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CAKEWALKING THE BLACK ATLANTIC

Wagner and Ragtime Cross the Pond

Chantal Frankenbach

> "The 'where' of history is by default, the nation."[1]

In 1905, two years into the cakewalk dance craze that had spilled from the United States to Europe, the German humor magazine *Jugend* printed a color drawing of three smartly dressed cake-walkers: two White women dancing in line with a Black man. The image captures not only the cakewalk's signature stance – torso tilted back, knees lifted, arms raised – and its typically colorful garb and accessories, but also the fears of racial disorder and miscegenation the dance evoked in the U.S. and abroad. As the first of the U.S. "dance fevers" to sweep Europe, the cakewalk spread what Astrid Kusser calls a "rationale of contagion" among those alarmed by the transfer of "savagery" to White society.[2] Further focusing this confrontation, the caption for *Jugend's* cartoon heralds the arrival of the cakewalk as a bad bargain of national proportions, citing for comparison another perceived national swindle – Germany's government-sanctioned exchange of U.S. professors for learned men from the esteemed University of Berlin. "It seems that America doesn't just swap professors for its use and uplift: It has taken *Parsifal* from us and paid for it with the Cake-Walk" (Figure 12.1).

The us-and-them rivalry in this nationalist critique centers on an exchange of exemplary cultural products. *Parsifal*, the last of German composer Richard Wagner's music dramas, carried enormous weight as a hallmark of high German musical culture.[3] In contrast, the Black American cakewalk, and the ragtime music it was danced to, exemplified not just American culture in general, but an unstoppable racialized modern invasion of U.S. popular culture into Germany. This trade of German art music for American vernacular dance became in fact a frequently cited example of the inexorable encroachment of American modernity in Austro-German culture. Composer Richard Strauss declared in 1903, for example, that America was not only invading German industry, but its music as well.[4] With popular Black American melodies now found on nearly every German concert program, even this luminary of German art music admitted "the relief experienced going from a heavy Wagner overture to a cake-walk tune."[5] Another humor magazine lampooned the cakewalk craze by suggesting the dance had seeped into Germany's entire cultural past to

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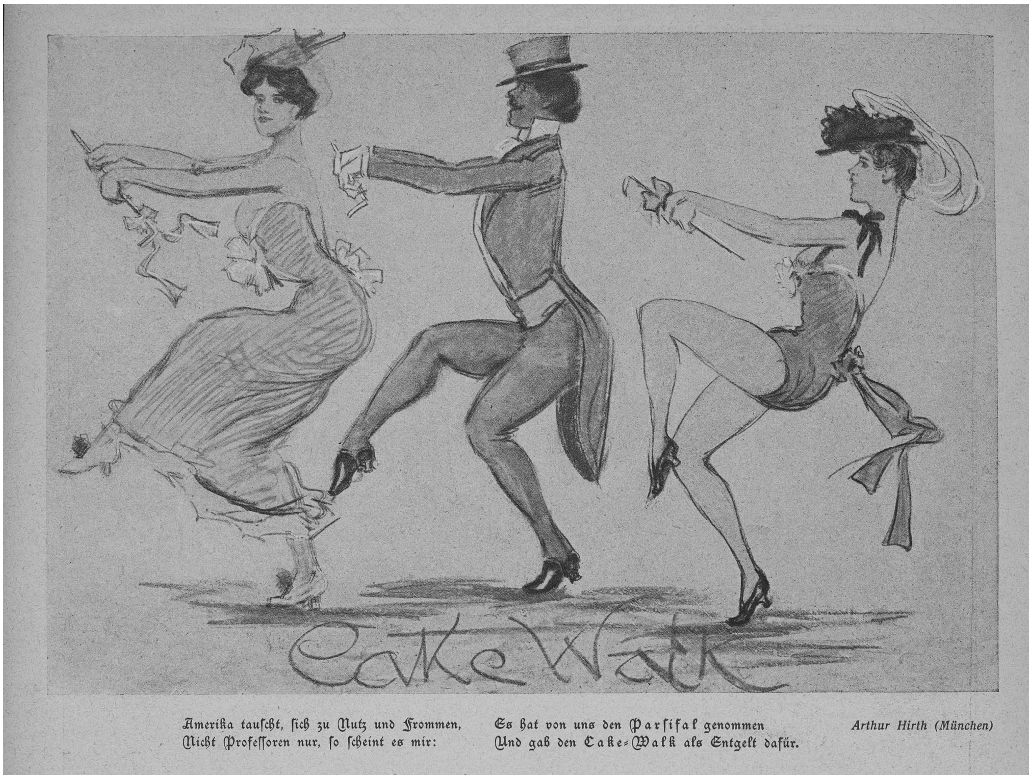


FIGURE 12.1 "Cakewalk." *Jugend* 10/24 June 11, 1905, 452. Amerika tauscht, sich zu Nutz und Frommen,/Nicht Professoren nur, so scheint es mir:/Es hat von uns den Parsifal genommen/Und gab den Cake-Walk als Entgelt dafür.

overwrite even the most ancient of old world dances. From the biblical Salomé to the fabled dance of spring in old Echternach, from ancient Bacchic satyrs and nymphs to the medieval "Totentanz," all must now be recast as cakewalks (Figure 12.2).[6]

In Austria, another satirist declared that Terpsichore was "covering her frightened head" and "wringing her arms in anguish," over this new cakewalk dance. Its "kangaroo steps and bat-like arms" were before seen only "on its native plantations." But now the mania has passed through Paris and Berlin "to plague Vienna."[7]

