



Arthur FARWELL

PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME THREE

NAVAJO WAR DANCES NOS. 1 AND 2, OP. 20, NO. 1, AND OP. 29

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LAUGHING PIECE

FOR CYNTHIA

Lisa Cheryl Thomas

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by Lisa Cheryl Thomas

When Arthur Farwell, in his late teens and studying electrical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, heard Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony for the first time, he decided that he was going to be not an engineer but a composer. Born in St Paul, Minnesota, on 23 March 1872,¹ he 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 grew rapidly, not least though his friendship with an eccentric Boston violin prodigy, Rudolph Rheinwald Gott, and frequent attendances at concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (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, looked over his work from time to time – Farwell's finances forbade regular study with such an eminent man. 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's. Making his base in a pleasant attic room in Boston, Farwell was now set up to begin his new calling.

¹ A detailed account of Farwell's life and work can be found in Evelyn Davis Culbertson, *He Heard America Singing: Arthur Farwell – Composer and Crusading Music Educator*, Composers of North America, No. 9. The Scarecrow Press, Metuchen (New Jersey), 1992.

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 upstate 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 a pension in Boppard am Rhein, where Humperdinck lived at that time. Humperdinck, who refused to accept any money for lessons from Farwell all winter, 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.'² 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 intense and opinionated 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 was going to continue his studies with his teacher there. Meeting Humperdinck in Paris, he discovered that

² Arthur Farwell, *Wanderjahre of a Revolutionist' and Other Essays on American Music*, ed. Thomas Stoner, University of Rochester Press, Rochester, 1995, p. 53.

the planned Italian trip was no longer on the cards, and so he decided to stay in Paris to study with Alexandre Guilmant.

He returned to America in 1899 and 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 after his encounter with Fletcher's book, when looking at the original Omaha melodies without the harmonisation John Comfort Fillmore had added to Fletcher's transcriptions, that Farwell realised the compositions he had written since his Damascene moment made more sense when he used the melodies only and abandoned the European harmonies imposed on them. It was then, too, that he felt the obligation to preserve the original cultural setting of the melodies he chose for his pieces.

But Farwell's reputation as an Indianist⁵ – 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). It is a persistent trait of Farwell's music that it flows true to life, in that it is a living, breathing artwork, unpredictable, with constantly changing tempi, dynamics, expressions, moods and phrasing.

Piano Sonata, Op. 113 (1949)

Op. 113 is Farwell's only sonata for solo piano, since an early Sonata in E flat, Op. 6, from 1899, is unfinished: one movement was completed, and since notes from a lecture

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.

⁵ For a detailed history of the Indianist movement, cf. my booklet essay with the first release in this series of recordings, *Toccatà Classics TOCC 0126*.

recital Farwell gave on 25 March 1903 state that he played an *Adagio* from a Sonata in E flat, it is presumed to be this same piece. Farwell composed two other late sonatas: one for solo violin in G minor, Op. 96, in 1934, and another for cello and piano, Op. 116, in 1950. The Piano Sonata of 1949 was premiered on a radio performance on WQXR on 16 April 1975, in a programme called *Listening Room*, presented by Robert Sherman, which focussed on Farwell's music; the performer was Neely Bruce. Another guest on the programme, the musicologist Gilbert Chase, commented:

This sonata bears no resemblance, certainly no emulating resemblance, to any of the contemporary currents of that time. It seems to me that it took a man of great character and great individuality to do that. When you think of how different it is from his early works, you realize that here was a man who had a tremendous capacity for development and growth in every way – not only in spiritual ways but also creatively.⁶

Neely Bruce, the performer, felt that the sonata has a 'technical ruthlessness surprising in a composer known chiefly as an arranger of Indian melodies' – which was the kind of reputation Farwell fought for all his life. Neely also said of the Sonata that some of the passages were awkward to play and that Farwell had 'pushed beyond what the piano can do – like Beethoven in his late sonatas – he really pushed the piano to its limits'.⁷ David Hall, a critic for *Stereo Review*, was very favourably impressed with the Sonata after seeing the piano score and listening to a taped performance, calling the formidable technical challenges a 'knuckle-buster'.⁸

