

SEARCHING FOR A NATIONAL SOUND: THE PAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMPOSERS 1928-1934

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Abstract

The 1920-30s was a period of great social, economic and political upheaval in America. The decades sandwiched between two world wars saw dramatic changes in the arts and later became understood as the 'maturing' period for music; a time where North America was finally emancipated from traditional European influence and was affirming its own national identity. Additionally, critical social changes were dominating several countries in South America following violent political revolts, also triggering a frenzied interest in acquiring a recognisable national music. In this climate ripe for nationalistic assertions, many key developments in music were made. Composer societies such as the PAAC formed, with the specific intention to promote the performance of music by American composers in the hope that they would 'stimulate composers to make still greater effort toward creating a distinctive music of the Western Hemisphere.' (PAAC manifesto, New York, 1928). Several of these composers later became national icons, creating a legacy which profoundly influenced younger generations. This paper features brief discussions of the music of three of the most performed PAAC members: Charles Ives (USA), Heitor Villa-Lobos (Brazil) and Carlos Chavez (Mexico), and the definitive elements of their music which became effective, authentic representations of their country. The union of these composers is not only attributed to their pursuit of an established national identity but also their attitude towards the cultural heritage and colloquial art forms that flavoured their works. Their fond reverence for indigenous folk and vernacular traditions influenced a fusion of 'high' and 'low' art forms, colouring their music with characteristic sounds which could then be recognised as national emblems. Composers of this period were attempting to create or reinforce their 'self' identity by using 'exotic' sources such as folk melodies - a technique commonly described as 'exoticism.' This paper also examines some of the issues surrounding identity, authenticity and exoticism, and the historical climate which contributed to the shaping of these composers' ideals, attitudes and ultimately their music.

"American music has too short a history to be considered as a series of scenes; there is scarcely enough of it to even make a narrative." (Thomson 1970: 15) Virgil Thomson's bold statement succinctly summarises the attitudes portrayed in his book *American Music Since 1910*. As the title suggests, music in America became worthwhile only after 1910, the year he suggests marks the birth of American music's history. For a country with a multitude of diversities made possible by a vast and varied history, it seems a mystery why Americans at this time could consider themselves as orphans with no valid historical lineage or heritage.

The offering of music as an academic pathway in the USA only emerged in 1875, beginning with Harvard University, followed imminently by Yale and Pennsylvania Universities. For many years previously, the musical tradition in the USA was heavily influenced by German practice imparted by an influx of professional emigrants. Lack of facilities inhibited opportunities

for an academic musical education in America making it rare or impossible to receive a formal training. It was therefore compulsory to seek it in Western Europe; aspiring musicians were especially lured to Austria and Germany for quality music instruction. Naturally, as these German educated musicians returned to the United States, America began to develop a musical style that was inherited from its German roots. The earliest professors occupying chairs at these American universities were an assembly of these German educated Americans. In H Wiley Hitchcock's historical study of America's music, the period 1865-1920 is named as the era of 'Cultivated tradition', and it is described so: "American music of the cultivated tradition from the end of the Civil War to the end of World War I was largely dominated by the attitudes, ideals, and the modes of expression of nineteenth-century Europe, particularly Austria and Germany" (Hitchcock 1974: 130).

Henry Gilbert supported this impression back in 1915, by describing America's music as "so largely imitative of the art of Europe" and he also admitted "it is true that American music as such is still very much in its infancy" (Gilbert 1915: 102). As Virgil Thomson suggested, America's history of music is youthful because it evolved from Western European traditions, thus leading to a problematic search for a definitive American musical identity.

It has generally been accepted that the 1920s and 1930s became the 'maturing period' for American music, and this 'maturing period' was understood as a successful emancipation from European traditions. Many studies in the early twentieth-century were devoted to discussion of the problems America faced in achieving a valid and authentic art music. Arthur Farwell as early as 1903 observed the intentions of budding American composers and an ensuing American style by suggesting, "Their compositions are sounding less German, less European, and more untrammelled and redolent of a new composite spirit, insistent, yet still undefined" (Farwell 1903: 93). Later studies also show a similar acceptance of this 'maturing period.' In 1996 Otto Karolyi suggests, "The emergence of America's musical independence, that is, the creation of a music with a characteristic profile, is thus an entirely twentieth-century phenomenon" (Karolyi 1996:2).

