# II. From the New World

# America—An Unfinished Symphony

by Robert Ingraham

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Dec. 10—The people of America are now crying out for something which will give their lives purpose, something which will define a pathway to a better and happier future. The signs of this are everywhere. The cultural cesspool of meaningless "escapism," which has entrapped millions over the recent decades, is now under siege, as women and men, young and old, now seek, even demand, policies and ideas which will provide them with the opportunities for a more productive and meaningful life.

This is the clear lesson of both the 2016 and 2018 elections. The "letter" that has been delivered by the American people is unambiguous: "Stop destroying us." But this is not a "negative" message. It is not a "protest." It is a demand by citizens to be allowed to have a future. It is an unspoken insistence that America live up to its promise to be a nation "of the people, by the people and for the people." This is a message of optimism, a determined commitment that a better future, a more productive and happier life, is possible, and what we have been witnessing is a willingness among growing numbers of Americans to fight for that future.

It is within the reality of this still unfolding potential that we present here a lesson—a vignette—from American history, one which has both parallels to, and a direct bearing on, the challenge we face today, and one



Antonín Dvořák, in 1897.

which, if carefully examined, will help illuminate the quality of political and cultural effort now required, if we are to be successful.

We shall look at a juxtaposition of two seemingly discrete, unrelated historical processes. These are the visit to America by the Czech composer Antonín Dvořák from 1892 to 1895 and the Presidency of William McKinley from 1897 to 1901. Thus, we are looking at a nineyear "slice" of America's history, from 1892 to 1901. There are great lessons to be learned from doing this, and in many ways the current efforts of the Schiller Institute and the LaRouche Political Action Committee bear a striking resemblance to what was attempted at that time. Reac-

quainting ourselves with those efforts will help to strengthen and improve our own efforts today.

#### I. Dvořák in America

Antonín Leopold Dvořák, together with his family, arrived in America on September 27, 1892. They entered New York City only days before the launching of an extended celebration, honoring the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' discovery of what became known as the Americas. Beginning on October 10, for three days, Manhattan was the scene of continuous celebrations, parades, speeches and musical concerts. The center of events was Union Square, where Dvořák was temporarily residing in a hotel. Witnessing the ongoing festivities in the street below, he wrote a letter to his friend Karel Bastar:

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Just imagine row after row [of marchers], an incredible procession of people working both in the fields of industry and the crafts, and huge numbers of gymnasts—among them members of the Czech Sokol—and crowds of people from the arts and also many nationalities and colors. And all of this went on uninterruptedly, from dawn until 2:00 in the morning.... Thousands upon thousands of people, and an ever-changing sight! And you should hear all the kinds of music! ... Well, America seems to have demonstrated all it is and all it is capable of! I haven't got enough words to describe it all.

This was Dvořák's introduction to the "New World." Dvořák came to America at the invitation of Jeanette Thurber, the founder of The National Conservatory of Music. Established in 1885, the Conservatory adopted a Mission Statement declaring its intention to operate at the highest European musical standards, to reach out to women, minorities and the handicapped, and to provide full scholarships to the poor, especially to the children and grandchildren of former slaves. By 1893, almost

one third of the students at the Conservatory were African-American. Dvořák was to head the composition department of the Conservatory, and he was encouraged by Thurber to compose new music on American themes, particularly a symphony called "From the New World." Thurber also introduced Dvořák to an individual named Harry Burleigh.

The Conservatory was not merely a "school" or a local New York institution. In 1888, appealing to the U.S. Congress for federal funding, which was denied, Thurber argued,

America has, so far, done nothing in a national way either to promote the musical education of its people or to develop any musical genius they possess, and that in this, she stands alone among civilized nations of the world.

What was intended was nothing less than a national policy for the aesthetic education of the very diverse American citizenry.



Façade of The National Conservatory of Music of America, 47-49 W. 25th St., New York City, December 31, 1904.

#### **American Music**

Writing later in life, Harry Burleigh recalled that when, in early 1893, he sang for Dvořák the Spiritual *Go Down Moses*, Dvořák immediately remarked, "Burleigh, that is as great as a Beethoven theme." Beginning as early as December 1892, Dvořák began working on various

"American" themes for their incorporation into new musical compositions. During this time, from the very beginning of his stay in New York, Thurber arranged for Burleigh to sing the plantation spirituals several times a week for Dvořák.

