Arthur FARWELL

Piano Music Volume One

Impressions of the Wa-Wan
Ceremony of the Omahas, Op. 21
The Vale of Enitharmon, Op. 91
Polytonal Studies, Op. 109: series 1

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‘The evil that men do lives after them,’ says Mark Antony in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*; ‘The good is oft interred with their bones.’ Luckily, that isn’t true of composers: Schubert’s bones had been in the ground for over six decades when the young Arthur Farwell, studying electrical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, heard the ‘Unfinished’ Symphony for the first time and decided that he was going to be not an engineer but a composer. Farwell, born in St Paul, Minnesota, on 23 March 1872, was already an accomplished musician: he had learned the violin as a child and often performed in a duo with his pianist elder brother Sidney, in public as well as at home; indeed, he supported himself at college by playing in a sextet. His encounter with Schubert proved detrimental to his engineering studies – he had to take remedial classes in the summer to be able to pass his exams and graduated in 1893 – but his musical awareness expanded rapidly, not least through his friendship with an eccentric Boston violin prodigy, Rudolph Rheinwald Gott, and frequent attendance at Boston Symphony Orchestra concerts (as a ‘standee’: he couldn’t afford a seat). Charles Whitefield Chadwick (1854–1931), one of the most prominent of the New England school of composers, offered compositional advice, suggesting, too, that Farwell learn to play the piano as soon as possible. Edward MacDowell (1860–1908), perhaps the leading American Romantic composer of the time, looked over his work from time to time – Farwell’s finances forbade regular study with such an eminent figure, but he could afford counterpoint lessons with the organist Homer Albert Norris (1860–1920), who had studied in Paris with Dubois, Gigout and Guilmant, and piano lessons with Thomas P. Currier (1855–1929), a piano teacher and student and associate of MacDowell. Making his base in a pleasant attic room in Boston, Farwell was now set up to begin his new calling.

Playing with other talented musicians was an obvious source of pleasure, and he spent the summer of 1896 at Lake Owasco, one of the eleven Finger Lakes in up-state New York, at the home of Thomas Osborn, his brother’s employer and himself a gifted pianist. Osborn enjoyed Farwell’s company enough to invite him on an all-expenses-paid tour of Europe, taking in Bayreuth and Nuremberg before continuing to Vienna, enjoying the concerts and operas on offer and visiting a number of landmarks in the lives of Beethoven and Schubert. In autumn 1897, while still in Germany, Farwell sought out Engelbert Humperdinck, then 43 and at the height of his fame; Humperdinck looked over some of Farwell’s music and agreed to take him on as a student. Osborne then went back to America and Farwell stayed on in the pension of a Frau Berg in Boppard am Rhein, where Humperdinck who then lived. Humperdinck, refused all winter to accept any money from Farwell for lessons, took him along on work-engagements to Heidelberg and Frankfurt. ‘The lessons were informal: I went up whenever I had sufficient work to show’, Farwell later wrote. ‘We would spend several hours over it, and my teacher-host would usually serve coffee and cigars, and sometimes a glass of yellow Marsala’. In March 1898 Farwell went to Berlin with Humperdinck, who had to be there to prepare for the first performance of his opera Königskinder. It was here that Humperdinck introduced Farwell to some of his personal friends, two of whom would influence the young composer: Hans Pfitzner and James Grun, the poet who was then writing the libretto of Pfitzner’s second opera, Die Rose vom Liebesgarten. Farwell spent the next five months in Berlin, during which time Grun helped Farwell achieve a more spontaneous means of expression. Composition lessons with Pfitzner, though valuable in the longer term, were a trial at the time: Farwell’s inexperience exasperated the opinionated and intense Pfitzner, who made little attempt to disguise his impatience. The pressure was such that Farwell’s health failed, and after spending the first part of the summer back in Boppard, he retreated to England to recuperate and to work on his Italian: the Humperdincks were intending to go to Italy in the winter of 1898, and Farwell intended to continue his studies with his teacher there. Meeting Humperdinck in Paris, he discovered that the planned Italian trip was no longer on the cards, and so he decided to stay in Paris to study with Guilmant.

He returned to America in 1899, to a lectureship at Cornell University, remaining on the staff there for two years.\(^3\) It was then that, in a bookshop in Boston, he discovered in Alice Fletcher’s *Indian Story and Song*\(^4\) the transcriptions of Indian melodies which so sparked his interest that they set him on the path by which he is chiefly remembered today. Farwell had been fascinated with Indian music and life since boyhood, when his father used to take him on family vacations to a Sioux village in Minnesota, on the shores of Lake Superior. But it wasn’t until a year later, when looking at the original Omaha melodies without the harmonisation John Comfort Fillmore added to Fletcher’s transcriptions that Farwell realised his compositions made more sense when he used the melodies only and abandoned the European harmonies imposed on them. He then realised he was obliged to preserve the original cultural setting of the melodies he chose for his pieces.

