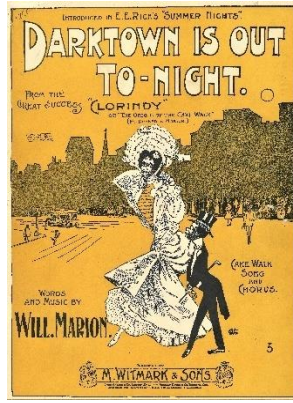
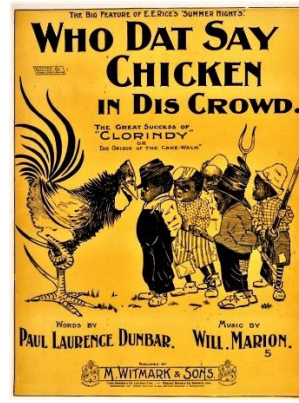




A



B



D

The CAKE-WALK: Visibility, Staging a Presence

The African American composer and violinist Will Marion Cook had already studied at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik with Joseph Joachim, the famous violinist and associate of Brahms, when following his introductory American concert, a critic labeled him “America’s finest Negro violinist.” Furious at the limits implied by the critic, Cook abandoned the violin and set his sights on pursuing musical composition. Partnering with the famed poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar he set out to write a Negro musical. The work, eventually titled “*Clorindy-The Origins of the Cake Walk*,” became the first all-black musical production on Broadway in 1898. However, Cook’s mother thought it a disgrace, that her son, with all his European training, was now composing a “nigger” musical. To disguise his family’s association with this early work, Cook composed under the name Will Marion, but like his mother, kept Negro respectability high on his agenda. Cook, along with other African American theater talents of the day, sought to present themselves in contemporary ways, bringing into prominence black women, and performing coupled with them in fashionable dress, with mainstream concerns and a self-possessed dignity. Together, in a concerted effort, they worked to move beyond the southern rooted and enslaved characterizations that had come to define and limit the black presence on the American stage.

A. **When You Ain’t Got No Money, Well You Needn’t Come ‘Round**, 1899

Publisher: M. Witmark & Sons, 49-51 West 28th Street

Art Supplement: Chicago INTER-OCEAN

B. **Darktown Is Out To-Night**, 1898“

“*Clorindy - The Origins of the Cake Walk*”

Lyrics & Music: Will Marion (Cook)

Publisher: M. Witmark & Sons, 49-51 West 28th Street

C. **Der’Il Be Wahm Coons A Prancin’**, 1898

Lyrics: Paul Laurence Dunbar

Music: Will Marion (Cook)

Publisher: Musical Supplement of the San Francisco Sunday Examiner

D. **Who Dat Say Chickens In Dis Crowd**, 1898

“*Clorindy - The Origins of the Cake Walk*”

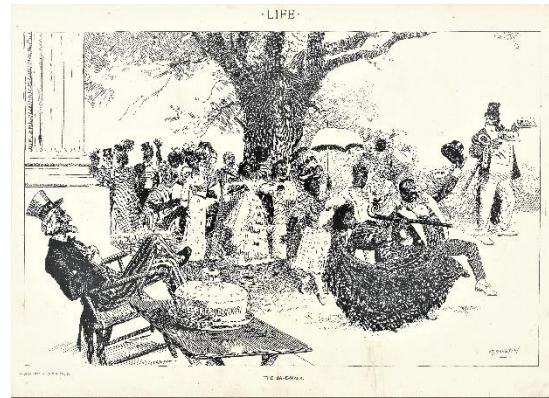
Lyrics: Paul Laurence Dunbar

Music: Will Marion (Cook)

Publisher: M. Witmark & Sons, 49-51 West 28th Street



B



C

The CAKE-WALK: From Dance to Politics

Aida Overton Walker the performer, choreographer and wife of George Walker of the Williams & Walker Co. said that among African American performers the cake-walk was an old fashioned dance, but that it became a popular 20th Century sensation after they performed it in the musical *"In Dahomey"* while on tour in Europe. The dance and its associated ragtime rhythms soon became an international craze. The cake-walk was so recognizable and synonymous with African Americans that it was often cartooned in both American and European publications with depictions that took on political and racist overtones. In a French illustration of the period, America's president, Theodore Roosevelt is hoisted "child-like" in the arms of a black woman, as she tugs on the tail of Venezuela's president, Cipriano Castro. The implication being, that Roosevelt was racially "manipulated" into siding with Venezuela against an embargo then underway by Great Britain, Germany and Italy. In a 1904 American cartoon, Roosevelt's *"Cake-Walk"* re-election to the White House implies a disloyal "blackening" up to African American voters while strutting on the arm of a black woman, not unlike supposed earlier wins by Grover Cleveland who is standing nearby. The century old illustration has a similarity to the Republican's current "cartoon-like" spin that demonizes President Biden for being in an implied "suspicious" African American conspiracy with Georgia's Stacey Abrams over his 2020 election win.