Burleigh was the grandson of slaves, and it was through his maternal grandfather, as well as his mother, that he learned the plantation songs. Through his mother's employer, he was introduced to classical music, and by his early 20s he was already an accomplished classical singer. Accepted as a student at the National Con-

servatory, at the age of 26, when he arrived in New York, he also joined the men and boys choir at the Free African Church of St. Philip's, a majority-black Episcopalian church, founded in 1809 and led for more than 30 years by the great African-American patriot and abolitionist Peter Williams, Jr. Two other members of the



University of North Carolina Press The Reverend Peter Williams, Jr. (1786-1840).

<sup>1.</sup> See "Hail Columbia, Happy Land!,", by Robert Ingraham, EIR, Vol. 44, Nos. 42 and 43, Oct. 20 and 27, 2017.

Church choir also studied under Dvořák at the Conservatory, and the entire Church choir performed under the direction of Dvořák at an historic concert held in Madison Square Garden in 1894.

In 1941, speaking at a commemoration for the hundredth anniversary of Dvořák's birth, the 83-year-old Harry Burleigh, said:

It was Dvořák who taught me that the spirituals were meant not only for the colored people, but for people of all races, and every creed. In New York, I was with Dr. Dvořák almost constantly. He loved to hear me sing the old plantation melodies. His humility and religious feeling—his great love for common people of all lands—enabled him to

sense the pure gold of plantation song. As an outsider ... he honored this music with more authority than any American could, whether black or white. It was Dvořák who urged me to take these melodies to the world, to sing them alongside the great art songs of Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms. If I was the first to undertake this, it was Dvořák who instructed me to do so.... We will always remember him as a great musician, but also for his greatness as a human being who understood, in the songs of the plantation, proof of the Negro's spiritual ascendancy over oppression and humiliation. who understood the message ever manifest: that the eventual deliverance from all that hinders and oppresses the soul will come, and man—every man—will be free.

Consider that statement: "the eventual deliverance from all that hinders and oppresses the soul will come, and man—every man—will be free." The spirituals which Burleigh sang, the themes Dvořák strove to incorporate in his new American music—yes, they conveyed the anguish and suffering of a people who have been oppressed, but their beauty, their essence is in the transcendence of their suffering. These are melodies



Harry T. Burleigh

not of stoic surrender but of liberation, and Dvořák saw in them the essence of the true *Idea of America*—a nation, constitutionally founded on a mission to develop an ever "more perfect union," where those who have been oppressed and denied hope, will see the beacon of a better future.

In his composition classes at the Conservatory, Dvořák instructed his students to compose new themes, many based on the spirituals. From these he would choose a handful that he considered suitable for "development." The students would then be instructed to incorporate the themes into an already existing Beethoven sonata, and to work on polyphony, key changes and modes to bring out the full potential of the themes.

As Burleigh states, elements of

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot are to be found in the second theme of the first movement of the New World Symphony; the Largo movement of the same symphony was written after Dvořák had read the famine scene in Longfellow's Hiawatha; and other influences of the American Spirituals are apparent in all of the music Dvořák composed in America. But these finished compositions, as well as the work with his students, were not "technical" exercises. It was the Soul of America that Dvořák was investigating, and it was the ongoing creative mission of America that he sought to aid and propagate.

In early 1893, Dvořák stunned the American music world with his statement, as reported in the *New York Herald*, that "In the Negro melodies of America I discover all that is needed for a great and noble school of music." And in a May 21 interview with the same newspaper, Dvořák proclaimed,

I am now satisfied that the future music of this country must be based on what are called the Negro melodies. This must be the foundation of any serious and original school of composition to be developed in the United States.... These beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil. They are American.

# Iowa, Chicago, and the Reaction

In June 1893, Dvořák, with his family, left Manhattan for an extended summer vacation at a Czech community in Spillville, Iowa. There, in a burst of creative energy, within an eight-week period, he completed the final revisions for his Symphony No. 9 (*From the New World*) and composed both his String Quartet in F (the "American") and the String Quintet in E-flat.

In August, Dvořák traveled to Chicago to visit the World's Columbian Exposition, a world's fair organized to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the New World. While there, he conducted a performance of his Eighth Symphony and supervised the first public performance of his "American" String Quartet. Between May 1 and November 1, more than 27 million visitors attended the Columbian Exposition.

