An "Alien Foundation": The Eclectism of Antonin Dvorak's American Period

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AN “ALIEN FOUNDATION”:
THE ECLECTICISM OF ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK’S
AMERICAN PERIOD

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In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
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in

Music History and Literature
by
Kelly Marie Fallon

Approved by
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For: Viola Mae Dumas
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ABSTRACT

In 1891 Bohemian composer Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) was offered a position as the Director of the American Conservatory in New York City by Jeanette Thurber (1850-1946) due to his reputation as a nationalistic composer. Thurber was intending to create a national music for America and hired Dvořák to not only promote the American Conservatory, but help her achieve her goal of an American style. By early 1892 an agreement was reached between the two parties, and Dvořák assumed his role as Director of the Conservatory in October of 1892, a tenure which lasted until May 1895. This three year period, identified as Dvořák’s “American” period, has ignited debate over his identification of source materials for composers to utilize as a possible source of influences to create an American nationalistic style of compositions.

Based on Dvořák’s public writings during this period, one might conclude that Negro Spirituals and music of Native Americans should form the basis of an American nationalistic style, but practice Dvořák’s compositions suggests a different direction entirely. Indeed previous scholars who have examined Dvořák’s American works have reached no consensus regarding the extent of influence that Negro Spirituals and Native American music in these works.

In this paper I will suggest an alternative to the influence of the Negro Spiritual and Native American music on the creation of Dvořák’s “American” period, and assert that it was, in fact, the influence of the Indianist and Progressive Movements that helped shape the music to invoke Americaness. I will support my hypothesis through a comparison of indigenous idioms, an examination of contract issues between Thurber and Dvořák, and contradictions between letters written by the composer to family and friends and the newspaper editorials attributed to Dvořák.
CHAPTER I
DVOŘÁK’S AMERICAN PERIOD: NOTIONS OF INFLUENCE

In 1892 Jeanette Thurber (1850-1946) contacted the Czech composer Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) and offered him a position as the Director of the National Conservatory of Music of America. Thurber was a visionary in her attempts to elevate the art music tradition of the young country, and her efforts led to the formation of the Conservatory as well as the American Opera Company. One of her goals for the Conservatory was to develop a style of art music that was exclusively identified as America. Dvořák was the perfect selection for the patroness due to his international recognition, but more importantly for his reputation as a highly skilled composer known for his creation of nationalistic compositions. His arrival in the United States garnered a great deal of media attention, and numerous essays appeared in the print such as, “The Real Value of Negro Melodies,” “For National Music,” and “Dvořák on His New World.” These essays disseminated his opinions and perceptions on the current state of music in America. While in the United States, he composed some of his most popular and well-known works, including the so-called “American” String Quartet in F major, op. 96 B. 179 (1893), and his Symphony No. 9 in E minor B. 179 (1893) enigmatically titled “From the New World.” Although his tenure in the United States lasted only for three years, the impact of his “American” period on the historiography of American music has been long lasting.

An examination of the music Dvořák composed during his American period (1892–1895) presents a number of difficulties for scholars, due in large part to misinformation regarding the composer that has been perpetuated. This misinformation has led to the construction of multiple accounts about his time in the United States. Three distinct narratives have emerged in Dvořák scholarship to recount his creation of American art music. These explanations, however, are
based in large part on misrepresentation and propaganda, which have caused the dissemination of inaccuracies about Dvořák and his American music. Furthermore, these narratives illustrate that an additional bias exists in scholarship due to attempts to claim national ownership of the music produced by the composer in the United States. Despite his statements that the music contained an amalgamation of musical characteristics derived from American popular music, individuals continue to assign his compositions to a single source of influence.

The first narrative is the simplest and is associated primarily with American scholars. It also contains the greatest amount of misinformation surrounding the composer and his reasons for coming to the United States. This account is found in most undergraduate history textbooks such as, *A History of Western Music* by J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, and centers on Dvořák as the definer of American music.¹ Through his position at the National Conservatory, Dvořák identified musical sources for composers to use in an attempt to create an American art music. This account is based on information extracted from a combination of newspaper interviews and essays written by Dvořák, and fosters the perception that he single handedly created American art music. It is important to mention that these articles and essays are viewed as controversial by scholars such as John Clapman and Michael Beckerman who assert that the information may not in fact be correct. Often these writings were penned by ghost writers who were hired to help promote Dvořák’s pilgrimage to America. Unfortunately, many of these writings contain a fair amount of misinformation or are based on propagandist ideas in an attempt to garner support for the National Conservatory of Music of America.

The second narrative asserts that Dvořák accepted the position of Director of the National Conservatory of Music of America for financial gain. Dvořák was offered an exorbitant salary to serve as the Director of the Conservatory for a period of one academic year. In addition to his duties as Director, Dvořák was required to teach composition courses and conduct the school’s orchestra. In this narrative Dvořák is viewed as an individual motivated by money with little regard for the creation of an American style of art music. Dvořák functions in this narrative as if he were an individual concerned solely with himself and his personal financial gain. This unfavorable depiction focuses on Dvořák, the financially poor artist who decides to accept the money and who is so self-centered he selects only a few of his children to bring with him to the United States.\(^2\) In this account he is considered to be more of an opportunist than an artist.\(^3\)

In the final narrative Dvořák is seen as a strictly European composer and his music only coincidentally contains elements that happen to share characteristics with American folk music. This narrative is one perpetuated by European scholars who argue that Dvořák had not been in the United States long enough to determine which folk or indigenous styles could define an American sound. Dvořák’s own statements support this argument as he protests that he had not been in the United States long enough to have fully engaged with the music of the American people.\(^4\) The result is an account that demonstrates a divide between American and European scholars as to the source of musical characteristics found in the composer’s “American” works. Numerous individuals attempt to identify characteristics in Dvořák’s compositions that

\(^2\) In this narrative Dvořák does not appear to be a dedicated family man who often made choices to provide financial stability for his children. This narrative suggests that by selecting only a few of his children to come to America with him, Dvorak demonstrated that he was not interested in spending time with the family, nor was he concerned with anything other than composing and gaining recognition for himself.

\(^3\) Dvořák was a man with a large family to support, so justification for this narrative could be easily constructed based on his need for money; however, information does not exist to substantiate why he accepted the position.

strengthen their argument for European ownership. Furthermore, they consider Dvořák a Bohemian composer who used Bohemian sources in his compositions.

In general, scholars create a picture of Dvořák that stays true to one of the three narratives resulting in misinformation or the formation of biases within Dvořák scholarship. In order to understand the impact of these three depictions on the perception of Dvořák and his music while in America, each narrative will be discussed to help understand how it affects Dvořák scholarship. Understanding the bias in these accounts will inform how this information has shaped our understanding of Dvořák as a composer during this specific three-year period.

**Dvořák the Definer of American Music**

By focusing on his time spent in America, information that reinforces the standard American narrative tends to focus on Antonín Dvořák’s classification as a nationalist Czech composer. Dvořák is treated as an individual who wanted to explore the music of America and create a nationalist sound for art music in the United States. This account is based on information found in American newspapers in which Dvořák (or his ghost writer) stated opinions on possible source materials that could be used to represent Americanisms in music. In an essay that appeared in *Harper’s Magazine* in 1893 entitled “The Real Value of Negro Music,” Dvořák identified music of Native Americans and Negro Spirituals as possible sources to create music that would be recognized as American. As indicated earlier, Dvořák was considered a nationalist composer and used traditional elements of Bohemian or Slavic folk and dance melodies in his music; therefore, for him to select American traditions that could serve in a similar fashion, such as Negro Spirituals and Native American music, was consistent with his

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5 This narrative is perpetuated by the information found in many undergraduate music appreciation and music history textbooks such as *A History of Western Music* by J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude Palisca (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2010), 757-58, or *The Oxford History of Western Music* by Richard Taruskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 755-57. Although these are simplistic narratives designed to disseminate information, help perpetuate this misinformation.
compositional techniques. In his Czech compositions, however, Dvořák did not quote fully intact tunes. Instead he used them as inspiration for original melodies representative of authentic folk songs. In selecting Dvořák, Jeanette Thurber hoped that he would help guide American composers to develop American art music; nevertheless, she may have had more influence on the conception of Dvořák and American music than accredited to her in previous Dvořák scholarship.

In an attempt to educate Dvořák about existing folk music traditions in America, Thurber introduced him to the music of Native Americans as well as popular Negro Spirituals. Proponents of the “Dvořák the definer of American Music” weave a thorough narrative that suggests after Dvořák’s exposure to these musical styles he concluded that these will be the music sources that provide the foundation for American art music. According to this narrative, Dvořák was fully under the influence of Thurber, given she selected the cultural events and individuals to which he was exposed. There is some truth to this assertion as she was the person who introduced him to his American copyist Harry T. Burleigh (1886 – 1949). In order to promote these two American musical heritages, Thurber was eager to have Dvořák compose an opera on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s (1807 – 1882) poem Hiawatha. In an attempt to inspire the composer she decided to expose Dvořák to Native American culture by taking him to Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show. During the performance he witnessed reenactments of Native American dances, tribal warfare, and more importantly music of the plains Indians. She also provided him with copies of the source materials she wanted used, The Song of Hiawatha (1855) and Minstrel Songs Old and New (1882). From these sources, Dvořák was able to identify similarities that existed in the music of Native Americans and Negro Spirituals, which he could

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6 Harry T. Burleigh (1866 -1949) was an African American student from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania at the National Conservatory of Music in America who also served as Dvořák’s copyist.
integrate into his “American” compositions. Dvořák’s selection of these sources was based on their shared traits of syncopated melodies, pentatonicism, drones, plagal cadences, and their usefulness in creating music that would be identified as American. Thus, the narrative attests that his Symphony No 9 in E minor, Op. 95 B. 178 and String Quartet No. 12 in F Major (“American”) B.179, his best known examples from his American Period, adopt many of these American musical source materials within the melodies and harmonies within the works. 

Often this narrative recounts Dvořák’s excitement in selecting and demonstrating the possible sources available to American composers for writing art music. He wrote numerous friends in Europe expressing that the Americans expected him to identify what would be considered an American sound. In a letter to Mr. and Mrs. Hlávka in Prague dated November 27, 1892 Dvořák relates, “The Americans expect great things of me and the main thing is, so they say, to show them to the promised land [sic] and national music. If the small Czech nation can have such musicians, they say, why could not they, too, when their country and people is [sic] so immense.” This statement demonstrates that Dvořák was honored to be considered as a composer who has the skills to help a country develop a national style of music. Dvořák never forgot his lower class status, so it would be quite an acknowledgement for someone in his position to elevate his social standing as a world renowned composer. Despite a statement by the composer directly confirming this idea, one could nevertheless conclude that Dvořák was proud

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8 Moreover, it is important to note that the Sonatina was completed before the aforementioned works and contains melodies that were used in both the Symphony No. 9 in E minor and String Quartet No. 12 and the melodies of the Sonatina are used within the symphony and quartet. Dvorak purposely withheld the opus 100 number because the number held a special meaning to him so there are issues that occur with the numbering of works during his American period. John Clapman, Antonín Dvořák: Musician and Craftsman, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1966), 209.

to be considered a world class composer based merely on the sheer number of individuals he wrote to about receiving this distinction.  

Even though Dvořák was excited with this opportunity, he complicated the identification of possible musical sources through his use of ghost writers for the essays that appeared in newspapers and magazines, who provided contradicting information. His earliest essay occurs in May 1893 in the *New York Herald* with the headline, “The Bohemian Composer Employs Their Themes and Sentiments in a New Symphony.” The headline refers to the effect American Indian and Negro Melodies had in the creation of the Ninth Symphony. According to Michael Beckerman, there are several problems with this headline and article. He believes the article was penned by the journalist James Creelman, and that it was Creelman who identified Negro melodies and Native American music which has informed much of the “Dvořák the Definer of American Music” narrative. As a result of Creelman’s articles, Dvořák was attributed with selecting American Indian and Negro melodies as potential sources an attribution that misinforms the resulting narrative. Beckerman argues that it was not written by Dvořák on the basis of the title of the essay and its appearance in the May 21, 1893 edition of the *New York Herald*. Beckerman asserts that the title “The Bohemian Composer Employs Their Themes and Sentiment in a New Symphony,” demonstrates that the symphony was complete. At the time of the article’s printing, the symphony was not finished. Indeed, it was not completed until December 1893. Beckerman suggests the headline was an attempt by the author to mislead the

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10 Dvorak in a fragment of a letter to a friend on November 17, 1890 discusses his honorary Doctorate degree he received from Cambridge University: “The University of Cambridge decided to honor me. They want to grant me a doctorate *honoris causa*. What do you think about it? I have to go there and receive this degree personally. It’s an ancient ceremony. And then I have to conduct *Sabat* and another symphony. It is not a common honor. Among foreign artists only Joachim has been recognized. Of course, I will accept it.” Dvořák understood the prestige of the award he was given. His acknowledgement of Joachim demonstrates he was a world class composer, and illustrates that he had an elevated status, recognized for his achievements as a composer. He was aware that this award from Cambridge and later his offer from the National Conservatory distinguished his contributions to the musical world. Otakar Dvorak, *Antonín Dvořák, My Father*, ed. Paul J. Polansky, translated by Miroslav Němec (Spillville, IA: Czech Historical Research Center, Inc., 1993), 144.
reader into thinking the symphony had been completed. Given this knowledge, Beckerman states it becomes difficult to determine if the statement is a mistake by Creelman or an outright lie.\textsuperscript{11} It is my interpretation that this headline does not determine that the symphony is complete, only that Dvořák planned to use these musical sources in his symphony. Dvořák never publically disclosed that he was working on a symphony, nor what materials he has identified as sources to include in the composition at this time.

Beckerman’s argument that the article was not written by the Dvořák is evidenced by the title referencing “the Bohemian composer.” Indeed, in his later years journalist John Creelman of the \textit{New York Herald} claimed to have been involved in the creation of this essay.\textsuperscript{12} It is also well known that Creelman participated in the practice of yellow journalism.\textsuperscript{13} This style of journalism was a practice used by newspapers to create sensational titles or stories in order to sell newspapers. Some of the statements regarding the honor of Dvořák’s appointment to the National Conservatory were in fact made by him in correspondence with family and friends, but many of these statements were inflated in the press to help sell newspapers. Dvořák made statements regarding his excitement to help a country develop its own style of art music; however he never made statements regarding the selection of indigenous musical sources. Dvořák asserted it would not be suitable for him to make the selection of a musical source because as a foreigner it would not be appropriate to define the music of a country from which he had little knowledge. He acknowledged that he did not have an “intimate knowledge of America…” and had only seen a very small section of the country.\textsuperscript{14} Dvořák had not even left

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 102
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 102.
\textsuperscript{14} Dvořák discusses his concerns about identifying musical sources were in the article, “Music in America,” which appeared in \textit{Harper’s New Monthly Magazine} (February 1895). His concerns with the geographic size of the country and, “…. (his) impressions therefore are those of a foreigner who has not been here long enough to overcome the
\end{flushleft}
New York City by May 21, 1893. Therefore, he had very little exposure to Native Americans. Problems have arisen from this narrative and further inquiry is needed because it relies on elements of yellow journalism. More importantly the narrative disregards Dvořák’s personal feelings about his understanding of the American culture.

Dvořák was uncomfortable with the amount of misinformation that appeared about him in newspapers and magazines. Dvořák often wrote to family, friends, and employers, such as Dr. Joseph Tragy, cautioning them about the statements attributed to him that appeared in the press. To cite but one example, Dvořák requested specifically that Tragy not believe what he read in the papers about his desire to stay in the United States. Dvořák was terribly homesick while in America and during his first year of residency often expressed that he wanted nothing more than to return to Prague to be with the rest of his children. Unfortunately, Dvořák was unable to return to Bohemia for the summer as he originally intended. Instead, he made arrangements for his sister-in-law Mrs. Koutecká and his children to join the rest of the family for the summer in Spillville, Iowa. Nevertheless, numerous articles indicated that Dvořák hoped to immigrate to America.

According to Michael Beckerman, one article stands out as a product of “yellow journalism” because it exemplifies issues of the misinformation surrounding Dvořák. Additionally, it is one of the first articles to appear in print in which “Dvořák” identifies folk feeling of strangeness and bewildered astonishment which must fill all European visitors upon their first arrival.”

