters, the insufficiency of notation to capture non-European music reflected the fragility and limitations of Western power and knowledge, descriptive primary sources often depicting music as indecipherable noise.²⁵ Seventeenth-century New England colonists habitually referred to the sounds of Algonquian-speaking Indians as “hideous” and their singing as hard to describe.²⁶ Encounters with a wider array of cultures did little to mitigate white listeners’ biases in the nineteenth century: Martha Noyse Williams, wife of the US commissioner at Shantou, declared that “[t]he noise of the [Chinese] performers, together with the clangor of their musical instruments” almost drove her “mad,” rendering them so culturally abnormal, so foreign, that she could not make sense of them.²⁷ Even unusually sympathetic and informed white listeners slipped into moments of incomprehension: abolitionist Lucy McKim compared the enslaved music she encountered on the Sea Islands to “the singing of birds, or the tones of the Aeolian Harp,” whose otherworldliness made it impossible to transcribe, an indictment often lobbed at nonwhite music heard in the Americas.²⁸

While the utility of racial fantasy as a hermeneutic is not new, the essays that follow provide anchoring points for this notoriously slippery idea, the tendrils of which are often figured as specters and shadows, described by scholars as haunting and looming over American cultural history and its archives.²⁹ Not only might they provide a historiography for future scholarship to interrogate, but they collectively serve as a nexus for conversations about this topic that are too often isolated within disciplinary silos. Taking up

23. For explorations of aural difference in historical sound studies, see, for example, Ochoa Gautier, *Aurality*; Smith, *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America*; and White and White, *Sounds of Slavery*.

24. The term “savage slot” comes from Trouillot, *Global Transformations*, where it is used with reference to the history of anthropology.

25. On the affordances and limitations of music notation in colonialist scenarios, see Goodman, “Sounds Heard”; Karnes, “Inventing Eastern Europe”; Lingold, “Peculiar Animations”; and Rath, “African Music.”

26. See Goodman, “But They Differ from Us.”

27. Quoted in Moon, *Yellowface*, 13. Recent English-language scholarship has taken up the question of how encounters with Chinese music influenced European discourse; see Hu, “From *Ut Re Mi*,” and Irvine, *Listening to China*.

28. Quoted in Levine, *Black Culture*, 19.

29. On such archival haunting, see Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts.”

the themes of yearning, projection, and vanquishment, these essays demonstrate how strategies of racial fantasy changed over time.

Bonnie Gordon's essay addresses the intertwined racial and colonial imaginaries that came together in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Dealing with two geocultural identities and two time periods, Gordon considers how racial difference figures in early modern European acoustemologies, and also how those acoustemologies are perpetuated today. She explores a fantastic spatiality between the Old World and the imaginative otherworldly "Somewhere" of the Americas that has always noisily threatened the established order. Writing from the urgency of the summer 2020 uprisings and in the shadow of partisan public debates about the Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* 1619 Project, she makes the explanatory power of racial fantasy patent. How else could a divisive figure such as Christopher Columbus, or a location such as Jamestown, Virginia (now a symbolic "first" for English colonization and enslavement but before that a Spanish outpost lodged in a larger matrix of colonization and enslavement), command such fierce loyalty and equally fierce calls for justice in the 2020s?³⁰ Gordon reminds us that we still live with the scars of early modern fantasies of justifiable hemispheric colonization.

As Maria Ryan discusses in her essay, the legacy of racial subjugation and fantasy also confronts researchers in the archive. An unexpected encounter with a British song in a Jamaican plantation letterbook leads Ryan to delve into the violent world of early nineteenth-century slavery. Acknowledging gendered violence in particular, she compares the experiences of two enslaved women of two hundred years ago with her own racialized and gendered objectification as a researcher. Invoking critical fabulation as a methodology, Ryan calls attention to the way knowledge about enslaved musical practices has been hampered or even suppressed as a result of the way archives themselves are often configured.

Gender and race also intersect in Candace Bailey's essay, which tackles the imbrication of genteel femininity, social position, and skin color. Her archival research into elite free Black families in the major urban slave trade hubs of the antebellum South overturns scholarly assumptions about the intersection of gender and race. Young Black women, she shows, pursued the ornamental accomplishments presumed to have been the domain of white women, demonstrating that Black women occupied the same spaces and collected and played the same music as white women. The fantasy of achieving tasteful musical accomplishments, resonant with ongoing respectability politics, was a powerful force in shaping Black gentility.

Both Bailey and David Garcia draw attention to the historical musical cultures of the American South and West, Garcia by calling attention to the

30. Columbus memorials are themselves examples of bids for higher racial status, in this case made by Italian immigrants in the nineteenth century.

contested aural and musical history of the United States–Mexico borderland. After evoking the horrifying stakes of current border politics, Garcia turns to sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to illuminate competing Indigenous, Latinx, and Anglo claims to territory and musicality. In doing so, he reimagines the collective fantasy and erasure that scholars engage in when we use terms such as “United States” and “antebellum,” both of which presume a national teleology that disguises conflict. When we take Indigenous and Latinx peoples’ music histories seriously, the musical and political landscape of the nineteenth century changes. Stop erasing those histories, and start attending to their relation to dehumanization today, urges Garcia.³¹

Presenting two recordings and an accompanying set of notes, Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr. reconsiders well-known Negro spirituals that evoke coffles and violent family separations alongside powerful hopes for escape and freedom. For Ramsey, the “stealing away” that figures prominently in spirituals was embedded in the larger “hiding tradition” that territorially remapped slavery’s carceral landscape and preserved the intergenerational transference of Black survival tactics, creating a spiritual shield of protection. If, as Bonnie Gordon writes, European racial fantasy was a “Somewhere,” racial fantasy arises in Black peoples’ ability to transport themselves musically to what poet-scholar Kevin Young terms a fantastical “Elsewhere”—a form of psychological escape to which freedom seekers might have recourse when self-emancipation is impossible.³² For European settler colonists, the Somewhere could be a destination (one that resulted, usually, in Native land dispossession); for people of African descent, the Elsewhere was intangible and manifested in many forms, invoked by an individual imagining where freedom could be possible, and also as a *collective* envisioning and willing of an alternative racial fantasy, grounded in total emancipation—one that conjured a place where freedom, equality, and self-possession was obtainable.³³ The racial fantasy of Elsewhere continues today in other fantastic forms and media.³⁴

As Caitlin Marshall reveals in her essay, the representation of Native Americans on nineteenth-century US stages projected a racial fantasy of Native erasure and replacement. Focusing on renowned actor Edwin Forrest,

31. David Garcia’s essay picks up the 1848 thread from Eric Lott, who also called attention to the importance of the US acquisition of California and the concurrent gold rush as a watershed in the history of national racial formation.

32. Young, *Grey Album*, 21. On “sonic beyondness” and transcendence in Black music, see Radano, *Lying Up a Nation*, 23. See also Graham, *Spirituals*.

33. Ned Sublette calls this “sonic marronage,” likening it to the way in which drumming allowed the enslaved to psychologically “escape, if only for a few hours”: Sublette, *World That Made New Orleans*, 283.

34. As Ebony Elizabeth Thomas argues, passageways into the fantastic are crucial to the Black cultural experience, noting that as a child during America’s crack epidemic, “my heart, mind, and soul were almost always somewhere else. In the realm of the fantastic, I found meaning, safety, catharsis—and hope. Though it eluded me, I *needed* magic”: Thomas, *Dark Fantastic*, 1.

Marshall delves into his fantastic deployment of “sonic redface,” particularly in his 1829 role-playing of the seventeenth-century Wampanoag sachem Metacom. There are clear parallels between the claims to authenticity of blackface minstrels T. D. Rice and E. P. Christy, which they alleged stemmed from studying enslaved African American performers, and their rival Forrest’s claim to have learned Native oratory from a Choctaw chief. Forrest’s alleged access to an “actual” Indian, coinciding troublingly with the Jacksonian mass Indigenous expulsion, has been taken up unquestioningly by theater scholars. Marshall brings to light both the tenuousness of this link and the larger significance of the way Forrest’s supposed racial authority patently served as a vehicle for white imperialism by subsuming the Indigenous Other.³⁵

A strategy of colonialist racial fantasy has been to declare some musics as “unrepresentable”—a strategy that never imagines that a colonized subject might talk back. How Native American musicians respond to, reject, work within, and generally complicate colonial categories of music is the subject of Sarah Eyerly and Rachel Wheeler’s essay. Drawing on their extensive and award-winning scholarship on eighteenth-century Mohican Moravian hymnody, the authors foreground how contemporary Mohican musicians confront the Indigenous erasure that has long been endemic to white racial fantasies. These musicians insist on the legitimacy of their genre-crossing music making *as* Mohican music, thereby avoiding the trap that is the search for “authentic” Mohican music.

Taken together, the approaches presented in these essays reflect recent moves toward the anticolonial and antiracist research methods, community collaboration, and greater attention to performance and listening practices that are increasingly part of the scholarly conversation.³⁶ Historical sources relating to the construction of race touch on the traumas of genocide, enslavement, physical violence both spectacular and routine, dispossession and removal, and sexual assault, as well as the more casual and recurring violence of the forced anonymity of individuals and the flattening of diverse and rich lives into crass caricatures and stereotypes.³⁷ The essays in this colloquy address the dilemmas occasioned by dealing with biased and disturbing archival sources, asking how we, as scholars, engage with a compromised historical record. Concerns about archival absences and silences, and how to attend to the absent and silenced voices, are not simply abstract or

35. Marshall extends Philip Deloria’s classic analysis of the way “[p]laying Indian offered Americans a national fantasy”: Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 185.

36. See, for example, Robinson, *Hungry Listening*; Karantonis and Robinson, *Opera Indigene*; and André, *Black Opera*. On decolonial methods more broadly, see Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

37. Violence in the historical record has received close attention from historians of slavery; see, for example, Rosenthal, *Accounting for Slavery*.

metaphorical.³⁸ What has been lost or rendered fragmentary, through shipwreck, fire, pandemic, war, pillage, the illegality of literacy for some groups and the lack of formal education for others, pales when compared to that which was never documented. Moreover, the establishment of archives, the provenance of their holdings, decisions about sustainability and accessibility, collecting priorities, cataloging protocols, the material preservation of ephemera, searchability, and bibliographical metadata all render some histories more tellable than others, a tendency that the essays in this colloquy seek to mitigate.³⁹ Seeking out evidence in hitherto ignored written sources and ephemera, and reading for clues about the musical past along and against the archival grain, the authors in this colloquy excavate and reconstruct diverse musical priorities, conditions, and subjectivities.

Future scholarship that carries forward the impetus for this colloquy might help us to hear what transpired in transgressive, creolized, and syncretized spaces—the music of the unknown and unnamed in Congo Squares; the gathering voices in the night *behind* the California missions; the entertainments in street parades and markets; the labor songs that kept pace in the fields, on docks, on ship decks, on railroads, in mines; and the riots, wars, and protests that were spaces for more fluid moments of expression. These are music histories that are concealed inside or alongside the rigid hierarchies of class and race that are the stuff of global capitalism and commercialized sound. They are histories that remain to be told.

Columbus as Upbeat

BONNIE GORDON

The long summer of 2020 saw a global pandemic, protests, and a racial reckoning across the United States. In library basements, books cataloged in the M2s (musical monuments) got dustier than usual. Concert halls remained tacet because the physical intimacy of performance might be deadly. And statues tumbled, especially of Christopher Columbus. In Chicago, city workers used a crane to dismantle him as a small crowd cheered. In St. Paul, Minnesota, protesters tied ropes around his neck and pulled him off his pedestal. In Richmond, Virginia, protesters toppled an eight-foot Columbus, set him on fire, and threw him in the river. In Boston, they cut off his head.

Columbus did not get much American press until the three hundredth anniversary of his voyage. On October 12, 1792, in the first official celebration of Columbus Day, the Italian who had worked for the Spanish sailed

38. The classic text on archival silence is Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*. See also Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*; Goodman, “Joseph Johnson’s Lost Gamuts”; and Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts.”

39. This is the subject of robust and ongoing conversations among librarians and archivists; see Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*; Eichhorn, *Archival Turn*; Helton, “On Decimals”; Roberto, *Radical Cataloging*; and Roy, Bhasin, and Arriaga, *Tribal Libraries*.

into the American imaginary as a nationalist symbol. Former British subjects celebrated Columbus as an embodiment of the “New World,” and as decidedly not British. In the quest for a national identity and culture, citizens of the new nation found in the figure of Columbus a symbol of empire. Over the course of the next century, writers, artists, and leaders increasingly painted a picture of an idealized explorer and romantic hero who stood for manifest destiny. And by 1892, he was an Enlightenment hero with the Chicago World’s Fair named after him.

In the century of Columbus’s American ascendance, the links between music and empire were forged. European and British elites heard their written cultivated music as radically different from the music of people from faraway lands. In Gary Tomlinson’s words,

Across the century from 1750 to 1850 music lodged itself at the heart of a discourse that pried Europe and its histories apart from non-European lives and cultures. Perched at the apex of the new aesthetics, it came to function as a kind of limit-case of European uniqueness in world history and an affirmation of the gap, within the cultural formation of modernity, between history and anthropology.⁴⁰

In the process of creating an aesthetic rooted in western European supremacy, and with Jean-Jacques Rousseau leading the way, thinkers located voice and song as particularly human and noise as not.

This essay moves from the historical Columbus to Jamestown and back in order to highlight multiple zones of contact and to emphasize sound as a part of the contested performance of early American identity. I argue that early American acoustemologies of race reverberated with premodern climatic taxonomies and texts passed down from the classical Greek and Roman tradition. It might seem jarring to begin an essay about cosmologies of race in Columbus’s voyages and Jamestown with an allusion to the current moment. But it is a deliberate call to hear contemporary echoes of the deep past and to pivot from tendencies to read Jamestown through the lens of the Enlightenment and emergent democracy toward reading for the premodern roots. My reading highlights the systems of thought and practice that produced capitalism, slavery, and settler colonialisms and amplifies sound as instrumental in reproducing hierarchies of humanity.

Columbus is seen in this essay as a passenger on a sea change and as an upbeat to the early American republic. The sixteenth century saw the dethroning of the Mediterranean as a center of Western culture and the emergence of the Atlantic slave trade and the Protestant Reformation. Aníbal Quijano explains that, over the course of the sixteenth century,

two historical processes associated in the production of that space/time converged and established the two fundamental axes of the new model of power.

40. Tomlinson, “Musicology, Anthropology, History,” 32.

One was the codification of the differences between conquerors and conquered in the idea of “race,” a supposedly different biological structure that placed some in a natural situation of inferiority to the others. The conquistadors assumed this idea as the constitutive.⁴¹

Understanding the entanglement of music and race in early America requires querying racialized thinking prior to the seventeenth century, which was conditioned by European myths. Enrique Dussel locates the birth of modernity in 1492, the year of Columbus’s voyage, and “with it the myth of a special kind of sacrificial violence which eventually eclipsed whatever was non-European.”⁴² In the premodern and Enlightenment imagination, the north was the frigid zone of people possessed of character strength; southern Europeans were characterized by moderation, and capable of thought and self-governance; and the torrid zone, which included the Americas, was full of lusty savages. By the sixteenth century the almost-people and othered creatures of the torrid zone occupied a non-normative place and shored up the hegemonic normativity of the European explorer. And Western aesthetic practices had tended to deny the region history and philosophy, and often humanity itself.⁴³

To highlight the Mediterranean inflection of early America is to answer Lisa Lowe’s call to remember the intimate connections between Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas, and especially between settler colonialism and the transatlantic African slave trade.⁴⁴ And it is to take seriously Sylvia Wynter’s reading of 1492.⁴⁵ For her, Columbus was instrumental in a system of knowledge that put man rather than God at the helm, and that marked women, Black people, Brown people, children, disabled people, and queer people as inferior. Man, as in white, able-bodied, Christian men, was “us” and everyone else was “them.”

Listening to Jamestown necessarily amplifies the role of sound in the hemispheric history of early America and indeed in the invention of America as a cultural and geographical construct.⁴⁶ So, while this essay is not an attempt to rewrite Virginian history, there is an important corrective embedded within it. American origin stories have tended to highlight Jamestown as the first English settlement and as the birthplace of American democracy. This narrative evades the imposition of Mediterranean encounters on the Atlantic world. And it eschews the ways in which English settlers drew on precedents set by the Spanish and Portuguese conquests in the Caribbean.

41. Quijano, “Coloniality of Power,” 533.

42. Dussel, *Invention of the Americas*, 12.

43. The literature on the torrid zone is vast; see, for instance, Nussbaum, *Limits of the Human*; Gómez, *Tropics of Empire*; and Quijano, “Coloniality of Power.” On aesthetics and empire, see Erlmann, *Reason and Resonance*, and Radano and Olaniyan, *Audible Empire*.

44. Lowe, *Intimacies of Four Continents*.

45. Wynter, “1492: A New World View.”

46. See Levander and Levine, *Hemispheric American Studies*.

They saw Virginia as a tool in their campaigns against the Spanish. Jamestown and Virginia were occupied first by Spanish Jesuits at a moment of transnational convergence, a crossroads of time and space. Sixteenth-century Virginia was part of Spanish territory and the Catholic empire, while seventeenth-century Virginia was part of England and the Protestant empire.

Torrid Columbus

Christopher Columbus articulated himself as a cross between a fifteenth-century Aeneas and an agent of the Catholic Spanish king's manifest drive for a universal empire. The voyages—literary, performative, and imagined even as they happened—now exist as a palimpsest: a journal vanished, recovered, and translated. The stories echo Ovid, Pliny, and the Bible as much as they refract what Columbus saw or heard. And they came from Columbus's sense that he was going south toward the torrid zone, a zone of monsters and marvels, populated by people, animals, and vegetation that he described as “like us” or “not like us.” On February 15, 1493, he penned a letter that described Hispaniola as marvelous, going on to say, “You can't believe the seaports without seeing them.”⁴⁷ A marvel was something arresting, something on the cusp of the real and the imaginary, taking the onlooker and listener beyond the ordinary. To Columbus, the zone he entered was not a new world but rather an “other world,” or “otro mundo.”⁴⁸ “Otro mundo” means something like a place outside of the known inhabited lands.

Columbus inherited his three-zoned world from ancient thinkers. Aristotle and Pliny located the torrid zone between the Tropic of Capricorn and the Tropic of Cancer. Writing about Columbus, Nicolás Wey Gómez suggests that naturalized imaginings of the South already “enabled [Columbus] to believe not only that he was about to venture into the most sizable and wealthiest lands of the globe, but also that the peoples he would encounter in those latitudes were bound to possess a nature—ranging from ‘childish’ to ‘monstrous’—that seemed to justify rendering them Europe's subjects or slaves.”⁴⁹ Gómez explains that

the geographical distinction between the higher latitudes of Mediterranean Europe and the lower latitudes of the Bahamas and Caribbean basin was to prove of enormous political consequence for the peoples Columbus invented. Columbus certainly regarded this distinction as crucial grounds for subjecting and enslaving the peoples of the Indies. Such a distinction also

47. Colón, *Textos y documentos completos*, 207: “La Spañola es maravilla”; “Los pouertos de la mar, aquí no havría crehencia sin vista.” This letter was one of four copies Columbus wrote describing the New World. It exists in versions addressed to Rafael Sánchez and Luis de Santágal.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Gómez, *Tropics of Empire*, xiv.

crucially anticipated imperial Spain's efforts to establish the lawfulness of its occupation of the Americas.⁵⁰

And Columbus inherited a particularly Mediterranean mode of dehumanization that would be translated to the Atlantic slave trade. On October 14, 1492, he captured seven Taíno Indians to serve as his slaves and translators.⁵¹ But it was the Caribs, not the Taíno, who for Columbus matched most clearly the “monstrous men” he knew he would find. In accounts of his four voyages, the admiral described Carib Indians who took young male prisoners, castrated them, made them servants, fattened them up, and then ate them. In the mind of Columbus, castration produced ideal slaves and then food. The practice of castration, together with sodomy and cannibalism, marked the Caribs as different from the peaceful Arawaks, and it marked them as the ultimate nonhumans.

