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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Binational Indianism in James DeMars's *Guadalupe, Our Lady of the Roses*

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Abstract

Since the late nineteenth century, the "Indian" as symbol has been a recurring trope in the art music of Mexico and the United States. Composers in both countries have often turned to representations of Indigenous Peoples as symbolic of nature, spirituality, and/or aspects of the national Self. This article seeks to place James DeMars's opera *Guadalupe, Our Lady of the Roses (2008)* in the context of two major cultural trends: Indianism in the U.S., and the representation of Mexico by U.S. composers. DeMars's use of Indigenous instruments in *Guadalupe*, including Mexican pre-Hispanic percussion, and flutes performed by famed Navajo-Ute flutist R. Carlos Nakai, continues the Indianist tradition of associating the Indigenous cultures of both countries with nature, spirituality, and authenticity. Similar associations emerge in the development and reception of both "world music" and the Native American recording industry since the 1980s, as exemplified by Nakai's career. DeMars uses these instruments in combination with Plains Native American features and generic exoticisms to represent both the Mexican Indigenous Peoples and the spiritual message of the opera. The sympathetic treatment of Indigenous cultures in Guadalupe nevertheless exists in tension with their exoticism and Otherness; in this the work is representative of U.S. cultural responses to Mexico stretching back throughout the long twentieth century.

> I wanted what I think of as a truly American sound… Beyond that, the topic of the opera is quintessentially American: it talks about the idea of immigration. It talks about the first integration of cultures that occurred in a cataclysmic fashion in the 1500s in Mexico. And all of the sound and the experience and the atmosphere of this event can be conjured by the sound of the [Indigenous] instruments that can be found at Canyon Records. These are quintessentially American instruments… So the flute became the key point.
>
> James DeMars[1]

Since the late nineteenth century, symbolic representations of Indigenous Peoples appear as a recurring trope in the art music of Mexico and the United States. Faced with the need to express their national "uniqueness" through music—that is, their difference from normative Western European musical models—composers in both countries have often turned to depictions of Indigenous Peoples.[2] This article seeks to place James DeMars's opera *Guadalupe, Our Lady of the Roses* (2008,

[1]James DeMars, "Guadalupe, Our Lady of the Roses," Interview by *Canyon Records Podcast* page, accessed Jan 6, 2012, http://store.canyonrecords.com/index.php?app=cms&ns=display&ref=GuadalupeOurLadyOfTheRosesPodcast. Page now available only through the Internet Archive, accessed Mar 8, 2021, http://web.archive.org/web/20130405171018/http://store.canyonrecords.com/index.php?app=cms&ns=display&ref=GuadalupeOurLadyOfTheRosesPodcast.

DeMars describes the flutes used in his work as "Native American flute in [key]" but they are designed to work only with specific flutes owned and played by R. Carlos Nakai, as explained later in this article.

[2]Throughout this article, I have endeavored to follow the guidelines presented in Gregory Younging, *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing By And About Indigenous Peoples* (Canada: Brush Education Inc., 2018). The exceptions are "Indianism" and "Indianist style," which refer to a specific movement within U.S. art music. Because of the extensive secondary literature on this subject and the lack of an agreed-upon replacement, these terms have been retained. "Native American" refers to

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hereafter referred to as *Guadalupe*) in the context of two major cultural trends: Indianism in the U.S. and the representation of Mexico by U.S. composers. With its use of Indigenous Mexican and U.S. instruments and musicians, and the themes of cultural conflict, negotiation, and reconciliation, this musical work contributes to a body of cultural and artistic responses to this binational relationship spanning over a century. The opera's themes also resonate in the context of Arizona's contentious immigration debate, which provided the genesis of the work.[3]

Born in 1952, James DeMars studied composition with Dominick Argento and Eric Stokes, and earned his doctorate at the University of Minnesota. For over 30 years, he taught composition and music theory at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ, from which he retired in 2019. Coming of age in the 1980s, he had access to world music sources that he incorporated into his works, including Native American as well as Hispanic, African, Japanese, Jewish, Arabic, and other musical traditions. He describes these works as "intercultural collaborations."[4] In 1986, DeMars started working with famed Navajo-Ute flutist R. Carlos Nakai and his label, Phoenix-based Canyon Records, when he was commissioned to write a concerto for Native American flute. The resulting work, *Spirit Horses* (1986), which was nominated for a Grammy in 1992, opened the doors for other commissions, including the Two Worlds Symphony (1986) and the Two Worlds Concerto (1993). Over the years, DeMars has collaborated closely with Nakai on incorporating various types of Indigenous flutes, which are not tuned to a tempered scale, into orchestral pieces in the Western art tradition.

