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# A Study of the Applicability of Makah Indian Music as Material for Concert Band Composition

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Accompanied by Makah Suite, an original musical composition, called "Appendix A to the Thesis", in separate portfolio.

A STUDY OF THE APPLICABILITY OF MAKAH INDIAN MUSIC  
AS MATERIAL FOR CONCERT BAND COMPOSITION

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty  
Central Washington College of Education

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

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by  
Larry S. Richardson  
August 1961

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APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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## PREFACE

One gains a genuine grasp of the inter-dependence of people when undertaking a project such as this. Without the assistance of many people, it would have been impossible.

The writer appreciates the valuable assistance of Evelyn Bigelow and Mable Robertson, who helped with the arrangements and groundwork leading to permission to make recordings.

Mr. A. Bert Christianson guided the project. On several occasions he solved vexing problems related to the transcriptions and compositions.

Finally, to my wife, Marilyn, goes my deepest gratitude for encouragement, understanding, and the endless assistance she rendered in typing and copying the manuscripts.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Folk music traditionally is one primary source of inspiration for great music in Western culture. Historical examples can be cited from the earliest composed liturgical music to the influence of jazz in American composition. While some American composers have used Indian materials from other parts of the continent, none has used the materials of the Northwest Coast Cultural Area.

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. This study intended to (1) use indigenous musical materials in a manner interesting to and useful in the instrumental music program of the public schools, (2) contribute to a greater understanding and appreciation of the artistic values of Northwest Indian Culture, and (3) promote an appreciation of the people who strive to perpetuate their Indian cultural heritage.

Importance of the study. As a candle surges into brightness before consuming its final bit of wick, the first contact between the Makah and the Whites began the inevitable collapse of Makah culture. James G. Swan, writing in 1869 prior to widespread White settlement of the Olympic Peninsula, concluded (8:61):

Their ancient history is wrapped in an impenetrable obscurity--that of a more recent date I have endeavored to exhibit; their future can be read in the annals of the New England emigrants. The steady wave setting to our western shores will have its due effect upon the Indian races, and in the lapse of another century, the places that now know them will know them no more.

Almost 100 years have passed since this prophecy.

The process of acculturation, while somewhat retarded by the reservation atmosphere, is, nevertheless, near completion. Only a handful of elderly Makah can communicate in the Makah language. Makah adolescents and young adults are more interested in the immediacies of twentieth century living than in developing a familiarity with ancient lore and customs. This tendency is especially noticeable in the musical customs of the Makah.

Makah young people are active participants in their own perception of adolescent culture. They are interested in current movies, current dance crazes, and current commercial musical styles. This interest leaves room for traditional Makah music only in terms of condescension to parental wishes.

Parents in the 25-40 age group appreciate traditional music to a greater extent but are generally unable to perform. Only a few people in this age group have devoted the energy necessary to familiarize themselves with the traditional music.

The burden of performance, then, falls upon the generation of old people. The Makah Club, an organization which

strives to perpetuate tribal lore and music, is composed mainly of elderly people. This generation is in the process of dying out. With these people dies the music of a culture.

The music to be preserved from this culture must necessarily be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed with considerable effort in the near future if this tradition is not to be lost.

A second factor which made this study important was revealed by assessing the knowledge and appreciation of local Indian culture by the surrounding majority White population. It is safe to assert that the average citizen of the Pacific Northwest would typify the native Indian culture as crude, easy-going, and perhaps degenerate.

A demonstration of the artistic, structural aspects of Makah music can further reveal that the early inhabitants had in reality a complex, expressive, and artistically rich cultural development, one growing naturally out of the Northwest locale.

## II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Makah Indians. Although the various government agencies legally define status in terms of Indian and/or Makah blood, this study concerned itself with cultural rather than legal considerations. Therefore, the term "Makah Indians" was defined as encompassing those people who reside primarily upon the Indian reservation surrounding Neah Bay, Washington,

and who, by virtue of their own opinion and the opinion of Makah Indians, consider themselves Makah Indians.

Makah Indian music. This term refers to the authenticity of any given song or dance. The fact that individual pieces are generally owned by an individual or family, coupled with the fact that considerable social intercourse existed and continues to exist between the Makah and neighboring tribes, makes it difficult to attribute any definite degree of antiquity to any given song or dance. It is also apparent that the generation to generation transmission of the pieces by rote learning allows a definite evolutionary process. The term "Makah Indian music" was, therefore, used to describe that body of music performed by Makah Indians and considered by them to be authentic Makah music. That conditioning through contact with the sound of European interval relationships has undoubtedly altered the ability of the performers to render indigenous interval relationships is highly tenable. The above definition, however, took the musical materials in their contemporary state, as recorded at Neah Bay in April of 1961. While this definition may be unacceptable in terms of basic research, it was practical in the sense that application of these materials to renditions by European instruments necessitated alteration of semi-tones to the nearest half-step regardless of the accuracy with which it was originally performed.

Primitive music. This term encompassed all music indigenous to a primitive culture; that is, a culture with no system of reading or writing. Generally, such music is based upon locally derived systems of interval relationships, rhythmic structure, and scale structures, thereby differing noticeably from European music. Another characteristic is simplicity.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature in three categories had a direct bearing upon the study: (1) anthropological study of the Makah Indians showed the vital role music played in their complex and interesting culture, (2) literature describing the general characteristics of primitive music and methods appropriate to its analysis placed Makah music in relation to other primitive music, and (3) applied ethnomusicology showed the specific characteristics of Makah Indian music.

