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Reclaiming the ‘Contemporary’ in Indigeneity: The Musical Practices of Cris Derksen and Jeremy Dutcher

Alexa Woloshyn

*Indigenous musical modernities have thrived across centuries of innovation and mobilisation through both exchange and resistance. Settler colonialism seeks to deny Indigenous Peoples a ‘contemporary’ by asserting both a temporal and spatial boundary. The temporal and spatial boundaries intended for Indigenous Peoples foster expectations from the dominant white culture regarding Indigeneity. Cree Mennonite cellist Cris Derksen and Wolastoqi singer Jeremy Dutcher mobilise settler expectations and institutional opportunities in their distinctive musical practices. These musical practices are the results of exchange and dialogue between Euro-American classical music and Indigenous musics, resulting in what Dawn Avery calls ‘Native Classical Music’. Such dialogues are negotiated through these musicians’ resistance to Euro-American classical music hierarchies, settler logics about authenticity and their resourcefulness in navigating settler institutions. By analysing Derksen’s combination of powwow music and newly composed classical pieces with *Orchestral Powwow* and Dutcher’s integration of archival research with composition and performance with *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa*, I argue that heterogeneous musical practices of contemporary Indigeneity thrive within and against the temporal and spatial constraints of settler colonialism. Throughout this analysis, I reflect on my own position as a white settler musicologist and listener in reinforcing these constraints.*

Keywords: Indigenous; Indigeneity; Settler Colonialism; Native; Classical Music; Powwow

Sounding the Unexpected

In the introduction to the recent edited book *Music and Modernity Among First Peoples of North America* (2019), co-editor Victoria Lindsay Levine acknowledges that colonial perspectives on modernity and Indigeneity often position them as oppositional. Beverley Diamond recalls the freshness of the phrase ‘modern Indigenous’ in the early

2000s (2019, 241) because it defied settler logics that require ‘authentic’ Indigeneity to be unchanging. In spite of expectations from non-Indigenous listeners, Levine asserts that ‘musical modernity has always been Indigenous, and Indigenous musicians have always been modern’ (2019, 11). In Philip J. Deloria’s book *Indians in Unexpected Places* (2004), he articulates the formation of white expectations of Indigeneity; the *unexpected* are labelled ‘anomalies’, a label that resists recognition of asymmetrical relationships within a settler colonial society. Indeed, as Deloria writes, ‘Native actions have all too often been interpreted through the lens of Euro-American expectation formed, in many cases, in ways that furthered the colonial project’ (2004, 7).

The ‘colonial project’ in what is now Canada (this essay’s main geopolitical boundary) is specifically settler colonialism: settler colonialism is an ongoing structure implemented throughout North America by which settlers occupy land as a means of asserting ownership (as opposed to non-settler colonialism, which asserts ownership but without dispossession) (Wolfe 1999, 1; Williams 2012, 223).¹ Indigenous Peoples are seen as obstacles to access to the land—all the land—and, thus, settler governments have implemented strategies of dispossession, containment (through reserves), and assimilation. Settler colonialism creates both a temporal and spatial boundary for Indigenous Peoples, seeking to deny them a ‘contemporary’ (Bruyneel 2007; Vowel 2016).

The temporal and spatial boundaries intended for Indigenous Peoples create expectations from the dominant white culture regarding Indigeneity. Deloria explains: ‘All Native people have had to confront [white] expectations—whether that meant ignoring them, protesting them, working them, or seeking to prove them wrong’ (2004, 12). Through all such strategies of confrontation, Indigenous Peoples have enacted their agency and remade the situations to achieve their own goals. Deloria’s case studies focus on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but his concept of the unexpected is a helpful frame for my analysis of two contemporary Indigenous musicians: Cree Mennonite cellist Cris Derksen and Wolastoqi singer Jeremy Dutcher. Derksen and Dutcher mobilise settler expectations and institutional opportunities in their distinctive musical practices. These musical practices are the results of exchange and dialogue between Euro-American classical music and Indigenous musics. Such dialogues are negotiated through these musicians’ resistance to settler logics about authenticity, and their resourcefulness in navigating settler institutions. By analysing Derksen’s combination of powwow music and newly composed classical pieces, and Dutcher’s integration of archival research with composition and performance, I argue that heterogeneous musical practices of contemporary Indigeneity thrive within and against the temporal and spatial constraints of settler colonialism. Throughout this analysis, I reflect on my own position as a white settler musicologist and listener in reinforcing these constraints.

Agency, Resistance, and Innovation in Native Classical Music

Cellist Cris Derksen was raised in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada by her Mennonite mother. Derksen positions herself in ‘a line of chiefs from North Tall Cree reserve

on her father's side a line of strong Mennonite homesteaders on her mother's side' (MUSKRAT Magazine 2015). The public school system provided music lessons, so Derksen studied the cello. Derksen completed her undergraduate degree in cello performance at the University of British Columbia (UBC). She explained to me that unlike many of her classmates, she was not aiming for a position within a professional orchestra (phone conversation, January 11, 2017). She wanted to perform her own music, collaborate with musicians, and perform in a wider range of genres. Derksen's 2015 album *Orchestral Powwow* earned her a Juno nomination for Best Instrumental Album in 2016. Throughout this essay, I refer to *Orchestral Powwow* as a project that encompasses both the studio album, which was created using pre-existing powwow recordings, and live performances with Aniishinaabeg family drum group Chippewa Travellers.² The word 'project' both captures the multi-modal expression of *Orchestral Powwow* and reflects 'Indigenous musical modernity as a process' (Levine 2019, 2) rather than a thing or object (Diamond 2019, 247).

Jeremy Dutcher is a Wolastoqi (Maliseet) singer, pianist, and composer from the Tobique First Nation in New Brunswick, Canada. He studied voice and social anthropology at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. His 2018 album *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa* (Songs of the Maliseet, or People of the Beautiful River) earned him the prestigious Polaris Music Prize (the Canadian equivalent of the British Mercury Prize) in 2018, a prize which is awarded to the best full-length Canadian album.

Derksen and Dutcher share some significant similarities that support my consideration of their practices together. First, they are both Indigenous musicians whose familial ancestries are considered 'First Nations' within the settler state's definition of 'Indigenous Peoples' in the Canadian Constitution.³ As I will discuss more below, the Canadian settler state has aimed to govern First Nations peoples since the late nineteenth century through the Indian Act, which has legislated various assimilative strategies. The second significant similarity is their training in Euro-American classical music. Indigenous Peoples have a long history of cultural exchange and dialogue, with music being a 'natural place for cross-cultural meetings' (Deloria 2004, 205). Mohawk cellist and composer Dawn Avery also pushes back against purist notions of Indigenous music: 'Traditional processes of Indigenous musical creativity may also involve borrowing melodies, musical instruments, or specific components of style from other Native as well as non-Native peoples' (2019, 202). For example, in 2011, Dutcher sang 'Ave Maria' at the Lieutenant Governor's Government House in Fredericton, New Brunswick: a beloved European art song with music by Franz Schubert and text from the Latin Catholic prayer. Dutcher challenges expectations, though, by singing it in Wolastoqey, the language of his people, Wolastoqiyik (or Maliseet).