The *Guadalupe* project began when DeMars was approached about composing a Requiem Mass to commemorate the undocumented Mexican migrants who die attempting to cross the desert. However, since the composer had written *An American Requiem* (1994), he decided to do an opera instead. This offered him an opportunity to work again with previous collaborators, including Nakai, mezzo-soprano Isola Jones, tenor Robert Breault, and African percussion specialists Mark Sunkett and Sonja Branch. DeMars worked on the libretto with Robert Doyle, president of Canyon Records, and therefore had the freedom to create and set his own texts in English, Spanish, Latin, and Náhuatl.[5]

Described as "powerfully evocative,"[6] and "a remarkable work … striking and graceful,"[7] *Guadalupe* is tremendously fresh, inventive, and contains intensely beautiful moments. The juxtaposition of disparate musical and cultural elements in the opera yields a richer and more satisfying result than is often the case in many "Indianist" works—possibly because its postmodernist style accepts such contrasts more comfortably than previous Indianisms. The opera, however, contains ambivalences and tensions that also exist in other Indianist works. Such conflicts arise from an ideological struggle between concepts of nature and civilization, which informs the deeply ambivalent relationship between mainstream U.S. culture and U.S. Indigenous Peoples, as well as the relationship between the U.S. and Mexico.

Indianism and the Nature/Civilization Dialectic

As I have argued elsewhere, these countries' European cultural and historical heritage and their post-colonial context influenced their conceptualization of nature and civilization. As a dialectical

Indigenous Peoples residing in what is now the United States of America. Although it goes without saying that hundreds of Indigenous communities exist in both the U.S. and Mexico, representations of both Native Americans and Mexicans are tied together in the U.S. imagination, as I argue later in this article.

[3]As a border state, Arizona is an epicenter for the immigration debate. While efforts to curtail undocumented immigration have existed since the early twentieth century, the issue has become a political flashpoint particularly in the last 30–40 years, as exemplified with the passing of SB1070 in 2010, which at the time was the most stringent immigration law in the U.S. Immigration plays a role in the politics of both countries and is a central issue of the binational agenda.

[4]James DeMars, "Biography," *The Music of James DeMars*, accessed Apr 15, 2010, https://jamesdemars.net/bio.

[5]James DeMars, interview with the author, Tempe, AZ, Mar 25, 2010.

[6]Kerry Lengel, "Opera review: 'Guadalupe' is a soaring message of peace," *Arizona Republic*, Nov 20, 2015, accessed Mar 8, 2020, https://www.azcentral.com/story/entertainment/arts/2015/11/20/opera-review-guadalupe-james-demars/76093508.

[7]Quote attributed to Dominick Argento (DeMars's former teacher), in "Guadalupe concert opera brings together stellar performers," *Latino Perspectives*, Nov 2, 2009, accessed Mar 8, 2020, https://latinopm.com/arts-culture/vibe/guadalupe-concert-opera-brings-together-stellar-performers-2754.

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opposition between the natural geography and resources of the so-called new world and the civilization of the old, this conceptualization extended to the contrast between the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, with their traditional way of life, and the "modernizing" aspirations of the European colonists. In the second half of the twentieth century, as the United States solidified its hegemonic position, its economic and technological prowess, and its media influence, this dialectical opposition expanded into one of modernity versus premodernity, technology versus authenticity.[8]

The underlying ambivalence of U.S. attitudes toward nature emerges also in its treatment of Native Americans and Latin Americans (due to their mixed Indigenous and European ancestry). As Frederick Pike notes:

> in hemispheric relations, seen from the north-of-the-Rio-Grande perspective, the United States stands generally for culture and Latin America for nature. Symbolizing the capitalist culture of the Yankees, shaped by their struggle to subdue wilderness and nature, has been the white male, often portrayed by Uncle Sam. In contrast, Latin America has been symbolized by Indians, blacks, women, children, and also the idle poor.[9]

These conflicting attitudes toward nature were not unique to North Americans but rather were prevalent in Western culture since the mid-nineteenth century, as the spread of industrialization, urbanization, and colonialism increasingly turned nature (and everything related to it) into a powerfully affective symbol, expressive both of nostalgia and danger. The symbolic struggle between civilization and nature emerged throughout Western civilization in the postwar, populist modernisms of the early twentieth century, which idealized rural and/or premodern cultures and minorities. This idealization plays a fundamental role in the development of the U.S.–Mexico relationship.

Since the late nineteenth century, these ideas emerge in the Indianist movement in U.S. art music, evident in works by Arthur Farwell, Henry Gilbert, Edward MacDowell, and others.[10] These composers combined melodies derived from ethnographic transcriptions, newly composed themes based on the distillation of features from those "authentic" sources, and generic exoticisms such as those identified by Michael Pisani—gestures that were often based on European folk idioms and served to represent any culture deemed exotic or different. In the "ready-made toolbox of exotica," Pisani identifies several musical elements including drone fifths, pastoral rhythms, percussive elements, pentatonic or modal scales, chromaticisms, excessive grace notes, and tremolos.[11]

The extent to which Indianism was an extension of Orientalism in general, and Indigenous Peoples just another exotic Other, may be gleaned from the fact that, as Pisani points out, some of Farwell's "Indian" song settings incorporate elements of ragtime and tango, and Harvey Worthington Loomis (1865–1930) combined his interest in Native American song with the explicit use of exoticisms associated with Asian topics.[12] Pisani sees a progression in the musical representation of Native Americans. First, composers used generic European exoticisms, such as those employed by MacDowell in the *Indian Suite* (1897). Later, as a result of the influx of ethnographic research and the increasing importance of the American West as symbol, composers, such as Farwell, became advocates for Indigenous

[8]Adriana Martínez Figueroa, "Music and the Binational Imagination: The Musical Nationalisms of Mexico and the United States in the Context of the Binational Relationship, 1890–2009" (PhD diss., University of Rochester, 2009).