None of what Dvořák was attempting took place within a political or cultural vacuum. The Chicago Exposition itself was the scene of a sharp intervention by African-American leaders. A boycott of the fair was organized to protest the exclusion of African-American exhibits. An 81-page booklet, authored by Ida Wells, Frederick Douglass, and others was produced and distributed both at the fair and throughout the nation. Titled "The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition," the pamphlet also took up the issue of the dramatic increase of lynchings, both in the South and elsewhere in the country.

At the same time, a vicious attack was organized against Dvořák, escalating dramatically after the December 16, 1893 premier of his New World Symphony at Carnegie Hall. Out of Boston, an eighth-generation Boston "blue blood" and music critic for the *Boston Herald*, Phillip Hale, took the point in spear-heading the assault on Dvořák and his theories concerning "Negro" music.

This attack became a trans-Atlantic onslaught, one in which Dvořák's friend and champion Johannes Brahms was also targeted. Composers from both Europe and America, including Anton Bruckner, were recruited to attack Dvořák, as was the Dean of Harvard's music faculty, and many other "musical authorities." Typical of these attacks was the statement by the composer John Knowles Paine, who wrote, "In my estimation, it is a preposterous idea to say that in the future, American music will rest upon such an alien foundation as the melodies of a yet largely undeveloped race," as well as the statement by the composer George Chadwick, who stated, "Such negro melodies as I have

heard I should be sorry to see become the basis of an American school of musical composition."

The Boston "music critic" William Apthorp wrote, "The great bane of the present Slavic and Scandinavian schools is, and has been, the attempt to make civilized music by civilized methods, out of essentially barbaric material. Our American Negro music has every element of barbarism to be found in Slavic and Scandinavian folk music, it is essentially barbarous music." And Phillip Hale chimed in, calling Dvořák "an uncultured Czech in America ... stupefied by the din and hustle of a new life"

This battle raged through 1894 and 1895; yet, to appreciate what was actually going on, it is critical to take the controversy out of the realm of "music theory" and place it in its precise historical context. All of the events described above took place in the months leading up the infamous 1896 Supreme Court *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, a decision which reversed, as national policy, all of the victories for human freedom and progress won by Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses Grant, and the sacrifice and blood of hundreds of thousands of Union soldiers, by justifying racial segregation. It was the *New Birth of Freedom*, as defined by Lincoln at Gettysburg in 1863, which was the intended target of this oligarchical attack.

Undeterred, Dvořák continued his work with the National Conservatory, as well as his compositional efforts, including his Cello Concerto in B minor, Op. 104b, and his now little-performed *American Suite* in A major, Op. 98b. In April 1895, he left the United States and returned to his home in Europe. Shortly before leaving, he wrote and published a "Farewell to America" in *Harper's Magazine*, in which he states:

It matters little whether the common inspiration ... is derived from the Negro melodies, the songs of the Creoles, the red man's chant, or the plaintive ditties of the homesick German or Norwegian; the germs of the best in music lie hidden among all the races that are commingled in this great country ... [but] the most potent as well as beautiful among them are certain of the ... plantation melodies and slave songs. I, for one, am delighted by them. When music has been established as one of the reigning arts of the land, another wreath of fame and glory will be added to the country which earned the name "Land of Freedom" by unshackling her slaves at the price of her own blood.

### II. McKinley

Eighteen months after Dvořák's departure from New York, William McKinley was elected President of the United States. McKinley is the unsung giant of American history. Washington, Hamilton, Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt are names known by all, while McKinley languishes in near obscurity. Yet, his eternal place belongs shoulder-to-shoulder with these others.

Between 1877 and 1933, it was McKinley who towered over everyone as the champion of the *Idea of America* and the great defender of the victories achieved by Lincoln and Grant between 1861 and 1877.

Consider the eulogies which McKinley delivered for Ulysses Grant on April 27, 1893, and Abraham Lincoln on February 12, 1895, the latter while Dvořák was still in New York. In the Eulogy for Lincoln, McKinley said:

Washington enforced the Declaration of Independence as against England; Lincoln proclaimed its fulfillment not only to a downtrodden race in America, but to all people for all time who may seek

the protection of our flag. These illustrious men achieved grander results for mankind within a single century, from 1775 to 1865, than any other men ever accomplished in all the years since first the flight of time began....