Through his own admission, he has not assimilated into the American culture, and therefore is unable to understand what would define the American people.

15 Dr. Joseph Tragy (1830-1914) was an individual whose opinion Dvořák solicited often. Tragy was the Director of the Prague Conservatoire, and he a lawyer. Tragy was the individual who oversaw the merger between the Prague Organ School and the Prague Conservatoire, so it would seem natural for Dvořák to ask him for advice before signing Thurber’s contract to accept the position of Director for the National Conservatory of Music. Otakar Dvorak, Antonín Dvořák, My Father, 145.

16 Otakar Dvořák, Antonín Dvořák, My Father, 156-8.

17 Antonín Dvorak, letter to Dr. Kozánek in Antonín Dvořák, 157.

18 Ibid.
music sources for the creation of an American art music. Beckerman asserts that the article “Real Value of Negro Melodies” was undoubtedly written by Creelman based on five references in the article that can be linked directly to him rather than Dvořák. The first statement in the article that supports Beckerman’s claim is as follows:

Americans vaunt their hospitals, and yet I have seen the most extensive and most perfectly equipped bacteriological institute in the world maintained by a few Russians without a word of boasting.\[^{19}\]

As indicated by Beckerman, Dvořák travelled to Russia in 1890, but the probability of his visiting a bacteriological institute, let alone a hospital, is unlikely. Moreover, Beckerman determined that Creelman had visited Russia and specifically spent time in Russian hospitals. The appearance of this statement calls attention to the problematic nature of Dvořák ’s writings of the period.

The second concern Beckerman raises with the article comes from the following passage:

Rubinstein told me that Wagner was a poor musician because he lacked the power of musical invention….\[^{20}\]

According to Beckerman it is unclear if Dvořák actually had a conversation with Rubinstein; however, it is known that Creelman interviewed Rubinstein. Furthermore, Dvořák admired Wagner and was part of Wagner’s orchestra for a February 8, 1863 performance dedicated solely to the works of the German composer. At the time Dvořák acknowledged that he had been hesitant to build a relationship with Wagner as he recognized that the composer held a higher status musically than he did.\[^{21}\] Aside from his respect of Wagner’s music, it is unlikely he would have repeated the comment by Rubinstein for two reasons. First, Dvořák admired Wagner, noting about the 1863 performance, “at that time I had not the courage to introduce myself to

\[^{19}\] Michael Beckerman, New Worlds of Dvořák: Searching in America for the Composer’s Inner Life (New York: W.W. Norton and Company 2003), 104-5.
\[^{20}\] Beckerman, New Worlds of Dvořák, 104.
\[^{21}\] Beckerman, New Worlds of Dvořák, 213.
him because Wagner was then already at the zenith of his glory and of me the world knew very little as of yet.”\textsuperscript{22} Dvořáč understood he was of a lower rank than the composer, and therefore would not have criticized the elder composer out of respect. His close relationship with Brahms was built on this paradigm as well. Dvořáč was always hesitant to correct Brahms and often took the blame for the older man’s mistakes as not to embarrass the senior composer.\textsuperscript{23} Secondly, Dvořáč had fallen out of favor with his publisher, Fritz Simrock, and it was only recently that the two men had reestablished their relationship. With their association in such a tenuous state, it is unlikely Dvořáč would have repeated a quote that would label Wagner as an inadequate musician, as that statement might have offended Simrock and once again destroyed their relationship.

Beckerman identifies a third statement that stands out due to the bold claims it makes regarding Dvořáč’s travels:

Many of the negro melodies – most of them, I believe – are the creation of negroes born and reared in America. That is the peculiar aspect of the problem. The negro \textit{sic} does not produce music of that kind elsewhere. I have heard black singers in Hayti \textit{sic} for hours at the bamboula dances, and, as a rule, their songs are not unlike the monotonous and crude chantings of the Sioux tribes.\textsuperscript{24}

Beckerman’s issue with this statement is that Dvořáč had not traveled to Haiti or New Orleans where he could have seen the bamboula dance performed. Additionally, in May of 1893 Dvořáč had not yet journeyed to Iowa where he would eventually encounter members of the Sioux tribes.

\textsuperscript{22} Beckerman, \textit{New Worlds of Dvořáč}, 213.
\textsuperscript{24} As a result of this passage, Beckerman demonstrates that it would have been nearly impossible for Dvořáč to have been the one to pen the response as he was currently traveling to Iowa between May 28\textsuperscript{th} and June 6\textsuperscript{th} of 1893. Additionally, Beckerman states that it unlikely Dvořáč would have been able to cable responses to the editor of the \textit{New York Herald} while on this journey. Beveridge, \textit{Dvořáč and His World}, 104.
performing chants.\textsuperscript{25} Creelman, however, had visited Haiti and it was there he likely saw the bamboula dance. Creelman was also familiar with the music of the well-known composer Louis Gottshalk, who’s \textit{Bamboula, Op. 2} was written from 1844 to 1845 and based on Creole melodies.\textsuperscript{26}

Beckerman believes the article contains other elements that suggest Creelman to be the real author, with the inclusion of the following quote from Francis Bacon:

\begin{quote}
Who taught the raven in a drought to throw pebbles into a hollow tree so that the water might rise so that she might come to it? Who taught the bee to sail….
\end{quote}

Although Dvořák could have included the following quote in his article, it once again appears to be unlikely. As indicated by Beckerman, Creelman quoted Bacon in his memoirs and referred to him as, “the greatest philosopher since Plato.”\textsuperscript{28} Given that Creelman was a special admirer of Bacon, Beckerman proposes that Creelman held Bacon in high esteem and was familiar with his philosophical thought. There is no indication prior to this statement that Dvořák was familiar with Bacon or his writings. Therefore, Beckerman concludes that the inclusion of the quote points to Creelman as the author.

Aside from the brief quote from Bacon, another statement appears in the article to further support Beckerman’s hypothesis. The last passage in the article is strikingly similar to one which appears in an earlier article written by Creelman. The two quotes appear below so the parallels which exist between the two statements can be compared:

\begin{quote}
“The Bohemian Composer Employs Their Themes and Sentiment in a New Symphony”
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{25} Even if Dvorak had traveled to Iowa prior to the May date, he would unlikely not have met members of the Sioux tribe. The Sioux tribe was located on the northwestern side of the state of Iowa and a large majority of the Great Sioux Nation lived in South Dakota, Minnesota, and North Dakota.
\textsuperscript{27} Beveridge, \textit{Dvořák and his World}, 104.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
Take those simple themes and weave them into splendid and harmonious forms. Glorify them: give them breadth. So the Dutch painter talks to his pupils. Do not try to imagine the angel in heaven, but try to paint that the wrinkled peasant woman at your side, that the angel in her may be seen by ordinary eyes.29

Pall Mall Budget

It is better to go to the common people for themes, for only that can survive which expresses their natures, he modern painter who expresses the idea of prayer by a haloed woman with folded hands and kneeling attitudes, falls far below him who paints a grey-haired woman about to eat a crust of bread raising her reverent, thankful eyes towards heaven.30

The similarities that exist between the two statements cannot be dismissed. The comparison of the haloed woman with eyes raised towards heaven not only establishes use of similar ideas that occur in each quote, but also the use of comparable language. Through Beckerman’s in-depth examination of the articles, he makes evident the essays attributed to Dvořák were most likely not written by Dvořák, but instead written by journalist James Creelman. Additionally, the Pall Mall Budget essay was signed by Creelman, further supporting Beckerman’s assertions that Dvořák did not write the essay that appeared in the New York Herald.31 This information becomes significant in Dvořák scholarship because many America scholars use to support their argument that Dvořák’s American works were firmly based in American music sources.

Moreover, Dvořák’s commentary on articles such as these reveals a different opinion as to the source of influence within the selection of source music. In his 1895 article “Music in America” Dvořák refutes much of the information attributed to him in earlier essays, such as ”The Real Value of Negro Melodies.” He specifically denies the earlier statements of his selection of possible musical influences. Instead, he states he only demonstrated one of many

29 Beveridge, Dvořák and his World,105.
30 Ibid., 104-5.
31 Ibid., 105.
potential ways in which American composers could create a nationalistic sound for America. Dvořák repeatedly states in the essay that the melodies included in his music are Bohemian and that he brought them with him to the United States. He was concerned about the accuracy of ideas presented as his own and how widespread acceptance of these ideas led to their treatment as fact.

The impact of ‘yellow’ journalism on this narrative makes it is difficult to differentiate fact from fiction surrounding Dvořák, and as a result the information supplied in this narrative must be questioned. The “Dvořák the Definer of American Music” narrative becomes questionable due to the presentation of multiple dates for compositions as well as contradictory statements made by the composer identifying potential sources. Dvořák stated that the inspiration for the Ninth Symphony was a melody that he wrote on his shirt cuff at Minnehaha Falls in September 1893, yet the Creelman account has the symphony was completed in May of 1893. If the symphony was completed in May as Creelman suggests, there is no possible way the influence for the Ninth Symphony could have come from Native American sources. Additionally, the Sonatina Op. 100 shares the melody with the Ninth Symphony attributed to Minnehaha Falls. If Creelman’s dates are correct, there could be absolutely no influence of Native American music on these two works. When one considers the amount of misinformation that exists in the Creelman article alone it becomes questionable as to how Dvořák’s sense of American nationalism was built on the influence of Native American music if Dvořák had not yet been exposed to it. When constructing an American narrative of Dvořák, careful

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32 Antonín Dvořák, “Music in America,” 376.
33 Dvořák had written to a friend Dr. Kozánek on December 18, 1893 of his concerns with much of the information appearing in American newspapers about him. Dvořák states that American newspapers were “fond of gossip which not even Cleveland escapes- and so they wrote a variety of things about me and it was all what they call; sensational g ssip, [sic] nothing more.” Antonín Dvořák, Antonín Dvořák: Letters and Reminiscences. Trans. Roberta Finlayson Samsour. (Prauge: Artia, 1954), 156.
consideration must be given to the source materials such as essays to consider if the sources quoted are actually attributed to Dvořák as the composer overtly denied the influence of some specifically American sources.

**Dvořák the Entrepreneur**

The second narrative suggests Dvořák came to the United States only for the financial gains through his employment with the National Conservatory of Music in America. This account demonstrates a darker side of Dvořák and illustrates a clear misunderstanding for his reasons for accepting the position. Dvořák received an exorbitant salary of $15,000 in 1893 for his position as Director at the Conservatory; however, Dvořák did not only consider finances when accepting academic positions as this narrative would have us believe. Dvořák had refused work for which he did not feel well suited or that did not allow him adequate time to compose, such as the initial offer of an appointment from the Prague Conservatoire in 1889.

In January 1889 Dvořák received an offer to teach composition at the Prague Conservatoire, but he refused the appointment because it conflicted with a number of personal engagements already scheduled at that time. Moreover, Dvořák expressed concerns that his extensive travel schedule would interfere with the courses he would be teaching. Some critics have suggested that Dvořák declined these offers because he was ill-suited to perform the duties requested of him. Dvořák explained his apprehensions in accepting the position when he wrote to Dr. Tragy, Director of the Prague Conservatoire, to decline the offer:

> Permit me to inform you that after carefully weighing all considerations, I am unable to decide to accept this high post at the Prague Conservatoire, and certainly not least because I am afraid that I should not be able to fulfil all my duties as I should like to, and

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35 Most sources identify Dvořák’s high salary as part of the issues surrounding the creation of a narrative about Dvořák’s time in America.
36 A salary of $15,000 in 1893 is the modern equivalent of a salary of $349,000 in 2014.
37 Antonín Dvořák to Dr. Josef Tragy, in *Antonín Dvořák*, 134-5.
then, being so overburdened with my work and extensive journeys abroad, I am afraid that it might cause only trouble both to the Conservatoire and myself. Thanking you, dear Sir, for your kind offer.

Dr. Tragy had offered the position to Dvořák in response to the merger of the Prague Organ School with the Prague Conservatoire for the academic year of 1889-1890. Tragy, however, did not offer Dvořák a position to teach organ at the school; he hoped Dvořák would accept the position as the school’s composition teacher instead. At the time Dvořák was just beginning to achieve international recognition through performances in England and Russia, and requests for personal appearances were received often. As a result of these requests Dvořák received minimal stipends to cover the cost of his travel and incidentals. If he only considered his finances, it would not be logical to turn down a position with a regular salary. Instead Dvořák selected the less lucrative path and chose the less secure, but flexible, option in order to focus on his composing and to give himself the freedom to continue to book personal appearances. For Dvořák, such activities were important so that he would be able to meet and spend time with acclaimed composers and conductors, such as Chaikovsky and Richter.

Dvořák would not likely turn down a position with a regular salary at the Prague Conservatoire in favor of sporadic personal appearances if he were only concerned with his finances. Additionally, Dvořák admitted in his letter to Dr. Tragy that the position had a level of prestige associated with it that would have enhanced his financial security. Moreover, it is counterintuitive to the narrative for Dvořák to refuse a position that would have provided a

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38 Dvořák was graduated from the organ school in 1857, and while he vacationed in Spillville he played the organ for the morning mass services at St. Wenceslaus Church. Juanita J. Loven, Dvořák in Spillville: 100 Days, 100 Years 1893-1993 (Spillville, Iowa: Spillville Historic Action Group, Inc., 1993), 12.
39 Dvořák was not only gaining the recognition in countries such as England and Russia as an accomplished composer, he was making friends with composers such as Chaikovsky and conductor Hans Richter. These individuals helped promote Dvořák’s career Chaikovsky was able to encourage Dvořák to take a tour of Moscow for 800 rubles, which barely covered Dvořák’s travel. Richter invited Dvořák to stay with him in Vienna. Although Dvořák did not financially benefit with his time with Richter, he was able to spend time with his friend and mentor, Johannes Brahms. Dvořák to Chaikovsky, in Antonín Dvořák: Letters and Reminiscences, 122. Dvořák to Hans Richter, in Antonín Dvořák: Letters and Reminiscences, 122-3.
guaranteed salary and a certain level of prestige. Dvořák would have been honored to for an appointment to the Prague Conservatoire. He came from a lowly background and such an honor would have signaled for him his acceptance into the upper classes of Bohemian society. If this account accurately depicts Dvořák’s motivations for accepting the Director position at the National Conservatory of Music in New York as based on finances, it seems that he would have accepted the position at the Prague Conservatoire as well.

By November 1890 Dvořák had accepted a permanent position at the Prague Conservatoire as Instructor of composition and arranging. In a letter to his friend A. Göbl, he outlined his teaching duties, which included composition and instrumentation for a period of 7 to 8 months per year; however, there is no reference to the salary he received for the contracted position.\(^{40}\) In 1891 Jeanette Thurber began her initial discussions with Dvořák in an attempt to acquire him as an Instructor for the National Conservatory. Their correspondence reveals that Dvořák’s salary at the Conservatoire was $1,200 gulden a year.\(^{41}\) Otakar Šourak explains that Dvořák was expected to assume his role as Instructor by January 1, 1891 at the Prague Conservatoire and teach for a period of 7 to 8 months per year for his financial compensation. Dvořák’s acceptance of this position received attention from Prince Ferdinand Lobkowitz, President for the Advancement of Music in Bohemia, who contacted Dvořák to congratulate him on his appointment.\(^{42}\) Dvořák was proud of his Bohemian heritage and viewed this as a prestigious appointment, however the acceptance of such an appointment would hinder his ability to compose and tour Europe which he enjoyed.

Otakar Dvořák recounted an exchange between his father Antonín and his mother Anna that contradicts Dvořák’s quest for financial security in this narrative. According to Otakar,

\(^{40}\) Šourek, Antonín Dvořák: Letters and Reminiscences, 133.
\(^{41}\) Aborn, “The Influence on American Musical Culture,” 89.
\(^{42}\) Aborn, “The Influence on American Musical Culture,” 133.
Antonín was consumed with composing music and that it was, in fact, his mother who had a head for business and managed the financial affairs of the family. As such, it was actually Anna who urged Antonín to accept the position at the National Conservatory of Music in New York. Otakar recalled the events surrounding his father’s acceptance of the position, noting that the decision was made while the family was eating lunch one day. The final draft of the contract arrived at the family home, and it sparked a debate about whether or not Antonín should accept the position and move the family to New York. Eventually, the family decided to put the matter to a vote. It was a close vote, and the matter was decided by a single vote that the family move to New York so Antonín could assume the position as the Director of the National Conservatory of Music of America, much to his wife’s delight. Nevertheless, Dvořák was still unsure about whether he should accept the position. According to Otakar, his mother fetched the contract from the study and forced Antonín to sign it immediately. Antonín “declared that it was not definite as long as the contract was in the home.”\textsuperscript{43} Without Antonín’s knowledge Anna immediately took the contract to the local post office and mailed it before her husband could change his mind.\textsuperscript{44}

There was no doubt that it was Anna and not Dvořák who was concerned with the family’s financial affairs. With six children to care for financial security was at the forefront of her mind.\textsuperscript{45}

What is important about this anecdote is it illustrates that Dvořák was cautious when considering leaving the Prague Conservatoire for this position in America. For someone who was


\textsuperscript{44} Otakar Dvořák, \textit{Antonín Dvořák, My Father}, 13-14.