#### I. LITERATURE ON MAKAH INDIAN CULTURE

At least two factors explain the exhaustive study of the Makah by numerous anthropologists. First, the Makah are the only tribe in the United States which is a part of Central Northwest Coast Indian Culture. Second, the culture, through comparatively less White interference and strong tribal loyalty, has tended to remain more intact than those of neighboring areas. It was therefore necessary to select representative material rather than to make a comprehensive survey.

Anthropologists geographically locate Northwest Indian Culture as extending along the Pacific Coast from the Gulf of Alaska to Northern California. This cultural area

is further sub-divided according to varying cultural characteristics into the Northern, Central, and Southern Northwest Coast. The Makah were a sub-group of the Nootka nation which occupied the south-western half of Vancouver Island and the northwest tip of Washington known as Cape Flattery. The Nootka nation, combined with the Kwakiutl nation, comprised the Wakashan linguistic group. The Wakashan group and the Central Northwest Coast culture area, for practical purposes, may be considered synonymous. A general-to-specific sequence of relationships can be shown, placing the Makah in relation to the general culture as follows: Northwest Coast Indian Culture (to) Wakashan Linguistic Group (to) Nootka Nation (to) Makah Tribe (3:186-195).

Originally, the tribe was a very loose organization, its main source of inter-relatedness being a common language. Colson (2:75) points out that at one time five villages at times made war upon one another. The emergence of Neah Bay as the only central community was the result of government operations which commenced in 1855 with the signing of the treaty. The fact that the school was established in Neah Bay with the government requirement in early days that the children reside at the school was an important factor in bringing the families into this central location.

Fishing was the basis of Makah culture. The abundance of sea-life provided the opportunity to collect and store food during a relatively short period of the year.

This enabled the Makah to develop their arts, rituals, ceremonies, and status systems during long periods of leisure time. An example of this development cited by Drucker (3:34-35) concerns the customs revolving around the uniquely Nootkan practice of whale hunting:

The most spectacular sea hunting on the whole coast was the whaling of the Nootka. . . . The whale harpooner was always a person of high rank, for the tricks of the trade--practical and magical--that contributed to the success of the hunt were cherished family secrets, handed down in noble lines only. Besides, only a chief possessed the necessary wealth to have a whaling canoe built, to outfit it, and the authority to assemble a crew. . . . Ritual behavior before and during the hunt was considered essential for all sea hunting, of course, but because of the importance of whaling in native eyes, its ceremonial requirements were more elaborate and more rigid than those for any other quest.

Material culture of the Makah. The primary material used for the manufacture of goods was wood. A wide assortment of cutting, splitting, shredding, and finishing tools was employed in fashioning houses, canoes, storage and cooking boxes, and other implements. Some of these implements made use of iron obtained in trade prior to European contacts. The source of this material is open to speculation (3:42-74).

Makah houses were made of wood. They were long enough to house the various branches of the extended family. The exteriors were of long split cedar planks; the roofs were nearly flat. All houses faced the ocean. Generally, the single door opened to the ocean beach. Swan reporting

in 1868, described the interior of the house as follows  
(8:46):

The bed places are next to the walls of the house, and raised about eighteen inches from the ground; . . . these bed places are arranged all around the sides and ends of the lodges, and are separated from each other by the boxes containing the family wealth, consisting of blankets, beads, and clothing which are piled up at the head and feet. Directly in front of them is a lower platform, usually three inches from the ground. On this, other mats are laid, and here the family and visitors sit and eat or talk as the case may be. The fire is in front of it, and a chain depending from a beam overhead, serves to hang the pots or kettles on, while cooking. Over the beds are stowed the provisions belonging to the family, packed away in baskets, while above the fire are hung such fish or other food as they may be desirous of drying in the smoke. . . . They have no buildings set aside for public purposes, but when an unusually large gathering takes place, they proceed to the largest lodge, which is always thrown open for the accommodation of the tribe.

Against this back-drop of abundant food, secure housing, and a frequently rainy and unfriendly outside environment, the ceremonial and musical life of the Makah unfolded.

Social organization and practices of the Makah. The Potlatch, the ceremonial, and the shamanistic observance each provided the Makah with an opportunity to perform and develop their music. The significance of music as personal property was imbedded in the social system of the Makah. No discussion of Makah music, therefore, is really meaningful without some understanding of the social forces which produced it.

The Makah individual fit into the total society in three different ways. He was a family member who lived in

the same house with his immediate family as well as with his brothers, uncles, grandparents, etc. He was a member of a social class. He might have belonged to the ruling class which comprised perhaps five per cent of society, the common class made up of the bulk of the people, or the slave class which represented the lowest ten per cent. Finally, the Makah, if a free man, probably belonged to a secret society, indulging in bizarre occult observances. As a member of the different groups, the Makah participated in the social and ceremonial life of the tribe (3:107-123).

The potlatch was the most important social observance on the Northwest Coast. Drucker states: "The potlatch brought to expression basic principles involved in social status and also served as a major force for social integration" (3:123). Basically, the potlatch was a ceremonial form of competition in terms of display of personal and group wealth. Its observance was generally attached to some signal stage in the life of an individual such as the announcement of heirship to the position of chief. Because all members of the family or tribe contributed wealth and talent to the observance, the potlatch was an integrative force in society. Drucker describes some of the dimensions of the potlatch as follows (3:126-129):

Among the . . . Nootka, potlatches were often given . . . to establish a child or youth as the heir presumptive. In addition, these . . . peoples often combined the potlatch with performances by the dancing societies. The latter were elaborate dramas representing the abduction

of certain individuals (with inherited rights to the performances) by supernatural beings who returned them, endowed with varied and often spectacular ceremonial prerogatives.