While in the Eulogy for Grant he stated:

Lincoln proclaimed liberty to four million slaves, and upon his act invited "the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God." He has received the warm approval of the one, and I am sure he is enjoying the generous benediction of the other.... Grant

gave irresistible power and efficacy to the Proclamation of Liberty. The iron shackles which Lincoln declared should be loosed from the limbs and souls of the black slaves, Grant with his matchless army melted and destroyed in the burning glories of the war; and the rebels read the inspired decree in the flashing guns of his artillery, and they knew what Lincoln had decreed Grant would execute.... Grant believed in

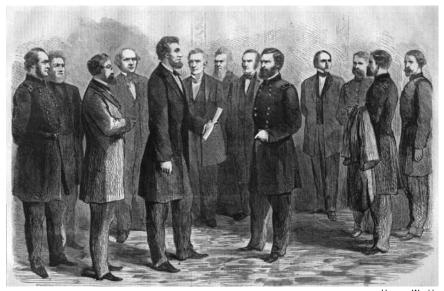
the brotherhood man—in the political equality of all men—he had secured that with his sword, and was prompt to recognize it in all places and everywhere.... We are not a Nation of hero worshippers. We are a Nation of generous freemen. We bow in affectionate reverence and with most grateful hearts to these immortal names, Washington. Lincoln. and Grant, and will guard with sleepless vigilance their mighty work and cherish their memories evermore.

Decades earlier, in 1867, the young McKinley delivered his first public speech. It was titled "On Black Equality." Therein, he says:



President William McKinley delivering his inaugural address in Washington, DC on March 4, 1897.

I speak for my comrades of the Grand Army of the Republic—the settlements of that war must stand as the irreversible judgment of battle and the inflexible decree of a Nation of free men. They must not be misinterpreted, they must not be nullified, they must not be weakened or shorn of their force under any pretext whatsoever.... It must not be equality and justice in the written law only. It must be equality and justice in the law's administration everywhere, and alike administered in every part of the Republic to every citizen thereof. It must not be the cold formality



Harpers Weekly

Major General Ulysses S. Grant receiving his commission as Lieutenant General of the U.S. Army from President Lincoln on March 10, 1864.

of constitutional enactment. It must be a living birthright....

Our black allies must neither be forsaken nor deserted. I weigh my words. This is the great question not only of the present, but is the great question of the future; and this question will never be settled until it is settled upon principles of justice, recognizing the sanctity of the Constitution of the United States.

# A Beacon of Hope

Following 1877, the great victory for humanity that had been secured by Lincoln and Grant, was reversed, step by step, such that by the 1890s every southern state had repudiated its "Reconstruction government," removed its African-American elected officials and returned to *de facto* Confederate rule. This is best epitomized in the 1890 statement by Benjamin Tillman, newly elected Governor of South Carolina: "The triumph of Democracy and white supremacy over mongrelism and anarchy is most complete."

In the 24 years from 1877 to 1901, it was McKinley, more than any other national political leader, who fought this reactionary tide. In the South, the Republican Party split between the "Black-and-Tan" Republicans, dedicated to continuing the work of Reconstruction, and the "Lily White" Republicans who demanded acquiescence in the Jim Crow laws. McKinley vigor-

ously backed the Black-and-Tans, and their support for him was critical in securing the 1896 Republican Party Presidential nomination.

In his first action as President, the delivery of his March, 1897 Inaugural Address, McKinley denounced the practice of "lynching," the very issue brought to the 1893 Chicago Exposition by Ida Wells and Frederick Douglass, and as President he acted aggressively to secure government positions for many of the former African-American Congressmen and elected officials who had lost their offices with the reimposition of Confederate rule in the South.

This fight continued through McKinley's years as President. The 1892 Chicago Exposition battle over

black equality was revisited at the 1901 Buffalo Pan-American Exposition in 1901. At the 1901 Exposition, there were two exhibits portraying blacks in America. One was on the theme of the "Old Plantation," showing stereotyped, docile slaves; the other was an exhibit created by W.E.B. Dubois, celebrating African-American contributions to science, and the improvement of America.

