

More Than Just Traditional: Indigenous Classical Composers from the US and Canada

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Indigenous Art Stereotypes

- Rudimentary, Simple
 - Visual Art: Stick figures, looks like cave paintings
 - Flat, black-line drawings
 - Music: Flute or drums only, re-enacting traditional songs
 - No reference to the modern world or current ideas
- Reality
 - Art created by people with Indigenous backgrounds is indigenous art
 - Variety of ways to express culture
 - Philosophy, topics, literal quotations
 - Art can be simultaneously modern and embedded in customary culture and aesthetics
 - Composers are living, modern people
 - Many have classical training, even graduate degrees
 - Variety of instruments
 - Focusing on piano for this presentation
 - Any music written by a person with indigenous heritage is indigenous music
 - There is no measurement or judgement about whether it's 'native enough'
- Important Considerations for Music
 - Not all music is equal in traditional or modern cultures
 - Some songs have special power or give power to the performer
 - Not all music is for public consumption or use
 - Composers from within the culture are more likely to use music appropriately
 - Is always best to check in program notes within scores, or contact composer directly
 - 'Indianist' music from 1800s/1900s not intended as disrespectful but no references for where melodies are from

Beverley McKiver

- Canadian, from Ontario; Anishinaabe heritage
- *Canadian Floral Emblems* (solo piano), Timelines (two pianos), song cycles
- Contact info
 - Website: <https://beverleymckiver.com/>
 - Contact her through the website to purchase music
 - On Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

Karen Sunabacka

- Canadian, lives in Manitoba; Métis heritage, also Scottish, Swedish and Finnish
- For piano solo
 - Spider Solitaire

- ...our inner lives were entwined...embroidered with the same pattern
- Curlicue
- Falling Water
- Hiding
- Lost
- A Canoe on a Lake
- Collaborative Piano
 - The Place Where the Creator Rests (piano trio with spoken voices)
 - Mama's Painting: Louis Riel's Dream (piano quintet)
 - Spaces Between (piano trio)
 - Tecla (violin, clarinet, percussion and piano)
- Contact info
 - Website: www.sunabacka.com
 - Music found at Canadian Music Centre website (<https://cmccanda.org>)
 - On Facebook and Instagram
 - Curlicue piano album: <https://www.ravellorecords.com/catalog/rr8074/>
 - Includes all solo piano music

Connor Chee

- From US, Arizona; Diné heritage (Navajo)
- Piano Works
 - Sandpaintings for Piano
 - Navajo Vocables for Piano
 - Scenes from Dinétah
 - Pathways (two pianos)
- Contact info
 - Website: <https://www.connorchee.com/>
 - Can buy his music and recordings from his website
 - YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/ConnorChee>
 - On Facebook, Instagram, Twitter

Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate

- From US, born in Oklahoma; Chickasaw heritage
- Collaborative Piano
 - Heloha Okchamali (Blue Thunder): Piano and Clarinet
 - Alikchi' (The Doctor): Piano Strings, Winds and Percussion
 - Snake Oil: Saxophone, Cello and Piano
 - Standing Bear: A Ponca Indian Cantata in Eight Tableaux
 - Solo Baritone, Piano and String Sextet
 - Found Again: Song Cycle for Vocal Quartet and Piano (optional children's chorus)
 - Hozho (Navajo Strong): Solo Soprano, Cello and Piano
 - Ithanali (I Know): Solo soprano, cello and piano
 - We Are the Storm: Women's Chorus, Piano and Hand Drum
 - Found Again: Song Cycle for Vocal Quartet and Piano (optional children's chorus)

- Contact info:
 - Website: <https://jerodtate.com/>
 - Contact him through the website, and he will send you PDF of the score
 - YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/JerodTateVideos>
 - Sound Cloud: <https://soundcloud.com/jerodtate>
 - On Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn

Charles Shadle

- From US, Oklahoma; Choctaw heritage
- Piano Solo
 - *Choctaw Animals*
 - *A Tale of My Native Land*
- Collaborative Piano
 - Dogtown Common (piano quartet)
 - Three Chardin Fantasies (fortepiano trio)
 - Primordia (song cycle for baritone)
- Contact info
 - Faculty page at MIT: <https://mta.mit.edu/person/charles-shadle>
 - Site on Choctaw Animals: <https://shass.mit.edu/news/news-2021-choctaw-animals-mit-composer-charles-shadle>
 - Includes scores for download, recordings, program notes and information on Choctaw culture