Indigeneity became subhuman or pre-human. In 1494, Columbus sent 30,000 pesos of gold and twenty-seven enslaved Native Americans to Spain. The idea was to teach them Spanish, make them translators, and baptize them. In 1495, he sent another three hundred enslaved Native Americans and thus provoked complicated debates about the ethics of enslaving humans who might be Christianized and, by extension, about who counted as human.⁵² Columbus insured that Native people were not potential Christians and were thus fit for enslavement.⁵³

Just over a century later in Virginia, the Atlantic slave trade, racialized slavery, plantation mass production, and European conquest converged. In Sylvia Wynter's words,

in the Black August of 1619, the Virginia Company purchased twenty abducted Africans; they created new laws permitting land held in common to become individualized private property for previously indentured white servants. Thus, Jamestown was sustained by a plantation triad: the invention of Black people as property, the invention of Indigenous land as claimable private property, and the invention of white people as property owners.⁵⁴

Torrid Tones

Technically, Virginia was far south for the English. The latitude shift from Glasgow to Jamestown is almost the same as that from Madrid to Hispaniola, and the vegetation in coastal Virginia looks almost as Caribbean as it

50. *Ibid.*, 53.

51. My thoughts on Columbus are deeply influenced by conversations with Anna Brickhouse. On Columbus and translation, see Brickhouse, “Mistranslation, Unsettlement, La Navidad.”

52. See Palencia-Roth, “Cannibal Law of 1503,” and Schlag, “Cannibal Moves.”

53. See Nader, “Desperate Men, Questionable Acts”; Herrmann, *To Feast on Us*; and Soule, “From Africa to the Ocean Sea.”

54. Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality,” 257.

does European. Moreover, when the English settled Jamestown, it was already “somewhere else,” and it was a somewhere else imagined and heard through tropes that had played out across the Mediterranean. John Smith, who had come from a tour of duty in Turkey, made clear the connections between the otherness and subjugation of southern Europe and the Far East and the subjugation of Virginia: “The Warres in Europe, Asia and Africa taught me how to subdue the wilde Savages in Virginia, England and America.”⁵⁵ The 1606 Charter of Virginia issued by King James I referred to “such people as yet live in darkness and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God” and to “[bringing] the infidels and savages living in those parts to human civility and to a settled and quiet government.”⁵⁶

Virginia was also a place whose sometimes violent climate terrified Europeans with its naturalized noise. Even the crossing came with a terrifying noise in the form of hurricanes, which were features of the Atlantic world. When John Smith and his fleet encountered an Atlantic hurricane, he used the words of first-century-BCE Roman poet Lucretius to describe it; it is a mediated hearing that reminds historians that colonizing writers cannot be taken at their word:

When ratling Thunder ran along the Clouds;
Did not the Saylers poore, and Masters proud
A terror feele as strucke with feare of God?
Did not their trembling joynts then dread his rod?
Least for foule deeds and black mouth'd blasphemies,
The rufull time be come that vengeance cryes.⁵⁷

John Smith heard the storms through a geographic climatic hierarchy that sounded a lot like the one Columbus inherited from ancient Greek and Roman thought.

Jamestown was, like Columbus's voyage, an assemblage of texts and places. Translator and traveler George Sandys, who served as treasurer to the Virginia Company and infused his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* with marvels from the other world, identified the Atlantic coast as the dwelling place of hermaphrodites: “there are many at this day in Egypt, but most frequent in Florida; who are so hated by the rest of the Indians, that they use them as beasts to carry their burdens; to suck their wounds and to attend on the diseased.”⁵⁸ Rebecca Ann Bach points out that John Smith almost immediately transcribed the dances of Indian women into English theatrical texts. A 1623 broadside advertising his *General Histories of Virginia* tells readers that they can, in book 3, read of Pocahontas entertaining him with

55. Smith, *Advertisements*, 1.

56. First Charter of Virginia (April 6, 1606), National Humanities Institute website, last updated 1998, <http://www.nhinet.org/ccs/docs/va-1.htm> (text modernized).

57. Smith, *Complete Works*, 2:220.

58. Sandys, *Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished*, 161 (text modernized).

a masque.⁵⁹ Smith's descriptions of Native rituals echo Dante's entrance to the inferno, which starts with an aural assault on the senses—sounds that might or might not be human, sounds that might come from souls:

Now sighs, loud wailing, lamentation
resounded through the starless air,
so that I too began to weep.
Unfamiliar tongues, horrendous accents,
words of suffering, cries of rage, voices
loud and faint, the sound of slapping hands—
all these made a tumult, always whirling
in that black and timeless air,
as sand is swirled in a whirlwind.⁶⁰

Smith described the music of the Indians he called Powhatans in terms that sound almost like Christian rituals but not quite. As Olivia Bloechl argues, Smith compared Powhatan rituals to Catholic rites in an account that he first penned in 1608. He reused it multiple times, describing them as scary, devilish, and disordered.⁶¹ In his descriptions, rattles, drums, screams, and cries sound more like Dante than what was imagined as music. The sounds were hellish, furious, out of control. And for him, they resembled Catholic music more than Protestant music. In *A Map of Virginia* (1612), Smith wrote,

For their music they use a thick cane, on which they pipe as on a Recorder. For their warres, they have a great deep platter of wood. They cover the mouth thereof with a skin, at each corner they tie a walnut, which meeting on the backside near the bottom with a small rope they stitch them together, till it be so tough and stiff that they may beat upon it as upon a drum. But their chief instruments are Rattels made of small gourds or pumpkin shells. Of these they have Bass, Tenor, Countertenor, Meane and Treble. These mingled with their voices sometimes 20 or 30 together, make such a terrible noise as would rather affright than delight any man. If any great commander arrive at the habitation of a *Werowance*, they spread a mat as the Turks do a carpet, for him to sit upon. Upon another right opposite they sit themselves. Then do all with a tunable voice of shouting bid him welcome. After this do 2 or more of their chiefest men make an oration, testifying their love. Which they do with such vehemency and so great passions, that they sweat till they drop, and are so out of breath they can scarce speak.⁶²

Smith expressed dread and wonder, hearing the Natives as outside of musical and religious systems. On the one hand, he viewed their gourds as the basic tools of music, four-part harmony accompanied by instruments.

59. Bach, *Colonial Transformations*, 193.

60. Dante, *Inferno*, canto 3, lines 22–30.

61. Bloechl, "Protestant Imperialism."

62. Smith, *Map of Virginia*, 28 (text modernized).

On the other, he highlighted the clamor and noise of it all. The rattle was a long-standing sign of the demonic, hollow and echoing. The whole is not that different from Dante's inferno. Smith's now much-studied descriptions of Indigenous sounds as noise say more about his imaginings of Native sounds than about Indigenous voices. For him, these sounds stood outside of Western harmony and outside of the naturalized harmony of Christian prayer.⁶³ In theoretical terms, they made noise because they existed outside the possibility of rational thought, the possibility of having a human soul, and, in the end, the possibility of being human.

Anti-Orpheus

Columbus believed he was an Orpheus. Arriving in Trinidad, he tried everything to induce the Indians to respond to him, including flashing shiny objects. He described a process of seduction, persuading the Indians to come closer each day. Eventually he brought out tambourines, hoping that they would respond with dancing and interest:

So I had a tambourine brought up to the poop and played, and made some of the young men dance, imagining that the Indians would draw closer to see the festivities. On observing the music and dancing, however, they dropped their oars, and picked up their bows, and strung them. Each one seized his shield, and they began to shoot arrows at us. I immediately stopped the music and dancing and ordered some crossbows to be fired. The Indians then put off, making for another caravel, and hastily sheltered under its stern.⁶⁴

The music thus absolutely failed to "tame the savages" and instead incited war. The Indians read the tambourine playing as a hostile act. Patricia Akhimie cites a similar episode of a century later in which English settlers arriving in Virginia misinterpreted a warning, hearing a song as a welcome when in fact it was the start of an attack:

Music occasions miscommunication on multiple levels, both in the moment of encounter and exchange as well as in the record and rehearsal of the moment in printed prose. The episode as recounted reflects the unfounded certainty that English travelers and colonists will always know what music means, that music signals the universal language of entertainment, that the very presence of song counteracts any perceived threat.⁶⁵

In the year of Jamestown's founding, Francis Bacon penned an essay titled "Orpheus; or Philosophy" that positioned Orpheus as the founder of civilization because he could tame the wild beasts. Sixteen years later, he wrote "Of Plantations," an essay that presented a logic for British expansion

63. This argument is deeply indebted to Bloechl, *Native American Song*.

64. Columbus, *Four Voyages*, 210.

65. Akhimie, "Performance in the Periphery," 81.

and imperialism: by “plantation,” he meant “colony.” In it, he claimed a politics that avoided extraction and displacement: “I like a plantation in a pure soil; that is, where people are not displaced to the end to plant in others. For else it is rather an extirpation than a plantation.”⁶⁶ Bacon went on to say,

If you plant where savages are, do not only entertain them, with trifles and gingles, but use them justly and graciously, with sufficient guard nevertheless; and do not win their favor by helping them to invade their enemies, but for their defense it is not amiss; and send oft of them, over to the country that plants, that they may see a better condition than their own, and commend it when they return.⁶⁷

Bacon did, however, believe deeply in the power of human over nature and in an empire that was political and philosophical. He also understood sound as the most affective sensory experience: “so it is *Sound* alone, that doth immediately, and incorporeally, affect most.”⁶⁸

For Bacon, civil philosophy

teaches the peoples to assemble and unite and take upon them the yoke of laws and submit to authority, and forget their ungoverned appetites, in listening and conforming to precepts and discipline; whereupon soon follows the building of houses, the founding of cities, the planting of fields and gardens with trees; insomuch that the stones and the woods are not unfitly said to leave their places and come about her.⁶⁹

Orpheus was the prototype for this:

[Orpheus] drew to him all kinds of wild beasts, in such manner that putting off their several natures, forgetting all their quarrels and ferocity, no longer driven by the stings and furies of lust, no longer caring to satisfy their hunger or to hunt their prey, they all stood about him gently and sociably, as in a theatre, listening only to the concords of his lyre. . . . The singing of Orpheus is of two kinds; one to propitiate the infernal powers, the other to draw the wild beasts and the woods. The former may be best understood as referring to natural philosophy; the latter to philosophy moral and civil.⁷⁰

Bacon’s words also echo the language used by colonizers to subjugate and eradicate Indigenous peoples.⁷¹ In 1608, George Percy wrote of Jamestown,

66. Bacon, “Of Plantations,” 85.

67. *Ibid.*, 87.

68. Bacon, *Sylva sylvarum*, 177.

69. Bacon, “Orpheus; or Philosophy,” 722.

70. *Ibid.*, 721.

71. For a sound studies approach in a related context, see Ochoa Gautier, *Aurality*. For a related approach to sound in the early modern world, see Smith, *Acoustic World*. Richard Rath has written extensively on early Virginia and sound; see, for instance, Rath, *How Early America Sounded*.

At night, when we were going abroad, there came the Savages creeping upon all fours, from the Hills, like Bears, with their Bows in their mouths, [who] charged us very desperately in the faces, hurt Captain Gabrill Archer in both his hands, and a sailor in two places of the body very dangerous. After they had spent their Arrows, and felt the sharpness of our shot, they retired into the Woods with a great noise, and so left us.⁷²

In Percy's narrative, the settlers eventually conquer and quiet the Natives.

Orpheus's entrance to and momentary conquest of the underworld was a kind of dominance, the dominance of nature that is part and parcel of the colonial project. Orphic sound leads to civilization and conquest. Bacon was not the first to make Orpheus into an empire maker. Over two centuries earlier, Boccaccio had written that Orpheus "arrests the flow of rivers, that is, unstable and lustful men who are destined to flow into the sea of unending bitterness unless the powerful pronouncements of eloquence confirm them in manly virtue. He tames fierce animals, that is, bloodthirsty men, who can often be restored to mildness and humanity only by some wise man's eloquence."⁷³

But just as Bacon turned Orpheus into a master of colonial subjugation, when Orpheus met his demise, so too did civilization. Orpheus works his musical magic mostly on creatures and things that stand outside the normal realm of civilized society: women, animals, savages, plants, rocks. When he plays, he tames them, captures them, seduces them into the body politic:

And all this went on for some time with happy success and great admiration; till at last certain Thracian women, under the stimulation and excitement of Bacchus, came where he was; and first they blew such a hoarse and hideous blast upon a horn that the sound of his music could no longer be heard for the din: whereupon, the charm being broken that had been the bond of that order and good fellowship, confusion began again; the beasts returned each to his several nature and preyed one upon the other as before; the stones and woods stayed no longer in their places: while Orpheus himself was torn to pieces by the women in their fury, and his limbs scattered about the fields: at whose death, Helicon (river sacred to the Muses) in grief and indignation buried his waters under the earth, to reappear elsewhere.⁷⁴

Once again, the taming does not quite work. Perhaps it is fitting that one of the first books connected to Virginia was George Sandys's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, published in 1626.⁷⁵ The book has in some histories been imagined as the first book written in what would be the United States.

72. Tyler, *Narratives of Early Virginia*, 10 (text modernized).

73. Boccaccio, *Genealogie deorum gentilium libri*, quoted in Cain, "Spenser and the Renaissance Orpheus," 26.

74. Bacon, "Orpheus; or Philosophy," 721.

75. On the edition, see Davis, "Early Editions." See also Robinson, *George Sandys, Poet-Adventurer*, 226–28.

While this might seem a stretch, Sandys began the project just before he sailed to Jamestown to become treasurer to the governor of Virginia and translated at least two of the volumes on the voyage.⁷⁶ Sandys himself was an explorer and travel writer. In an expanded 1638 edition of the *Metamorphoses*, he added that “these drunken Bacchides [may] be taken for the heady rage of mutiny and sedition, which silence the authority of the law, and infringe that concord (the music of Orpheus) which had reduced wild people to civility; returning now to their former pravity and natural fierceness: himself, the life of philosophy, torn in pieces by their fury.”⁷⁷ For Sandys, as for Bacon, Orpheus stands as a civilizing poet.

When the colonies became the United States, Orpheus crept into the rhetoric of the founding fathers in relation to democracy, which promised both enlightenment and domination. John Quincy Adams would eventually propose the lyre of Orpheus as a federal seal because it could lead men and beasts to harmony.⁷⁸ Francis Hopkinson, in a letter to George Washington, made the Orphic connection clear: “Orpheus was a Legislator and a civilizer of his Country. In those Days Laws were promulgated in Verse and sung to the Harp, and the Poets by a Figure in Rhetoric have attributed the salutary Effects of his Laws to the Tunes to which they were play’d and sung.”⁷⁹

Conclusion

To return to Columbus, it might be possible to hear the final devastating letter from his fourth voyage as a crucial turn. On this voyage, Columbus and his men had survived a horrible storm, brought on, he said, by evil and devils, that even Job would not have survived. He was worn out and exhausted. The voyage failed by all accounts: many men died, he lost his ship. An attack by Indians left him collapsed in despair. He cadenced his account with a lament: “I clambered up to the highest point of the ship crying in a trembling voice with tears in my eyes to all your Highness’ war captains at every point of the compass to save me, but there was no reply. Tired out and sobbing I fell asleep and heard a very compassionate voice.”⁸⁰ Upon return to Spain, he said he never thought of any of his destinations without tears in his eyes. In the end, he was devastated by the noise he could not control and could not understand.

As for the translators he captured, it has been argued that Columbus’s ability to understand the words of the Indians, even with captive translators, was questionable at best. That means that in some fundamental way he could

76. See Bloechl, *Native American Song*, 16.

77. Sandys, *Ovid’s Metamorphosis Englished*, 387.

78. See Coleman, “‘Music of a Well Tun’d State.’”

79. Letter of March 3, 1789, in Twohig, *Papers of George Washington*, 1:357–59. Available online at <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-01-02-0268>.

80. Columbus, *Four Voyages*, 296.

not hear them; he could not hear their words as language or their song as music. He suffered from what Franz Boas called “sound-blindness,” the characteristic feature of which is “the inability to perceive the essential peculiarities of certain sounds.”⁸¹ Boas was responding to linguists who claimed that Native languages had alternating sounds or sonic inconsistencies that reflected Native American linguistic inferiority, and thus social inferiority to white English speakers. Boas argued that linguists misheard Native American languages, that they literally could not hear the sounds of the Other. This othering of sound, so crucial in the colonial American project, has its roots in the canon of the Western tradition.

Racialized Selves and Musical Sources in the Archives of Slavery

MARIA RYAN

There is often joy in finding music notation in unexpected places. I had one such experience researching in the Special Collections reading room of the National Library of Jamaica, where I came across a tune called “Kiss My Lady” that had been copied into the back of a letterbook. But my initial delight at finding the piece was tempered by the violence of its source. The book contained copies of letters outlining the day-to-day running of the Hermitage Estate, a coffee plantation of three hundred acres in St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, on which around sixty enslaved men, women, and children were held to labor. The letters were written between 1819 and 1824, and were addressed to John Wemyss, a white Scottish man who was one of the absentee joint owners of the Hermitage Estate.⁸² The author of the letters was William Adlam, a white British resident of Jamaica and himself a slave owner, who had been left in charge of the Hermitage in the absence of Wemyss and the other owners of the estate. Among other topics, Adlam complained about the rising cost of purchasing enslaved people since Britain’s banning of the transatlantic slave trade in 1807, expressed pleasure over favorable market prices of coffee, and updated Wemyss about births and deaths of the enslaved people on the estate. Yet in Adlam’s letters the enslaved people who worked there were rarely individualized, an omission typical of the quotidian horror of the logistics of slavery.

The exceptions were two women whom Adlam wrote about in some detail. The first was Nancy, an elderly enslaved woman, whose death Adlam coldly reported to Wemyss, saying, “we have a few days ago lost an old invalid woman named Nancy, she had been doing little or nothing for the

81. Boas, “On Alternating Sounds,” 47.

82. John Wemyss, Letterbook, Hermitage Estate, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, 1819–24, National Library of Jamaica, MS 250. Information on John Wemyss and William Adlam from the Legacies of British Slave-Ownership database, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs>.

property for some time past, and her loss is not much felt in consequence.”⁸³ The second woman was unnamed: a woman with a white father, referred to only as “Mr. Bonthorne’s daughter.” She appears three times in the letters, as Adlam kept Wemyss up to date on his efforts to persuade Bonthorne to buy his daughter’s freedom in exchange for “a good young negroe Man or woman to be sold to the H[ermitage] in lieu of her.”⁸⁴ As I read the letterbook, I wondered about the lives of these two women, well aware that I may have to leave my jotted questions and notes about them in my notebook, as Adlam’s letters give so little indication of their musical lives. In this short essay, I explore how Nancy and Bonthorne’s daughter, myself as researcher, and the tune that is found at the back of Wemyss’s letterbook are bound together through a process of racialization with origins in slavery.

The tune is written on one of the final pages of the book, with its title, “Kiss My Lady,” scratched above it in what appears to be a different hand from that of the letters copied in the rest of the book.⁸⁵ Below the tune someone has drawn additional blank staves that continue onto the next page, as if intending to copy more music in the future. The pages directly preceding “Kiss My Lady” contain tables valuing the twenty-seven enslaved men of the estate at £3,860 and the twenty-six women at £3,455, with each individual neatly categorized as “negro,” “mulatto,” or “sambo.” This juxtaposition—of the neatly notated value of humans and the neatly notated music—throws into stark relief what Saidiya Hartman describes as “the diffusion of terror and the violence perpetrated under the rubric of pleasure, paternalism, and property.”⁸⁶ The potential pleasure of the tune is inextricably connected to the people counted as property through its position in the letterbook.