Jugend's suggestion that Germans had swapped Wagner's *Parsifal* for the cakewalk presumes that an inherently national exclusivity adheres to these cultural assets. Yet as Paul Gilroy has argued, the artistic products of the Atlantic triangle formed in the movement of human traffic from Africa to the Americas and Europe had always "overflowed from the containers that the modern nation state provides for them."[8] Taking the Black Atlantic as "one single, complex unit of analysis" that promises a more transnational and intercultural perspective, Gilroy breaks apart the model of culture that presents national and ethnic difference "as an absolute break in the histories and experiences of 'black' and 'white' peoples."[9] In this chapter, I examine a particular artifact of this "absolute break" to ask how the cakewalk's dissemination and reception might look from a Black Atlantic perspective,

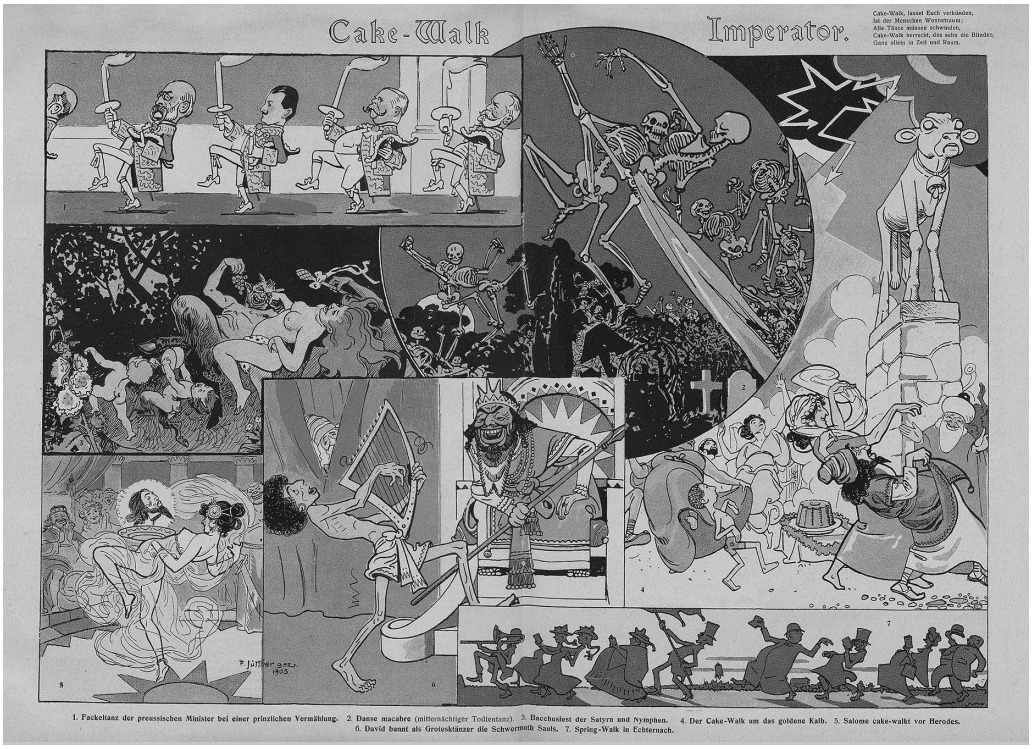


FIGURE 12.2 "Cake-Walk Imperator," *Lustige Blätter*, April 22, 1903, 8–9. "Cake-Walk Imperator. Cake-walk, lasset Euch verkünden,/Ist der Menschen Wonnetraum;/Alle Tänze müssen schwinden,/Cake-Walk herrscht, das sehn die Blinden,/Ganz allein in Zeit und Raum." (Emperor Cakewalk. The Cakewalk, let it be known,/Is the human dream of bliss;/All other dances must bow,/The cakewalk rules, as the blind can see,/Over all in time and place.).

1. Torch dance of the Prussian ministers at a royal marriage.
2. Danse macabre (midnight dance of death).
3. Baccus Festival of Satyrs and Nymphs
4. The cakewalk around the golden calf.
5. Salomé cakewalks in front of Herod.
6. David banishes Saul's melancholy as a grotesque dancer.
7. Spring-Walk in Echternach.

in which more fluid cultural blendings overtop the interests and claims of national identity. To take the example at hand, we might ask how Wagner's German operas and the U.S. cakewalk flow with, against, and through one another. How did their Atlantic crossings – *Parsifal* to the west, the cakewalk to the east – also cross lines of color and class as U.S. audiences clamored for European high culture and Europeans relished popular Black American music and dance? From this perspective, we can then also consider how a dance from "primitive" American quarters came to embody modernity in Europe. And finally, how Germany's turn-of-the-century colonial expansion into Africa conditioned its appropriation of modern Black American culture.

Using the *Parsifal*-cakewalk "exchange" as a test case to consider how its presentation as a contest of nations quiets the turbulent currents of Black Atlantic culture, my aim is to show that on many fronts, connections between German opera and Black American dance roil the reductive nationalist rhetoric that sought to separate them. With attention to the cross currents of the Black Atlantic, we instead see in one direction the cakewalk's multi-faceted travesty of White European culture, and in the other, the common cause that Black American intellectuals and artists found with Wagner's German nationalism. In one direction we see the confounding of national identities in German dance composers' adoption of cakewalk tunes, and in the other, popular themes from Wagner operas "ragged" by U.S. musicians. In reaction to these crossings, however, we also see fears of a choreo-musical miscegenation that gave Black American bodies alarming proximity to White European music and folded U.S. "racial chaos" into anxieties over race purity in Imperial Germany. Although the press in Europe and the U.S. claimed separate wells of culture for European art music and Black American dance at the turn of the century, such a segregation could only have been an illusion – or a cultural mechanism to push back the rising tide of African cultural influence. In fact, the currents of Black Atlantic culture sloshed in all directions, and had for centuries.

