

LETTER TO POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for inquiring about our NEH Summer Institute “Dvořák and America: In Search of the New World,” sponsored by the Pittsburgh Symphony and meeting at the Music Building of the University of Pittsburgh, July 12 to 30, 2010.

The institute will take place Monday through Friday, 9 am to 4:30 pm, for three weeks. The participants will be 25 middle and high school teachers. The instructors are nationally known scholars and educators. The schedule includes field trips and concerts, and culminating curricular projects. The curriculum ranges far afield from music to deal with such subjects as Buffalo Bill, the slave trade, *The Song of Hiawatha*, and Yellow Journalism. The core topic is the quest for American identity at the turn of the twentieth century.

The following description offers an overview of the institute and the application process, and will also answer questions you may have.

BACKGROUND and RATIONALE

There was a time when young Americans were introduced to “great music” via a pantheon of dead Europeans. This is no longer done, and nothing has taken its place. The story of Dvořák in America is more than a timely alternative; it offers a singular opportunity to infuse the arts and humanities into Social Studies, Art, English, and Music instruction in middle and high school classrooms. Robert Winter, one of the Dvořák institute’s distinguished instructors, pertinently writes: “Historians generally consign the arts to the margins. Ironically, when you visit Florence, you may hear about the power of the Medici or the mendacity of Savonarola, yet you focus on the creativity of da Vinci, Michelangelo, Botticelli. It is artists who both encapsulate their own time and create its furthest flights of imagination.”

A butcher’s son, an instinctive democrat, Dvořák was self-made. No other European musician of comparable eminence so dedicated himself to finding “America.” Dvořák’s quest was both concentrated and varied. And Dvořák’s warm embrace was egalitarian: he loved folk music, popular dance and song. He thrilled to Manhattan’s polyglot population and in Iowa equally savored what Willa Cather called “the sadness of all flat lands.”

In 1993, as Executive Director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, Institute Director Joe Horowitz undertook to celebrate the 100th birthday of the best-known, best-loved symphony ever composed on American soil: Dvořák’s “From the New World” (1893). As a scholar specializing in the late Gilded Age, Horowitz appreciated that Dvořák had ignited a rousing national debate over the questions “What is America?” and “Who is an American?” Jeannette Thurber, a visionary educator, had lured him from Bohemia to direct her National Conservator of Music. And she handed him a mandate: to help New World composers create a concert idiom Americans would recognize as their own.

Dvořák -- the proud member of a Hapsburg minority subject to prejudice and discrimination -- was galvanized by African-Americans and Native Americans. “It is to the poor that I turn for musical greatness,” he told a New York reporter. “The poor work hard; they study seriously.” And Dvořák predicted -- his most famous, most controversial, most prophetic utterance -- that the future music of the US would be based upon its “Negro melodies.” In New York -- then, as now, a city of immigrants -- Dvořák’s counsel was taken to heart. But in Brahmin Boston, Dvořák’s view that “black and “red” Americans were representative was considered naïve at best; Philip Hale, Boston’s leading music critic, denounced him as a “negrophile”

To its first, electrified New York audiences, Dvořák’s *New World* Symphony -- an intended catalyst for an “American school” of composition -- seemed obviously impregnated with plantation song, with Indian dance, with Longfellow’s *The Song of Hiawatha*. It resonated with iconic renderings of “America” by such painters as Frederic Church, Albert Bierstadt, Frederick Remington, and George Catlin. **It helped Americans to define and understand themselves** -- a function it still vividly serves.

The Brooklyn Philharmonic Dvořák festival, with the *New World* Symphony at its core, linked with activities in inner-city middle and high schools; the Dvořák story proved a unique cross-disciplinary learning tool for young Americans. The subject matter, in Social Studies classrooms, included the slave trade, blackface minstrelsy, Yellow Journalism, and the Kickapoo Medicine Show; the cast of characters included Buffalo Bill (whose Wild West Dvořák attended at Madison Square Garden), Will Marion Cook (who briefly studied with Dvořák before inventing the black Broadway musical), Duke Ellington (who studied with Cook), and Marian Anderson (whose practice of singing spirituals in recital began with Dvořák’s assistant Harry Burleigh). **For youngsters new to symphonic music, Dvořák proved a fascinating and heroic figure. They eagerly identified with his search for a New World voice remote from Old World models (many mentioned rap).**

Subsequently, as Director of an **NEH National Education Project**, Horowitz wrote a young readers book, *Dvořák and America*, and commissioned a companion interactive DVD from Robert Winter of UCLA. These materials -- basic to the Teacher Training Institute -- have since been used (in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and California) with remarkable results. Jay Gavitt, Social Studies Subject Chair at Columbia High School (Maplewood, NJ) -- a teacher previously unfamiliar with Dvořák -- permanently incorporated “Dvořák in America” into his 11th grade American History curriculum. Student evaluations included: “We took a trip back in time and learned more than any book or movie could offer.”