It is likely that the Wemyss letterbook was in fact produced on the Hermitage Estate by Adlam or a clerk, who would have copied the letters before they were dispatched to Scotland so as to have a record of them on the estate for reference.⁸⁷ “Kiss My Lady” may even have been played on the Hermitage, creating a tangible connection between the conditions of chattel slavery in the British colonial Caribbean and the transatlantic circulation of airs and tunes. Several recent articles and projects have foregrounded the political necessity of connecting previously nonracialized (i.e., white racialized) musics to slavery.⁸⁸ The case of “Kiss My Lady” suggests how difficult it is

83. Wemyss, Letterbook, letter from William Adlam to John Wemyss, February 1, 1820, 2r.

84. *Ibid.*, 4r.

85. Wemyss, Letterbook, 20r.

86. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 4.

87. This was the case for other letterbooks relating to Jamaica in this period, such as those of Isaac Jackson. On the letterbooks of planting attorneys, see Higman, “Letterbooks of Isaac Jackson,” 318.

88. David Hunter, for example, writes about “music’s lack of innocence,” tracing the extent to which eighteenth-century music in England was funded through the profits of slavery in Jamaica, and highlighting George Frideric Handel’s personal investments in the Royal African

to racialize tunes in a colonial Caribbean context. Unlike the names of enslaved people listed on the page that precedes it, the tune is not labeled with a racial assignation. And yet the way the tune is interpreted, treated, and understood to “fit” into historical narratives—then and now—relies on its racialization. Although it may not be possible to definitively draw a direct connection between “Kiss My Lady” and the lives of Nancy and Bonthorne’s daughter, the presence of the traces of the women’s lives in the same book as the tune is testament to the inseparability of music of European origin, circulated and performed in colonial America and the Caribbean, from chattel slavery.

As foregrounded by the title of this colloquy, race is a construction, albeit one that needs constant maintenance. Although racialization has very real consequences, it has no biological reality. Dorothy Roberts, scholar of race, gender, and law, clearly lays out that “[r]ace applied to human beings is a *political* division: it is a system of governing people that classifies them into a social hierarchy based on invented biological demarcations.”⁸⁹ The careful cursive through which one can glimpse moments in the lives of Nancy and Bonthorne’s daughter in the letterbook hides the violence of colonial racial categories that were not biological facts but enforced creations, developed to justify and rationalize racialized slavery. These colonial categories of race are not bound up in texts in archives, nor are they fixed; they are living, breathing concepts that we inherit and reinscribe.

I was reminded of this as I teased an older man sitting next to me at a New Kingston bar one quiet Sunday night during a research trip, asking if he could guess my ethnicity after he, like dozens of men before him on both sides of the Atlantic, had rejected the answer I gave to his question as to where I was from, namely “London.” The man contemplated my skin, my features, my shape for a while, but I was not expecting his answer: “mestee.” A mestee was (or, I suppose in this case, is) another term for an “octoroon,” a person with one Black great-grandparent.⁹⁰ I laughed out loud at being assigned to this colonial category, in shock as much as amusement, at the same time attempting to hide my bruised ego that my half Afro-Jamaican

Company: Hunter, “Beckfords in England.” Glenda Goodman weaves together the direct and indirect ways in which the music book of Sarah Brown, an eighteenth-century white resident of Rhode Island, was connected to enslaved workers in her own household through her family’s business interests in both slavery and abolition: Goodman, “Bound Together.” Emily Wilbourne explores how our understanding and teaching of musical culture in Medici Florence would be expanded and challenged if we considered the enslaved Africans who labored there: Wilbourne, “Little Black Giovanni’s Dream.” And David R. M. Irving lays out the “‘whitewashing’ of much music historiography and discourse, which has occluded the presence of ethnic Others in the formation of what we now call Western Art Music,” calling for a global consideration of the idea of Western art music: Irving, “Rethinking Early Modern ‘Western Art Music.’”

89. Roberts, *Fatal Invention*, x (Roberts’s emphasis).

90. On the racial stratification of enslaved children in Jamaica on the basis of their parentage, see Vasconcellos, *Slavery, Childhood, and Abolition*, 48.

heritage had not been recognized and the simultaneous realization of how strongly colonial taxonomies of race still resonate.⁹¹ I was reminded of what Michel-Rolph Trouillot teaches us: “the past does not exist independently from the present.”⁹² And just as that man at the bar was committed to finding a racialized label that would reconcile my presence, skin, and accent, so I have an impulse, both through training and through being a person in the world, to racialize and make sense of the tune “Kiss My Lady.” The legacies of colonial ideologies that led to his satisfaction at describing me as “mestee” are the same histories that let me breathe a sigh of relief at seeing the notated tune “Kiss My Lady” in the letterbook, relief occasioned by its legibility—notation—within a particular form of musical education, knowledge, and qualification that I myself am immersed in.

“Kiss My Lady” originated as a British tune. An early version can be found in the fifth volume (1801?) of the Glasgow-printed *A Selection of Scotch, English, Irish and Foreign Airs Adapted for the Fife, Violin, or German Flute*.⁹³ Similar tunes with the same title can be found copied into personal music books on both sides of the Atlantic.⁹⁴ In colonial America and the Caribbean it is rarely possible to easily or purely racialize music as “white,” given the demographics of the continent and the reliance that European settlers and colonists had on both Indigenous Americans and Africans and their descendants who lived and worked in America by choice, coercion, or force. In a colonial Jamaican context there is no reason to assume that a performer of “Kiss My Lady” would be of European descent. Imported fifes and violins were often advertised for sale in local newspapers produced and printed in Jamaica, and there is sufficient evidence to argue that enslaved fiddlers were an everyday part of life in some parts of colonial Jamaica.⁹⁵ Enslaved musicians on the Hermitage were alluded to by Adlam, who wrote to Wemyss at Christmas 1820, asking him to “please excuse this short letter for my house is now surrounded with a great number of Negroes, singing, dancing, and playing their country music on account of their holidays that I have not time

91. I am grateful for conversations with Tatiana Nelson and my late grandmother Norma Hemans about colorism in Jamaica. On the ways in which legacies of gendered racial categories affected twentieth-century Jamaican culture, see Rowe, “Glorifying the Jamaican Girl.”

92. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 15.

93. *Selection of Scotch, English, Irish and Foreign Airs*, 5:23.

94. Several examples are documented in the archived website Early American Secular Music and Its European Sources, 1589–1839: An Index: https://web.archive.org/web/20190502193416fw_/https://www.cdss.org/elibrary/Easmes/Index.htm. A tune titled “Kiss My Lady” in the possibly American manuscript “Woburn Fife Book” appears to be a more ornamented version than the one found in Wemyss’s letterbook.

95. On the ways in which the “ubiquitous and iconic” Black enslaved violinists of Jamaica may have been trained and learned European tunes in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Banfield, “Anglophone Musical Culture.” On the significance and desirability of enslaved fiddlers in late eighteenth-century Afro-Jamaican society, see Leigh, “Jamaican Airs.” For a study of the lives of enslaved violinists, see Ryan, “Hearing Power, Sounding Freedom,” ch. 1.

to write you more on account of this great noise.”⁹⁶ It is certainly possible that some of this “country music” could have been played on violins, which appear in several descriptions of Christmas celebrations in Jamaica that are contemporary with the Wemyss letterbook.⁹⁷ If any enslaved people on the Hermitage owned and played violins, or instruments of some type, they may have known “Kiss My Lady,” although the lack of probate records for enslaved people makes tracing the ownership of instruments difficult.

The Christmas that was such an assault on Adlam’s senses came at the end of the year in which Nancy died and Adlam attempted to sell Bonthorne’s daughter through exchange. It would have been the first Christmas in many years when Nancy was not present to join the celebrations. She was not mourned by Adlam, but her absence would surely have been marked and mourned by others on the Hermitage, particularly on a holiday such as Christmas, the biggest holiday for enslaved people in Jamaica. Given her age, it is possible that she was a survivor of the middle passage and would have previously brought experiences of her life in Africa to the celebration. Adlam’s reference to “their country music” suggests that he heard the celebrations on the Hermitage as distinctly “African,” but it is likely that many types of music, including music with European origins, were involved in the celebration.⁹⁸

One cannot assume that “Kiss My Lady” would have been heard as European by enslaved listeners on the Hermitage Estate. By 1820 there had been over a century of European influence on Afro-Jamaican songs and tunes, and visitors to the island were sometimes surprised by enslaved fiddlers’ knowledge of tunes familiar to them from Europe. Astley Clerk, an early twentieth-century Jamaican collector and historian of the island’s music, highlighted the bidirectional musical transmission between Britain and Jamaica, noting that “Jamaican Negro Folk-Songs . . . can easily be bracketed with their English brothers,” and that new songs influenced by English and Scottish songs written by enslaved people from Jamaica found their way back to Britain: “Book-keepers, overseers, attorneys, proprietors, and visitors

96. Wemyss, Letterbook, letter from William Adlam to John Wemyss, December 26, 1820, 5r–v.

97. Alexander Barclay, for example, a vehemently pro-slavery visitor to the British colonial Caribbean, wrote in the 1820s, “Following the example of the white people, the fiddle which they [enslaved African descendants] play pretty well, is now the leading instrument; they dance Scotch reels, and some of the better sort (who have been house servants) country dances. . . . Such dances were formerly common, or I should rather say universal, at Christmas”: Barclay, *Practical View*, 10. Cynric Williams, writing about a visit to Jamaica in 1823, observed that he was awoken on Christmas morning by “a chorus of negroes singing” that only stopped when he “gave the fiddler a dollar”: Williams, *Tour through the Island*, 21.

98. Of Christmas traditions of enslaved people in Jamaica that combined West African and European elements, the most documented is Jankunu, on which there is also a rich secondary literature; see, for example, Wynter, “Jonkonnu in Jamaica”; Leigh, “Jamaica Airs”; and Brathwaite, *Development of Creole Society*, 228–32.

. . . took the songs heard on their own Estate to others, sang them at table, and even . . . carried them as far as England & Scotland.”⁹⁹ Musical transmission in colonial Jamaica was not experienced or understood as a one-way process, nor did it take place only through notation. Like Clerk, historian Devin Leigh makes a similar observation about a rare collection of notated tunes composed and performed by enslaved musicians in 1770s Jamaica, noting that “if taken out of context, most of these airs could easily be mistaken for Irish or Scottish reels.”¹⁰⁰ It is context, then, that allows us to racialize notated music and to recognize how this racialization may have changed over time, a context that is missing for the “Kiss My Lady” tune notated in the Wemyss letterbook.

The “Lady” of the tune’s title may seem a flirtatious form of address, but the conditions and possibilities of flirtation for women in the colonial Caribbean carried a different weight and relationship to racialization from those in the metropole. “Kiss My Lady” would have been listened to in various ways in 1820 depending on context, whether heard by a Scottish teenaged girl in an Edinburgh drawing room, whose comforts were provided through the profits of slavery; by a Jamaican-born white woman hearing the tune played in the distance by a Black fiddler, watching from a window as her husband strolled toward the “negro huts” of their plantation; or by an enslaved girl, the daughter of a mixed-race mother and white overseer, pondering her future as she watched her father dance to the tune at a ball. The lives of all these imagined women would have been shaped by chattel slavery, which is inseparable from the violent control of the sexual and reproductive lives of enslaved women who could scarcely count on being titled “Lady,” a term that would have been mostly reserved for white women.

Like many who profited directly from slavery, Wemyss and Adlam were anxiously aware of their reliance on women’s reproductive labor at the time the Wemyss letterbook was written, since after the banning of the transatlantic slave trade in 1807 they could no longer rely on a supply of captive Africans who survived the middle passage to replace their coerced labor forces.¹⁰¹

99. Astley Clerk, “The Music and Song Words of Jamaica Folk Song—With an Account of Local Made Instruments,” 1931 and 1934, National Library of Jamaica, MS 44D, “About Folk-Songs.”

100. Leigh, “Jamaican Airs,” 4. Leigh recently created a digital exhibit of the musical content of the C. E. Long papers at the British Library: “The Jamaican Airs Exhibit,” Early Caribbean Digital Archive, Northeastern University, 2019, <https://ecda.northeastern.edu/jamaican-music-exhibit-leigh/>.

101. Before 1807, most plantation owners in the British colonial Caribbean did not rely on the children born to enslaved women—children born into the condition of slavery—to sustain their coerced labor force. The enslaved population in the British colonial Caribbean did not increase naturally as it did in the colonial and early United States, on account of low birth and high mortality rates. On changing attitudes toward the reproductive lives of enslaved Black women driven by abolitionist discourse, see Turner, *Contested Bodies*.

Adlam's anxiety and frustration over the difficulty of replacing enslaved laborers who were no longer productive workers on account of illness, injury, age, or death runs through his letters to Wemyss. He did not hide his desire for the enslaved population of the plantation to be increased through the birth of children born into slavery, complaining that "[w]omen on the Hermitage breed very slow indeed, which I cannot account for, and they are many of them good looking young women."¹⁰² It is a skin-crawling sentence, equating the sexual and reproductive lives of enslaved woman to the breeding of livestock, and tying the possibilities of successful pregnancy and childbearing to their perceived attractiveness in the eyes of men. Regardless of whether children born to enslaved mothers had fathers who were free or enslaved, white or African-descended, in 1820s colonial Jamaica they would automatically inherit their mother's status, according to the law of *partus sequitur ventrem*, itself based on Roman law—"the offspring follows the womb."¹⁰³ But the simplicity of this principle belies the complexity of the relationship between racialization and enslavement in the British colonial Caribbean.

For children born to white men and enslaved mothers, the possibilities that might be offered by life, whether working as an enslaved laborer in the field or in a domestic or town setting, or even being granted freedom, were tied to the level of recognition that fathers were prepared to give their offspring. Mr. Bonthorne's daughter was one such child, whose route out of enslavement was dependent on her father's ability to purchase her freedom. It is probable that Mr. Bonthorne was Henry Bonthorne, who was named as the overseer in charge of the daily work on the Hermitage plantation in 1807.¹⁰⁴ For a white overseer to have fathered mixed-race children was not exceptional: many visitors to the Caribbean commented with distaste on the custom by which white men of all ranks had relationships with enslaved women, and in some cases even secured the freedom of their mixed-race children.¹⁰⁵ Although reference in the letterbook to the purchase of one's own kin seems abhorrent, Adlam was suggesting a transaction that would be beneficial to both parties, and presumably to Bonthorne's daughter, too: Bonthorne would purchase his daughter's freedom from the Hermitage by providing Adlam with an enslaved field laborer in her place.¹⁰⁶ But although negotiations began in February 1820, by November Adlam had not yet

102. Wemyss, Letterbook, letter from William Adlam to John Wemyss, February 1, 1820, 2r.

103. See Morgan, "*Partus sequitur ventrem*," and Weinbaum, *Afterlife of Reproductive Slavery*, 6–7. On the politics of birth and slavery in Jamaica, see Turner, *Contested Bodies*.

104. See Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed*, 183.

105. On the recognition of mixed-race children by white overseers and bookkeepers and the lack of recognition for their enslaved mothers, see Livesay, *Children of Uncertain Fortune*, 282–85. This issue is also explored in Marlon James's novel *The Book of Night Women*.

106. This specific case is mentioned in Vasconcellos, *Slavery, Childhood, and Abolition*, 55.

obtained what he wanted on account of Bonthorne's illness. Like that of so many enslaved women who appear fleetingly in sources written by white men, the fate of Bonthorne's daughter is not resolved in the letterbook. She had value in the letterbook because of her relationship to whiteness through her father, whereas her distance from Africanness meant she was less valued by Adlam, who wanted a "good young negroe Man or woman," whom he deemed better suited to coerced agricultural labor. And yet, because I do not know her name, it is easier for me to trace genealogies of the "Kiss My Lady" tune than to trace her ancestors and descendants. Was Bonthorne's daughter present on the Hermitage that Christmas? Or was she with her father, perhaps tending to his illness, and singing to soothe him? And what music was Wemyss hearing at that time, four thousand miles away, living off profits created through the coerced labor of those on the Hermitage? The limits of the archive preclude obvious answers to these questions.¹⁰⁷ But asking them is a gesture, however small, that pushes against the racial logic of the letterbook, the notation's seeming indifference to race, and a disciplinary impulse to parse out what is "musical" in the archive. Asking these questions springs from a hope that we can imagine and begin working toward a future in which we can structure our relationships to knowledge creation, to the archive, and to each other in ways that do not thoughtlessly reproduce and reinscribe the racial categories that we inherit.

But those categories are not easily undone. As I was walking to the South Parade bus terminus from the National Library of Jamaica after a day of research, a man called out to me, asking, "Didn't your parents let you play outside?" Through further conversation I learned that the question was related to my skin. The skin of my legs, my arms, my hands—unscarred, unblemished, bearing no traces of labor or hardship. Shaved, moisturized, "mulatto." The man's comment was direct testimony to the legacy of taxonomies of race and their relation to labor that left Nancy unmourned and Mr. Bonthorne's daughter valued within the Wemyss letterbook, as well as a reminder that each of our experiences of, and access to, the labor of archival research about early music in America is affected by deep-rooted legacies of colonialism. In my case, these include my skin, which does not allow me to pass as white, but does give me access to the gendered colorism of light-skinned privilege; my figure, which conforms to a white-racialized, gendered slenderness, shielding me from racialized fatphobia; an English accent that many deem authoritative and attractive according to those same logics and histories of Euro-supremacy; and the backing of a private North American university that itself benefitted from the institution of slavery at

107. Marissa Fuentes proposes reading seemingly hostile or perfunctory sources about enslaved women "along the bias grain" in order to write a reparative and generative history of enslaved women in Barbados: Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*.

its foundation.¹⁰⁸ I search for race in archives and am racialized in the process; I look for music and in so doing I make decisions as to what is musical and what is not, what is content and what is context.¹⁰⁹ Taken by itself, the version of “Kiss My Lady” notated in the letterbook might have little attractiveness as an object of musicological study. Its presence, however, allows the lives of Nancy and Mr. Bonthorne’s daughter, though so briefly recorded, to be woven into histories of music in America, their lives and ways of listening as defined by racialization as ours are today.

Music and Black Gentility in the Antebellum and Civil War South

CANDACE BAILEY

When I began to focus my research on women amateur musicians in the United States, my entire perception of music among the genteel folk of the antebellum South comprised only white men and women. Nothing that I had absorbed from period literature (both visual and textual), histories of Black music (encumbered by a persistent and grossly erroneous representation of all Black people as enslaved and thus bounded by oral traditions), and even scholarly writing on parlor music (which occasionally described Black-cum-minstrel music in white parlors but never mentioned Bellini in Black ones) contradicted this picture. Around 2006, I became aware of the music collection of Anna and Catharine Johnson and the education of Susie and Cherokee Mariah Lilly Hunt, and their experiences prompted me to consider how our limited knowledge of music’s role in the construction of race, gender, and class had yielded a vastly incomplete narrative.¹¹⁰

Since then, I have realized that I must recalibrate my research on music as a science in women’s culture, and that a similar recalibration is needed in

108. In the fall of 2017, several undergraduates at the University of Pennsylvania founded the Penn and Slavery Project, which continues to examine the university’s historic relationship to slavery: <http://pennandslaveryproject.org>. The interconnections between slavery and higher education in the United States are explored in Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy*.

109. I am inspired here by the honest and thoughtful evaluation of her experience of doing research as a white woman at the archive of the Metropolitan Opera given by Lucy Caplan in the Q&A session to her paper “The Limits of Desegregation”; also by Boon, *What the Oceans Remember*, and Carby, *Imperial Intimacies*, which beautifully document the experience of doing archival research as mixed-race (post)colonial subjects investigating histories that intersect with ancestors’ lives.