Parsifal *in the United States*

By most accounts, the "theft" of *Parsifal* denounced in *Jugend* was a matter of intense interest for American Wagnerians devoted to the uplift of U.S. culture by way of Wagner's revered music dramas. If, as musicologist Joseph Horowitz claims, America remained from the 1880s to World War I "a musical colony of Germany," Wagner was arguably its most powerful foreign conqueror.[10] Indeed, the step-by-step arrival of *Parsifal* reads like an epic transfer of European cultural dominion to the cultural wilderness of America. Not surprisingly, *Parsifal's* journey to New York was a sensitive subject for many in Germany suspicious of Americans' thrall to "progress" and unrestrained consumerism. Conceived especially for the *Festspielhaus* at Bayreuth, stage performances of *Parsifal* were embargoed by Wagner's estate in order to maintain the opera's artistic integrity and to ensure a source of income for his family after the composer's death in 1883. In March 1886, four years after *Parsifal's* Bayreuth premiere, the German American conductor Walter Damrosch irreverently undercut this stipulation with an unauthorized concert version of *Parsifal* in New York.[11] The coveted performance took place at the Metropolitan Opera House with soprano Marianne Brandt, a member of the original Bayreuth cast of *Parsifal*, among the star soloists.

At issue in the 1905 *Jugend* cartoon was a similarly unsanctioned stage production of *Parsifal* that opened in New York on 24 December 1903. Earlier that year, Heinrich Conried, the business-savvy director of New York's German-American Irving Place Theater and newly appointment general manager of The New York Metropolitan Opera, had set out to wrest *Parsifal* from its Bayreuth cocoon in a national public relations scuffle "unparalleled in operatic history."[12] Determined to snatch this jewel from Germany's musical crown, the Austrian-American Conried defied Wagner's widow, who fought him in court and declared any participants in an American *Parsifal* "traitors to Wagner."[13] Front-page news of the verdict favoring Conried launched a howl of indignation in Germany. One critic described the desperate hope that if Conried didn't fail on his own, and if a legal Hail Mary couldn't be found, "a decree from heaven itself" would prevent the sacrilege of *Parsifal* falling to New Yorkers' "inner barbarism" on Christmas Eve.[14]

Just a month after Conried's court victory over the Wagner estate, the fully staged *Parsifal* played at the Met before an audience of Wagner's U.S. worshipers.[15] One of them confirmed the clash of national reputations in a letter of appreciation to Conried:

> I am so glad you have shown to those people on the other side that Americans can, and do, appreciate what is highest and noblest in lyric art, and are capable of distinguishing between a ragtime ditty and the glorious masterpiece of a heaven/inspired genius . . . . [E]ven in a land credited with little more than the eternal greed for dollars, there are still hearts that can throb in sympathy with the work of the great master.[16]

On the surface, what *Jugend* depicted as an unfavorable swap of *Parsifal* was an objection to a national breach of copyright. Yet for *Parsifal* to fall into American hands was also for it to be contaminated by U.S. commercialism, and worse yet, by America's Black entertainment culture – the sort of "ragtime ditty" scorned in the above quote. Another caricature, this one in Munich's leading humor magazine *Simplicissimus*, laments this very fate. Titled "Wagner in America" and picturing three elegantly dressed cakewalkers, the satire mocks a nation overrun by unchecked enthusiasm for Black dances: "Ever since Conried put in a Negro dance as an interlude, *Parsifal* has been drawing full houses."[17]

Whether this critique refers to the 1904 film of *Parsifal* made by Edison or a reported ragtime parody of the opera given by Weber and Fields is unclear. In any case, Conried had opened the floodgates to *Parsifal* in America and its high religious content invited numerous burlesques on the lower variety stages.[18] What we can presume is that any irreverent addition of American popular dance to the flower maidens' Act 2 seduction of Parsifal represented Americans' own "seduction" into Black culture, a conquest easily understood as a form of cultural miscegenation.[19]

Concern over the transatlantic U.S. swindle didn't stop with Conried's bootleg *Parsifal*. Americans were seen to be palming their favorite dance for European art as well. Early in 1903, the powerful German journalist and critic Theodor Wolff, soon-to-be chief editor of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, raised the alarm that great showpieces of European art were also headed to the wrong side of the Atlantic, paid for in cakewalk coinage.[20] After deriding the cakewalk's plantation origins and lamenting its arrival in Europe, Wolff writes in a lengthy *feuilleton* that along with other products of American "tastelessness" such as the "Sousa-melodies," the cakewalk has now become entrenched. And in return, the treasures of European art – the enamels of Bernard Palissy, the bold pastoral games of Fragonard, the magnificent portraits of Largillieres – are being "loaded for New York" to enrich the collection of Mr. Pierpont Morgan. "The Americans bring us the 'cake walk.' And you really don't know what to complain about most – what they take from us or what they give us."[21]

Wolff's grievance ran in papers across the U.S., often with added commentary on the uneven state of cultural exchange. His high-minded indignity was well understood in the United States, and critics to the west had begun to fight back with retorts such as this one from a Salt Lake City critic:

> Europe gets what it wants, and America gets what it wants, and on the score of taste each is or ought to be content. But what shall be thought of a people which parts with its priceless

