



MUSIC AND THE MAKING OF  
MODERN JAPAN  
JOINING THE GLOBAL CONCERT  
MARGARET MEHL





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## 2. Under Reconstruction: Japan, the United States, and the European Model

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Having journeyed through a realm of civilization and enlightenment, we were now crossing a very ancient, uncivilized wilderness.<sup>1</sup>

Compared to classical music in its European homeland, classical music in the United States is a mutant transplant. Deep roots were not importable, nor in the main were they newly cultivated. The resulting foliage, oftentimes resplendent, was often “peculiar”.<sup>2</sup>

Kume Kunitake (1839–1931), in his record of the Iwakura Embassy to the United States and Europe, was recalling the Embassy’s train journey from San Francisco through the states of Nevada and Utah in February 1872. His remarks suggest that he was thinking in terms of the spatial conception of civilization versus barbarism (*ka’i*) that characterized the world view of the Sinosphere.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, he and the other members of the embassy may well have been aware of the North American frontier mythology that was so central to the country’s national narrative, and which posited civilization against barbarism in a similar way. The American ‘Wild West’ is arguably the

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1 Kunitake Kume, *The Iwakura Embassy 1871–73: A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary’s Journey of Observation through the United States of America and Europe*, ed. Graham Healey and Chushichi Tsuzuki, trans. Graham Healey, Martin Colcutt, Andrew Cobbing, P. F. Kornicky, Eugene Sowiak, Chushichi Tsuzuki, 5 vols., vol. 1: *The United States of America* (Kamiyakiri, Matsudo, Chiba: The Japan Documents, 2002), 126–31, 127.

2 Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of Its Rise and Fall* (New York: Norton, 2005), xiii. See also Wolfgang Rathert and Bernd Ostendorf, *Musik der USA: Kultur- und Musikgeschichtliche Streifzüge* (Hofheim: Wolke, 2018), 16, 311.

3 See [Chapter 4](#).

most mythologized among the frontiers of the nineteenth century, and the conquest of the West became a central element in the construction of the history of the nation.<sup>4</sup>

Kume's report only hints at the amazement he and his Japanese fellow travellers must have felt when, after visiting schools, factories, a shipyard, and locomotive works, they began to traverse territories that were not yet fully incorporated into the nation. While travelling through the Humboldt wilderness, the members of the embassy first caught sight of the continent's native population, and Kume discussed their similarities with the unruly populations that resisted the Yamato court in ancient Japan. The train that Kume and the other members of the Iwakura Embassy boarded in San Francisco was the first transcontinental railway, completed less than three years earlier in May 1869 and running via Salt Lake City to Chicago, and from there to New York. Westward expansion into the territories between Kansas and California was still ongoing, as were the American Frontier Wars. Not until 1890 was the frontier officially declared closed.

Traversing the frontier in the middle of the United States by train may well have provided the most spectacular evidence of a nation under construction. By the time Commodore Perry arrived in Japan in 1853, sparking off the turmoil that led to the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate, the United States' borders with Canada in the north and Mexico in the south had largely been determined (1842 with British Canada; 1848 with Mexico).<sup>5</sup> But territorial expansion was still under way, and internal tensions were rising and culminated in the Civil War. Bayly, who describes the war as a 'global event', may well be right when he observes that it 'may also have aborted the emergence of a more aggressive American expansionist policy in the Pacific and the Far East, where Japan was afforded a short, but critical respite from Western pressure.'<sup>6</sup> Once the war ended, the United States had to virtually found itself all over again, and with the period of reconstruction entered a

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4 See Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2009), 465–500.

5 Osterhammel, *Verwandlung der Welt*, 685, 687.

6 Christopher Alan Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 161.

new phase of nation-building at the same time as Japan.<sup>7</sup> Thus, both the United States and Japan were under reconstruction in the last third of the nineteenth century, and they knew it.<sup>8</sup>

Besides this synchronicity of the processes of nation-building in the two countries, there were other parallels, albeit superficial. At the same time that the colonization of the West was in its final stage in the United States, the Meiji government had its own wilderness to tame. Japan's early territorial consolidation, by incorporating the northern island of Ezo as Hokkaido in September 1869 and the Ryukyu Islands as Okinawa in 1879, tends to be taken for granted, but it required significant effort. In Hokkaido, the government engaged in a project of internal colonization, administered through the Hokkaido Colonization Office.<sup>9</sup> Unsurprisingly, the Japanese government hired American teachers to support their efforts: General Capron, the U.S. Commissioner of Agriculture, resigned from his post to take up a position in the Japanese government's Frontier Development Bureau (Kaitakushi) from 1871 to 1875; William Clark, president of Massachusetts Agricultural College, was appointed president of the newly founded Sapporo Agricultural College, where he taught from 1876 to 1877, assisted by two young colleagues from Massachusetts, William Wheeler and David Penhallow, who continued their work after Clark's departure. Some of the advisors explicitly cited the colonization of the American West as a model.<sup>10</sup>

The closing of the frontier and the United States' subsequent rise to an imperial power (it acquired the Philippines as a colony in 1898), moreover, roughly coincided with the emergence of 'Imperial Japan', which is generally associated with the proclamation of the constitution

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7 Osterhammel, *Verwandlung der Welt*, 600–01. Osterhammel even treats Japan and the United States together in one section, although not because of similarities, but rather as two special cases ('Sonderwege', pp. 596–601) of nation-building.

8 'Reconstruction' is not a term usually employed to describe Japan after 1868. 'Under Reconstruction' is, however, the English title of Mori Ōgai's famous short story *Fushinchū*.

9 Hokkaidō Kaitakushi (1869–82). See Mark Ravina, *To Stand with the Nations of the World: Japan's Meiji Restoration in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 173–75.

