

# Film 1

## Dvořák's New World Symphony

### A Lens on the American Experience of Race

This first film in the series keys on Dvořák's prophecy and explores its present-day pertinence. In New York City and Spillville, Iowa, Dvořák boldly chose to regard African Americans and Native Americans as representative Americans. That decision was both acclaimed and ridiculed at the time. It remains inspirational. His *New World Symphony*, still the best-known and best-loved symphonic work conceived on American soil, is saturated with the influence of plantation song, and also with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*. This act of appropriation, my film argues, was an act of empathy performed by a great humanitarian. The musical selections here are mainly taken from the *Hiawatha Melodrama*, which I co-composed with the music historian Michael Beckerman with orchestrations by Angel Gil-Ordóñez. It mates Dvořák with Longfellow. The participating commentators include the music historians Mark Clague and Lorenzo Candelaria, the literary historian Brian Yothers, the conductor JoAnn Falletta, faculty members from Howard University – and also (sagely commenting on cultural appropriation) the bass-baritone Kevin Deas, with whom I have long enjoyed the privilege of performing the spiritual arrangements of Dvořák's assistant Harry Burleigh. – J.H.

This PostClassical Ensemble 'More than Music' 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 Antonín Dvořák and Harry Burleigh, and the *Hiawatha Melodrama*  
created by Michael Beckerman, Joseph Horowitz, and Angel Gil-Ordóñez

Performed by PostClassical Ensemble conducted by Angel Gil-Ordóñez,  
and Kevin Deas (narrator/baritone).

'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*

Commentary by:  
Mark Clague  
Kevin Deas  
Lorenzo Candelaria  
Kehembe Eichelberger  
JoAnn Falletta  
Matthew Franke  
Angel Gil-Ordóñez  
Joseph Horowitz  
Brian Yothers

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.

Support for this project was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts

Total playing time: 83 minutes • NTSC 16:9 • PCM stereo • Region: 0 (worldwide) • DVD 9

Language: English

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