Indigenous communities are always reworking tools 'in culturally compatible ways' (Vosen 2019, 99), and musical instruments are an example of such tools. As Deloria explains, the *expectation* has been that Indigenous Peoples are 'distant from contemporary technology in both time and space' (2004, 145). Both Derksen and Dutcher challenge that expectation not only through their use of musical instruments as technologies but also through their use of digital tools, like pedals and samplers. For

example, Derkson's song 'Pow_Wow_Wow' uses a Boss DR-550 drum machine and pedals to establish a repeating beat and bass pattern over which Derksen plays a cello melody; the song's futuristic video features a fancy shawl dancer in space while Derksen plays inside a spaceship.

As a white Canadian and a non-Indigenous musicologist, I want to interrogate the institutionalised assumptions I have internalised that lead me to find anything about Derksen's and Dutcher's musical practices *unexpected*. Nonetheless, in media and musicological discourse and institutional practices, the binary of traditional/contemporary is ubiquitous. The 'othering' of Indigenous musicians and reliance on Euro-American classical music hierarchies are habits that are difficult to break: I will be plain and self-reflective of this throughout the essay. The racialised, classist, and sexist foundations of Euro-American classical music and its place in Canadian society remain unmarked and unnamed, and, thus, as Loren Kajikawa explains (2019), our music programmes and institutions perpetuate these beliefs implicitly. Though Kajikawa is critiquing music studies in the United States, his characterisations apply also to Canadian music schools and departments. Canadian undergraduate music curricula have similar core requirements in music theory and history (typically unmarked as 'music' despite being specifically Euro-American classical music theory and history) and using the same textbooks as U.S. music programs. Canada's formal music studies are even more closely tied to British music (Green and Vogan 1991), evidence of the country's colonial legacy.

European culture has not been part of an equitable exchange between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples. Rather, the settler culture became the dominant culture in Canada through the justifications of settler colonialism, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*. In short, policies and laws were implemented and revised over centuries, all with the purpose of granting European colonisers access to the land: specifically, legal and economic access. As Eva Mackey explains, 'making the land available for settler appropriation, then, required a justifying rationale which depended on an equivalent "fantasy of entitlement" to define Indigenous peoples as inferior and in a state of nature' (2016, 48). The legal systems that established Western settler states including Canada are 'still being relied on to justify the denial of indigenous tribal peoples' fundamental human rights' (Williams 2012, 223). Settler colonialism does not allow its own cultural practices and those of the Indigenous communities in North America to thrive simultaneously. This is an impossibility as settler colonialism is built on the belief that its systems of governance, religion, and culture are superior and that it is right and good to 'kill the Indian, save the man'.⁴ As a result, Indigenous cultural practices were often banned (Ellis 2003).⁵

European classical music, as an example of 'high' Western culture, asserts a hierarchy above Indigenous musics, as it does over other musical traditions in general. Euro-American classical music disciplines have overwhelmingly constructed this genre as aesthetically superior over 'primitive' musics, such as popular and folk musics, though such musics may be elevated by mediation through Euro-American classical music. And with Indigenous musics, that mediation is problematic. The Indianists,

for example, believed that they were able to maintain the ‘true’ meaning of Indigenous musics throughout the processes of transcription and arrangement (Deloria 2004). When Deloria discusses the Indianists, he emphasises the extensive and numerous collaborations with Indigenous musicians; these musicians had agency in the creation and mediation of Indigenous musics to a white dominant audience. Nonetheless, Deloria remarks that Indianists were filled with stereotypes and fantasies, resulting in published music whose meanings were largely Euro-American. They thought they were ‘capturing’ Indigenous meaning, but such a belief is predicated on seeing Indigeneity as a ‘thing’ instead of an action or process (see Diamond 2019).

Thus, classical music studies in Canada continues as a ‘system that privileges the work of white composers and treats as secondary in importance the contributions of people of color’ (Kajikawa 2019, 160), or, to my point, the contributions of Indigenous musicians. Deloria (2004) demonstrates, though, that while a system may not be created with equity or Indigenous agency in mind, Indigenous individuals and communities assert their agency, mobilise resources, and resist white expectations. Derksen and Dutcher exemplify two ways of using Euro-American musical training to their advantage. Yes, these cultural institutions can be difficult to navigate as Indigenous students. However, both Derksen and Dutcher have taken what they love about Euro-American classical music, including instruments, melodic and harmonic approaches, and notational practices, and built a large white audience; at the same time, they fulfil, reject, and transform white expectations. They are also part of a large community of Indigenous classical musicians. The February 2019 ‘Indigenous Classical Music Gathering’ held at the Banff Centre for the Arts, which both Derksen and Dutcher attended, exemplifies that many Indigenous musicians have training in Euro-American classical music, love this music, and implement it into their creative practices. However, they also reject ‘the enclosure of Indigenous elements in a dominant mainstream idiom [that replicates] colonialist power dynamics’ (Diamond 2019, 253).

Avery coined the phrase ‘Native classical music’ precisely to describe musicians like Derksen and Dutcher who are trained in Western music theory, history, and performance, and incorporate some Western written notation. These musicians use contemporary settler cultural institutions like music schools to expand their creative options (2019, 205). This is not assimilation into dominant settler cultural practices. Rather, as Avery explains, ‘we are exploring and choosing educational, compositional, and performance practices and refusing the Western racial imaginary of what Indigenous music should sound like’ (2019, 205). Avery (2012, 2019) examines the music of many Indigenous composers, including herself, and there is a range in the explicitly ‘Indigenous’ content of their work. For example, Ravon Chacon (Diné) ‘does not consciously compose or improvise Indigenously, but, because he is a Native person, his background and heritage merge naturally in this work’ (2019, 215). By contrast, both Derksen and Dutcher are employing explicitly Indigenous music with *Orchestral Powwow* and *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa*. They create music that incorporates their classical musical training as evidenced by instrumentation, style, pitch material

(melodic and harmonic), and use of Western written notation. In Derksen's case, the parts for the chamber orchestra musicians are fully notated according to the conventions of Euro-American classical music. In Dutcher's case, he used notation to transcribe the recorded song melodies, and wrote out harmonisations of the monophonic melodies.

Combining Western and Indigenous musical codes and worldviews is an important opportunity to challenge the hegemony of the settler state and its notions of cultural supremacy and to undermine the image of 'authentic' Indigenous culture as something frozen and unchanging.

Origins of 'Aural Regimes of Coloniality' in Canada

The temporal and spatial components of settler colonialism—including dispossession, violence, and cultural genocide—attempt to constrain the creation, reception, and discursive strategies of contemporary Indigenous music in Canada. Defining the concept of 'contemporary Indigeneity' seems superficially straight-forward: Indigenous existence—individual and community—in the now. By extension, contemporary Indigenous musical practices would be those currently practiced by Indigenous artists. But granting Indigeneity a 'present' runs counter to the strategies of assimilation in settler colonialism, Kevin Bruyneel explains the distinction between the coloniser and the colonised through a temporal boundary:

... the colonizing society defines itself as temporally unbound and therefore capable of individual agency and collective independence in modern political time, while the colonized are seen as temporally constrained—whether referred to as primitive or traditional—and therefore incapable of modern agency and independence. (2007, 2)

Settler colonialism aims to bind temporally Indigenous Peoples to an undefined pre-modern past outside of which they cannot exist and, thus, binds them spatially, whether with a geopolitical boundary (e.g. reserve) or a social and discursive boundary of inclusion/exclusion (Bruyneel 2007, 2).