10 Mark Ravina, *To Stand with the Nations of the World*, 175. On Capron, see also Edward Boyle, 'Imperial Practice and the making of Modern Japan's Territory: Towards a Reconsideration of Empire's Boundaries', *Geographical Review of Japan Series B* 88, no. 2 (2016): 72, <https://doi.org/10.4157/geogrevjapanb.88.66>

in 1889, the first elections in 1890 and the revision of the unequal treaties and colonial expansion from the 1890s onwards.<sup>11</sup>

Obviously, in some respects the situation of the United States could not have been more different from that of Japan. The frontier the Iwakura Embassy witnessed was geographically in the middle of the emerging nation rather than at the periphery like Hokkaido. The original inhabitants of North America were excluded and forced onto reservations. The differences between the two nations are even more obvious with regard to the populations within their borders. The United States was dominated by a population that had only arrived recently, as a result of migration on an unsurpassed scale that was still ongoing.

## The Beginnings of Music Education in America

The diversity of the immigrant population and the successive waves of immigration decisively influenced the history of music in the United States. After the Civil War, massive industrial growth, led by the Northern states, and the resulting economic prosperity provided the basis for science, scholarship, and the arts to flourish, including music. European music was already well-established, brought by the immigrants. Many of the early, chiefly German and British, immigrants had left Europe seeking freedom to live according to their religious convictions, and thus church music initially dominated in New England. The early Puritans strongly believed in music as an instrument of symbolic politics and theological guidance. This emphasis on music for moral and religious edification was significantly stronger than in Europe, and continued well into the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> It was not lost on the members of the Iwakura Embassy, who also noted the importance accorded to singing education. The Puritans, while restrictive in the range of music they considered acceptable, accorded high importance to singing as part of worship, and efforts to improve the quality of singing in church lay at the roots of music education in America.<sup>13</sup> In the course of the eighteenth

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11 It should be noted that 'Imperial Japan' is a term used in English-language scholarship, and that the Japanese term *teikoku* ('empire') has significantly different connotations and is often used differently.

12 Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 135.

13 Following based on Michael L. Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2008), 9–77.

century, ministers began to propagate formal instruction in music in the belief that an ability to read music would help improve the quality of singing. Singing schools were established, and continued until well into the nineteenth century, and this tradition of teaching music to the public provided the basis for the introduction of music into public schools.

As later in Japan, pragmatic considerations dominated the efforts to establish systematic instruction in music from the start. Among the pioneers of music education in schools were William Channing Woodbridge (1794–1845) and Lowell Mason (1792–1872), who has been described as the ‘father of singing among the children’.<sup>14</sup> Woodbridge had travelled to Europe and observed Pestalozzi’s colleague and disciple Georg Nægeli teach music to children. He adopted Pestalozzi’s idea that music served to develop a child’s intellectual, moral, and physical capacities. Mason moved to Boston in 1827, having spent fifteen years promoting music education in Savannah, Georgia. He fully embraced the nineteenth-century belief in progress through science. In musical terms this meant shunning the older practices of psalmody in favour of music by European composers and teaching music in a way similar to other school subjects. Mason was one of the founders of the Boston Academy of Music, established in 1833 to train teachers, offer music classes to children and adults, and operate music programmes in private schools. Music was also taught at music conventions, where singing masters, directors of church choirs, and others could further their musical training. Mason, together with George Webb, held his first convention in 1834, and they continued for about thirty years. For teacher training, summer courses (‘normal institutes’) were introduced in the 1850s. They offered several weeks of practical and theoretical instruction. The first one was held in New York City from 23 April to 15 July 1853 under the direction of Lowell Mason, George F. Root and William B. Bradbury.<sup>15</sup> Music as a curricular subject in public schools was first introduced in Boston in 1838. Lowell Mason was appointed Superintendent of Music, the first in the United States. Other communities followed, and on the eve of the Civil War several large cities had introduced music education in their schools. The numbers rose after the war, particularly in the Northern states.

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14 Quoted in Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education*, 34.

15 Bonlyn G. Hall, ‘The American Education of Luther Whiting Mason’, *American Music* 6, no. 1 (1988): 68, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3448346>

After the Civil War this tendency increased, as did the trend towards what was regarded as a scientific approach to teaching music, with graded courses of drills and prescribed songs, and examinations.<sup>16</sup> Here again, Lowell Mason was a pioneer: he was the first to use the phrase 'graded music series', to describe his *Song Garden*, published in three volumes from 1864.

The most influential graded series in the following decades was the *National Music Course*, first published in Boston in 1870. Although it met increasing competition from the 1880s, it continued to be in use into the twentieth century. Its author was Luther Whiting Mason (1818–96), the future pioneer of music education in Japan. A distant relative of Lowell Mason,<sup>17</sup> he had received informal musical training in his native Maine before enrolling in the teachers' classes at the Boston Academy of Music in 1838. In October 1845 he attended the three-day American Music Convention in New York City. In 1853 he studied for three months at the New York Normal Music Institute. He continued to attend training courses even after beginning his career in public school music in Louisville in autumn 1853. In January 1856 he started teaching in Cincinnati public schools. That summer he attended the Normal Musical Institute in North Reading, Massachusetts. This ended his formal musical education.<sup>18</sup> Mason was one of 'hundreds of American school music teachers of that era' who received their training through 'a rigorous course of continuing education'.<sup>19</sup>

Having thus received the best training available in his day, Luther Whiting Mason became a pioneer of music education in his own right. In Cincinnati, where music was already being taught in the public school system (established in 1830), he was introduced to the textbooks of Christian Heinrich Hohmann (1811–61), namely his *Praktischer Lehrgang*

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16 Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education*, 40, 54–55.

17 Bonlyn G. Hall, 'Luther Whiting Mason's European Song books', *Notex, Second series* 41, no. 3 (1985): 483, <https://doi.org/10.2307/941157> Hall cites genealogical research to the effect that Luther Whiting Mason's father and Lowell Mason were eighth cousins. On his musical education, see Hall, 'The American Education of Luther Whiting Mason'. See also Sondra Wieland Howe, *Luther Whiting Mason: International Music Educator* (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 1997).

