

“Indianist” Operas in the early 20th century United States

Opera and Race in the United States

Week 3, February 17 2021

LES INDES GALANTES,

BALLET HEROIQUE

REPRÉSENTÉ

PAR L'ACADEMIE ROYALE

DE MUSIQUE;

Pour la premiere fois, le Mardy 23. Août 1735.

REMIS AVEC LA NOUVELLE ENTREE
DES SAUVAGES,

Le Samedi dixième Mars 1736.



DE L'IMPRIMERIE

De JEAN-BAPTISTE-CHRISTOPHE BALLARD,
Scul Imprimeur du Roy, & de l'Académie Royale de Musique.

M. D C C X X V I.

AVEC PRIVILEGE DU ROY.

LE PRIX EST DE XXX. SOLS.

Jean-Philippe Rameau,
Les Indes galantes, 1735

Vogue Dancers Subvert a Baroque Spectacle at the Paris Opera

Rameau's "Les Indes Galantes" was designed to show the triumph of Enlightenment order over the exotic "other." Can hip-hop dance make it feel less toxic?



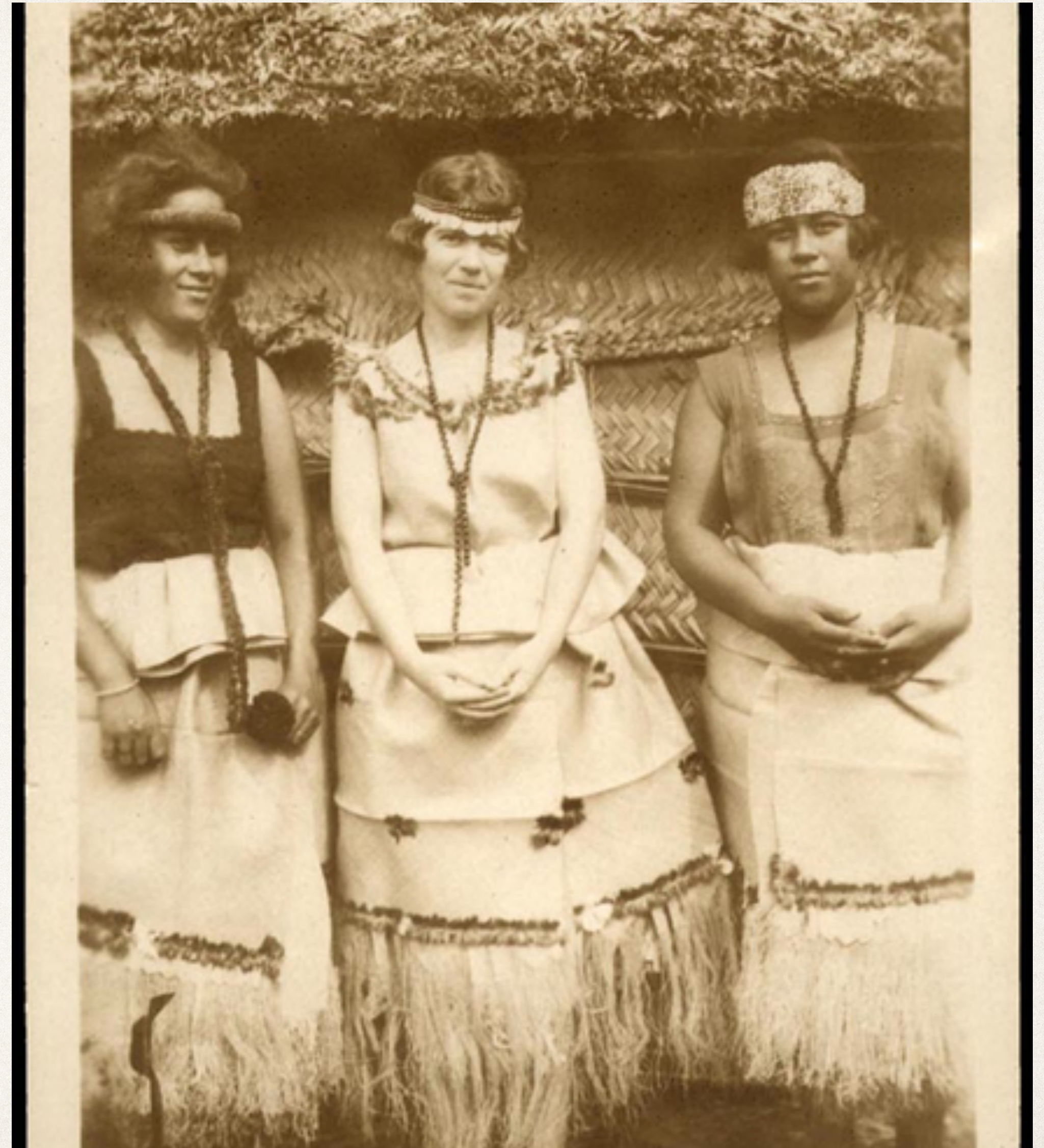
See today's class folder
if you'd like to read this interesting take (optional)