110. Dale Cockrell generously sent me notes on the Johnson women’s music long before I was able to see it in person. On William Johnson and music, see Bailey, “Music in the Life,” and Cockrell, “William Johnson.” I wish to thank one of the *Journal*’s anonymous readers who made several helpful suggestions, as well as Glenda Goodman and Rhae Lynn Barnes for their guidance and advice. Further information on the women described here and contextualization of their musical practices can be found in Bailey, *Unbinding Gentility*.

musicological discourse about racialized expectations of music and social class. In a larger study, I interpret instruction in “scientific music,” a term used by nineteenth-century Americans that meant performance from notation as well as knowledge of a particular (but loosely defined) repertoire, as a fundamental facet of aspirational gentility. Describing music as a science lifted it above the mere ability to play by ear (i.e., mimicking someone else) and raised its value as a sincere, true art—aligning it with sentimental ideals as well as mandating the financial means to acquire instruments, lessons, and sheet music.¹¹¹ Those seeking to be seen as genteel emulated the elite by pursuing the same accomplishments, and scientific music figured prominently among these ideals. Women used these accomplishments to position themselves within a particular circle, belonging to one and being above or beneath others. Locating oneself socially depended necessarily on others interpreting the process through the same lens, a fragile ranking fraught with expectations that usually demanded the acquisition of material items and immaterial knowledge. With its physical accoutrements, such as instruments and sheet music displayed in the parlor, and the concomitant knowledge required to render the physical page in performance, music was an essential signifier of gentility.

Most scholarship assumes that genteel culture existed exclusively among whites.¹¹² Evidence tells a different story. Many Black women learned to read music as part of the cultural performance of parlor music—that is, singing and playing notated music as dictated in etiquette manuals, definitive guides to gentility, written for whites. The paradox here lies in the fact that white gentility did not allow for the possibility of Black gentlewomen. In her assessment of the reception of Elizabeth Keckley’s *Behind the Scenes in the Lincoln White House, or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House* (1868), Carolyn Sorisio demonstrates that white Americans saw Black women as “ungenteel and publicly accessible.”¹¹³ Keckley, a formerly enslaved woman who established herself as the leading seamstress for Mary Lincoln and other white women in the 1860s, wrote *Behind the Scenes* in part to aid the former First Lady financially and socially after the Civil War, but she overstepped social boundaries, was harshly criticized, and was eventually completely ostracized by her white clients. Keckley was caught in a

111. I discuss the application of the term “scientific music” in this period, as well as the meaning of gentility in culture, in several chapters of Bailey, *Unbinding Gentility*. The “scientific” repertoire equates somewhat with what comes to be known as “classical music” later in the century, although it was also used more broadly; see *ibid.*, 95–107 (definition at 96–99).

112. The titles of a recent introduction to American music exemplify the problem: “How Sweet the Sound’: Sacred Music in the New Republic,” “‘Make a Noise’: African American Music before the Civil War,” and “‘A Language of Feeling’: Cultivating Musical Tastes in Antebellum America”: Crawford and Hamberlin, *Introduction to America’s Music*, chs. 3–5. Here, Black musicians “make a noise” whereas whites have “sacred music” and cultivated taste.

113. Sorisio, “Unmasking the Genteel Performer,” 25–26.

trap: she was accused of both acting in an ungentle manner (because she aired private moments in public) and contravening her social status in the first place by supposing herself, a Black woman, to be genteel.

What, then, can we say about the meaning, both in the nineteenth century and now, of genteel music practice among those who were reputed incapable of gentility? The word “science” signified economic and social possibility. Whites assumed that science in any form was beyond the intellectual capacity of Blacks, thus reading music (scientific music) should be unattainable. Using music in the performance of culture takes science beyond academia and places it in the home. When Black women performed music in the parlor as white women did, they deconstructed the boundaries drawn around the sanctity of white womanhood. Published discourse and pictorial representation, as well as the historical record, lay within the control of whites, who never considered the possibility that others might lay a claim to gentility and who carefully protected it for themselves. Nineteenth-century magazines, sheet music, and public performances all promoted racial division in musical experiences, especially publications with images.¹¹⁴ The images in figures 1 and 2 illustrate this point.¹¹⁵ The first shows the wild, uncontrolled motions of Black dancers outdoors under the moonlight, underscoring a more primitive culture. The second contrasts the first in every way: elegant movements in a well-lit hall, accompanied by an orchestra.

As visual artifacts, sheet music portrayals of musicking such as these communicate how white Americans saw themselves and others. By appearing on notated scores, the visually striking images imply that such music belonged solely to those in the white community who could afford music lessons. As early as 1828, the lyrics to “Jump Jim Crow” declare that “down” in Virginia, Jim Crow’s fiddling was considered on a par with the “skyentific” music of “Massa Paganini.”¹¹⁶ That Jim Crow could remotely be associated with Paganini would appear ludicrous to the music’s intended audience, and the Northern sleight on Southern culture is undeniable. Images on sheet music served white views of musical practice, reinforcing racial boundaries between styles of musicking. This conception of who performed scientific music remains intact today: through textbooks, music history surveys, and casual conversation, musicological discourse and pedagogy continues to perpetuate the idea that music read from notation signifies whiteness in the nineteenth century.

My essay raises questions about race, gender, and social class that I cannot answer, but my goal is to offer a necessary corrective to the presumed

114. I have seen only one sheet music cover with a sympathetic image of a Black woman (John P. Ordway’s “Why Not Love Thee Darling?”), and it dates from 1868.

115. Figure 1 is reproduced from the author’s own photograph; image also available at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3a26891/>. Figure 2 is reproduced from <https://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu/collection/185/107>.

116. Glenda Goodman kindly reminded me of the appearance of this term in “Jump Jim Crow.” See also Lewis and Lewis, *Jim Crow America*, 1–43, and Lhamon, *Jump Jim Crow*, 95–102.



Figure 1 Illustration for the sheet music of “I’se Gwin Down de Ribber” from *Melodies of Bancker’s Troupe of Sable Brothers* (Boston: A. & J. P. Ordway, 1848)

whiteness of antebellum parlor music. The lives and experiences of the women presented here, and of many others, have long been silenced.¹¹⁷

117. See Myers, *Forging Freedom*, 25. Trouillot’s *Silencing the Past* finds application in the study of antebellum women and music in the United States, and parallels between his subjects and mine can be easily drawn.

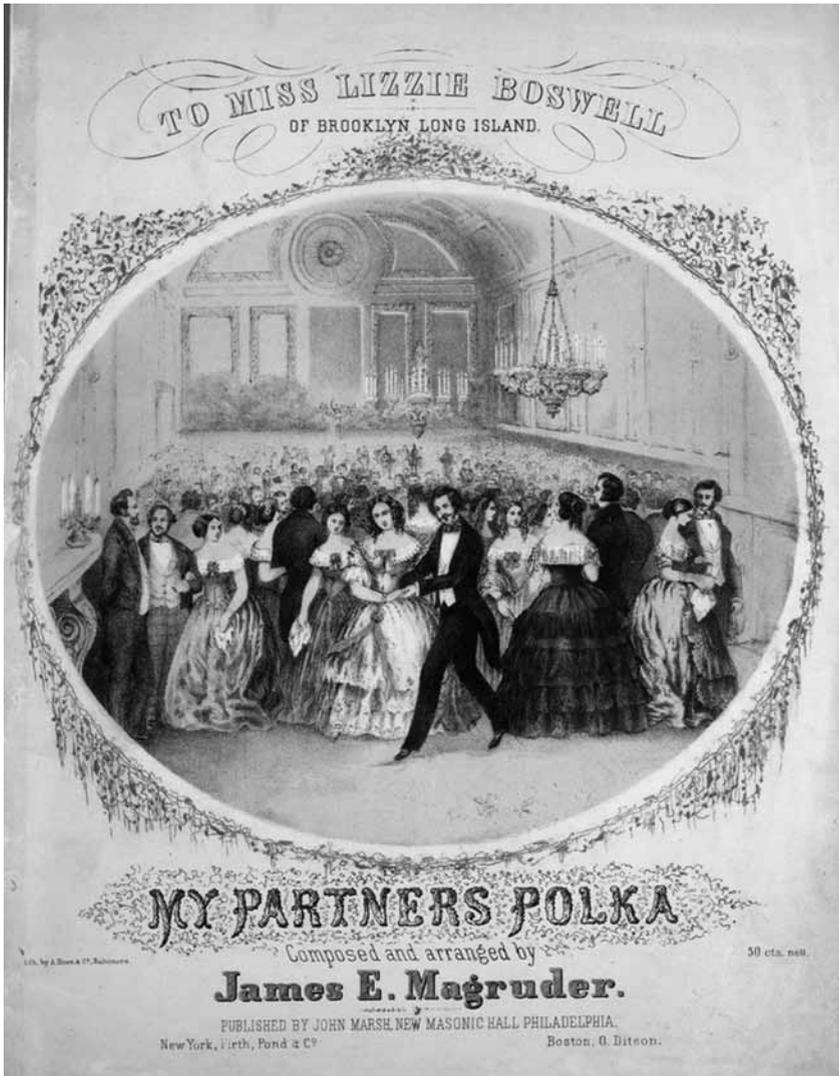


Figure 2 Illustration for the sheet music of “My Partner’s Polka” by James E. Magruder (Philadelphia: John Marsh, 1855). This figure appears in color in the online version of the **Journal**.

Antebellum Black women learned to read music, and their stories unsettle the received narrative of the history of music in the United States. The evidence for such practice is difficult to find, for many reasons. One may even be that the attainment of gentility demanded the concealment of private practices. Mere vignettes, such scraps of evidence as exist remind us of how much we have assumed about musical practices among women and people of African descent. Furthermore, we have yet to compile myriad pieces of

secondary research from across disciplines, but this topic demands that we do. To interpret the meaning of music in the lives of women of color requires an intermingling of ideas concerning race, gender, and class. Whether the women be enslaved or free (a problematic term), married or unmarried, or subject to any number of other circumstances does not preclude their inclusion in the broader narrative. And although my research has thus far uncovered musical practices in Black households, I have no doubt that other women of color—those hailing from the Global South as well as Indigenous—were taught to play and sing from notated scores.

Opportunities for aspirational gentility varied significantly according to individual circumstances. Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield (ca. 1820–76), the concert singer known as the “Black Swan,” took music lessons only after moving from Natchez to Philadelphia, but we should not assume that moving to the North was the only way for Black women to pursue music study. Like Greenfield, Sarah Martha Sanders (1815–50) grew up enslaved. Unlike Greenfield, however, Sarah’s ten children with the man who owned her, Richard Walpole Cogdell, all studied music in the South. In fact, Sarah herself received piano lessons, around the same time as the birth of her first child and not long after Richard’s white wife moved out of the family home (1832).¹¹⁸ In Charleston, these enslaved people pursued gentility in the same space and with the same physical objects as white women: the piano and sheet music in the parlor. They achieved the accomplishments required for gentility, which enabled their children to move in respected middle-class circles in Philadelphia (where Richard relocated them in the 1850s). On the basis of her work on this family and others, Amrita Chakrabarti Myers perceives whiteness and Blackness as social constructions, noting that “the performance of respectability” relied on the individual and the community. For Sanders’s female children, the community was Black, therefore the gentility must be also. Expensive clothes and jewels, music lessons, and other items testified that they were ladies.¹¹⁹ Seeking the need for such capital (objectified and embodied, in the manner described by Pierre Bourdieu), including scientific music, is but one step in the journey to understanding the musical practices of Black women in the antebellum South.¹²⁰

But are we right to assume that such musical practice was merely part of an effort to imitate the standards of white culture? Proper behavior was arguably more essential for Black women than for white women because of long-held stereotypes concerning black female sexual aggressiveness. In her work on post-Civil War Southern schools for Black and white women, Sarah Case

118. See Myers, *Forging Freedom*, 160, which situates the Sanders-Cogdell family within the racial divides of Charleston. I discuss Sarah’s piano lessons in Bailey, *Unbinding Gentility*, 45.

119. Myers, *Forging Freedom*, 155. See also Cain, “Art and Politics.”

120. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 47. Music as cultural production also figured among the requirements for belonging to the “Black aristocracy” of Charleston—a group that certainly did not include Sarah Sanders; see Myers, *Forging Freedom*, 4, 25.

asserts that schools for women refashioned antebellum femininity in the postwar era in order to protect the reputations of women in the public gaze,¹²¹ but how to present oneself as culturally acceptable also occupied women before the war. In Charleston, Martha Sophia Moor Inglis, the wife of a member of the aristocratic Brown Fellowship Society, recognized the importance of respectability for protecting her children against stereotypes and fitted them with the necessities of social progress as exhibited by white culture.¹²² Among the refinements she used to promote their status were music lessons for the children and a piano in the parlor (together with wall-paper, wine glasses, and other accoutrements of genteel status). Social historian Linda Young describes music practice as “a deliciously unproductive means of passing time at home, displaying a lady as rich enough to afford idle time”—a description that confirms Martha’s high social position within her own community.¹²³ The Inglis family surely does not stand alone in this regard. They and their social circle represent Black gentility, and Charleston is not the only place where we can locate it.

The voluminous music collection of Anna (1841–1922) and Catharine (1842–1909) Johnson, the daughters of William Johnson, a businessman of note in Natchez, and his wife, Ann Battles Johnson, resembles that of other women of the antebellum South whose family’s worth extended to five figures. It differs, however, in that it is the only music collection that can be positively identified with a Southern *Black* family in the antebellum period. Consisting of music for solo piano and solo voice, Anna and Catharine’s repertoire ranges from the simple folk-like songs of the British Isles to arias and dances from popular operas, and includes the era’s popular composers: Glover, Russell, Auber, Wollenhaupt, Wallace, Beyer, and Hawthorne (Winner). These young women exchanged music with friends and inherited music from older female family members. They played piano in the parlor for dancing, and potential suitors were aware of their accomplishments and requested displays. Thus, the Johnsons performed the same behaviors as those with whom they shared class values—white women of equal economic status. Undoubtedly, music functioned as part of the performance of culture by the Johnson women.

The Johnsons identified with genteel society, like other Southerners of comparable means. William refused to allow his apprentices to attend “darkey parties”; he owned slaves and entertained white townsmen with champagne.¹²⁴ Anna went away to school, and, after William’s death, their

121. Case, *Leaders of Their Race*, 6–7, 69.

122. See Reynolds, “Wealthy Free Women,” 134–36, 146–47. The Brown Fellowship Society was a closed group of affluent Black Charlestonians whose presence within the cultural life of the city has been studied for some time.

123. Young, *Middle-Class Culture*, 209. See also Ross, *Great New Orleans Kidnapping Case*, 98–99.

124. See King, *Essence of Liberty*, 31, referencing Davis and Hogan, *Barber of Natchez*, 51–68, 241.

mother arranged for both Anna and Catharine to have music lessons and purchased the necessary music to be played on the family's piano and guitar. As commodification of their social position, these material possessions confirmed the Johnsons' cultivated gentility. Raised in this environment, what did Anna think when she looked at published images of white musicking? The family and their acquaintances must have reenacted such scenes in their household. Was Anna, who went to school in New Orleans, shocked or insulted by the depiction of a belle from that city in an illustration for the sheet music of the "Five Belles Polka" (see figure 3):¹²⁵ The New Orleans belle casts a wanton eye over a shoulder from which a flimsy wrap seductively falls—the exact opposite of gentility as personified in the frontispiece to Emily Thornwell's popular *Lady's Guide to Perfect Gentility* of 1856 (see figure 4).¹²⁶ Thornwell's vision adopts all the modesty and docility she advises for young women and is a far cry from the salacious New Orleans belle portrayed on the sheet music. We might also wonder about the possibility that this immodest belle implies a mixed-race woman—a presumed coquette from the infamous quadrone balls for which the city was famous. Lest Anna be seen as the New Orleans belle—an image it was all the more necessary to counter because she was not white—she had to adopt the ideals presented by Thornwell's *Gentility*.

The Johnsons owned parlor music, participated regularly in social rituals that included music, and used music as a marker of social status. Virginia Gould argues that free Black women, such as Ann Battles Johnson (Anna and Catharine's mother), were "incompatible with the ideals associated with white women" and in response built identities to distinguish themselves from both Black enslaved women and white women. They restructured white gentility, modeling their identities on the dominant culture while simultaneously maintaining the traditions of their own communities.¹²⁷ This is the path forward in understanding the musical practices for women in the Johnson and Inglis families and many others. They pursued gentility as understood in their region and molded its meaning to suit their cultural environment.

In his study of Black Charlestonians in the nineteenth century, Bernard Powers contends that Black women in Charleston imitated white women for a variety of reasons, but the view that imitation was their goal needs refining.¹²⁸ Indeed, neither white nor Black women can be confined to a single homogeneous social category. Many women of lower status attempted to emulate those at the top of the social spectrum: the daughters of farmers, small-town merchants, clergy, mechanics, and so on all aspired to genteel status in part by acquiring musical accomplishment. Their reasons for doing

125. Figure 3 is reproduced from <https://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu/collection/100/082>.

126. Figure 4 is reproduced from the author's own photograph.

127. Gould does not use the phrase "Black gentility," but she does not generally employ gentility as a governing principle in her analysis: Gould, *Chained to the Rock*, xxii.

128. Powers, *Black Charlestonians*, 22, 79.



Figure 3 Illustration for the sheet music of the “Five Belles Polka” by T. J. Cook (New York: S. T. Gordon, 1856). This figure appears in color in the online version of the **Journal**

so varied. For some it was a means of achieving economic freedom (becoming teachers), as it was for Ella Sheppard (1851–1914), the first Black faculty member at Fisk University and the accompanist for (and a soprano in) the Jubilee Singers. For others it stood as a marker of respectability.



Figure 4 Frontispiece to Emily Thornwell's *Lady's Guide to Perfect Gentility* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1856)

Women like Anna Johnson, Sarah Sanders, Ella Sheppard, and Martha Inglis represent Black gentility, a social status distinct from but concomitant with white gentility that calls for further investigation. Their microhistories provide enough data to unsettle current histories of music in the United States and demand a more thoroughgoing investigation of the musical practices of Black people, of women, and of place. Antebellum parlors were the spaces where racialized femininity was constructed for both Black and white women, but there were too many parlors (of all sizes) for it to be possible to generalize about a monoculture. Black women did perform scientific music in their parlors, and in this respect their cultural performance was no more hidden than that of white women. They were not publicly accessible, either. Many layers of meaning have yet to be explored because scholars, myself included, have assumed that this phenomenon did not exist. The evidence presented here means that we now have a duty to investigate the environment of this feminized space in the context of what it meant to be Black across different cultural geographies. Natchez was not the same place as Charleston, or Sparta, or other locales.

Samuel A. Floyd once wrote that “the responsible and appropriate approach to historicizing black music before the nineteenth century would be to ask *theoretically interesting questions* that evolve in the exploration of the circumstantial evidence.”¹²⁹ His statement retains its relevance for the limited number of nineteenth-century examples I have compiled. The musical practices of Black women must be contextualized through their individual experiences. And even if the answers to the questions cannot be ascertained, the exercise of seeking the data will enrich our understanding of women’s cultural production in this turbulent period. There is a long way to go.

Trumpism and Hauntological Reckonings of *latinidad* and Music

DAVID F. GARCIA

In 2018, ProPublica released a clandestine recording of wailing children separated from their parents inside a converted-warehouse Border Patrol detention facility in Texas.¹³⁰ A backlash ensued nationally and across the political spectrum: one report characterized the recording as “heartbreaking,” and former First Lady Laura Bush compared detention centers with

129. Floyd, “Black Music,” 116 (Floyd’s emphasis).

130. Ginger Thompson, “Listen to Children Who’ve Just Been Separated From Their Parents at the Border,” ProPublica, June 18, 2018, <https://www.propublica.org/article/children-separated-from-parents-border-patrol-cbp-trump-immigration-policy>.

the “internment camps” used for Japanese Americans during World War II.¹³¹ I would like to recall one particular moment of the recorded exchange between a border agent and weeping children pleading to be reunited with their mothers and fathers:

AGENT: What we have here is an orchestra.