But Farwell’s reputation as an Indianist – which he soon grew to resent – has obscured what he achieved as a composer in his own right: his Indianist works account for only around ten per cent of his published output of well over one hundred opus numbers (for example, he also had a keen literary sense and wrote a series of *Symbolistic Studies* for orchestra), and so this CD and its successor present both Indianist works, some in their first recordings, and first recordings also of other Farwell pieces, both Romantic and more exploratory material, including the ethereal *Vale of Enitharmon* and a first group of his 23 *Polytonal Studies*, which show his engagement with contemporary theoretical concerns.

The Indianist movement nonetheless deserves some background. The first ‘western’ composer to have been inspired by Native American music seems to have been Jean-Philippe Rameau. In 1725 a group of six Indian chiefs sent to Paris by French settlers in Illinois were presented to the king and then, performing a number of dances, to the public in the Théâtre italien. The first music to result was a rondeau entitled ‘Les Sauvages’, the fourteenth movement in Rameau’s *Nouvelles suites de pieces de clavecin* of 1725–26; ‘Les Sauvages’ was also the name he gave to the fourth *entrée* (act) that was added to *Les Indes galantes*, an *opéra-ballet* of 1735, on its revival the following year. Over half a century later, the very first orchestral

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\(^3\) Just before taking up his position at Cornell, Farwell returned to Lake Owasco, enjoying a camping holiday on the eastern shore. The experience resulted in a piano suite, *Owasco Memories*, Op. 8, published by the Wa-Wan Press in 1907.

\(^4\) Small, Maynard and Co., Boston, 1900.
work published in the fledgling United States was *The Death Song of an Indian Chief* by the Danish-born Hans Gram (1754–1804); the text, by the long-lived poetess Sarah Wentworth Morton (1759–1856), was taken from her poem, *Ouâbi, or The Virtues of Nature. An Indian Tale. In Four Cantos* of 1790, and Gram’s setting appeared in March the following year in *The Massachusetts Magazine*. Echoing the nascent nationalism of Europe, James Fenimore Cooper’s 1826 novel *The Last of the Mohicans* made a literary *topos* of the Native Americans themselves. But Gram’s early composition notwithstanding, an interest in their musical cultures took much longer to gather impetus, stimulated by two events in particular.

The first was the premiere, in Carnegie Hall on 16 December 1893, of the last and best-known of Dvořák’s nine symphonies, *From the New World*, using themes suggested by Native American melodies and Negro spirituals. In an article published the day before the performance, Dvořák explained that

> I have not actually used any of the [Native American] melodies. I have simply written original themes embodying the peculiarities of the Indian music, and, using these themes as subjects, have developed them with all the resources of modern rhythms, counterpoint, and orchestral colour.

The other main stimulus to the Indianist movement was the 1896 World’s Fair in Chicago, which lasted six months, received 27 million visitors and hosted 47 states and territories, 51 nations and 39 colonies. Entitled ‘The World’s Columbian Exposition’, since it marked a grand celebration of the 400th anniversary of Columbus’ ‘discovery’ of America, it was one of the grandest of the series of nineteenth-century World’s Fairs which began at Crystal Palace in London in 1851 and continues to this day (the next will take place in Milan in 2015). Showcased in the ‘midway’ (the central area) were cultural exhibits from around the world, the most popular being the Native American village – set up, along with the African American exhibit, on the edge

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5 *The New York Herald*, 15 December 1893. In fact, Dvořák had encountered Native American music much earlier: an Indian song-and-dance team visited Prague in 1879; even if he wasn’t present at their performance, he is almost certain to have read an article, in the magazine *Dalibor*, by his friend Václav Juda Novotný, illustrated with some of the songs and dances of the group (*cf.* Jarmil Burghauser, *Antonín Dvořák: Life and Work*, KLP, Prague, 2007, p. 92).

of the midway, as far as possible from the white-race exhibits in the very centre.

The young science of ethnography was getting off the ground around this time, too, and beginning to publish the material that was to sustain the Indianist composers for the three decades of their activity, roughly from 1890 to 1920. Their aim was simple: to develop an entirely American identity in classical music through compositional material derived from the indigenous Native American melodies, rhythms and unique music culture, Farwell and several others endeavouring to present the works in a way that preserved the original context of the tribal melodies.

After his two-year stint at Cornell University, Farwell settled in Newton Center, a small town in Massachusetts, and there compiled a collection of *American Indian Melodies*, for which he could not then find a publisher. His solution was typically direct: he founded the Wa-Wan Press, named after an Omaha ceremony, which began its operations in 1901, and in its eleven years of activity (it was absorbed by G. Schirmer in 1912) it was to publish the work of 37 composers.

