Sunday, October 12, 2025: Music Notes from St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia

In recognition of Indigenous Peoples Day (Monday, October 13), services on Sunday, October 12 include several musical selections and service elements by indigenous voices. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church acknowledges that we gather on the traditional land of the first people of Richmond, the Powhatan people, who are still here. We honor with gratitude the land itself and the Powhatan nation.

Indigenous identity is not a monolith, but rather encompasses an expansive set of communities, peoples, cultures, and traditions. The music staff of St. Stephen's hopes to recognize some of that expansiveness while also remaining mindful of several key tenets. Brian Hehn, Director of The Center for Congregational Song, notes that "the lack of [written] resources/songs from indigenous communities in the U.S. and Canada is no accident and is tied directly to the centuries-long cultural genocides that occurred by both secular government and the church… Native church communities are generally more under-resourced and/or disenfranchised making publishing more difficult (this is combined with the tendency toward oral/aural culture of music-making rather than the European style of notation)." Additionally, it is important to remember that not all "native musics… are appropriate for Christian contexts." While we don't have a perfect approach, we have attempted to our best extent to balance efforts towards expansive inclusion with sensitivity to respectful usage.

9 and 11:15 a.m. services

Arizona-based composer and pianist **Connor Chee** (b. 1987) often blends elements of Western classical music with his Diné (Navajo) heritage in his compositions. ***Hózhó*** is a Diné word sometimes translated as "balance and beauty." As Chee explains, "This concept permeates Diné life and culture, and reflects the state of harmony that binds all things together in the universe… '*Hózhǫ́*' for organ solo presents a musical search for balance and beauty. At times, the music is unbalanced in form and meter, but seeks to return to a more harmonious state. The melodic content that opens the piece—which draws inspiration from traditional cedar flute melodies—is presented again at the end, but in retrograde [or reverse]… It returns the listener to the beginning of the piece with a melody that is in essence the same, but transformed during the experience."

Joseph Renville (1779–1846), a fur trader of mixed Dakota-French heritage, authored the text of **Hymn 385. Many and great, O God, are thy works** (*Lacquiparle*), drawing from Jeremiah 10:12-13. The hymn's tune name, *Lacquiparle*, originates from Lac qui parle ("Lake that speaks"), a lake along the border of South Dakota and Minnesota; Renville lived and worked in a settlement by the lake and was a notable political and economic figure in the community, as well as something of a "bridge-builder between [the] cultures" of the Dakota people and Protestant missionaries, the latter of which began arriving in the area in 1835. "Many and great" made its first appearance in an 1846 supplement to *Dakota Odowan* (Dakota Song), a Dakota hymnal produced by the missionaries. Raymond Glover, editor of *The Hymnal 1982 Companion*, suggests that Renville's melody may have been adapted from a preexisting Dakota tune.

Celtic Evensong and Communion
The Celtic service on October 12 opens with a reading by the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston. Bishop Charleston, a member of the Choctaw Nation, was Bishop of Alaska from 1991 to 1996. He was the first indigenous person made a bishop in the Episcopal Church. He is a theologian, academic, and prolific writer, and his books have been published by Red Moon, Morehouse, Broadleaf, and Fortress Press. A graduate of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, and the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, he served as Dean of Episcopal Divinity School from 1999 to 2008.

In *Scenes from Dinétah*, Diné (Navajo) composer and pianist **Connor Chee** (b. 1987) offers musical snapshots of life and culture in Dinétah, the Diné homeland (and the Navajo Nation's self-designation). According to Chee, the pieces "weave diatonic modalities, indirectly referencing traditional Navajo melodies… Rooted in the rhythms, forms, melodies, and methods of development found in traditional Navajo music, these pieces serve as a harmonious bridge between contemporary expression and cultural heritage." Chee collaborated with Navajo filmmaker Michael Etcitty, Jr. to film several music videos on the reservation in conjunction with *Scenes from Dinétah*. In the video for **Cedar**, Chee includes the following note: "The smell of cedar always brings me great comfort, and it was my inspiration when I wrote this piece. Cedar trees (technically juniper) are found throughout the Navajo Nation. They are used in many ways in Diné culture. Cedar beads or 'Ghost Beads' are made from the berries, and the plants are also dried and burned for ceremonial and cleansing purposes."

Hymn 385. Many and great, O God, are thy works (*Lacquiparle*): see service note for 9 and 11:15 a.m.

Heleluyan (Alleluia) is a **traditional Muscogee (Creek) hymn** (#783 in our Episcopal hymnal supplement *Wonder, Love, and Praise*). Dr. Hugh Foley, a music historian and scholar of Native American studies at Rogers State University (Claremore, Oklahoma), describes Muscogee hymnody as one of the "untold stories in American music."

> We're talking about a pre-removal music that happened in the early 1800s and was a combination of African spirituals, Muscogee words, and perhaps some influences from their ceremonial songs and then all that being started by the Scottish missionaries who bring in Christianity and their own singing style. All three of those merge into what we now know as Muscogee Creek hymns, which are a unique musical product in American and world music history.

Typical congregational practice is to sing Muscogee hymns in unison, without accompaniment or harmonization.