18 Hall, 'The American Education of Luther Whiting Mason', 69. Hall calculated that his total hours of formal training compared well with present-day requirements, apart from the absence of courses in music history (pp. 70–71).

19 *Ibid.*, 71.



für den Gesang-Unterricht in Volksschulen, translated into English as *Practical Course of Instruction in Singing* (1856–58). Hohmann, whose works were introduced by German immigrants, was also known for his tutors for piano (1847) and violin (1849).<sup>20</sup> Mason began to develop his own musical charts for teaching, based on those of Hohmann, making use of German folk songs.

In 1864 Mason was appointed Superintendent of Music in the Primary Schools in Boston, where, after serving in the Civil War, he taught until 1878. Here he continued to develop his method, published as the *National Music Course*. In the course of his work he travelled to Europe twice, in 1872 and 1874, to observe musical education and collect song books. During his time in Boston, Mason firmly established his reputation as a music educator; his *National Music Course* earned him honours at the world exhibitions in Vienna (1873) and Paris (1878) as well as the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876. Mason hoped to develop an international music course, which is one of the reasons he readily took up an appointment in Japan (1879–82), where he could build on his experience at home. He subsequently travelled to Europe twice more: in 1882, and in September 1890, when he did not return to America until spring 1893. In the 1890s, as well as continuing to train teachers at summer schools in Boston, Detroit, and Maine, Mason headed an editorial committee that published a German work, *Neue Gesangsschule*, based on his methods.

Luther Whiting Mason's pioneering work in America attracted the attention of Japanese officials, and led to his appointment by the Japanese government in 1879. As his biographer sums up: 'Luther Whiting Mason was a significant international music educator, because he transported nineteenth-century European methodology and song materials to America, synthesized these materials in the popular *National Music Course*, and brought Western music education to Japan.'<sup>21</sup> That he could fulfil this double role is another illustration of how Japan and the United States were in a comparable position when it came to introducing what they perceived as the most advanced musical education of the time: that of Europe, specifically Germany.

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20 Howe, *Luther Whiting Mason*, 13–17.

21 *Ibid.*, 144.

## Concerts and the Veneration of European Art Music

America's (and Japan's) dependence on European models was not limited to education. By the time of Mason's pioneering work in Boston, the city had a thriving music scene. Standards of artistic performance, however, were mixed. European art music was highly venerated, but the musical infrastructures to support professional performance developed only after the Civil War. The Boston critic John Sullivan Dwight, who began publishing *Dwight's Journal of Music* in 1852 and who 'more than any other individual first defines what Americans meant by "classical music"',<sup>22</sup> was instrumental in fostering the reverence for European art music, including the cult of Beethoven, whose music he described as the 'presentation of coming social harmony'.<sup>23</sup>

Dwight was also among the founders of the New England Conservatory of Music, established in 1867 as a private institution. The founders included both Americans and recent immigrants, and the first head was Carl Stasny, a pupil of Franz Liszt.<sup>24</sup> Two years later, Boston became the scene of the 'Great National Peace Jubilee', intended to celebrate the restoration of peace after the Civil War. The official programme of 1869 boasted, 'this glorious event in our national history will be celebrated by the grandest musical festival ever known in the history of the world.'<sup>25</sup> The festival was the brainchild of the Irish-born bandmaster Patrick S. Gilmore (1829–92) who, together with Philip Sousa (1865–1932), did more than any other to popularize music in America.<sup>26</sup> He and his band had taken part in the Civil War. About a thousand instrumentalists and ten thousand choristers took part in five concerts; art and showmanship combined, and the result represented a triumph for Boston.

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22 Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, xiv.

23 Boyles, quoted in Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 291.

24 Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 165. The other American founders were the pedagogue Eben Tourjée and the music publisher Oliver Ditson; the German-born immigrants were the pianist Robert Goldbeck and the flautist Carl Zerrahn.

25 Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 16. The following outline is taken from *ibid.*, 15–25.

26 Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 143.

Gilmore attempted to surpass his previous success with the 1872 World Peace Jubilee, which was on an even grander scale, billed as 'the greatest series of concerts ever given in the world', with three weeks of concerts in a newly built Coliseum seating twenty-one thousand.<sup>27</sup> The French, British, and Prussian governments sent bands, and Johann Straus Jr, Vienna's waltz king, performed for the first time in America.

The Jubilee was attended by the members of the Iwakura Embassy. Already on the day after their arrival in San Francisco on 15 January 1872 they had been treated to an evening 'serenade' by a band from the San Francisco artillery regiment. Their sightseeing trip of San Francisco Bay and to the Navy Yard on Mare Island on 19 January was likewise accompanied by a band.<sup>28</sup> The Embassy's next encounter with Western music was during a visit to the Denman School for Girls on 23 January, where they were greeted by singing, as they were to be at all the elementary schools they visited, and Kume concludes his short description by stating that he would not mention the fact each time.<sup>29</sup> Kume does not appear to have had a particular interest in music, but his few descriptions of the delegates' musical experiences are revealing in that they concern those functions of Western music deemed the most relevant to the Japanese (and indeed to other nations who adopted Western music).

Kume's description of the Jubilee in the Embassy's official report is the longest description of a musical performance, reflecting the fact that it was almost certainly the most overwhelming musical event the delegates attended. They were invited as guests of honour for the second and third days (18 and 19 June). The concerts they attended featured a massive choir and orchestra with thousands of participants. The programme featured patriotic items:

the British National Anthem *God Save the Queen*, English version, sung by a full chorus of twenty thousand voices, with solo by the eminent artiste Madame Eiminia Rudersdorff, accompanied by the band of the Grenadier Guards, the grand orchestra of one thousand performers, the military band of one thousand, full corps of drums, all the bells of Boston in chime and several batteries of artillery fired by electricity.