\textsuperscript{45} Paul J. Polansky includes in the book \textit{Antonín Dvůřák, My Father} a section that demonstrates Anna’s carefully monitored the family finances. She kept a diary in which she recorded the household expenses. “He took the diary and started to read some entries to me. It contained mainly housekeeping accounts: pork 18 cents, bread 5 cents, rent $112, Dvořák $2, children 35 cents, radishes 9 cents, asparagus 35 cents, clothes $2.50, beer $3.50, from Mrs. Thurber $500. Notes about ships coming into Hoboken harbor filled many pages. On one page we found numbers and balances of several bank accounts. The last entry divulged that the family’s return trip to Prague has cost $750.” Dvořák., xxvii.
concerned only with the financial aspects as implied by this narrative, it is unlikely he would exhibit any hesitation in accepting this position. Yet, Dvořák contacted Dr. Tragy and numerous friends to have them weigh in on the matter of accepting the position. Even with the endorsement of his family, Dvořák still exhibited a cautious attitude toward leaving Bohemia and his family. Nevertheless, if Dvořák were only motivated by money as this narrative implies, he would do whatever Tragy requested in order to avoid dismissal from the Conservatoire, including refusing a lucrative offer from an American university.

Dvořák was conscientious in fulfilling the requests of his employers; however there were two requests from Thurber with which Dvořák was unable to comply. The first request was for a cantata or a “Te Deum” for the Columbus Day celebration in November 1892, during which Dvořák’s compositions were performed in order to introduce him to American audiences. Upon accepting the position with the National Conservatory Dvořák received a letter from his English publisher Henry Littleton on behalf of the Conservatory stating:

Will you please write to Dr. Dvořák and propose to him that he should write for the occasion a cantata (not to take longer than thirty minutes) for soli, chorus and orchestra. Mrs. Thurber is trying to get suitable words for the occasion written by some good American poet and will send them to you as soon as possible. Should Mrs. Thurber not succeed in getting suitable words in time, the proposition is that Dr. Dvořák choose some Latin hymn such as Te Deum Laudamus or Jubilate Deo or any other which would be suitable for the occasion.

Dvořák immediately began working on the Te Deum and completed the composition before he left for America to comply with Thurber’s request. The second composition, a cantata titled The American Flag, was not complete before he set sail for America, nor was it finished in time for

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46 Thurber had carefully planned and understood the parallels that could be drawn between Dvořák and Columbus discovering “The New World.” Even her request for a Te Deum and American themed cantata would demonstrate old world tradition meeting new world tradition. Everything about the event was orchestrated to gain recognition for the National Conservatory of Music.
the Columbus Day Celebration as Thurber requested. Thurber had selected a poem written by
Joseph Rodman Drake entitled, *The American Flag*, but the text arrived only six weeks before
Dvořák was to arrive in New York. The composer made a rough sketch of the work before
leaving for America, but he was unable to finalize the composition before arriving in New York
for the concert to honor Columbus and his arrival. The work was not premiered until 1895 after
Dvořák returned to Bohemia. Coincidentally, “The American Flag” would be the only
composition given to an American publishing company, and it was not performed in America
until Dvořák returned to Bohemia. Although Thurber had delayed sending the poem to Dvořák it
did arrive prior to his departure and if he was concerned with financial security the composition
would have been completed before he arrived in America.

Dvořák also failed to complete a second request by Thurber in which she asked him to
compose an opera based on Longfellow’s poem *Hiawatha*. In order to inspire Dvořák, Thurber
gave him a copy of the poem shortly after he arrived in New York in 1892. Dvořák sketched
several melodies and thought about create a cantata based on the poem according to his
interpreter James Huneker. In consideration of a cantata, Dvořák deviated from the request of
an opera by Thurber, an act that would place the renewal of his contract in jeopardy. If he were
motivated by money, it would be unlikely he would violate the request of his employer. The
information supplied by Thurber states the work should be conceived as an opera, yet Dvořák
stated he only wanted to compose a simple cantata based on the poem by Longfellow. What is
known of the debate is provided in a statement from Anton Seidl, the conductor for the premiere
of Dvořák’s Ninth Symphony. Seidl states,

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50 Ibid.
When I consulted Dvořák about the matter, he told me he would like to have a book [libretto] based on Longfellow’s poem. I worked at this for a long time but...I became convinced that the subject was far too big for a cantata; that it contained all the elements of music drama. I told this to Dvořák, but he shook his head and said something about it being too much trouble. He preferred a simple cantata, and asked if I could recommend someone else to do the job but, though I mentioned the names of one or two men in the matter never got any further.  

In order to produce an appropriate libretto for the opera, Thurber created a committee to approve the content of the subject matter. By itself, such would appear to be an odd course of action; however, considering the controversy that surrounded Native Americans as a result of the Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890, she likely wanted to ensure the success of a work based on Native American themes. The massacre by the American Calvary at Wounded Knee was the direct result of military action taken against the Sioux Nation in an attempted to disarm them. The conflict left the country polarized about and prejudiced against Native Americans. Many individuals rejected anything to do with their culture. Thurber must have been aware of this pervasive attitude, therefore, elected to form a committee to approve of the subject matter. Additionally, when Dvořák’s first articles appeared in the media, he received backlash from individuals, specifically in the Boston area who rejected the influence of Native Americans and Negro Spirituals as too primitive to create the basis of American art music. Even though there appears to be confusion surrounding the nature of the work Hiawatha, it is clear that Dvořák did not comply with Thurber’s wishes. If he were, in fact, focused solely on the money, it would seem unlikely that he would risk possible non-renewal due to a claim of breach of contract.

The “financial gain” narrative is one in which Dvořák is portrayed as an individual whose only concern was money. Given a situation in which someone accepts a position seen as improving his family’s quality of life, the application of this narrative is easily understood. In looking at only a few of the instances in which Dvořák either refused a position or did not

51 Ibid.
comply with his employers wishes, however, one could infer that he was not completely consumed by the idea of making money. Thurber did impose terms within Dvořák’s contract that he would have to meet or be considered in breach of contract and risk non-payment. Much of this narrative appears to be built on circumstantial evidence or personal opinions. Thus it is difficult to construct an argument that Dvořák’s sole motivation to come to America was based on financial gain.

**Dvořák the European Composer**

The final narrative is one that is not as well-known as the first two and is one in which Dvořák is viewed as Bohemian and employs only European compositional techniques. Often this narrative is created by European scholars, such as Karel Hoffmeister, who view Dvořák’s music as unchanging during what is considered to be his “American Period” (1892 – 1895). Regardless of the inclusion of American themes in the music, individuals dismiss the influences and argue that his music is still Slavic and moreover, that Dvořák composed works that are consistent with his understanding of European traditions. To support this viewpoint, his music is discussed in an argument that presents Americans as waiting for someone to show them how to create art music, illustrated in a passage by Karl Hoffmeister,

> The Americans did not recognize him as the English had done, merely as a great satisfactory composer of oratorios and symphonies equal to the demands of English taste. Americans saw him as something higher. Musically sterile, she had waited until this Czech gave her something of a national art, just as the German Handel had endowed unmusical England. Therefore his works were received so enthusiastically there especially those which were shot through with ‘American’ rhythms.

Though Hoffmeister references “American” rhythms in the above quote, it is important to note that Dvořák saw these rhythms as similar to those found in Scottish, Irish, and Slavic musical

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53 Ibid.
traditions. These rhythms were not, in fact, specific to American music. Moreover, the inclusion of these rhythms offered a combination of musical styles to be inclusive of the diverse population of America. Comments like the one above often demonstrate that Europeans were still unwilling to recognize that Americans had a tradition of music before Dvořák arrived in New York. The American music tradition may not have been perceived as sophisticated as European art music because the compositional output of American composers was often viewed as inferior or secondary to other concerns. For example, Gottschalk’s works were often viewed as inconsequential to his skills as a pianist. Furthermore, Gottschalk utilized creole melodies within his compositions, which were viewed as popular music by Europeans instead of art music. Most likely Gottschalk’s nationalism would result in Europeans viewing this style of music as a novelty instead of a thoughtful musical work which demonstrated the nationalistic qualities similar to those in Europe.

America was still in its cultural infancy and was only beginning to create a music tradition due to its transformation from an agrarian society to one of an industrial society after the Civil War. With a change in the amount of free time and disposable income created by the industrial revolution, individuals were able to enjoy their economic prosperity by attending concerts and performances of imported music and other art forms from across Europe. An increased interest of Americans to attend cultural events led to the founding of orchestras and opera companies, such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1881 and the American Opera Company in 1886. These institutions succeeded in exposing a large number of Americans to European art music. In the minds of some Americans, this exposure to art music demonstrated a

55 Beckerman, New Worlds of Dvořák, 70-71.
divide in the styles of music between American traditions and European styles. Europeans viewed this lack of an American music tradition and dismissed the influence of American music on Dvořák’s compositions.

Arguably Dvořák’s most famous work, his Symphony No. 9 in E minor (From the New World) was described by Europeans scholars such as Otakar Šourek as containing some elements of American folk music; but they assert that it largely retains its structure and formation as a Bohemian composition. Šourek described the composer’s works during this time as music with American elements, but largely conceived through European influences. Šourek supports this claim with evidence from the Violoncello Concerto in B minor, op. 104 (1894–5); stating “But it falls in this period chiefly because of the time and place of composition, for in content and to some extent in expression it touches on American only in so far as it seems to speak of loosing [sic] the ties with that country.” Even though it is true there is less influence of American sources in the work, it also demonstrates that the connections of Dvořák to his homeland cannot be separated by European scholars. To further support this idea, Karl Hoffmeister states,

Dvořák’s fifth Symphony, in E minor (op.95), is called “From the New World.” A series of motives used as the basis of the work are connected with America. This thematic material, like that of American Quartet and Quintet, has been derived or imitated from Negro and Indian sources: The characteristic rhythms of these tunes, and some of their melodic peculiarities, are stamped upon the entire work. But it is certain that, in spite of this, the composer’s connection with his native land is far more intimate here than in either of the chamber-music works in which he was entirely preoccupied with his American impressions; how close the tie is becomes evident as the note of the “New World” intermingles more and more with reminiscences of home.

57 Otakar Šourek, Antonín Dvořák: His Life and Works, 59.
58 It is important to note that there are numerous inaccurate statements in the account by Šourek of Dvořák’s time in America. An example of the misinformation transmitted about the composer in Šourek’s account is that the composer had not written any works in America until Symphony No. 9 op. 95. This statement is not a correct statement because the first work completed by the composer was The American Flag op. 102 on January 8, 1893. Clapman, Antonín Dvorak, 234.
59 Otakar Šourek, Antonín Dvořák: His Life and Works, 61.
60 Hoffmairster, Antonín Dvořák, 74-75.
A typical example of the issues discussed in Dvořák scholarship often examines European versus American characteristics in the music of his American Period. The music exhibits characteristics of American folk music, but this fact is often dismissed in favor of his European influences, and rejects the notion that Americanisms could provide possible influences on the conception of these works.

The narrative is supported through statements made by the composer who reinforces the aforementioned opinions when he acknowledged that he was a foreigner and not fully aware of American culture. In an essay in the February 1895 issue of Harper’s New Monthly Magazine Dvořák stated:

It is a difficult task at best for a foreigner to give a correct verdict of the affairs of another country. With the United States of America this is more than usually difficult, because they cover such a vast area of land that it would take many years to become properly acquainted with the various localities, separated by great distances, that would have to be considered when rendering a judgment concerning them all.61

This statement from the composer reveals that he recognized himself as an outsider and that he lacked exposure to American culture. There were many challenges to overcome when selecting musical sources, and Dvořák was aware that he had not seen enough of the county to render an educated opinion on the matter. Additionally, after three years in the country, Dvořák still considered himself as an “other” and not part of the musical culture.

Although Dvořák’s otherness is important to recognize in the previous comment, Dvořák perpetuates the European attitude by labeling himself as an outsider and unable to render a judgment by defining a source of influence in a short period of time. He states,

Because the population of the United States is composed of many different races, in which the Teutonic [German] element predominates, and because, owing to the improved method of transmission of the present day, the music of the entire world is quickly

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absorbed in this country, they argue that nothing specially original or national can come forth.\textsuperscript{62}

A pervasive attitude by Europeans that the United States would never produce a style of art music that individuals would recognize as American links Dvořák’s claims from 1895 to modern scholarship which reflects this opinion.

**Combining the Narratives**

Applying three separate and distinct narratives to the music of Dvorak's American period results in an incomplete picture of the composer's output from this short period of time. In order to understand his music, one should combine elements of each narrative and carefully consider how their bias will inform others. Each of the three narratives contains information that is vital to creating a coherent and all-encompassing description of Dvořák’s musical output and his attempt to create an American style of art music.

Dvořák is Bohemian. An acknowledgement of this information exists in each narrative, but the application of this idea is often incomplete. He was educated at the Prague Organ School and performed in many Bohemian orchestras; his compositions employ the use of rhythms, melodies, modes, and harmonies reflective of his Bohemian heritage. Scholars recognize that he is Bohemian in their examination of his work in his American period; however they often overlook Bohemian influences on this new American sound. His Slavic years encompass his music composed between 1876 and 1880.\textsuperscript{63} The music of his Slavic Period utilizes \textit{dumkas} and other folk idioms from Bohemia. Dvořák did not incorporate traditional dumkas in his compositions; instead he created melodies or as he described them \textit{dumkas} to produce impressions of a traditional folk song. The result is a body of melodies created by exoticism

\textsuperscript{62} Antonín Dvořák, “Music in America,” 376.

instead of utilizing authentic folk sources. The lack of authentic sources leaves scholars debating on the influences Dvořák selected when he creating his America compositions. The technique used in his Slavic years to create new melodies built on characteristics of the authentic traditions demonstrates parallels between the compositional techniques he used to derive “Americanisms” in his American Period.

The composer retained his compositional style regardless of his geographic location or the source of materials used for his melodies. His ability to create music that includes expressions of melancholy and frequent tempo changes were present in the music during his Slavic period as well as his American period. An excellent example of this style of composition is found in his Symphony No. 6 in D minor (1880). During this time period Dvořák hoped to create music which would unite the people of Bohemia and contribute to ending the political unrest that had a hold on his country. By composing a new folk song to serve as the basis of his Sixth Symphony Dvořák was able to help create a new Slavic stylized folk melody that could not be aligned with either party’s political aspirations, but which was easily identified as Bohemia in character.

Although Dvořák was not fully aware of the issues of inequality, education, and political differences in America in 1893, he was able to recognize that the music requested by Thurber needed to function in a similar manner as his had in 1880 in Bohemia. In order to accomplish music that could unify the American people musically, Dvořák used similar compositional techniques and created dumkas for his American period. Scholars do not debate the existence of dumkas in his American music, yet it is not considered as Dvořák’s Bohemian heritage manifesting in the music. Explanations of the appearance of dumkas are often attributed to his

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64 The work is often identified as being influenced by Brahms, but the work clearly exhibits closer ties to Chaikovsky’s Second Symphony.
compositional style and do not acknowledge that it is a Bohemia folk music tradition. Dvořák’s heritage is often overlooked in this argument, but it is an idea that should be considered when examining the music of Dvořák. He did not simply move to America for a three-year period, change his compositional techniques to be reflective of an America style, and then return to Bohemia and resume his earlier style. Instead, he changed American music by introducing his Bohemian constructs to help accomplish the goals requested of him by Jeanette Thurber.