This putative 'maturing period' was a result of several decades of ardent attempts at liberation from European practice, which dominated concert programmes, patronage, publishing and education. Several American composers sought an autonomous music that could be recognised so internationally and it was seemingly in this period that measurable achievements were accomplished. Celebrated American composer Aaron Copland confirms this trend by describing his aims in 1924, "I was anxious to write a work that would immediately be recognized as American in character. This desire to be "American" was symptomatic of the period" (Copland 1939: 175). Confirming this inference in 1967, he also proclaimed "the period of the Twenties had been definitely coloured by the notion that Americans needed a kind of music they could recognize as their own" (Boretz and Cone 1971: 138).

American art music's definitive period in the early twentieth-century is causally ascribed to the breakdown of perimeters between 'high' and 'low' art forms. Composers of the Pan American Association of Composers (PAAC, 1928-1934) were committed to 'defining' music that could be recognised internationally as an 'American' product, achieved predominantly through various techniques and styles adopted in their music that dissolved cultural boundaries. Because the decade of the 1920s saw an insurgent anti-European sentiment sweep across the Americas influencing all the arts and particularly music, composers were consciously asserting their independence from European tradition and actively seeking to create music stimulated by

non-European ideas. Naturally, a trend emerged producing music infused with the vernacular traditions, indigenous folk song and popular urban genres associated with particular regions. From this period was born the Pan American Association of Composers (PAAC), a modern music society operating in New York between 1928 and 1934. In many ways it was the continuation of the International Composer's Guild, a society founded by Edgar Varese in 1921-1927 to promote modern music, but with a specific aim to promote music from North, Central and South America – to directly address the 'identity crisis' that American music faced. Their manifesto stated:

It is the hope of the association that the performance of North American works in Central and South America and of Central and South American works in the United States will promote wider mutual appreciation of the music of the different republics of America, and will stimulate composers to make still greater effort toward creating a distinctive music of the Western Hemisphere. (Root 1972: 51)

This paper seeks to briefly explore examples of music by three PAAC members, Charles Ives (1874 – 1954, USA), Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959, Brazil) and Carlos Chávez (1899-1978, Mexico) to highlight and discuss the definitive elements of their music which apparently became effective, authentic representations of their countries. Villa-Lobos, Chávez and Ives have all been recognised as pioneers in creating genuine aural depictions of their countries, successfully blending popular and high art forms without compromising their musical integrity. The union of these composers is not only attributed to their pursuit of an established identity; it is their attitude towards the cultural heritage and colloquial art forms that flavoured their works. Their fond reverence for indigenous folk and popular traditions enabled a fusion of 'high' and 'low' art forms, colouring their music with a characteristic sound which could then be realised as a national emblem.

Villa-Lobos 1887-1959

Biographer Gerard Béhague writes of Villa-Lobos:

In many ways, his personality, his career and his production reflect typical Brazilian traits such as grandeur, flamboyance, restlessness, lack of organic unity, disparity and gaudiness, along with others such as individuality, spontaneity, allurements and sophistication. (Béhague 1979: 183)

The inherent 'nationalism' in the music of Heitor Villa-Lobos is recognised by the influence of urban popular genres on his compositional style. Rather than turning to rural, indigenous folk sources as was the vogue in other Latin American countries during this period, Villa-Lobos exploited popular dance forms and street music commonly associated with his native metropolis Rio de Janeiro. He completed a series of works entitled *Choros*, a direct reference to the instrumental ensembles heard in Rio most usually in a *Roda de Choro* (a 'ring' or 'circle'), an informal social musical gathering which undermined accustomed social class structure by the equal treatment bestowed upon participants, regardless of status or musical ability. The collection of *Choros* shows Villa-Lobos's fondness for unusual instrumental combinations, and the innate qualities of the choro spirit.