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27 Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 27.

28 Kume, *Iwakura Embassy*, Vol. 1, 1: The United States of America, 65, 70.

29 *Ibid.*, 75.

The British band then followed this up with *The Star-Spangled Banner*.<sup>30</sup> The audience went wild.

What the Japanese delegates made of it is another matter. Presumably, they hardly knew what had hit them; Kume's description is far from conclusive: 'they gracefully performed the falling snow' must be regarded as a rhetorical flourish rather than an accurate description of what he actually heard, with 'falling snow' (*hakusetsu*; literally 'white snow') being the metaphor for a particularly intricate (and incomprehensible) piece of music.<sup>31</sup> Significantly, Kume followed up his description of the concert with observations about patriotism in Western countries.<sup>32</sup>

All three encounters described by Kume are examples of music's uses in the context of the modern nation: as part of ceremonies and hospitality in diplomatic relations, in the education of its citizens, and in commemoration as a display of power and an expression of patriotism. Western music was already beginning to fulfil the same functions in Japan. Ironically in the face of Kume's remarks, American patriotism did not provide as obvious a premise for the 1872 Peace Jubilee as it had for the 1869 one, since there was no specifically American peace to celebrate. The new hall was not filled, the festival failed to make money, Dwight condemned it and concluded: 'The great, usurping, tyrannizing, noisy and pretentious thing is over ...'.<sup>33</sup> Kume and the other Japanese

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30 Official Programme for the Second Day, 'English Day', *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, 19 June 1872, quoted in Kunitake Kume, *The Iwakura Embassy 1871–73: A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary's Journey of Observation through the United States of America and Europe* ed. Graham Healey and Chushichi Tsuzuki, trans. Graham Healey Martin Colcutt, Andrew Cobbing, P. F. Kornicky, Eugene Sowiak, Chushichi Tsuzuki, 5 vols. (Kamiyakiri, Matsudo, Chiba: The Japan Documents, 2002), 318.

31 The English translation reads 'The sound was so serene that it could have been the music of falling snow.' Kume, *Iwakura Embassy, Vol. 1*, 1: The United States of America, 310. This, presumably is based on the interpretation given by a Japanese scholar of Western music in Japan (Nakamura Kōsuke), but given the sheer noise of the spectacle, this seems implausible. Dictionary definitions *hakusetsu* (the character combination can also be read *shirayuki* but the Sinitic *hakusetsu* is more likely) include the proper name of a (lost) piece of music of ancient China, and a metaphor for a difficult and intricate piece of music. This seems a plausible literary expression for Kume to use for what to him and the other delegates must have been an inaccessible piece of music.

32 Kume, *Iwakura Embassy, Vol. 1*, 1: The United States of America, 311–12.

33 On 13 July 1872; quoted in Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 28.

delegates would probably have agreed. Anyway, no event on this scale was repeated either in Boston or elsewhere.

Performances of symphonic and large-scale music, however, continued to be popular. They played a central part in the consolidation of European art music as one central element in modern American musical culture. With the increasing segmentation of American society and culture after the Civil War, European art music was firmly adopted by the economic and social elites as 'high culture', together with the other classical traditions of Europe, whether art, theatre, or architecture. 'Eurocentric ideals of cultural superiority' were enshrined in the institutions of this culture, including the concert hall and the opera house.<sup>34</sup> In the years following the Boston jubilees, professional symphony orchestras were founded in several major cities. The Boston Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1881; it became the model for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1891, which in turn became the model for orchestras in other cities: Cincinnati in 1895, Pittsburgh in 1898, Philadelphia in 1900 and Minneapolis in 1907.<sup>35</sup>

The founder and musical director of the Chicago Orchestra was Theodore Thomas (1835–1905), one of many German immigrants with a cultural mission.<sup>36</sup> The son of a town musician who emigrated with his family to New York in 1845, he joined the Philharmonic Society of New York. By 1862 he was arranging his own orchestral concerts. His mission was to improve the musical tastes of his audiences, and besides performing he also founded several new institutions, including the Cincinnati Festival and the Cincinnati College of Music. In Chicago, Thomas's tasks included preparing for the World Exhibition in 1893, for which he was appointed musical director. The Orchestra was expanded to 130 players. One of them was August Junker (1868–1944), who after a short period as a violinist in the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and, possibly, a stint in Boston, joined the Chicago Orchestra in early 1892 as principal of the viola section. He even helped to find more German players.<sup>37</sup> Junker also performed as a soloist and a member of a string

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34 Eric Avila, *American Cultural History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 58, <https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780190200589.001.0001>

35 Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 175–76.

36 Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 82–83.

37 Norman Schweikert, *Interview with Iwakura Tomokazu* (1995), Cassette tape, Rosenthal Archives of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. For details on Junker's

quartet, and taught violin at the Columbian College of Music. In 1897 he became naturalized as August Junker.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, he decided to leave America for Japan: by 18 February 1898 he was performing with local amateurs at a meeting of the Yokohama Literary Society.<sup>39</sup> A year later, he was appointed professor at the Tokyo Academy of Music, a post he held until 1913. He premiered several symphonic works in Japan and is remembered as the ‘father of the Japanese symphony orchestra’.<sup>40</sup>

By the time Junker left the United States for Japan, Germany rather than America had become the direct source of musical imports, as far as education and European art music was concerned—although, in the twentieth century, American popular music would become a new import, with jazz introduced almost as soon as it came into being. Having laid the foundations with American support, the Japanese turned directly to the European heartland. From the 1880s, the government primarily hired German musicians as teachers, and Europe (particularly Germany) became the primary destination for music students. Although Kōda Nobu, a pupil of Mason and the first music student sent abroad by the Meiji government in 1889, initially studied at the New England Conservatory in Boston, she stayed there only for a year before continuing her studies in Vienna.<sup>41</sup>

The reliance on and reverence for Europe’s musical tradition in both America and Japan may well have resulted in the similar attitudes in both countries towards the source of their modern musical culture. While the sacralization of art music was characteristic of nineteenth-century Europe, it manifested itself even more strongly in these two new nations. As Horowitz remarked in *Classical Music in America*, ‘More than Europeans, Americans have worshipped musical masterpieces and deified their exponents.’<sup>42</sup> Similarly, it has been observed that ‘Japan has

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work in Japan, see Margaret Mehl, *Not by Love Alone: The Violin in Japan, 1850–2010* (Copenhagen: The Sound Book Press, 2014).