The first, along with Farwell himself, was Edgar Stillman Kelley (1857–1944), a composer, conductor and teacher who is best known for the oratorio *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1917), his First Symphony (1900), based on Gulliver’s Travels, and the orchestral suites *Alladin* (1887–93) and *Alice in Wonderland* (1919). Among the other major Indianists was Amy Beach (1867–1944), the first female American composer of large-scale works of a European nature but whose piano pieces also include the four-movement *On Eskimo Themes*, Op. 64 (1907), based on Inuit material, and *From Blackbird Hills*, Op. 83 (1922), based on one of Alice Fletcher’s Omaha melodies. Charles Wakefield Cadman (1881–1946) enjoyed a hit with ‘From the Land of the Sky-Blue Water’, one of his *Four American Indian Songs*, Op. 45 (1909); his opera *Shanewis, or The Robin Woman*, one of three stage-works based on Native American themes, was performed with success in 1918 at the Metropolitan Opera. Blair Fairchild (1877–1933) wrote a set of *Some Indian Songs and Dances* (twelve in number) for solo piano (1926). The compositions of Henry Franklin Belknap Gilbert (1868–1928), a student of MacDowell, include *Indian Scenes*, a suite of five solo piano pieces published in 1912. Harvey Worthington Loomis (1865–1930), who studied with Dvořák, composed over 500 works; his *Lyrics of the*
Red Man, Op. 76, a suite of six piano pieces written in 1903–4, was published by the Wa-Wan Press. Preston Ware Orem (1865–1938), composed an American Indian Rhapsody for piano solo, one of the more formally developed compositions in the Indian vein, and was active as a teacher, organist and editor for Theodore Presser. Charles Sanford Skilton (1868–1941), educated at Yale and musically trained in Berlin, was inspired to compose with Indian melodies when he was Professor of Music at the University of Kansas in 1903 and heard Indian students singing tribal melodies at the nearby Haskell Institute. His Indianist works include Two Indian Dances for string quartet (1915; it was later orchestrated), Three Indian Sketches for piano (1919), American Indian Fantasy (1926) and Shawnee Indian Hunting Dance, also for piano (1929). Lily Strickland (1884–1958), who lived in India from 1920 to 1929 and became fascinated with non-western music, composed Two Shawnee Indian Dances for piano solo. Although George Templeton Strong (1856–1948), a close friend of MacDowell, moved to Switzerland, he wrote a piano suite Au pays des peaux-rouges (published in 1918) on the shores of Lake Geneva. The Romanticised piano pieces of the German-born Carlos Troyer (1837–1920) were often based on the music of the tribes of the south-western states: his Two Zuñi Songs appeared in 1893, but the Ghost Dances of the Zuñis (1904), Traditional Songs of the Zuñis (1904) and Kiowa-Apache War Dance (1907) were all published by the Wa-Wan Press. The interest of many of these composers in Native American music ran alongside a fascination for the exotic more generally, and their Amerindian works often appeared alongside others inspired by other non-European cultures.7

Their source material was the tribal melodies collected, transcribed and recorded by a number of important ethnographers. The arrival of hundreds of thousands of white people in America had obviously diluted a natural resource of American identity and diffused an indigenous culture (prophesied, incidentally, in ancient Indian lore8). Removing the Indians from their homelands and corralling them into controlled reservation areas, forbidding them

7 The only prominent European composer to make direct use of American Indian material was Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924), who wrote an Indianische Fantasie, Op. 44, for piano and orchestra (1913–14); four solo-piano studies on Native American motifs, the Indianisches Tagebuch (1915), using melodies collected by Natalie Curtis; and the Gesang vom Reigen der Geister ('Song of the Spirit Dance'), Op. 47 (1915), for string orchestra, six wind instruments and timpani.

8 Scott Peterson, Native American Prophesies, Paragon House, St Paul (Minnesota), 1991, p. 197.
to use their own languages, observe their religion, sing their songs or dance their dances and
practise all the other ways of their people, forcing them instead to adopt Christian ways,
sing Christian hymns and speak English (at the same time as they were denied American
citizenship) eventually led to the realisation that this ancient culture was in danger of being
lost forever, provoking, from the 1880s to the 1920s, a rush to collect and record the details of
Indian society. (Earlier interest had been haphazard, often a by-product of popular side-show
entertainments which presented the songs and dances that the white man expected to see
from ‘wild’ Indians; the aim was to make money. Even Dvořák and Farwell were discovered to
have found some of their material at such entertainments. 9) Still, although the fieldwork was
done by ‘westerners’ 10 and the music transcribed in the European system of notation, these
transcriptions are the closest written representations of the original indigenous music. (The
wax-cylinder recordings that were made were not generally available to the public). 11