.....

Competitive potlatches have received considerable attention in ethnographic literature because of their very spectacular nature. Two powerful rivals might give away and destroy thousands of dollars' worth of trade goods and money in the course of the contest. The destruction of property, of course, was to demonstrate that the chief was so powerful and so rich that the blankets or money he threw on the fire . . . were of no moment at all to him. . . .

.....

The economics of the potlatch were not particularly complex. A chief announced his plans to his lineage or extended family mates some time in advance. He would normally expect them to contribute wealth goods to the extent of their ability. The low-ranking members of the group gave furs, blankets, or money for a variety of reasons: to gratify their personal sense of participation in the group performance, to assure the esteem of their chief and fellow members, or to ensure public recognition for them-selves or their children at the time of the potlatch by being given names or being included in some ceremonial at least in a minor capacity.

The second of the observances around which society revolved was the Winter Ceremonial, otherwise known as the Wolf Ritual or, among the Makah, the Klukwalle. The religious concepts of the Makah were involved in this ritual centering around the finding of an individual spirit, a sort of magical helper. Ernst, in a comprehensive description of the Wolf Ritual, gives the following general introductory information (4:2-3):

The core of its movement centers always about the active dramatization of a legend which enacts the capture of a number of people (initiates) by Wolves, their recovery by certain other people already initiated (members of the

secret society known as Klukwalle) after they have received certain powers or instruction from the Wolves, and the exercising of the Wolf spirit that possessed them. . . .

Basically, the ceremonial included formal adoption of a spirit helper, not necessarily individual in this case, but social or tribal in force. By the initiation Klukwalle, one of the several types of the ritual, the novice gained the right, among those tribes studied, to share henceforth in the collective tribal dances or ceremonials during the sacred winter season. . . . Although the ritual was not necessarily connected with the finding of an individual "manitou" or ghostly helper, this occasionally coincided with one of the rituals; for, following the secret ceremonies, set aside for the Wolf, an initiate also chose and first performed some individual dance or song, with appropriate action and mask.

Other forms of Klukwalle were the healing Kluwalle and the dancing Klukwalle. The dancing Klukwalle was the least formal, lasting only one day and being devoted only to performance of the songs and dances of the society.

A third important factor was the culture's use of ritual and magic in curing disease. The "medicine man" known among anthropologists as the shaman, was an individual whose personal spirit had endowed him with magical healing powers. Illness was supposed to be the result of supernatural happenings.

The shaman's task consisted in summoning his spirit helper or helpers, usually by singing their songs and dancing, until the supernatural assistant bestowed the power to . . . remove the contamination (3:144).

Music was an integral part of the extensive ceremonial life of the Makah. Ceremonial life was the primary motivation for the development of Makah music. The main exception

to this concept was the use of canoe songs. Rhodes comments:

Since paddling can be a very rhythmical motion, it is to be expected that the extensive use of the canoe would present occasions for canoe songs. There are a few to be found, but not in great numbers, probably because the stern waters of the Northwest Coast rarely permitted the leisurely attitude conducive to song. However, the early explorers all mentioned that the Indians, coming out to their ships to trade, arrived singing (5:6).

The use of music in the potlatch is described by Dr. Erna Gunther, who has undoubtedly devoted more time and study to the Makah than has any other anthropologist (6:6):

When the guests arrived from another village by canoe, they always landed in a little cove nearby and dressed in ceremonial clothes and painted themselves. To make a spectacular entry into the host's village, often two canoes were lashed together, on which dancers stood ready to perform when they were close enough to be easily seen. The songs and dances used on such an occasion were the property of the head of the family. The arriving guests were greeted by the host, also ceremonially dressed, and a welcome song with a slow, stately dance was performed on the beach.

After the arrival, the guests proceeded to the house, where songs were sung at random until the meal was served. If the potlatch was to last for more than one day, a bone game generally took place the first evening. This gambling for big stakes was accompanied by traditional bone game songs designed to impair the concentration of the gamblers. The songs were loud, chanting numbers, accompanied by the beating of sticks on boards by the spectators.

During the potlatch proper, welcome songs were first performed. If food was served, songs thanking the

cooks were employed. Then, with the presentation of gifts, the songs and dances which belonged to the families represented were performed. These pieces were considered an object to be displayed as a part of the wealth of the family.

Only the owner of the song or dance had the right to have it performed even though the song was generally known to all. A group of instrumentalists accompanied the singing, which was generally done by the owner. If the owner was too old to perform, he would hire another person to take his place (6:6-8).

The instruments employed included rattles made of strings of sea shells or of wood, carved with totemistic designs. Drums came into vogue with the increase of inter-Indian trade, stimulated by the earliest fur traders. These drums were appropriated in design or purchased from the more northern tribes. In certain dances and songs, whistles were employed. Some of these were small and placed entirely in the mouth. Larger versions were hand-held.