The music during this three year period demonstrates that Dvořák used American sources, but perhaps not to the extent many American scholars would lead us to believe. The central problematic issue with these three distinct narratives is Dvořák. His compositional technique is one in which he creates illusions through exoticism; therefore scholars are unable to firmly identify the source material. The ownership of the source materials remains in question and thus an incomplete understanding of his work is disseminated as factual. In order to resolve the issues of influence on Dvořák’s music, one must understand that he is unlikely to abruptly change his compositional techniques any more than he will cease being Bohemian. Dvořák was under contractual obligations that made it necessary for him to adhere to the requests of Thurber, but these requests would not ultimately result in a loss of identity as a Bohemian composer.

Any attempt to create a coherent narrative by differentiating fact from fiction with the purpose of producing a coherent narrative that encompasses the compositional output of Dvořák in America is difficult. To apply a single narrative to Dvořák’s music produced during the America period limits our ability to fully understand the composer’s music. Therefore, an examination of his largely ignored work Sonatina in G Major, op. 100, B. 183 reveals Dvořák’s eclecticism in miniature, as it distills these multiple influences present also in his larger compositions and a combination of all three narratives. Through an analysis of the Sonatina, I
will demonstrate that Dvořák’s so called “American” period was eclectic. In part, this eclecticism arose through Thurber’s associations with the Abolitionist and Progressive movements and her desire to create an “American” style using inauthentic sources of marginalized cultures within the American society. Dvořák’s ability to masterfully assimilate melodies allowed both European and American audiences to identify representative nationalist compositional ideas within the music, which created the controversy surrounding his American period. A brief look at Thurber’s influence on Dvořák and an examination of her and her associations to key figures in the Progressive and Indianist movements will shed light on Dvořák’s selection and inclusion of Native and American musical cultures as part of the conception of the Sonatina.
CHAPTER II
DVOŘÁK AND THE INSPIRATION FOR TRULY NATIONAL MUSIC

Dvořák scholarship often explores the composer’s tendency to include music of Native and African Americans in those works written while serving as the Director of the National Conservatory of Music of America. Scholars have studied these compositions to identify the inclusion of these indigenous sources, without considering possible motivations for Dvořák’s selection of these two groups. As a result, the potential reasons for his selection of these marginalized cultures as representative of the American people have been neglected by most and sorely misinformed by others. In Chapter I, “The Definer of American Music,” the discourse of “Americanisms” in his works was presented; however, the reason why Dvořák chose these minority groups as representative of the entire American music culture has yet to be explored. His selection of the music of these marginalized peoples is peculiar because the population of America consisted largely of people from a European heritage. Moreover, as illustrated in Chapter I, the earliest accounts of “Americanisms” in Dvořák’s music were informed through controversial sources, which are now acknowledged as largely propagandistic. Consequently, the politicization of these early sources has led to a broad misunderstanding of the composer’s intentions. The disagreement between stated influences in the music made by yellow journalists in publications in May 1893 and statements by the composer has altered our understanding of the musical ideas in his American works. Additionally, an examination of Thurber and her connection to the Indianist movement and Progressive agenda reveals the selection of musical sources may have been a result of her political aspirations.
Jeanette Thurber and Thomas Wentworth Higginison

Thurber and Thomas Wentworth Higginson are two individuals who must be examined in the context of the source materials identified in Dvořák’s American compositions. As a result of their accessibility to the composer, they provided him with information on indigenous musics of America. Both Thurber, the President of the National Conservatory of Music of America, and Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, an abolitionist, activist, and author, may have influenced the composer’s selection of musical source materials. Through their political ideologies both individuals selected sources that illustrate their participation and connections to multiple reformist movements. It is, however, both individuals’ contributions to the Progressive and Indianist movements that highlight a link to the sources identified by Dvořák. The inclusion of these musical sources in the music of mainstream American culture altered the negative connotations associated with these marginalized cultures. Indeed, the insertion of their music within the American art music traditions demonstrated equality between the races and elevated the status of these oppressed individuals within society.

Thurber was responsible for hiring Dvořák, and she introduced him to Higginson. It is important to note that scholars often confuse Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson with his cousin Lieutenant Colonel Henry Lee Higginson, the founder of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. This misidentification of Henry Higginson has resulted in his inclusion as an active participant in the Dvořák American narrative for significant events, such as the Columbus Day

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66 The Progressive movement is often defined by the establishment of the 1912 Progressive party created by Theodore Roosevelt. The Progressive movement began at the turn of the 19th century with the establishment of The First Era Movement. The Second Era Movement was a modification of ideology to be inclusive of the plights of individuals during the reconstruction efforts after the Civil War. These similar ideas were embraced by pre-Civil War abolitionists who found parallelism to their cause within The Second Era Movement. Additionally, Thurber had studied at the Paris Conservatoire and would have been exposed to these ideas in Europe as well as the United States.
Concert in 1892. The concert was arranged to introduce the composer to the America public. Nevertheless, it was not Henry, but his cousin Thomas Wentworth Higginson who served as the Master of Ceremonies for the event that announced Dvořák’s arrival to the “New World.”67 The two Higginson’s serve different roles in the creation of art music in America; therefore it is important to understand who actively participated in these events. Through Dvořák’s interactions with Thurber and Thomas Higginson, his perceptions on America music reveal his rationale for selecting Native and African American musical sources. Additionally, these relationships demonstrate the expectation of the social sphere in which Dvořák, as the Director of the National Conservatory of Music of America, was to interact. Moreover, it will contextualize and inform the influences that social sphere had on Dvořák. The significance of these interactions will exemplify Thurber’s motivations for her selection of a popular, internationally recognized composer to further the acceptance of her political and cultural ideologies.

Jeanette Thurber was a visionary in her time, and she was an individual who hoped the United States would be able to establish a musical tradition within the arts similar to the one that existed in Europe. Her desire was to establish a conservatory in America that was recognized internationally and considered equal to European conservatories. As the daughter of Henry Meyer of Demark, an amateur violinist, and Annamarie Coffin Price, a New England socialite, she was provided financial resources that allowed the young girl to pursue her education anywhere she chose. She was only a teenager when her interest in music led to her parents’

67 Henry and Thomas had opposing views on how to develop the American art music culture. It is important that any discussion of Dvořák’s music contains the correct attribution of possible influence by an individual. Thomas was a proponent of the inclusion of popular music in American art music, while Henry wanted to avoid inclusion of popular music because he believed this inclusion would further demonstrate the divide that existed in the music of America with the culturally refined European art music tradition. This misidentification can be found in the work of Merton Robert Aborn in which he attributes Thomas Wentworth Higginson as the founder of the Boston Symphony orchestra. In an attempt to correct this mistake, Michael Beckerman corrects the name to Henry Lee Higginson; however, this results in the misidentification of Henry as the speaker of the Columbus Day Concert.
decision to enroll her in the Paris Conservatoire. As a result of her European training, she understood the challenges Americans faced in establishing a respected music tradition. Her desire to establish an American art music practice has led to her identification as one of the greatest music patrons of the 19th century in the United States.

The question remains as to why this young woman would set her hopes on creating an American tradition of art music. The answer is found in Thurber’s association with an individual who shaped her ideas for the development of a unique American culture. Additionally, he convinced her that there needed to be an educational overhaul of the current university curriculum in order to address the inadequacies that existed between the United States and Europe. In 1867 Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson wrote an essay that specifically identified issues associated with the American university system. He explored the inability of young people in the United States to receive an education considered equal to that of European countries. As a result, affluent families would send their children overseas to obtain a well-rounded education. His essay further delineates his concern that the pursuit of “high culture” preparation in Europe, specifically addressing individuals trained in Germany, would inadequately prepare them to apply this knowledge in America. He does recognize that universities were established in Cambridge, Massachusetts, New Haven, Connecticut, and Ann Arbor, Michigan, but found American culture too provincial to provide adequate preparation. In order to allow The United States an opportunity to achieve equal footing with Europe, Higginson suggested,

What we need is the opportunity of high culture somewhere, that there should be some place in America where a young man may go and study anything that kindles his

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enthusiasm and find there instrumentalities to help the flame. As it is now, the maximum range of study in most of our colleges leaves a young man simply with a good preparation for Germany, while the minimum leaves him very ill prepared for America.

His articulation of concerns acknowledges that a lack of serious investment in their own culture would further hinder America’s development of an identity beyond that of its political aspirations. He hoped that through the formation of an “ancient” educational tradition based on those found in Athens, Greece, a balance would be achieved in which the student received well-rounded instruction. In the development of an education in which equal emphasis was placed on literary and artistic traditions, Higginson outlined a model that nourished the soul of the individual as well as their mind. He suggested that this level of intellectualism was far superior to one exclusively grounded in politics. Through this well-rounded education, a balance between art and politics allowed for individualized development unlike any opportunity available in Europe.70

Higginson’s article may not have been read by Thurber, but his thoughts on equality and education would likely have been known to her. He was an abolitionist before the Civil War, and one of the anonymous six individuals who funded John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry.71 Moreover, Higginson served in the Civil War as a colonel for the First South Carolina Volunteers, composed of free blacks from the North.72 During his service in the First South Carolina Volunteers, he collaborated on the collection of Negro Spirituals from different regions of the country with Lieutenant Colonel Trowbridge that were eventually part an anthology entitled, Slave Songs of the United States: The Classic 1867 Anthology.73 He also was an

70 Ibid., 14.
71 Ibid., 1.
72 Ibid.
intellectual who disseminated his views on rights for women, African Americans, and religious dissenters through his role as a Unitarian minister.\textsuperscript{74}

As a major proponent of the African Americans in society, Higginson clearly influenced Jeanette Thurber and some of her intellectual ideas. An example of his influence on her can be identified through her creation of educational opportunities for African Americans.\textsuperscript{75} It is clear from the Columbus Day Concert that Thurber knew Higginson, given he was the individual invited by Thurber to introduce Dvořák to America. Thurber had asked Higginson repeatedly to serve as Master of Ceremonies at events during which Dvořák conducted his own compositions. Thomas was also the guest speaker at Dvořák’s premiere concert with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.\textsuperscript{76}

Thurber clearly identified with Higginson’s aims of a free education when she perceived the National Conservatory of Music Of America. She had hoped to, “…provide free instruction to talented individuals who could not afford the expense of a good music education.”\textsuperscript{77} Thurber stated she conceived the Conservatory as early as 1875 when she was traveling through France. She envisioned that the institution would be able to provide her with performers for the American Opera Company that she established in 1885. The combination of these two institutions allowed her to expose the American public to European operatic traditions with some of the best trained performers, musicians, and composers in the country. Moreover, it is important to note that it was Thurber’s intent that the opera company would be the primary emphasis of her endeavors, as it allowed “…America to free herself from absolute dependence

\textsuperscript{74} Thomas Wentworth Higginison, \textit{The American Intellectual Tradition}, eds. David A. Hollinger and Charles Capper, I.
\textsuperscript{75} Merton Robert Aborn, “The Influence on American Musical Culture of Dvořák’s Sojourn in America,” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1965), 62.
\textsuperscript{76} Antonín Dvořák to Mr. and Mrs. Hlavka, Boston, December 27, 1892, in \textit{Dvořák in America}, ed. John C. Tibbets (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1993), 389-91.
\textsuperscript{77} Aborn, “The Influence on American Musical Culture,” 53.
on foreign talent.”

It is clear that Higginson’s call to culture in his 1867 essay is at the heart of this statement by Thurber. Free education in the arts would not only benefit the students, it would enhance the overall culture of high art in America. With society now receiving exposure to these operatic performances by the National Opera Company, Higginson’s goal of creating well-rounded cultured individuals was possible. His influence on Thurber did not end there; she also looked to the marginalized groups within American society whose plight contributed to the expansion of American thought during the Progressive Era. Through her philanthropic pursuits, she was able to enhance the lives of these marginalized individuals (ie., Native and African Americans, and women) by expanding opportunities not currently available to them.

Thurber used her access to Dvořák to inform his perception of indigenous American cultures. Her imposed ideology guided him in a manner that furthered her agenda for development of the arts. She created scholarships for talented individuals to attend the Conservatory for free, so that the recipients could focus solely on the development of their artistic talents. The idea of free tuition to the Conservatory was appealing to Dvořák. As a young man he had benefitted from the receipt of a stipend for developing artists. In his essay “Music in America, Dvořák explains that financial support for the artist allows composers to pursue creative endeavors without worrying about financial security. It is evident from Dvořák’s statements that he fully supports Thurber’s attempts to provide artists the ability to pursue their craft without the concerns of financial security. The additional benefit of Dvořák’s statement is he demonstrated what is possible for an artist to achieve when financial constraints have been eliminated. For Thurber, his statement could have encouraged individuals to become possible donors for her philanthropic activities. If Thurber could have the financial backing of other

prominent families such as the Carnegies and Rockefellers, she would no longer have to continue to support this financial effort on her own. The use of Dvořák’s name to perpetuate awareness of this issue adds a level of credibility to her agenda. Thurber had initially hoped to achieve financial stability and legitimacy for the Conservatory through the endorsement of a European composer. Her hope was that other like-minded individuals would invest in the arts to produce a European framework for financial support of artists.

Thurber designed the National Conservatory of Music of America to provide an exceptional educational environment for young artists. In order to study at the Conservatory individuals needed to fit a specific criterion for admission. An age restriction was one of the conditions she specifically addressed. In order to be considered for acceptance into the school all individuals need to be within their respective age categories. Of those students who qualified based on their age and talent, the Conservatory acknowledged that they granted special consideration to “women, Negro, and blind students,” which were identified as marginalized individuals in need of educational development. A direct relationship to the opportunities created by Thurber’s ideological principals generated a student body which largely consisted of women and African American students. Thurber was concern with the socioeconomic advancement of African Americans, and it is evident that she shaped Dvořák’s impression for their cultural inclusion in the development of America art music.

Thurber used Dvořák’s contract with National Conservatory of Music of America to commission works of a specific subject matter. Controlling his compositional output, she suggested he create an opera based on Longfellow’s poem Hiawatha. It is through this request that a connection between the Indianist movement and Thurber can be established. More

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80 Aborn, “The Influence on American Musical Culture,” 60.
81 Aborn argues that as a result of the Conservatory branded as a girl’s school, it did not garner much financial backing through philanthropy. Ibid.
importantly, the subject matter for the opera would create an ancient American epic. Dvořák would have understood the importance of selecting a culturally specific story to provide the American people with an identifier that encompassed their heritage. He was often given books or exposed to Native American themes in an attempt to further the cultural agenda of the Indianist movement.  

What Thurber did not take into account was that most European-Americans did not identify with the culture of the Indians nor were they willing to replace their culture with one which was perceived as having connections to primitivism. Gilbert Chase explains,

> [Indian Music] attracted a number of composers who were looking for something indigenous, something that could immediately and unmistakably be identified as “American.” But the fallacy of attempting to create representative American music out of Indian material soon became apparent. Indian tribal music was not part of the mainstream culture of American culture. It was an interesting but essentially exotic branch that one could follow for a time as a digression, a diversion from the European heritage. But if followed to its source led to a primitive culture that had nothing in common with prevailing norms and trends of American civilization.

Dvořák may or may not have understood the full implications of using Native American themes in his music, but what is clear is they did not have the encompassing effect on him as Thurber had hoped. In a statement about nationalistic music Dvořák explains,

> Every nation has its music. There is Italian, German, French, Bohemian, Russian; why not American music? The truth of this music depends upon its characteristics, its colour. I do not mean to take these melodies, plantation, Creole or Southern, and work them out as themes; that is not my plan. But I study certain melodies until I become thoroughly imbued with their characteristics.

The account by Dvořák communicates that Thurber was unaware of how to create a nationalistic style of music. Often she made suggestions of pieces for him to compose, but she always looked to the libretto and selected a text that overtly conveyed her perception of American themes.

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In addition to supplying the means for influence by the Native American music, Thurber ensured that Dvořák was exposed to music identified as Negro spirituals. Through her association to the Progressive and abolitionist movements she attempted to elevate the status of African Americans in society and create equality among the races. As a result of her participation in these social circles she introduced Dvořák to individuals such as Higginson and an African American student at the Conservatory, Henry T. Burleigh. Often Burleigh would sing songs for Dvořák and the composer would transcribe the melodies for further study. Moreover, Thurber had requested that Dvořák arrange the Stephen Foster song “Old Folks at Home” for a benefit concert in January 1894. The purpose of this concert was to collect clothes for Blacks in need; specifically, the event organizers wanted to collect clothing for Black women.\(^\text{85}\) For this event, Thurber arranged for the formation of an all-Black choir that performed compositions written by Black composers for the concert, with the exception of Dvořák’s arrangement of Foster’s “Old Folks at Home.” Harry T. Burleigh was a soloist for the evening and the featured soloist for Dvořák’s arrangement of Foster.