Choro No. 5 (1925) for piano is subtitled '*Alma Brasileira*,' (Brazilian Soul). It has characteristics of the serenading style of the popular *choros*, as well as clear roots in the *modinha*, a salon genre with distinct lyrical and sentimental melodies, akin to Italian operatic arias. *Choro*

musicians at the turn of the twentieth-century such as Villa-Lobos, were undoubtedly familiar with both forms and frequently interchanged between them. As typical of *choros*, *Alma Brasileira* has a relatively simple ternary structure with a contrasting middle section. The main melody, like the *modinha*, is expressive and lyrical and is accompanied by parallel chords evoking the guitar, the usual accompanying instrument in the traditional *modinha*. Confirming the sentimental nature of the melody, the opening is marked *dolente* – sorrowful.

Villa-Lobos gives an impression of *rubato* by indicating tempo changes and by placing irregular cadences within a quadruple metre. The melody is then embellished with an added semiquaver accompaniment and this remains a constant underlying rhythm in contrast to the subtle syncopations of the guitar-like chords. The key change to the relative major signifies another tempo change, marked *un poco piu moto*, and this brighter melody features typical melodic sequences and syncopated chords reminiscent of the *cavaquinho*, a small four string guitar which formed an essential part of the *choro* ensemble whose role was primarily strumming syncopated patterns in support of the melody. Although *choro* harmony is not usually considered as progressive, Villa-Lobos incorporates several harsh dissonances and frequently uses unresolved sixths, sevenths and ninths, particularly in the contrasting middle section.

The middle section is redolent of typical dance repertoire performed by *choro* musicians, with lively rhythmic patterns. Here, Villa-Lobos emanates glissandi and includes other typical *choro* devices such as rhythmic ostinato, a descending chromatic melodic contour featuring repeated notes and a suggested rhythmic flexibility with the arpeggiated chordal accompaniment scored in triplets against the quaver melody. Also present is the exclusive dotted rhythm used in several Brazilian dances such as the *polka* and *maxixe* as well as in *choro* music. This section, perhaps more so than the opening, reinforces the music's connections to the *choro* genre and supports listeners in realising these allusions.

Carlos Chávez 1899-1978

Aaron Copland wrote of his friend and contemporary Carlos Chávez:

The music of Chávez is strong and deliberate, at times almost fatalistic in tone; it bespeaks the sober and stolid and lithic Amerindian... Chávez' music is, above all, profoundly non-European. To me it possesses an Indian quality that is at the same time curiously contemporary in spirit. (Copland 1952: 91)

Chávez unlike Villa-Lobos, turned to indigenous Indian folk sources for his compositions rather than urban genres. His early works show an affinity to the Mexican salon genres rooted in Romantic tradition but still reveal traits which eventually brought him international acclaim - rhythmic drive, brusque textural contrasts and daring harmonies. His best known work is probably the *Sinfonia India* where he combines native percussion instruments and authentic Indian melodies with 'exotic' rhythms and modal harmonies. Chávez's success is due to his apparent ability to achieve a genuine spirit and essence of folk elements through his music that offer a national 'flavour,' rather than just creating straightforward settings and bland quotations of existing melodies to serve as crude associations or patriotic signals.

In his *Third Sonata* (1928) dedicated to Aaron Copland, Chávez demonstrates much of this Indian and folklorist style associated with his mature period. There is a strong emphasis on rhythm and melody over harmony, with a predominantly polyphonic texture. Cross rhythms

and syncopation, a key feature in *mestizo* (Spanish) Mexican music, are similarly prevalent in Chávez's work as well as irregular and frequently tripped metres and changes of tempo. These complex and strong rhythms embody a primitive and harsh quality to the music and combined with his astringent harmonies and severe dissonance, along with the percussive use of the piano is strongly indicative of the 'modern' sound world. This combination of folk influence and 'modern' percussive dissonance was also simultaneously explored by composers such as Béla Bartok and Zoltán Kodály in Hungary in the early twentieth-century.