Strategies of assimilation were intended to solve the 'Indian Problem' of prior claim to the land and prevent Indigenous Peoples from existing in the present (and, thus, the future). Canada relocated Indigenous communities to reserves to facilitate settler expansion and control activities of Indigenous communities and individuals. For example, the Pass System required First Nations members to acquire a pass from the Indian agent to legally leave the reserve, even to visit another reserve (Vowel 2016, 209). The main assimilation strategy was the Indian Residential School (IRS) system.⁶

Indigenous Peoples were also forbidden to practice their ceremonies on reserves (Simpson and Filice 2018; Henderson 2018; Mathias and Yabsley 1991).⁷ While Indigenous Peoples resisted this oppression and, thus, songs, dances, and ceremonies continued, their presence and intergenerational transmission was greatly diminished.

Residential schools broke down intergenerational transfer of knowledge. From 2008 to 2015, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) investigated the IRS and called the results of its 150 years ‘cultural genocide’ (2015, 1) because its goal was the systematic and violent dismantling of cultural practices, pride, and identity. Over decades, Indigenous children were forced—by law—to leave their families and communities to live at church- and state-sponsored residential schools. Students were not permitted to speak their languages, and their hair was cut off. Physical and sexual abuse was rampant. When students weren’t being used for cheap hard labour, they were forced to endure a classroom curriculum that characterised Indigenous Peoples as savages. The ability to pass on cultural knowledge—including language, songs, and dances—was cut off through the residential school system. The children who did return to their communities could not speak the language of their parents and grandparents, and did not know the songs and ceremonies (TRC of Canada 2015).

Yet, Indigenous communities and their cultural practices persist, resisting the temporal and spatial constraints of settler colonialism. Such geo-political histories are entwined with the artistic practices of Indigenous artists. Indigenous musicians challenge the division between past and present, and tradition and modern, exposing the lasting effects of settler colonialism, demanding ‘a greater degree of intergenerational responsibility’ (Robinson 2014, 303) from non-Indigenous listeners, and asserting Indigenous contemporary existence and autonomy. Métis educator and author Chelsea Vowel criticises the use of the word ‘tradition’ to grant Indigenous Peoples only an unspecified past and some arbitrary line between ‘tradition’ and ‘modern’. Anything that is viewed as modern could not possibly be part of Indigenous culture. But she explains: ‘Integrating settler technology into traditional Indigenous practices does not require us to accept settler philosophies, and it certainly does not erase our Indigeneity’ (2016, 76). Non-Indigenous listeners are called to break habits of binary and hierarchical thinking.

In addition to habits of colonial thinking that reinforce hierarchies in Euro-American classical music, I must address my own positionality as a white settler musicologist writing about Indigenous musicians. First, I acknowledge my limitations as a non-Indigenous scholar and musician. Garneau explains: ‘[Non-Indigenous friends, colleagues, and collaborators] are front-runners who risk a great deal to be allies and work toward justice and fundamental change. However, they know that the lived complexity of Indigeneity exists beyond their presence ...’ (2016, 28). Throughout this essay, I aim to accept what is unknowable to me as a non-Indigenous person, and to create space for Indigenous musicians to speak for themselves. Second, I avoid what Métis artist and academic David Garneau calls ‘objectivist discourse’ (2016, 25). Derksen and Dutcher have created music to be shared within and beyond their Indigenous communities. I engage with their music not only as a researcher but also as a musician and a fan, and I allow these positionalities to come through in my writing. Garneau encourages this kind of writing because it challenges the seeming objectivity of academic discourse (2016, 25). Third, I resist what *xwélmexw* (Stó:lō) Dylan Robinson calls ‘hungry listening’ (2020), or the kind of extractive and

exploitative listening that is normative within the settler state. As a listener, my position as settler within the settler-native-slave triad (Tuck and Wayne Yang 2012) shapes not only what I perceive (and do not perceive) but also how I process what I perceive. In the conclusion of this essay, I reflect on how to reject 'aural regimes of coloniality' (Diamond 2019, 256) that seek to replicate hierarchies.

'Jagged Worlds Collide' in *Orchestral Powwow*

Orchestral Powwow (2015) combines existing powwow recordings⁸ and newly composed chamber orchestra pieces by Cris Derksen. The live performance of *Orchestral Powwow* in particular draws on the significance of the powwow as a physical act of gathering designed for Indigenous communities while allowing guests to view and share in Indigenous-managed ways, creating what Garneau calls 'an Indigenous sovereign display territory' (2016, 35).⁹ Such spaces and power structures resist the hegemony of the settler state,¹⁰ in this case by rejecting hierarchies reinforced in Euro-American classical music history and practice. Due to Derksen's own musical background as a classically trained cellist, she brings a Western musical sensibility (both art and popular musics) to her musical practice. However, she is also an Indigenous musician who mobilises musical influences from both cultures to express an 'intersectional, variable, and complex [identity] formed through experiences and discourses' (Ineese-Nash 2020, 11), as opposed to how the settler state racialises and compartmentalises Derksen's 'mixed' identity. Listening to *Orchestral Powwow* prompts me to consider how the two musical worlds reflect 'jagged worlds colliding' (Avery 2012) and how such a sonic impression might undermine habituated hierarchies.

Derksen takes her creative inspiration from the thriving contemporary practice of powwow, which is an intertribal gathering that celebrates Indigenous song, dance, food, and crafts (Browner 2009; Hoefnagels 2018) but is typically open to non-Indigenous attendees. Powwow has always been a site of innovation and transformation, with the beginnings of the practice 'rooted in older musics but now infused with a significant amount of intertribal exchange' (Deloria 2004, 219). Powwows developed through venues like Buffalo Bill's Wild West (Perea 2013, 21). Yet, despite the fact that such demonstrations of Indigenous culture were reinforcing white expectations, Indigenous individuals were also managing those same expectations and developing 'new senses of Indian selfhood' (Deloria 2004, 27).

For non-Indigenous listeners like myself, it's important to understand powwow's history as a form of resistance and cultural reclamation. Such performances for non-Native audiences were a legal way for Indigenous dancers to continue some of the cultural practices that were banned during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Hoefnagels 2018). We might be tempted to conclude that powwows are a kind of reproduction of past traditions, rather than a vibrant contemporary cultural practice. We saw patterns of this kind of thinking during recent sesquicentennial celebrations of Canada's confederation that spread across the country. Erica Violet Lee (Néhiyaw) and Hayden King (Anishinabe) critiqued the trend of 'fabricated notions

of Indigenous primitivity' such as tipis and wigwams, denying Indigenous Peoples 'the benefit of a contemporary existence' and making 'Indigenous peoples appear as static, stuck in time' (2017). One specific element of powwow the settler gaze interprets through stereotypes is Indigenous regalia. Lucy A. Ganje (2003) explains that mass media presents individuals in regalia not as a real people with names but 'only an *Indian* or an *Indian-head*' (118). She argues: 'Seeing American Indian people only in traditional dress gives media audiences the idea they are simply historical artifacts without significance in today's world' (2003, 118).

Powwow music is thriving *now*, both as a recording culture and a live practice (Scales 2012; Browner 2009). Powwow drum groups can be found in communities across Canada, singing new songs and absorbing influences from their favourite music and other drum groups. *Orchestral Powwow* builds on this contemporary powwow practice with recordings of current drum groups, in addition to performing live with Chippewa Travellers. To be clear, Derksen's project is not the same as a powwow, which is an immersive experience that is as much about socialising and building community as it is about the music and dance. Her project builds from the practice of powwow, but it also transforms in the process, just as Derksen herself has transformed.