Connor Chee writes that his Navajo Vocables "draw from the rhythms, forms, melodies, and methods of development used in traditional Navajo music. Some of the pieces are close transcriptions of the songs, while other pieces focus only on elements such as rhythm and

recurring melodic patterns… The term 'vocables' refers to the non-lexical syllables used in indigenous chants to carry melodic lines… These pieces add harmony to the melodies, an element that was not originally used in traditional Navajo music." **Navajo Vocable No. 3** is based on traditional Navajo corn grinding songs.

Fannie Rose Howie (1868–1916), also known as **Te Rangi Pai** ("the beautiful sky")—a stage name taken in honor of her Māori mother, Herewaka Porourangi Potae, also known as Te Rangi-i-pāea—was a New Zealand composer and singer descended from the *iwi* (tribe) of Ngāti Porou and Te Whānau-ā-Apanui. The lullaby ***Hine e hine*** ("Little girl, darling girl") is perhaps her best-known composition. The piece has cemented its place as a New Zealand popular culture touchstone through its association with the *Goodnight Kiwi*, a short animation broadcast on Television New Zealand channels from 1975 to 1994.

Sandpainting No. 6: Southern Clouds comes from *Sandpaintings for Piano*, a collection of piano works by **Connor Chee** that takes inspiration from traditional Diné visual art. Chee notes that, "Diné sandpaintings are created by carefully sprinkling different colored sand to create works of visual art. Traditionally, they serve a curative purpose, and are used in a variety of ceremonies. Unlike the Diné sandpaintings one might see displayed for aesthetic and artistic purposes, the healing sandpaintings contain sacred elements, and they exist only during the ceremony. I feel a strong parallel with music here, in that they only exist while the ritual is performed. While there are sacred sandpaintings that should not be used or created outside of ceremony, I took inspiration from several common elements in sandpaintings: sacred stones, clouds, lightning, and the sacred mountains."

E moe te Ra (Shadows of evening) is a Māori-language *waiata* (song) by **Erima Maewa Kaihau** (1879-1941), a New Zealand Māori pianist and music educator of Ngā Puhi descent. Kaihau's best-known compositions are her songs, which feature Māori language texts in combination with idioms from popular music of the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

Choctaw composer **Charles Shadle** (b. 1960) serves on the music faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He provides the following background about his piano collection, ***Choctaw Animals***:

> I had two goals in composing *Choctaw Animals*. Firstly, I hoped to create interesting and enjoyable music in the tradition of the [Robert] Schumann *Album for the Young,* or [Béla] Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*; music that meets a clear pedagogical need, while also providing repertoire for interested pianists of all ages and varied abilities. I also wanted to make sure that the pieces represented my personal musical language, perhaps best described as "contemporary classical music," while highlighting elements that I think of as innately Choctaw. Surviving traditional Choctaw music has generally been understood as belonging to two streams, one a hauntingly beautiful tradition of Christian hymns, and the other an older repertory of social dance music. The music of these dances is essentially vocal, following a call and response pattern, and features a single melodic line with the dancer's feet and simple percussion instrument keeping the pulse. Many Choctaws who are involved in the performance of this repertoire understand it as essentially unchanging and unchangeable, so when

composing music, in *Choctaw Animals*, that engages with this tradition, I focused on using melodic patterns and rhythmic configurations that are inspired by it, without ever quoting any of the actual dance songs. In addition I have allowed these ideas to mingle with my own interests in juxtaposing melodic lines and creating interesting and evocative harmonies.

The third movement of the collection, ***Nashoba*** (Wolf), seeks to express the "stealthy and mysterious nature of the elusive wolf… Imagine a dark wood, where you have a sense of being watched by unseen eyes."

Cem mēkusapeyvtē (Lord, dismiss us) is a **traditional Muscogee (Creek) hymn**. Muscogee elder Juanita Girt sang and recorded a version of this hymn in a 2014 Muscogee language and music documentation project, collaborating with Dr. Jack Martin, Professor of English and Linguistics at the College of William & Mary. Girt offers this context about the hymn: "This is the dismissal song that the Creeks and the Seminoles sing when they have had worship services, all-night services, or any service… at the end of it, they usually sing this song, and they go around shaking hands with their brothers and sisters."

The folksong ***Aloha 'Oe*** (Farewell to thee)—written by **Queen Lili'uokalani** (1891–1895), last sovereign of the Kingdom of Hawai'i—holds an important place in Hawaiian culture and music. At its most basic level, "*Aloha 'Oe*" is a love song inspired by a young Hawaiian woman's tender farewell to her soldier sweetheart, Colonel James Harbottle Boyd. Viewed amidst the backdrop of the U.S. government's forced 1898 annexation of the islands, however—during which Lili'uokalani was overthrown from power in a *coup d'état*—the song is often read as "the farewell of a queen to her country [and] a lament for the loss of Hawaiian sovereignty."

Compline
In **grandmother moon**, Canadian choral composer Eleanor Daley musically sets a text by **Mary Louise Martin** (b. 1956), a Mi'kmaq poet based in British Columbia, Canada. As Martin writes, "Mi'kmaq people are the First Nations People of Nova Scotia; these Aboriginal people have their own language, the term Mi'kmaq coming from their work *nikmak*, meaning 'my kin-friends.'"

—*Notes compiled by Diana Chou*