The entire sonata has two main motifs: the permeating, persistent, declamatory falling fifth (from A to D), the first and the last two notes of the work, and the more lyrical, questioning, ascending four-note stepwise theme (mi, fa, sol, la) that is presented immediately after the opening falling fifth. There is a third motivic idea that briefly appears on several occasions to serve as a transition: it has a distinctive pattern of five repeated staccato semiquavers (sixteenth notes), followed by three semiquavers

⁶ Quoted in Culbertson, *op. cit.*, p. 521.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 520–21.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 522.

descending a half-tone, falling a perfect fourth, and jumping up a major third. This third motif appears sometimes accompanied by one of the other motifs in the other hand and sometimes in both hands in contrary motion.

The opening introductory section, marked 'Somewhat slowly' [1], is followed by a chromatic section, to be taken 'a little faster' and more technically demanding, with opposing chromatic work in both hands, even between both sides of the right hand, with chromatic notes executed with the little finger alternated with chromatic notes executed with the thumb, two-against-three rhythms (hemiolias), and with both main motifs present. This passage is followed by a slightly slower, very delicate and tender section, with triplet rhythms in the left hand and a playful, delicate idea taken from the falling-fifth motif, accelerating and moving next into a four-against-three rhythm, staccato and with dramatic dynamics. This idea of four notes in one hand against three notes in the other hand then swaps hands, with those rhythms every bar or so for a while, presenting a mental challenge for the performer in maintaining an even transition each time it swaps, and the piece continues with varying and contrasting treatments of the two main motivic ideas, including contrary motion, rhythmic figures taken from the inversion of the second motif, falling intervals in distortions of the falling fifth and altered rhythm of the falling fifth as first presented, triplet rhythms, two-against-three rhythms, chromaticism, wide leaps in both hands, and five-against-three rhythms, all the while growing in intensity and technical demands. Indeed, the Sonata pushes both piano and pianist to their limits, demanding increasingly difficult technical execution from the player. The dramatic close is reminiscent of Prokofiev, particularly the *Andante assai* middle section of the First Piano Concerto (1912), where the melody note in the high treble falls in intervals of a descending half-tone and then falls a seventh, at which point the melodic phrase resolves with a flat second scale degree to the tonic pitch (not the tonic harmony); then the melodic phrase repeats a half-tone lower than the melody note to which it had just resolved (or a tritone lower than the first melody note of the first phrase), after which the next melodic phrase begins a tritone below the first melody note of the second phrase. And likewise, in the Farwell Sonata, six

bars before the end, the high treble sequential pattern is, in scale degrees:⁹ a descending 9–8–1 down a semitone to 7; this pattern is repeated in the next bar, and in the third and fourth bars, but these two bars reverse the last two intervals – dipping down to the leading tone and resolving up to the tonic pitch of the pattern (Farwell’s training as an engineer at work, perhaps). Then four bars before this passage (ten bars before the end), plus a pick-up beat (i.e., the last beat of the previous bar), it has both the first and second motifs from the beginning of the Sonata sounding simultaneously with the ascending four-note motif passing between both hands while the falling fifth overlaps it in octaves. The loud falling-fifth motif sounds in octaves, with the ascending four-note motif overlapping from the middle voice. These overlapped motifs happen twice and extend into the high melodic interval pattern described above. The supporting harmony that results alternates, as in the Prokofiev example, between augmented and diminished, and minor and major, harmonies.