The concert received mixed reviews, and newspaper critics such as Hale and Finck, “reflect(ed) the sensibilities of their fellow art patrons who, in their everyday life, were finding themselves confronted by groups – unionists, anarchists, suffragists – who fundamentally challenge the social and economic structures from which middle-class patrons derived their power, wealth, and status."\(^\text{86}\) Although Dvořák included musical characteristics of these marginalized cultures in his compositions, it was not the seamless acceptance that Thurber had hoped for by the audience and critics.


The promotion for the January 1894 concert was not without propaganda. Advertisements printed in the *New York Herald* exhibit that the concert was designed to help Blacks overcome the difficulties associated with their role in society. Even though they did not name specific benefactors for the event, the papers issued the following statement, “Here is, indeed, a treat for all lovers of music, as well as for those who take interest in the development of our national schools of music and in the negro race.”\(^87\) The following day the *New York Herald* ran a congratulatory message in the paper in which they applauded the work of Thurber, and noted that she had the students of her institution perform at a high level, “no matter what their race, color, or creed.”\(^88\) Thurber revealed her true feelings on the plight of African Americans in society and her ideas appear in article, “Emancipation, in her idea, had not gone far enough, Bodies have been liberated, but the gates of the artistic world were still locked.”\(^89\) Thurber was clearly an abolitionist who sided with the philanthropic ideology of the Progressive movement to elevate the African Americans and help them gain acceptance in society. The concert with its clear political aims exemplifies the parallels which existed between her opinions and those of Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

**Henry Lee Higginson**

There exists some confusion in Dvořák scholarship as to the individual who was associated with Jeanette Thurber and Dvořák. Thus an examination of Henry Higginson is necessary. Moreover, an examination of Thurber’s and Henry Higginson’s concepts of affordable art music for the masses reveals a divide within the American people. The origin of the issue may in fact be Dvořák’s confusion of two individuals with their similar names (Colonel Higginson). Dvořák in a letter to a friend identified Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson as

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\(^88\) Root, “The Stephen Foster,” 244.  
\(^89\) Ibid.
the creator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, instead of Lieutenant Colonel Henry Lee Higginson.\textsuperscript{90} The two men were cousins, but they differed greatly on their approach to the creation of art music in America. Thomas was closely aligned with Thurber. A connection linking Henry Higginson to Thurber is difficult to establish with one exception: Dvořák’s works were performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra on a concert. Beyond that, unfortunately, there is nothing to indicate that Thurber and Henry Higginson knew each other. On the other hand, Thomas not only provided the speech to greet Dvořák to America, he was recognized by Dvořák as providing financial support to the National Conservatory of Music of America.\textsuperscript{91} Through his participation with the Conservatory, it is obvious that Thomas agreed with the agenda set forth by Thurber.

Henry Higginson however, did not approve of Thurber’s assessment that the creation of American art music should include the use of popular music. Instead he chose to expose Americans to the musical traditions established in Europe, specifically from German composers such as Beethoven.\textsuperscript{92} It is apparent that the formulation of Henry Higginson’s ideas on art music was informed from his close associations with critic John Sullivan Dwight. Dwight was a graduate of Harvard and considered to be one of the first influential music critics in the United States.\textsuperscript{93} Dwight created a journal that provided a critique of music in America, which he also used as a platform to disseminate his views on what he believed to be the sacralization of art.\textsuperscript{94} Dwight, like Thomas Wentworth Higginson, called into question which of the affluent individuals in American society would use their money to create a permanent orchestra that

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{94} Levine, \textit{Highbrow-Lowbrow}, 120.
provided quality music for an affordable price for Americans. He, like Thomas Higginson, wanted to advance American society through the arts.\textsuperscript{95} Henry Higginson responded to Dwight’s call for culture, and in 1881 single handedly created and financed the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra “would consist of sixty musicians and be led German-born English baritone and composer Georg Henschel, would give twenty concerts during its premier season, and would charge five to ten dollars for season tickets and twenty-five to seventy-five cents for single admission.”\textsuperscript{96} Thurber and Henry Higginson were both concerned with the quality and affordability of the performances Americans would view; however, the similarities ended there.

Higginson approached the Boston Symphony Orchestra differently than the management style of European orchestras. He demanded that the musicians not perform in other orchestras from Wednesday to Saturday and refrain from performing in specific settings as outlined in their contracts. Additionally, Higginson refused to allow the programming of “Mixed musical genres,” and to deal with a player’s musician union.\textsuperscript{97} To do so would have hindered his ability to manage the orchestra in the style he set forth in the musicians’ and conductors’ contracts. The control of the orchestra’s personnel was solely the responsibility of Higginson, and he placed within each of their contracts the following statement: “If said musician fails to play to the satisfaction of said Higginson, said Higginson may dismiss said musician from the Orchestra, paying his salary to the time of the dismissal, and shall not be liable to pay him any compensation or damages for such dismissal.”\textsuperscript{98} Higginson’s control of the ensemble served two purposes. First, he was assured his musicians would only perform for him. Second, he could control the music that they

\textsuperscript{95} Levine, \textit{Highbrow-Lowbrow}, 122.  
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{97} Levine, \textit{Highbrow-Lowbrow}, 124.  
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
were performing. Higginson approved the repertory that the orchestra would perform to ensure the quality of each performance. He viewed

...himself less as a proselytizer to the masses than a preserver of the faith; a builder of the temple and a keeper of the flame. Though he supported his conductors’ penchant for occasional experimentation – always with the caveat that ‘of course anything unworthy is to be shut out’ – Higginson, like Thomas and Dwight, never lost his strong preference of the work of the classical Austro-Germanic composers, especially Beethoven..."  

Higginson saw himself as an individual who needed to protect culture, and thus continued to support the standards associated with European art forms.

Thurber however, looked at the Conservatory as a training facility for the students, in which they would gain experience, and in return receive a contract with the American Opera Company upon completion of their studies. Thurber’s goal with the American Opera Company was to translate great European operas originally written in foreign languages into English. She hoped to meet the masses on their level and create an interest in the arts. Clearly, the artistic endeavors between Henry Higginson and Thurber do not demonstrate similar interests in the development of American art music. Higginson attempted to function as a protector of the culture and not stray too far from European ideals; Thurber tried to create an art form that was unique to the United States. Therefore, it is unlikely that she would have had the support of Henry Higginson in the inclusion of popular music in the art music tradition of America. Regardless, even if she obtained an influential European composer such as Dvořák, Henry Higginson was an unlikely ally for her cause.

The disparagement between the ideals of Thurber and Henry Higginson is representative of different school of thought within the classes of American society at this time. It is these two dissimilar ideologies that informed the perception of Dvořák’s American compositions.

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99 Levine, Highbrow-Lowbrow, 126.
Individuals on both sides wrote essays and commentaries in the press about the reception of his compositions. It is no surprise that Dvořák’s essays underwent the greatest scrutiny in the Boston area newspapers, based on the proximity and influence of Dwight and Henry Higginson. Both men clearly opposed the composer’s opinions and used their influence with the higher echelons of society to resist the inclusion of indigenous American musical cultures in art music. Dvořák was referred to as a negrophile for many years by well-known Boston critic Phillip Hale. He continued his denouncement of Dvořák’s inclusion of Negro melodies in his American composition even after the composer’s death.\(^{101}\) Composer John Knowles Paine made a reference to Dvořák’s inability to select appropriate source materials for his composition as evidenced in the quote,

…the time is past when composers are to be classed according to geographical limits. It is not a question of nationality, but individuality, and individuality of style is not the result of limitation – whether of folk songs, Negro melodies, the tunes of the heathen Chinese or of Digger Indians, but of personal character and inborn originality…. Dr. Dvořák is probably unacquainted with what has been accomplished in the higher forms of music by composers in America. In my estimation, it is a preposterous idea to say that in [the] future American music will rest upon such alien foundation as the melodies of yet a largely undeveloped race.\(^{102}\)

As a result the dissemination of Dwight’s and Henry Higginson’s opinions on the elite culture of society clearly shaped the prevailing attitudes towards Dvořák’s inclusion of what they considered to be an alien race.\(^{103}\) Though the message demonstrates that individuals were not receptive to Dvořák’s ideas, it also illustrates that they did not understand that Dvořák used popular music for inspiration when creating his melodies. The largest composer of “Negro”

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103 James Huneker was a critic who describes Dvořák’s influence on American music in terms of limitation as evidenced in the following quote: The influence of Dvořák’s American music has been evil; ragtime is the popular pabulum now. I need hardly add the negro is not the original race of our country.” Beckerman, *New Worlds of Dvořák*, 82.
spirituals in America was the white composer Stephen Foster, and thousands of copies of his songs sold well after his death in 1864.\textsuperscript{104}

Dvořák was aware that conflict existed between the two schools of thought and addressed the problem directly in his 1895 essay, “Music in America.” In the essay he provided his impressions of America as an outsider:

It would ill become me, therefore, to express my views on so general and all-embracing as subject as music in America, were I not pressed to do so, for I have neither travelled extensively, nor have I been here long enough to gain an intimated knowledge of American affairs. I can only judge of it from what I have observed during my limited experience as a musician and teacher in America, and from what those whom I know here tell me about their country.\textsuperscript{105}

Dvořák’s comments on the selection of source materials, does not acknowledged anyone directly; however, it is a forgone conclusion that he is referencing Thurber and her associates. He recognized that his perception of American music had been shaped by those he has been associated with and clarified his position:

A while ago I suggested that inspiration for truly national music might be derived from the Negro melodies or Indian chants. I was led to take this view partly by the fact that that the so-called plantation songs are indeed the most striking and appealing melodies that have been found on this side of the water, but largely the observation that this seems to be recognized, though often unconsciously, by most Americans.\textsuperscript{106}

Dvořák understood that the melodies he heard were not authentic sources, and he was aware it was the work of white men. Although those songs did not have the authenticity of folk songs in Bohemia, he assumed that the lack of authenticity was an unimportant factor due to the music’s ability to capture the sentimentality of America.

Dvořák further delineates this idea in the following statement,

The point has been urged that many of these touching songs, like those of Foster, have not been composed by the Negros themselves, but are the work of white men, while others did

\textsuperscript{105} Antonín Dvořák “Music in America,” 370.
\textsuperscript{106} Antonín Dvořák “Music in America,” 376.
not originate on the plantations, but were imported from Africa. It seems to me that this matters little. One might as well condemn the Hungarian Rhapsody because Liszt could not speak Hungarian. The important thing is that the inspiration for such music should come from the right source, and that the music itself should be a true expression of the people’s real feelings.\textsuperscript{107}

He understood that the music had to represent the people and their culture. The themes that occurred in the Negro songs were often catchy tunes and as a result people would often perform them due to their playability and accessibility.\textsuperscript{108} Dvořák envisioned this music as a representation of the blending of cultures through music. He saw a music that was written by white men and emulated the style of songs which were representative of Negro songs. To an outsider, such as Dvořák, the amalgamation of traditions and cultures were perfected in these songs and would satisfy Thurber’s desire for truly American art music.

The Source of the Songs

On May 14, 1857 Dwight’s Journal of Music attempted to answer the question in an article, “Who Writes Our Songs?”\textsuperscript{109} The answer to the question was Pittsburgh native, Stephen Foster. According to Dwight’s Journal of Music, he was found to be a major composer of Negro Minstrelsy.\textsuperscript{110} The editor of What They Heard: Music in America, 1852-1881: From the Pages of Dwight’s Journal of Music, Irving Sablonsky explains that the Negro Spirituals being suggested to Dvořák meant nothing more than “popular songs with verse written in a parody of Negro dialect. They might come from the blackface minstrel show or from the books of sentimental songs that lay on so many parlor pianos.”\textsuperscript{111} Due to the misconception surrounding these works many whites actually thought they were listening to authentic slave songs.\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{107}Antonín Dvořák “Music in America,” 377.
\textsuperscript{108}An article in Dwight’s Journal of Music stated that Negro spirituals were popular in the 1850’s and the most well-known song was Old Folks at Home. The song crossed all levels of class associations and two editions of the song were printed in the Ladies Home Journal. Root, “The Stephen Foster,” 244-45.
\textsuperscript{109}Sablonsky, What They Heard, 267.
\textsuperscript{110}Sablonsky, What They Heard, 367.
\textsuperscript{111}Sablonsky, What They Heard, 266.
\textsuperscript{112}Ibid.
The popular Stephen Foster song, “Old Folks at Home,” also known as “Swanee River,” was the most widely known song of the time. “Old Folks at Home” sold over 100,000 copies in the United States alone, and was widely circulated in Europe by 1857. The song was even included in a collection of ‘Negerlieder’ in Germany and was touted as authentic African American song. Indeed, “Old Folks at Home,” was so popular that many whites believed that it was based on authentic Negro melodies, and the music was so convincing that many if the blacks accepted them as traditional plantation songs as reported in Dwight’s Journal. This song’s popularity cannot be underestimated. Not only was the song a popular minstrel tune, it had also been published in several books and in popular magazines such as, The Ladies Home Journal.

The popularity of the song is undeniable, but why would Dvořák select this song to be performed at the concert in New York in 1894? The answer is he did not, as its inclusion was an orchestrated attempt by Thurber to increase the awareness of a social cause closely associated with the Progressive movement and ties to her philanthropy. The original manuscript used to orchestrate the song, “Old Folks at Home,” had a note attached which states:

The enclosed will be of interest in case you wish to refer to the concert given by our students for the fund of the Silver Service for the Cruiser N.Y.

I asked the Dr. to write “old folks at home” for two v[o]ices. You will see that only one signature of the Dr. remains, the others were torn off by the pupils in the orchestra as autographs.

This two-voice arrangement was sung on this occasion by black Patti and Harry Burleigh – and accompanied by the N.C. of A. orchestra conducted by Dr. D.

113 Ibid.
115 Sablonsky, What They Heard, 259.
Deane L. Root concludes that the note was written by Thurber, but the recipient of the note is unknown. Dvořák, however, did consider this song to be a part of the folk song tradition, and made the following statement about “Old Folks at Home,”

“It is a folk song and a very beautiful one… The only difference it has from what normally comes under that head is that we know the composer’s name. And that is only because he happened to write it as a period when the art of preserving music by writing it down existed, whereas most folk songs have been handed down from mouth to mouth until in later years they were copied in manuscript by some musician. But by that time the composer’s name had been forgotten. American music is music that lives in the heart of the people, and therefore this has every right to be regarded as purely national.”

He understood, unlike Thurber, that the music of the indigenous people would not be representational of all individuals within society. In his 1895 essay “Music in America” Dvořák explains that plantation melodies and slave songs have beautiful and subtle harmonies like those from Scotland and Ireland. By finding commonalities within the two musical styles, he would be able to combine characteristic to create music that was representative of Americans.

Dvořák understood that there was an issue with the American population’s unification under a single music tradition. The selection of a musical source would need to encompass everyone in its society due to the vast differences that existed from the diversity of the American population. Therefore, in order for Dvořák to satisfy Thurber’s request he knew he would have to look to popular music traditions in order to accomplish her desires.

Thurber was a trained musician from one of the greatest conservatories in the world, and she clearly had her own political agenda for furthering the American society. She desired to create an American style of art music to rival the European traditions, yet she was also a visionary. She knew that the source music would have to have broad appeal and resonate with the American public. Through her studies at the Paris Conservatoire she would have understood

119 Antonín Dvořák “Music in America,” 377.
the longstanding traditions of European opera. She knew that many of the stories associated with opera were aligned with Greek mythology or a story that focused on ancient origins. In order to create a similar influence in America, she felt she must combine all of these narratives to establish a musical tradition. Thurber recognized she needed to hire a composer who had an international reputation, but who also understood how to create nationalistic music. In addition, the composer would have to write instrumental and vocal music and have a desire to learn and incorporate these elements into his own style of composition. Dvořák was the perfect composer to realize all of these needs.
CHAPTER III
THE SONATINA IN G MAJOR OPUS 100: INFLUENCES ON ITS CREATION

Antonín Dvořák has long been classified as a nationalistic composer who infused elements of the Classical and Romantic Eras alongside native folk influences to create his music. Nationalism according to Richard Taruskin, espouses a “… doctrine or theory according to which the primary determinant of human character and destiny, and the primary object of social and political allegiance, is the particular nation to which an individual belongs.”¹²⁰ The definition insinuates that an individual must be from the country and tied to its ideology through a personal identity defined by their understanding of the culture and politics. Therefore, the question arises as to why Americans would look to a foreigner to determine the course of American art music.