But the Indianist composers ran into a fundamental difficulty: although they did their
best to honour the original context of the melodies they were using, the indigenous peoples
themselves could not recognise their own melodies in the new compositions, primarily
because the harmonies used were in the western European tradition and the rhythms often
distorted. And already compromised by this basic confusion, the Indianist movement found
it could not stay afloat in the tidal wave of the ‘Roaring Twenties’ and was pushed under
by European impressionism, American jazz, ragtime and other musical fashions. The racist
attitudes of the American cultural elite also had a deleterious effect. The grandees of Boston,
for example, considered African and Native Americans as ‘barbaric’ outsiders 12 and looked
down their noses at the use of ‘lower genres’ of these peoples’ music and art. 13 A review by

10 Chief among them, so to speak, were Theodor Baker (1851–1934), Franz Boas (1858–1942), Frederick Burton (1861–1909), Natalie Curtis (1875–1921), Frances Densmore (1867–1957), Alice Fletcher (1838–1923), George Herzog (1901–84), Erich von Hornbostel (1877–1935) and Thurlow Lieurance (1878–1963).
the critic William Foster Apthorp, for example, described Dvořák’s *New World* Symphony as an ‘attempt to make civilized music by civilized methods out of essentially barbaric material’, and Louis C. Elson, a prolific writer on music, ‘dismissed American Indian music contemptuously in 1900 as being “the lower savage plane”’.¹⁴ Farwell, by contrast, understood that a ‘revolt against [German] domination was an absolute historical necessity’¹⁵ but it was an uphill struggle, and in any event he and the other Indianist composers themselves resented the typecasting that the label brought – in most cases, Indianism coloured only a part of their output and simultaneously obscured the rest of it. Although now, a century further on, the Indianist movement is beginning to attract attention once more, Farwell deserves the independent recognition that he was denied first time around, and I hope that these two recordings, which document the evolution of his basically Romantic style, will make some contribution to that end.

*The Vale of Enitharmon, Op. 91 (1930)*

Farwell’s early first-hand experience with Native American cultural lore no doubt influenced his mystical style in other works like *The Vale of Enitharmon*. Enitharmon was a major character in William Blake’s complex books of prophecy, whom Farwell summarised thus on the opening page of the score: ‘Enitharmon, in the unique mythology of William Blake, has been interpreted in one phrase, as Spiritual Beauty’. He also drew a figure on the cover from a sketch by George Russell that he owned – he was fond of combining the arts: poetry and music, art and music. This Romantic and Impressionist work marks a turning point in Farwell’s harmonic language. Like the cover-drawing of a woman appearing to ascend into spiritual beauty, Farwell’s opening and closing sections ascend ethereally in Romantic passages of two-against-three rhythms. The middle section, indicated ‘as from a distant height’, is a feathery, *pianissimo* passage of contrary-motion quaver (eighth-note) chords, predominantly major and minor triads that combine and overlap to form seventh- and ninth-chord harmonies. A short passage in this middle section, in 6/4 time, is even softer, ‘as from a more greatly distant height’, using widely spaced octaves and dotted minim (half-note) chords.


Impressions of the Wa-Wan Ceremony of the Omahas, Op. 21 (1905)
The aim of the Wa-Wan ceremony (‘wa-wan’ means ‘to sing to someone’) was to unite someone of one tribe in brotherhood with a member of a different tribe – a bond considered even more honourable and binding than the natural one between father and son. A ceremony of peace so respected among natives that warring tribes would lay down their arms to let the ceremony process undisturbed, it was first documented in Alice Fletcher’s *A Study of Omaha Indian Music* in 1893, and thus attributed to the Omaha people of what is now north-eastern Nebraska and western Iowa; in fact, it was common to a large number of tribes and very similar to the Hako ceremony of the Pawnees, about which Fletcher also wrote a book. The rite was initiated when a member of one tribe wished to become like a brother with a member of another tribe, perhaps to extend kinship or cement peaceful relations, a boon that would then be enjoyed by the members of both tribes. Both of these members had to be in good standing in their own tribes, and both chiefs had to give consent before the ceremony could begin. A group of eight to twelve men then began a ceremonial procession over a distance that could be as long as two hundred miles. When they were within about a half-day’s distance from the tribe they were to visit, a messenger was sent, with gifts of tobacco from the tribe desiring the kinship to the other tribe. If he was received, gifts were offered and the ceremony which ensued lasted four days and nights – not including the days of travel either side of the ceremony itself.