A. The Cake-Walk No. 5

Performers: Williams & Walker Co., circa 1903

Aida Overton Walker, George Walker, Lottie Williams & Bert Williams

Published: Franz Huld Publishers, NY

B. Le Cake-Walk, Paris Salon

Published: L'illustration, Janvier, 1903, France

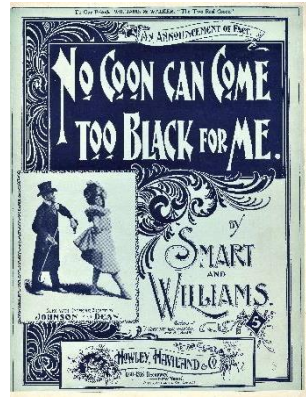
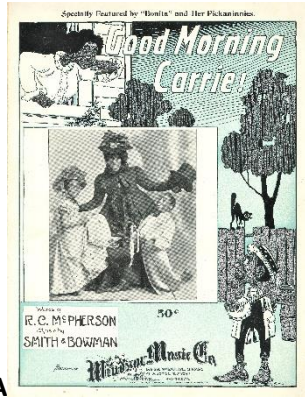
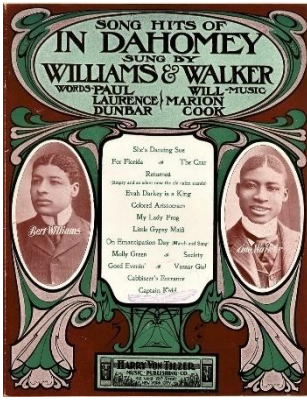
C. The Cake-Walk, caricature

Artist: Charles Broughton

Publisher: Life Publishing Co., 1904

D. Le Cake-Walk Officiel, caricature

Publication: Le Rire, Mars, 1903, France



The CAKE-WALK: Theater History and Musical Influence

At the time when the African American theater troupe, the Williams & Walker Co. took to the stage, there were more white's imitating blacks on the American stage than actual African Americans. The company led by Bert Williams and George Walker, sought to disassociate from that tradition and confirm their authenticity by self-titling themselves, "*The Two Real Coons.*" Their comic originality was supported by the leading African American performers, dancers and composing talents of the day, soon making them a standout musical presence. The company's production of "*In Dahomey*" was a great success in America, and a smash-hit on a European tour that included a royal performance for King Edward VII at Buckingham Palace. It was that show, and its popularity, that introduced the cake-walk to Europe. Newspapers printed musical supplements offering the show's tunes, serving to further spread its notoriety. African American dance teams like Johnson & Dean, and child performers, tagged "*picks,*" for pickaninnies, performing behind blackface white performers in minstrel shows also advanced the cake-walk to an even wider audience. This popularity encouraged white composers to also embrace its rhythms and to further promote its black associations through lyrics and the cover art of their sheet music, the majority of which was printed by Tin Pan Alley publishers.

A. Song Hits Of In Dahomey, 1903

Theater Production: "*In Dahomey*"

Lyrics: Paul Laurence Dunbar

Music: Will Marion Cook

Publisher: Harry Von Tilzer Music Pub. Co., 42 West 28th Street

B. Good Morning Carrie!, 1901

Words: R. C. McPherson (Cecil Mack)

Performer: Bonita and Her Picaninnies

Music: "Smith & Bowman," - Chris Smith & Elmer Bowman

Publisher: Windsor Music Co., 41 West 28th Street

C. No Coon Comes To Black For Me, 1898

Performers: "Johnson & Dean," - Charles Johnson & Dora Dean (Johnson)

Publisher: Howley, Haviland & Co., 1260-1266 Broadway

D. The Mississippi Side-Step, 1899

Composer: Leo E. Berliner

Publisher: Leo E. Berliner & Co., 42 West 28th Street

E. Evah Dahky Is A King, 1902

Lyrics: E. P. Moran & Paul Laurence Dunbar

Music: Will Marion Cook

Published by Permission: Harry Von Tilzer Music Pub. Co., 42 West 28th Street

Musical Supplement: New York American & Journal, 1902