Zenobia Powell Perry

- 1908-2004; From US, born in Oklahoma; African-American and Cherokee heritage
- Piano solo repertoire
 - Piano Potpourri (set of 15)
 - Vignette no. 1, Orrin and Echo, Ties, Flight, A Jazz Trifle, Blaize, Promenade, Times Seven, Soliloquy, Round and Round, Teeta, Rhapsody, Vignette no. 2, Childhood Capers, March
 - Homage to William Levi Dawson on His 90th Birthday
 - Nocturne
 - Pavanne
 - Sonatina
- Collaborative repertoire
 - Clarinet sonatina
 - Three Pieces for Horn and Piano
 - Many song sets and cycles
- Scores:
 - <https://www.jeanniegaylepool.com/>
 - Also includes links to books and information
 - Collection at Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College in Chicago
 - Also at Helen Walker Hill Collection at University of Colorado at Boulder
 - Hidden Voices: Piano Music by Black Women Composers

- <https://www.colorado.edu/project/hidden-voices/>
- University of Colorado at Boulder project
- Videos and information on her pieces

Louis W Ballard

- 1931-2007; From US, born in Oklahoma; Cherokee and Quapaw heritage
- 'Father of Native American composition'
- Piano works
 - *Four American Indian Preludes*
 - A City of Silver
 - A City of Fire
 - A City of Life
 - The Cherokee Variation, excerpt from the *Four Moons* ballet
 - The Choctaw Variation, excerpt from the *Four Moons* ballet
 - The Shawnee Variation, excerpt from the *Four Moons* ballet
 - The Osage Variation, excerpt from the *Four Moons* ballet
- Collaborative Piano
 - Perc Ego (percussion and piano)
 - Espiritu di Santiago (SATB choir, flute, guitar, piano)
 - Katcina Dances (cello and piano)
 - Midwinter Fires (Sioux flute/recorder, clarinet, piano)
 - Four American Indian Christian Hymns (SATB choir, piano)
 - Gado Dajvyadvhneli Jisa (One Drop of Blood) (baritone/soprano and piano)
 - The Rio Grande Sonata (violin and piano)
 - Thus Spake Abraham (choral cantata for SATB choir, soloists, piano)
 - Thusnelda Louise (mezzo soprano and piano)
- Scores are difficult to get
 - Out of print, but not public domain
 - Have to borrow through interlibrary loan
 - Hopefully better resources coming soon
- Helpful dissertation about his music:
 - Native American Influence in the Piano Music of Louis W. Ballard: <https://shareok.org/handle/11244/319350>

Other composers

- T. Patrick Carrabre: <https://tpatrickcarrabre.com>
 - Sonata #1 (Black Echoes)
- Dawn Avery: www.dawnavery.com
 - Owentsia Piano Suite
- Brent Michael Davids: www.brentmichaeldavids.com
 - Sky Bear, Testament of Atom
- Thomas Sleeper: <https://sleepermusic.com/>
 - Marina
- Jack Kilpatrick: <https://shareok.org/handle/11244/335602>

YouTube Playlist with scores and recordings of all pieces mentioned:



Additional Resources

MTNA Webinar: Discovering Music by Indigenous Composers with Connor Chee (May 13th, 2022)

MTNA Webinar: Loud and Clear: Piano Music and Resources by Black, Indigenous and Women of Color (November 11, 2022)

Piano Inspires Webinar: Piano Works by Native American Composers with Renata Yazzie (November 16th, 2022)

Canadian Indigenous Classical Musicians and Composers Directory: [Directory – Canadian Indigenous Classical Musicians and Composers \(wordpress.com\)](https://wordpress.com/directory-canadian-indigenous-classical-musicians-and-composers)

Indigenous Art Song Project: Indigenous Canadian Composers: [Indigenous Canadian composers | Canadian Art Song Project](https://indigenouscanadiancomposers.ca/)

Beverley McKiver interview with University of Toronto Music Library: <https://exhibits.library.utoronto.ca/exhibits/show/diversity-in-music/beverley-mckiver-interview>

Loud and Clear Podcast with Olivia Adams, Episode 9: Composing with Beverley McKiver (Oct 31, 2022)

List of Indigenous musicians: <https://renatayazzie.com/north-american-indigenous-music-resources/>

McKiver plays the full Canadian Floral Emblems Suite: <https://vimeo.com/479136150>

Crappell, Courtney. "Native American Influence in the Piano Music of Louis. W. Ballard." DMA diss., University of Oklahoma, Norman, 2008.

https://shareok.org/bitstream/handle/11244/319350/Crappell_ou_0169D_10040.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

Coie, Hayden Ray. "Jack Frederick Kilpatrick, Oklahoma's Cherokee Composer: An analysis of six intermediate works for solo piano." DMA diss., University of Oklahoma, Norman, 2022. <https://shareok.org/handle/11244/335602>

Questions?

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