Lawrence Levine explains that Americans were divided on the best direction to develop art music in America. Individuals such as Henry Lee Higginson elected to have the Boston Symphony Orchestra perform only art music from Europe, and publically expressed his concerns about creating an art music tradition based on folksongs, music of Native Americans, and Negro Spirituals. Conversely, individuals like his cousin, abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Jeanette Thurber hoped American art music could be developed from music of Native Americans and Negro Spirituals. Moreover, Thurber’s connection to the Indianist and Progressive movements shaped her desires to use musical sources from these marginalized cultures to establish a musical impression based on ancient musical tradition. The link between American art music and these ancient musical sources could create a parallel between the music of the United States with those found in European music cultures.

Thurber, in particular, wanted to create music that reflected the spirit of America, given the perception of many individuals that America lacked a national music tradition. Thurber decided to look to Europe to help guide American composers in the formation of a distinct sound that would be easily recognizable and defined as “American.” During this time period, many American composers were viewed as writing “common” music that was inadequate for the European art music tradition. Irving Sablosky explains, “The American public had not been converted ‘en masse’ to classical music; its taste for the popular, the spectacular, and the novel appeared to be undiminished, and the rising music trades were only too happy to pander to it.”

Several factors likely informed this opinion: 1.) the lack of music conservatories in America; 2.) the hiring of European instructors by American universities; 3.) the absence of well-known American composers on the world stage; and 4.) the focus by American music publisher’s popular music that could be performed in the home. American popular music included Negro Minstrelsy and the music of Stephen Foster. These styles of music were designed to depict life in rural America or characterizations of white perceptions of African Americans. The importations of popular American musical art forms to Europe at this time were largely informed by the Negro minstrelsy and performances by composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk. His music focused on his virtuosity as a pianist and not the creation of a longstanding musical tradition. Thurber’s desire for such a composer would find her seeking an individual who already had international fame as a nationalist composer. Her search was completed when she selected the Bohemian composer, Antonín Dvořák. Dvořák was already an established European composer known for his nationalistic compositions; moreover he would be able to help the National Conservatory of Music in New York gain international recognition and promote American music. His first year at

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the American conservatory, Dvořák spent much of his time performing administrative duties, teaching, and conducting, however, he also began working on numerous projects that were reflective of Thurber’s desire for him to create a national American compositional style.

At the conclusion of his first academic year, Dvořák and his family vacationed in the small town of Spillville, Iowa, at the home of one of his students from the Prague Conservatory, Joesph Jan Kovarik (1870-1950), who accompanied Dvořák on the trip to America and functioned as his personal assistant.\(^{122}\) The landscape surrounding the small town of Spillville was similar to the countryside of his native Bohemia, and since it was a Czech settlement, the dominant language spoken was also Czech. The Dvořáks were quite comfortable here, and his time there was one of his most productive periods for composition in America, as he completed the String Quartet in F, String Quintet in E flat, and some of the melodies used both in the Sonatina for Piano and Violin Op. 100 and his Symphony No.9, "From the New World".

The music written by Dvořák while he vacationed in Spillville has been labeled as the most “American” music created by the composer, seen by scholars through specific identifiers such as Negro spirituals or Native American melodies. The application of such labels has resulted in an incomplete narrative of these compositions and highlights the desires of some individuals to classify them as American. The view of Dvořák’s American works validates the desires of Thurber and her contemporaries through the inclusion of what were considered to be “Americanisms.” What has resulted is the application of a false narrative to the Sonatina in G

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\(^{122}\) Joseph Jan Kovarick was the son of American immigrants attended the Prague Conservatory. As a student of Dvořák’s in Prague, he was comfortable working with Dvořák and knew the meticulous the habits of the man he affectionately referred to as “The Master.” Dvořák had inquired of Kovarick what life was like in America before he began his negotiations with Thurber. He hoped the young man would serve as his personal assistant while in New York, due to his own poor skills in English. Kovarick was more than a personal assistant and took the liberty of arranging a summer vacation in the Czech settlement of Spillville for the Dvořák family. Kovarick thought the Dvořák family would enjoy spending sometime in the small Catholic rural community. Kovarick had made arrangements for housing, as well as Dvořák to play the organ for morning mass, something Dvořák recalled with fondness after returning to NY.
Major Op. 100. An idealistic narrative presented to explain the musical influence on the Sonatina reveals that inconsistencies exist between the information supplied by the composer and the scholarship of individuals regarding the conception of the work. Dvořák discusses his music in terms that demonstrate his Bohemian nationalism and his connections to his publisher Fritz Simrock in Germany, although scholars such as Paul Stefan state the influence came from Native American musical sources.

Three Narratives, Three Sources

The three narratives surrounding Dvořák’s time in America are often cited by scholars to illustrate the sources he utilized when composing the Sonatina, and based on the author’s bias will result in the selection of one of the three narrative, often reveal their bias when assigning a musical source to the melody ie. Native American, Negro Spiritual, or folk songs. What can be found in the discussions surrounding the melody of the second movement of the Sonatina, which emphasize connections with Native American influences. According to Kovařík, the inspiration for the melody occurred when Dvořák travelled from Spillville to Minneapolis and visited Minnehaha Falls during the summer of 1893. In his book Paul Stefan provides the following anecdote, “The beauty of the falls absolutely carried him away. Then and there, he wrote down on his starched cuff a theme later used in the Slow Movement of his Violin Sonatina.” The significance of this account is the Sonatina was written between the months of November and December of 1893 in New York City; nevertheless, the musical influence of his summer trip had a lasting effect on Dvořák, as evidenced by the inclusion of the melody depicting Minnehaha Falls in the Sonatina.

Joseph Horowitz draws further parallels between Native American culture and Minnehaha Falls by linking the melody to the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s (1807-82) poem “Hiawatha” (1855):

The Minnehaha theme Dvořák set down on his sleeve found its way into the second movement of the Sonatina, a delicate and fragrant Hiawatha picture. Its simplicity, its tom-tom repetitions, aura of magic and mystery would typify Dvořák’s “Indian” style. Minnehaha’s “wayward” alternation between “shade and sunshine” translated into a musical alternation between the brighter and darker keys composers call “major” and “minor.” In the middle of the movement, a dainty two-note violin figure dappled shimmering chords high in the keyboard (Minnehaha Falls being no Niagara): truly the music of “Laughing Water.”

As evidenced by the quote, the melody does not by itself create a link between Native American culture and Dvořák’s music. Only when the melody is placed within the context of the Hiawatha epic and Minnehaha Falls by Horowitz can a Native American influence. Furthermore, there has been no discussion that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was himself of European descent and not part of the Native American culture.

The connection between the Sonatina and Native American music was first suggested by Fritz Kreisler who established this link at the request of Dvořák’s publisher, Fritz Simrock. Through the application of the subtitle, “An Indian Lament”, on the title page of the composition, a narrative was created that associated the composition to a Native American musical source. Beckerman explains that Kreisler identified the second movement as an “Indian Lament” or “Indian Wail,” but did not substantiate this claim through the use of musical examples. The connection has been accepted by many scholars, yet, Beckerman remains skeptical of this account. He states that, “Although the repetitions at the beginning of the Larghetto may be a shorthand for tom-toms, at least as part of the modal sheen has another source, although Dvořák

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may well have been thinking ‘Indian’ in his slow movement, inevitably it came out somewhat African-American as well, since the opening idea bears a real resemblance to various elements from ‘Negro Melodies’. Moreover, no one has provided a musical example that demonstrates the conception of a “Negro Melody” in the Sonatina, and instead the concept is founded on generalities of rhythm and the use of a pentatonic scale. These two ideas are too general a concept to concretely assign the melody to a specific musical tradition.

Despite the fact that Dvořák could have used an Indian lament as a source of inspiration, the melody contains characteristics that could also be found in Slavic folk melodies, Native American “Wails” or “Negro Melodies.” Therefore to assign the melody to only one source of inspiration would be almost impossible without a statement from the composer. What can be said of this melody is that it included shared characteristics by a gifted composer who synthesized musical elements to create an eclectic melody that people recognized as part of their musical culture. America’s shared music tradition also includes many elements of European traditions such as the Scottish Snap. Not only is this rhythm found in European music, but it is also found in Negro Spirituals, American popular music, and Bohemian folk music. Dvořák would have recognized this rhythm and assimilated it into his compositions. He would, however, have most likely identified it as a Bohemian musical characteristic.

Melodies from the Sonatina can be found in the “New World Symphony,” and it is safe to conclude that these melodies are not based on Native American music. The melodies demonstrate Dvořák’s ability to pull from familiar melodic ideas and rhythms that could be identified as American. Dvořák on speaking of the “New World Symphony,” explained, “It is

\[126\]Ibid., 169.
\[127\]The inclusion of melodies with dotted figures, balanced phrases, syncopation, five note motives, contrasting major and minor key signatures, and the trading of melodies are not only Slavic tendencies, but compositional techniques used by Dvořák. These characteristics can be found in his The Piano Trio No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 90, B. 166, Dumky Trio. Additionally, the inclusion of movements in binary and ternary forms, and slight variations of the melodic material is consistent with the compositional structure of the Sonatina in G Major, Op. 100.
always written that I gathered motives for my last symphony in America, and that it contains some Indian melodies. Nevertheless, this is not true. Yes, I composed it there but the motives are my own, and a few of them were brought with me. The symphony is and always remain ‘Bohemian’ music.”

To further support Dvořák’s claims, John Clapman suggests that Dvořák altered the folk-song, “Dolina dolina, níže Nových Zámku,” to “create the first movement’s second subject…. [he may have] on the other hand, …modified, perhaps unconsciously, during composition to make it correspond to the well-known Moravian folk-song…” If this hypothesis is possible, as given that Dvořák knew Thurber wanted him to create American music; the composer would have likely attempted to satisfy the wishes of his employer.

Dvořák had numerous correspondences with individuals in Europe in which he outlined the expectations of his contract and the desires of Thurber. Dvořák would have understood that he needed to produce music that not only satisfied the requirements to sound like American music, but that also contained elements of Native American music and Negro Spirituals.

Victor Fischl, however, states that he believed the lament of the second movement was actually an expression of the inner struggle that Dvořák underwent once he had returned from Spillville to resume his duties in New York. Upon Dvořák’s return to New York he was offered a renewal on his contract as the Director of the Conservatory. It was no secret that

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130 In order to establish this claim one only needs to look to the letters exchanged between Dvořák and his publisher Simrock. Dvořák ’s willingness to alter his work to appease the publisher, when requested Dvořák would find a German language translation to a composition’s libretto to comply with Simrock’s requests instead of publishing it with a Bohemian text. Additionally, he would contact Dr. Tragy at the Prague Conservatoria before making a decision that would affect his employment while he was in America and ask for his opinion if he should accept an additional year of employment.
Dvořák did not like New York, and he wrote to his employer at the Prague Conservatory, Dr. Tragy, to ask for advice and express his rationale for staying in America:

I have been asked to extend my contract for a further one or two years, and I wanted to ask your advice as to what I should do. My family circumstances would seem to demand that I should take the opportunity of saving enough for my old age. You know that I love my country above anything, that I would gladly offer my modest services where they are needed, and that I would dearly like, on returning home, to devote myself to the wealth and growth of our people’s art. With God’s help I will carry out that which I have dedicated my life and of which I have dreamt. So I beg you to believe that, even if in the interest of my family I feel constrained to remain a further one or two years, I would most gladly return to my country should you at any time find it necessary to summon me.132

Fischl uses the letter Dvořák sent to Dr. Tragy to support his claim that Dvořák was homesick and desired to return to Prague. Fischl suggests that this longing for home prevented Dvořák from working on larger scale projects and led to the creation of the Sonantina for his 15 year old daughter Otilia and 10 year old son Antonín. It is Fischl’s opinion that the melodies were reminiscent of home and provided him the connection to Bohemia that he had longed for since leaving Spillville.133

Given the absence of evidence of a definitive Native American musical influence, it is possible that Beckerman is correct that there has been an overstated influence of Native American music on the conception of the work. The answer to this inflated attribution of Native American sources may have been the result of Dvořák’s restored relationship with his publisher Fritz Simrock. Dvořák and Simrock had a falling out several years earlier when Dvořák turned to an English publisher to reissue some of his compositions. Simrock took exception to this supposed infidelity, and reminded Dvořák that they had an exclusive contract. Dvořák, not recalling any such agreement, chose to wait until he could reestablish the relationship with Simrock and regain the publisher’s trust. Once the composer had repaired his relationship with

132 Ibid.
133 Ibid.
Simrock, he began to send his compositions to Germany in 1893 for publication. The slow speed at which the compositions were arriving from America created the need for Simrock to expedite the publication of Dvořák’s American works. In order to increase the speed of the editorial issues for publication, Simrock asked Dvořák for approval to call on a well-known editor of Dvořák’s works his friend and mentor Johannes Brahms.\textsuperscript{134} Much of Dvořák’s music was being published by Simrock without Dvořák actually seeing the final drafts or arrangements. Simrock understood that tensions between Dvořák and Thurber were increasing and may have tried to defuse the situation by publishing works in which he would suggest Native American associations on the cover page of the publications. In the case of the Sonantina, Simrock took the liberty of publishing various arrangements of the work under titles such as “Indian Lullabye”\textsuperscript{sic} or “Indian Lament.”\textsuperscript{135} Not only with this publication demonstrate Dvořák’s desire to please Thurber, it would also increase sales of Dvořák’s music in Europe. Europe was interested in musical exoticism and a work with a subtitle such as Indian Lament or Indian Canzonet would appeal to the European public.

Stefan places the following hypothesis as additional information between the composer and publisher, “It is possible, however, that Simrock may have heard from Kovařík that Dvořák really had in mind Hiawatha’s brooding on the waters at play.”\textsuperscript{136} Such could be possible, but more than likely the publisher knew that the exoticism of the Native American’s would sell the compositions in Europe. The popularity of the composer at this time can be established from examining two separate letters written by Dvořák to a friend in February and to Simrock in

\textsuperscript{134} Beckerman, 62.
\textsuperscript{135} Stefan, 225.
\textsuperscript{136} Stefan, 225.
April. Both reference that Simrock wanted all the compositions that Dvořák was writing while in America, knowing he could effortlessly market them in Europe.\footnote{The two letters in question are: Dvořák to A. Göbl, Synchr, February 27, 1894, in Antonín Dvořák : Letters and Reminiscences, ed. Otakar Šourek (Prague: Artia, 1954), 175. Dvořák to Fritz Simrock, Vienna, April 20, 1894, in Antonín Dvořák: Letters and Reminiscences, 179-80.}

**The Sonatina in G Major Op. 100**

The Sonatina in G major Op. 100 was the last chamber work composed by Dvořák during his time in America. Written for his children “Otilie” and “Tony,” the work appears to be a simple sonatina, yet it has elements to make it challenging enough that adults would take interest in the composition. The selection of the sonatina genre by Dvořák was based on practicality since the work was for his children. A composition such as a sonatina does not require the level of virtuosity due to its lighter themes, lack of a development sections, and its short modulatory passages, as compared to a sonata from which it is derived. The marked difference between the two genres is that the sonatina is shorter and less serious in nature. Additionally, the genre is extremely popular with composers who write music for students. Although, the number of movements in a sonatina may vary, as typically fewer, Dvořák’s Sonatina the work contains four movements like that of a sonata (See Table 1).

Dvořák began composing the Sonatina in September 1893 after he returned from his summer sojourn in the Midwest. By early October, he began to assemble the sketches he wrote while on vacation in Spillville. These ideas in the sketches were intended for his D minor orchestral suite, but ultimately he decided to abandon the work. Instead of discarding the melodies he had already composed for the orchestral suite, he used them to fashion the Sonatina
for his children. A sketch of the initial version of the work was finished by mid-November and the work was completed December 3, 1893.  