Horowitz’s young readers book, published by Cricket in 2003, was recommended by *Booklist* for grades 6 to 12. Surveying Horowitz’s Dvořák enterprise, Alex Ross wrote in *The New Yorker*: “Because one woman in the Gilded Age decided that music should be taught differently, a new tributary opened in American culture. More people should learn this story in school.”

Robert Winter's DVD proved a singular educational tool, exploiting unprecedented DVD technology. It includes some 4,000 screens and subscreens, more than 1,000 images, almost 600 musical examples (including 100 complete compositions), 65 videos, a Glossary of 2,000+ terms, and 225,000 words of primary source documents. Users can hear a historic recording of Harry Burleigh, take part in a "Stephen Foster Singalong," and sample the tape-recorded reminiscences of elderly Czech-Americans who as children met Dvořák in Iowa.

For many teachers, the subject matter of music seems intangible, intimidating. The institute will create pertinent curricular materials as well as preparing 25 participants (no matter what their musical aptitude or training) to explore a multitude of American themes.

FACULTY and SCHEDULE

All 25 institute participants will receive Horowitz's young readers' book and Winter's DVD beforehand, and will be expected to have read the book before arriving.

Weeks One and Two will be devoted to a series of core topics. **Week Three** will concentrate on five curricular projects created by the participants. The schedule will also include four field trips and three concerts. The three core faculty members – Horowitz, Winter, and Michael Beckerman of New York University – are today's most prominent Dvořák-in-America authorities. The following list of faculty members shows the sequential organization of the institute.

WEEK ONE:

JOSEPH HOROWITZ pursues a dual career as writer/scholar and producer. Of his eight books, three (in addition to the young readers' book) relate to Dvořák in America; two were named best books of the year by *The Economist*. The *New York Times* has called him "a force in classical music today, a prophet and an agitator." For the institute, Horowitz will introduce Dvořák and his *New World Symphony*; he will subsequently concentrate on two aspects of the Dvořák story:

--**"A Tale of Two Cities" (July 12):** Social Darwinism turned Darwinian theory into a ranking of human racial types. In Boston, as in much of the US, even Americans who had opposed slavery assumed the innate inferiority of black- and red-skinned human beings. Louis Agassiz of Harvard – Boston's most famous scientist – taught that blacks and whites belonged to different species. Boston reviews "scientifically" categorized Dvořák's music as Slavic and "barbaric." Boston's composers decried Dvořák's use of "Negro melodies." The contemporaneous NY discourse on culture and race was remarkably egalitarian. This "tale of two cities" incorporates demographics and sociology; it uses Dvořák to illuminate American practices and prejudices a century ago.

--**"The American Sublime"/Manifest Destiny (July 14):** In late 19th century American art, the iconic genre is landscape. In particular, the heroic landscapes of Frederic Church and Albert Bierstadt elaborate a distinctive "American sublime" infused with Manifest

Destiny, prairie poignancy, and majestic skies and peaks. Like Dvořák (whose music, more than any American's, evokes the American sublime), these visual artists illuminate what Americans made of themselves as a culture (and geography) distinct from New World parents (and terrain). For this segment of the institute, Horowitz is joined by art historian **TIM BARRINGER** (Yale University), a leading specialist in American landscape.

FIELD TRIP: "Rivers of Steel" (July 13) -- A customized all-day Pittsburgh tour exploring Gilded Age patterns of immigration, urbanization, and industrial development.

ROBERT WINTER (July 15-16), Presidential Chair in Music and Interactive Arts at UCLA, will guide participants in the use of his DVD. Using the DVD, Winter will concentrate on:

-- **The World's Columbian Exposition** in Chicago -- the Herculean "White City," an unprecedented American cultural inventory, which Dvořák twice visited. What impressions did Dvořák absorb of "America"? What did the Midway, with its living exhibits of exotic peoples and cultures, impart about culture and race?

-- **Buffalo Bill:** Dvořák saw Buffalo Bill's "Wild West" at Madison Square Garden. What impressions did he absorb of the Native American and the West? What was William Cody's relationship to the Indian?