For McKinley, as in the case of Lincoln, Grant and Dvořák—as well as what we see later in Martin Luther King—none of this was simply about "civil rights" for one section of the population. The fight was one of fulfilling the promise of America for all of humanity, the *Idea of America*, intended to liberate all peoples from the bestial oppression of oligarchical rule.

A clear expression of this intention is seen in the speech delivered by McKinley at the Pan-American exposition on September 5, 1901—his final speech. He says:

Gentlemen, let us ever remember that our interest is in concord, not conflict, and that our real eminence rests in the victories of peace, not those of war. We hope that all who are represented here may be moved to higher and nobler effort for their own and the world's good, and that out of this city may come not only greater commerce and trade for us all, but, more essen-



Library of Congress

President McKinley, a Civil War veteran, speaking at the 40th anniversary of the Lincoln-Douglas debate in Galesburg, Ilinois, October 1898.

tial than these, relations of mutual respect, confidence, and friendship, which will deepen and endure. Our earnest prayer is that God will graciously vouchsafe prosperity, happiness, and peace to all our neighbors and like blessings to all the peoples and powers of earth.

McKinley was assassinated the very next day.

#### **America's Mission**

When the 1888 Presidential election resulted in the ascension of the Democrat Grover Cleveland to the White House, McKinley responded with a statement:

The Democratic victory has established beyond dispute or controversy the partnership between the Democratic free-trade leaders of the United States and the statesmen and ruling classes of Great Britain. It is a powerful alliance—a resolute and aggressive combination. If you have any doubt of it, I beg you will read the English press and the Democratic press of the United States just before and since the elections, and you will be convinced that they are fighting in the same unpatriotic cause, engaged in the same crusade against our industries. They rejoice to-

gether over the same victory. Theirs is a joint warfare against American labor and American wages, a plot against the industrial life of the Nation, a blow at the American Commonwealth.

McKinley, like Grant and Lincoln, knew that the British Empire was America's mortal enemy, and that the policies and axioms of that empire represented a view of humanity violently opposed to the principles which framed the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Today's revisionist historians accuse McKinley himself of being an imperialist, of creating an American Empire with the Spanish-American War. It is important here to set that record straight.

A Spanish colony, Cuba did not abolish slavery until 1886, and afterwards, the 400,000-plus "freed" slaves, as well as 100,000 indentured Chinese laborers, con-

tinued to be held in *de facto* bondage. Policies of the ruling government were brutal toward both the former slaves as well as the rest of the population. A revolt against Spanish rule had taken place from 1868 to 1875, and in 1895 another uprising began. The island quickly descended into chaos. Demands for U.S. intervention began immediately. In February 1896, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution recognizing the Cuban revolt and declaring a state of war with Spain. Although this was a non-binding resolution, the fuse for war had been lit. On the day of McKinley's inauguration, in March 1897, outgoing President Cleveland told him that he was leaving him a war with Spain.

In his December 1897 State of Union message, President McKinley was explicit that the carnage in Cuba was entirely the result of Spanish rule. He stated:

The cruel policy of concentration was initiated February 16, 1896. The productive districts controlled by the Spanish armies were depopulated. The agricultural inhabitants were herded in and about the garrison towns, their lands laid waste and their dwellings destroyed. This policy the late cabinet of Spain justified as a necessary measure of war and as a means of cutting off supplies from the insurgents. It has utterly failed

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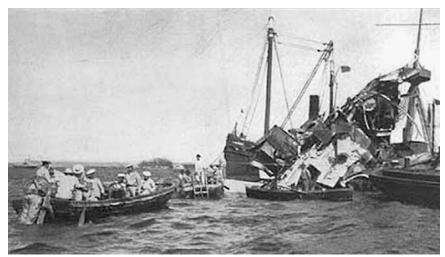


Photo by UIG/Buyenlarge

The wreck of the USS Maine after exploding in Havana Harbor, Cuba on Feb. 15, 1898.

as a war measure. It was not civilized warfare. It was extermination <sup>2</sup>

Despite his moral sympathy with the Cuban rebels, McKinley resisted intense pressure from Congress, the news media, and from within his own administration to go to war with Spain during his first year in office. He launched an intensive diplomatic effort to persuade Spain to give up Cuba, so that an independent government could be established. Even at the point of the sinking of the USS Maine in February 1898, McKinley resisted the

war cries and attempted to force a political solution. Yet, much like Donald Trump today, he was surrounded by adherents of the Anglo-American establishment who were demanding war.