38 According to his grandson, he renounced his American nationality when he returned to Germany in 1913: Schweikert, *Interview with Iwakura Tomokazu*.

39 ‘A Violin Virtuoso’, *The Japan Times*, 21 February 1898.

40 Tōkyō Geijutsu Daigaku Hyakunenshi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Tōkyō Geijutsu Daigaku hyakunenshi: Tōkyō Ongaku Gakkō hen 1* (Tokyo: Ongaku no Tomosha, 1987), 535.

41 Margaret Mehl, ‘A Man’s Job? The Kōda Sisters, Violin Playing and Gender Stereotypes in the Introduction of Western Music in Japan’, *Women’s History Review* 21, no. 1 (2012), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2012.645675>

42 Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 26.



also led the rest of Asia in the iconization (fetishization) of Western classical music. The very high status ascribed to learning piano or violin has elevated *kurashikku* to the pinnacle of cultural admiration.<sup>43</sup>

In both countries, the reverence for European art music, particularly German music, contributed to a strong emotional affinity. In America, ‘nonverbal cultural and artistic contacts [...] proved much more intense and enduring than political ties, surviving broken treaties, mutual alienation and even several wars.’<sup>44</sup> American actors promoting German Kultur, and particularly orchestral music, believed that it was ‘both unique and universalistic’, and that classical music was a ‘means for providing evidence of culture’ and ‘an essential element of Western civilization’.<sup>45</sup> American students flocked to Europe, above all Germany, clinging persistently to the ‘almost mythical belief in a “musical atmosphere” that Germany had’ and their own country lacked, and went in search of ‘the magic’.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, in Japan, the affinity Japanese felt for Germany as a result of their strong cultural links survived Germany’s participation in the Triple Intervention of 1895 and Japan’s joining the Allies in the First World War. The alliance between Japan and Nazi Germany owed much to this pre-existing affinity, and the cultural links forged in the 1930s and 1940s endured even after the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936 and the Tripartite Pact of 1940 had proved unsuccessful in political and military terms.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, post-war cultural exchanges between the two countries show significant continuities on closer examination.<sup>48</sup> The links were only in part a result of government policies. They were promoted by people who had their own agenda and acted if not independently then at least

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43 David W. Hughes and Alison McQueen Tokita, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Japanese Music* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), 7–8.

44 Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 5, 10.7208/chicago/9780226292175.001.0001

45 Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy*, 7–8.

46 *Ibid.*, 57, 61.

47 Political, military, and cultural relations are treated in Gerhard Krebs and Bernd Martin, eds., *Formierung und Fall der Achse Berlin-Tōkyō* (Munich: iudicium, 1994).

48 The cultural relations between Japan and Germany from 1933 to 1945 have received detailed treatment in Hans-Joachim Bieber, *SS und Samurai: Deutsch-Japanische Kulturbeziehungen 1933–1945* (Munich: iudicium, 2014).

in a semi-official capacity, displaying initiative and resourcefulness that went beyond government expectations.

Both American and Japanese elites were conscious of their dependence on European models, and a perception of cultural inferiority resulted.<sup>49</sup> In both cases, the sense of inferiority had its counterpart in European stereotypes. The question of whether America had any distinctive culture at all was debated by intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>50</sup>

## The Quest for a National Music

The heavy dependence on an imported culture represented the backdrop for the quest for a national sound in both Japan and the United States. To some extent this corresponded to musical nationalism in Europe, but the timing is not the same, as the efforts to create a specific national music did not reach their peak in the United States (and, to a lesser extent, in Japan) until the twentieth century.<sup>51</sup> The search for an American cultural identity and, in musical terms, an American sound is a major theme in the history of music in the United States.<sup>52</sup> Arguably, the debates about a specifically American music were even more intense than their equivalent in Japan. Unlike Japan, where the divide between traditional Japanese and Western music was obvious, American culture was dominated by immigrants from Europe, who brought their music with them. European styles and aesthetics dominated American musical culture, well into the nineteenth century.<sup>53</sup> Other major differences were that America was multi-ethnic in a way that Japan was not, and that popular music came to play a major role in defining America musically. Nevertheless, the parallels are significant enough to warrant a brief discussion, because, besides showing that the challenges Japan faced in its search for a way to express and celebrate the nation musically were not unique, they highlight the questions associated with the very concept of a national music. In theory, a national music is one that is

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49 Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 16, 311.

50 Barbara A. Zuck, *A History of Musical Americanism* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1980 (1978)), 17.

51 For America: Zuck, *Musical Americanism*, 7. For Japan, see following chapters.

52 Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 1.

53 *Ibid.*, 282.

shared by all the nation's citizens, as opposed to musical genres that are attributed to a particular class or group within a society. But what exactly should that music express? Who decides? Whom is the music for? And whose music is it anyway?