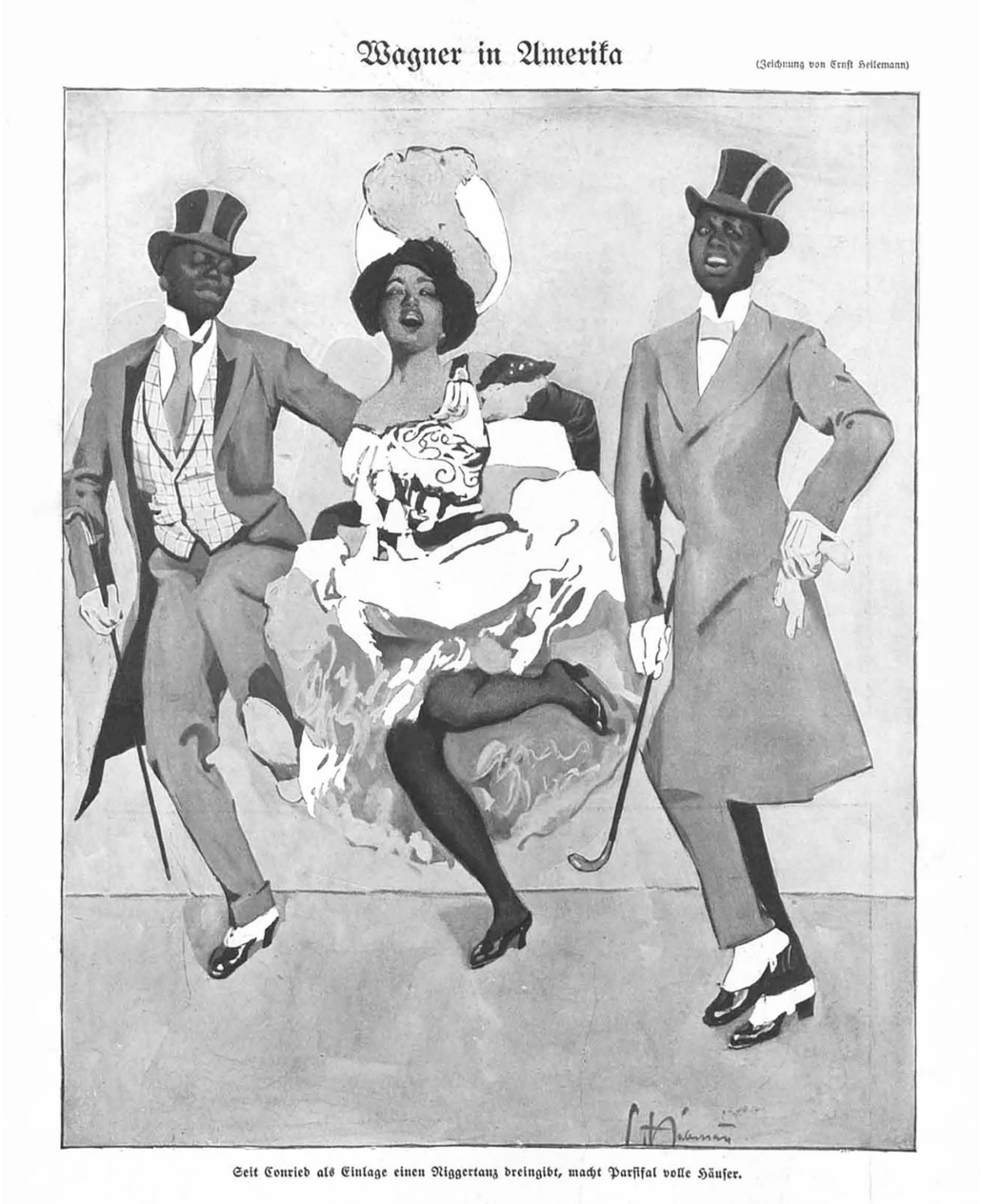


FIGURE 12.3 "Wagner in America." *Simplicissimus* 11/42 January 14, 1907, 671.

> pictures and art work, taking in exchange the cake-walk, to mention nothing so gross as gold for makeweight? Degenerate Europe! To sell its priceless treasures, and then spit at the buyer![22]

Yet the simmering sense of cultural inferiority cooled enough for a San Francisco reporter to boast of America's triumphant lead in the modern art of stage dancing.[23] After all, he notes,

European artists, aristocrats, and heads of state have been captivated by American dancing as "the coming of a new era" in the art of dance.

> The old nations may look down on our painting, our music, our poetry, but when it comes to dancing . . . America will be known hereafter not only as the land of liberty and of gold, but of the cakewalk.

That may not be much, this reporter concedes, "but it is something. We have a specialty."[24] As I will show in what follows, it was a specialty Germans also understood well as a mark of modernity.

The Cakewalk in Germany

The cakewalk craze entered Germany and Austria via touring variety hall revues from the United States. In 1901 the U.S. cakewalk team of Charles Johnson and Dora Dean began its first tour of Germany marketed as Creole dancers.[25] Their elegant evening wear and "high class" dances earned them praise in the German press as a fashionable alternative to minstrelsy, which had been on German stages since the 1880s.[26] The *Louisiana Amazon Guard* came to Berlin's Cirkus Schumann the same year with a show that featured a cakewalk scene.[27] This troupe of seven Black women toured Germany in 1902 under the management of German agent Paula Kohn Wöllner.[28] The so-called "Amazons" portrayed the female members of the armed palace guard in West African Dahomey, a kingdom active in the slave trade. A review of a performance at the Cirkus Schumann in Berlin describes a cotton picking scene with sorrowful "coon songs" that give way to a more bouyant serenade on banjos and a performance of the cakewalk, "the national ring-dance," all followed by a Rough Rider scene drawing on themes from the U.S. war against Cuba in 1898 (Figure 12.4).[29] Another exhibition titled *42 Dahomey Neger* appeared in 1902 at the Passage Theater in Berlin.[30] In December, 1902 an offshoot of the *Amazon Guard* called themselves the "5 Louisianas" and advertised themselves as "Creators of the Cakewalk."[31]

Performances of the musical comedy *In Dahomey*, with music by Will Marion Cook and lyrics by Paul Laurence Dunbar, further boosted the cakewalk's popularity in Germany with a song that explained how to perform its latest, most stylish steps.[32] *In Dahomey* featured the cakewalking team of Daniel and Minnie Washington, who spoke German well and spent a good deal of time in Germany.[33] Aida Overton Walker, another star cakewalker of *In Dahomey*, made a specialty of giving private cakewalking lessons to socialites in both the U.S and Europe.[34]

Germans from all classes were eager to learn the "authentic Negro cakewalk." Those who couldn't afford lessons turned to sheet music that included instructions for the dance. Otto Teich's "Hänschen und Fränzchen" (Little Hans and Little Franz), for instance, contained instructions for the dance in the text of the song.[35] Others provided varying degrees of instruction along with the music notation. "Die Lustigen Neger" (The Happy Negro) had instructions on the last page of the sheet music.[36] "Jim and Mary's Cake-Walk: Amerikanische Negertanz," (American Negro Dance) by Harry Cooper depicts a Black couple in four cakewalk poses on the cover and promises "detailed instructions and illustrations." The cover for Adolf Kunz's "Kuchentanz – Cakewalk," claiming to be "based on an original Negro melody," depicts a White couple in cakewalk poses accompanied by detailed written instructions for each eight-bar phrase of the music (Figure 12.5).