Chávez in his music displays affection for pentatonic and modal melodies, based on the Indian tonal system where an absence of the fourth and seventh degree of the diatonic major scale excludes suggestions of modulation and therefore forces an absence of tonal perspective. He purposefully avoids thick sonorous Romantic chords, preferring wide spacing and range, with an abundance of octaves and dissonant intervals such as sevenths and ninths.

The distinct harshness of his style is described by Herbert Weinstock as:

characterised by the harshness of Mexico's highland landscapes. The Mexico in this music is not the fictitious one of travel advertising, but of the magnificent and spacious plateaus of craggy distances, the Mexico in which a stolid people wring livelihood from a somewhat forbidding nature. (Weinstock 1936: 442)

Charles Ives 1874-1954

In 1962, music historian Wilfrid Mellers said of the American, Charles Ives, "I think he's probably the closest to a great composer you have come, for this reason: because he accepted the amorphous polyglot nature of your society and tried to create something out of it which was new."¹ The *Concord Sonata* (1920) is a very important work within the Ives discography because prior to the legendary performance of this piece in 1939 by pianist John Kirkpatrick, he was virtually unknown. Throughout the *Concord Sonata*, Ives demonstrates the use of combined popular and traditional art forms by his use of musical borrowing. The sonata is primarily built on two motifs, which are immediately exposed. The first is motif taken from the iconic opening to Beethoven's fifth symphony and the second five note motif resembles popular parlour song writer Stephen Foster's refrain *Down in the Corn Field*. These two main themes unite the four movements of the work which are each named after an American writer/philosopher from the idyllic town of Concord, Massachusetts: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bronson Alcott (and family) and Henry David Thoreau. Ives was a great admirer of these writers and was fascinated by the town of Concord which he visited prior to composing this sonata.

Not only does the *Concord Sonata* show an array of musical borrowings that demonstrate how Ives drew inspiration from a wide spectrum of native and non-native musical sources, it also reveals Ives's diversity of styles, from the alternating chaotic 'prose' sections with the broader more sustained thick textured stacks of chords in the 'verse' sections of the first movement *Emerson*, to the flowing scherzo-like rushes of semiquavers of the *Hawthorne* movement which also includes moments of traditional four-part harmony style hymn settings and a fast march in the style of a military band, in the score marked '[as the drum-corps]' which is a theme borrowed from another of

1- Quote taken from an Interview first broadcast in 1962, transcripts can be found in: DeVoto, M. 2010. "Two Composers on American Music at Mid-Century." *American Music*, 28 (1): 120-121

his works, *Country Band March*.² Ives was a devoted admirer of the transcendentalist philosophies that these Concord writers were associated with and as well as having an essentially 'American' subject matter, his music is also programmatic in the sense that it is intimately connected to certain people from a certain place, as Ives himself suggested of *The Alcotts*, "and there sits the little old spinet piano Sophia Thoreau gave to the Alcott children on which Beth played the old Scotch airs, and played at the Fifth Symphony." (Ives 1947: 47) *The Alcotts* represents a melodic apotheosis, achieved by the stating of the extended and completed hymn-like 'Human Faith Melody' derived from the opening motif which has also been compared to Simeon Marsh's hymn *Martyn*. This largely diatonic third movement is indeed a stark contrast to the wild dissonance, freewheeling chaotic rhythms and abrupt changes of style displayed in the other movements. The 'Human Faith Melody' appears several times in the first two movements, but is always interrupted with rhythmic, melodic or contrapuntal interjections. It is fragmented and distorted but retains its recognition as a suggestive theme until it is heard in its entirety for the first time in the third movement.