Present-day Makah generally use only the drum accompaniment. The instrument is about sixteen inches in diameter and four to five inches deep. The shell is made of bent hardwood of quarter-inch thickness. The sealskin head continues over the shell, diminishing into four strands which cross the bottom, forming a handle. The player is able to increase head tension by increasing his grip on the handle. A multi-colored totemic figure is generally painted on the playing

surface. The drum is struck with a leather-tipped stick, four to five inches long, held in the player's right hand. The drum is held in the left hand.

The primary medium of the songs, however, was voice. A variety of combinations was used, including solo renditions and various combinations of men and women.

Music occupied a similar position in the other two main ceremonial observances, namely the Wolf Ritual and the practice of the shaman. In the case of the Klukwalle, the songs were the property of the society, and only members were allowed to participate in their performance. One of the outward signs of finding the individual's spirit was the development of a new song as a part of the ceremony. In future Klukwalle times, the owner would perform his songs as described by Gunther (6:8):

If a person was possessed of a spirit and did not respond by singing and dancing, the spirit was strong enough to kill him. In other words, singing and dancing here was a form of exorcism. . . .

During a man's spirit dance, his wife often walked around in front of the audience and urged them to sing. Volume was generally regarded as more important than quality in this type of singing.

Summary. The Makah of Neah Bay were among the most creative and adventurous Indians of the Northwest Coast. The abundance of the environment allowed the development of a rather complex economic system, a system couched in the conspicuous consumption of a rich and colorful ceremonial

life. Music was an integral part of this ceremonial life; much of the activity was accompanied by music. The instruments employed included rattles, drums, and whistles. The voice was the most important vehicle. Makah life and music have been scrutinized by scholars, and a substantial body of information is available.

## II. LITERATURE RELATED TO THE MUSIC OF THE MAKAH

Three levels of ethnomusicology contribute to an understanding of Makah music. The first is in terms of the general development of the science of ethnomusicology; the second is in regard to the music of the Northwest Coast in general; the third is the specific study of Makah music.

Rousseau's Dictionary of Music is among the earliest of works (1768) to make provision for music beyond the culture of Europe. His original division of non-European music into classifications of Oriental, primitive, and folk music remains a major concept.

One landmark for the beginning of scholarly study is a short monograph by the German philosopher and psychologist Carl Stumpf on the music of the Bella Coola Indians of British Columbia. In 1882, a group of Bella Coola Indians visited Berlin, where they performed songs and dances; and Stumpf, intrigued by their songs, worked for many hours with one singer writing down songs in modern musical notation. This experience stimulated him to further study of primitive and Oriental music, and eventually he founded the Berlin archives (5:28).

Out of these beginnings grew the Berlin school of ethnomusicology. The principle motivation for this movement

psychological investigation, resulting in a scientifically analytical approach. The various investigators developed means of measuring and notating non-diatonic intervals and scales, but showed less concern for aesthetic factors such as rhythm and form (5:27-29).

The American school of ethnomusicology, composed primarily of anthropologists and practicing musicians, emphasized aesthetic factors. Study was in relation to the whole complex of society rather than in terms of scientific phenomenon.

The American school was impelled by the realization that Indian music was gradually disappearing. Individuals such as James Mooney, Alice Fletcher, B. I. Gilman, and Washington Andrews recorded voluminously with the newly developed phonograph. Their goal was the preservation of materials for the future use of scholars with more ample training (5:33-35).

During this period, James C. Filmore, a composer famous for his contributions to march music, recorded, transcribed, and published Indian material. In addition, he used the material in his own compositions. Filmore theorized that the Indian music, though monophonic, had a latent harmonic content which could be brought out through the techniques of composition. Nettl (5:33) cites the shortcomings of Filmore's theoretical approach:

Filmore experimented by harmonizing the same song in various ways and presenting the results to Indian informants, who were supposed to express a preference. They almost always agreed in their judgment with Filmore. Perhaps not realizing that the informants may have been trying to please him by choosing in accordance with subconscious hints on his part, he thought he had made a promising discovery.

Franze Boas, one of the leading American pioneer anthropologists, did much to stimulate ethnomusicology. He stressed to his students the concept that an understanding of the social-ceremonial life of a culture was impeded by a lack of understanding of the music. In his work among the Kwakwaka'wakw, linguistic and geographic neighbors of the Nootka-Makah, Boas transcribed the music of the ceremonials along with the other overt phenomenon (5:34).

It is significant to stress at this point that the Northwest Coast has, in a sense, provided a laboratory for the development of anthropological techniques. The work of some of the most eminent anthropologists has focused upon this culture area with a resulting significant body of material which eventually has become a basis for generalization in the field as a whole. Significant examples of this tendency are the studies of Boas, mentioned above, and the studies of Herzog and Densmore.

Herzog, combining the German and American traditions, made the following observations of Salish music. The term "Salish" was considered to include the Makah in the study (7:96-98):