TABLE 1

MOVEMENTS IN THE SONATINA IN G MAJOR OP. 100, B. 183

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Time Signature</th>
<th>Key Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allegro risoluto</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>G major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larghetto</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>G minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molto vivace</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>G major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegro</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>G major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All four movements follow a typical ABA form and contain only minimal thematic development in the work. The opening Allegro risoluto begins with the initial theme played by the violin alternating with the piano. The theme is 8 bars in length and ends with cadences on the tonic. The melody is transferred between the violin and piano which creates an antecedent and consequence relationship between the two. The question is typically presented by the violin and has a strong confident tone; in contrast, the answer is softer and played by the piano. According to John Clapman, the melody is similar to the well-known Moravian folk song “Dolina, dolina, níže novyých Zámků.” The brief development section contains modulations to the keys of B-flat major and D-flat major before returning to G major. With the A’ section, our initial melody returns, but is not as assertive as in the initial opening phrase. As the A’ section comes to a close,

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the once assertive melody from the A section is heard no more, replaced by the soft melody from
the answer of section A.

The middle movements are short and less complicated than the two outer movements that
frame them. The second movement of the Sonatina contains probably the best-known melody of
the entire work. The opening of the movement begins with a three-fold repetition of the melody
played by the violin. According to most scholars, this melody is based on a pentatonic scale, a
characteristic which is used by Dvořák regularly in his American compositions. In measure 17
the mood of the piece shifts through a series of modulations, and Dvořák places the melody in
the piano. The *Poco più mosso* section in mm. 44-55 is in the key of G major and the melody
seems almost playful against the broken chords in the piano. An alternation in the violin between
E and D drives the melody forward and signals a change from the haunting opening melody of
the Largehtto. In the contrasting *Meno Mosso* section in mm. 56-71, the melody of the *Poco più
mosso* is given to the violin for four bars before the introduction of a G pedal tone in the violin.
The pedal tone is complemented by the alternation of a D and G in the right hand of the piano.
The scherzo third movement functions as a light diversion, with a syncopated melody and
contrasting themes.

In the fourth movement Dvořák presents a series of seven themes for the movement. In
general themes are broken into four bar phrases with each second four bar phrase ending with a
slight alteration to either the rhythm or melody by the addition of a form of ornamentation. An
eight bar periodic structure is maintained throughout the movement. The themes occur in a call-
and-response format between the violin and piano. The movement goes through a series of
modulations throughout the work before returning to the home key of G major. The
characteristic syncopated rhythm that occurs within the E minor section of the work, has been
identified as a “Scotch snap,” and it drives the melody forward into the next theme. The movement ends on an elevated feeling due to the return to the opening tempo which contrasts with the mood of the proceeding melody indicated as *molto tranquillo*.

The Sonatina contains several contrasting moods as well as interesting melodic and rhythmic inventions by the composer. It is easy to identify the elements that support Dvořák’s statements that the work was, in fact, written for children. The violin part does not require many switches of hand position and exploits primarily the first position for the player. The piano part never requires much independent activity between the hands and is comparable to music that would be found in most etude books for a student of moderate capabilities. With its quickly changing moods, the Sonatina is filled with melodies that are playful and ideas that are reminiscent of an imaginative childhood, but challenging enough to keep an adult interested in performing the composition.

**Possible Native American Influence**

Much has been made of the influence of Native American culture on Dvořák while he was in America. Thurber did take him to a Wild West Show in New York, and he attended multiple performances at a medicine show while in Spillville in July of 1893. It is known that Dvořák conversed with Big Moon, John Fox, and John Deer who were members of the Kickapoo and Yankton Sioux tribes as well as actors in the show.\(^{140}\) It was unlikely that one distinctive meshing of cultures occurred, since the cast members of the medicine show were not from one specific heritage. The influence of Native American culture on the conception of the Sonatina has been but, it has been over exaggerated and leads to a misrepresentation of the work.

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The suggestion of influence appears to have come primarily from Dvořák’s publisher Fritz Simrock. On the title page of the Sonatina from 1906, the work is subtitled “Indian Canzonetta”. Additionally, Fritz Kreisler added a subtitle to the second movement “An Indian Lament,” to increase its connections with those of the Native American culture. Aside from these subtitles, connections to the Native American music have been suggested through the rhythmic activity found in the second movement. The basis of this construct is found in a four bar rhythmic figure that appears in the second movement of the Sonatina in measures 56-59 in the left hand of the piano (See Example 2).

Example 1: Sonatina in G Major Op. 100, - Larghetto - mm.56-59, “Tom-tom” Rhythm

The rhythmic figure does evoke images of a Native American rhythm through the use of exoticism as representative Native American music. Furthermore, the rhythm has little in common with the actual rhythms found in Native American music. It is difficult to attribute Native American influence on Dvořák’s conception of the work based on a rhythm found in only four bars of an 87 measure movement as a definitive Native American influence on Dvořák’s conception of the work. Scholars have attempted illustrate the influence of this indigenous culture on Dvořák by citing syncopated melodies found in Native American songs. The comparison of a melody to a Native American drum pattern is a flawed technique to demonstrate

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142 Beckerman, New Worlds of Dvořák, 169.
influence. As a result, this type of comparison, little information can be found to substantiate the claim of Native American influence.

In order to authenticate the rhythm, Dvořák’s drum pattern must be compared to drum patterns found in Native American music. In contrast to this rhythm (seen in example 1), Native American music tends to contain strong down beats. Bruno Nettl has collected three typical drum patterns found in the music of Northwest Coast Indians (See Example 2).

Example 2: Three Common Native American Drumbeats - Music of Northwest Coast Indians

Drum Pattern 1

Drum Pattern 2

Drum Pattern 3

As seen in the example, the stress falls on the down-beat of each measure, unlike Dvořák’s drum pattern found in Example 1. To further support the theory of the use of strong down beat drum patterns; one needs only to look at the drum patterns in relationship to the melody of the music of the Navajo Indian Songs (See Example 3). The melody of the song focuses on the upbeats; however, the drum pattern is firmly placed on the downbeats and remains constant throughout the entire song. Therefore one is unable to draw a connective link between the rhythmic motives that occur in the left hand of the piano and Native American drum rhythms.

Dvořák’s “tom-tom” rhythm could have associations to drum patterns that may have been

**Example 3: Navajo Indian Song**

Formulated to contain stereotypical characterizations from popular culture Wild West or Kickapoo medicine shows. Interest in exoticism was on the rise in America through 1876 to the 1920s with the advancements in production and the growth of the Industrial Revolution. As a result, many individuals were moving to the cities. These new urbanites had not only increased their affluence, they also had more free time available to them than ever before. The desire to connect with the land coupled with an excess of free time resulted in the creation of these traveling shows to expose white America to expanded cultural opportunities. Unfortunately,

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these opportunities were often steeped in stereotypical characterizations as a means of drawing larger crowds for the sake of the box office and they were not authentic performances. We do know that Dvořák attended these events which focused more on spectacle than authenticity.

John Tibbetts has stated that Dvořák received transcriptions of Iroquois song melodies from Henry Krehbiel; however, they were transcriptions of the melodies placed into the European notation system. The transcription process may account for an approximation of the note length instead of the actual duration. In order to place the melody into a readable rhythm and meter, slight alterations may have occurred so that the melodies could be understood and performed within European musical heritage. Although it is possible that these melodies have been recorded correctly, those transcriptions do not take into account the differences that will occur through oral transmission or the presence of regional dialect and a lack of a cohesive tribal system.

The strongest connection of the Sonatina to Native American culture exists on the basis Longfellow’s poem Hiawatha in the second movement. Despite Dvořák’s familiarity with the poem, the actual melody was inspired by Minnehaha Falls. Dvořák often recorded the songs of birds and drew inspiration from the land when constructing melodies, as he did when he “recorded” the falls. The associations to the poem and the falls are superficial sources of influence; however, the poem could have placed the imagery in of Native American life in Dvořák’s mind’s ear, but then then the music becomes a convention associated with a Bohemian composer and not authentic Native American culture. Additionally, the Longfellow poem Hiawatha was written by an individual with a European heritage that was not part of the Iroquois culture. Michael Beckerman’s research attaches the text of the Longfellow poem to syncopated

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146 Tibbetts, “Dvořák ’s Spillville Summer,”116.
147 Juanita J. Loven, Dvořák in Spillville 100 Days, 100 Years Ago 1893-1993, (Spillville, IA: SHAG INC.,1993), 33.
rhythms in Dvořák ’s sketchbooks. The discovery is a significant find, but once again it does not validate the influence of the Native American music culture on the Dvořák. *Hiawatha* was written in a trochaic tetrameter, which places the stress on a long syllable and the unstressed beat on a short syllable. Additionally, this type of poetry was created from Greek culture, so regardless of the subject matter or suggested influence, the setting of the text would generate a syncopated rhythm. As a result, it does not indicate an influence of the Native America musical culture.

The lack of authenticity is the central issue when it comes to suggesting authentic Native American musical influence on the composer, nonetheless, it is cursory and the influence, if any, is provided through stereotypes and characterizations driven by the demand for exoticism in the American culture at this time. There is no doubt that Dvořák had a copy of the *Hiawatha* or received musical sources transcribed from the music of the Native Americans. He clearly had attended Native American spectacle shows and met individuals from various tribes; however, it is circumstantial evidence of a Native American influence. The connections have been primarily aligned with the subtitles of given to the Sonatina from individuals other than Dvořák. There have also been associations to the poem *Hiawatha*, which undeniably exist; nevertheless, it does not demonstrate an influence of Native American music. Clearly this is an American-European one that is based primarily on stereotypes and created by individuals not directly tied to Native American heritage or culture.

**Possible African American Influence**

The Sonatina has been considered as having strong connections to that of the African American music culture through the inclusion of musical devices that have been attributed to

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Negro Spirituals and plantations songs. These songs were popular during Dvořák’s time in America, and therefore many have concluded they were a source of inspiration to the composer. A characteristic of African American music included in Dvořák’s American works can be illustrated through his use of a pentatonic scale. The Sonatina is no exception and is presented as including pentatonicism in the Larghetto movement of the work. Paul Stefan has recognized that the melody written down while Dvořák was at Minnehaha Falls includes a pentatonic scale (See Example 4).

Example 4 Sonatina in G Major Op. 100 – Larghetto - mm. 1-4

The melody in the first four measures of the Larghetto section establishes a feeling of melancholy that will be found throughout the movement and is described as containing a pentatonic scale by Stefan. One can only assume he is referring that the scale uses five notes, since the notes used in the melody of Example 4 do not create a G minor pentatonic scale.

When the melody in Example 4 is placed within the context of common practice harmony it can be reconceived as a melody that makes use of passing tones instead of pentatonicism (See Example 6). The G minor pentatonic scale would consist of the following notes: G, B-flat, C, D, and F. In looking at this melody, one will notice an absence of F, and the inclusion of A. Although not a G minor pentatonic scale, it demonstrates a stylized pentatonicism by Dvořák.

Through traditional European-tonic-centered harmonies (seen in Example 5), Dvořák creates an artificial pentatonic construct that will provide the listener with an illusion of pentatonicism. A

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harmonic analysis defines the function of certain tones through their consideration as passing
tones, in order to avoid disruption of the tonal center.

Example 5 Sonatina in G Major Op. 100 – Larghetto - mm. 1- 4

An example of this would be the C in the first measure functioning as a passing tone in common
practice harmony. Dvořák often places these stylized pentatonic melodies within his
compositions to create characterization of musical styles. Despite its lack of authenticity, the
pentatonicism here does create an image of what many individuals would have considered an
authentic plantation song influence.

Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson captured some of these authentic songs while he
served as part of the First South Carolina Volunteers. One of the plantation songs recorded was
“Poor Rosy” (Seen in Example 6). The interesting aspect of this work is the balanced four bar
phrases which can be found consistently in numerous collections of Negro Spirituals. The song
“Poor Rosy” was extremely popular, and contained multiple verses, but no refrains. The verses

create various inflections when sung to enhance performance while conveying the emotions associated with the lyrics by the performer.\footnote{151}{J. McKim, “Negro Songs,” Dwight’s Journal of Music. (August 9, 1862) (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press), 274.}

Example 6 – Plantation Song “Poor Rosy”

According to Lucy McKim,

They (songs) are all exceedingly simple, both in sediment and music. Each stanza contains, but a single thought, set in perhaps two or three bars of music; and yet as they sing it, in alternate recitatives and choruses, with varying inflections and dramatic effect, this simple and otherwise monotonous melody will, to a musical ear and a heart susceptible of impression, have all the charm of variety.\footnote{152}{Ibid.}

The four bar phrase structure found in the plantation song “Poor Rosy” is identical to the four bar phrases structure utilized in the Sonatina by Dvořák (Seen in Example 7). In Dvořák’s Sonatina each four bar phrase is altered to change the inflection of the melody a similar to the technique found in the plantation song “Poor Rosy.” The use of timbre changes allows Dvořák to provide not only interplay between the voices and creates a sense of drama within the composition or a simplistic narrative. Each part has a specific use to “describe” or “illustrate” the melodic idea through exoticism. For example the violin in the first movement demonstrates characteristics of
confidence or gaiety while the right hand of the piano has a reserved characteristic with occasional moments of playfulness.

Example 7 Sonatina in G Major Op. 100 - Allegro risoluto - mm. 1-16

One can see connections to Negro Spiritual or plantation song have been sighted as an influenced Dvořák’s conception of the phrase structure within the Sonatina. Nevertheless,
Dvořák once again demonstrates a lack of authenticity since he does not fully adhere to the form of the plantation song in which the lyrics are changed for each verse. The music maintains the same melodic material creating an a,a,a,a..(et cetera) form for the song. In the Sonatina however, Dvořák uses an A, B, A’ form for the first movement of the composition and maintains the four bar phrase structure throughout the composition (Seen in Table 2).

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1-68</td>
<td>G Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>69-114</td>
<td>G Minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td>115-195</td>
<td>G Major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dvořák chooses to adhere to the sonatina form, however, he elects to continue to provide illusions to the characteristics of these popular song styles from the African American musical tradition.

Negro Spirituals and plantation songs cannot be overlooked as a source of influence on Dvořák due to their inclusion in American popular music. Stephen Collins Foster was one of the most prevalent song writers in this medium. Foster utilized the sentiments and styles of these songs to create his own style of compositions that drew on international music traditions viewed as “American.”\(^{153}\) It is known that Dvořák made an arrangement of the Foster song *Old Folks at

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Home for the benefit concert on January 23, 1894 at the request of Thurber. Additionally, Dvořák also owned a copy of *Minstrel Songs, Old and New: A Collection of Minstrel and Plantation Songs, Including the Most Popular of the Foster Melodies*. The collection was published by the Oliver Ditson & Company from Boston in 1883. A copy of this book was found among Dvořák’s possessions in Bohemia upon his death. The table of contents of this book reveals that, Stephen Foster has 15 songs included in the collection of 93. The second largest number of songs collected in the book was written by songwriter William Shakespeare Hays with a contribution of 5 songs.

Foster’s ability to capture the music of the multiple cultures and assimilate them into his own style was very similar to the techniques employed by Dvořák. Foster’s well-known song *Old Folks at Home* also contains a four bar phrase structure and alternates cadences between either a half or an authentic cadence. Such a cadential structure is consistent with the melodies found in Negro Spirituals or plantation songs. Knowing Dvořák had a copy of *Minstrel Songs Old and New*, made an arrangement of *Old Folks at Home* for a benefit performance, and listed Foster as an influence on the creation of songs imitating the music of African Americans, one can conclude there is no possibility that Dvořák had not recognized Foster’s contributions to creating an American style of music. Dvořák himself noted, “The important thing is the inspiration for such music come from the right source, and that the music itself should be a true expression of the people’s real feelings. To read the right meaning the composer need not necessarily be of the same blood, though that, of course, makes it easier for him.”

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155 Merton Robert Aborn, “The Influence on American Musical Culture of Dvořák’s Sojourn in America” (PhD diss. Indiana University, 1965), 97-100.
157 Ibid.
statement reveals that Dvořák was not concerned with authenticity, only the composer’s ability to insert the right meaning in the work. Therefore, it would be consistent that Dvořák would look to a composer such as Foster, who was from America, and use his music as a model to create the national style of art music Thurber desired. Foster had already combined the compositional techniques from multiple influences into one style of music that was identified as American. Additionally, this music was known to most Americans as well as most Europeans because of the popularity of Foster’s works. For Dvořák, popular music would be the perfect musical source to create Thurber’s style of national music, which would be internationally recognized.