Like the mass-setting of the Catholic liturgy, the Wa-Wan ceremony had certain set pieces in specific order, and places where optional songs could be inserted. Two feathered pipes or *calumets* were the central sacred paraments of the ceremonial journey from one tribe to the other. The pipes used in the ceremony, called ‘Ne-ne-ba wae-ah-wan’ (‘pipes to sing with’), were not intended for smoking: there was no bore through the centre, nor tobacco bowl. Many objects believed to have sacred powers were attached to them, such as feathers and parts of

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18 From the Latin *paramentum*, adornment.
birds which are ‘leaders’: eagle feathers, because the eagle is chief of the day, a woodpecker head, because the woodpecker is chief of the trees, the body of a duck, which is chief of the water, and owl feathers, the owl being chief of the night, according to the similar Hako ceremony of the Pawnees.\(^\text{19}\) There are two pipes, male and female. Ten fanned-out brown tail-feathers from an eagle are fastened to one end of the female pipe, which is painted with emblematic colours, and also fastened with two thongs with little balls of white down trimmed from the inside thigh of a male eagle, representing reproductive power. The male pipe stem is similar, but with white eagle feathers in a fan shape, and different emblematic colours. Thus decorated, the pipes were so highly revered, because of the powers believed to be attached to them, that bearers of such sacred emblems of peace and divine will could process in complete safety through enemy territory – ‘The sceptres of our kings are not so much respected’\(^\text{20}\) – but danger loomed on the return trip since the pipes would by then have been given up in the ceremony. The ceremonial songs, performed in a choreographed ritual for many men, women and children in an earthen hut or lodge, were accompanied by rhythmic movements of the pipe-bearers and pipes, movements called ‘Ne-ne-ba ba-zhan’ (‘shaking the Wa-Wan pipes’) which always captured the attention of white observers, who called it the ‘pipe-dance’, even though the Indians didn’t think of it as dancing.

The stages of the Wa-Wan ceremony are directly reflected in Farwell’s suite, and he carefully and clearly states the original tribal melodies, giving them harmonic treatments that support the activity associated with each song, presenting them in their original context. The first movement \(^\text{2}\) is entitled ‘Receiving the Messenger’: as the village is approached, a messenger is sent ahead with a gift of tobacco from the man who presents the pipes, called ‘Wa-wan ah-ka’ (‘the one who sings’) for the man to whom they intend to present the pipes, called ‘Ah-wan-e-ah-ka’ (‘the one who is sung to’). Both the presenter and the receiver must also prepare ‘a considerable expenditure of property’\(^\text{21}\) as gifts for each other, and each asks their kinfolk to contribute to the collection of gifts. If the receiver, the ‘Ah-wan e-ah-ka’ (‘the

\(^{19}\) The details are from Fletcher’s *The Hako, op. cit.*, pp. 4–6. In *A Study of Omaha Indian Music (op. cit.*, p. 36), Fletcher records merely that the pipes are covered with different types of bird feather and painted with detailed and emblematic designs.


one who is sung to’) can give enough horses in exchange for all the other gifts that have been compiled, such as dried meat or other foodstuffs, articles of clothing, and ornaments, then the hosting tribe will accept the tobacco pouch. The song sung at this point has words which translate as ‘this I seek’ – i.e., fellowship. Now that the one to receive the pipes has accepted the gift of tobacco, he then sends a messenger to tell the Wa-Wan party that the gift was accepted, and he is greeted with this song, now sung by the Wa-Wan party. There is a double meaning in the words ‘This I seek’, for both the Wa-Wan party and the party about to receive them are seeking peace and fellowship with each other.

In ‘Nearing the Village’ 3, the pipe-bearers sway the pipes as they move toward the village (about half a mile away) and sing ‘We have reached there, the mother screams returning’ – a reference to the mother eagle which screams on her return to the nest, so that her young will know she is approaching. The ‘Song of Approach’ 4 is heard when, once inside the village, the procession stops, then steps forward towards the earthen hut or lodge as the participants sing ‘This is the one or only good’ – peace and fellowship is the one good gift. Once inside the lodge the pipe-bearers sing the ‘Laying Down the Pipes’ 5 as they ceremonially place the pipes on the skin of a cougar, lynx or other wild cat with motions of swaying high, sweeping low and circling as a mother eagle flying over her nest. There are several songs that may be used for this ritual (not all of which are featured by Farwell), but this particular song is always sung last at this point in the ceremony as the pipes are rested. ‘Raising the Pipes’ 6 is the point at which the ceremony recommences; the pipe-bearers in the tribe of the ‘Ah-wan e-ah-ka’ lift the pipes and wave them in motions that suggest the mother eagle rising from her nest, with the wind blowing the branches of the trees, and now ready to fly over the people with a message of peace. There are also several songs that belong to this part of the ceremony (again, not all of them are heard in Farwell’s suite). At this point, all the people join in a number of chorales; Farwell includes three in his suite, beginning with the ‘Invocation’ (that is, of the spirits) 7 (which Fletcher describes simply as ‘a favorite choral’22), although many more could be used in the ceremony, and Alice Fletcher’s collection of transcriptions gives many other original melodies.23 Many of them end with the word ‘Hunga’ (meaning ‘ancient’ or ‘leader’), which