Evelyn Davis Culbertson’s study of Farwell implies that this work is in sonata form in view of its extensive development.¹⁰ I have to disagree with that judgement. It is, rather, a variation work, since throughout it is based on variation of its three motifs and is thus another of the works in free-variation form, descended from the Classical theme-and-variations form, encountered in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century music, strongly influenced by the character variation, such as Elgar’s ‘Enigma’ Variations, the Franck *Variations symphoniques* and Strauss’ *Don Quixote*. In variation form(s), a distinction must be noticeable in the preservation of the original themes, as opposed to development technique, which unfolds the theme into expanded ideas instead of keeping the original theme distinctly recognisable.¹¹ In the free-variation form of the early twentieth century, variation harmonic patterns can be different from the harmonic patterns in the original theme(s), and the length of the variations of the motifs can vary widely. Farwell’s themes are not stated in the typical sonata keys of tonic

⁹ There are eight degrees in a diatonic scale, counting the tonic on both ends of the scale, so that 9 means an octave plus a whole tone above the lower tonic, and 8 is the tonic an octave higher than 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 521.

¹¹ John D. White, *The Analysis of Music*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs (N.J.), 1976, p. 63.

and dominant, but in many different keys and chromatic possibilities, and there is no extended dwelling on the dominant harmony before a ‘homecoming’ recapitulation that is characteristic of textbook sonata form. Even so, the distinctive falling fifths at the opening and close of the work are both in the tonic, falling from A to D.

***For Cynthia* (1942)**

Farwell had five children from his first marriage, to Gertrude Everts Brice, then a 25-year-old actress. That relationship ended in divorce in 1937; he married Betty Richardson (a former student 40 years his junior) two years later and his sixth and youngest child, Cynthia, was born in November 1941, when her father was 69. Composed when she was one year old, *For Cynthia* [2], with a tempo marking of ‘Delicate and rhythmic, not too fast’, depicts the simple worry-free life of a little toddler. This playful, delicate and feminine piece was written after his *Two Little Poems for Piano*, Op. 106, ‘Girl Singing’ and ‘Strange Dream’. *For Cynthia*, which is reminiscent of ‘Girl Singing’, is in ABA form, and $\frac{2}{4}$ metre. The A sections have a very distinctive melodic and rhythmic motif of two quavers (eighth notes), a semiquaver rest and a semiquaver, all in a triplet grouping followed by two quavers, two more quavers and a crotchet (quarter note). This ‘skipping’ melody and rhythm is stated several times in both A sections. The B section, marked ‘tenderly’, with the tempo marking ‘a little slower’, uses a descending stepwise idea.

***Laughing Piece* (1914, rev. 1940)**

Culbertson writes that ‘Farwell had a good sense of humor and tried to express this quality in several compositions. An earlier effort to be humorous was a solo titled: *Laughing Piece*, written in 1914, and revised in 1940’.¹² *Laughing Piece* [3] is one of many tone poems composed during his Michigan period. Culbertson continues:

The revised *Laughing Piece*, written predominately with staccato notes, is to be played ‘light and jocularly’. It features a jaunty melody. Scalar passages made up of small intervals should be worth the effort needed to create the ‘jocular’ mood intended.

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 515.

Another humorous piece is *Happy Moment*. His humorous pieces ‘balance what might otherwise picture Farwell as a long-faced serious idealist, but Sara Farwell [his daughter] remembers how jovial he could be.’