**Possible European Influence**

At the request of Thurber, Dvořák was attempting to create a nationalistic style of American art music that would be internationally recognized. He had been exposed to possible indigenous cultures in America in which he could use as sources to create American art music; however, Dvořák elected to include elements from European music in his compositions. One such element was the use of European forms. The sonatina was derived from the sonata and had been utilized by composers such as Handel, Beethoven, and Schubert. While there was no set form for the genre, Dvořák was consistent with other late Romantics Era composers who chose to include four movements in the Sonatina. (See Table 1) Additionally, Dvořák elected to use an ABA structure for each of the four movements of the composition.

Significant in defining Dvořák’s music in America is the fact that most of the popular plantation songs created by composers such as Foster use a verse/refrain form. Moreover,

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authentic Negro Spirituals or plantation songs would not include a refrain and instead merely repeated the verse. Such arguments may appear to be superficial, but it demonstrates that Dvořák was still under the influence of his Austro-Germanic training. Unlike Foster, Dvořák made the new American style fit that of the Austro-Germanic tradition. Charles Hamm notes that Foster was not an untrained musician; he was a professional musician versed in multiple genres including that of opera. Foster elected to write popular music based on indigenous music of America, but it was Dvořák who took this music and synthesized it into a style of art music.

The parallels to the European art tradition do not cease with the form of the composition. Dvořák also included other conventions of the European tradition, pedal tone. The technique is used throughout the Sonatina, but is best illustrated in the first movement in measures 17-20 (See in Example 8).

Example 8 _Sonatina in G Major Op. 100, Allegro risoluto_, mm. 17-24

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159 Hamm, “Dvořák, Stephen Foster,” 150.
The pedal point creates a sense of harmonic stasis, but also demonstrates Dvořák’s inclusion of the European folk music traditions. In Slavic music, the use of a pedal point is reminiscent of the instrumentation of the folk bands. The common use of the bagpipes in these village folk bands would create sustained pedal tones by the drones on the bagpipes and influenced composers to replicate the sound of the drones on the bagpipes through the inclusion of pedal tones. Dvořák would have been familiar with this tradition since he himself had played in village bands to supplement his income. Additionally, he used pedal tones in his earlier works the *Slavonic Dances* Op. 46 and 72 (1878 and 1886), thus, one can conclude he was comfortable including this device in his composition to convey connections to Slavic music (See in Example 9).

Additionally, these pedal tones were common in the European music tradition and can be found in the piano music of composers such as Schubert (See in Example 10). Schubert does not
use the E in the base line to imitate a bagpipe drone as in Slavic music, but instead he uses the
tone to illustrate that a key change has occurred prior to measure 33. The use of the E pedal tone
allows for the tonicization of the new key signature and reinforces the tonal center of the new
key. Dvořák and Schubert both utilize a similar technique in their compositions, as a harmonic
stasis, a device that further demonstrates the eclecticism that exists between Dvořák’s music and
other musical traditions in Europe.

The inclusion of European traditions in the Sonatina illustrate that Dvořák was not
ignorant of the musical tradition established in the United States. He was aware that many of the
individuals in America which came from a European background. When Thurber asked him to
create an American art music tradition, Dvořák would have recognized that some of the music
was still firmly ground in European traditions. To support this idea, one only has to look to the
summer Dvořák spent in Spillville, Iowa. While the settlement was in the United States, the

Example 9 Slavonic Dances Op. 46, 1, mm. 240-247
people of the Spillville community clung to their Bohemian heritage. The predominant language of Spillville was Czech, and the older women within the church congregation loved when Dvořák played mass because he included hymns from Bohemia. Many of these new immigrants still had connections to Europe. While the indigenous music represented a long tradition in America, Dvořák knew he would have to include elements of the European tradition to resonate with those individuals who did not recognize the Americanisms in the music. By blending American and European traditions, Dvořák would successfully create a national style of art music in America.

**Possible Pedagogical Influence**

Dvořák had attempted to create a nationalistic style of art music in America, but the Sonatina had a personal connection for Dvořák since it was written for his children. Many

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European composers had written compositions as teaching tools such as “Mozart’s K 545 in C, called ‘a little piano sonata for beginners’ and published as Sonate facile.” The sonatina as a genre was to help develop their technique for inexperienced players. The pedagogical intent is evident upon examination of the individual parts of the Sonatina by Dvořák.

The violin often stays in the first position and only makes occasional shifts to either second or third position, but does so in a logical progression. Dvořák studied the violin from a young age before he learned to play the organ. His training as a violinist was accomplished enough to allow him to play in various orchestras around Prague, and he was a skilled enough to perform as part of the orchestra for Richard Wagner during a concert series Wagner had in Prague. His understanding of the physical requirements of the instrument and the developing skill of a student would allow him to write parts appropriate for his children’s abilities. With the exception of the third movement, the other movements utilize the third position only sporadically and no more than for a few measures at a time. Nevertheless, the fourth movement begins with the player in the third position of the instrument and slowly moves down the fingerboard until they end in first position. There is always a slow transition in the work that allows the player to move comfortably to the position on the fingerboard, and there is not a need for the player to shift from first to third position without moving through second position on the instrument.

The piano part is conceived in a similar fashion to that of the violin: the individual’s skills are being developed. An examination of the score reveals that a moderately skilled pianist would have little difficulty performing this composition. The rhythms are uncomplicated and in moments of high rhythmic activity one hand, the other is given a rhythm that creates a

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subdivision for the complex rhythm. When a wide ranged melodic line is required in the right hand, the left hand typically remains in an anchored position on the keyboard. Other elements that exist in the composition to develop the pianist’s skills are the use of rolled chords for a melodic line, inclusion of pedal markings, and melodies with supporting rhythms to develop the full independence of both hands.

Dvořák designed the Sonatina to help the two players interact with each other through the use of alternating melodies. The violin often exhibits the qualities of confidence and assertiveness, while the piano often has whimsical or pensive melodies. It is in these exchanges that the instrumentalists need to listen to each other to match dynamics and stylistic articulations of the melodic lines. The interplay is consistent throughout the Sonatina and requires the two players to interact with each other to produce a musical interpretation of the work. That the work is designed for a developing player is evident within the composition, while the melodies to create an episodic narrative to keep younger players entertained.

**Eclecticism in the Sonatina**

Dvořák often stated that many of the melodies found in his so-called “American” compositions that individuals have attributed to an American influence were brought with him to America. The implication of this statement by the composer is that the melodies and harmonies had shared characteristics with much of the music found in America during his three year position as the Director of the American Conservatory, but that they were, nonetheless, grounded in his typical compositional style. The only explanation for such an idea can be found in the eclecticism of the techniques he included in his music. Often individuals have examined harmonic structure of these American compositions; nonetheless the relationship of a tonic to dominant key structure is too common of a progression to assign to a specific style of music.
It is true that many of the Negro spirituals utilize a I to V key structure for the strophic songs, and therefore that influence has been applied to Dvořák’s American music instead of its recognition as part of common practice theory. His chord progressions and modulation tendencies can also be found in much of the music of the Classical and Romantic period symphonic traditions. The initial structure of most symphonies from the Classical Era forward utilize a tonic to dominant progression and therefore it is impossible to attribute this characteristic to a specific genre or composer. Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, Brahms, and Schubert all followed this progression in their compositions, and therefore it is unlikely that these chordal progressions can be used to classify Dvořák’s compositions dated 1892 to 1895 as American.

The rhythms used within his American composition are heavily syncopated and often include dotted rhythms, including the Scotch Snap. Musicologists have suggested these rhythms as being tied to either a Native American or Negro spirituals influence. Although these rhythms can be found in both styles of music, they are also found in Slavic music; therefore it is difficult to attribute a specific influence by relying solely on this convention. The influx of immigrants in the United States brought a number of folk styles to the country, which also complicated discussions of rhythmic influence. For example, the Scotch Snap can be found in many folk dance styles that were brought to America by Europeans, including Slavic dances. Thus Dvořák’s rhythmic practices can also be understood from the context as being Slavic. To further complicate matters, in the recreation of the Negro dialect during transcription of Negro melodies, white northerners used European rhythms to replicate the language spoken by the Negros. Often these transcriptions were mere representations rather than an authentic portrayal of the dialect; the process was simply inaccurate. Forcing these rhythmic patterns into European models created a link between the transcribers’ rhythms, associated with European music specifically Slavic,
music of Ireland and Scotland, and the syncopated rhythms found in the Native and African American cultures. Moreover, the popular music of Stephen Foster also made use of syncopated rhythms and demonstrate similarities to rhythms found in Dvořák's music, and thus may be another source of influence.

Dvořák’s use of his own style of “Dvořákian Pentatonicism” creates an exotic stylization. Even though he does not use the authentic pentatonic scale, Dvořák’s implied pentatonicism through the use of characterization demonstrates he recognized its use in the music, but he needed to adapt the scale in order to have it fit the European form of the Sonatina. A stylized pentatonic scale, its inauthenticity demonstrates that Dvořák is a master composer who was able to find elements that represented different culture groups and assimilates them into his music. This Dvořákian convention is not only representative of African American culture; it also symbolizes Slavic and European traditions that also utilize this scale in their music.

These similarities explain how individuals in America could find Americanisms in the compositions written by Dvořák. His ability to combine musical ideas borrowed from other cultures would provide him the opportunity to create music that is representative of large groups of individuals. He identified music that contained shared characteristics and used them through a stylized compositional technique to create music that was similar to both authentic musics and stereotypical music used in multiple cultures. Dvořák produced a style of music that could not only contain Americanisms, but was representative of some European cultures as well. Dvořák stated that he brought many of his ideas with him to America, and upon examination of these musical sources it is clear that Dvořák did in fact bring these ideas with him. The similarities that exist between musical techniques are easily identified and can be found in multiple culture groups, nevertheless, it is these rather general characteristics that scholars appear to cite when
determining possible sources of influence. These sources, however, are far too general to ascribe to one culture group, therefore, one can conclude Dvořák’s so-called “American” music is actually eclectic.
CONCLUSIONS

AREAS OF FURTHER STUDY

Numerous primary documents exist from Dvořák’s time, in America and these have been the catalyst which informed perceptions about the composer during his tenure at the National Conservatory of Music of New York. These primary sources, however, must be given further scrutiny to determine the accuracy of the statements made by “Dvořák.” Past scholarly beliefs about Dvořák’s time in the United States from 1892 to 1895 have led to the creation of three inconsistent narratives, each complicated by bias and misinformation. Although research clearly reveals essays attributed to Dvořák that appear in newspapers in May 1893 and 1895 contain misleading and incorrect information, nevertheless, these primary sources have come to define the narrative of Dvořák’s sojourn in America and his role in creating an American music. Dvořák’s letters to family and acquaintances in Bohemia reveal his opposing view about his role in America. Future scholars must work to construct an objective narrative that takes into account these conflicting source materials and further navigates the concerns of fact and fiction in order to definitively uncover source material in Dvořák’s “American” music. Additionally, issues of Dvořák’s own sense of compositional identity during his American period must be considered in advance of a necessary re-conception of his contribution to an American style of composition. More importantly, this re-conception helps redefine Dvořák’s identity as a composer while working in the United States.

Notions of Dvořák’s association with an American idiom do not take into account the composer’s own acknowledgement that he created only one possible trajectory for composers to consider in writing American art music. Dvořák was a central figure in creating this idiom, but not because of his music; his main contributions occurred through his employment as
composition teacher at the Conservatory. As a teacher Dvořák influenced numerous students to look to sources that would define American music from a nationalistic perspective. By examining compositions of Dvořák’s students, it may be possible to determine Dvořák’s influence on American composers through his position at the Conservatory. Moreover, this mode of inquiry may provide insights into his guidance on the formation of American art music and the possible effect of his suggestion to exploit popular music sources to create “Americanisms” on nationalistic elements in American art music.

Dvořák’s relationship to individuals associated with the Progressive and Indianist movements must also be further explored. Given the amount of control these individuals had over him, one might be able to determine the possible long-lasting artistic and political effects of these movements’ ideologies on the development of an American art music. An examination of the connections between the Board of Directors of the Conservatory and individuals active within the Progressive and Indianist movements potentially informs the effects of this influence on composition students before Dvořák’s arrival from Bohemia and after his departure. One might be able to determine if borrowings of indigenous Native and African American idioms were promoted before Dvořák assumed his role as the Director. Thus representative compositions by students of the Conservatory prior to his arrival, during his time in America, and after he returned home should be explored. If such borrowing did in fact occur prior to Dvořák’s arrival, alterations to the American musical historiography narrative must be made to more accurately reflect Dvořák’s actual role.

Dvořák clearly influenced composers in the creation of American art music; however, his contributions have been greatly exaggerated and framed in a context that is in conflict with historical documents penned by the composer. In order to correct the narrative, further inquiry
into his compositional style while in America is paramount in order to correct the misconceptions regarding the authenticity of indigenous sources in his music. In historiographies, Dvořák has been reconfigured and characterized as an individual who exhibited an abrupt change in the style of his compositional output from 1892 to 1895 because of his association with the development of American art music. Disgusted and frustrated with statements about his efforts to define American art music by many music critics in Boston, Dvořák returned home to Bohemia and wrote his final operatic works, all of which exhibit a decidedly Bohemian nationalism. His easy return to his native Bohemian musical language and his own frustration with reports regarding his “America” sources suggest that further inquiry is necessary to determine the role Dvořák played in the creation of American music.

**American Art Music and Antonín Dvořák**

Through the examination of Dvořák’s music during his three year period in America, influences from American Intellectual Thought have been posited as possible factors for the inclusion of certain indigenous source music in Dvořák’s compositions. Dvořák’s insertion of these musical sources in his “American” compositions reveals that his music can only be described as eclectic. It is through these eclectic elements, whether American or European, that the emergence of these “Americanisms” can be identified in his American art music due to their shared musical characteristics. Moreover, this style of composition satisfies the request of his employer Thurber. Furthermore, it demonstrates Dvořák’s ability to encompass multiple musical sources into his compositional techniques to create generalizations that would allow to his music to be classified as American.

Dvořák was aware that inequality existed in America and that difficulties would arise in creating a nationalistic style of music for the United States. Nonetheless, Dvořák utilized
exoticism in his music to create these “Americanisms” and to fulfill the desires of the individuals within the Progressive and Indianist political movements. Controversy arose from clashing perspectives from individuals within American society on the inclusion of these musical sources, and Dvořák would eventually acquiesce that such sources were only one possible way to create American art music.

Though primarily a Bohemian nationalist, Dvořák was a facile composer with an eclectic compositional technique as evidenced by his Sonatina in G Major Op.100. After an examination of his relationships with multiple individuals, a new narrative emerges in which he creates a composition that was able to fulfill the needs of each faction. The Sonatina clearly satisfied his children’s need for a work to develop their techniques as musicians, while the use of “Americanisms” with direct links to marginalized cultures fulfilled the requests of the individuals involved in political movements. The Sonatina also contained elements that were associated with Dvořák’s European heritage that would be recognized by newly arrived immigrants such as those in the Bohemian community of Spillville, IA. Finally, it provided his publisher with an exotic work that was performable by amateur musicians and that had associations with “The (exotic) New World.” Indeed, a seemingly simple request by Thurber in 1892 for Dvořák to assume the duties as the Director of the National Conservatory of Music of New York requires a new level of complexity upon examination: Dvořák’s role in the creation of an American art music is not as simple as once assumed.
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September 3, 2013

Kelly Fallon
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Dear Ms. Fallon:

This letter is in response to the submitted thesis abstract titled “Antonin Dvořák’s ‘American’ period and the Constructing Americanisms in Music.” After assessing the abstract, it has been deemed not to be human subject research and therefore exempt from oversight of the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46) has set forth the criteria utilized in making this determination. Since the information in this study does not involve human subjects as defined in the above referenced instruction, it is not considered human subject research. If there are any changes to the abstract you provided then you would need to resubmit that information to the Office of Research Integrity for review and a determination.

I appreciate your willingness to submit the abstract for determination. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Integrity if you have any questions regarding future protocols that may require IRB review.

Sincerely,

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