Certain traits appear in Salish music. (1) There is a limited tonal range. . . . (2) Connected with this feature, the melodic movement is often level or undulating, rather than primarily descending. (3) When the range is wider, giving the melodic movement greater scope; the latter may be balanced between ascending and descending. This may lead to the "pendulum" movement, in which the melody swings up and down with frequent reversals of movement. . . . (4) In melodies of wider range, broad jumps are fairly frequent; combinations of steps of thirds with fourths, or of thirds with each other, give the effect of broken triads. This is a noteworthy phenomenon, rare in primitive music, but a "latent harmonic feeling" in our sense should not be deduced from it, as did . . . John C. Filmore. (5) Pentatonic scales, which, with an avoidance of half-tone steps, divide the octave into seconds and thirds, are less common than in Indian music at large. (6) Small, half-tone steps and some rare intervals that can result within the scale from the presence of such steps--the diminished fifth, the augmented fourth or fifth--occur more often than is usual in Indian music or in primitive music in general. (7) A stable, consistent rhythmic measure dominating the melody is more frequent than is usual. (8) Rhythms based on three, including triplet rhythms--more common than in Indian or in primitive music in general. (9) Rhythms of five and seven are moderately frequent. (10) The relationship of the rhythmic accompaniment to the rhythm of the voice is at times intricate, instead of the simple coordination between the two which is so general in North American Indian music. Syncopated accompaniment is fairly frequent; so is a difference in the simultaneous rates of speed for voice and accompaniment. (11) The use of skin-covered drum recedes somewhat, as against rattles and rigid percussion instruments (beating on planks, striking sticks together, etc.). . . . (12) While most North American Indian music displays the clear-cut structural organization of a stable musical stanza built up of balanced musical phrases, the structure of Salish melodies often shows a certain looseness and lack of clarity. (13) Indications of harmonic or polyphonic part-singing among North American Indians are so few and far between that the number of references to such practices in Salish material is noteworthy. (14) While in many areas of North America the man predominates considerably as singer and instrumentalist, among the Salish the woman appears to be almost as active as a musician and composer as is the man.

The very great scope of the research of Frances Densmore entitles her to recognition as one of America's leading contributors in the field of ethnomusicology. Densmore, during the late 'twenties and early 'thirties, collected over 2000 pieces of Indian material, representing the entire United States. There is, however, some question as to the quality of the analytical material which accompanies the material. Nettl states his objections as follows (5:34):

She has been a tireless recorder, whose aim is to preserve the material for study. . . . Her transcriptions are useful and her descriptions of song functions, origins, native dancers, instruments, and customs associated with music are valuable. Unfortunately, her analyses are not as reliable. She leans perhaps too heavily on European music theory, and she works in isolation from the methods developed by the Berlin group. Consequently her merit is greatest as a collector and transcriber, and as such her contributions to the field are unsurpassed.

One of Densmore's many books is Nootka and Quilleute Music. This is the only comprehensive work directed to the specific study of Makah music. All of the 210 songs published therein were recorded at Neah Bay. Some of the songs are from other nearby tribes. Each song is treated in the context of the social matrix as follows: (1) the song is written out with both voice and drum parts; (2) the metronome setting is given; (3) a discussion of the story and performance of the song is presented; (4) the melodic and rhythmic characteristics are discussed; and (5) the names of informants are given.

On the basis of the recorded material, certain central tendencies with regard to the characteristics of major or minor mode, use of intervals, length of phrases, etc., are evaluated numerically and by percentages. At this point, the objections of Nettl and other modern ethnomusicologists come into play. The basis for the evaluations is in terms of European harmonic theory. No allowance is made for quarter-tones which can be heard in most recordings of Makah music. No provision is made for tonalities based on scales other than the European major and minor.

Some of the instruments observed in use by Densmore have already passed out of frequent use among the Makah. These include the use of sticks on long planks (now limited to gambling songs), rattles, two sticks struck together, and the small whistles used in the Wolf Ritual. The rhythmic tools still in common use are the hand drum and hand clapping.

One interesting observation made by Densmore is in relation to the use of language:

The Makah language is considered hard to sing and therefore few Makah songs have words from the Makah language. Even the songs composed by members of the tribe have words in the language of the tribes living in British Columbia (2:26).

Willard Rhodes recently recorded songs from the Northwest Coast for the Library of Congress. The only available analytical material is in a brief pamphlet which accompanies

the record produced. The material is general and intended for lay consumption. There are, however, Makah songs of interest available for individually owned record libraries as a result of this work.

To summarize, the serious study of Indian music began in 1882 in Berlin. A school of thought resulted which stressed the mechanical details of the primitive materials with reference to the psychological processes involved. The American school of ethnomusicology emerged shortly thereafter, with an approach oriented to the context of the society which produced the music. Much of the early research done on the Northwest Coast resulted in the development of techniques later applied elsewhere. The concept that music is a key to the understanding of the culture of which it is a part was espoused by Boas in his work among the Kwakuitl of Vancouver Island. Hertzog identified basic characteristics of the music while Densmore recorded voluminously but carried out analyses of dubious value.

## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS OF MATERIALS USED

#### I. MATERIALS

Collection. The materials were tape recorded at Neah Bay, Washington in April of 1961. The specific event was the anniversary party of Mr. and Mrs. Otis Baxter. Considerable advance arranging was necessary to obtain permission to make recordings. The participating individuals were assured that no commercial use would be made of the recordings.

All of the songs performed during the evening were recorded. The resultant two hours of music included songs preparatory to eating, family dances performed with the giving of a gift, songs sung in appreciation of a gift, and songs simply interspersed for amusement. The music for the bone game, played considerably later than the party-proper, was not recorded.

Selection. The materials for the original composition were selected in terms of the interest and variety they would contribute to the composition as a whole. The process was simple; namely, to listen to the entire tape, taking notice of selections with special merit as examples of particular types of Makah music. Four songs with especially

interesting rhythmic patterns or lyric content were selected for the original composition.

Transcription. Considerable difficulty was encountered in the transcription process, notably in the area of assigning meter signatures to the songs and durational values to the notes.