FIGURE 12.4 "The Louisiana Amazon Guard." Postcard dated February 7, 1902. Dr. Trenkler Co., Leipzig. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

In 1903, at the peak of the cakewalk's popularity in Germany, newspapers printed daily announcements of Black American dancers performing the "authentic" cakewalk. Berlin audiences had a steady stream of shows to choose from: *In Dahomey* played at the Circus Busch in January; "The Original Cake-Walk Dancer" appeared at the Apollo Theater in February;[37] March brought the "American-Creole-Cake-Walk-Dancer";[38] and in April the Passage Theater advertised the "genuine Louisianas" doing the cakewalk.[39] The cakewalk quickly entered the repertoire of German-language operetta with Franz Lehar's *der Rastelbinder* (1902) and *Wiener Frauen* (1903), and Jean Gilbert's *Der Prinzregent* (1903).[40] In reply, the *Wiener Caricaturen* ridiculed the "invasion" of Black performers with a mocking announcement that "the Negro-operetta is coming." Managed by "Mr. Joshua Blackface," the three-act *Die Schwarze Venus (The Black Venus)* promises the sensation of a "Cake-Walk-Negro-Paar" imitating the most famous Viennese waltzes: *An der schönen schwarzen Donau* (On the Beautiful Black Danube), *Geschichten aus dem Schwarz-wald* (Tales from the Black Forest), and *Das schwarze Mädel* (The Black Girl). Tickets might be had from "Dark and Darkish at the corner of Black and Blackamoor Streets."[41] Finally, the cakewalk invasion is hailed with a mock cry of enthusiasm: "Down with European operetta! Up with the Negro-Comic-Opera!"

The racial rhetoric evident in this farce infused much of the German social commentary on the cakewalk. In a similar vein, the Munich humor magazine *Fliegende Blätter* produced a sketch titled "Suitable Comparison" that points to the racial taboos kicked up by the cakewalk vogue. A rearing horse displays the leaned-back stance of a cakewalker, front

FIGURE 12.5 Adolf Kunz, "Cakewalk-Kuchentanz." Berlin: Adolf Kunz's Musikalische Volksbibliothek, n.d.

feet jutting out, its black coat strongly contrasted with the White male, top hat flying, who struggles to control his unruly mount. "Great heavens," the rider exclaims, "now this damned beast is also doing the Cake-Walk" (Figure 12.6).