Derksen's journey to powwow music is one of process and transformation. In our interview, Derksen explained:

I started going to powwows with friends when I was around 18, 19. ... It wasn't really a part of my life growing up. And our reserve up there [in northern Alberta where I spent the summers with family] doesn't have a drum group. ... When you finally learn about your own history, and who you are and where you came from. That's when things came up for me.

Derksen lacked confidence to complete a project like this for many years. She confessed to me that it took a long time for her to be ready: she was referring not only to her compositional and arranging skills, but also to an intimacy with the powwow practice, and how this project would reflect her own identity.

Derksen's hesitance was in part due to her lack of knowledge of the mechanics of powwow music, but also a reverence for the genre. In an interview with Rosanna Deerchild (2015), Derksen exclaimed: 'Powwow music is so strong, so strong in the beat and so strong in the singing. ... That power comes from our ancestors'. With *Orchestral Powwow*, Derksen connects the past and present, thus continuing 'the structural logics' (Robinson 2019, 239) of powwow through an innovative instrumentation and genre dialogue. Her project defies settler imagination that relegates powwow to the nineteenth century (or to 'authentic' recreations today of that nineteenth century culture) and insists on the genre's flexibility to welcome new performance contexts.

Derksen's broader practice illustrates how her Indigeneity manifests across a spectrum of genre expressions. Derksen has performed with a number of genre-defying musicians including Tanya Tagaq, Buffy Sainte-Marie, and Kinnie Starr. Recently,

she participated in Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory's collaborative theatre show *Kiinaalik: These Sharp Tools*. She frequently performs with drummer Jesse Baird and Anishinaabe hoop dancer Nimkii Osawamick. Some of her music has no overt connection to Indigenous musics. Nonetheless, like Raven Chacon, her Indigeneity guides her creative practice. Derksen's solo practice typically involves a drum machine and pedal to create foundational loops, above which she layers cello lines. She also often sings along to her instrumental layers, using intertribal vocables, or non-lexical syllables (e.g. hey ya). In the monumental *Orchestral Powwow*, she engages with her Indigenous identity and musical heritage more directly, following years of personal transformation and learning.

Derksen explained to me: 'I grew up mostly in Edmonton. ... My dad wasn't really a part of my life. My dad is Native. He was the chief of my reserve. ... He wasn't really a part of my life until I was probably 19'. Because of this spatial disconnection from her Cree family and community on the reserve, she didn't come to learn much about Cree history until she was a young adult. And powwow was also not a part of her identity until around the age of 18. Her main musical immersion was Western art music. She took up the cello as part of a school music programme, a privilege of her urban upbringing, despite growing up in a working-class family. She explains:

I am an urban Indigenous human, mostly grew up in the cities. Hence, I can play the cello. If I grew on the rez, there's not really cello lessons there. You don't get the opportunities or the education that you do in the cities.

We have been sold a myth that 'cities are settler spaces, both in their origin and their contemporary reality' (Tomiak 2019, 2). In truth, the lands on which cities are currently based were and are Indigenous sites of resistance, contestation, and 'resurgent Indigenous world-making' (Tomiak 2019, 2). Rather than use Derksen's story as confirmation of settler colonial discourse that denies Indigenous communities' agency and vibrancy within urban spaces, and replicates a false urban/non-urban binary, her story reflects how settler logics can be internalised by Indigenous individuals and lead them to question their identity and authenticity. Evelyn Peters and Chris Andersen's edited volume *Indigenous in the City* (2013) articulates that urban-based Indigenous individuals often struggle with their identities, despite the evidence that vibrant Indigenous communities and distinct urban Indigenous cultural practices exist.¹¹

Derksen's comments also highlight an anxiety that many so-called 'mixed' Indigenous individuals have due to the Canadian settler state's reliance on racialised categories. In their analysis of Indigenous-Black identity, Ann Marie Beals and Ciann L. Wilson insist: 'Nativeness is not just a form of identity, but is an act of political and social acceptance of identity that is exclusionary regarding who is "real" and who is not, based on colonial government act and regulations and classifications' (2020, 34). The notions of blood quantum and 'status'¹² are still invoked in settler and Indigenous laws as well as daily conversations, through which claims of 'full' versus 'mixed' blood are weaponised as lateral violence (Pack 2012). Avril

Bell explains that the settler state aimed to ‘breed out’ Indigenous Peoples as an assimilation technique (2014, 63).¹³

Parallel to the process I’ve articulated in Derksen’s musical practice (one that transforms from a lack of knowledge of powwow to confidence to write for a powwow drum group) is Derksen’s discourse about her own identity. Derksen’s website bio used to state that she is half-Cree, half-Mennonite (this language is still used in the summary of her *Orchestral Powwow* album). This language emphasises a binary-based hybridity whose employment of ‘half’ is reminiscent of blood quantum language. Now, her website bio calls her an Indigenous cellist and composer, while still outlining her patrilineal (Cree) and matrilineal (Mennonite) ancestries. This small shift in language is significant. Diamond’s words can apply to Derksen: ‘What might be heard as hybridity is unified in [her] own [life]’ (2019, 253).

Though I have emphasised here a unity within the aspects of Derksen’s identity, this does not mean that a sonic fusion is present in *Orchestral Powwow*. Rather, there is a jaggedness that allows the powwow element of this project to resist historical trends of Euro-American ‘othering’. Avery applies Blackfoot academic Leroy Little Bear’s phrase ‘jagged worldviews colliding’ (2000, 85) to similar musical moments in her work, which helped her ‘cross borders of understanding’ (2012, 132). For Avery, a musical work exhibits ‘jagged worlds colliding’ (Avery 2012, 133) when ‘... the two musical sensibilities co-exist, and yet it is clear what part is “classical” and what part is “Native”. They do so without sacrificing or privileging one over the other’ (133). She goes on to say that each part could exist ‘on its own as an individual piece of music’ (133).¹⁴ When listening to *Orchestral Powwow*, the ear can easily hear the two performance ensembles as separate.

Derksen intentionally designed the music and performance space to keep the two musical practices separate yet simultaneous and in dialogue. With *Orchestral Powwow*, the powwow music is the focus in stage layout: Chippewa Travellers are in the centre of the performance space, with the orchestral performers, as Derksen explains, ‘around to support’ (Xtra 2017). Derksen’s compositional process similarly centres the Indigenous musical practice. This approach rejects Euro-American classical music’s historically entrenched hierarchies and a tokenistic presence of non-classical musics (in this case, powwow music). Here, the drum is the focus, and the powwow song comes first. The orchestral parts fit around the powwow recordings, and Derksen composed the mode, tempo, and form of her new material around the powwow songs. Tracks like ‘East Winging It ft. Black Bear’ open first with the powwow drum before any of the chamber orchestra instruments enter. In this case, the original powwow recording of ‘East Wing’ (from the album *Rez Road*) also includes a vocal introduction of the drum group Black Bear, a gesture which, by its inclusion here, emphasises the importance of the drum group. ‘Kakina Pasekok ft. Northern Voice’ waits until both the powwow drum beat and lead vocal line have been established before entering with the orchestra. Derksen explains in a video interview with Xtra: ‘All of the players, they have to listen to the powwow beat. It’s about time that we start listening to the Aboriginal beat first ...’ (2017).