[9]Frederick B. Pike, "Latin America and the Inversion of United States Stereotypes in the 1920s and 1930s: The Case of Culture and Nature," *The Americas* 42, no. 2 (Oct 1985): 131.

[10]As I have argued elsewhere, there are parallels between Indianism in the U.S. and *indigenismo* in Mexico. Both Indianisms played an important part in each country's musical nationalisms, but there are striking differences as well. While Indianism in the U.S. romanticized and idealized Native Americans against the backdrop of their perceived imminent disappearance, Mexican *indigenismo* celebrated Indigenous heritage as a vital force that had been "buried" by European domination and needed to be "rediscovered," in the context of the nationalism that swept through politics, art, and culture in the wake of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Martínez Figueroa, "Music and the Binational Imagination," 113.

[11]Michael Pisani, "I'm an Indian Too," in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 229–30.

[12]Pisani, "I'm an Indian Too," 344, 347.

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music and culture and wrote "more complex" portraits.[13] Nevertheless, it is clear from Pisani's own observations on Farwell's views of Native American music that composers' interest in Indigenous music and culture lay primarily in their association with nature, spirituality, and authenticity, as an implied antithesis to modern U.S. civilization.[14]

Although it seems easy to dismiss these appropriations of Indigenous melodies as acts of cultural colonization or domination, the "Western," "civilized" elements and the purportedly "exotic," "primitive" elements coexist in a much more ambiguous relationship. As Ronald Radano and Philip Bohlman argue, various different groups "can potentially share, appropriate, and dominate" music. Moreover,

> In these and many other colonial instances … domination quickly destabilizes, turning the direction of 'influence' back upon the oppressors, and consequently unseating the simple logic of colonizer/colonized… . Music thus occupies a domain at once *between* races but has the potential of embodying—*becoming*—different racial significations.[15]

We can see the "unseating" of the discourse of domination in the frequency with which composers offered their idealized musical "Indian" as an antidote to perceived European decadence. For instance, MacDowell sought to have the *Indian Suite* performed after years of hesitation, to counter what he saw and heard as Dvořák's superficial "tailoring" of "Negro clothes cut in Bohemia" in the *New World Symphony*; MacDowell clearly saw Native Americans ("stern but at least manly and free") as more suitable for the musical representation of the American character.[16]

Similarly, representations of Mexico in U.S. culture, including art and popular music, repeatedly focus on its Indigenous cultures, their perceived "authenticity," and their association with nature. Examples of this are found in the works of Aaron Copland who visited Mexico several times at the invitation of Mexican composer Carlos Chávez. On several occasions, Copland expressed his fondness for Mexico, which he regularly associated with its Indigenous heritage, depicting the latter in positive if highly idealized terms. For example, he described Chávez' works as "superbly Mexican in quality … but Mexican-Indian—stoic, stark, and somber, like an Orozco drawing."[17] Furthermore, on Latin American art music more generally, he believed "the countries with the deepest Indian strain seem to promise most for the future."[18] In a letter to his friend Mary Lescaze (January 13, 1933), he wrote:

> Mexico was a rich time. Outwardly nothing happened and inwardly all was calm. Yet I'm left with the impression of having had an enriching experience… . Mexico offers something fresh and pure and wholesome—a quality which is deeply unconventionalized. The source of it is the Indian

[13] Michael Pisani, "Exotic Sounds in the Native Land: Portrayals of North American Indians in Western Music" (PhD diss., University of Rochester, 1996), 521.

[14] Pisani, "Exotic Sounds in the Native Land," 520–21.

[15] Ronald Radano and Philip V. Bohlman, "Introduction: Music and Race, Their Past, Their Presence," in *Music and the Racial Imagination*, eds Ronald Radano and Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 8.

[16] The work was finished as early as September 1892, but was not premiered until 1896, nor published until 1897. Crosby Adams, "What the Piano Writings of Edward MacDowell Mean to the Piano Student" (1913): 6, and MacDowell to Henry E. Krehbiel, December 10, 1897, quoted in Margery Lowens, "The New York Years of Edward MacDowell" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1971), 55; see also Alan Howard Levy, *Musical Nationalism: American Composers' Search for Identity* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 121, 125. After Dvořák's suggestion that American composers use Black and Indigenous musics in their works, MacDowell countered: "We have here in America been offered a pattern for an 'American' national music costume by the Bohemian Dvořák—though what the Negro melodies have to do with Americanism in art still remains a mystery … To be sure, this 'tailoring' may serve to cover a beautiful thought; but why cover it … with the badge of whilom slavery rather than with the stern but at least manly and free rudeness of the North American Indian?" quoted in Tara Browner, "'Breathing the Indian spirit': Thoughts on musical borrowing and the 'Indianist' movement in American music," *American Music* 15, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 266. Similar statements were made by other prominent Indianists, like Farwell.