Laughing Piece has a time-signature of $\frac{2}{4}$ and the tempo marking ‘Moderately, with motion’. The laughter is portrayed by continuous staccato paired double cluster chords. Most of the cluster chords are two minor thirds stacked only a whole tone apart, sounding in semiquaver (sixteenth note) pairs. These pairs alternate with another pair of semiquaver clusters consisting of a stacked minor third with a whole tone added on top, each pair being separated by an octave plus a minor third from the highest note to the lowest. The cluster chords are in the right-hand treble, and are in semiquavers, suggesting ‘ha ha’ with two identical clusters, followed by another ‘ha ha’ on two other identical clusters in a string of six double clusters in a jaunty back-and-forth descending fashion, followed in turn by three ascending staccato scales in F minor, E flat major and what seems to be D minor but is in truth an E flat major scale starting with D (the seventh of the scale), with D minor chords in the left hand. The form is ABA, with the short B theme, a legato melody stated twice, the second time an octave higher, giving respite from all the staccato; it is then followed by a descending staccato semiquaver transition back to the A section, using the original cluster chord pitches. Seven bars later, there is one short two-bar hemiola (two-against-three) rhythm, followed by another two bars of semiquaver ascending scales that separate the A theme with original cluster-chord pitches from the next statement of the theme a semitone higher, and continuing with higher and higher restatements and ascending staccato scale passages and contrary-motion staccato scales. The last staccato scale is in contrary motion on the dominant, B flat, followed by a final ‘ha’ on E flat.

Two Little Poems for Piano, Op. 106: No. 2, ‘Strange Dream’ (1942)

‘Strange Dream’ [4] is an impressionistic tone poem, in ABA form and common time. The opening theme presents a string of chords built by stacking the interval of a tritone and adding a major third to the top note of that tritone – the resulting top melody from these chords is a falling perfect fourth, followed by an ascending minor third, then

beginning again one whole tone lower, and continuing this pattern like a linked chain. The A theme is eight bars long, with the opening harmonies stated twice and resolved to the tonic, G. The chromatic B section builds to an *accelerando* and climax of a slowly arpeggiated chord – the same chord that started the A section, built by stacking a tritone and adding a major third to its top note. After a fermata, the A section returns with the same chord that the B section ended with in arpeggiation, but the second statement is extended into two extra bars, climbing to a higher register, and extending into a codetta of the A-section harmonies and interval scheme, ending slowly with three arpeggiated harmonies, G major, B flat minor and a final G major.

In the Tetons, Op. 86 (1930)

Farwell wrote this suite inspired by the Teton mountains, a place he loved after spending a summer vacation there.¹³ He was intending to compose two suites with five pieces each, but in the end wrote only seven pieces. The first, ‘Granite and Ice’ [5], is in a chromatic D minor, with large, heavy, accented chords. ‘Lonely Camp Fire’ [6], in A minor, is quite a contrast, with softer passages and subtleties, and with light, playful ascending staccato scales at the end. ‘Arduous Trail’ [7] is a humoresque in F minor, with a brisk, trudging rhythmic movement portraying hiking on a challenging trail. Periodically, there are sweeter reflective moments, with text supplied in the score. At the end of the first page, Farwell indicates: ‘Leaning against a tree, breathing, and listening to the birds.’ Then again, at the end of the second page, he writes: ‘Leaning against a tree, breathing, and listening to the brook.’ For this visualisation, he uses minor sixths a whole tone apart, rocking back and forth, and then a third apart. It concludes with a more dramatic trudging theme in *ff* and *fff*, as if the pinnacle of the mountain trail has been reached, and it stops with a celebratory F major *fff* chord, a three-and-a-half-octave ascending run, and two more *fff* F major chords. ‘Wild Flower’ [8] is very simple, and a stark contrast to the previous piece. Farwell wrote ‘Homage to MacDowell’ on the manuscript. It was published by Schirmer in another version in 1941, with a title given to it by the

¹³ The Grand Teton National Park, in north-west Wyoming, encompasses 310,000 acres, including the Teton Mountain range and the Jackson Hole valley and the famous 4,000-meter-high Grand Teton peak.

publisher, 'Purple Lupine.' 'Wind Play' [9], marked 'Moderately fast, well nuanced', is an octave study for the right hand, with a running bass line, both in continuous quavers. To me it suggests the wind tossing fallen autumn leaves in unpredictable circles. 'The Peaks at Night' [10], marked 'Slowly, but with motion', begins *ppp* and 'mysteriously', and never gets louder than *piano*. It has a unifying triplet figure throughout, which is sometimes presented in unison pitches in three different octaves, using both hands, and sometimes against groups of four staccato semiquavers in the other hand. The staccato semiquavers pose a technical challenge, since they are all spaced at different interval spacings and marked *pianissimo*.