On the album, the two traditions seem to play off each other, drawing on each other to create a particular mood.¹⁵ Powwow music is monophonic, with a single vocal line sung solo by the lead and then in unison (and often octave unison with additional female voices) with the remaining singers (or ‘seconds’). Harmony is emphasised in Euro-American classical music, so Derksen hears certain harmonic implications in the powwow song melodies and phrases. Derksen explained to me that in previous improvisation sessions with powwow groups, she discovered that the drum tuning makes everything sound in G minor.¹⁶ Because of her training in notated Western classical music, Derksen hears music in terms of key areas and harmonies. Because of how she hears powwow music, many of the tracks on the album are in G minor (or a closely related minor, like D minor and C minor). When ‘East Winging It ft. Black Bear’ is first harmonised in Eb major, it stood out to my ears as a contrasting major mode. Derksen’s harmonic choices for the orchestral parts were decisions that, combined with orchestration and rhythm, shaped and shifted the overall mood of the original powwow recording. For example, in ‘East Winging It’, Derksen combines her harmonisations with a staccato homorhythmic string accompaniment below a cello melody that creates a lightness not found in many other tracks. ‘Intertribal Happy Feet ft. Chippewa Travellers’ uses a dotted rhythm in the bass to transform the often-driving straight powwow drum beat into a laid-back dance groove.

To my ears, some songs embrace even more tension between the two sound worlds by not having the fundamental beats of the powwow song and the chamber orchestra composition be exactly simultaneous. This tension is actually part of powwow music, with melodies often sung slightly behind or ahead of the drum beat, what Scales calls ‘rhythmic displacement’ (2012, 81). By contrast, Euro-American classical music performance practice values complete beat synchronicity (unless explicitly stated otherwise). Thus, listening to a song like ‘Round Dance (feat. Northern Voice)’ challenges white expectations from music with a chamber orchestra. Instead, listeners hear the kind of ‘rhythmic displacement’ that is embraced in powwow music, and they may be inspired to reflect on how this sonic tension can remind us of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination today. This opening track ‘Round Dance’ features Northern Voice’s ‘Be Thankful’, a round dance performed with hand drum.¹⁷ This type of round dance has a monophonic melody (with the women’s voices in octave unison on particular phrases) above a unison heartbeat (long-short) drum pattern.¹⁸ The cello opens the song on G (to establish the tonal centre), with horn, tuba, and lead voice entering next, followed by the echo of the seconds (0:11) and more and more instrumental layers, creating a polyphonic texture with the multiple independent lines. Derksen’s newly composed material emphasises the beat, in addition to more active rhythmic material on the half beat and some dotted material. This mostly ‘straight’ rhythmic material contrasts with the abundance of long-short rhythms in the original round dance ‘Be Thankful’. Throughout the song, the strong beats and weak beats of the powwow and orchestral groups are not always exactly simultaneous.

In addition to these small-scale examples of ‘jagged worlds colliding’, Derksen maintains tension between the two musical practices on the larger-scale level of formal

design. Powwow songs typically include four push-ups, each one beginning with the solo 'lead'. Rather than have the chamber orchestra compositions always begin a new section with each push-up, Derksen composed phrases and sections independent of the push-up structure. For example, in 'Powwow Rhapsody', Northern Voice's second push-up begins around 0:42 while Derksen is in the middle of a cello solo phrase. In some tracks, like 'Powwow Rhapsody' and 'Mozart's Ghost', she composes a short break in the orchestral texture to expose the beginning of a new push-up. Subsequent push-ups, though, do not necessarily begin during the orchestral break, an aural reminder of their formal independence. These songs present a 'mutuality and respect' (Avery 2012, 133) that can prompt the listener to consider a broader socio-cultural context.

Derksen intended to make these musical choices because she recognised some problematic legacies within Euro-American classical music. First, as a musician on a 'settler instrument' (her phrase), she had first-hand experience with the hierarchies of Euro-American classical music that positioned itself and its white male creators above other categories of musicians and musical practices. She saw Western classical music hierarchies as a parallel of broader systems of inequality and oppression for Indigenous Peoples. Second, she confessed to me a frustration with serving on arts grant committees and seeing so-called Indigenous projects for orchestras being written by non-Indigenous individuals. She summarised her revelation to me:

We can do Indigenous classical music but that promotes and showcases Indigenous folks in the centre of the piece. It's time for us to reclaim our own art and how we present it to other folks, even in the classical context. Even though it's a colonial construct, we can still speak for ourselves.

Orchestral Powwow exemplifies the broader implication and socio-political importance of independence and tension, of sonically insisting that 'jagged worlds collide' when two musical codes are combined: powwow and Euro-American classical music. This project represents a very personal journey for Derksen, and implements new relational possibilities between Indigenous and settler musicians. The chamber orchestra musicians in particular experience a dynamic different from typical Euro-American classical concerts. Derksen resists the binary between white and Indigenous cultures, 'traditional' and contemporary, by innovating the powwow genre to reflect her creative Indigeneity.

'Bring the Songs Back ... Bring Everything Back'¹⁹

Jeremy Dutcher's first studio album *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa* was the outcome of years spent not only learning specific Wolastoqey songs from Elder and song bearer Maggie Paul and from archival recordings, but also training extensively in Euro-American classical music. The album enacts a cultural and linguistic resurgence for Dutcher and his community. To white listeners, the album presents unexpected juxtapositions

of the past and present, and of Western and Indigenous musical practices. Yet, Dutcher's music on this album and in live performance is not unexpected when one surveys the Indigenous creative landscape, which Dutcher characterises as an Indigenous renaissance. Similar to Derksen, Dutcher has been resourceful in combining his musical education with his Wolastoqey worldview, and creatively resisting settler consumption.

Dutcher fully displayed his integrated creative practice during his live performance at the Polaris Prize gala concert on 17 September 2018. In this performance, he draws on both his operatic voice training, with a dramatic translucent black cape, and his Wolastoqey identity, with a birch-bark hat made by Kim and Wayne Brooks (Wolastoqiyik) of St. Mary's First Nation in New Brunswick, and eagle feathers, two in the hat and one in his hand. His performance is also filled with the unexpected. For example, in contrast to his bold clothing, Dutcher begins his live performance quietly, with simple piano chords, before shifting to a rapid repeating pattern in the piano part beneath the song's melody (0:54). This is an abbreviated version of the album's 'Mehcinut' followed by the second part of 'Essuwonike' (3:14). The arrangement increases a sense of chaos and tension (4:19) by including what sounds to my ears as Stravinsky-esque dissonant accents (a style Dutcher would have encountered during his undergraduate degree) as a woman vocalist slowly slides up to a C6 (4:45–5:15). Out of the hanging silence, Dutcher begins 'Pomok naka Poktoinskwes' (Fisher and Water Spirit): he learned the melody from a monophonic vocal recording, but here he applies numerous minor mode harmonisations. This gala performance is contrapuntal—dialogic—as Dutcher, the cello, and two backup vocalists weave in and out with various parts of the main melody and counter melodies. Dutcher finishes the song a cappella (7:48), with the drum providing a heartbeat pulse beneath. Through the various juxtapositions and surprises in this performance, Dutcher rejects simplistic and Euro-centric understandings of Indigeneity.

This performance and its album origins defy the logic of the 'contemporary' in settler colonialism in two main ways. First, Dutcher sings in the Wolastoqey language, which, like all Indigenous languages, was suppressed through the Indian Residential School system with the goal of entirely eliminating its usage. Second, these are songs that were recorded by a white ethnographer who aimed to 'capture' Indigenous culture before it was 'lost' forever. Dutcher, through the support of his family and community, rejects this logic, demonstrating rather that Indigenous languages and cultural practices persist through Indigenous resurgence.