First, a few terms

Some history and terms

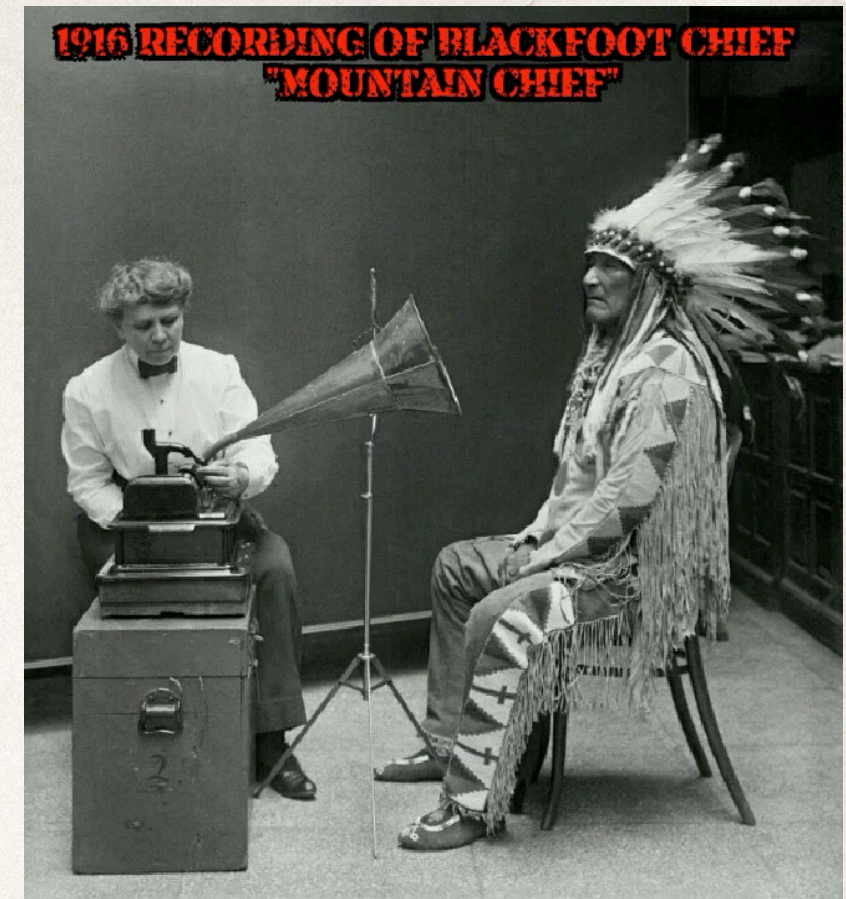
ethnographer: (related to anthropology)

- ❖ person studying the culture of a particular society or group
- ❖ participant observation: often goes to the society to learn/study (“fieldwork”)
- ❖ *emic*, from within the social group (from the perspective of the subject) and *etic*, from outside (from the perspective of the observer).
- ❖ qualitative methodology



"Margaret Mead standing between two Samoan girls,"
ca. 1926, Library of Congress,

Some history and terms



transcription:

- ❖ notating (in some way) a musical piece or sound
- ❖ might think of Bartok, Vaughan Williams,
- ❖ in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this often meant notating non-Western musics into Western notation

Some history and terms

aids in transcription (technologies):

- ❖ recordings: “Edison cylinder”



Frances Densmore with Blackfoot chief, Mountain Chief, during a 1916 phonograph recording session for the Bureau of American Ethnology

Indianist Music

Representation: who is borrowing music? From whom?

Sources: where do the borrowers learn about this music?

Relationships: what kind of relationships are there between the borrowers and the people who belong to the culture with the source materials?

Agency and Power.....who's getting credit? Who's making money?

Historical context....what's going on in American history at this point?