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22 Ibid., p. 39.
23 Ibid.
refers to the small child who has the important task of bestowing the gifts, and over whose head the teachings of peace are delivered. The words associated with the ‘Song of Peace’, one of the more tender chorales, mean ‘The clear sky now coming. The clear sky, the green fruitful earth is good, but peace among men is better’. In the closing ‘Choral’ the pipes are waved high and borne past the people as a few people begin the song, accompanied by the drum. Then all the people join in singing and the loud, majestic music is sung four times as the pipes are carried around the lodge. The words to this song mean ‘This is what is given, what is brought to you – peace, brotherhood’.

**Polytonal Studies (1940–52)**

Strictly speaking, Farwell’s *Polytonal Studies* should have been called *Bitonal Studies*: the treble clef has a different key-signature from the bass clef. And although Farwell was no modernist – Webern had only six years to live when, in 1940, Farwell began to compose the *Studies* – they do show him, in his late sixties, still to be in an experimental cast of mind. His initial intention was to compose 46 *Polytonal Studies* but in the end managed to complete only 23 before his death. His planning was meticulous, with work-sheet charts working out the harmonic structures. The first eleven are in major keys and the next ten are in minor keys, and Nos. 26 and 34 pair a major and minor key – but the numbering does not indicate the order of composition: No. 26, for example, was written in 1940 but No. 3 is dated 1945, and with many of them there are no specific dates of composition. No. 6 is the only one to have been given a title, ‘Sea Picture’. This first CD includes the eleven major/major *Polytonal Studies* – that is, those combining two major keys – and one of the two major/minor ones, with a major key in the bass clef and a minor one in the treble; the next disc will include the ten minor/minor *Polytonal Studies* and the other major/minor one. Farwell gives the key in the bass clef first, followed by that in the treble clef. It is also interesting to note that he puts the relationship of the chordal structures of the two keys in Roman numerals in parenthesis at the top of each piece: for example, in No. 1 (‘I 7 – V 7’) he uses C major seventh-chord harmony in the bass and G major seventh-chord harmony in the treble; No. 5 is inscribed ‘I 7 – II 7’, No. 11 ‘I 7 – flat VII 7’, and so on. It would seem that

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he wanted to prove that you can set the first key against all the other keys that start on any of the other seven diatonic pitches of that key and, by basing the chordal structures on a series of major and minor thirds, make them all sound compatible. Farwell’s biographer, Evelyn Davis Culbertson, suggests that Farwell intended his students to practise every possible position and inversion of the chordal relationships before learning the studies. A common characteristic is constantly changing tempi – to cite a few examples: No. 1 indicates 22 changes on less than three pages, No. 6 (‘Sea Picture’) gives at least 30 tempo variations in six pages, No. 7 states nineteen tempo variants in slightly over three pages, and No. 11 gives 28 different tempo directions in just under four pages.

The first Polytonal Study, written in 1942, combines G major in the treble and C major in the bass and uses the theme in sequences and inversion with the bass echoing the treble each time the opening melody enters. Some of the Studies are devoted to technical drills: No. 2, from 1940, sets a right-hand four in C major against a left-hand three in G major, and No. 4, also from 1940, has double thirds in C major in the treble and quaver (eighth-note) spans of a tenth or more in every bar of the A flat major bass. No. 3, dated 28 April 1945, sets up semiquaver (sixteenth-note) rhythmic patterns between the left hand in C major and the right hand in A major in both contrary and parallel motion, but the left hand starts each pattern with a semiquaver rest. The busyness is contrasted with a slower middle section of repose in quartal harmonies, followed by a return of the A section. No. 5, dating from 1940, combines a bass G flat major with a treble A flat major in a polyphonic two-part invention. No. 6, ‘Sea Picture’, (date unknown) suggests layers of billowing waves in the C major bass clef overlapping with dramatic and delicate waters in the B major treble clef. No. 7 is composed in keys only a semitone apart, with C major in the bass clef and D flat major in the treble, with running quavers covering all combinations of intervals in the opening and closing sections, contrasted with blocked interval combinations in an agitated, faster middle section. In No. 8, dated 30 May 1940, Farwell indicates a C major key-signature for the bass clef and E flat major for the treble on the first line of the score only, after which he abandons key-signatures and indicates the accidentals for the rest of the score. In ABA’