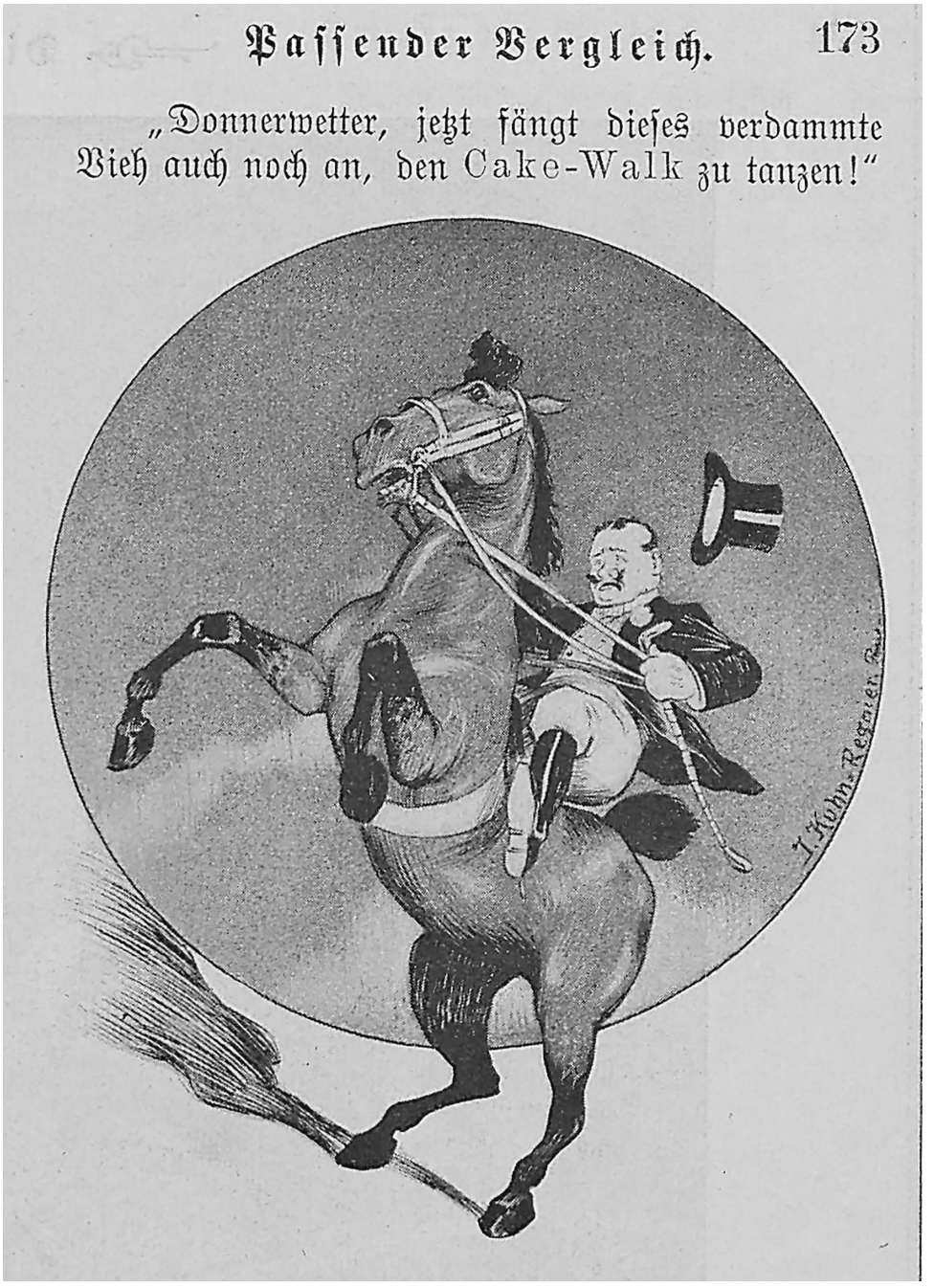


FIGURE 12.6 “Passender Vergleich,” *Fliegende Blätter* 119/3037, 1903, 173. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg.

The German humor magazines weren’t the only voices sounding the alarm over the cakewalk craze in Germany and reinforcing its menacingly foreign features. The daily newspapers also warned frequently of the invading dance. German travel writer Ernst

von Hesse-Wartegg published reflections on the cakewalk's march through Germany that set this hallmark of Black American culture against the refinements of a White Europe struggling to stabilize a racial hierarchy no longer secure in the New World. Reporting on the gigantic cakewalk competition held annually in New York's Madison Square Garden, Hesse-Wartegg points to the breakdown of U.S. social rankings by comparing enthusiasm for the Cakewalk to attendance at Wagner's operas.[42] He describes the best seats at the Garden, far below the masses of Black American attendees, where the Fortune 400 are ablaze with jewels and finery more fitting for an opera premiere. In fact, he notes, the Met likely presented a Wagner opera the same day, but the celebration of "Limkam's Day" proved a "better opportunity" for the smart set "to be amused and to be seen."

From this collapse of the U.S. social order, Hesse-Warteg turns to the threat of a similar possibility in the Old World. Blending tropes of Black savagery and docility, he rehearses the typical plantation myth to describe his first encounter with the cakewalk on a New Orleans sugar plantation – The Magnolia – where the cane fields give way to marshes, "half-land, half-water, surrounded by dark, dark, jungle," and beyond these, "the playground of alligators" in the bayous.[43] As "Negroes" enjoy "the sweet idleness" of their post-war freedom, singing by day at their work from "sheer joie de vivre and exuberance," and dancing their pleasures in the evening, the cakewalk grew from a grotesque mimicry of their masters' polonaise, gradually to be "translated into African."[44] Hesse-Wartegg concludes this is all fine in America, but should this "wild, grotesque Negro dance" be made socially acceptable in Germany? In Berlin? "No, Pardon me. This is not possible." It would never have become acceptable

> if our milk-cheeked, blue-eyed, Nordic blonds knew that the Cake Walk was nothing more nor less than an African Negro dance. . . . One is not capable of these lapses of taste on the Spree. . . . An end to the Cakewalkomania!

The Cakewalk's Parade of Parodies

Hesse-Wartegg's fear of the cakewalk's disguised racial roots is in fact ironically fitting, for the cakewalk was, from its origins, a dance of disruption, of dissembling, of displaced identity that folded black into white and paraded defiantly through any simplistic categories of national origin. As a gestural form of the sealed and encoded "charts of cultural descent" that Henry Louis Gates identifies in Afro-American oral traditions, dance must also have preserved some of the meaning and belief systems that were the only sure possession of enslaved Black Americans.[45] Peter Wood identifies ancient gestural signs that persist in the angular stance of African and African-American dances like the cakewalk: the arched back, the raised knees and bent elbows.[46] Yet numerous slave narratives describe the original Black plantation cakewalk as a controlled mockery of the stiff European dances – minuet, quadrille, polonaise, cotillion – performed in the "big house" festivities of their White enslavers.[47] One narrative from an enslaved "strut girl" describes how White European dance practices became embedded in the dance competitions of plantation owners' human property:

> Us slaves watched white folks' parties where the guests danced a minuet and then paraded in a grand march, with the ladies and gentlemen going different ways. And then meeting again, arm in arm, and marching down the center together. Then we'd do it, too, *but we used to mock em*, every step.[48]

Performed on special occasions in fancy dress, the plantation cakewalk's defining features over-exaggerate the rigidly upright decorum of Old World social dances, making the dance, as Jayna Brown explains, "counter-hegemonic at its inception."[49] Competing for the prize cake, enslaved dancers improvised cakewalk steps as athletic feats of balance and grace performed as if in defiance of a mockingly displaced center of gravity. As a transplanted form of "signifying" in the African folk tradition, the cakewalk was a gestural iteration of what U.S. cultural scholar Eric Sundquist terms "the subversion from within that defines the place of much African American cultural work" in the context of white cultural norms.[50] Arguing that the cakewalk had always performed a "rearrangement of white models," Sundquist surmises that its satiric import as a physical burlesque is in fact "its most African feature."[51]