CHILD: Where’s the orchestra?

AGENT: What’s missing is a conductor, taaan! . . . Don’t cry!¹³²

The agent’s rhetorical use of music, comparing the sound of children crying to a conductorless orchestra, is a poignant reminder of the insidious ways in which music has been used and invoked in spaces of detainment—perhaps most notoriously during the United States’ War on Terror.¹³³ The fact that the people on the recording are children separated from their mothers and fathers makes the agent’s invoking of music especially pernicious. It does not matter that this agent is not playing recorded music at painfully high volumes to produce sensory disorientation in the children. What he does do is humiliate them and aim to destroy their humanity, all in the service of Customs and Border Protection under whose watch detained children have in fact died.¹³⁴

What is more, the impression I have of the agent’s native Spanish accent makes the entire recorded event for me confounding. But why should I be confounded by the idea that one Latino US border agent would humiliate immigrant children from Latin America? According to political scientist David Cortez, Latinx people make up more than 50 percent of Border Patrol agents and 24 percent of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.¹³⁵ Consider also that, according to the Center for American Progress, over 50 percent of people apprehended by the US Border Patrol in 2017 were nationals of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, and by 2018, many of these apprehended people primarily spoke

131. Annifred Solomon, “Heartbreaking Recording of Children Separated from Families at US Border,” *The Week*, June 19, 2018, <https://www.theweek.in/news/world/2018/06/19/heartbreaking-recording-of-children-separated-from-families-at-u.html>.

132. “AGENT: Bueno, aquí tenemos una orquesta. CHILD: ¿Donde esta la orquesta? AGENT: Falta el maestro, ¡taaan! . . . ¡No llores!” Translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

133. See Cheng, *Just Vibrations*, 71–92, and Cusick, “You Are in a Place.”

134. Six migrant children died in Border Patrol and Office of Refugee Resettlement custody between September 2018 and May 2019; see Robert Moore, “Six Children Died in Border Patrol Care: Democrats in Congress Want to Know Why,” *ProPublica*, January 13, 2020, <https://www.propublica.org/article/six-children-died-in-border-patrol-care-democrats-in-congress-want-to-know-why>.

135. David Cortez, “I Asked Latinos Why They Joined Immigration Law Enforcement: Now I’m Urging Them to Leave,” *USA Today*, July 3, 2019, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2019/07/03/latino-border-patrol-ice-agents-immigration-column/1619511001/>.

Indigenous languages (e.g., K'iche', Mam, Ixil, Chuj, Q'anjob'al, Q'eqchi', and many others).¹³⁶

How might ProPublica's heading, "*Listen* to Children Who've Just Been Separated from Their Parents at the Border" (my emphasis), prompt a critical reframing of music and race in the United States of the nineteenth century? What can we learn in any of this—the headline, the agent's allusion to music, or the demographic data of detainees and border agents—to link the anti-immigrant and white nationalist policies of the Trump administration and the complicity of *latinidad* in the histories of settler colonialisms in North America? I suggest here that the recorded sounds of the sobbing children and the Spanish-speaking US border agent evoke a nineteenth-century US *latinidad* conflicted both in its complicity in genocidal settler colonialism and in its resistance to white supremacy's project of manifest destiny.

What I argue is twofold. First, the ProPublica recording forms a part of the United States' ever-expanding archive of settler colonialism, empire, and white supremacy. Secondly, accounting for the power of the US colonial archive to reproduce the "antebellum period" and its contingent Black/white racial binary illuminates what is silenced in the process: namely, the complex and contradictory presences of Indigeneity and *latinidad* in the United States of the nineteenth century.¹³⁷ Even in the case of the United States' westward expansion across Indigenous and Mexican lands, the antebellum narrative typically unfolds as a chapter in the grand narrative of the US Civil War. Instead, a reckoning for a nineteenth-century musicology of *latinidad* in the aftermath of Trump necessitates demonstrating how power works in making certain historical subjects alternately invisible, brutally hypervisible, and silent. Just as Marissa Fuentes theorizes that the enslaved women's screams constitute a rhetorical genre of the colonial archive, so my listening to these detained children's cries conjures histories of dehumanization at the hands of manifest destiny, white supremacy, and Spanish and Mexican settler colonialism in North America.¹³⁸

I aim to establish the methodological groundwork for researching and recovering archival materials that stand not merely as evidence of the

136. Tom Jawetz and Scott Shuchart, "Language Access Has Life-or-Death Consequences for Migrants," Center for American Progress website, February 20, 2019, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2019/02/20/466144/language-access-life-death-consequences-migrants/>.

137. Here, I draw on Marissa Fuentes's theorization of the archive of slavery of eighteenth-century Bridgetown, Barbados: Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, 60. For my use of the terms "latinidad" and "Latinx," I turn to Guzmán, "*Latino*, the Word," my reading of which theorizes the inability of the words "*Latino*," "*Latina/o*," "*Latin@*," and "*Latinx*" to capture "something remarkably unnamable." Drawing on the work of Jean-Luc Nancy and Norma Alarcón, Guzmán argues for the "radical potential" in the "naysaying" that *latinidad* "repetitively performs in language and in history."

138. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, 142–43. See also Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*, 89–90, and Ellis, "Border(s) Crossed Us Too."

pre-twentieth-century history of *latinidad* and music in the United States. I listen to the crying of the detained children in the modes of Jacques Derrida's "hauntology," by transforming the child's question "Where's the orchestra?" into a message from a past *latinidad*, so that, as I look for the music of *latinidad* in the United States of the nineteenth century, I am always pursued by our histories of the settler colonialism of Indigenous lands and the slavery of African and Indigenous people throughout North and South America.¹³⁹ Furthermore, I conceptually substitute the "pre-Mexican War" period for the "antebellum period" as a needed corrective to historical studies of early US music and race, one that Eric Lott (citing Michael Rogin) gestures toward with his "the American 1848" in highlighting minstrelsy's significance for the class conflict and racial oppression that were revealed in the aftermath of the Mexican War (1846–48).¹⁴⁰

I trace the musical presence of *latinidad* in and around the trans-Mississippi West, where generations of people from the Spanish empire and the Mexican nation disrupted the ways of life of the Kiikaapoi, Osage, Očeti Šakówiŋ, Mvskoke, Timucua, Jicarilla Apaches, Pueblos, Utes, and many other Indigenous peoples (see figure 5).¹⁴¹ Trumpism, which continues to be a pernicious movement that stokes white nationalist fears of the supposed browning of the United States, is merely the most recent attempt to displace and silence Indigenous and other nonwhite people within US borders. As Ann Ostendorf, Anne Hyde, and others have shown, white anxieties over racial difference date back to early nineteenth-century Anglo-American encounters with mixed-race people throughout Luisiana, Florida, and Nuevo México.¹⁴²

I begin with Spanish settler colonialism along and around the Mississippi River in the late eighteenth century. From the start of his administration in 1777, Governor Bernardo de Gálvez y Gallardo ramped up efforts to settle lands throughout Luisiana with immigrants from Spain as well as Catholics from France, Canada, and Germany.¹⁴³ The majority of the Spanish settlers were Andalusians from Málaga and Granada and Isleños from the Canary

139. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 1–10, 62–63. I thank Rhae Lynn Barnes for steering me toward framing the child's question as a haunting.

140. Lott, *Love and Theft*, 9, 105–7.

141. Figure 5 is reproduced from <https://www.loc.gov/item/74693107/>. For Indigenous names and spellings as well as information on land acknowledgments, I follow Native Land Digital, <https://native-land.ca/>.

142. For a study of the forging of a national music and early Anglo-American anxieties over racial difference in the lower Mississippi River Valley, see Ostendorf, *Sounds American*. For a thorough history of mixed-race families throughout the trans-Mississippi West, and their importance to the fur trade in this region, see Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families*. I use Spanish orthography for place names when referring to periods in which those places were under Spanish and Mexican political control.

143. See Montero de Pedro, *Spanish in New Orleans*, 48–49.



Figure 5 Map of North America drawn by Juan López, geographer to King Charles IV of Spain, ca. 1780, showing Spanish settlements in and around the trans-Mississippi West

Islands.¹⁴⁴ During Spain's war against Great Britain in 1779–83, Gálvez settled married Spanish soldiers along the western bank of “el Rio Misisipi” for the defense of Luisiana and Nueva Orleans.¹⁴⁵ In 1790, Vicente Manuel de Zéspedes reported to Charles IV of Spain on the status of the border between Florida and the US state of Georgia, in particular the area of the Rio Santa María, lands of the Timucua and Mvskoke. The report expressed concern over the “introduction of fugitives, known as Crackers,” across the Rio Santa María and into Florida.¹⁴⁶ Among its recommendations was that the

144. See Sluyter et al., *Hispanic and Latino New Orleans*, 22.

145. See Din, *Populating the Barrera*, 11–14, 25.

146. Luis de Las Casas, letter to Conde del Campo de Alange, August 14, 1790, Archivo General de Indias, Santo Domingo, 2554, expediente 1, letter 8, 529r–v: “introducción de la gente profuga, conocida por el nombre de Crakares.” James A. Lewis discusses the etymology of the term “cracker,” explaining that it circulated among Spanish speakers living in the border areas of Florida and Luisiana, and in the eighteenth century “referred to backwoodsmen living in an area stretching from Maryland to Georgia”: Lewis, “Cracker: Spanish Florida Style,” 185. Scott Syfert adds that the British in colonial America referred to Scots-Irish settlers as “crackers”

Spanish border provinces of Florida and Luisiana should be vigilant with respect to the Americans' "desire to seize the western territory and to acquire the right to navigate the Mississippi."¹⁴⁷ It also advised the Crown to populate the Rio Santa María region as a mode of fortification, thereby creating a "living wall of industrious citizens."¹⁴⁸

Francisco Luis Héctor, baron de Carondelet, who was the Spanish governor-general of Luisiana and Florida Occidental, continued settler colonialist policies through the 1790s; like his predecessors, he feared that Anglo-Americans would swarm into Luisiana and seize it. Carondelet encouraged the Spanish court to supplement settlements throughout the territories with émigrés fleeing the French Revolution and with Irish, Flemish, and German immigrants.¹⁴⁹ In 1795, Carondelet ordered Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, governor of Natchez, to inspect settlements in Luisiana Alta, including Nuevo Madrid, Santa Genoveva, San Luis, and San Fernando (now Florissant, Missouri). Gayoso observed, for example, that San Fernando, land of the Kiikaapoi, Osage, Miami, and Očeti Šakówiŋ, "is exactly like a Spanish village; it is a small town, but its inhabitants are well disposed and good cultivators."¹⁵⁰ Gayoso's recommendation to Carondelet was to "encourage the emigration of good quality people to Illinois as I consider it the most direct route to the Kingdom of Mexico and if this interesting objective is not attended to, it will not take many years for the English traffickers to enter there and [military] forces will follow."¹⁵¹

Then, in May 1803, Spanish officials in Nueva Orleans confirmed what had already been public knowledge since 1800, that Spain had retroceded Luisiana back to France.¹⁵² Following President Thomas Jefferson's announcement in October of France's cession of Louisiana to the United

for their uncouth habits in living or squatting in the backwoods of, for example, North Carolina's Piedmont: Syfert, *Eminent Charlotteans*, 29.

147. Quoted in Lewis, "Cracker: Spanish Florida Style," 199. In his report to the Spanish king, Zéspedes also discussed a group of Americans who had petitioned Luisiana and Florida for admission since they objected to the US government's enforcement of debt payment.

148. Quoted in Lewis, "Cracker: Spanish Florida Style," 202.

149. See Din, *Populating the Barrera*, 106–7.

150. Holmes, *Documentos inéditos*, 274: "es exactamente como una aldea de España: es pueblo corto pero sus habitantes bien dispuestos y buenos cultivadores." See also Holmes, "1795 Inspection."

151. Holmes, *Documentos inéditos*, 278: "fomentar la emigración de gentes de buena calidad a Ilinois pues lo considero el paso más directo al Reino de México y si no se atiende a este tan interesante objeto, no tardará muchos años sin que los tratantes ingleses se introduzcan allí y a ellos seguirán las fuerzas."

152. See Kukla, *Guide to the Papers of Pierre Clément Laussat*, 53. Gilbert C. Din and John E. Harkins remind us that, through the Treaty of Fontainebleau (1762), King Louis XV of France ceded Louisiana to Spain shortly after the end of the French and Indian War (1754–63) as "compensation for inducing the Iberian nation to enter the war as its ally and losing Florida." Spain retroceded Luisiana back to France with the (not very) secret Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1800, believing that "France could serve as a buffer in Louisiana, with responsibility for

States, the House of Representatives debated the constitutionality of the annexation of territory and with it the making of non-Anglo people into American citizens. It is at this historical moment that I draw on Michel-Rolph Trouillot's explanation of historicity and authenticity, in which he states that an authentic knowledge of a past's injustices is one that engages with the renewal of those injustices in the present.¹⁵³ Take the sound of the crying of detained children and that of their ancestors conquered in the United States' errant borders of the early nineteenth century, and we discover, in Sharon Holland's words, those who reside "in the nation's imaginary 'space of death' and why we strive to keep such subjects there."¹⁵⁴

I will say more about Holland's framing of the United States' history of slavery, genocide, and empire as a "space of death" below. For now, I return to 1803 and Federalist Representative Gaylord Griswold of New York, who spearheaded the objection to the Louisiana treaty by pointing out that, with the addition of its territories, which more than doubled the existing size of the nation, the "rights of the present citizens . . . [would] be swallowed up and lost."¹⁵⁵ As the United States had been free of British rule for barely twenty years, Rep. Griswold couched his concern for the young nation's Anglo citizens in both political *and* cultural terms. He stated that an "exceedingly large" territory was not "consistent with the spirit of a republican government," adding that "as you extend your limits you increase the difficulties arising from a want of that similarity of customs, habits, and manners, so essential for its support."¹⁵⁶

The possession of US citizenship depended not only on legal matters (being white, male, and, at this time, a landowner) but on performative ones as well. What Griswold and other Anglo-Americans wrestled with throughout the nineteenth century, as Anthony Mora points out, was the role and rights of non-Anglo people who had been colonized by the United States. By the Enlightenment's logic of republicanism, "race, gender, and cultural markers," Mora notes, served "as evidence of a lack of reason" and therefore provided the rationale for governing without consent.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, Griswold's anxiety over preserving the uniformity of Anglo-American culture is demonstrative of this logic. Thus, in order to preserve their imaginings of a racially pure national culture, the "present citizens" to whom Griswold refers strove to remove the non-Anglo people of the Louisiana territories to the nation's "space of death." And it was music and dance or the sounding and movements of non-Anglo and

maintaining a vigorous military establishment that Spain could no longer afford." Din and Harkins, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 39, 295.

153. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 150–51.

154. Holland, *Raising the Dead*, 4.

155. United States, 8th Congress, 1st Session, *Proceedings and Debates*, 433.

156. *Ibid.*, 433.

157. Mora, *Border Dilemmas*, 26.

racially mixed bodies that haunted—and continue to haunt, as Trumpism shows—the nation’s Anglo racial imaginings.

With Spanish colonialism came the music and dance of Andalusian, Canary Islander, French, and German settlers, of mixed-raced Indigenous people, and of the political class. The new French colonial prefect of Louisiana Pierre-Clément de Laussat, for example, describes celebrations of the transfer of power in New Orleans in 1803 and 1804 that included boleros, gallopadés, gavottes, and quadrilles played and danced to by Spanish, French, and Anglo-Americans.¹⁵⁸ Following the transfer of colonial power, Spanish officials, soldiers, and many residents of the Louisiana territories left their settlements en masse for the Spanish colonial port city of Panzacola, but not before leaving sonic traces of their music.¹⁵⁹ Arriving in Santa Genevieve, land of the Očeti Šakówiŋ, Osage, and Kiikaapoi, in 1806, Irish writer Thomas Ashe noted that Spanish “manners and habits remain with the French settlers, who originally resided among them.”¹⁶⁰ “Hence, I have heard,” he continues, “the guitar resound soon after sun-set, with the complaints and amorous tales of the village swains.”¹⁶¹ Ashe describes the playing of guitars and fiddles and singing coming from nearly every home during the evening hours, and in the later evening hours people gathered together to play and dance the *vals*, the *pas de deux*, and the fandango, which was the “favorite of the few remaining Spaniards of the village.”¹⁶²

The fandango was also favored in Nuevo México. Zebulon Pike, the first American official to travel there, arrived in Agua Caliente, land of the Jicarilla Apaches and Pueblos, in 1807 (see figure 6).¹⁶³ Describing the population as consisting of “civilized Indians, but [of] much mixed blood,” Pike describes participating in a “dance which is called the *Fandango*.”¹⁶⁴ He described another dance

by one man and two women, who beat time to the music, which is soft and voluptuous, but sometimes changing to a lively, gay air. The dancers exhibit the motions of the soul, by gestures of the body, snapping the fingers, and sometimes meeting in a *stretched embrace*. The fandango is danced to various figures and numbers. . . . The music made use of the guitar, violin, and singers, who, in the first described dance, accompany the music with their hands and voices, having always some words adapted to the music.¹⁶⁵

158. Laussat, *Memoirs*, 80–91.

159. See Coker and Inglis, *Spanish Censuses*, 6.

160. Ashe, *Travels in America*, 117.

161. *Ibid.*

162. *Ibid.*, 118.

163. See Pike, *Account of Expeditions*, 206–7. See also Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*, 116–17. Figure 6 is reproduced from <https://www.loc.gov/item/2006683398/>.

164. Pike, *Account of Expeditions*, 207.

165. *Ibid.*, appendix to pt. 3, 36 (emphasis in source).

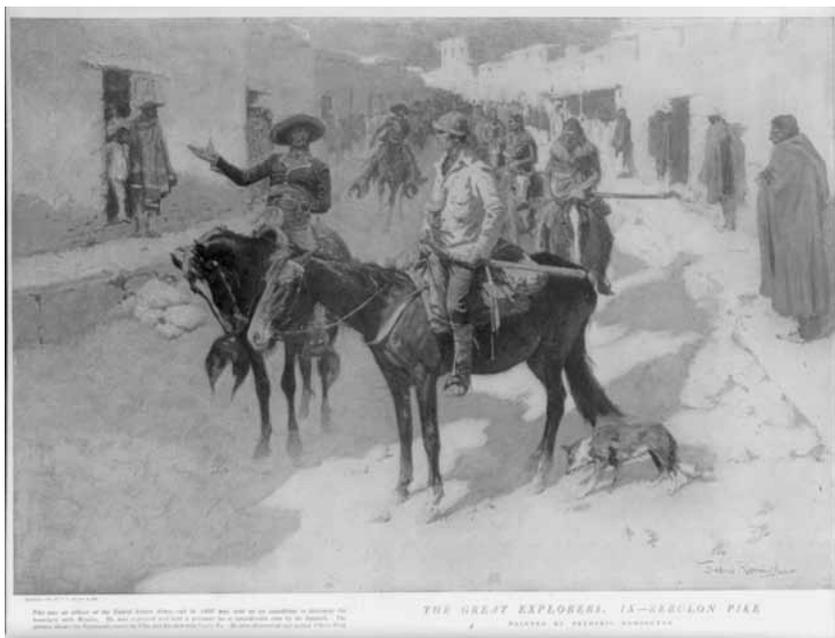


Figure 6 Spaniards escorting Zebulon Pike into Santa Fe, Nuevo México, in 1807, reprint of a drawing by Frederic Remington, *Collier's Magazine*, June 16, 1906

In the wake of Rep. Griswold's objections to the United States' acquisition of the Louisiana territories and, with them, non-Anglo citizens, other Anglo-American men expressed similar xenophobic concerns. In 1804, the New York *Evening Post* published an article claiming that a celebration of the acquisition of Louisiana that was to take place in Battery Park, Manhattan, was unwarranted. The article includes a letter from a member of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, who confirmed that the society would not participate because many of its members did not view the acquisition of Louisiana as a cause for celebration on account of its "manifest violation of our Constitution, in the admission of foreigners to all the rights of Citizens, *without the legal qualifications*."¹⁶⁶ The member continues: "Besides, [the members] do not conceive that, though an order may issue from the mighty 'Organ of the Public Will,' they are bound to obey it; and particularly when the result proves how *Frenchified* every thing appears in the arrangement."¹⁶⁷ By "Frenchified" the writer was referring to the inclusion of French and Spanish music in the proposed celebration.