The suppression of language has been a dramatic shift for Wolastoqiyik. In many interviews, Dutcher has declared that fewer than a hundred people speak his language.²⁰ He explains in an interview with Noisey's Veronica Zaretski (February 15, 2018):

Within one generation it went from an entire community of people that speak the language to now mostly elders who speak it. ... You see how the schools isolated children from their families and how that created a culture of shame around their own language and identity.

Language carries meaning and cultural worldviews, and it is central to Indigenous Peoples' resurgence and post-genocide recovery. Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Leanne Simpson explains: 'Indigenous languages carry rich meanings, theory and philosophies within their structures. Our languages house our teachings and bring the practice of those teachings to life in our daily existence' (2011, 49). The songs Dutcher sings comment directly on this linguistic urgency. For example, in 'Essuwonike', Dutcher sings in Wolastoqey 'It's time to listen', and he encourages his nation to use song to 'save our language'.

All of the songs on *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa* are in the Wolastoqey language, leaving listeners like myself uncertain about the meaning of lyrics. Dutcher has explained the context behind some of the songs in interviews, but he has not provided translations of the songs. During the press conference after the Polaris announcement, Dutcher explained 'For me, to do this album in the language, totally in the language, and not translate ... that was very important to me. ... To unabashedly share our Indigeneity and not have to translate'. Such an approach resists the colonial urge 'to penetrate, to traverse, to know, to translate, to own and exploit' (Garneau 2016, 23). The lyrics, then, may provide some meanings for those who understand them, but they are not the only meanings.

I provide a close reading of the album's opening track 'Mehcinut' to demonstrate how Dutcher expresses a hybrid musical sensibility based on his training in Euro-American classical music and his mentoring in Wolastoqey songs. The song opens with a single, gently articulated piano chord, followed up shortly thereafter with Dutcher's voice—presented here first as a soft and pure-toned tenor. Dutcher's voice begins to swell as both the melody and dynamics expand. In an Instagram live session on 27 March 2020, Dutcher confessed that after he left his formal classical voice studies, he went through a transition as a singer. He characterised this as a difficult transition to develop a vocal approach that he felt was fully his own, as opposed to an emulation of Euro-American classical vocal standards. 'Mehcinut' offers the listener a window into the results of Dutcher's efforts. As Dutcher sings a repetition of the main strophe (0:52), his piano part shifts from single chords to a left-hand counter melody and a right-hand running ostinato. The song welcomes more instrumental voices. When the action suddenly slows, Dutcher's voice is agile and precise. Then Dutcher welcomes another singer out of the misty texture: a voice emerges (Jim Paul), with the recognisable grain of turn-of-the-century phonographic recording (2:07). He sings the same melody as Dutcher, and as he continues to sing, Dutcher's piano begins to accompany him. Right-hand octaves, drums, and more strings surround the monophonic archival recording. Dutcher loudly returns to the melody (2:47), but offers additional evidence of his voice training with a seemingly effortless leap from F4 to D5 (3:29). Dutcher's note continues to soar above the instrumental texture below, and the voice from the past returns to a prominent place in the mix. The instruments continue to accompany Paul's final phrase and spoken statements in the Wolastoqey language, still in an unknown language to non-Wolastoqey ears.

While Dutcher does not offer complete translation of Wolastoqey lyrics, he has discussed ‘Mehcinut’, or Death Chant, in interviews.²¹ He describes the song as a ‘celebration of life and not really buying into the sadness of death’ (Zaretski 2018), a statement that resonates with how I listen to his arrangement of the song. To journalist Veronica Zaretski, Dutcher explained his choice to include ‘Mehcinut’ on the album and as the first track:

In the period around the time these songs were collected there were a lot of what I call death narratives or the idea of Indigenous people as fading people. I wanted to challenge that stereotype and say, ‘No, we’re here, we’ve been here. We’re still doing it’ ... and challenge *that* idea of death. (Zaretski 2018, n.p.)

These ‘death narratives’ were common refrains from anthropologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Jonathan Sterne declares that nineteenth century sound recording was used to ‘preserve the bodies of the dead so that they could continue to perform a social function after life’ (2003, 292). Anthropologists recorded the songs of Indigenous Peoples throughout North and South America with the dual goals of preservation and dissemination. Dutcher’s album was only possible because songs from his community were recorded and archived. As Dutcher explains in interviews, he had been learning songs from Maggie Paul²² (Passamaquoddy), and she told him to seek out the archive in the Canadian Museum of History.²³

Anthropologist William H. Mechling lived with communities in New Brunswick in the summer of 1911 and recorded songs.²⁴ Anthropologists seemed little aware of the entitlement (and violence) inherent in this ethnographic practice: that is, that culture can be ‘captured’ and then subsequently ‘owned’ by the collectors or the institutions they represent. Settler scholars do not acknowledge enough the violent strategies of assimilation that created such a circumstance in the first place. Why would the songs be lost? Because Indigenous cultural practices were banned, because children were forced to attend residential schools and were, thus, not exposed to their communities’ practices, and because residential school children were punished for speaking their languages. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action outline steps based on a reconciliation framework for museums and archives to take in compliance with UNDRIP.

Indigenous Peoples around the world are seeking to reclaim cultural property that has been stolen and to repatriate it (Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull 2002). Anthropologist Aaron Fox’s work with Laura Boulton’s collection of Iñupiaq songs offers a model of community-based repatriation (2013); for Fox, ‘musical archives are only meaningful, only valuable for any purpose at all, when they are embedded in (and actualize) networks of forward-looking reciprocity’ (2013, 552). Dutcher’s album is such an act of repatriation, to bring these songs back to Wolastoqiyik. Maggie Paul speaks of the ancestors being happy to hear these songs (on ‘Eqpahak’), and this album sounds out this simultaneity—these shared songs. The Canadian Museum of History (and similar institutions across Canada) should see Dutcher’s work as an

opportunity to create long-term, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities whose songs were recorded and became the institution's private intellectual property. Similar to the shift Moira Simpson notes within a restorative justice model of contemporary museology in Australia and Canada, albums like *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa* model how song archives can be part of 'living cultures' (2009, 122).

Dutcher transcribed the songs he heard, harmonised them based on Euro-American classical and popular music codes, and arranged the songs for multiple instruments and vocalists. He also chose to include excerpts of the archival recordings in his songs. By bringing the voices of Wolastoqiyik ancestors into dialogue, Dutcher challenges a linear concept of temporality, especially a modernist narrative of progress from past to present. Stanyek and Piekut's work on posthumous duets is insightful in relation to my reading of Dutcher's album. They emphasise that such 'collaborations' demonstrate that agency does not belong only to Dutcher as the 'here and now' performer. Rather 'agency is always distributed and never coterminous with a single body' (2010, 18). While those who sang on the archival recordings did so in the past, in a linear sense, they become present, with Dutcher, sometimes, taking the lead. For example, on the song 'kotuwossomikhal' (Thirsty), the ancestor sings alone, with several rhythmic layers accompanying him and some production effects on his voice, resulting in what Stanyek and Piekut call 'revertibility': the initial recording is undone, 'disarticulated and taken back to a prior stage in the process of assemblage' (2010, 19). Dutcher speaks of feeling connected 'to those who have gone before and those who have yet to come' (CBC News 2018) when he listens to the archival recordings. Both the album's process of production and our listening experiences underline these temporal and spatial circularities and overlaps. Similarly, in 'Oqiton' (Canoe Song), the voice on the recording sings out first, with Dutcher echoing like a student responds to a teacher (0:10). Dutcher's interpretation of the song becomes dominant in the mix, but in the end, the ancestor's voice rings out again (2:44), sharing the present with Dutcher and his community through these songs.