Farwell stated¹⁴ that if he didn't manage to complete a second book of *In the Tetons*, 'Wind Play' should be performed as the fifth movement, and 'The Peaks at Night' as the sixth. That points to an original plan whereby 'The Peaks at Night' was originally in fifth position, with 'Wind Play' and the unfinished seventh piece, 'Big Country', intended for the second suite. He also condoned performances of individual pieces from *In the Tetons* on their own – but he was left 'hopping mad'¹⁵ by Schirmer's separate publication of the easier pieces from *In the Tetons*, because they would sell easily, but not the more challenging pieces that showed off his talent and skill as a composer.

***What's in an octave?*, Op. 84 (1930)**

What's in an octave? [11] is hugely intriguing. The entire piece happens between two Fs in the range of only one octave, as the title suggests. Both notes sound in unison, droning in slow crotchet rhythm for the entire opening and closing A sections, while the melody weaves between both hands in the inner voices. The middle, B, section is a four-voice fughetta, in a faster tempo, and without the drones. The ending fades out with the droning Fs in longer and longer note-values, until a final single F is suspended in the stillness. Farwell wrote a quotation from Pythagoras on the manuscript: 'All the knowledge of music is to be found within the octave.'

¹⁴ Culbertson, *op. cit.*, p. 510, quoting from a marginal note on the manuscript of 'Wind Play'.

¹⁵ Culbertson, *op. cit.*, p. 510.

From Mesa and Plain: No. 1, 'Navajo War Dance' (1904)

Farwell's 'Navajo War Dance' [12], composed in 1904 as the first piece of his suite *From Mesa and Plain*, Op. 20,¹⁶ was one of his most successful pieces, and one of the few to enjoy performance and recording in recent years. The opening section is marked 'With intensity, not too fast' (with the further direction in the score of *mormorando*), and 'With severe precision of rhythm throughout, and savagely accented'. The opening two bars are in $\frac{9}{8}$ and the rest of the piece is $\frac{6}{8}$. The opening tempo increases gradually as the piece progresses, and its accents become *sforzandi* in *fortissimo* passages. It is monothematic. After a two-bar 'drum beat' introduction in $\frac{9}{8}$, the seven-bar theme, in $\frac{6}{8}$, with a chromatic eighth bar of transition at the end, is stated twice on G (starting pitch) and then once on D, but only five bars in length this time, plus a sixth chromatic transition bar; then comes another seven-bar statement on G plus a chromatic transition bar, and another five-bar statement on D, this time followed by two emphatic bars emphasising tritones. There follows a section labelled 'A little faster', which is an extension of the opening theme, on a higher pitch, A, with similar rhythm; it forms a central section. The first part of the theme is stated once more, abbreviated, *ff* and in the highest register of the piece, seven bars before the end. Each statement of the theme is preceded by an ascending chromatic scale with the hands a fourth apart.

There are two versions of *Navajo War Dance* No. 1, one considerably shorter than the other (here I play the longer of the two). The last chromatic passage in the shorter version descends. The longer version offers 39 further bars of the same rhythms and passagework and then uses a longer glissando at the end and a characteristic Native American rhythm, which changes the rhythm from two main accents per bar in $\frac{6}{8}$ to a feeling of $\frac{3}{4}$ with three main accents per bar, for two bars, before the final two bars. Farwell orchestrated the longer version as a movement in his *Indian Suite*, Op. 110, of 1944. Here he requests the strings to exert scratchy pressure on the strings, asking that it should always be *marcato* and to be sure to begin it slowly enough.

¹⁶ 'Pawnee Horse', No. 2 of *From Mesa and Plain*, was recorded on my second volume of Farwell's piano music, on Toccata Classics tocc 0222.