Physically encoded movement thus made dance a particularly successful mode of subversive transatlantic communication. William Cook explains enslaved peoples' use of satire, including the cakewalk in its many forms, as a "game of double-perception," that says one thing in terms of another.[52] By mixing criticism of the master with flattery, the cakewalker's buffoonery "desensitizes the seeming impropriety" of the ridicule and diffuses "dangerous face-to-face confrontations."[53] W.T. Lhamon detects the same masquerade in a performative contrapuntal cultural style that "embodies a persistent countermemory of historical opposition."[54] This gestural repertoire, which he calls optic blackness, "keeps a running tab on its past that is legible in its successive signs."[55] Able to turn stereotypical effect inside out, optic blackness inscribes the history of Atlantic racism by "conjoin[ing] apparently separate publics over time."[56] The chromatic inverse of Ralph Ellison's "optic white," Lhamon's optic black began in the earliest White fascination with Black performers in the Americas, who defined public spaces as "Atlantic rather than Anglo, European, or African."[57] The core gestures of U.S. vernacular cultures, he argues, form a "train of emulations" stemming back to the eighteenth-century slave trade.[58] Yet also embedded in the cakewalk are emulations of eighteenth-century slave traders' genteel minuets. Like Lhamon, Kusser notes the futility of trying to split the popularized cakewalk into original and copy, subaltern and majority. Always, "each refers to the other," amplifying the tensions between them.[59]

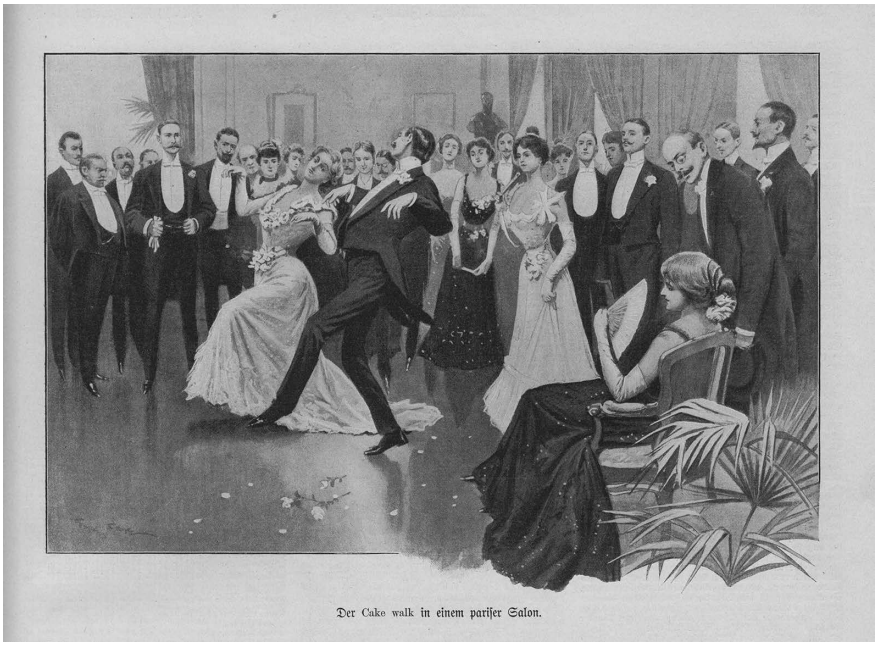
Indeed, this tension remained a stable feature in the cakewalk's journey from plantation dance to White entertainment. Around the mid-nineteenth century, the plantation cakewalk made its way into White minstrelsy as a grotesque parody of slave life, was subsequently reclaimed by Black minstrel performers, and eventually became the standard finale for Black revues staged for White audiences in the tony post-reconstruction rooftop theaters of major urban centers. Papanikolas sees in the cakewalk's passage from plantation to popular fad a "multiple refraction of puns, linguistic and social."[60] If the enslaved had once parodied their owners, Whites in turn recreated Black life on White controlled minstrel stages, substituting "denial and denigration of Black culture for their race's lost license to control it."[61] The result was the "remarkable irony" of White minstrels in blackface "satirizing a dance satirizing themselves."[62] Around 1896, when Black American performers began to mimic White minstrel performers, a fourth register of parody ensued.[63] Still further Atlantic transfer followed as Black performers trained wealthy White Europeans to cakewalk in their ballrooms, bringing the dance, two centuries on, back to the site of its original model, now transformed into a metaphor of White modernity. Krasner's discussion of the social decoding at work in parody suggests that Germans' zeal for the cakewalk further added

their own colonial experience to the dance's increasing "mimetic vertigo,"[64] a topic I will return to presently.

