



## Film 3 'The Souls of Black Folk' and the Vexed Fate of Black Classical Music

If George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* - the highest creative achievement in American classical music - embodies a glorious (and controversial) fulfilment of Dvořák's prophecy, there also exists a buried lineage of exceptional compositions by Black composers following in Dvořák's wake. Coming first was his assistant Harry Burleigh, whose seminal settings of *Deep River* are as much compositions as transcriptions. Burleigh's initiative was sealed by singers like Paul Robeson and Marian Anderson. But William Levi Dawson's oracular *Negro Folk Symphony*, though triumphantly premiered by Leopold Stokowski and his Philadelphia Orchestra in 1934, gathered dust - and Dawson was never to create the symphonic catalogue he seemed destined to undertake. Our commentators here include George Shirley, the most legendary name in present-day Black classical music, also Kevin Deas, who sings Burleigh with singular authority, and the conductors Roderick Cox and the late Michael Morgan. - J.H.

This film is part of the Naxos film series, *Dvořák's Prophecy - A New Narrative for American Classical Music*, aligned with Joseph Horowitz's book *Dvořák's Prophecy and the Vexed Fate of Black Classical Music*.

Written and produced by Joseph Horowitz  
Visual presentation by Peter Bogdanoff

Music by Harry Burleigh, William Levi Dawson, Florence Price and William Grant Still, performed by bass-baritone Kevin Deas and conductors Arthur Fagan and James Jeter.

Commentary by:  
Roderick Cox  
Kevin Deas  
Joseph Horowitz  
Michael Morgan  
George Shirley

'These six beautiful films reveal a compelling, inclusive musical tradition, deeply interwoven with American culture.'

- J. Peter Burkholder,  
author of *A History of Western Music*

As the *Dvořák's Prophecy* films were undertaken during the pandemic, interviews were conducted virtually and in many cases do not meet normal technical standards.

Total playing time: 78 minutes • NTSC 16:9 • PCM stereo • Region: 0 [worldwide] • DVD 9  
Language: English

© 2021 Naxos Rights (Europe) Ltd • Made in the USA

WARNING: The material contained on this disc is licensed for non-commercial private use only. Any public performance, broadcast, other use or any other reproduction is strictly prohibited.

[www.naxos.com](http://www.naxos.com)