Navajo War Dance No. 2, Op. 29 (1904)

Soon after the first 'Navajo War Dance', Farwell wrote another one – both were composed in 1904 – and published it as a free-standing piece, his Op. 29. *Navajo War Dance No. 2* [13] is the more directly representative of the irregularities to be found in Native American rhythm. A longer piece than either version of the first dance, it changes metre frequently. The first page is in $\frac{4}{4}$, except for one bar (the sixth) in $\frac{3}{4}$. There are two themes. The end of each statement of the *a* theme ends with Native American 'honour beats': distinctive, loud, steady drum-beats at the end of a song or long section of music that signal to the dancers when to stop. The pow wows I have attended usually play an odd number of beats on the large drum; the dancers know exactly how many honour beats will be played and so can stop dancing on the very last one. Here there are six beats to begin with, and seven on other occurrences; after the last statement of *a*, before theme *b*, there are nine. Six honour beats is unusual; I believe Farwell simply didn't know that and so used six here to fit his design. The *b* theme is in $\frac{9}{8}$ and $\frac{3}{8}$, changing back and forth almost every bar (on page 8 of the score, for example, it changes fifteen times). When theme *a* returns, it is the same as when first heard, except for the addition of three bars of difficult contrary-motion octaves, followed by the final seven accented honour beats that end the war dance; and it also has a more authentic seven honour beats. The piece centres around E for both sections, although the sense of key is weak, and tension is created by the long sustained crescendos rather than modulation. (Farwell uses the key-signature of E major, and the tonic is indeed E, but the third is avoided and the predominant intervals are the fifth and the second, with constant chromatic 'drum' accompaniment, so that a tonal feeling of major or minor is avoided, which is more authentic. Hailed as one of Farwell's best pieces by the pianist Rudolph Ganz, president of Chicago Musical College, *Navajo War Dance No. 2* was one of the last pieces to be published by Farwell's Wa-Wan Press, probably in 1905.

These days we take for granted that there are American composers. But Arthur Farwell's essays on American music, *Wanderjahre of a Revolutionist*,¹⁷ make it clear that there was

¹⁷ Cf. note 2 on p. 3.

a time when American composers and their works were not admitted to the mainstream of classical music – a situation that required correction. Farwell was the champion of this cause, and his accomplishment deserves to be more widely known. Farwell indeed was the father of the Indianist movement and did lead the way for American composers to heed Dvořák's challenge to create an identifiable American concert idiom, based on the music of America's indigenous culture, the Native Americans. But Farwell's mission for American composers went so much further than that.

The value systems of the early settlers and their descendants led them to believe that to be educated in the fine arts, American people must be trained in the only real music – European music. That is how concert societies chose their repertoire, how concert programmes were planned, how the curricula of music schools were designed. The reason is obvious: in the early settlements there were no American classical composers as yet,¹⁸ and so customs, traditions and schools were set up based on the European music they already knew. It followed that 'American music' must be merely folk-music, rather than a contribution to the fine arts in its own right. Farwell saw the shortsightedness of this view and boldly set about correcting it, encouraging American composers of classical music to step forward. In one of his essays, he states:

the great managerial and publishing organizations of the East are planted firmly [...] in the immense industry of selling America its European music. The very ground under the rock shifts when the creative idea in American music springs into being and America begins to look to herself for her music. Even these great organizations must begin, not without great inconvenience, to undergo readjustments. And so all down the line the American composer trying to get a hearing sings, with the witches in *Macbeth*, 'Double, double, Toil and trouble.' Neglected? Not a bit. He has not been in the game long enough to be neglected. He is a new kind of man, these ten, twenty, fifty years past, fighting for standing-room in a place where no provision has been made for him.¹⁹

¹⁸ For example, a set of three trios, for two violins and cello, Op. 3, of c. 1790, by John Antes (1732–1811) is the earliest known chamber music by a composer born in America – although a letter from Antes to Benjamin Frankel, dated 10 July 1779, documents a set of 'Six Quartettos', now lost. Antes was also one of the earliest instrument-makers in American history.