166. *Evening Post* (New York), May 11, 1804 (my emphasis).

167. *Ibid.* (emphasis in source).

This use of the term “Frenchified” recalls the previous decade’s heated debates between Federalists and Republicans over the goals of the French Revolution, particularly its more radical aspects.¹⁶⁸ Given that Republicans generally supported the aims of the revolutionaries, we might assume that the letter writer leaned toward federalism and was thus not a supporter of Thomas Jefferson and the treaty his administration had brokered with Napoleon. Moreover, his objection, like that of Federalist Representative Griswold, points to music and culture as critical forms of citizenship, which, Susan Branson reminds us, is as much a performative concern as it is a legal one.¹⁶⁹

These few archival records of Spanish, French, and US settler colonialisms and empires are significant for the insights they offer into the cultural and musical implications of a nineteenth-century history of *latinidad* in the United States. But what specifically do they teach us?

First, they show that the threat to whiteness dates from much earlier than recent US music and race theory scholarship has proposed. Angelo Rich Robinson, for example, considers the post-Reconstruction era as the moment when white supremacy was forced “to show its face for the first time” through legalized segregation. “During slavery,” he writes, “whiteness was normalized and deemed invisible.”¹⁷⁰ Yet the acquisition of Louisiana in 1803 and with it the granting of citizenship to “foreigners” “without the legal” and cultural “qualifications” challenged white supremacy’s exclusive hold on US citizenship, legal or otherwise. The Saxon myth that was emerging as the prevailing definition of American descent as proposed by Thomas Jefferson accounted, it seems, for Spanish- and French-speaking people’s lack of “the legal qualifications” by which to claim US citizenship.¹⁷¹

Secondly, they may be combined with other primary sources from the United States’ historical aural archive of settler colonialism, empire, and white supremacy to build on the work of Jennifer Lynn Stoeber, who argues that the reconstitution of whiteness and Blackness’s resistance to whiteness materializes in historically contingent practices of sounding and listening.¹⁷² We must add to this history of the US sonic color line the sounding and listening practices that forged nineteenth-century *latinidades* and their resistance to white supremacy, starting with the US acquisition of the Louisiana territories. Rep. Griswold’s allusion to “a want of that similarity of

168. See Goodman, “Transatlantic Contrafacta,” 409–11, and Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 9.

169. Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 13–20. For a discussion of federalist xenophobia in political song during the Jefferson administration, see Lohman, *Hail Columbia!*, 170–71.

170. Robinson, “Race, Place, and Space,” 98. See also Shaffer, “Charles W. Chestnutt.”

171. On the Saxon myth, see Painter, *History of White People*, 111.

172. Stoeber, *Sonic Color Line*, 19–32.

customs, habits, and manners” betrays a certain sense of anxiety over sharing citizenship with those of foreign or non-Anglo cultures, whether “Frenchified” or not.

Indeed, we continue to observe similar anxieties materialize more than two centuries later, not only in voter suppression laws and in the current and previous administrations’ vexed handling of migrant surges at the United States–Mexico border, but also in everyday confrontations between white and Latinx people and their musics. In May 2020, for example, NowThis News posted a video titled “White Woman Harasses Latinx Family at Park.”¹⁷³ In this video, the berated US citizens, who NowThis News suggests are a Puerto Rican family, are also heard to answer back in resistance:

WHITE WOMAN: In America, we speak English.
 LATINO: So?
 WHITE WOMAN: We don’t have to listen to your f*cking crap.
 LATINO: Who say that? Who say that?

Not only can the woman’s objection to the sounds of Puerto Rican Spanish and the family’s music be traced back in time to early nineteenth-century debates on the floor of the House of Representatives and in the newspapers of New York City. We rediscover, once again, why white supremacy in the United States strives to keep racially mixed and Black subjects in the nation’s imaginary “space of death.” As Holland states, “we cannot escape the raw fact that our boundary is filled with the blood from five hundred years of slavery, removal, and conquest and that our border is a constant space of death and terror.”¹⁷⁴

Such anxieties over one’s whiteness in racializing sounds and bodies as Others have always consumed this nation; this was particularly true when US territory expanded through acquisitions of the lands of Indigenous peoples, of Spanish Florida in 1819, of the northern provinces of Mexico in 1848, and of Puerto Rico in 1898. From the 1830s through the 1850s, US newspapers printed dozens of articles stoking fears about an imminent “war of races” between Anglo-Saxons and people of the “Celtic” or “Latin” races.¹⁷⁵ In the early 1840s, as Anglo-Americans intensified their encroachment on the lands of Mexico’s northern provinces, Nuevomexicanos prepared to resist.

173. The video is currently available online.

174. Holland, *Raising the Dead*, 4.

175. The number of such articles is vast. I include here only a few representative examples: “House of Representatives,” *Commercial Advertiser* (New York), May 21, 1836; “Mr. Calhoun to Mr. King,” *Evening Post* (New York), December 9, 1844; “Europe—Its Races and Revolution,” *Hillsdale Whig Standard* (Hillsdale, Michigan), July 18, 1848. For a historiographical account of “Celts” in US racial discourse, see Painter, *History of White People*.

On January 10, 1846, four months before the United States declared war on Mexico, Governor Manuel Armijo of Nuevo México issued a proclamation imploring the Mexican province's citizens for unity against those "baptized with an Anglo-Saxon name."¹⁷⁶ In one relevant passage, he states, "Far more are we compelled by a commonality of feeling when we see ourselves embittered by a foreign nation and in danger of losing our sacrosanct religion, our nationality, and perhaps even our lives [and] families that are inevitably affected as the subjects of a foreign nation, in language, in Christian morals, and in the religious customs that we inherit from our forefathers."¹⁷⁷

I conclude by returning to the ProPublica recording with which I began this essay. When I listen to it, I am haunted by the pain and trauma that Ned Blackhawk traces in his corrective of US American history, a realm of Indigenous trauma and not of "greatness."¹⁷⁸ He writes, "Elusive yet omnipresent, pain remains an uncommon subject in historical inquiry, partly because of language's inability to capture the experiential nature of another's pain."¹⁷⁹ What we hear in the cries of migrant children in 2018 and of those today should not resound merely with their humanity but with a humanity denied by white supremacy, framed within a seemingly innocuous allusion to music. We hear an aural reckoning, most importantly, for a Latinx musicology in the aftermath of the Trump administration that also holds *latinidad* accountable for its own hauntings of inflicted trauma and pain.

A Long Way from Home

GUTHRIE P. RAMSEY JR.

The versions of two well-known Negro spirituals that form the starting point for this essay are contemporary meditations on part of the oldest repertoire produced by African Americans living in the United States.¹⁸⁰ (These versions may be heard in audio examples 1 and 2 in the online version of the **Journal**.) "Motherless Child" and "Wade in the Water" have been performed in many contexts beyond their original ones: as art music in concert

176. Sender and Salazar, *Sender Collection*, document #298, "Copy of a Proclamation by Governor Manuel Armijo Re the Sensation of Troubles with the U.S., January 10, 1846": "bautizados con el nombre de Angulo saxones [*sic*]."

177. *Ibid.*: "Mucho mas nos obliga la uniformidad de sentimientos cuando nos vemos amargados de una Nacion Extranjera y Expuestos à perder Nuestra religion sacrosanta, nuestra nacionalidad y quisa àsta [*sic*] nuestras vidas familias que interesan teniendo que estar sujetos a una Nacion Extraña en el ydomia [*sic*] en la Moral christiana y en las costumbres religiosas que heredamos de nuestros antepasados" (punctuation modified).

178. Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*, 1.

179. *Ibid.*, 8.

180. "Motherless Child" (traditional) and "Wade in the Water" (traditional), from Guthrie Ramsey, *A Spiritual Vibe*, Vol. 1, 2020, digital track (currently available online).

settings, as gospel songs, in music education curricula, and as the thematic subjects of jazz improvisation. For more than 150 years these songs have served as sturdy reminders of the nation's Black musical past and as a constant source of creative inspiration for contemporary performers, arrangers, and composers.¹⁸¹

The significance of this repertoire runs deep in African American history. Spirituals are testimonies of pleasure and of resistance to horrific violence. Embedded in both their lyrics and their performance conventions are traces of the survival tactics of an enslaved population motivated by radical dreams of freedom. "Rather than stay in their place," writes poet Kevin Young, "slaves imagined a new one."¹⁸² Remapping was for them a necessary form of survival—reconfiguring the American landscape as Egypt or Canaan in order to shore up (and keep secret) their search for freedom. At times allegorical, always coded, such remappings—a kind of storying—provided a set of radical metaphors for the slave's exile. Young characterizes the magical elements of these survival techniques as a "hiding tradition," from slave culture to more modern iterations of poetry, song, storytelling. His reading of these practices and their legacies in sound, word, and idea provides a template for understanding their pathways to the allegorical space he refers to as "Elsewhere." "Elsewhere," Young writes, "is central to the African American tradition. Conjured again and again in the spirituals, simultaneously ethereal and earthbound, Canaan and Canada, heaven and Harriet Tubman heading north, Elsewhere is the goal of going—framed in the remapping of what's here. A cosmology that is simultaneously exterior and internal, and what's more, eternally hopeful, however hidden."¹⁸³ Indeed, the conjuring magic of music making allowed the participants to "steal away" and find an alternate reality that they could sustain, nurture, and pass on.

Sometimes that notion "to go" went beyond the figurative and metaphorical. Mass migration, both forced and elective, has informed the entire history of American music in the western hemisphere. With respect to the specific case of Black music in the United States, however, it has persisted as a central trope. In the typical narrative of African American music, the South has been described as the first soil, a source and the beginning. According to this by now well-known epic tale, enslaved Africans brought to the New World dynamic approaches to music making, which in the context of America's brutal plantation economy became a distinct art. Out of a nation-building theater of violence and wit, labor and prayer, profit and song, novel and diverse forms of music appeared in lockstep with each new social circumstance encountered by African Americans. Whether going Elsewhere by way

181. For an important recent study of spirituals, see Graham, *Spirituals*. See also Allen, Ware, and Garrison, *Slave Songs*.

182. Young, *Grey Album*, 21.

183. *Ibid.*, 53–54.

of horse-drawn chariots in the spirituals or later via railway, a post-Civil War technology, some form of migration to the safety of “home” has always been captured in pre-twentieth-century forms of Black music.¹⁸⁴

Following the legal end of slavery in the 1860s, the musical styles evolved by African Americans transformed in many ways, as they became rooted in an emergent industrialized system of creation, mass production, marketing, dissemination, and consumption. Migration defines the next stage of this narrative too, as the music traveled northward (and westward) from the South to the urban North. Black music acquired a legion of new listeners decade by decade, even as African Americans themselves flooded big cities seeking opportunities for better lives. Through networks of live performance venues, sheet music production, and, eventually, the mass consumption of recordings, Black music’s reach and influence became a key symbol of “Afro-modernism,” a notion often couched in the dream language of “progress.”

The abovementioned arrangements of “Motherless Child” and “Wade in the Water” were conceived as part of *Hide/Melt/Ghost*, a multimedia performance piece I developed that tells the story of the early years of African American music through narration, live music, and film. Over the course of the interdisciplinary workshop in which this colloquy originated, I performed them with two vocalists in an academic setting, as a supplement to discussion of my current research. They hold space in this colloquy as living, breathing, sonic testaments to the value of Black lives in the study of early American music. In some ways, they are, perhaps, a long way from home in this logocentric domain. Yet, at the same time, the power of these songs may help us remap what counts as reliable knowledge in academic settings.

A Voice Like Thunder: Edwin Forrest’s Sonic Redface

CAITLIN MARSHALL

On November 15, 1829, Edwin Forrest (1806–72) stepped onto the stage of New York’s Park Theater in the title role of John Augustus Stone’s newly commissioned play *Metamora, or The Last of the Wampanoags*. Costumed in buckskin, feathers, and a smear of redface, Forrest presented an imposing incarnation of the familiar stage Indian. But audience members were unprepared for the revolution in American theater that roared forth in the sound of Forrest’s voice. Thunderous and striking, it was patterned on the “savage” oratorical style he had purportedly gleaned from an ethnographic deep dive with Choctaw chief Pushmataha (1764–1824) during a theatrical

184. See Floyd, *Power of Black Music*, 213–17.

tour of the western territories in 1824–25.¹⁸⁵ By the time of his death, Forrest's roar was iconic, the mark not just of an actor but of a wholly new, American style of drama and performance.¹⁸⁶

In what follows, I deconstruct Forrest's theatrical legacy by tuning in to the sound of a voice—a rich site of inquiry familiar to scholars of music and sound studies, but largely unattended to by theater and performance historians. Listening closely to the dramatic text of *Metamora* alongside first-person accounts of Pushmataha's oratory, I make a case for Forrest's appropriation of the chief's verbal art. I call this appropriation “sonic redface,” that settler colonial speech act wherein white social actors, posing as Indian, appropriate the sonic figuration and decolonial force of Indigenous oratory. I argue that Forrest's sonic redface cast Pushmataha's verbal art in the service of the settler colonial projects of refiguring Native oratory as American stage speech and establishing whites as “native” Americans. My essay weds methodologies from sound and performance studies to make audible the way in which stage dialect constructs race, consolidates settler colonial power, and overdubs the archival record to silence history's violent erasures.

Metamora arrived on the US cultural scene at a pivotal time in the nation's history. Manifest destiny reigned, bringing increased contact and conflict between settlers and Indigenous peoples. To meet the moment, Forrest commissioned an “aboriginal drama,” and playwright Stone responded to his call with a loose dramatization of a brutal seventeenth-century conflict between British colonists and North Atlantic tribes led by Wampanoag sachem Metacom. Metacom's Rebellion ended in Wampanoag defeat, and with Stone's injection of “Noble Savage” and “vanishing Indian” ideologies into the drama, the demise of Forrest's *Metamora* resonated eerily with the announcement of President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal policy—a genocidal plan for the forced displacement of tribes from cultural homelands to reservation lands in what is present-day Oklahoma.¹⁸⁷ As *Metamora*, Forrest greased the wheels of this forced migration.

Audiences were struck by the “realness” of Forrest's portrayal of *Metamora*: his carriage, gestures, voice—all appeared as “the genuine Indian who was brought upon the stage.”¹⁸⁸ As early as 1837, Forrest's biographers attributed this verisimilitude to the actor's proto-ethnographic experiences among Natives.¹⁸⁹ Yet it was not until the 1877 publication of Forrest's official, posthumous biography by William Rounseville Alger that the authenticity of Forrest's Indian delineation was ascribed to the month in 1825 he

185. See Rebhorn, “Edwin Forrest's Redding Up,” 455. Rebhorn describes Forrest's vocal performance as “savage” in the way it leveraged stock conceptions of the Noble Savage to upend early American understandings of oratory and elocution.

186. See Gaul, “Genuine Indian,” 2.

187. See Lepore, *Name of War*, 192. Lepore clarifies that *Metamora* opened the same week as that in which Jackson announced his Removal policy.

188. Alger, *Life of Edwin Forrest*, 1:239–40.

189. *History of Edwin Forrest* (no page numbers).

spent “going Native” with Choctaw chief Pushmataha outside of New Orleans.¹⁹⁰ Crucially, Alger’s narrative is uncritically replayed in nearly every subsequent biography and scholarly work on Forrest.¹⁹¹

This tale of Forrest’s “‘method acting’ *avant la lettre*” functions as an authenticating myth.¹⁹² The myth gave rise to the following fallacy: because Forrest’s ethnographic replication of Native particularity was so exacting, so complete, Forrest became the person he mimicked—a Native American.¹⁹³ At work here is Philip Deloria’s concept of “playing Indian,” an analytical approach that captures the way in which American identity crystallizes through Indianness performed.¹⁹⁴ Later connecting Forrest’s Indianness performed to the statesman Pushmataha, Alger established Forrest as an authentic stand-in for the chief. This substitution functioned to supplant Pushmataha, erasing his historical legacy from the archival record, and inaugurating Forrest as the prototypical “native” American in Pushmataha’s stead. In this essay, I contend that a central register of this racialized, performative substitution was sonic, as Forrest, his biographers, and nearly two centuries of theater scholars established the actor’s signature vocality as a sound recording of Pushmataha’s speech and oratory.

Born around 1764, Pushmataha was chief of the Choctaw six towns district (see figure 7). He was a renowned and masterful orator, a skilled diplomat on behalf of Choctaw sovereignty, and also a decorated general in the United States Army. In 1820, he and Andrew Jackson participated in diplomatic negotiations at the Treaty of Doak’s Stand, a meeting wherein Pushmataha forestalled early US efforts to remove the Choctaw nation to Arkansas Territory (now Oklahoma). Native oratory of the nineteenth century was a heteroglossic verbal art form deployed in contact situations with an asymmetrical balance of power between Indigenous peoples and government representatives. Reviewing published records of Pushmataha’s oratory during treaty proceedings, as well as a posthumous 1829 article in the

190. Alger claims that Forrest spent time not with the Pushmataha of historical fact but with the chief’s young adult son. Pushmataha the statesman died on a diplomatic mission to Washington, DC, in December 1824 and was deceased by the time Forrest claims to have spent time in Choctaw Nation. Theater historian Bethany Hughes (Choctaw) argues persuasively that Forrest had no contact with Pushmataha or any member of his family: Hughes, “Indispensable Indian.”

191. Contemporary scholarship on Forrest that reproduces but never unpacks Alger’s Pushmataha narrative includes Moody, *Edwin Forrest*; Grose, “Edwin Forrest, ‘Metamora’”; Bank, “Staging the ‘Native’”; Jones, “First but Not the Last”; Mason, *Melodrama*; Lepore, *Name of War*; Rebhorn, “Edwin Forrest’s Redding Up”; Mallett, “‘Game of Politics’”; Gaul, “‘Genuine Indian’”; and Dillon, *New World Drama*.

192. Rebhorn, “Edwin Forrest’s Redding Up,” 460.

193. Theresa Gaul argues that Forrest’s body served “as an ethnographic text” and as the site of “the inscription of his close observations of American Indians in the southwest.” Forrest transmitted his authentic knowledge on Indians “for eastern audiences who had little direct contact at this point [1824–28] with indigenous peoples.” Gaul, “‘Genuine Indian,’” 8.

194. Deloria, *Playing Indian*.



Figure 7 Pushmataha by John William Gear after Charles Bird King. Reproduced courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Used by permission. This figure appears in color in the online version of the *Journal*.

Cherokee Phoenix, Jason Edward Black contends that Pushmataha used oratory to resist removal rhetoric and assert Native sovereignty.¹⁹⁵ Stated otherwise: Pushmataha’s eloquence served distinctly decolonial ends.