The Alcotts is much like a stately hymn - chordal homophony, calm and tranquil. These stylistic allusions to musical genres are a major and controversial trademark of Ives's music. Often used conventionally and appearing as recognisable forms, the diversities of styles he uses encompass many familiar sounds of everyday America. Although this technique has been greatly criticised by some scholars who suggest Ives was a dilettante whose music lacks cohesion and continuity since the frequent and erratic juxtaposition of contrasting genres disguise true depth and meaning, it has also been praised as a valid embodiment of a variety of experiences, a 'union of diversities,' which Larry Starr describes as a unique style unto itself. (Starr 1992) *Concord Sonata* is a poignant depiction of simple domestic life in America, the innocent and emotive impressions of childhood. For many, it is an authentic and recognisable 'American' music, for like Chávez and Villa-Lobos, Ives succeeded in capturing the spirit of a native land through his personal style, rather than simply making allusions to it through banal connotations, as Mellers suggests,

Charles Ives was the first American composer since the Primitives to accept the loss of the wisdom that respect for tradition brings; to become, unafraid, his "own Carver", who would make what he could of the chaotic world he lived in. For that reason he became the first authentic American composer- and is still the closest America has come to a great composer, parallel to her nineteenth century literary giants. (Mellers 19964: 37)

The PAAC connected composers whose precious homelands were thousands of miles apart and whose spiritual, cultural, social and political experiences were incommensurable. Despite the discernible disparities between the works of the three composers mentioned, there are certainly homogenous elements in their approach to creating music that demonstrate audacious attempts to break away from European tradition to achieve an authentic sound and international acclaim. Rather than attempting to be 'nationalist,' they endeavoured to create an experience of the everyday life and a celebration of the music of their homelands, which is what ultimately led to their success. Additionally, they were also united by their nations' somewhat unique historical positions, as Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia explain of Brazil: "Just as Brazilians were confronted with the task of building a nation from the remnants of colonialism, so Brazilian composers imposed upon themselves the task of breaking away from European models, and creating a musical voice that

2- Ives, *Country Band March* for small orchestra, composed c1910-1911

was distinct to Brazil” (Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia 2005: 178). The same may also be said of the United States, Mexico and other countries in the Americas.

Scholars in the late 20th and 21st century seem to be more critical and less ready to accept the authenticity of music by these composers. The growing field of ethnomusicology certainly highlights the immensely vast and varied indigenous folk traditions and popular genres of the American countries and more recent studies suggest that these composers were perhaps not as proficient at handling folk or popular sources as once considered, as various social or racial class barriers that existed during their productive years prevented their ability to be truly exposed to all ‘popular’ music practice. Gérard Béhague’s 1994 biography of Villa-Lobos argues that he was not so knowledgeable of Brazil’s extensive music traditions, and would have been considered more a native of Rio de Janeiro rather than as a ‘Brazilian.’

In addition, more recent studies also suggest how these composers have many European traits in their music, despite perhaps their adamant denial of such connections. Historian J. P. Burkholder writes that Ives incorporated many traditions, “including the programmatic tradition of Wagner and Strauss, the French schools of Franck, D’Indy, Roussel and Debussy, Russian influences from Glazunov, Scriabin, and the Stravinsky of the *Firebird*” (Burkholder 1988). Several scholars have also suggested that Ives’ music shows a logical progression from his European predecessors, specifically linking him to the tradition of nineteenth-century Romanticism. Characteristics of Ives’ music that support this concept include his use of traditional form such as sonatas and symphonies and the use of complex thematic development, also associated with the music of Beethoven, Chopin, and Berlioz. Additionally, quoting melodies and alluding to a genre for character association was not a new ‘invention’ but a common nineteenth-century practice also employed by many composers such as Liszt and Brahms. Ives is also ‘Romantic’ in attitude; his music evokes nineteenth-century small town America, an America which no longer existed at the summit of his career. His depictions of his childhood in suburban New England make his music autobiographical, a chronicle of intimate personal nostalgic recollections. Yet Ives’s perceptions of America could hardly be valid in such a drastically modernised, commercialised ‘machine age’, which defined that period between the two world wars. Changing representations of Ives then, suggest he was not a pioneer and did not break free from European tradition to create an ‘American’ identity; he was in fact immersed in it and became a continuation of that tradition. His music is highly organised in a systematic and logical manner based on the firm foundations of a European academic training, therefore, as Burkholder proclaims, “Ives’ Americanism is a European trait” (Burkholder 1997: 279).