¹⁹ 'The Idea of the American Composer', *op. cit.*, p. 148.

I found hampering conditions surrounding the performance of American compositions and surrounding the publication of them. Artistically, and commercially, there was pathmaking to be done. The influence of society, taking the term broadly, must be brought to bear on gaining adequate performance of American works.²⁰

Since American publishers were hesitant to publish works by American composers, Farwell founded the Wa-Wan Press, almost literally putting his money where his mouth was: it operated from the Farwell family home. It was an article of Farwell's, moreover, 'Society and American Music', which led to the foundation of the National Wa-Wan Society in 1907, reorganised the following year as the American Music Society, which established centres across America. Farwell's further efforts on behalf of American music on all strata of American society are documented in the anonymous biographical essay on the website of the Library of Congress:²¹

In addition to his involvement with the Wa-Wan Press and Society, Farwell served as the chief music critic for *Musical America* in New York from 1909 to 1914. He was appointed Supervisor of Municipal Concerts in New York [...] in 1910 and composed music for community pageants – enormous outdoor events that he felt could evolve into a new American art form, comparable in power to Richard Wagner's music dramas. In 1916 he co-founded the New York Community Chorus (the first community chorus in the country), effectively coining the term. Over the course of the next ten years, Farwell's career shifted to the West coast, and he organized community choruses wherever he went: first at the University of California-Berkeley, while chairing the music department; then in Santa Barbara, where he was instrumental in forming the Santa Barbara School for the Arts; and finally in Pasadena, while writing music for the *Pilgrimage Play*, a pageant based on the life of Christ. The U.S. Army hired Farwell during World War I to serve as the Army's first consultant on group singing. [...]

In 1927, Farwell was appointed head of the theory/composition department at Michigan State Agricultural College (now Michigan State University), where he continued to compose

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²¹ Online at <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200035729/>.

amidst a busy teaching schedule. In the late 1930s and 40s, John Finley Williamson commissioned six arrangements of Farwell's early Native American piano pieces for the Westminster Choir. These eight-part *a cappella* works are noteworthy for their use of Indian 'vocables' (words without meaning) as well as for Farwell's experimentation with extended vocal techniques.

Farwell retired from teaching in 1939 and moved back to New York City. During his final decades he wrote a philosophical work titled *Intuition in the World-Making*, which discusses intuition's role in the creative process, incorporating drawings and analyses of his artistic visions. Though he was a prolific and important composer, Farwell is remembered primarily as a critic, publisher, and champion of American music. He died in New York City in 1952 after a short illness.

Lisa Cheryl Thomas graduated with a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in piano performance from the University of North Texas in 2010, her teachers to that point including Joseph Banowetz, Helen Barlow, Dorothy Gideon, Jim Giles, Adele Marcus, Alfred Mouldous, Bobby Ossman, Virginia Queen, Adam Wodnicki and Jan Wiest Ward. 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; *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). Reviews and lists of awards, scholarships and performances can be read at her website, www.lisacherylthomas.com.

She is herself of Native American stock, counting members of the Cherokee, Blackfoot and Sioux tribes among her ancestors, and her concert performances, research and lecture recitals on Native American and 'Indianist' piano repertoire are awakening a new enthusiasm and interest in this music. 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 1994, 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. She premiered her own works, written under the name of Delisgidv (the short version of her Indian name), at her Smithsonian Kennedy Center concerts, as well as at the Presidio in San Francisco in 1999 and in several other concerts, including her doctoral dissertation recital. She is continuing her research with First Nation indigenous music and culture, giving presentations and performances of solo piano and chamber music. Her most