The quest for a specifically American art music (or 'cultivated' music, which is 'usually created by trained composers to be interpreted by professional performers'<sup>54</sup>) was an internal contest between 'cultivated music in America' and 'American cultivated music' that had a 'conceptual' and a 'compositional' dimension.<sup>55</sup> Conceptual Americanism refers to advocating music composed by Americans, as well as writings and activities to promote American music. Compositional Americanism refers to using native elements in the composition of music. There was some attempt to develop new styles independently of European models by composers of the so-called First New England School in the eighteenth century, but contrary to the name they did not establish a lasting tradition.<sup>56</sup> While conceptual Americanism became a noticeable trend from the mid-nineteenth century, compositional Americanism did not become a significant trend until the end of the century.<sup>57</sup> By then, the question of how to define American music preoccupied all musical actors.<sup>58</sup>

The debate about a specifically American music reached its height when Antonín Dvořák was appointed to the National Conservatory of Music in New York in 1892, where his symphony 'From the New World' was premiered in the 1893–94 concert season.<sup>59</sup> Dvořák, who in his Bohemian homeland had drawn inspiration from peasant songs and dances, advocated the use of melodies of African and Native Americans in composition, although he had limited knowledge of either. Not everyone agreed with him. One of the most original American composers, Edward MacDowell, felt strongly that quality, not nationality, should set the standard and was scathing of Dvořák's suggestion:

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54 Zuck, *Musical Americanism*, 7.

55 The following is based on Zuck, *Musical Americanism*, 8–9.

56 Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 276.

57 Zuck, *Musical Americanism*, 9, 10.

58 Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 299.

59 Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 5–11, 211–41; Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy*, 151–75.

Moszkowski the Pole writes Spanish Dances. Cowen in England writes a Scandinavian Symphony. Grieg the Norwegian writes Arabian music; and to cap the climax, we have here in America been offered a pattern for an 'American' national musical costume by the Bohemian Dvořák—though what the Negro melodies have to do with Americanism in art still remains a mystery. Music that can be made by 'recipe' is not music, but 'tailoring'.<sup>60</sup>

The music critic Henry Krehbiel, on the other hand, in an article in the *New York Daily Tribune* on 15 December 1893, justified his description of Dvořák's Symphony no. 9 as 'American' by pointing out various musical features.<sup>61</sup> What precisely is quintessentially American about them is, however, open to question: the 'Scottish snap' is (as the name suggests and he himself points out) not limited to the music of 'the negroes of our South'. Of a melodic element he stated that 'the phrase is built on the pentatonic, or five-note, scale, which omits the fourth and seventh tones of our ordinary diatonic series, and admits that the same scale feature in Scottish, Irish, or Chinese music, as well as songs by the Omaha Indians.' And, we might add, in Japanese music, where it is known as *yonanuki* (the fourth and seventh degrees omitted) scale and commonly regarded as reflecting Japanese musical sensibilities and preferences, particularly in its minor version (*yonanuki tan'onkai*).<sup>62</sup> A subsidiary phrase is described as having a 'distinctly negro characteristic', giving the (first) movement a 'somewhat Oriental tinge'. Another phrase (in the last movement) is described as 'a paraphrase of "Yankee Doodle"'. The musicologist Michael Beckerman in his analysis of Krehbiel's article calls these musical devices 'multicultural puns', meaning that they are common to at least two cultures.<sup>63</sup> In fact, if *Yankee Doodle* were

60 Quoted in Zuck, *Musical Americanism*, 56. For more examples of critics' reactions, see Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 59, 66–69.

61 The article is quoted in full in Michael Beckerman, 'Henry Krehbiel, Antonín Dvořák, and the Symphony "From the New World"', *Notes* 49, no. 2 (1992), <https://doi.org/10.2307/897884> Krehbiel, who was in close contact with the composer, wrote it after hearing the symphony in rehearsal. On Krehbiel's characterizing the symphony as 'American', see also Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy*, 168.

62 The *yonanuki* modes, whether major (*yonanuki chōonkai*) or minor, which dominated Japanese-style popular songs (*kayōkyoku, enka*), are hybrids of the pentatonic mode of traditional music with a Western harmonic orientation. They are not a typical feature of traditional Japanese music.

63 Beckerman, 'Henry Krehbiel, Antonín Dvořák, and the Symphony "From the New World"', 462.

replaced with the title of a Japanese folk song, these 'American' musical devices might equally well be described as characteristic of Japanese national music of the early twentieth century. Krehbiel himself seemed to be aware of the 'multicultural' dimensions, as is suggested by his observations written immediately after the premiere and published two days later in the same newspaper:

If the melodies which he has composed and moulded into a symphony contain elements which belong also to the music of other peoples, so does the American people contain elements of the races to which those elements are congenial. Let them be Scotch, let them be Irish, let them be German, let them be African or Indian, in them there is that which makes the appeal to the whole people, and therefore, like the people, they are American.<sup>64</sup>

Subsequent discussions of the symphony often centred on whether 'negro' and 'Indian' tunes could be regarded as representative of America. More broadly, the question was what in fact constituted American sound. Charles Ives, perhaps the most emblematic of American composers in that period, explicitly rejected the appropriation of slave plantation and native Indian melodies in his music.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, although there was no agreement on the question of which folk tunes might be considered truly 'American', ultimately this was a minor issue. As Dvořák himself stated, 'Undoubtedly the gems for the best of music lie hidden among all the races that are commingled in this great country.'<sup>66</sup> Dvořák's major contribution was that he inspired Americanist composers' interest in vernacular music, that is American folk or popular music. As a result, American composers took up a variety of sources. Compositional Americanism received a major boost, and continued as a significant trend until 1945.<sup>67</sup>

A significant group among the composers embracing folk music were the Indianists. Musical Indianism is the trend that can most usefully be compared to efforts in Japan to compose art music in the European idiom while including traditional Japanese elements. Unlike

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64 *New York Daily Tribune* 17 December 1893, p. 7. Quoted in Beckerman, 'Henry Krehbiel, Antonín Dvořák, and the Symphony "From the New World"', 471.

65 Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*.