“Indianist” Music

- ❖ lasted roughly from 1890 to 1925.
- ❖ kind of a vague term, but...
- ❖ Any American who used Native American music as source material for art music on a consistent basis between 1890 and 1920
- ❖ Some examples: Edward MacDowell, Arthur Farwell, Charles Cadman, John Comfort Fillmore, Henry Gilbert, Amy Beach, Frederick Burton, Thurlow Lieurance
- ❖ is this nationalist? Well kinda....but by **geography** rather than ethnicity
- ❖ Indianist music illustrates a distinct kind of nationalistic cross-cultural appropriation that is different from the more common practice of composers taking folk tunes from their own ethnic heritage

“Indianist” Music

Edward MacDowell, pre-1900:

- ❖ From 1891-1902 uses Native melodies extensively in Indian-titled works such as the Second (“Indian”) Suite, 1897
- ❖ doesn’t present Native melodies strictly in context
- ❖ doesn’t confine them to Indian-centered works

Andante

Hon an gea boñ ma ga hon an gea boñ ma to gu da - e ma oi ôt
boi pa goi keant da ni hon an gea boñ ma ga ha ye hai ba ôt
de he nén ta ba sa goñ nañ ha o ge to ba da na gea boñ hop.

(Ich hab’ ihn lange nicht gesehen; viel junge Männer giebt’s, ich aber liebe den Einen, meinen Sohn; wenn er zurückkommt, werde ich ihn sehen; ich wache jede Nacht, bis er kommt; er wird sich freuen, mich zu sehen.)

Kiowa Lied der Mutter an den abwesenden Sohn.

Figure 1. Theodore Baker, *Über die Musik der nordamerikanischen Wilden* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1882), 70.

Example 1. Edward MacDowell, Second (“Indian”) Suite, op. 48 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1897), 75, mm. 17–23.

Langsam, trauernd
Dirge-like, mournfully
Lentement, tristement } (♩ = 80)

Flute A

Clarinet in Bb

Horn in F

hinter der Scene
behind the scene
derrière la scène

pp *mf* *pp*

“Indianist” Music

New phase, post-1900

- ❖ influenced by Dvorak’s remarks
- ❖ Arthur Falwell founds Wa-Wan Press, named after Omaha Indian ceremony
- ❖ Wa-Wan mostly uses Native melodies by ethnologists Alice Fletcher and Francis LaFlesche

BE-THAE WA-AN

With feeling ♩ = 69

con Ped.

Um-ba — e - dan — ha ee - dan hoo-we-nae ha ho ae ho wa tho

hae thae ee - ha ha hae ho ha hae ho hae ha wae thae tho-e.

Um-ba — ee-dan — ha ee - dan hoo we nae ha ho ae ho nae tho hae

Figure 2. Alice Fletcher, *A Study of Omaha Indian Music* (Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, 1893), 148.

Breathing the Indian Spirit

The Old Man’s Love Song

Harmonized by
ARTHUR FARWELL
Edited by
MAURICE HINSON

Flowingly ♩ = 96-104

p *dim.* *p* *poco rit.* *a little slower* *a tempo* *poco rit.* *a tempo*

Figure 3. Arthur Farwell, *American Indian Melodies* (1901; repr., ed. Maurice Hinson, Chapel Hill, N.C.: Hinshaw Music, 1977), 9. Copyright ©1977 by Hinshaw Music, Inc. Copyright © assigned 1990 to Alfred Publishing Company, Inc. Used by Permission of the Publisher. All Rights Reserved.

Indianist Opera

Table 10.1 Indianist operas produced in the USA, 1907–1918

The “Western” Operas

1 *Narcissa: or, The Cost of Empire*

Composer: Mary Carr Moore

Librettist: Sarah Pratt Carr

Premiere: Seattle, WA, 1912. Revivals San Francisco 1926; Los Angeles 1945

Quasi-historical account of Whitman massacre/incident of 1847 in Oregon Territory near present-day Walla Walla, WA, without added triangle

2 *The Sun Dance Opera*

Collaborators: William F. Hanson and Zitkala Sa (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin)

Premiere: Vernal, UT, 1913. Revivals Provo (Brigham Young University) and Salt Lake City, UT, 1914; Provo 1935; New York City, 1938

Partial re-enactment of (post-contact Sioux) sun dance framed by romantic triangle among Sioux, Ute, and Shoshone individuals; set in Ute country adjoining Vernal

Zitkala sa (1876–1938), whose English name was Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, was a Yankton Sioux who was taken from her mother at age seven and sent to an Indian school. She later studied at Earlham College (Indiana) and the New England Conservatory (Massachusetts), before teaching at the Carlisle (Pennsylvania) Indian school and, in 1900, touring as a soloist with its band.