recent awards include a Fulbright Scholarship for January–May 2017, becoming the Fulbright Visiting Research Chair in Arts and Humanities at the University of Alberta, Edmonton. During her main Fulbright tenure she received the Fulbright Visiting Scholar Speakers Award, with a formal invitation from Brock University, St Catharines, Ontario, in April 2017, as well as the award of the Fulbright Western Hemisphere Regional Travel Program grant, with formal invitations from the Institute of Culture in Cuzco, and the National Conservatoire of Music in Lima, Peru, in April 2017. She performed formal concerts in each location as well as giving lectures to students of composition and musicology, and in several other departments at the University of Alberta. While in Edmonton, in March 2017, she gave a concert at The King's University on Glenn Gould's concert grand piano. After returning from Peru, in April 2017, she presented and performed Arthur Farwell's Piano Quintet with members of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra in a setting that included a lecture and open rehearsal for students and faculty at the University of Alberta; she also judged a student composition competition of original works based on authentic indigenous melodies collected by ethnographers. In each Fulbright performance and lecture, she inspired students to continue the challenge that Dvořák put to composers over a century ago – to create a uniquely American concert idiom based on America's own rich indigenous culture.



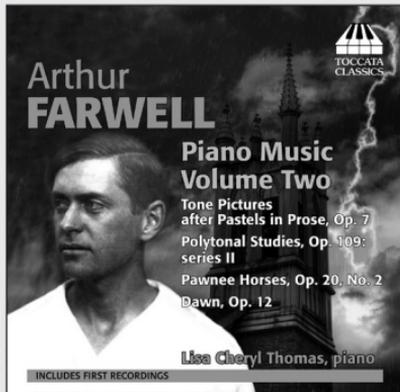
Already released on Toccata Classics

TOCC 0126



'the love she feels for this music is near palpable. Her musicological background work is impeccable, too, as she used facsimiles of Farwell's manuscripts in preparation for this recording. She pens her own wide-ranging booklet note, also, which itself makes for fascinating reading. Recommended' *Fanfare*

TOCC 0222



'these works give us a taste of Farwell's stylistic variety – often overlooked in favor of his “Indianist” works. Thomas, herself part Cherokee, approaches this music with warmth and imagination'

American Record Guide



Recorded on 24 and 25 November 2016 at Potton Hall, Westleton, Suffolk

Piano: Steinway D

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Editor: Jennifer Howells

Booklet essay: Lisa Cheryl Thomas

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Toccata Classics, 16 Dalkeith Court, Vincent Street, London SW1P 4HH, UK

Tel: +44/0 207 821 5020 E-mail: info@toccataclassics.com

ARTHUR FARWELL Piano Music, Volume Three

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|--|--------------|
| ❶ Piano Sonata, Op. 113 (1949) | 18:05 |
| ❷ <i>For Cynthia</i> (1942) | 3:03 |
| ❸ <i>Laughing Piece</i> (1914, rev. 1940) | 2:44 |
| <i>Two Little Poems for Piano, Op. 106</i> (1942) | |
| ❹ No. 2 Strange Dream | 2:54 |
| <i>In the Tetons, Op. 86</i> (1930) | 21:05 |
| ❺ I Granite and Ice | 4:46 |
| ❻ II Lonely Camp Fire | 3:36 |
| ❼ III Arduous Trail (Humoresque) | 4:38 |
| ❽ IV Wild Flower | 2:19 |
| ❾ V Wind Play | 3:06 |
| ❿ VI The Peaks at Night | 2:40 |
| ⓫ <i>What's in an octave?, Op. 84</i> (1930) | 10:56 |
| <i>From Mesa and Plain, Op. 20</i> (1905) | |
| ⓬ No. 1 Navajo War Dance | 2:55 |
| ⓭ <i>Navajo War Dance No. 2, Op. 29</i> (1908) | 4:57 |

TT: **66:41**

Lisa Cheryl Thomas, piano

FIRST RECORDINGS