Other Robert Winter DVD topics will include:

-- "Documenting the Journey": Using the actual logs from transatlantic liners to gain a picture of how immigration made America a great nation.

-- "Romantic Etiquette": An exploration (using a leading 1890s etiquette book) of social interactions and the distribution of power in upwardly mobile America.

-- "Take the Amateur Course": A tutorial in how teachers without any musical background can lead their students to concrete knowledge of the languages of music.

-- "Where Were the Women?": An examination of the reasons behind the low profile of women in the compositional arts during Dvořák's time.

-- "What Dvořák Ignored": A look at the popular culture and music that began to sweep America at the time of Dvořák's visit.

STEVEN MAYER (July 16) is a virtuoso pianist specializing in the music of Scott Joplin, James P. Johnson, Jelly Roll Morton, Fats Waller, and Art Tatum. Horowitz has dubbed this repertoire -- a self-defining American achievement -- "**The Black Virtuoso Tradition.**" Dvořák himself acknowledged Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869) as a precursor in his quest for an American concert idiom. Born in New Orleans, raised on saucy Caribbean musical delicacies, Gottschalk flouted Europe with sublime insouciance; to this day, his is the earliest American concert music we regularly hear, and the earliest we hear as "American." In such piano works as "The Banjo," he initiated a lineage of American keyboard works steeped in the African-American vernacular; his successors not only included generations of amazing black jazz keyboardists, but Antonin Dvořák,

whose *American Suite* Mayer will perform and discuss in charting the evolutionary history of “Negro melodies” and the piano. The day will culminate with a . . .

STEVEN MAYER LECTURE/RECITAL (8 pm, July 16) addressing the question: What makes music sound “American”?

WEEK TWO

MICHAEL BECKERMAN (July 19), Professor of Music at NYU, is the author of *New Worlds of Dvořák* and *Dvořák and His World*. For the institute, he addresses:

-- **Longfellow’s *The Song of Hiawatha***: As of 1900, it remained the most-read, best-known work of American literature -- an American Beowulf. What can be learned from this anachronistic text today, with its romanticization of the noble savage? In what ways did Dvořák absorb its influence, and also that of actual Native-Americans he met and observed? What was the fate of Native Americans in Dvořák’s America? Finally: how does the *New World* Symphony specifically evoke Hiawatha’s homeward journey, Minnehaha’s death, and the elegiac demise of the noble savage? Beckerman has long pursued these questions, with startling findings.

-- **Yellow Journalism**: James Creelman was an astonishing embodiment of “the journalism that acts,” a distinctive feature of American media culture, and notoriously a catalyst for the Spanish American War of 1898. Creelman’s specialties included getting famous people to say famous things. His private clients included Jeannette Thurber. Beckerman has ascertained that Creelman was in fact Dvořák’s mouthpiece in the American press – the actual writer of the words: “I am now satisfied that the future music of this country must be founded upon what are called the Negro melodies.”

DALE COCKRELL (July 20-21), Professor of Music, Vanderbilt University, is a leading authority on **Stephen Foster** and on **blackface minstrelsy**. The latter -- the most popular American entertainment for decades -- is a controversial topic that cannot be ignored. Dvořák adored the minstrel songs of Foster -- and attended blackface shows at which they were sung by white performers caricaturing indolent blacks. To him, the black vernacular inflections of “Old Folks at Home” seemed yet another example of the potency of “Negro melodies.” And yet Dvořák was no racist -- and neither, arguably, was Foster. The topic is the more tangled insofar as contemporary scholarship, favorable to Foster, contradicts conventional wisdom. While the sensitivity of the issues at hand might predispose educators to steer clear, Horowitz’s most rewarding in-school Dvořák experiences have included those that tackled Foster and blackface head on, producing vibrant disagreement and discussion among performers, teachers, and students, white and black.

For the institute, a colloquy is planned including Cockrell and **KEVIN DEAS** (one of today’s most eminent African-American concert singers). Cockrell understands Foster’s songs as empathetic to the marginalized and oppressed. A native of the deep South, he is the author of a seminal, award-winning study -- *Demons of Disorder* -- demonstrating

that pre-bellum minstrelsy had more to do with class than with race; essentially, he argues, it was a court-jester's tool for tweaking the powerful. His nuanced viewpoint is best expressed in his own words:

Minstrelsy was a powerful vehicle for affirming the values of the powerful. And yet -- something Dvořák might have sensed -- it was not unambiguously that. Entertainment has always to some degree served to disrupt the status quo. The music that provides the richest example of the transgressing possibilities of minstrelsy came from the fertile imagination of Stephen Foster. Foster's "Oh! Susanna" (1847), among the first of his blackface songs, is nearly all idiom and convention. It reflected back to white audiences their stereotypical views of blacks and slavery.