[17] Aaron Copland, *The New Music: 1900–1960* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1968), 149.

[18] Aaron Copland, *Copland on Music* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960), 206; Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis. *Copland: Since 1943* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 32; Martha Graham, *Blood Memory* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 226.

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> blood which is so prevalent. I sensed the influence of the Indian background everywhere—even in the landscape. And I must be something of an Indian myself or how else explain the sympathetic chord it awakens in me.[19]

Copland's reaction to Mexico is overwhelmingly positive, yet his is an ethnic reading, inhabited by the same assumptions regarding nature and authenticity that, as discussed above, have colored the relationship of white U.S. Americans with both Native Americans and Mexicans.

The connection between Indigenous Peoples of both countries in the U.S. imagination emerges, for example, in Copland's ballet *Billy the Kid* (1938). Based on the life of the infamous outlaw, the ballet presents an image of frontier life from which Indigenous Peoples have been essentially erased. The only members of the company who are cast in nonwhite roles are the Mexican girls, wearing Indigenous-style dresses and long braids, who dance to a jarabe before the death of Billy's mother. Later, they help him hide from his enemy, Alias, and they eventually mourn his death. They seem to be Billy's only friends. "The Mexican," coded as female and representative of the natural and authentic life that the pioneers are coming to replace, here substitutes for "The Indian," who is otherwise absent from the ballet. Undoubtedly, Copland's personal experience of Mexico and his friendship with Chávez influenced his representations of Mexican folk music and his sympathetic treatment of the Mexican girls in *Billy the Kid*. It is with Billy and his Mexican friends, and not with the pioneers, where the work's sympathies lay. Their exit after Billy's death and before the return of the "Open Prairie" theme, which accompanies the pioneers' inexorable progress westward, suggests the end of the Mexicans' authentic way of life.

Other U.S. composers have tackled the subject of Mexico by focusing on its Indigenous historical heritage, including Roger Sessions (*Montezuma*, 1935–63), Lou Harrison (*Song of Quetzalcoatl*, 1941), and Philip Glass (*Toltec Symphony*, 2005), among others. These pieces suggest a complex and largely unexplored musical dialogue on the subject of the binational relationship and are not just about representing the Other, but also the Self, and the ambivalent but rich relationship between the two.

World Music, Authenticity, and the Native American Recording Industry

The same associations between Indigenous Peoples and the tensions between "nature" and "civilization" emerge in the development and reception of both "world music" and the Native American recording industry since the 1980s. As a catch-all term for "non-Western" or "nonwhite," the world music category reflected not only the increasing availability of recordings from outside the rock/pop North Atlantic mainstream, but also the continuing interest of Western audiences in the symbolism that such music represents—what Radano and Bohlman call "modernity's never-ending quest for the authentic."[20] As Simon Frith argues:

> As a rock critic in the late 1980s on most world-music mailing lists, I was always more aware of the authenticity claims of the music sent to me than of its exoticism. The difference at stake wasn't between Western and non-Western music but, more familiarly, between real and artificial sounds, between the musically true and the musically false, between authentic and inauthentic musical experiences.[21]

Notwithstanding the appeal of "authentic" experiences to the hipster rock aesthetic, the "authenticity" of world music cannot be divorced from its Otherness. As Frith himself acknowledges later in the same essay, "It was soon clear, for example, that 'the authentic' worked in retail terms as a redescription of the exotic." This was possible because of the nature/civilization dialectic:

[19]Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland: 1900 through 1942* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 216.

[20]Radano and Bohlman, "Introduction," 32.

[21]Simon Frith, "The Discourse of World Music," in *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, eds Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 307, ProQuest Ebook Central.

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> This move is familiar enough from the long European Romantic celebration of the native (the peasant and the African) as more real (because more natural) than the civilized Westerner. The implication is that world musicians can now give us those direct, innocent rock and roll pleasures that Western musicians are too jaded, too corrupt to provide.[22]

Frith further argues that by the early 1990s the academic discourse of world music pivoted from concepts of authenticity to "the hybrid." This argument "defines hybridity as authenticity and implies that musical creativity depends on a free trade in sounds; 'uncorrupted' music can now be seen as stagnant music, music constrained by reactionary political and cultural forces."[23]

Although hybridity appeals to postmodernist discourses of world music, it is a concept that leads to confusion in the recording industry. Its inability to cope with musics that don't fit neatly into predetermined categories is exemplified by its treatment of Native American musics. The growth of Native American music in the recording industry throughout the 1990s was evident in the creation of the Native American Music Awards, whose first ceremony was held in 1998.[24] The Grammys added the Native American category in 2000 and televised it for the first time in 2001.[25] Still, a year later, Catherine Applefeld Olson of *Billboard* noted that "even in a time of increased exposure, an industry-wide answer to the question of just what constitutes Native American music and how it should be categorized at mainstream retail remains elusive. The majority of sales for the category still derive from such niche markets as powwow vendors, gift shops and direct sales."[26] By the early 2000s, record labels enjoyed increased sales of Native American content, but the industry struggled with where to put them in the retail space. In 2001, Lourdes Vitor of Paras Recordings told *Billboard* that "Many Native titles that are brought into most mainstream accounts are placed in the New Age bin … Our goal is to have Native American as its own separate section, adjacent to or within the World section."[27] Furthermore, Joanna Spindler of Silver Wave Records reported that:

> [retailers] will have some of their Native American titles located in Folk, some in New Age and yet others in the World Music section. We are trying to encourage the accounts to create a separate Native American section, so everybody is classified together and easier to find. A lot of the accounts have created Native American categories within their stores, but there are some that still don't have it. They put every Native American artist in New Age—even artists like Robert Mirabal, who is clearly not a new age artist.[28]

Such confusion stemmed from what Olson reported as "retailers' stone-etched mindset that all music from a Native American band must be traditional Native American music, despite the fact that there are a growing number of acts branching solidly into other genres." She quotes Tom Bee, president of the Albuquerque-based SOAR Corp. record label, noting that "All people hear is that the artist is on SOAR, so they assume it is [traditional] Native American music, when it is really straight-ahead rock or hip-hop… . That music should be in the rock section, but we are having trouble getting stores to bring it in at all."[29] It was in this context that Nakai's career developed; in fact, it was his success, bolstered at least in part by his collaborations with DeMars, that catapulted contemporary Native American music into the recording industry's spotlight. His career reflects the complex social,

[22] Frith, "The Discourse of World Music," 308.

[23] Frith, "The Discourse of World Music," 309, 312.

[24] Davin Seay, "NAMA Gala: Debut Awards Show Puts the Music on the Map," *Billboard* 110, no. 30 (July 25, 1998): 17, ProQuest. R. Carlos Nakai took the Best Male Artist award that year.

[25] Deborah Evans Price, "Native American Music Keeps Growing Steadily," *Billboard* 112, no. 48 (Nov 25, 2000): 12, and Deborah Evans Price, "Selling the Songs: Already Successful at Alternative Retail Outlets, the Genre is Finding its Place in Mainstream Stores," *Billboard* 113, no. 34 (Aug 25, 2001): 26, ProQuest.

[26] Catherine Applefeld Olson, "Native American Music: Increased Exposure," *Billboard* 114, no. 35 (Aug 31, 2002): 26, ProQuest.

[27] Price, "Selling the Songs," 26.

[28] Price, "Selling the Songs," 26.

[29] Olson, "Native American Music: Increased Exposure," 32.

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economic, and cultural dynamics of Indigenous Peoples navigating the music industry and U.S. culture at large.

Nakai studied trumpet since the seventh grade and performed both classical and jazz styles during his time at Northern Arizona University. As Paula Conlon reports, "He had applied to the US Navy School of Music when a serious car accident left him with nerve damage in his facial muscles that precluded a future as a trumpet player." He then turned to the Plains cedar wood flute, which is not a traditional instrument for the Navajo. He spent many years studying its background and performance practice with several traditional flutists, eventually developing his own style of playing and building his own instruments.[30] The process resulted, among other things, in a manual, cowritten with DeMars and others, entitled *The Art of the Native American Flute* (1997).

Nakai initially traded for flutes at a powwow. In his own account, he would:

> ask people if they knew how the flutes worked and they didn't… . At the same time I found I could apply the discipline of Western European music to the flute and that's how my first recordings came about. I thought, 'I can't let this instrument disappear into Sotheby's auction houses as another lost item of material culture of Native people in North America.' So I started learning how to make the instrument and elders eventually began to come out and say, 'You need to do this, you need to do that. We were skeptical about your intentions originally but now we see you are serious.' … It wasn't until later when I had spent a lot of time with tribal people who said, 'Sit down with us and learn these songs', that I discovered the flute is based on the vocal music of the tribes. You have to have a pretty good understanding of how music is organized by tribal communities to be able to play those same melodies on the flute or originate new melodies as they do in the powwow context every year. I realized I'd missed it entirely, all that time spent looking for the flute philosophy and it was in front of me all the time. You sang and then you played.[31]

Like other artists working in traditional or folk musics, Nakai has had to carefully negotiate the boundaries of tradition, innovation, and commercial success. He has focused his career not only on raising the profile of the Native American flute, but also resisting the idea that it should exist only in "traditional" settings, while preserving certain traditional performance practices. Early in his career, he maintained a traditional style, as can be heard in his first recording, *Changes* (Canyon Records, 1983). Conlon sees this as "representative of Nakai's apprenticeship stage, when he stayed close to the traditional style advocated by Doc Tate Nevaquaya, with its imitation of bird calls linking the flute melody to its origins."[32] Later, Nakai "asked Doc Tate's permission to 'go his own way' in the early 1980s. Doc Tate said it was alright since by that time Nakai, along with players such as Tom Machahty Ware and Doc Tate himself, had re-established the traditional Native American flute melodies."[33] Nakai explains: "That's all I'm doing today, going one more step beyond the tradition. However, I have always determined that I would never totally abandon tradition because when you do that you diminish the distinctiveness of the instrument itself."[34]

Nakai's approach to Indigenous cultures—or indeed, to any culture—is inclusive. As Cartwright notes, he "sees himself as a member of a tribal people who stretch from Antarctica to the Arctic and beyond: a week after we met, Nakai headed to New Zealand to workshop with Maori musicians

[30] Paula Conlon, "The Native American Flute: Convergence and Collaboration as Exemplified by R. Carlos Nakai," *The World of Music* 44, no. 1 (2002): 66, ProQuest.