The source of the difficulty is psychological. Once a feeling of a rhythmic meter had been sensed, it was difficult to be objective in evaluating the original perception. In a sense, "wishing made it so." The transcriber found it necessary to turn to outside assistance in the verification of difficult rhythmic notations.

The assignment of definite pitches of the European system was difficult and necessitated the practice of assigning the pitch nearest the pitch heard on the recording.

The transcriptions included notation of the song-proper, the drum part, and notes regarding the places performed solo and those in tutti form.

## II. ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL SONGS AND DANCES USED IN THE COMPOSITION

Each of the songs and dances was analyzed from the standpoint of (1) tempo, (2) intervallic characteristics, (3) tonality, (4) compass of scale, (5) phrase structure, (6) rhythmic characteristics.

The first song (Figure 1) was used at the celebration as an occasional number without particular reference to any aspect of the ceremonial observance.

The song was sung by Hal George at a fast tempo in an exuberant vocal style. The entire song is based upon a G minor triad, employing skips in thirds and passing tones. The tonality was therefore established as G minor. The compass of the song is a perfect fifth. The phrases are primarily repetitive and three measures in length. The final phrase introduces a new idea and is four measures long. The rhythm of the melody is syncopated, employing a dotted quarter and eighth note directly followed by a quarter note triplet. Other rhythmic variety is achieved by reversing the order of the dotted quarter and eighth. A sense of finality is achieved by the longer duration of the notes in the closing phrase. The drum rhythm is a simple even beat.

The second song (Figure 2) was sung by Mrs. Colfax, the wife of the recipient of a new drum crafted by Otis Baxter. After the opening phrase the other singers, both men and women, joined her.

The rendition was slow and stately and sung in a plaintive vocal style. The entire song is placed on the notes of an F major triad; F, A, and C. The movement swings down and up in the style described by Herzog. All the skips are in thirds. The rhythmic character is best described as a long note with stress followed by a short note sung as a

The image displays a handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Joyful Song". The score is organized into four systems, each consisting of two staves. The top staff of each system is for the Voice, and the bottom staff is for the Drum. The music is written in a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The Voice part features a melodic line with various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and includes several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' and a slur) and accents (indicated by a '>'). The Drum part provides a steady accompaniment, primarily using quarter and eighth notes, with some rests and a final measure ending in a double bar line. The notation is clear and legible, showing the composer's or transcriber's intent for the performance.

FIGURE 1

## TRANSCRIPTION OF JOYFUL SONG

Voice:

The first system of music shows the voice and drum parts. The voice part is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The drum part is written in a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature and starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The voice melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, while the drum part provides a steady accompaniment of quarter notes.

The second system continues the music. The voice part includes a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking. The drum part features a dynamic change to *f* (forte) and a time signature change to 2/4 for two measures, then returns to 4/4. The voice melody continues with quarter and eighth notes, and the drum part maintains its accompaniment.

The third system concludes the piece. The voice part ends with a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking followed by a piano (*p*) dynamic. The drum part continues with quarter notes in 4/4 time, ending with a final quarter note.

FIGURE 2

TRANSCRIPTION OF THANK YOU SONG

release and slurred. Then the released note becomes the base for another stress and release. All of the phrases are two measures long except the middle phrase, which is one measure. This middle phrase is also the most climactic and intense. The drum maintains an even basic beat throughout the song.

The third song selected (Figure 3) was employed to accompany a canoe dance. The dance employs a long cloth painted to resemble in totemic symbols the Makah canoe. The women dancers stand behind the cloth and use totemic canoe paddles to symbolize the paddling of the canoe.

After the opening eight-bar recitative which is sung rubato, a very deliberate andante tempo is set. The texture is chant-like, employing a rhythmic pattern which alternates accents between the drum and voice parts. The drum plays a simple quarter and eighth pattern while the sung notes fall on the after-beats.

Tonally, the piece is based upon an interval of a fourth, the compass of the piece. The direction is from the tonic above to the fourth below in a skip followed by gradual stepwise motion back up to the tonic note.

There is considerable variety in the phrase lengths of this song. The first group-sung phrase is six measures long, the second five, the third and fourth phrases are each two measures long. Next is a six-bar phrase, followed by two two-bar phrases. The final phrase before the repeat is

MALE RECIT.

mf

mf

Group

Drum

Figure 3 is a musical transcription of a canoe song. It consists of four systems of music. The first system is labeled 'MALE RECIT.' and 'mf'. The second system has a 'mf' dynamic. The third system has 'mf' and 'f' dynamics. The fourth system has 'mf' and 'f' dynamics. The drum part is in the bass clef and consists of eighth notes with accents. The vocal part is in the treble clef and consists of eighth notes with accents. The score includes a repeat sign with first and second endings in the fourth system.

FIGURE 3

TRANSCRIPTION OF CANOE SONG

again six measures long.

The overall effect is one of rhythmic motion, characteristic of work songs in general.

The fourth and final song (Figure 4) is more complex both rhythmically and structurally. It is one of the pot-latch dances used by the family which owns it when presenting a gift ceremonially.

In European terms, the form may be identified as ABABC. The basic tonality is a triad based on F. The most-played notes, however, are A and C, the third and fifth. The song leaves the triad only once, when in the second measure the melody comes to rest on a G after a passing tone A flat.

The first section is a recitative in a deliberate four. Then follows a faster, syncopated section with contrapuntal interplay between the melody and drum parts. The drum part is interesting because the accents are moved about while the pattern alternates between feelings of duple and triple meter. This section contains three phrases, the first containing four measures, the second two containing three measures.