form and 6/8 metre, the first section uses quaver broken-chord harmony in spans of a tenth against right-hand dotted crotchets (quarter notes) and sometimes a division of two quavers in the treble against three in the bass. The b section is a fast syncopated right-hand melody against semiquaver scales in the left hand; A then returns with the right hand in semiquaver arpeggiation instead of the opening dotted crotchets. No. 9 \[\text{(date unknown)}\] again uses a broken harmonic bass spanning a tenth in G major, with a treble agitated melody in D flat major supported with intervals in quartal harmonies, all in 3/4 time except for one broadening bar in 5/4 immediately before the return of the opening melody, this time in the bass, in octaves. No. 10 [\[\text{\text{20}}\], of uncertain date, pits D major in the left hand against B flat major in the right but still manages to sound like a Chopin grande valse. No. 11 \[\text{(date unknown)}\], which Farwell signed on 11 February 1942, indicates F major in the bass and E flat major in the treble, using a motive of two quavers followed by a minim (half note), the hands overlapping with this motive employed and cleverly varied throughout the piece. No. 34 \[\text{\text{21}}\], which he dated 12 July 1940, is in E flat major in the bass and E flat minor in the treble, in a haunting combination of parallel keys, ending with exquisitely beautiful contrary motion and overlapping arpeggios. But in all of these Studies Farwell never allowed the technical considerations to take precedence over the beauty of the music itself.

Farwell’s writing for piano calls for some comment. Playing his music brings the realisation that he must have had large hands, as the span of a tenth is often required in his piano output. Basically, he approached the instrument as if it were an orchestra. In many places, for instance, the performer must reiterate a note that is already being played in another voice – as in an orchestra one instrument holds a particular note while another has the same note in its own separate phrase. Farwell writes this way so often that it is obviously intentional. His approach to pedalling also indicates an orchestral cast of mind. Because he notated the use of all three pedals in his earlier composition Dawn, Op. 12 (1902), he was certainly aware of the relatively new sostenuto pedal patented by Steinway in 1874, and first advertised in the USA in 1876. Steinway quickly began to add the sostenuto pedal to all grands and better-quality uprights, as did many other American piano-makers. Few European piano-makers added the sostenuto pedal to any of their pianos: even Hamburg Steinways featured this pedal
only on the nine-foot model. Composers thus gave few indications for its use until decades later. I believe that Farwell’s fondness for the *sostenuto* pedal came about because he thought it opened the way to write for the piano as if the overlapping phrases that used the same note(s) were played on different instruments. I also suppose that, since he was trained from his childhood as a violinist, he could have been mimicking the ability of the violin to reiterate a note while simultaneously sustaining it. In fact, although it may seem counter-intuitive, with minutely careful attention to pedalling it is possible to sustain a note and yet reiterate it in an audibly separate phrase without the blur that would occur with using only the damper pedal. Indeed, attentive pedalling is so important in the *Polytonal Studies* that they could be subtitled ‘Pedal Etudes’.

Farwell’s scores are as idiosyncratic as the music itself. Many of the *Polytonal Studies* do not have slur markings and there is no *legato* marked, so that the performer must decide on phrasing according to whatever other indications are available. There are inconsistencies, too, perhaps arising because Farwell never completed the set and was therefore unable to cast an editorial eye over it before releasing it. For example, the word ‘increase’ is used in No. 2, but it is not clear whether it refers to tempo or dynamics – although when he writes ‘increase greatly’ in No. 7, he must be referring to the dynamic, since ‘broaden’ occurs in the same bar. In No. 9, too, it is clear that in ‘increase and accel’ it refers to dynamics. Another oddity is that in No. 8 he includes the different key-signatures on the first page, on the first line only, and then abandons them for the remainder of the score, using only accidentals.

The scores I have used in these recording are facsimiles of Farwell’s manuscripts, which are beautifully clean and clear for the most part, with remarkably few errors. On only a handful of occasions did I find places where, to judge by similar passages or sequences, the accidental or lack thereof is questionable and I had to make an editorial judgement.

Farwell’s career reflects the generosity of spirit that allowed him to take an interest in music outside his immediate area of experience. His large tally of compositions also admit African-American spirituals, Spanish-Californian melodies and cowboy songs. He wrote music for large-scale outdoor community pageants – something he thought could become a typically

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American art-form – and in 1916 he was a co-founder of the New York Community Chorus, the first of its kind in the USA, and put on a light-show in Central Park, likewise the first in the United States. He was the chief music-critic of *Musical America* in New York between 1909 and 1914 and wrote voluminously throughout his life, often addressing the issue of establishing a musical voice that reflected the eclecticism of American culture. He composed an expansive *Rudolph Gott Symphony*, Op. 95 (1932–34), on an idea of his former mentor. Among his song-settings are 39 to poems by Emily Dickinson, some of them exhibiting a surprising degree of violence. He experimented with systems in composition and yet composed a satirical opera, his only opera, *Cartoon*, (1948), poking fun at Schoenberg and Stravinsky. His interest in the visual arts and literature was an active one: for example, he designed and printed the covers of a number of the scores issued by the Wa-Wan Press; and his six *Symbolist Studies* (No. 1, from 1901, for piano, and Nos. 2–6, from 1904–38, for orchestra) testify to his engagement with poetry. Farwell, in short, was a remarkable man, and we have much more to learn before we have the measure of him.