Studies in the 1990s also discuss parallels between Ives and his European contemporaries such as Mahler, Schoenberg and Berg in an attempt to dispel the so-called ‘myth’ surrounding Ives’s reputation as radical American pioneer and to continue to place him firmly within the classical tradition as Kathryn Bumpass in 1998 suggests: “The mythic Ives represents the American ideals – perhaps one might better say “stereotypes”- of rugged individualism, radical independence of thought, artistic and moral courage, and, inevitably, loneliness” (Bumpass 1998: 677). Nicholas Tawa, writing in 1996 agrees: “The fiction that requires rejection is that Ives was an absolute original creator, un beholden to the music of the American art composers that came before him. No musician forms his creative faculties in a vacuum; neither did Ives” (Tawa 1996: 72).

Much like Ives, Chávez has also been linked to European traditions, specifically the

Neoclassical movement and to Impressionist composers such as Ravel. His early works are staunchly Romantic in character, rooted in the 'salon' style popular in Mexico City during the early twentieth-century, which itself had origins in the traditions introduced to Mexico by Spanish settlers. However, his mature compositions are also deemed to have significant European influences, as Béhague suggests:

While the *Sinfonia India* is one of Chávez's more overtly Indianist compositions, it has a clear affinity with neo-Classical works by such composers as Stravinsky and Copland. Brilliant orchestral effects and occasional Impressionist techniques (parallelism, for example) more than counteract references to either pre-Columbian musical culture or contemporary Mexican Indian music. (Béhague 1979: 138)

More recently, Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia also comment on various European influences suggested in Villa-Lobos' music, particularly Bach and Chopin, even suggesting that "the piano work *Impressions of a Serenade* (1936) sounds as if the hand of the Polish master himself had touched it" (Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia 2005: 186).

When considering the complex issues pertaining to a 'national identity' or a 'national sound' in music, it is also necessary to question whether works by these composers are now outdated and irrelevant as they represent times and places past. Would the works of Chávez still sound Mexican to a non-Mexican or even to a native Mexican in the twenty-first century? Is the *choro* tradition that Villa-Lobos showed so much affection for still recognisable as distinctly Brazilian in today's globalised world? Can music really accurately represent a place, and if so, how long can it remain a fair representation? Landscapes are indeed ever changing, as are the people that reside on them.

'Exoticism' is also an important element in the works of the three aforementioned composers, as well as several other composers in the PAAC as their manifesto included a blatant statement of their aims to create a "distinctive music of the Western Hemisphere" (Root 1972: 51). If 'exoticism' can be understood as a movement which seeks to represent the exotic 'other' in various art forms by creating or reinforcing the 'self' identity so that the 'other' may be equated, then the PAAC were attempting to create or reinforce their 'self' identity as well as present their exotic 'selves' to audiences in Europe who would conceive the distinct Western Hemisphere 'otherness.' Exoticism however, was by no means a feature exclusive to music of the PAAC composers; twentieth-century exoticism also has close links to the wider modernist movement, as David Hesmondhalgh and Georgina Born write:

"If we look at other developments in early-twentieth century musical modernism, before and concurrent with Schoenberg's development of serialism, different aesthetic strategies become evident: not absolute and autonomous formal negation, but various attempts to draw upon other musics, to represent the other, to bring into the orbit of modernist music the sounds of the other." (Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000: 12)

Timothy Taylor argues that the age of Imperialism between 1875 and 1914 brought about prominent historical shifts such as topographical changes to cities, urbanisation and the rise of consumerism which in turn influenced society's perception of 'others.' During this Imperial age, Europe and its colonies dominated 86 percent of the global land mass, merchant shipping doubled and the railway network expanded to over one million kilometres to meet consumer demand for what became essential commodities from these distant lands. The world was becoming smaller

and accessing the 'exotic' was becoming a routine, everyday way of life (Taylor 2007). Although the PAAC's active years were outside of this so-called Imperialist period, the composers involved were affected by the worldwide events prior to the 1920s and saw these rapid changes; indeed, almost all of the PAAC members experienced childhood and their formative years during this period, perhaps even being more susceptible to influence in their adolescence. Born confirms that this historical and cultural phenomenon had its impact on music:

In literature and the visual arts as well as music, these strategies combined explorations in form with the representation of popular and everyday content or subject matter. The different aesthetic properties of non-Western and popular arts became sources of experiment and innovation. (Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000: 12)

Furthermore, as Born states, exoticism was not merely a representation of distant lands and people but also closer to home, references to domestic popular arts were also featured in music of this period. Ives in the USA was using vernacular music in his compositions, borrowing and developing material from a variety of hymns, parlour songs, military marches and ragtime. Villa-Lobos was equally 'exotic' as he was 'popular' as he based several of his works on popular street music of Rio de Janeiro. Cultural hierarchy in the USA, particularly perceptions continuing from the nineteenth-century of the 'classical' art music world as an effeminate, stuffy, genteel tradition saturated with European influence perhaps led to the notion that the 'popular' vernacular sounds were somehow more typically 'American.' Composers engaging with the vernacular, like Ives, were then simultaneously asserting a concept of selfhood whilst crafting music within the classical structure, in addition to creating a somewhat exotic other in distancing himself from the genteel norm.

Much discourse about these composers is concerned with questions of authenticity. Exoticism in music is intrinsically linked to authenticity, and presents several complex issues a few which may be summarised in the following questions: who is capable of representing whom accurately, who is suitably qualified or has the right to represent particular cultures, who is authorised to collect and use resources to preserve certain, perhaps vulnerable cultures, and by which standards can such subjective and subtle attributes of authenticity possibly be measured. John Corbett sees the act of deciding 'authenticity' as deconstructing music to quantify and separate 'ethnic' sources which are the essential wholesome components of the piece from the additional elements which create the hybrid, absolute result as he describes: "The move to entangle "authentic" ethnic music from its hybridized new-music forms can be seen as a reassertion of the peculiar Western power to define (and preserve) "pure" expressions of cultural ethnicity as opposed to their "tainted" counterparts" (Corbett 2000: 163).

Authenticity also links to individuality, a trait that composers of the PAAC and many other composers in the USA during the 1920s-1930s strived for. This individuality is closely related to the identity issues in the USA and South America concerning the desire to possess (as a nation), a respectable music tradition separate from European tradition. Carol Hess summarises:

By the 1920s the lines of debate over US musical identity had been drawn. Should composers embrace the African and Native American legacy as Dvořák had proposed? Aspire to European high culture, as had been done for much of the nineteenth century? Pay homage to the European heritage but adapt it to American circumstances through, say folk music? (Hess 2013: 22)

Ives, Chávez and Villa-Lobos were among the most performed composers during the PAAC's active years and since then have been considered as successful individualists or 'pioneers' because of their accomplished fusion of 'high' and 'low' art forms. Henry Cowell (1897-1965) and Edgard Varèse (1883-1965), the founders and partisans of this faction, have also secured their position in historical narratives as creative innovators – predecessors of the next generation of inventors and experimentalists such as John Cage (1912-1992) and Harry Partch (1901-1974). Alternatively, Ives, Chávez and Villa-Lobos exploited sounds of their homelands to depict 'exoticism' and 'individuality' in their music. Hess attributes Chávez's warm reception in the USA to a blossoming Pan-American movement with improved relations between the USA and Mexico following the 1910 Mexican revolution. Hess states that the USA hungered for an ancient tradition, a 'usable past' in the arts and consequently suffered 'cultural envy' towards Mexico and their bountiful history. A desire to seek cultural common ground to justify an attempt to share cultural resources led to a surge of interest in Mexico in the USA; indeed a ripe environment to present Chávez and his 'exotic' style. Like Taylor, Hess views consumerism as an important factor in defining 'selfhood' and 'other,' alleging that "Chávez capitalized on difference by strategically revealing in exoticist images of the primitivism" (Hess 2013: 48).