66 Quoted in Zuck, *Musical Americanism*, 59.

67 Zuck, *Musical Americanism*, 59.

other American folk music, but like traditional Japanese music, the music of Native Americans was so different from European art music as to render the two incompatible.<sup>68</sup> During Dvořák's tenure in New York, Alice Fletcher published her pioneering ethnographical *Study of Omaha Indian Music* in 1893, the result of extensive collaboration with her Omaha informant Francis La Flesche. Fletcher envisaged the creation of a national music, and saw to it that Dvořák received a copy of her *Study*, including ninety-two transcriptions. Although the study was not the only collection of its kind, the timing and Fletcher's lobbying meant that it had significant influence on Indianist composers and in the construction of 'Indian Sound' in the decades between 1890 and 1930 out of a mixture of indigenous music mediated (and often distorted) by ethnographers, and composers using Western musical devices with a long history of association with the exotic and the primitive, as well as their individual imaginative creations. Native performers both played on and challenged expectations, resulting in 'a peculiar pastiche in which racist stereotypes might be simultaneously reinforced and questioned through Indian musical performances'.<sup>69</sup>

But the Indianist movement sought to do more than importing a few Indian tunes into European art music to create a 'national' music.<sup>70</sup> Arthur Farwell, one of its leading representatives, explicitly challenged the 'great definite machinery for the performance of European music':<sup>71</sup> the Old World institutions as well as the music itself. Musically, he and others envisioned a new language, created by bringing together two musical spheres. Romantic notions of Indian culture combined with ideas of progress: at the time, the Frontier Wars were in their final phase and there was a general assumption that Indians would vanish in the face of unstoppable modern progress. Ethnographers saw their efforts to collect and record Indian culture, including Indian music, as salvage work. The native peoples, while viewed as primitive, were simultaneously accorded a certain dignity, based on the patina of an

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68 The following discussion of Indianism is based chiefly on Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 183–223, <https://doi.org/10.1353/book111312> See also Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 317–26.

69 Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 210.

70 Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 317.

71 Quoted in Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 260.



ancient culture. Indianist composers saw their work in part as an act of translation.

But what does translation mean in a musical context? The key for Alice Fletcher and her associate John Filmore was harmony (as with many would-be reformers of Japan's traditional music). In the Western musical system, melodies fit within a clear harmonic structure. The music of the Omaha and of Indians in general did not use harmony, and melodies were not structured in the same way as Western ones.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, Filmore operated with the idea of 'implied harmony': he harmonized Omaha melodies and came to believe that by doing so he was highlighting their natural structure. In reality, he was imposing Western conceptions of music in the belief that they were universal. The fact that his and Fletcher's Omaha informants reportedly approved of the result is no evidence for this supposed universal harmonic sense. By this time most Indians had long been exposed to Western music and especially the harmonized hymns taught by Christian missionaries playing them on the harmonium or piano.<sup>73</sup>

The 'Indian Sound' of twentieth-century popular culture resulted to a large extent from the addition of harmony by the Indianist composers to the melodies collected by ethnographers. Arguably the most successful example was Charles Wakefield Cadman (1881–1945), whose well-known *Four American Indian Songs Founded upon Tribal Melodies* (Op. 45, first published in 1909) even found their way to Japan.<sup>74</sup> Cadman's 'Indian' opera—tellingly, he himself preferred to call it 'American'—*The Robin Woman* (*Shanewis*) was the first successful opera by an American composer, premiered in March 1918 at the New York Metropolitan Opera and running for two seasons as well as being performed in other American cities. A major reason for the opera's success was the singer in the title role: Tsianina Redfeather Blackstone (1882 or 1892–1985).<sup>75</sup> A Creek Indian trained by Denver's leading voice instructor and well-known singer John C. Wilcox, she had been touring the United States with Cadman since 1913, performing in his highly successful *Indian Music Talks*.

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72 Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 200.

73 *Ibid.*, 202, 279. The quote comes from Fletcher, *Omaha Music*.

74 See Chapter 10.

75 According to Deloria, the 1892 date is more likely.

Redfeather, who also had a successful singing career independently of Cadman, performed in pieces which encapsulated Indianness. She was perceived as authentic and she herself actively used white people's fascination with Indians. In that way her career is not unlike that of her Japanese contemporary Miura Tamaki (1884–1946) and her performances as the eponymous *Madame Butterfly*.<sup>76</sup> Both were talented, conservatoire-trained singers who, in performing their ethnicity, consciously played to Western stereotypes, even while their mastery of Western-style singing and European art music confounded white people's expectations.

By the time of Cadman's success with *Shanewis*, the Indianist movement had, however, already passed its zenith. Indianist composers such as Cadman and Indian performers such as Redfeather Blackstone faded into oblivion. There are several reasons why Native American music failed to become part of an American national music. The distance between the musical systems made it almost impossible for the former to be integrated convincingly into European art music.<sup>77</sup> Arguably, the most significant reason, however, was that Native Americans themselves in the twentieth century pursued a version of 'inclusion' in American society that included recognition as sovereign nations, based on their memories of independence, their claims to the land, their legal rights, and their distinct national status. This version of inclusion rested on 'distinct cultural and social status', that is, on 'distinctiveness and difference'.<sup>78</sup>

Meanwhile, African Americans, who sought 'inclusion' during the same period, sought it in the form of legal and social equality and equal opportunities for full participation in the ideal of American freedom. Their history of close contact and interdependence with the white population was reflected in Afro-American music, which had a history of exchange and acculturation that had started early, particularly in the Southern states.<sup>79</sup> The Civil War sped up the process, which after the

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76 Mari Yoshihara, 'The Flight of the Japanese Butterfly: Orientalism, Nationalism, and Performances of Japanese Womanhood', *American Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (2004), <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2004.0067>

77 Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 317.

78 Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 235–37.