195. Black, “Native Resistive Rhetoric.”

Let us now listen to the way Pushmataha's oratory was recorded and reproduced in *Metamora*. Alger's biography pinpoints the following oration as central to Forrest's characterization:

"Pushmataha," said Forrest, in wondering admiration, "who were your grandparents?" His nostrils curled with a superbly beautiful disdain, and, stretching forth his arms with a lofty grace which the proudest Roman orator could not have surpassed, he replied, "My father was never born. The Great Spirit shivered an oak with one of his thunderbolts and my father came out, a perfect man, with his bow and arrows in hand!"¹⁹⁶

Forrest's connection to Pushmataha is entirely fantasized. Yet the Native oratory recorded in Alger's account is decidedly *not*. The above passage loosely reproduces Pushmataha's oration on his family origins—an oration recorded as a first-hand account by white Mississippi settler Gideon Lincecum (1793–1894), and later included in his 1861 manuscript "Life of Apushmataha." According to Lincecum, Pushmataha made the following oration during a Choctaw council after missionaries had attempted to publicly goad him into revealing his kinship ties. Given the significance of the speech, I reproduce it at length:

It was a long time ago; at the season when the glorious sun was pouring down its brightest, balmiest and greatest life-giving influence. . . . The day was calm and fair and very pleasant. There was a beautiful wide spreading plain, with but few trees on it. One there was of a giant size and venerable age. It was a red oak, and its dark, waving branches, overshadowing an immense area of the beautiful green plain, had bid defiance and braved unscathed the storms of many winters. . . . It had witnessed the rise and fall of many generations of animal life. But everything must have its time, fulfill its destiny. That magnificent red oak . . . had not accomplished the object for which the great spirit had planted it. . . . Anon a cloud was rising in the west, a black, angry, threatening cloud, looming upwards and rapidly widening its scowling front. Harshly grumbling as it whirled its black folds onward, nearer and nearer, very soon it overspread the whole heavens, veiling the landscape in utter darkness and appalling uproar. It was a sweeping tornado, fringed with forked lightning, thunders rolling and bellowing; the winds fiercely howled and the solid earth trembled. In the height of this confusion and war of elements a burning flash of fire gleamed through the black obscurity. A shattering crash, followed by a burst of terrific thunder that, heavily rumbling through the surging storm, seemed to shake down the humid contents of the fast rolling cloud in irresistible torrents. Awful sounds assailed the startled senses in all directions as the frightful tornado swiftly swept by in its devastating course. Soon it passed and was all calm again. The sun poured down his beaming rays in their wonted brilliancy; but the vast, time honored sylvan king, the red oak, had been shivered into fragments; its oddshapen splinters lay widely scattered on the rain-beaten plain. Not a vestige remained to mark the spot where once stood

196. Alger, *Life of Edwin Forrest*, 1:139.

that towering tree. . . . The object of its creation was accomplished, and in its place there was a new thing under the sun! Shall I name it? Equipped and ready for battle, holding in his right hand a ponderous club, standing erect on the place of the demolished red oak, was your dauntless chief, “Apushimataha.”¹⁹⁷

While these recordings and rerecordings of Pushmataha’s oratory testify to the ways in which settler colonial ideologies filtered Native speech, and while such filters render attempts to hear or listen to any “authentic” Native oratory little more than a historiographic ruse,¹⁹⁸ I acknowledge simultaneously the necessity of reading and centering the decolonial work of Pushmataha’s oration.¹⁹⁹ Ironically, however, the scope of this essay, and (as I endeavor to argue) the research challenges posed by the way sonic redface structures hearing and the archive, make it necessary to first center the performative construction of whiteness. In subsequent research, I aim to expand the work presented here and foreground Pushmataha’s decolonial oratory. This essay’s account of sonic redface will ultimately enable a performance history that does more than replay the sounds of white supremacy.

For the current argument, it is important to note the central tropes connecting the three examples of oratory I have so far presented in this essay and its footnotes. Each emphasizes the performativity of oratorical context, establishes a genealogical connection between Pushmataha, a celestial force, and an oak tree, and weds these elements in order to performatively enact Pushmataha-the-speaker-as-warrior. Finally, each endows the performative

197. Lincecum, *Pushmataha*, 86–89. Lincecum’s manuscript was published posthumously by the Mississippi Historical Society in 1906. Alongside “The Life of Apushimataha,” the editor of that publication reproduced in endnotes a *Galveston and Dallas News* sketch containing a secondary version of Pushmataha’s oration, one that preserves key thematic elements of thunder, lightning, and an oak tree, but that dresses Pushmataha’s oration in the garb of classical rhetoric: “Jupiter was a god of power and gave birth, in a very extraordinary manner, to the impersonation of the highest order of intellect. With a blow of his brazen hatchet, Vulcan cleft the head of Jupiter and Minerva leaped forth in panoply. This is a beautiful allegory, but it is not as grand in its conception as that of the birth of Pushmataha (Son of Thunder), who had neither father nor mother, but directed by the Great Spirit a thunderbolt struck a giant oak, and Pushmataha leaped forth, a young warrior, armed and painted, to go on the warpath”: Lincecum, *Pushmataha*, 98n1. This sketch was almost certainly published by Lincecum’s son-in-law W. P. Doran in the 1890s.

198. See Kheshti, *Modernity’s Ear*, ch. 1. Roshanak Kheshti persuasively argues that ethnographic recordings of Blackfoot Mountain Chief are not authentic records of an Indigenous subject, but rather recordings of power relations between a white female recordist (Frances Densmore) and an Indigenous recorder.

199. I am ultimately interested in the way sound figured the decolonial force of Pushmataha’s verbal art. Scholars working on the relationship of sound to Indigenous projects of sovereignty include Beth Piatote, Dylan Robinson, and Trevor Reed; see, for example, Piatote, “Juris-Sonics”; Robinson, *Hungry Listening*; and Reed, “Sonic Sovereignty.”

context with the symbolic sonic figures of lightning and thunder. These figures are repeated with a racialized difference in *Metamora*.

The block quotation below is extracted from *Metamora*'s first oration. The sachem has just returned to his "Indian village" after narrowly escaping capture and death at the hands of scheming British settlers. The lithograph shown in figure 8 reflects the *mise-en-scène* of the speech, and the oration is calculated to rally *Metamora*'s people to the cause of war:

"Chief of the people," said a voice from the deep as I lay by the seaside in the eyes of the moon—"Chief of the people, wake from thy dream of peace, and make sharp the point of thy spear, for the destroyer's arm is made bare to smite. O son of my old age, arise like the tiger in great wrath and snatch thy people from the devourer's jaws!" My father spoke no more; a mist passed before me, and from the mist the Spirit bent his eyes imploringly on me. I started to my feet and shouted the shrill battle cry of the Wampanoags. The high hills sent back the echo, and rock, hill, and ocean, earth and air opened their giant throats and cried with me, "Red man, arouse! Freedom! Revenge or death!" (*Thunder and lightning. All quail but Metamora.*) Hark, warriors! The Great Spirit hears me and pours forth his mighty voice with mine.²⁰⁰

Forrest's sonic redface in this passage has two registers of figuration. The first register is rhetorical, the second material and embodied. First, *Metamora*'s oration lifts central rhetorical elements from *Pushmataha*: there is an elision that positions the Great Spirit as the speaker's "father," whose voice (like *Metamora*'s) is rhetorically aligned with the stage sound effect of "thunder and lightning." And, while *Pushmataha*'s origin story figured the chief as a warrior emerging from a shattered oak, in this passage *Metamora* is figured as a warrior whose call to arms is echoed by the "rock, hill, and ocean, earth and air." In fact, it is unclear whether the words "Red man, arouse! Freedom! Revenge or death!" are uttered by *Metamora* or are the "voice" of nature—the implied response of "rock, hill, and ocean, earth and air" to *Metamora*'s "shrill battle cry." Indeed, this discursive entanglement between the sound of nature and the sound of *Metamora*'s voice is calculated to blur the line between them. I note this move—taking the specific figuration of *Pushmataha*'s oratory and broadening it so that *Metamora*'s voice is figured as nature itself—as an oversimplification based on the racialized ideology of the Noble Savage.

The rhetorical figuration of the voice of nature is doubled through sonic materiality, as when the voice of the Great Spirit (itself indistinguishable from *Metamora*'s cry and nature's echo) is represented by the sound of thunder and lightning. The performative effect here is to figure *Metamora*, and by extension Forrest's *voice*, as thunder and lightning. In live performance, this stage magic was produced through the use of a thunder sheet. As Forrest roared forth, "Red man, arouse!," a stagehand vibrated the sheet,

200. Stone, *Metamora*, 78.



Figure 8 Edwin Forrest as Metamora in a lithograph illustration by D. C. Johnson. Reproduced courtesy of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Used by permission.

underscoring Forrest's voice as the sound of thunder. This staging literalizes the sonic figuration attending Pushmataha's oration.

Finally, central to the practice of sonic redface is the racialized pitch shift that accompanies the appropriation of Native oratory. In *Metamora's* speech, the sonic figure of thunder is lifted from Pushmataha's oratory and replayed as sonic redness. Rebhorn highlights the "redness" of *Metamora's* speech, but produces settler colonial logics in attributing this racialization to general emotional and sonic excess inspired by Pushmataha's "natural" oratory. In *Metamora's* speech, the elision between *Metamora's* voice and that of nature trains listeners to hear the address "Red man, arouse! Freedom! Revenge or death!" in two ways. It could be construed as a racialized hailing by a chief of his followers. Alternatively, if it is nature's echo of *Metamora's* battle cry, it explicitly hails *Metamora* himself as the "red man." In either scenario, *Metamora's* reverberating voice is sonically figured as "red," reinforcing the savagery of a chief calling for bloodshed in reprisal against settler colonial incursion. Later in the oration, as the Great Spirit "pours forth his mighty voice" to match *Metamora's* war cry, the redness of the chief's voice maps onto the sound effect of thunder and lightning. This redded-up sonic figure ultimately becomes the signal trope of *Metamora's* delivery, a hallmark of Forrest's voice and of a distinctly American style of acting.

But why bother parsing sonic redface, particularly when scholars have been writing about Forrest's brand of playing Indian and the relationship between *Metamora* and Indian Removal for decades? At stake in this essay's attention to sonic redface is a move to decolonize the archival record and methodologies of writing theater history, as well as a call to further investigate how contemporary performance practices relating to voice and speech are complicit in perpetuating settler colonial violence.

First, the archival record. I have described sonic redface as a performative enactment and supported this claim with analysis of the script and staging of the 1829 performance of *Metamora*. I recognize the tenuousness of this line of argumentation. It is certain that Forrest never encountered Pushmataha prior to the debut of *Metamora*, and I have yet to find evidence that the young actor encountered the chief's oratory. Yet I am convinced that such evidence is immaterial. Alger's 1877 authenticating myth enacted sonic redface by linking Pushmataha's verbal art to Forrest's portrayal of *Metamora*. While strictly rhetorical, that masquerade is no less felicitous than any embodied performance. Alger's *ex post facto* twinning of Forrest and Pushmataha occurred during Reconstruction, followed Buffalo Bill Cody's first Wild West show in 1872, and preceded by a decade the US policy shift from Indian Removal to the Dawes Act. This period was marked by performances that enacted white racial nationalism by playing out fantasies of settler triumph and Native domestication.²⁰¹ In this racial climate, Pushmataha's

201. See Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 58.

decolonial oratory was overdubbed in the service *not* of Choctaw sovereignty but of white Americana, and the sonic redface of Alger's 1877 biography retroactively rescored the archive, recomposing history to match its myth. In this way, Pushmataha's oratory was instrumentalized to underscore both antebellum paternalist Removal policy and the late nineteenth-century policy of "kill the Indian, save the man." Whether embodied in the flesh or through the page, the 1877 performance of sonic redface fundamentally altered the way audiences heard (and continue to hear) *Metamora*, Native oratory, and a legacy of American stage dialect.

A central effect of this archival redding-up is the relegation of Pushmataha's verbal art to the acoustic shadow of white, settler colonial supremacy. How else might it be possible that, 141 years after Alger first spun Forrest's authenticating myth, Choctaw theater historian Bethany Hughes was the first to debunk and critique the Pushmataha narrative as illustrative of settler colonial epistemology undergirding theater history and historiography? Forrest's sonic redface ensures that *Metamora*, the archival record, and theater history itself play and replay white settler colonial power. Intervening against sonic redface as an instrument of slow domination will require new techniques for listening to and hearing the past; I have endeavored to furnish such "sound methods" for theater and performance history in this essay.

In a final provocation I return to the question of the American stage. Aside from pointing up necessary interventions in theory and methodology for theater history and performance studies, a theory of sonic redface makes audible the legacy of racial masquerade in a genealogy of dramatic voice and speech training. If, as historians have well documented, Forrest's stylings as *Metamora* set the tone for a uniquely American style of acting, then it is time that scholars and practitioners alike reckoned with the fact that our practical and aesthetic legacy is at best predicated on settler colonial fantasy, and at worst built upon the theft of Indigenous aesthetics in the service of white nationalism. Learning to listen to and hear the performative play of sonic redface is a first step toward decolonizing both our theory and our practice.

What Is Mohican Music?

SARAH EYERLY AND RACHEL WHEELER

They say we are violent. We are unarmed.
They say we are rioting. We are praying.²⁰²

202. Text by Tara Zhaabowekwe Houska and Brent Michael Davids, from Brent Michael Davids's *Singing for Water* (2017, published 2018), a composition for three layered choruses, piano, shaker, and recorder.



Figure 9 Bill Miller, *The Warrior's Path*, 2021. Used by permission. This figure appears in color in the online version of the **Journal**.

Grammy-winning Stockbridge Mohican musician Bill Miller often visits classrooms when he performs on college campuses. He holds students in rapt attention with his stories of growing up on the Stockbridge-Munsee Reservation in Wisconsin, and of his life on the road as a musician touring with Tori Amos and opening for Pearl Jam. But when he asks them, “What does Mohican music sound like?” the students squirm. They look as though they have just been given a surprise test they are about to fail. They seem to feel bad for not knowing the answer, and also for recognizing *why* they do not know the answer: the history of colonialism and genocide in America. After what feels like minutes but is probably only seconds, Miller picks up his guitar and unleashes a dazzling guitar riff from Eric Clapton’s “After Midnight,” or a plaintive rendition of Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah.”

He lowers his guitar and looks up at the students: “That,” he declares, “is Mohican music.”²⁰³

Miller’s interchange with students surfaces an important question that highlights the connection between racial identity and musical styles and genres for American audiences. Namely, how do contemporary Indigenous artists like Miller navigate the legacy of white settler colonialism and racism, including narrowed perceptions of what constitutes Native music, while sounding their own identities as Indigenous musicians and Americans?²⁰⁴ While it may seem strange to begin an essay on early American music and race with a story of a contemporary Native artist, Miller’s interchange and his long career as a professional musician provide an important theoretical framework through which to engage the tangled issues of music, race, and colonialism to which this colloquy is devoted.

As we write this essay in the summer of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic and the protests sparked by the murder of George Floyd by police are underscoring the devastating legacies of colonialism and slavery. As this colloquy highlights, music and ideas about music are bound up with these forces and structures. Music can serve (and has served) to reinforce racialized identities and these relationships must be interrogated. We hope to further the project of decolonizing archives, scholarship, and the academy by considering a number of pointed questions in this essay. What does it mean for Indigenous musicians, past and present, to engage with musical forms derived from settler culture? How are non-Indigenous Americans to respond to and understand the legacy and ongoing structures of colonialism? How can early Americanists ensure that their work centers the full humanity of Indigenous historical subjects?

We came to know Miller and other members of the Stockbridge-Munsee Community through our interest in the history of Mohican encounters with English (Congregational) and German (Moravian) missionaries in the eighteenth century.²⁰⁵ Over the past twenty years, those relationships have

203. The authors witnessed this type of conversation between Bill Miller and students in several contexts: during a visit to Rachel Wheeler’s Native American Religions course at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis on April 3, 2014; during a gathering with students from the American Indian Studies program at the same institution on April 4, 2018; during a public masterclass with music faculty and students at the University of Richmond, October 9, 2018; and during a virtual talk with musicology faculty and students from Florida State University on September 25, 2020.

204. Recent scholarship on contemporary Native musicians and Indigenous modernity engages precisely with these questions. See Levine and Robinson, *Music and Modernity*; Robinson, *Hungry Listening*; Browner, *Music of the First Nations*; Perea, “Pamyua’s Akutaq”; Perea, “Politics of Inuit Musical Modernities”; Berglund, Johnson, and Lee, *Indigenous Pop*; Browner and Riis, *Rethinking American Music*; Diamond, “Music of Modern Indigeneity”; and Diamond, Szego, and Sparling, “Indigenous Modernities.”

205. The Wisconsin Community traces its roots to the 1730s, when several communities of Housatonic, Mahican, Highland, and other Native groups accepted the proposal by Massachusetts provincial and ministerial authorities for a missionary and a secured New England township. This confederated group became known as the Stockbridge Mohicans. Several years after the

grown into a collaborative project to re-sound Mohican-language hymn texts dating to the 1740s that are located among the records of the Moravian missions. We ultimately recorded these re-soundings in three different performance modes.²⁰⁶ The first recordings were made with students at Florida State University. The second set of recordings were made at the Lutheran Church of the Wilderness, one of three churches in the Stockbridge-Munsee Community, with arrangements by Stockbridge Mohican composer Brent Michael Davids. The final set of recordings featured Miller's renderings of the Mohican hymn texts.²⁰⁷ (A recording of the hymn "Jesu paschgon kia" from each of these three sessions may be heard respectively in audio examples 3, 4, and 5 in the online version of the **Journal**.) This collaboration with Mohican partners helped us to understand the eighteenth-century creation of Mohican hymnody in ways that would have been impossible had we relied only on the traditional archival practices of our academic disciplines. The challenges of navigating Indigenous identity and settler colonial structures are part of the lived reality of Indigenous peoples, including our collaborators from the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. Their strategies for navigating these tensions offer a starting point for reframing our efforts to understand the eighteenth-century meetings of Europeans and Mohicans as they played out through musical creation and performance.

The rich sources in the Moravian records revealed that the hymns were not simply missionaries' translations of German hymns, and that, in fact, a number of them are attributed to Native authors, making them one subset of just a handful of early Mohican-authored texts preserved in the mission records. Further research in the archives revealed that these Mohican-language hymns quickly came into broad usage in Mohican communities. The mission records make clear not only that the hymns were sung in the context of Christian worship, but that they might also have fulfilled the functions of Mohican traditional music in ritual contexts: they were sung while

founding of Stockbridge, Moravian missionaries first approached a Mohican community at Shekomeko, New York, just forty miles from Stockbridge. Ties of kinship and diplomacy bound these two Native communities. For a history of Stockbridge and Shekomeko, see Wheeler, *To Live upon Hope*. On the history of the tribal archives, see Miron, "Mohican Archival Activism."

206. For a full description of this project, see Wheeler and Eyerly, "Singing Box 331"; a digital version of the article, together with accompanying multimedia elements (including hymn recordings), is available at <https://oieahc.wm.edu/digital-projects/oi-reader/singing-box-331-rachel-wheeler-sarah-eyerly/>. A subsequent forum includes reflections on the project; see O'Brien et al., "Article Forum." For a short documentary overview of the project, see "Singing Box 331: Mohican Hymns from the Moravian Archives," <https://oieahc.wm.edu/digital-projects/oi-reader/singing-box-331-rachel-wheeler-sarah-eyerly/documentary/>. See also Wheeler and Eyerly, "Songs of the Spirit."

