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Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection

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Saturday, October 4th, 2003, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

- [Clifford Vaughan](#) (1893-1987). Oriental Translations for Denishawn, Movements 1-5, 7 (1933). The Vaughan Ensemble, Clifford Vaughan, Cambria CD-1041. 15:58
- Clifford Vaughan. Hindu Rhapsody (1938). Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra, Vit Micka, MMC2121. 16:22
- [Henry F. Gilbert](#) (1868-1928). The Dance in Place Congo (1918). Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Calvin Simmons, New World Records 80228-2. 9:13

This month we listen to two American composers of a few generations ago who tackled the problem of American identity in different ways. Clifford Vaughan worked as the Music Director in the late '20s and '30s for the groundbreaking Denishawn Dance Company, the inventors of modern dance in America, before he went on to success as a film and TV orchestrator in Hollywood. During dance tours through the Far East he picked up sounds and transformed those into pieces for the troupe. "White Jade," No. 3 of Oriental Translations, became a signature piece for Ruth St. Denis, one of the company's founders. This recording is a re-release of the original 1941 LP. The Hindu Rhapsody likewise uses tunes Vaughan heard on the street and at religious rituals, put together in a scintillating score. In this recording from last year, as well as the earlier one, listen for his craftsmanship in drawing brilliant colors from small ensembles.

Henry F. Gilbert may have been the first to take to heart Dvorák's challenge to American composers to use the unique musical contributions of African-Americans in crafting a national style. He based The Dance in Place Congo on an article he read describing the slave sector in New Orleans, appending a ballet program to increase the work's chance of success. Like Vaughan, he borrowed exotic tunes, but here they are more homegrown French Creole songs. A love story leads to raucous dancing, but the tolling of the bell at 9 o'clock forces the slaves to depart to their quarters, and the piece ends as, in Gilbert's words: "the orchestra breaks forth with the tragic cry of the introduction: the cry of racial revolt against slavery. The dark background or frame of the dance-picture is completed and the composition ends with the note of tragedy in which it began."

Hosted by [Kile Smith](#), Curator of the Fleisher Collection, and [Jack Moore](#), Program Director of WRTI. In *Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection* we uncover the unknown, rediscover the little-known, and take a fresh look at some of the remarkable treasures housed in the Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music in the [Free Library of Philadelphia](#). The Fleisher Collection is the largest lending library of orchestral performance material in the world. For recording details, please go to our [web page](#). For a detailed list of all our shows, please visit our [archives](#).