Several composers, decades earlier also attempted mastering the 'exotic' to achieve a discernible national identity but rather unsuccessfully. Arthur Farwell (1872-1953), Edward MacDowell (1860-1908) and Henry F. Gilbert (1868–1928) among several other composers active at the beginning of the twentieth-century "blazed few trails of their own prior to World War I, accepting instead without question the models that they had inherited from Europe" (Tischler 1986: 67). As the pressing issue of national identity arose at the turn of the century, the USA pursued global superpower status and composers looked for a musical idiom that demonstrated shared ethnic and cultural experiences as composers in Europe were doing, perhaps more effectively as the Europeans were better equipped with more fertile cultural histories and homogenous populations which America could not yet compete with. Nevertheless, efforts continued, "Farwell still looked to national or regional musical expression based on folk music for the creation of something uniquely 'American,'" but never strayed far from his Romantic origins as Barbara Tischler explains, "such 'exotic' material was musical seasoning intended to provide a dash of regional or national flavour to compositions that otherwise diverged hardly at all from accepted patterns of nineteenth-century Romantic orchestral writing" (Tischler 1986: 67). An example perhaps, of how misjudging the illustrious balance of 'individualism' and 'exoticism' could jeopardise authenticity. The efforts of composers such as Farwell are important because they are still products of Taylor's acknowledged Imperial Age and as he argues, we should view composers as 'social, cultural and historical subjects rather than autonomous individuals.' This creates a useful alternative perspective of composers as 'subjects inhabiting a particular historical moment and a particular place,' suggesting that several elements of their behaviour are essentially out of their control and are dependent on their historical and cultural surroundings. This is not to say that the PAAC or any other artists were simply puppets of their historical age, but merely to assert that a detailed study on their historical and cultural backgrounds would enrich the understanding of these composers' achievements, aims and creative processes (Taylor 2007).

Exoticism evidently has several complex meanings and definitions which Born has summarised into four key areas. The first, to create an imaginary identity, where the exoticism

exists through fantasy and accuracy bears no importance in representation, 'a kind of psychic tourism through music.' The second, when exoticism seeks to anticipate or manifest a more realistic identity of the other. The third, when exoticism seeks to mimic, or impersonate an existing identity of the other – or perhaps restore it. Finally, exoticism which is an update, a reinterpretation of cultural identity – perhaps required as a result of changing historical perceptions, followed by a 'reinsertion' into the existing cultural norm (Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000: 35). In the case of Villa-Lobos and his use of mass culture resources, much of the perceived 'exoticness' of his music was probably due to the imagined identity or the manifestation of a USA/European viewpoint of anticipated 'Brazilianess.' Villa-Lobos, representing an exotic other to the USA audience in the 1930s, was not constrained by their social models and perceptions as he was not 'threatening' any American 'self-hood.' The same also applies to Chávez. Ives in some ways was also creating an 'imaginary identity' of a quaint suburban America as well as emphasising what he may have considered to be a more realistic self-identity.

Tischler suggests that:

American composers who consciously neglected national identification in their music in favour of a continuing search for new means of expression or the re-definition of concepts of classicism or romanticism in modern terms often had to forego audience recognition and acclaim. (Tischler 1986: 122)

American composers of this period were therefore required to address the national identity issue in their music to satisfy the demands of the consumer culture – even though their target audiences were only a proportion of the wider 'mass culture,' composers were still referring to it through their use of exoticism and vernacular art forms. The PAAC was just one of a number of composer societies formed in this critical period drawing together hugely diverse musicians with contrasting personalities, interests and works, united by a common aim – to create and promote a recognisable national identity. The American identity crisis then, was paradoxically the need to achieve a "national identification" through employing exoticism and dissolving boundaries between 'high' and 'low' art forms, but also the need to remain individual in the search for "new means of expression," encompassing the 'avant-garde' or 'experimental,' the overall prerogative being to triumph in achieving "recognition and acclaim."

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