When the return is made to the first section, it is elongated but in the same recitative form as previously found. The final measure is the same as performed in the earlier case.

The second rendition of the second section is the same as played the first time except that the final A is



elongated for an additional three measures in a solo cadenza which swings above and below the basic tone while accompanied by a drum roll.

The final section of five measures may be considered a coda. It leaves and returns to the A, then skips to an elongation of the final C. This is accompanied by heavy accents on the drums for the final ritard.

The overall effect is one of considerable complexity, especially in the faster sections where the contrapuntal staggering of accents between the drum and voice parts and the shifting of the accents about the drum part provide an exciting effect.

### III. SUMMARY

The materials used in the study were selected from tape recordings to represent the various styles of Makah music and to provide interesting contrast in material. The characteristics common to all of the songs are (1) relatively small compass of tones and (2) arrangement of intervals such as a major triad. Considerable syncopation is used, providing a musically satisfying compensation for the lack of tonal variety. The use of contrasting drum and voice parts heightens the syncopated effect, providing in some cases a sound of considerable complexity.

## CHAPTER IV

### USING THE MATERIALS IN AN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION

The melodic line, rhythmic sequence, and arrangement of phrases were generally applied directly. Harmonic content was kept in a simple form under the assumption that the simplicity of the intervals used suggested that the Makah relied upon rhythm to achieve variety and interest.

Figures V through VIII represent the substance of the application. The main energy of the project was directed toward the composition.

The composition was intended to be playable within the generally accepted limitations of class B band literature.

By retaining much of the original character of the music it was hoped that students playing the music in the future would find a familiarity with the music of the Makah.

For the full score, see Appendix A, separately bound.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS OF THE ORIGINAL COMPOSITION

The title Makah Suite was selected as a concise descriptive heading. Titles for individual selections were assigned in terms of descriptive quality rather than anthropological accuracy.

The playing order assigned to the pieces was planned to provide maximum variation between numbers, thereby enhancing the interest of the audience. The Joyful Song provides a short but rather exciting introduction; the Thank You Song offers a change to lyric quiet. The Canoe Song, with its chant-like character, increases the momentum of pace while the rhythmic variety and faster tempo of the Pot-latch Dance serves as a climax.

#### I. ANALYSIS OF SONGS USED

Joyful song. There is no introduction to the piece; the horns, baritones, and trombones start the melody in unison:

The musical score is written for three staves. The top staff is for Horn, Trbn., and Bar. (Horn, Trombone, Baritone) and contains a melody starting with a forte (f) dynamic. The middle staff is for Bass, also starting with a forte (f) dynamic. The bottom staff is for Timpani + Tom-Tom, starting with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The music is in 4/4 time and features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure of the top staff.

After the first phrase, the horn and first trombone carry the melody for the remainder of the piece. The remaining low brass provides a sustained, simple chordal background. The bass doubles with the percussion in playing a straightforward, even rhythmic texture. The cornets and upper woodwinds are used simply to add filling material at the ends of phrases and during sustained notes in the melody. Two harmonic devices are employed to provide the filling material: a stepwise progression of triads upward for one octave and a rhythmic progression of parallel triad steps:

The image shows a musical staff for Cornets + W.W. & va. in G minor. It contains two phrases, 'a.' and 'b.'. Phrase 'a.' consists of a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a sustained chord. Phrase 'b.' is a rhythmic progression of parallel triad steps, also marked with a triplet. Dynamic markings include *f* and *f* with accents. There are also breath marks (vibrato lines) under the sustained notes.

The timpani solo in measure ten was not suggested by the original transcription but added to provide additional time between the phrases it separates:

The image shows a musical staff in bass clef for a timpani solo. It features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking.

The dynamic variations indicated in the score did not appear in the original tapes but were added to increase variety.

Throughout the piece, the fundamental harmony is G minor. The other chords used are either passing chords, neighboring chords, or, in measure six and other examples, dominant chords which actually are augmentations of the tonic.

In brief, Joyful Song, a solo for horn and trombone

accompanied by band, is entirely a prolongation of the tonality of a G minor triad. The source of contrast is found in the rhythmic patterns of the melody.

Thank You Song. The song was elongated by repeating the first phrase before the middle section and again after the middle section. This repetition of material allowed a symmetrical structure; the first phrase is played by the solo clarinet, the second phrase by the flute. The center contrasting section is played by all of the brass. The process is then reversed, returning to the flute, then to the clarinet. The final chord is build up from the lower to the high instruments.

A variety of harmonizing textures is used. For the clarinet solos at the beginning and end, an intermittent background of low brass and saxaphones playing sustained chords is used:



The chords employed are tonic, sub-dominant, and chords composed of neighbor notes to the tonic chord to which they directly resolve. The flute solos which appear before and after the middle section are accompanied by passing chords which move downward stepwise. The chords are played by the oboe and soprano clarinets in the first flute solo:

flute  
oboe  
clar.  
p

For the second solo, the alto and bass clarinets are added to the oboe and soprano clarinets:

flute  
oboe  
clar.  
alto clar.  
bass clar.  
p

The deliberate tempo and generally soft dynamic levels give the characteristic of a peaceful, lyric mood.