207. Brent Michael Davids is a prolific and accomplished composer of concert music, film scores, and music for dance and theater. His website can be found at <http://filmcomposer.us/>. Bill Miller is a singer-songwriter and Grammy-winning musician whose music spans multiple genres from traditional Native American flute to classic rock, blues, gospel, and sacred music. His website can be found at www.billmiller.co.

hunting, at the bedside of the sick and dying, and during celebratory feasts to give thanks for the food that sustained the community. It became clear to us that the hymns could not be understood simply as a mechanism of colonization. Rather, they represented Mohican efforts to sustain community through ceremonial practice.²⁰⁸

Once we began to understand the hymns as a form of Mohican music, and not simply as European music with texts translated into the Mohican language, we were convinced that the process of re-sounding the hymns might yield new insights into their resonances and functions for the eighteenth-century authors and performers, both Mohican and European. After an intensive period of research and consultation with linguist Chris Harvey, who is working on language revival with the Stockbridge-Munsee Community, we gathered to record eight hymns with the early music choir at Florida State University. In these recordings, the singers followed the standards of historical performance practice in attempting to conform as closely as possible to what we know of musical practices in Moravian communities on the basis of the archival records of the Moravian Church in Pennsylvania and Germany.²⁰⁹

But as we played these recordings for people who were unfamiliar with this project, it quickly became clear that most listeners did not hear the hymn recordings as examples of Mohican music. Rather, many of them heard the hymns as European Christian music. In other words, the form, timbre, and harmony of the German chorale tunes were sonically familiar enough to them that they failed to hear the hymns as Mohican either linguistically or musically. Indeed, *we* could not be confident that *we* were hearing or singing Mohican music as it sounded in the eighteenth century. We knew Mohican singers incorporated Moravian musical and aesthetic practices when singing Moravian hymns in multiethnic worship services, but because archival records preserving information on the performance practices of the Mohican hymns are particularly sparse, we could not determine if Native singers might also have chosen to incorporate Mohican musical practices

208. Contextual evidence suggests that the hymns may have functioned in similar ways to wampum: they were communally produced and deployed for purposes of diplomacy; see Wheeler and Eyerly, "Singing Box 331," 661–76; for the digital version, see <https://oieahc.wm.edu/digital-projects/oi-reader/singing-box-331-rachel-wheeler-sarah-eyerly/the-creation-of-jesu-paschgon-kia/>.

209. For a detailed discussion of the processes of musical and linguistic reconstruction employed for the hymn "Jesu paschgon kia," see the companion website for "Singing Box 331": Christopher Harvey, "Linguistic Analysis," <https://oieahc.wm.edu/digital-projects/oi-reader/singing-box-331-rachel-wheeler-sarah-eyerly/linguistic-analysis/>; and Sarah Eyerly, "Musical Analysis," <https://oieahc.wm.edu/digital-projects/oi-reader/singing-box-331-rachel-wheeler-sarah-eyerly/singing-jesu-paschgon-kia-at-florida-state-university-tallahassee-fl/>. To learn more about Moravian singing practices and the sound environments of eighteenth-century Moravian communities, see Eyerly, *Moravian Soundscapes*, and its companion digital project: https://doi.org/10.33009/moraviansoundscapes_music_fsu.

into their hymn singing. We also knew that several Mohican Moravians received extensive training in European musical practices and theory, and learned to build European musical instruments, but the archives remained silent on whether and how Indigenous musical practices influenced the performance of Native hymnody. The archives simply did not provide answers to these questions, and did not help us to imagine the eighteenth-century hymns as fully realized practices capable of expressing Mohican creativity and agency.

In considering our own project, we realized that if we stopped with the FSU recordings we would miss the opportunity to delve into the wide range of musics that can rightly be considered Mohican. It was essential to have conversations with people who viewed the history of the Mohican hymns from a different angle: descendants of the Stockbridge Mohicans.²¹⁰ We turned to the methods of Native American and Indigenous studies, which emphasizes community-engaged scholarship, particularly the cocreation of knowledge and recognition of the knowledge-keeping traditions of Native communities.²¹¹ These approaches provided the foundation for recording the hymns in two additional versions with Brent Michael Davids and Bill Miller respectively. By creating these two sets of recordings with contemporary Mohican musicians, we came to hear the historic sounds of Mohican hymnody in a different register.

Both Davids and Miller are accomplished composers and musicians who bring European and Native musical and cultural forms into productive tension. They have devoted their life's work to investigating and working with and through the thorny issues of musical genre, racial identity, and spiritual and religious commitment. Both artists lay claim to non-Indigenous musical forms, asserting that genre and content do not remain inextricably linked but can be harnessed to express new ideas, including those that may be both foreign and contrary to the creator's intent. This move enables Native artists to transcend the bounds of expected Indigenous musical forms, thereby, in Davids's words, "expand[ing] the palette of techniques by which Native [artists] can express their own Nativeness."²¹² Their perspectives continue

210. Archival collections like the Arvid E. Miller Library on the Stockbridge-Munsee Reservation contain significant holdings for historical research that complicate and sometimes contradict colonial histories. For an excellent discussion of the creation of the Arvid E. Miller Library as an expression of Mohican sovereignty and activism, see Miron, "Mohican Archival Activism."

211. The call of NAIS scholars to decolonize the archives has found support in many disciplines, including musicology, in finding creative ways to utilize colonial archival holdings while also engaging with their sins of omission and commission; see Mt. Pleasant, Wigginton, and Wisecup, "Materials and Methods," and Perea and Solis, "Music, Indigeneity, and Colonialism." We discuss these ideas and their implications for the study of early American music in Eyerly and Wheeler, "Music in Unexpected Places."

212. Quoted in Avery, "Native Classical Music," 205. Davids has also advocated for encouraging Native composers to explore Indigenous expression through the composition of Western classical music.

to lend further credence to our sense that the creation of the Mohican hymns in the eighteenth century should not be seen as simply the imposition of settler ideology and musical styles.

Our work with Miller and Davids provided opportunities to learn from the lived experience of our collaborators in navigating these tensions. They both live out the complexities of eighteenth-century America within their own heritage. Miller is descended from Stockbridge Mohicans on his father's side and German Americans on his mother's. Davids traces his family line to English Puritans who came over on the *Mayflower* on his mother's side and to Stockbridge Mohicans on his father's side. We came to understand this all the more clearly with respect to their work as we collaborated on the hymn recordings. Miller and Davids were interested in collaborating on the hymn project because of the historic ties between their eighteenth-century Stockbridge ancestors and the Mohican Moravian community where the first Mohican-language hymns were composed, the memory of which continued down through the centuries to the present day.²¹³ Both men prioritize community over religious affiliation, valuing the connection with their Mohican ancestors and language above doctrinal orthodoxy.²¹⁴

As a composer professionally trained in the traditions of Western classical music, Davids has deployed traditional Western musical forms as a means of engaging the legacy of colonialism and genocide in the United States. Writing about his compositions, Davids pushes against those who might see his work in Western classical genres as a forced assimilation: "I've dedicated my career to voicing tribal people's perspectives in the concert music world, where there is precious little influence." Rather, he spells out his methodology with precision: "From my perspective as a Mohican living on a reservation, I advocate for the expansion of indigenous thought into Western music."²¹⁵ Davids's requiem, opera, and concertos accomplish this not only in their content but also in their performance practices, which are deeply collaborative. His opera *Purchase of Manhattan* calls attention to the profoundly different understandings of the relationships between Indigenous and settler peoples and represents this clash of worldviews by voicing the different roles

213. In the course of our research, we discovered that visitors from Stockbridge were present on the occasion of the first singing of Mohican-language hymns in Shekomeko in December of 1744; see Wheeler and Eyerly, "Singing Box 331," 665.

214. Jessica Bissett Perea has written about contemporary Inuit musicians in Alaska, arguing that for many Indigenous musicians of mixed heritage, what might be described as musical hybridity is viewed as a unified musical practice by the musicians themselves: Perea, "Pamyua's Akutaq."

215. Brent Michael Davids, "Artistic Statement," *Requiem 4 America* website, accessed August 30, 2021, <http://www.requiemforamerica.com/about.html>. See also Brent Michael Davids, "Cultural Appropriation in Classical Music?," *NewMusicBox*, November 21, 2019, <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/cultural-appropriation-in-classical-music/>.

in the opera with Native and non-Native performers, using a musical language not originally designed to give voice to Indigenous cultures, in hopes of provoking discussions about our nation's history of injustice toward Indigenous peoples.²¹⁶ Davids's approach to composition aligns with that of many other contemporary Indigenous musicians and composers, such as Dawn Ierihó:Kwats Avery (Kanienkéha [Mohawk]), in "refusing the Western racial imaginary of what Indigenous music should sound like."²¹⁷

Miller's work similarly seeks to challenge the confining and racialized stereotypes of what constitutes Indigenous music, something we had witnessed many times at his concerts in the years before we started our collaborative work on the hymns. He is masterful at engaging his audiences with the tensions of modern Indigeneity by compelling them to recognize and reflect on the very real impact of systemic racism and colonialism on Native individuals and communities. Miller insists through his artistry and performances that his life—with its tragedies and its joys—not be reduced to evidence of European settler sins, but that his agency, creativity, and humanity be recognized. As he rified during a concert at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, "I'm in a museum, but I'm not one of the exhibits."²¹⁸ Miller often begins his concerts with his traditional Native American flute compositions before picking up his guitar and singing. During this latter part of his performances, he often melds his own songs together with covers of songs by well-known non-Native artists such as Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, and Eric Clapton, interspersed with stories of his life. This practice primes his audiences to hear these familiar songs in a new way. Audiences may come to his concerts expecting to hear "Native music," and he provides that with his virtuosic performances on traditional Native flutes. By the end of the concert, regardless of the expectations they brought in with them, audiences are offered the chance to reflect on the dual inheritances of settler colonialism and Indigenous survivance, and to move beyond the confining racial associations of particular musical forms.

Miller's and Davids's approaches align with studies by pioneering Native scholars Lisa Brooks, Craig Womack, and Philip Deloria, who find in historic

216. See <https://www.purchaseofmanhattan.com/>; and James Barron, "The Sale of Manhattan, Retold from a Native American Viewpoint," *New York Times*, November 18, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/19/arts/music/the-sale-of-manhattan-retold-from-a-native-american-viewpoint.html>. An example of Davids's work, "Mtukwekok Naxkomao (The Singing Woods)," can be found in Levine, *Writing American Indian Music*, 271–84.

217. Avery, "Native Classical Music," 205.

218. Video at Wheeler and Eyerly, "Singing Box 331," <https://oieahc.wm.edu/digital-projects/oi-reader/singing-box-331-rachel-wheeler-sarah-eyerly/singing-jesu-paschgon-kia-at-eiteljorg-museum-indianapolis-indiana/>. Patrick Erben calls attention to this moment in Erben, "Releasing the Energy," 389n3.

Native engagement with European American literary, religious, and musical forms cultural persistence and resistance, not simply erasure.²¹⁹ Likewise, to understand Mohican Moravians' engagement with music of European origin, we seek to attend to the meanings that Native peoples found in Christianity and European American musical forms broadly and hymnody more specifically. In this, we follow anthropologist David Samuels. In his study of Apache country bands, he turns the question from "How could Indians possibly sing country songs?" to "What kinds of participation and expression does the *choice* of country music style make possible for Native people?"²²⁰ Just as Miller's and Davids's engagement with Western musical forms is not a renunciation of their Mohican identity but a means to express Indigenous perspectives through varied musical forms, so we can perhaps view the Mohican hymn texts as expressions of Mohican identity through the new form of Moravian hymnody, rather than as a rejection of Native musical or religious practices or capitulation to missionary agendas. This interpretive framework receives further support from consideration of Bill Miller's long career and his involvement in the hymns project.

Since he started touring as a professional musician in the 1980s, one constant of Miller's career has been the melding of Native spiritual and musical traditions with Christian theology and Western musical genres. He describes his musical style as "true Americana in its historical sense," merging his contemporary experiences as an artist and musician.²²¹ In the song "Praises" from his album *Red Road*, for example, he includes a prayer in the Menominee language, using a Plains falsetto singing style, which is continued by backing singers as Miller shifts to singing in English using his signature mix of rock, gospel, and blues styles. Likewise, in his original composition *Ghost Dance*, a tribute to the members of the Lakota nation who were massacred by the United States Army while participating in a ceremonial dance, Miller merges the millennialist hopes of the Ghost Dancers with images of biblical millennialism.²²²

Miller's music challenges his listeners by subverting genre and the assumed connection to racial identity. Throughout his career, he has navigated the legacy of colonialism in his music, forging his own path musically in conversation with modernity and Native traditions. His body of work is an assertion of faith that his identity as Mohican and Christian, American and

219. Brooks, "Digging at the Roots"; Womack, "Theorizing American Indian Experience"; Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*.

220. Samuels, "Singing Indian Country," 147. See also Avery, "Native Classical Music"; Diamond, "Purposefully Reflecting," 251–52; Lassiter, Ellis, and Kotay, *Jesus Road*; Spinney, *Passamaquoddy Ceremonial Songs*; and McNally, *Ojibwe Singers*.

221. Bill Miller, telephone conversation with Rachel Wheeler, April 28, 2021.

222. The cover of the *Ghost Dance* album features art by Miller, who is also a renowned visual artist, and depicts a Native man holding ceremonial objects of Native spirituality. For a recent book-length treatment of the Ghost Dance movement, see Warren, *God's Red Son*.

Native American, can be expressed through multiple genres of music. Miller's involvement in the re-sounding of the eighteenth-century Mohican hymns similarly brings together numerous strands of his life and career. The resulting recordings challenge listeners to hear his music as fully Mohican and fully Christian. In a conversation about his rendition of the hymns, Miller described his process: "I tried to stay as true as I could to my musical heritage, which includes the heritage of drum groups. [The hymns] are truly sacred music for me, above all . . . music that is prayerful, sacred, and connected to my tribe."²²³ Working on the hymns became an opportunity to explore his Christian faith in the context of his Native language. Miller's version of the hymns provokes a cognitive dissonance in his audiences. Just as the FSU recordings were often not heard as Mohican, so Miller's version of the hymns was rarely heard as Christian, lending further evidence to a point that has been made by scholars of Indigenous music stretching back to Philip Deloria's influential book *Indians in Unexpected Places*.²²⁴ Because Miller's rendering sounds "Native," listeners assume it cannot be Christian.

Davids's and Miller's musical ecumenism reflects a parallel ideological ecumenism, one that can be found throughout their musical careers and that, not surprisingly, shaped their participation in the re-sounding of the Mohican hymns. Davids, who identifies as an atheist, is deeply critical of missions and their legacies. Because of his commitment to community over ideology, however, he offered his musical skills to the congregation of the Church of the Wilderness to help realize their shared aims of the historical preservation and revival of the Mohican language and the strengthening of Mohican identity and community. Miller, who identifies as Mohican, Christian, and American, pushes his audiences to embrace a more encompassing definition of those identities.²²⁵

Miller's participation in the hymns project brought together multiple strands of his heritage—the experience of learning to hunt from elders on the reservation, learning Native flute techniques from an elder musician, and remembered words and phrases of Mohican still in use in his youth. Discovering more about the eighteenth-century Mohicans of Shekomeko who had adapted the distinctive Moravian form of Christianity that emphasizes spiritual empowerment through ritual encounter with Jesus's blood, and rendering these religious ideas and practices in song, seemed to offer Miller a welcome counterpoint to the Christianity of various missions to the Stockbridges over the centuries that had embraced more aggressive forms of cultural transformation.

223. Miller, telephone conversation.

224. Related arguments can be found in Levine, "Music, Modernity, and Indigeneity," 2, and Goodman, "Conditioned Ears."

225. Nonexclusivity is common to many Native religious practices. As Jace Weaver has detailed, practice and commitment to community are often valued over orthodoxy: Weaver, *Native American Religious Identity*; Weaver, *That the People Might Live*.

Both Davids's and Miller's perspectives on the hymns provide a theoretical framework for rethinking Mohican hymnody in the eighteenth century. Both work in multiple musical genres, and both collaborate across racial and religious lines. Just as Davids's work in the operatic form is not a renunciation of Indigenous identity, so we can posit that the turn to Moravian Christianity by eighteenth-century Mohicans does not mean rejection of Native identity or Native spirits, even if that was part of the Moravian agenda. The diversity of their views also serves as a caution against generalizing too broadly. Davids and Miller are two Mohican musicians of the same generation, and are enrolled members of the same community, yet they have differing perspectives on the meanings and interpretations of the Mohican hymns. Their work on the hymns project points out the limitations of overreliance on structural accounts to tell the whole story. Like others in their communities, they have had to reckon with a painful legacy of multiple removals, mission boarding schools, attempted cultural genocide, and ongoing ideological and systemic racism. The hymn renditions by Davids and Miller are an invitation to consider the eighteenth-century context in a different light, not by discounting the press of the structures of power, but by highlighting the individual artistry and shared commitment to their community and its history. In a very deliberate way, Miller and Davids reject the framework of dominance and tragedy often central to Marxist, structuralist, and settler colonial scholarship, calling on their audiences to confront the legacy of genocide and colonialism, while also insisting on their right to interpret Indigenous experiences through multiple musical forms.

Such caution and celebration are at the center of a recent book by David Treuer (White Earth Ojibwe), *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee*, in which he laments that the victims of the massacre died twice, once at the end of a gun and a second time at the end of a pen, in Dee Brown's best-selling *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, published in 1970. While Brown's book brought the tragedy of Native American dispossession and genocide to national awareness and amplified the work of the emerging American Indian Movement, it also limited Native lives to the experience of tragedy. Treuer's rebuttal of the book seeks to "render those histories and those lives as something much more, much greater and grander, than a catalog of pain," and he does this by attempting to catch historical subjects and living Native peoples "in the radical act of living."²²⁶ Treuer sees this aim as crucial, not just for historical accuracy, but also as an important step toward charting a different future: "I worry that if we tell the story of the past as a tragedy, we consign ourselves to a tragic future."²²⁷ He is, of course, not advocating that we should deny the tragedy of Native experiences, but that we must not stop there. His answer is to attend

226. Treuer, *Heartbeat of Wounded Knee*, 453.

227. *Ibid.*, 452.

to the “tiny, fretful, intricate details [that] make us who we are,” insisting that “they are lost again and again when we paint over them with the tragedy of ‘the Indian.’”²²⁸ Miller’s concerts and classroom appearances are an expression of this dual exhortation: he manages at once to keep the tragedies of colonialism and racism before his audience without letting them fall into resignation. Brent Michael Davids does something very similar in his new project *Requiem 4 America*, in which he explores the historical associations of the genre of the requiem by casting his new work as a funeral mass for the Native America destroyed by settler colonialism. In his vision for its performance, however, he makes a powerful case for the persistence and beauty of Native American life and culture. He hopes to perform the *Requiem* in all fifty states with choirs composed of Indigenous and non-Indigenous singers, thereby urging performers and audiences to both mourn what was lost and celebrate the life and creativity that survives.²²⁹

What would it mean to hear Miller’s flute music as American, as well as Native American? And conversely, what would it mean to hear his rendering of Cohen’s “Hallelujah” as Mohican music? What does the discomfort of the students tell us about the need and the desire for interpretive lenses that help them to reckon with America’s past, present, and future? The work of contemporary Indigenous artists and authors offers an important lens through which we can explore historical Indigenous music in the context of colonialism. Miller’s and Davids’s work on the hymns functions as an assertion of cultural sovereignty, providing a helpful model of working across racial and ideological divides in hearing and interpreting the past through the varied perspectives of the present. We conclude with a slight twist on some of Treuer’s own concluding words: “Indians lived on, as more than ghosts, as more than the relics of a once happy people. We lived on increasingly invested in and changed by—and in turn doing our best to change—the American character.”²³⁰ Likewise, Native music and musicians live on, invested in and changed by and in turn doing their best to change American music.

Hungry and cold, so young and so old
 There’s so much that he doesn’t know
 But the voice that’s inside him keeps telling him mile after mile
 You’re learning the art of survival

He eyes the lights of an ageless horizon
 Rising up from the sand
 He aches for something to believe in and guide him
 Out across this no man’s land

228. *Ibid.*, 451.

229. Davids, *Requiem 4 America* website, <http://www.requiemforamerica.com/about.html>.

230. Treuer, *Heartbeat of Wounded Knee*, 451.

Bridges behind him are burning to ashes
 There's no way that he can turn back
 But that voice that's inside him keeps telling him mile after mile
 It's all in the art of survival.²³¹

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