"Old Folks at Home" (1851) exhibits a developing political consciousness; it is a song of dialogue between white and black, rich in transgressive possibilities. "My Old Kentucky Home" (1853) makes utterly clear Foster's intention. There is no dialect, for Foster came to condemn it as degrading. The narrative is of a family in happy times, into which comes tragic disruption and death. The chilling reason for their melancholia is that the father-figure is missing: he has been sold downriver. *This family is a family of slaves!* "My Old Kentucky Home" followed directly on the heels of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

After emancipation, with no genius like Foster to guide the way, minstrelsy quickly reverted to racially demeaning earlier forms. Ironically, it was during this time that African-Americans first took to the American stage in number. Early theatrical productions by blacks, including those of Dvořák's onetime student Will Marion Cook, were shaped like typical minstrel shows. Minstrelsy provided a means by which African-Americans could assume a rightful and powerful place in the American musical and theatrical tradition. Minstrelsy also provided loathsome evidence of a fraught, deeply divided society.

Though Deas has long resisted Foster's songs, his response to Cockrell will include "trial" performances of songs by Foster and Cook.

JEAN SNYDER (July 22 field trip) is the biographer of **Harry Burleigh** – Dvořák's black assistant, who acquired plantation song from his blind grandfather, a former slave. Young Harry was celebrated in Erie for his splendid baritone; the community took up a collection to send him to New York to study. His close relationship with Dvořák was mutually inspirational. Dvořák pedigreed plantation song as no American could. Fired by Dvořák, Burleigh was the first to transcribe and perform spirituals as recital songs. He also became famous for his own songs (now forgotten). In contrast to his friend Will Marion Cook, he disavowed jazz as a desecration of his heritage (and so partook in a long-running cultural debate that we will sample and assess). Joined by **KEVIN DEAS** (see above), Snyder will host an all-day Harry Burleigh field trip to Erie, Pa. -- an institute-within-an-institute including historic sites, a Harry Burleigh show, and a choral concert. Deas will reflect on the historic significance of plantation song (a message-

bearing balm for slaves) – as well as on his own travails as a black American singer whose late start in opera (vs. oratorio) reflects a much documented bias against black male protagonists in Verdi or Puccini.

MARIANA WHITMER (July 23) of the University of Pittsburgh will introduce participants to “Voices Across Time” (of which she is co-director). This landmark NEH-supported effort incorporates American popular song into the teaching of American history. Of particular interest will be Dvořák’s arrangement of Foster’s “**Old Folks at Home.**” The original manuscript score and instrumental parts are housed at the **Center for American Music**, a primary source that the teachers will be able to view firsthand during a two-hour afternoon tour of the Center’s resources.

KEVIN DEAS LECTURE/RECITAL (8 pm, July 23): Songs and spirituals by Harry Burleigh, plus “Goin’ Home” (adapting the Largo of the *New World* Symphony) and a visual presentation of the Largo.

WEEK THREE:

The core activity of week three is the development, presentation, and discussion of five **curriculum development projects** (for which the 25 participants will be grouped by grade level). The projects will synthesize the content and strategies taught during weeks one and two. Each will feature an inter-disciplinary lesson plan. The projects will address academic standards and diverse learning styles. The five groups will meet periodically throughout the institute, with ample opportunity to confer with faculty and peers. The resources at hand, in addition to readings and the interactive DVD, include an individual subscription (furnished without charge to each participant) to the Naxosmusiclibrary website, with hundreds of hours of pertinent music. Participants will also have access (without borrowing privileges) to University of Pittsburgh libraries. The finished projects will be posted on a Pittsburgh Symphony Dvořák Institute website at the conclusion of the institute. Possible topics include:

- Blackface minstrelsy, Stephen Foster, and American popular entertainment. What do they tell us about the American experience? What was Dvořák’s response?
- Dvořák, race, and American national identity. Why such different turn-of-the-century perspectives in New York City and Boston?
- The Harry Burleigh story. How did Burleigh and Dvořák “appropriate” black culture? Did they honor it or “sanitize” it? What did the Harlem Renaissance have to say about cultural appropriation?
- Late 19th century nationalism (cultural and political) in Europe and the United States. How does culture define a nation? How has music defined the United States? Is nationalism good or bad for nations?
- The American West, Manifest Destiny, and the pioneer ethos. How did Dvořák’s “American style” illuminate the American vision of iconic nineteenth century painters (Church, Catlin, etc.) and writers (Cooper, Longfellow, etc.)?