<https://orchestraonenyc.org/composer-spotlight-zitkala-sa/gertrude-simmons>



Example 10.3 *The Sun Dance Opera*, “Ohiya’s Serenade” and “Ink-pa-ta” from Act II, Scene 2, 1912 version

(a)

pp Winona threads beads. Curtain

Ohiya's flute in the distance. (Winona hears it)

Flute nearer

Ohiya Sings. rit.

I stand in the west I beckon come to me. The 4 braves enter Ohiya plays flute around tent

3 companions hum

Ink - pa - ta, na - wa - zye Na - chi na - chi cho - ze.

Ma - ya Ma - ya De le chi ku wa, na.

Of the Ute-derived melodies used in the opera, the one that definitely came from Zitkala Sa is “Ink-pa-ta,” the third of Hanson’s nine themes, a love song sung or played by several of the characters; it is the only theme that is scarcely extended or elaborated, always appearing with minimal changes to its initial four-part harmonization. In example 10.3 here, it appears following Ohiya’s serenade with the love-flute.

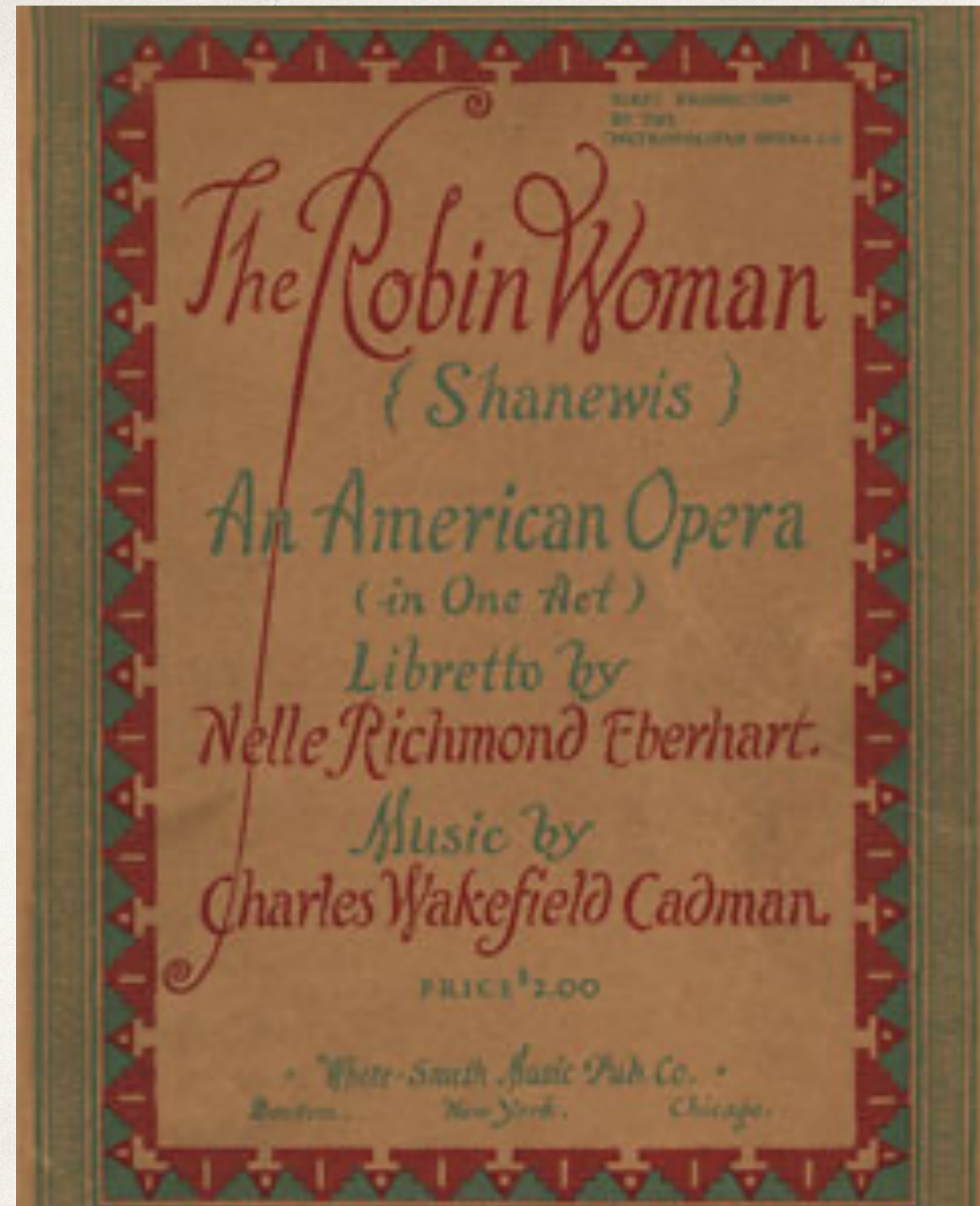
Zitkala sa supplied other details of ute courtship practice, such as the carving of the love-flute. She very likely organized, rehearsed, and helped costume the Ute participants.