Canoe Song. The song is basically a rhythmic work song, the basic organization dictated a chantlike treatment. The song opens with a recitative played by the alto saxophone in a rubato style. After the fermata, the basic rhythmic pattern is established by the horns and saxophones playing the melody with chords build on parallel fourths below. The bass plays the same after-beat rhythm but sustains a pedal point A natural. The percussion play the basic quarter and eighth note rhythm in opposition:

Horn  
Sax  
Bass  
mp  
Timp.  
Tem Tem  
mp

At letter A, the cornets introduce the new pattern of short, repeated phrases. At this point, the high woodwinds

provide a syncopated after-beat accompaniment harmonized in the same parallel triads employed by the cornets.

Immediately after this short diversion, the original motive is reestablished and diminished. At letter B the cornets return for the contrasting material. The effect is heightened by sustained trills in the high woodwinds:

The image shows a handwritten musical score for three staves. The top staff is labeled 'Cornet' and features a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 3/8 time signature. It contains a series of parallel triads with accents and a dynamic marking of 'f'. The middle staff is labeled 'Horn' and 'Bass' and features a bass clef, the same key signature and time signature. It also contains parallel triads with accents and a dynamic marking of 'f'. The bottom staff is labeled 'Timp' and 'Tom Tom' and features a bass clef, the same key signature and time signature. It contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents and a dynamic marking of 'f'. A 'Clar.' staff is indicated at the top right with a trill-like notation.

This until four measures before the end where there is a diminuendo and the instrumentation is reduced to high woodwinds, saxaphones, horns, and bass. The intention was to suggest the disappearance of the canoe into the distance.

Potlatch Dance. After a short recitative by the horn, the basic rhythmic pattern of duple opposed to triple meter is established in the low brass and percussion. The harmonization is in parallel triads moving gradually down, then up a minor third. Against this background, the clarinets play the melody in unison low register, completing the section at letter A:

At letter A, another recitative appears, played by the solo cornet. The recitative is an elongated version of the introduction. The final two measures are accompanied by the high woodwind chords in fourths. Four measures after letter A the main theme reappears:

The second playing of the main theme was varied from the first playing by a change in register of the woodwinds. The upper register of the clarinet was employed and the flute and oboe added to the texture. This style is maintained until letter B where a sudden change occurs:

This change leaves the flute alone playing a short recitative or interlude in anticipation of the finale. The flute is accompanied by sustained chords in the bass clarinet, bassoon, horns, bass, and timpani:

The interlude is concluded with the addition of oboe and first clarinet on the melody and the remaining woodwinds playing the basic rhythmic pattern in triads. Another cornet recitative, a variation of the first, follows the

interlude, ending in a fermata:

The image shows a handwritten musical score for two parts: Cornet and Low Brass. The Cornet part is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, ending with a fermata. The Low Brass part is written on a bass clef staff with the same key signature and time signature. It consists of a few chords represented by black rectangles.

A sudden crescendo introduces the final tutti phrase of five measures. The cornets and high woodwinds play the final melody, supported by the entire band in the basic rhythmic pattern marked forte; molto ritard.

## II. SUMMARY

In the main, the form of the pieces was maintained; the major exception being the elongation of phrases employed in Thank You Song.

A variety of instrumental textures was employed to add variety to the simple harmonic structures employed. The original rhythmic variety was heightened through the use of whole sections playing chords on the rhythmic patterns.

The sequence of pieces was designed to provide variety and a sense of movement toward a climax provided in the final selection.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to employ musical materials native to the State of Washington in a manner both interesting to and useful in the public school music program and to contribute to a greater appreciation of the Indian culture of the Northwest Coast. The Makah tribe of Neah Bay, Washington, was selected as the source of the material.

The literature relative to the general culture of the Makah was reviewed; material on Makah music was presented. The Makah had a highly organized cultural pattern which included a complex economic system and a strong sense of ownership of property.

The benevolent natural environment of the Makah made possible the development of a considerable body of ceremonial behavior. The main ceremonials were the potlatch, the Wolf Ritual, and the activities of the Shaman, each of which gave rise to the composition and performance of music.

The music of the Northwest Coast had at least fourteen important distinguishing characteristics. Two important characteristics were the pendulum-like movement of melodies and a relatively small range of notes and intervals.

The most important and extensive study of Makah music

was accomplished by Densmore. The primary virtue of this study is in terms of its scope rather than in the quality of the analytical conclusions derived.

Recordings were made at Neah Bay in 1961 as a basis for the present study. Songs were selected for transcription and subsequent arrangement for band on the basis of interest and variety of style.

After the pieces were transcribed into standard notation, an original composition was developed from the materials. The melodic and rhythmic characteristics were employed as transcribed. Harmonic textures and instrumental voicings were determined creatively. Simplicity of harmony and frequent changes in voicing best characterize the style of composition. In most cases, the original relationship of phrases was retained. Dynamic variation was increased over the original recordings.

Performance of the suite will give high school students an awareness of the music of the Makah. They will realize that the music is logically organized and aesthetically stimulating. It is hoped that this study will stimulate interest in the music of the Indian to the extent that composers more adept and creative than the present writer will turn to this source in their quest for new and different material.

The Makah music has much to recommend it. Unique

tonal patterns are present; individual rhythmic patterns are varied and interesting.

One project for future composers may lie in the potential of the various rituals, such as the Wolf Ritual, as material for a longer vocal work. The clandestine and supernatural happenings with the attendant music offer material of significant interest. Yet another possibility is in terms of ballet. The possibilities of the dance and staging potentials are virtually unlimited.

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