In The Souls of Black Folk (1903), W.E.B. Du Bois theorized that black peoples were viewed behind a metaphorical “veil” that consisted of three interrelated aspects: the skin as an indication of African Americans’ difference from their white counterparts, white people’s lack of capacity to see African Americans as Americans, and African Americans’ lack of capacity to see themselves outside of the labels white America has given them. This, according to Du Bois, resulted in the gift and curse of “double consciousness,” the feeling that one’s identity is divided. As African Americans fought for socio-political equality, the reconciliation of these halves became essential in creating a new identity in America by creating a distinct voice in the age of modernity. Intellectuals and artists of the Harlem Renaissance began to create new art forms with progressive messages that strove to uplift the race and ultimately lift the veil. William Grant Still (1895–1978), an American composer of African descent, accomplished this goal in his opera Blue Steel (1934) by changing how blackness—defined here as characteristics attributed to and intended to indicate the otherness of people of African or African-American descent—was portrayed on the operatic stage. Still exemplifies what Houston A. Baker called “mastery of form” by presenting double consciousness in the interactions of three characters, Blue Steel, Venable, and Neola, in order to offer a new and complex reading of blackness.