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Lisa Cheryl Thomas graduated with a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in piano performance from the University of North Texas in 2010, her teachers up to that point including Adam Wodnicki, Joseph Banowetz, Jim Giles, Alfred Mouledous, Virginia Queen, Adele Marcus, Dorothy Gideon, Bobbye Ossman, Jan Wiest Ward and Helen Barlow.

She is herself of Native American stock, counting members of the Cherokee, Blackfoot and Sioux tribes among her ancestors, and her research and lecture recitals on Native American and ‘Indianist’ piano repertoire are awakening a new enthusiasm and interest in this music, which she has performed in Europe as well as in America. The organisations she has addressed include several music-teacher associations (among them the Texas Music Teachers’ State Convention in Arlington in June 2010), and her recital programmes have been presented at The National Museum of the American Indian of the Smithsonian and the Millennium Stage of The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. She has concentrated on this branch of the piano repertoire since premiering Tom Hoffmann’s Voices of Our Ancestors in 1995, for prepared piano and rhythm instruments (Native American drum, wind chime, turtle-shell rattles, rain-stick, natural-bone wind-chime) in the Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall in 1995. Works by Lisa Thomas under her Indian name, Delisgidv (the short version), were premiered at the Smithsonian in Washington DC and The Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, both in the summer of 2010, but have also been performed in San Francisco at the Presidio, in 1999, and in several other concerts, including her doctoral dissertation recital. Her doctoral thesis, Native American Elements in Piano Repertoire by the Indianist and Present Day Native American Composers, presented at the University of North Texas, Denton, in 2010, can be read online at www.digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc28485/ and was published by ProQuest in 2011; and Smithsonian, the magazine of the National Museum of the American Indian, published her article ‘Composers and Indians: The Search for a National Style Preserved Native Tradition’, in summer 2010 (Vol. 11, No. 2). Her website can be found at www.lisacherylthomas.com.
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The Vale of Enitharmon, Op. 91* (1930) 9:16

Impressions of the Wa-Wan Ceremony of the Omahas, Op. 21** (1905) 14:03

1. No. 1 Receiving the Messenger: Slowly and quietly*
2. No. 2 Nearing the Village: Moderately*
3. No. 3 Song of Approach: Moderately, with breadth*
4. No. 4 Laying down the Pipes: Very broadly*
5. No. 5 Raising the Pipes: Lightly, with motion*
6. No. 6 Invocation: With dignity, slowly*
7. No. 7 Song of Peace: Peacefully
8. No. 8 Choral: Broadly, with religious feeling


9. No. 1 C major/G major (1942)
10. No. 2 G major/C major (1940)
11. No. 3 C major/A major (1945)
12. No. 4 A flat major/C major (1940)
13. No. 5 G flat major/A flat major (1940)
14. No. 6 C major/B major, ‘Sea Picture’ (date unknown)
15. No. 7 C major/D flat major (date unknown)
16. No. 8 C major/E flat major (date unknown)
17. No. 9 G major/D flat major (date unknown)
18. No. 10 D major/B flat major (date unknown)
19. No. 11 F major/E flat major (1942)
20. No. 34 E flat major/E flat minor (1940)

The first key given is that of the bass clef, the second that of the treble.

Lisa Cheryl Thomas, piano

*FIRST RECORDINGS; **FIRST COMPLETE RECORDING
The American composer Arthur Farwell (1872–1952) is remembered as the leading member of a group of ‘Indianists’ who used Native American tribal melodies. But Farwell’s stylistic range was much wider than is realised today. This CD, the first of two to be recorded by Lisa Cheryl Thomas, herself of Cherokee, Blackfoot and Sioux ancestry, presents first *The Vale of Enitharmon*, based on the mythology of William Blake, which mixes Romanticism and Impressionism. *Impressions of the Wa-Wan Ceremony of the Omahas* represents an American Indian ritual so revered that warring tribes would lay down their arms to let the procession pass. And the experimental *Polytonal Studies* pit two different keys against each other, exploiting the attraction of opposites to generate unusual harmonies and melodies.

**ARThUR FArWELL Piano Music, Volume One**

2. *Impressions of the Wa-Wan Ceremony of the Omahas, Op. 21* (1905) **14:03**

TT 60:53

Lisa Cheryl Thomas, piano

*FIRST RECORDING

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