79 Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 237; Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 219, 276.

war was accompanied by serious research into Afro-American music, represented in the landmark collection, *Slave Songs of the United States*, published in 1867, and discussions of the music's positive qualities, with *Dwight's Journal* even referring to an 'American School of Music' in the making.<sup>80</sup> The period from 1890 to 1920 was one of 'crucial development' in Afro-American music, which morphed from 'folk' music (understood as the music associated with a particular group) to 'popular' music (music played and heard throughout the nation). Unlike Indian music, ragtime and jazz were the result of 'cross-pollination', and their appeal was broad enough to allow their integration into the musical mainstream.<sup>81</sup> While the Indianist movement waned after 1920, the new hybrid genres, together with European modernist music, became the main inspiration for compositional Americanism.<sup>82</sup>

Even the integration of music that included Afro-American roots into European art music, however, was limited. The music of the United States was virtually colonized by the aesthetic characteristics and values of European art music, and the dream of a uniquely American music that integrated all the heterogenic musics prevalent in America was not realized.<sup>83</sup> It may well have been an impossible dream, at least within the genre of European art music and beyond the 'cautious integration' of elements from foreign musical systems.<sup>84</sup> Besides, any effort to create the authentically American through complete adoption and mastery of European models, without reference to the diverse local traditions, meant that the composers who attempted it isolated themselves from the 'popular' in the sense of being owned by the people.<sup>85</sup>

Ultimately, popular music, not art music, came to be recognized as quintessentially American. As early as 1864, after the death of Stephen Foster, his songs were described by *Harper's Magazine* as 'our national music'.<sup>86</sup> Foster's formative musical experiences were minstrel shows and music-making at home, and he aimed to write music 'for the people', and

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80 Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 305.

81 Zuck, *Musical Americanism*, 74. For her definition of 'folk' and 'popular', see pp. 14–15.

82 Zuck, *Musical Americanism*, 74–86.

83 Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 207.

84 *Ibid.*, 303–14.

85 *Ibid.*, 303.

86 Quoted in Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 44.

succeeded in transforming 'certain sentimental and nostalgic everyday myths' into music.<sup>87</sup> Songs such as *Oh! Susannah* and *Old Folks at Home* became immensely popular. His early minstrel or plantation songs contained lyrics in pseudo-African American dialect, but songs such as *Nelly was a Lady* (1849) and *Massa's in de Cold Ground* portrayed slaves as having dignity and human feelings, beyond the prevailing stereotypes.<sup>88</sup> Some of his songs became popular worldwide. In Japan they were heard for the first time when Commodore Perry's men treated their reluctant hosts to a number of minstrel shows, held on the steamship *Powhatan* in Yokohama, Hakodate, Shimoda, and Naha in the Ryukyu Islands. The programme included several songs by Foster.<sup>89</sup> While only very few Japanese witnessed these performances, Foster's songs found their way into school textbooks and hymnbooks in Japan, often with Japanese lyrics that had nothing to do with the English ones. The tune of *Old Folks at Home* first appeared in a singing textbook for schools in 1888, and again in subsequent editions in 1891, 1892, 1895, 1902, 1905, and 1908, and in a hymnbook in 1901. *Massa's in de Cold Ground*, with Japanese lyrics, can be found in school books published in 1903, 1908, and 1911 and in hymn books published in 1909 and 1915. Both songs appeared in volumes of songs in English.<sup>90</sup> The recurring themes of Foster's songs: yearning for one's native place, loss of loved ones through death, and nostalgia in general, are similar to those of several other songs published in Japan at the time, as well as sentimental popular songs played in both countries throughout the twentieth century.<sup>91</sup>

Given the pains American elites went to in order to distinguish cultivated music from vernacular, 'popular' music, a fundamental conflict that characterized debates from around the end of the eighteenth century and into the twentieth century,<sup>92</sup> it is ironic that 'American'

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87 Ibid., 45.

88 Ibid., 46–48. Only 23 of 287 were written in dialect (p. 23).

89 Kiyoshi Kasahara, *Kurobune raikō to ongaku* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001), 102–70.

90 Details of the Japanese versions in Kazuko Miyashita, 'Foster's Songs in Japan', *American Music* 30, no. 3 (2012): 313, <https://doi.org/10.5406/americanmusic.30.3.0308> For the original lyrics, see Sakai, Katsuisa. *Eigo shōka shū*. Tokyo: Uedaya Shoten, 1903 vol. 1, pp. 6–9; vol. 2, pp. 16–19.

91 For America, see Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 50. For Japan: Miyashita, 'Foster's Songs in Japan', 313–14.

92 Rathert and Ostendorf, *Musik der USA*, 136, 303.

music came to be defined by popular genres, starting with Foster's songs, and eventually including jazz, blues, gospel, music theatre, and others. A similar irony in Japan is that it was popular music that came closest to embodying the elite reformers' ideal of a harmonization of Western and Japanese music. Japanese genres, meanwhile, could be and were elevated and preserved as 'traditional', thus serving to represent specifically Japanese music and thus what Deloria, with reference to Native Americans, described as 'distinctiveness and difference'.<sup>93</sup>

The United States, in the person of Luther Whiting Mason, played a major role in the introduction of Western music in Japan in the crucial early phase of establishing the teaching of singing, reading staff notation, and basic music theory in schools and setting up teacher training. Americans, whether Mason on a national level, or Kate I. Hansen in the provincial city of Sendai, also acted as mediators of European musical traditions. For both countries, the art music of Europe was an object of veneration, and when Horowitz, describing the efforts of Dwight and others to sacralize European art music in its purest form, remarks, 'This zeal reflected insecurities inherent to a borrowed high culture [...]',<sup>94</sup> he might just as well be referring to Japan. The process of adopting and establishing a musical high culture based on European models went hand in hand with nation-building in both countries and almost contemporaneously, as did the quest for a national music integrating indigenous elements (however defined) into the European idiom. In both countries, this trend waned after 1945.<sup>95</sup>

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93 Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 237.

94 Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 27.

95 For America: Zuck, *Musical Americanism*, 273–78.