The sampling of these archival recordings produces another striking sonic impression: the vulnerability of wax cylinder recordings. Wax cylinders disintegrate over time, and the recordings can become completely compromised and unusable. Dutcher draws attention to this preservation problem on the album at the beginning of track six. A voice states: 'Quatorze. Fourteen. Broken'. That song is now gone. Archival collections are being digitised, and the songs that Dutcher performs are not at risk of physical disintegration. Yet, how many other song collections are still at risk? There is urgency to repatriate Indigenous cultural artefacts like song recordings.

The sonic materiality of recordings like this, with the noise of the old wax cylinder technology breaking through, and the distinctive vocal timbre, have been incorporated in contemporary recordings to various expressive ends, sometimes to invoke a kind of nostalgia or authenticity. In this case, I hear this materiality as a reminder of the ethnographic context of its extraction from the community. As a white settler Canadian, I can wish for a past that did not happen: that the songs would have thrived in Dutcher's community all of these decades, passed from generation to generation. Instead, as

Dutcher explains, the songs went to sleep for a while, and ‘our Elders tell us that it’s time to take [them] out’ (CBC News 2018). Elyse Carter Vosen emphasises the ‘mobility, shape shifting, and resourcefulness’ (2019, 93) of modern Indigenous artists. We can be critical of the settler colonial foundations of turn-of-the-century ethnographic activities while also embracing the possibilities those same activities offer. Dutcher takes from both settler musical and archival institutions what will serve his creative purposes.

Dutcher’s work, in the archives and in creating this album, is a political act of resurgence that defies the Canadian government’s historical and ongoing strategy of systematic and openly documented assimilation and cultural genocide. That he created a compelling and critically acclaimed collection of songs from this process is entirely to his credit as a Wolastoqi musician. This act of creative resurgence opens a new sonic path for Wolastoqiyik heading into the future. The songs and the Wolastoqey lyrics of those songs have a new life. They are no longer tucked away in an archive with limited access. To Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson (2020), Dutcher exclaimed: ‘in my community they’re just so excited to hear the songs ... It’s just about getting song out there and trying to revive it within and for the community’ (175).

Through this album, Dutcher insists on a contemporary relevance for these songs—that they can and will be sung again. However, Dutcher also demonstrates that reviving Wolastoqey songs does not have to mean singing them exactly as he found them on the wax cylinders. On this album and in live performance, Dutcher expresses himself as a twenty-first century Wolastoqi person, one with extensive musical training. His Wolastoqi self sings Wolastoqey lyrics in his powerful tenor voice while accompanying himself on the piano. He sings defiantly in the face of a settler state that aimed to keep Wolastoqiyik in the past. He awakens the songs anew with each performance. His live performances of ‘Pomok naka Poktoinskwes’ are particularly striking for how he uses space to resonate these melodies and the Wolastoqey language. In both CBC Music’s First Play Live and the first live performance of the song I heard, Dutcher sings the final phrases into the piano, as his strong voice awakens the resonance of the piano interior. During his performance at the Polaris Prize gala, he stepped away from the piano and finished singing the song front and centre, facing the audience. As his final notes rang out, he held up an eagle feather in his raised fist. ‘Psiw-te npomawsuwinuwok, kiluwaw yut!’²⁵

Garneau declares: ‘The primary sites of Indigenous resistance, then, are not the rare open battles between the colonized and dominant but the everyday active refusals of *complete* engagement with agents of assimilation’ (2016, 23; emphasis mine). Dutcher’s musical practice is the result of both immersion in a Wolastoqey worldview *and* settler cultural institutions. His musical style is clearly the result of extensive training in Euro-American classical music. Yet, he refuses *complete* engagement in settler institutions. To paraphrase Vosen, Dutcher simultaneously harnesses and disrupts settler power structures. When Dutcher created *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa* and each time he performs it, Dutcher is ‘speaking with one’s own [i.e. the Wolastoqiyik] in one’s own way’ (Garneau 2016, 23); he doesn’t translate the texts of the songs nor offer copious explanations regarding their context and meaning. His people come before the settler hungry to consume his cultural product.

Listening to Contemporary Indigeneity

‘We are here’. Maggie Paul stated this simple phrase in response to Dutcher’s Polaris Music Prize win in 2018. Its simplicity belies the complexity that necessitates it: a long history and violent legacy of settler colonialism in Canada to assimilate all Indigenous Peoples. Freezing Indigenous culture at the moment of contact is ‘an enduring trope of difference in the settler-colonial imaginary’ (Kowal 2015, 94).²⁶ The result is ‘expectations of cultural continuity’—white expectations that ‘have long worked against the creation of histories of change within Indigenous society’ (Diamond 2019, 241). Within this colonial erasure, Jarrett Martineau and Eric Ritskes explain, ‘Indigenous art marks a space of a returned and enduring presence’ (2014, I). Or as Deloria phrases it, we witness the unexpected. There has also been a push within Indigenous artistic communities to create what Garneau would call ‘Irreconcilable Spaces of Aboriginality’ (2016, 26–30) that are only for Indigenous artists. The February 2019 ‘Indigenous Classical Music Gathering’ held at the Banff Centre for the Arts is one example.

Canada is making efforts to support Indigenous artistic projects based on a call to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada, though such efforts are focused on Indigenous/non-Indigenous collaborations. Of the TRC’s 94 Calls to Action, Number 83 is directed to the Canada Council for the Arts, a federally funded organisation that supports wide-ranging arts organisations, individual artists, and specific projects: ‘We call upon the Canada Council for the Arts to establish, as a funding priority, a strategy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process’. The Canada Council developed the {Re}conciliation Initiative, which is focused on Indigenous/non-Indigenous collaborations. Indigenous and settler artists and scholars alike have been examining such collaborations (in concept and in practice) with a critical eye on how collaboration may simply reinforce settler artistic aesthetics (Garneau 2016; Robinson 2014) through containment (Diamond 2016), which, like ‘world music’ more broadly, includes only sonic markers of Indigeneity that ‘[feed] on Otherness and [homogenize] cultural specificity’ (Diamond 2016, 246). Too often such collaborations ‘[reinforce] settler structural logic’ (Robinson 2014, 277) by upholding Western musical aesthetics as normative and superior.

Robinson is a leader in exploring collaborative musical models that refuse ‘the *feeling* that something has been achieved’ (2012, 123) rather than ‘taking up a greater degree of intergenerational responsibility in the acknowledgement of Canada’s history of colonisation and the reverberations of intergenerational trauma as they play out in Aboriginal communities across Canada’ (2020, 230). Robinson is critical of intercultural art music performances (even those that are Indigenous-led) at which settler audiences feel particularly moved by such performances and, therefore, ‘the intensity of affect when experiencing socially and politically oriented performance allows for a conflation of affect with efficacy’ (2020, 218). While he recognises that art has the capacity ‘to reach audiences who might not otherwise engage with such histories, and even incite them to action’ (2012, 113), colonisation continues in Canada; the

rights of Indigenous Peoples remain materially unrecognised by the Canadian government. Accountability is central to his theorising of decolonial listening practices (Robinson 2020).