[31] Quoted in Garth Cartwright, "Phoenix Story: Canyon Records, home of Native American music and Navajo flute king R. Carlos Nakai, is more than 50 years old. Garth Cartwright hops a Greyhound and goes calling…," *Folk Roots* 27, no. 2–3 (2005): 63.

[32] Conlon, "The Native American Flute," 66.

[33] R. Carlos Nakai, interview with Paula Conlon, 1998, quoted in Conlon, "The Native American Flute," 71.

[34] Sule Greg C Wilson, "The Accidental Virtuoso," *Rhythm Music* 20–1, n.d., quoted in Conlon, "The Native American Flute," 66.

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trying to relearn their lost ancestral instruments."[35] In the liner notes to the Two World Concerto, Nakai "expressed the desire that his work not be seen as a traditional 'silver bracelet' but a unique Artistic statement joining Native America, African, European and Asiatic cultures."[36] Indeed, many of his projects involve this inclusive approach. His college jazz group named Jackalope (a mythical beast, part antelope, part coyote) included Indigenous, European, and electric instruments, a variety of percussion, and electronic sequencers and techniques. Their first record, released in 1986, "defied classification. Nakai resisted the label 'New Age' and suggested the term 'synthacousticpunkarachiNavajazz!' Performances by Jackalope utilize improvisation, visual art, storytelling, dance and dramatic theatrical effects. Performers pop up in various parts of the theater." Nakai continued this experimental world music fusion with the R. Carlos Nakai Quartet.[37]

Rather than approach Nakai's, DeMars's, or any other musics with reductive expectations or arguments of "authenticity," "tradition," or appropriation, it is perhaps more productive to understand these musics as cultural products in which these and other constructs interact and react. The nature of all music is to acquire layers of meaning, as contexts and audiences change and evolve. Hybrid musics in particular—that is to say, most postmodern musics—require an acknowledgment of the negotiation between the past and the present; between origins—however construed—and the agency of contemporary musicians and audiences.

Guadalupe and Its Indianisms

Although DeMars admits never to have listened to other Indianist art music, his use of Native American materials bears some striking similarities to the Indianist tradition, with some pointed differences. While composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries turned to published monographs for their sources, DeMars was provisioned with a Native American flute, which he taught himself to play. He also conducted his own research, by listening to the recordings of Native American music in the Canyon Records archives and making his own transcriptions. Regarding his powwow concerto *Native Drumming* (1996), he notes: "that required actually learning to sing the powwow songs and sing along with the guys, there really was no other way."[38]

DeMars and Nakai found a balance of precomposed melodies, improvisation, and ornamentation to allow the Indigenous flutes to function in a Western art music context while preserving the instrument's traditional scales and performance practice. In a 1993 interview regarding the Two World Concerto, Nakai noted that "Jim was able to grasp the concept of the arbitrary system of tuning and performance technique, and then utilize that. This piece won't work for any other Native American flute in the world, except for the two we're using."[39] As Kathleen Joyce notes, DeMars actively seeks to avoid losing "the flute's improvisatory tradition" in the context of "absolute, precise rhythms like the European instruments… . To compensate for this potential dilemma, DeMars writes melodic lines for the flute that are more rubato in terms of rhythm and tempo." He also "avoids writing unisons" to prevent intonation problems.[40]

The collaboration between DeMars, Nakai, and other Canyon Records artists, including Xavier Quijas Yxayotl, who provided Mexican Indigenous percussion and wind instruments for *Guadalupe*, places his works in contrast to previous Indianist music. Whereas in earlier Indianist works (like MacDowell's *Indian Suite*, for instance), the "Indian" was a useful symbol but was essentially absent from the work, in DeMars's works, Indigenous artists are present, have agency, and contribute to

[35] Cartwright, "Phoenix Story," 63.

[36] R. Carlos Nakai, liner notes for *Two Worlds Concerto*, Canyon Records Production, 1997, CD, quoted in Conlon, "The Native American Flute," 70.

[37] Nakai, liner notes, quoted in Conlon, "The Native American Flute," 68–69.

[38] DeMars, interview.

[39] Tom Jacobs, "The Best of 2 Worlds: Composer James DeMars seeks to blend American Indian sound, which stresses nature, with traditional European symphony," *Los Angeles Times*, Mar 21, 1993, IIMP Full Text.

[40] Kathleen Ann Joyce, "The Native American Flute in the Southwestern United States: Past and Present" (DMA diss., University of Arizona, 1996), 94–95.

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the representation of their cultures. At the same time, DeMars's use of Native American melodies and instruments continues the Indianist tradition of associating the Indigenous cultures of both countries with nature, spirituality, and authenticity. The composer subscribes to conventional (perhaps stereotypical) views of Indigenous cultures as something "primeval and good." During an interview with DeMars, when I pointed out that Mexicans have been taught to value Indigenous cultures as unique and a key element making Mexican culture what it really is, he responded "and it does."[41] He described his first hearing of the Native American flute as "a very fluid, life-like sound with biomorphic bends and curves; it had the sound of nature, blended with the sound of the wilderness."[42] Such views emerge in *Guadalupe*. DeMars uses a combination of Mexican Indigenous instruments, generic exoticisms, and Native American (specifically Plains) musical features to represent both the Mexican Indigenous Peoples and the spiritual message of the opera.