William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer's *New York Herald* howled for war, and after the *USS Maine* exploded in Havana harbor, the



Romantic painting of Col. Theodore Roosevelt leading his Rough Riders in the battle of San Juan Hill, near Santiago de Cuba, on July 1, 1898.

New York Journal issued a one-million-run "special edition" demanding war.

Within his own administration, McKinley had to contend with the likes of Teddy Roosevelt and other Anglophile imperialists. Roosevelt, then the Undersecretary of the Navy, used the opportunity of the absence of Secretary of the Navy John D. Long, to personally order a full-scale alert in the Pacific, preparing Adm. George Dewey for the attack on the Philippines.

On April 19, 1898, the United States declared war on Spain. Yet,

McKinley made very clear to the American people, and to the rest of the world, the true war aims motivating America. In giving his consent to the Declaration of War, McKinley stated:

As soon as we are in possession of Cuba and have pacified the island it will be necessary to give aid and direction to its people to form a government for themselves. This should be undertaken at the earliest moment consistent with safety and assured success. It is important that our relations with this people shall be of the

most friendly character and our commercial relations close and reciprocal. It should be our duty to assist in every proper way to build up the waste places of the island, encourage the industry of the people, and assist them to form a government which shall be free and independent, thus realizing the best aspirations of the Cuban people.

Spanish rule must be replaced by a just, benevolent, and humane government, created by the people of Cuba, capable of performing all in-

<sup>2.</sup> This policy of extermination warfare would be repeated by the British Empire in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902.



President McKinley speaking before 50,000 people at the Pan-American Exposition on Sept. 5, 1901. He was assassinated the next day.

ternational obligations, and which shall encourage thrift, industry, and prosperity and promote peace and good will among all of the inhabitants, whatever may have been their relations in the past.

# III. Principles Must Always Lead

To continue, for another moment, with William McKinley: On July 4, 1891, he delivered a speech in Woodstock, Connecticut. On that occasion, he stated:

It is a common thing to say, but a good thing to say, because it is true, that we have the best Government in the world. It represents the best thought and the best civilization; ave, more—it represents the hope and future of mankind; and yet it has never been as good as its principles. It was not so from the beginning, and it is not now.... Our principles are always better than our practices. This is true of individuals as well as nations.... Principles must always lead; they are the advance guard of right thought and action.... The founders of this Republic declared better than they did.... The Declaration of Independence, which sounded the voice of liberty to all mankind, was in advance of the thought of the great body of the people.... It took a hundred years of National life and National thought and

earnest agitation, and at last wasting war, to place this Government where the Declaration of Independence anchored it....

There must, I repeat, be a remedy for every wrong, a road somewhere and somehow to be found, which leads to righteousness. We can only pursue the right as it appears to us; the rest we can leave to others, and the ultimate victory may be nearer than we think. When Lincoln entered upon the execution of his great office in the turbulent year of 1861, he had not formulated the immortal Proclamation of Emancipation. When Grant started upon his final campaign against Lee, in front of Richmond, he had not thought of that famous letter [of terms of surrender].... Every great historical event in the world's progress has had its preceding steps.

Those who guided and directed could not always foresee with precision the outcome and the end; they only knew what seemed right and true to them, and so, pursuing the right and the truth, mighty epochs have been marked in the world's history, and mighty results achieved for mankind.

Thus, America—and the living Principle that is America—is an ongoing composition, one in which each new generation must take up the pen to continue its composition—never complete, but ever more perfect, always striving to fulfill past promises. This is what Dvořák saw in the essence and the potential of America, and this is what he sought to enrich and further with his efforts. This, too, is the commitment to which McKinley always remained loyal.

Today, that pledge is seen explicitly in Lyndon La-Rouche's Manhattan Project and Helga LaRouche's Schiller Institute—to better the human soul, to improve our hearts, and in so doing, to ennoble each of us to act, to once and for all eliminate the still-present vestiges of British imperial financial rule. Our task is to accept the mission of Lincoln, Grant and McKinley, to learn the lesson of Dvořák's work with the National Conservatory and to awaken in the hearts of our fellow citizens a yearning for a human, productive and creative future.