Joe Horowitz and Jean Snyder will be on hand all 15 days, as will be **HARRY DAWE**, our master teacher, who brings decades of pedagogical experience to the institute. Long a

crusader for curricular reform, he was the key liaison between Horowitz's New York Philharmonic Dvořák project and New York City's Fieldston School (itself a leading force in curricular reform).

Applicant Eligibility

Full-time teachers in American public middle and high schools (grades 5 to 12) are eligible to apply, as are teachers from parochial, charter, independent, private, and home-schools (including home-schooling parents). Americans teaching abroad are also eligible if a majority of the students are American citizens. Librarians and school administrators are also eligible. Up to three institute spaces are available for current full-time graduate students who intend to pursue careers in K-12 teaching. Teachers at schools in the US or its territorial possessions or Americans teaching in foreign schools where at least 50 per cent of the students are American nationals are eligible. Applicants must be US citizens, residents of US jurisdictions, or foreign nationals who have been residing in the US or its territories for at least the three years immediately preceding the application deadline.

Knowledge of music is not required for the Dvořák institute. You will not be asked to read music or play an instrument, but we will be singing. We encourage applications from teachers of all pertinent subjects, including Social Studies, Music, and Literature. We encourage colleagues from complementary disciplines at the same school to apply to the institute to foster collaborative teaching.

Housing

Rooms will be available at the [Shadyside Inn](#) at a special low rate for all participants: comfortable, spacious studios (at \$1980) and two-bedroom suites (at \$1270 each) with a full living room, dining room and kitchen (all utilities are included). Located exactly one mile from the Music Building where the institute will be held, the Shadyside Inn provides weekly maid service, air conditioning, telephone (with answering machine), TV with cable, all linens and kitchenware, as well as other amenities at no additional cost. The Shadyside Inn is adjacent to restaurants, shopping, and nightlife, within an attractive residential area. Although it is an easy, almost flat walk to campus, the Shadyside Inn offers a complimentary shuttle. You will likely want to share these wonderful accommodations, and we will be happy to assist with these arrangements. We can also assist participants who wish to bring their families, or seek alternative accommodations.

Stipend

You will receive a \$2,700 stipend to help to cover expenses associated with travel, housing, and meals. You will not be asked to pre-pay for housing before you arrive, and all reading and listening materials will be furnished by the institute.

Continuing Education Credit

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (Act 48) will provide continuing education credit. Participants from other states may inquire about interstate reciprocity in advance of the Institute and we will assist you with that process.

Cultural and Recreational Resources

The [University of Pittsburgh](#) is situated in the Oakland section of the city, where there is a readily available assortment of cultural and recreational opportunities in an attractive urban environment. Across the street from the campus, The Carnegie complex contains the region's main public library, a music hall, a fine arts museum, and a natural history museum (which contains the world's largest dinosaur collection). Also nearby is the [Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens](#). An assortment of restaurants offers an ethnically varied menu for those with adventurous tastes, although there are many offering traditional fare as well. There are also three Starbucks within walking distance, as well as other coffee establishments. Retail shops, including new and used bookstores, banks, and a post office are all conveniently located within easy walking distance. Abundant running or walking trails are found within close proximity at Schenley Park. Religious services are held at various sites near campus. Information concerning the City of Pittsburgh can be found at www.pitt.edu/pittsburgh/index.html, and we recommend the online tour of the campus and surroundings at <http://www.umc.pitt.edu/tour/>.

Application Information

Application information is included with this letter. Please be sure to fill out the online application cover sheet completely, according to the instructions. Your completed application should be postmarked no later than **March 2, 2010**, and addressed to Nicole Longevin-Burroughs at the Pittsburgh Symphony:

Nicole Longevin-Burroughs
Education and Community Engagement
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
Heinz Hall
600 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222

Perhaps the most important part of the application is your **essay**. It should be **four pages maximum (double-spaced)** and touch on the following: your reasons for applying, your relevant personal and academic experience, your qualifications to do the work at hand, and the relationship of the institute to your town teaching. Don't hesitate to contact Joseph Horowitz at jh@josephhorowitz.com with any questions.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Sincerely,
Joseph Horowitz