As a powerful cultural symbol for Mexicans and Mexican Americans, the story of the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe to the Indigenous Juan Diego during the sixteenth-century conquest of Mexico by Spain resonates with melodramatic possibilities. The opera largely follows the traditional story of Juan Diego's quest to fulfill Guadalupe's mandate that Bishop Zumárraga build a temple for her on the hill of Tepeyac. The Bishop rebuffs Juan Diego's request twice, demanding proof that Juan Diego has truly spoken with the Virgin. In the traditional story, the Virgin directs Juan Diego to collect in his tunic roses that have miraculously appeared in the middle of winter. When Juan Diego takes the roses to Zumárraga, a portrait of the Virgin is revealed under them in his tilma.[43]

DeMars admits that adding the Indigenous flutes to the piece served multiple purposes. From a practical perspective, Nakai's visibility and the marketing and financial resources available through Canyon Records would bring much to the project. On the other hand, Nakai's flutes also served a symbolic musical purpose: He treated the flute "as if it were Juan Diego, the idea of Juan Diego."[44]

There are two primary musical uses of Indianism in the opera: The first and most important iteration is what I label the "spiritual" Indianist style, which centers on the Native American flute, and accompanies the apparitions of Guadalupe and Juan Diego's petitions to the bishop. In the Prologue, the opening conch shell call introduces an impressionistic soundscape of non-Western percussion and wind instruments, including ocean drum, rain stick, and wind whistle. The soundscape of wind, water, and seagulls serves as a backdrop for the Native American flute, concisely encapsulating the symbolic conjunction of nature, the spiritual realm, and the Indigenous; this symbolic soundscape recurs at different moments throughout the opera. The cedar flute (identified as Native American Flute in G in the score) introduces the three main themes that will appear later in the piece (Example 1). Following the tuning of the flute, the themes are pentatonic and feature the pitch cell D-F-D-C-Bb-G around which variation and ornamentation occur. The themes accompany all three apparitions of Guadalupe over open fifth drones, a harmonic stasis that serves as a backdrop for the cedar flute.

In Juan Diego's first aria, "Ah, mi alma," we find him "wandering, in surprised euphoria" as he sings of the nature around him. At rehearsal 7, bird whistles, cedar flute, and rain stick represent the sounds of the environment surrounding him, but also recall the spiritual soundscape presented in the introduction. This precedes the first apparition of Guadalupe (Example 2).

At rehearsal 19, Guadalupe asks Juan Diego to relay to the bishop her request to build a temple for her at Tepeyac. Here the cedar flute presents a theme that will be used in a later scene: As Juan Diego makes his request to the bishop at Tlatelolco, the translator Malinche sings a variation on this theme (Examples 3 and 4).[45]

[41]DeMars, interview.

[42]Quoted in Joyce, "The Native American Flute," 93.

[43]In the original version of the opera, Juan Diego paints the portrait himself; however, in the 2015 staged version by ASU's Lyric Opera Theater, the painting of the portrait was removed.

[44]DeMars, interview.

[45]It should be noted that Malinche does not appear in the traditional story of the apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego. Her inclusion here as translator underscores her symbolic role as a cultural bridge between the Spanish and the Indigenous Peoples of Mexico.

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Example 1. James DeMars, *Guadalupe, Our Lady of The Roses* (2008), Prologue, mm. 1–30.

Example 2. DeMars, *Guadalupe*, No. 2, "Ah, mi alma," reh. 7., mm. 80–97.

The return of the rain stick one measure before rehearsal 54 and of the cedar flute a few measures later recall the introduction; Malinche and the cedar flute have the "Thus she has spoken" theme first heard in m. 13 (see Example 1). The return of these themes indicates Juan Diego and Malinche's sincerity in their request to the bishop for a temple for Guadalupe (Example 5). In the fourth scene, as Juan Diego returns to Tlatelolco for a second time, the cedar flute will substitute for him by playing this same theme.

The second use of Indianism in the opera is the "exotic" Indianist style, which centers on the use of what DeMars describes as the "powwow" style of singing in the chorus, representing the cultural clash between the Indigenous population and the Spanish conquistadores. This style is first introduced in the second scene, depicting the Indigenous People at Tlatelolco before Juan Diego addresses the bishop.

Example 3. DeMars, *Guadalupe*, No. 3, reh. 19, mm. 248–54.

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Example 4. DeMars, *Guadalupe*, No. 8, mm. 515–521.

Example 5. DeMars, *Guadalupe*, No. 8, reh. 54, mm. 554–62.