What is not speculation is that Zitkala Sa’s share in creating the first version of *The Sun Dance Opera* was emphasized as an element of the opera’s simultaneous authenticity and its exoticism. That is quite different from recognizing her as an equal collaborator, as becomes even more evident when one sees that Hanson copyrighted both surviving scores under his own name. He only assigned “an undivided half interest” in the opera to his Sioux collaborator a month after the first production, most likely at her or her husband’s insistence on the suggestion of a revival in salt lake City or provo. Only much later in his life, long after all the productions and after her death did Hanson give her credit as co-creator of the opera.

The “Eastern” Operas

- 3 *Poia*
Composer: Arthur Nevin
Librettist: Randolph Hartley, on story by Walter McClintock
Premiere: Philadelphia, PA, 1907
Set in pre-contact Blackfeet country (western Montana); all-Blackfeet triangle
- 4 *The Sacrifice*
Composer: Frederick Shepherd Converse
Librettist: John Macy, on story by Converse
Premiere: Boston, MA, 1911
Set in rapidly Americanizing California, 1846; triangle among two Mexicans and one “American” (i.e., Anglo-American)
- 5 *Natoma*
Composer: Victor Herbert
Librettist: Joseph D. Redding
Premiere: Philadelphia, PA, 1911
Set in Old California, 1820s; triangle among two “Americans” and one Mexican
- 6 *Azora, Daughter of Montezuma*
Composer: Henry Hadley
Librettist: David Stevens
Premiere: Chicago, IL, 1917
Set in the City of Mexico just before and at the moment of contact; triangle among two Aztecs and one Tlascalan
- 7 *Shanewis, or The Robin Woman*
Composer: Charles Wakefield Cadman
Librettist: Nelle Richmond Eberhart
Premiere: New York Metropolitan Opera, 1918; revived 1919
Set in contemporary California and Oklahoma; triangle is one Pawnee, two “Americans”

Shanewis (1918)



Tsianina Redfeather

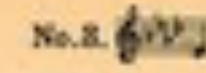
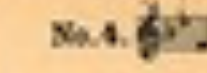
(1882-1985)

- ❖ Creek / Cherokee, born in Eufaula, Oklahoma
- ❖ 1908-1916: in her mid-20s, joins Cadman on his lecture-recital tour about Indigenous musics
- ❖ her signature song becomes “The Land of Sky Blue Waters,” by Cadman.....



“Indianist” compositions:

Cadman and Eberhardt, “From the Land of the Sky-Blue Water “ from *Four American Indian Songs*, Op. 45.

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From the Land of the Sky-blue Water

From the Land of the Sky-blue Water,
They brought a captive maid;
And her eyes they are lit with lightnings
Her heart is not afraid!

But I steal to her lodge at dawning,
I woo her with my flute;
She is sick for the Sky-blue Water,
The captive maid is mute.

Nelle Richmond Eberhart

(LOVE SONG)



Omaha Tribal Melody, collected by Alice C. Fletcher

From the Land of the Sky-blue Water

Omaha Tribal Melodies
collected by Alice C. Fletcher
Poem by Nelle Richmond Eberhart

Charles Wakefield Cadman
Opus 45, No. 1

Voice

Piano

pp Moderately, but increasing in time and tone to end of Introduction

con moto

From the Land of the Sky - blue Wa-ter,

ff *mf*

They brought a cap - - tive

14932-4

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*Flageolet Leve Call of the Omahas

broadly

maid; And her eyes they are

lit with light-nings Her

maestoso

heart is not a - - fraid!

ff

As performed by opera
singer Lillian Nordica, 1910



Tsianina Redfeather

(1882-1985)

- ❖ 1918: tours France and Germany performing for US soldiers during World War I
- ❖ 1924: sings lead in *Shanewis* in Denver
- ❖ 1926: sings lead in *Shanewis* at Hollywood Bowl
- ❖ 1930s: co-founder of American Indian Education Foundation
- ❖ serves on Board of Managers for School of American Research in Santa Fe