What are our intentions when we listen to Indigeneity? Musicians like Derksen and Dutcher are clearly successful with non-Indigenous audiences. We need to wrestle with why certain Indigenous musicians are legible to settler listeners, and what this reveals about our assumptions about Indigeneity. Robinson's recently published *Hungry Listening* (2020) holds some answers. Diamond believes that we can employ anti-colonial and decolonial listening to 'contribute to an emergent tomorrow in which diverse and sovereign cultural communities could exist without one subsuming another or addressing differences violently' (2019, 256).

This essay has been driven by two parallel purposes. First, to demonstrate how Cris Derksen and Jeremy Dutcher each refuse to capitulate to the settler-colonialist contention that tradition and modernity are incompatible. They reclaim musical hybridity and sonic collaboration as Indigenous and not evidence of cultural loss or corruption. Rather, these are core practices within creative Indigenous modernities (Spurling, Szego, and Diamond 2012; Levine and Robinson 2019): to exchange musical ideas, mobilise resources, and innovate creative forms. Powwow and Wolastoqey songs remain powerful signifiers for these musicians and their communities. Derksen and Dutcher express these Indigenous musical practices in new musical contexts that suit their twenty-first century Indigenous selves even while the Canadian settler state persists.

Second, to critique hierarchical thinking that is implicit in settler colonialism and is foundational to Euro-American classical music studies, both performance and musicology. My hope is one articulated by Diamond: 'to recognize colonial processes that continue to shape contemporary societies [while being] willing to accept responsibility for helping to animate a future' (2019, 257). Listening is relational, and we have an opportunity to reject 'the aural regimes of coloniality' (Diamond 2019, 256) instead of invoking stereotypes. Classical violinist Heidi Aklaseq Senungetuk (Inupiaq) explains: 'New music challenges listeners to rethink static images of Indigeneity through expressive media that are at once forward-looking and of the present and that embrace the past' (2019, xiv). How can we listen for and to 'the slippages that make something not quite what one expects' (Diamond 2019, 253), whether it's rhythmic tension in *Orchestral Powwow* or an archival recorded voice immersed in a classical/pop soundscape?

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consumption of musical practices in both art and popular musics. Woloshyn is currently completing a book manuscript on the Canadian Electronic Ensemble. In addition, she researches Indigenous creative practices through the lens of settler colonialism, Indigenous sovereignty, and musical hybridity with artists like Tanya Tagaq, A Tribe Called Red, and Cris Derksen. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, *Circuits: musiques contemporains*, *eContact!*, *The American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, *TEMPO*, and *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, as well as chapters in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Music Production* and *Popular Music and the Politics of Hope: Queer and Feminist Interventions*.

Notes

- [1] Younging explains that the phrase ‘what is now Canada’ is a preferred wording to assert Indigenous sovereignty (2018, 91).
- [2] Chippewa Travellers are originally from The Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation of the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula in Ontario, Canada.
- [3] The Canadian Constitution recognizes First Nations (or ‘Indians’), Inuit, and Métis as three distinct Indigenous groups (previously referred to ‘Aboriginal’). While these designations recognize important distinctions between the three groups, they can result in an impression of ‘First Nations’ homogeneity and a lack of recognition of the shared histories—including significant kinship networks—between the groups, such as Cree and Métis in the prairies.
- [4] This phrase was used by Richard Henry Pratt, who founded the Carlisle Indian Industrial School (1879–1918). Read more about the U.S. Indian boarding schools in Ward Churchill’s *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools* (2004).
- [5] Amendments to the *Indian Act* in 1951 allowed Indigenous Peoples to practice traditional ceremonies, including powwows. In the United States, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act was passed in 1978.
- [6] For details about the history and legacy of the residential school system in Canada, see The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). For more information on the similar Indian Residential Schools in the United States, see Trafzer, Keller, and Sisque (2006).
- [7] Reserve is a legal term within Canada. Reservation is the term used in the United States.
- [8] Tribal Spirit Music is an Indigenous powwow music label that offered Derksen its catalogue, as they have done with A Tribe Called Red.
- [9] For more information on powwow music, see Tara Browner (2009) and Christopher Scales (2012).
- [10] David Garneau (2012, 2016) writes about challenging the colonial attitude in art exhibitions, especially emerging as a response to the TRC of Canada. His charge to ‘be certain that those we work with are agents and not subjects’ (2016, 37) applies to musical collaboration as well.
- [11] While Indigenous spaces cannot be defined by Canada’s reserve system, I want to clarify that Canada has urban reserves and Indigenous Peoples currently live in cities, many by choice. Nonetheless, many more reserves exist in rural spaces, and settler discourses often argue Indigenous communities should abandon their rural reserves and move to the city (for example, see Scott Gilmore’s many opinion pieces in *Maclean’s* on the subject).
- [12] For a clear explanation of how the *Indian Act* categorises status Indians, see Vowel (2016, 28–30).
- [13] The problems with the concept of ‘mixed’ identity are numerous, including that typically the ‘mix’ is between white and Indigenous, thus erasing complex histories of kinship networks between Indigenous nations and between Indigenous and Black communities (Beals and Wilson 2020).

- [14] Avery's discussion here is focused on her work 'In Two Worlds' (1722/2006) but also applies to musical works with similar approaches.
- [15] I have not seen a live performance of *Orchestral Powwow*, nor is there much video documentation on the internet. Therefore, I cannot compare this effect on the studio album versus live performance.
- [16] As Deloria explains (2004, 191–92), transcription of oral Indigenous musics codifies that music within a Euro-American classical framing and emphasises the traits that classical music emphasises. Thus, I employ Western classical terminology like key areas to the material composed by Derksen, which was written in Western written notation and was conceived through the lens of Western musical parameters such as melody, harmony, and meter. I use common powwow terms like melody and beat when discussing the original drum group songs.
- [17] The sound of the hand drums isn't prominent in the mix until around 1:30.
- [18] Powwow songs use one large drum while round dances typically use hand drums.
- [19] This statement is from Maggie Paul whose conversation with Dutcher is included on the track 'Eqpahak'.
- [20] Statistics Canada (2016) identified approx. 350 speakers who identify Wolastoqey as their mother tongue. There is now an app for learning the language through the University of New Brunswick and the Mi'kmaq-Wolastoqey Centre: <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/wolastoqey-latuwewakon/id1324181619?mt=8>.
- [21] Dutcher describes one performance in which an Indigenous, non-Wolastoqi audience member reacted negatively to his performance of this death chant. In his conversation with Dylan Robinson, they reflect on the tensions between different Indigenous protocols (Robinson 2020, 174–76).
- [22] See Browner (2009, 54–66) for more information on Paul's work to revitalise traditional singing in Passamaquoddy and Wolastoqiyik communities.
- [23] The Canadian Museum of History archives has two audio reels of songs collected by Mechling in 1911 (CCFCS III-E-1 to III-E-29).
- [24] According to the 'Summary Report of the Geographical Survey Branch' (Department of Mines 1912), Mechling spent the summer of 1911 with the Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik of New Brunswick (380) working for the Survey's Anthropological Division (Richling 2012, 62). The Heritage Branch of the Province of New Brunswick has a photo of Edward Paul demonstrating Wolastoq music and drum songs to Mechling; they indicate the year as c. 1913. Mechling earned a B.S. and A.M. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1910. He earned his PhD in Anthropology in 1917.
- [25] This phrase translates to 'All of my people, this is for you!' Dutcher opened his acceptance speech with these words at the Polaris Prize gala.
- [26] Kowal analyses this trope in the context of Australia, but she makes this claim about settler colonialism more broadly.

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