The scene, which starts with the hand drums and an Indigenous double flute improvising, is full of generic exoticisms: trills, articulation, open fourths and fifths in the chorus and strings, and so on. These generic elements are nevertheless framed around the traditional Drum circle singing with which DeMars is familiar, with the use of vocables, falsetto in the male voices, and a repeated descending vocal line accompanied by an insistent percussion beat. At rehearsal 31, there is an indication in the score to vocalize in powwow style, and at rehearsal 36, the double flute is directed to have a powwow-

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Example 6. DeMars, *Guadalupe*, No. 6, mm. 351–66.

Example 7. DeMars, *Guadalupe*, No. 6, reh. 41, mm. 440–44.

style battle with the singer. At rehearsal 41, the chorus joins with vocables in Plains style (Examples 6 and 7).

After Juan Diego is dismissed, the bishop turns his attention to the evangelization of the Indigenous People. His interaction with the chorus at reh. 60 depicts the cultural gap between the conquistadores and the conquered: As the bishop attempts to teach them chant (the Easter sequence *Victimae paschali laudes*), the Indigenous People perform their resistance by adding elements of the Plains singing style. Here again DeMars uses the Plains "powwow" style for the chorus over a pedal point in the low strings (Examples 8 and 9). This style returns in two later scenes when the populace harasses Juan Diego, in scene 4 (No. 15, reh. 85) and at part II, scene 2 (No. 20, reh. 24). In No. 22, pounding drums and staccato piano chords at reh. 50 signal the final variation of the "powwow" theme in the chorus tenors, after the revelation of the roses, indicating the Indigenous People associate this supernatural event not only with the Christian mythology they have received from Zumárraga but also with their ancestral beliefs.

The use of the Plains powwow style as a semiotic marker of the Mexican Indigenous Peoples in *Guadalupe* strongly conveys their "Otherness" to a U.S. audience. At the same time, the representation of one Indigenous group with the music of a different group is problematic. Although it is true that not enough is known about pre-Hispanic Mexica (Aztec) music to use its characteristics in a modern

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Example 8. DeMars, *Guadalupe*, No. 9., reh. 60, mm. 607–613.

Example 9. DeMars, *Guadalupe*, No. 22, reh. 50, mm. 493–498.

opera, that hasn't stopped many composers from trying; Chávez himself did this in his *Xochipilli-Macuilxóchitl* (1940), appropriately subtitled "An Imagined Aztec Music."[46] That music, however "imagined," would certainly be just as exotic to a mainstream U.S. audience as the Plains pow-wow singing. The composer's familiarity with Indigenous musical cultures of the Southwest is certainly a factor here, but the participation of Nakai was likely the main reason that DeMars includes Plains

[46]It should be noted that Chávez himself was no more Indigenous than DeMars is Navajo.

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musical elements in the opera. The powwow style in the "exotic" Indianist sections offers an appropriate contrast to Nakai's flutes in the "spiritual" Indianist sections.

Beyond the practical considerations, I would argue that by representing Mexican Indigenous Peoples with U.S. Native American musical tropes, *Guadalupe* exemplifies the symbolic association of all Indigenous Peoples of North America in the U.S. imagination with nature and spirituality, an association that is not devoid of problematic essentialism. The sympathetic treatment of Indigenous American and Mexican cultures in *Guadalupe* nevertheless exists in tension with their exoticism and Otherness; in this, the opera is representative of U.S. cultural responses to Mexico stretching back throughout the long twentieth century. At the same time, the work's themes of cultural conflict, negotiation, and eventual reconciliation with the Other resonate with echoes of the modern binational relationship. Probably due to the genesis of the project, echoes of the immigration debate resonate in the piece, which the composer notes, "is not a religious statement." He states that the message of the opera is that people must learn to try to understand the other side: "You have to learn to understand the people, figure out who they are, and you have to realize that they themselves, don't see themselves as evil."[47] The same message of cultural understanding underlies the work of Intercultural Journeys, a nonprofit musical organization to which both DeMars and Nakai belong, whose stated mission is to "boldly leverage the power of the performing arts to catalyze social change, challenge bias, and create spaces for dialogue and understanding by presenting culturally diverse voices that celebrate and affirm our shared humanity."[48]

The story of the Virgin of Guadalupe illustrates one of the most crucial aspects of post-Conquest Mexican culture: the ability to absorb disparate cultural elements and blend them into a syncretic, yet coherent, whole. Similarly, since at least the 1980s, U.S. cultural identity has sometimes embraced and often struggled with its multiculturalism. While the Indianist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century failed to be accepted as an appropriate representation of U.S. musical nationalism, many of its features, as well as African American and other ethnic minority musics, were absorbed into the later nationalist style championed by Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, Leonard Bernstein, and others. Works like DeMars's *Guadalupe* offer a contemporary reinterpretation of the various disparate elements of U.S. and Pan-American identity.[49] Both the U.S. and Mexico are multiethnic, multicultural societies, as represented in these artistic works. Such works can symbolize the potential for collaboration and understanding, rather than conflict, in the future of the binational relationship.

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[47] DeMars, interview.

[48] "Our Mission," *Intercultural Journeys*, accessed Feb 5, 2022, https://www.interculturaljourneys.org/mission.

[49] Due to the cooptation of the term "American" by the U.S. to describe its own identity, I am using the term Pan-American to describe the entire continent.

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