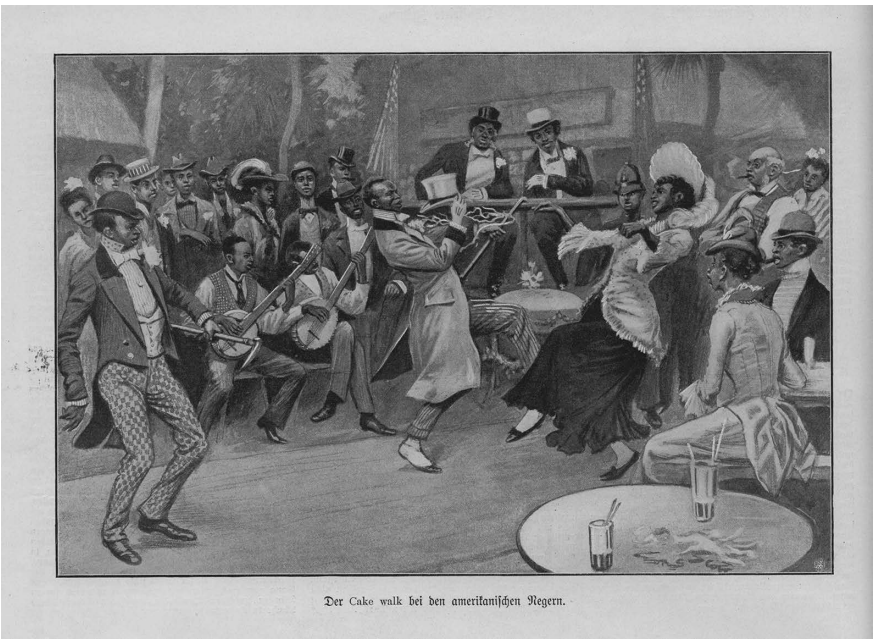
Performing Modernity

Despite the cakewalk's trans-Atlantic accumulation of meaning, the German-language press often associated the dance with the counterfeits of a modernity grounded in U.S. secular materialism. A *feuilleton* by art critic Alfred Wechsler in the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, for instance, likens the cakewalk's veiled cultural glancing to the pretentious façade of modernity aped in fashionable European drawing rooms. Here, the affectations of high society inversely expose those of the cakewalk fad with obvious symbolic reference to light and dark, black and white. Wechsler describes a society scene in which a young Viennese salon hostess restlessly improvises a veneer of contemporary accoutrements to disguise her distressingly Old-World dining room. Owing to the flimsy façade, Wechsler writes, "you have to be very careful not to knock, or the whole modernity will crumble."[65] The guests at a dinner party run through the social obligations of standing, smiling, sipping cognac, and obsequiously praising a newly painted portrait – "Symphony of White on White" – depicting the guest of honor who is conspicuously late.[66] When the social celebrity finally arrives in her silver and white sequin dress with white powdered face and a white cyclamen in her hair, she tries hard "to look like her portrait" as she sips her white wine. As the story's denouement approaches, she is overheard whispering disdainfully to her husband, in her "pale, secret, orchid-like voice," of the young hostess's faux modernity: "I care nothing for this cakewalk." Yet the real travesty, according to Wechsler, is in the legs of all those swindled by "the folly of the year," the actual cakewalk dance, which is nothing but a chain of racial deceits. "The Americans mock the Negros who like to behave like whites in a grotesque parlor game . . . and suddenly the united snobs of the continent take up this dance of which they know nothing . . . and you can't go into society without witnessing people trying to be graceful in the cakewalk." Young women "try to extend the corners of their mouths to their ears," and fine men secretly practice the dance in their private rooms, knees bent and elbows pointed, all "martyrs of modernity."[67] If indeed Germans were martyrs of modernity, their perceived suffering was due to the Americanization of their culture. Complaining of the Yankee invasion of everything from Sousa's "Washington Post" to the cakewalk, another critic for the *Berliner Morgenpost* concluded that "the new dance is not beautiful, but it is modern and the modern wins" (see Figure 12.7).

The quest for modernity further intersected with a quest for racial authenticity. In Berlin, various classes gathered at dance venues along Friedrichstraße to eat, drink, dance, and observe the latest dances being performed by Black dancers hired for this purpose.[68] The sumptuous Palais de Danse in the Metropolpalast was the largest of these, hosting upper class men who came to dance with ladies of the demimonde and adventurous "slummers" looking for "authentic" performances of the new Black American dances.[69] Whites came, as Weldon Johnson said, "to get their imitations first hand" from Black entertainers.[70] "Slumming" in Berlin, as in New York, frequently brought White women into contact with Black men on the dance floor, making these sites "practice fields for a new kind of social flexibility."[71] This social flexibility was at the heart of *Jugend's* satire protesting *Parsifal's* trade for the Cakewalk. I turn now to view that purported "trade" from a U.S. perspective to further break down its suggestion of nationally demarcated cultural possessions.



Der Cake walk in einem pariſer Salon.



Der Cake walk bei den amerikaniſchen Negern.

FIGURE 12.7a-b "The Cakewalk of the American negro. The Cakewalk in a Parisian salon." *Illustrirte Zeitung* 120, February 5, 1903, 202–203. Side-by-side illustration in the nationally distributed weekly magazine that captures bourgeois efforts to assimilate the Cakewalk's "modernity." The same contrasting images were reproduced as line drawings in several Germany newspapers. The *Berliner Morgenpost* published them under the headline "Triumphal March of the Negro Dances." *Berliner Morgenpost*, January 18, 1903.

Black Americans and European Opera

If White Europeans absorbed the cakewalk as a choreographed performance of modernity, how might we understand a reciprocal process of Black Atlantic exchange less evident in *Jugend's* cartoon? How, in other words, did Black Americans' engagement with Wagnerian opera, and White European music more generally, complicate *Jugend's* suggestion of worlds apart? Broad acceptance of the perceived cultural distance between *Parsifal* and the cakewalk tapped a real rhetoric of difference. This is evident in the stock phrase commonly tossed out by the mainstream press (both German and U.S.) that characterized a range of contemporary musical tastes spanning "from Wagner to ragtime" or "from Wagner to the cakewalk." This perception manifested in a variety of stereotypes. For European opera to be as far as possible from Black American dance required a separation of musical aptitude as well. Larry Hamblin demonstrates the status of opera in early-twentieth-century U.S. culture as a widely understood symbol of White musical elitism in a tune by Ted Snyder and Irving Berlin: "That Opera Rag."[72] This 1910 "coon song" parodies Sam Johnson, a Black house painter "afflicted with a love of opera." Hamberlin analyzes comedic quotations from European operas that "give voice in first person" to Sam's inability to appreciate opera, literally and figuratively toppling Sam – a representative of "uneducated and disorderly response to high culture" – from his painter's ladder and his cultural ambitions.[73]

Here we see the perception of opera as an emblem of White culture imperiled by the chaos of social disorder if Black people are allowed to enter.[74] Yet enter they did. The *Times* report on Conried's *Parsifal* premiere remarks that in the packed topmost gallery "where sartorial anarchy reigned," far above the Vanderbilts and the Guggenheims, "a colored man wearing a jewel in his necktie . . . discussed motifs and movements with a man and his wife from beyond the Bronx who were in evening attire."[75]

Thanks to a growing body of scholarship on Black Americans' engagement with opera and concert singing, we have an emerging record of their operatic endeavors that challenges turn-of-the-century constructs of race, nation, and genre. The lives and careers of Black American opera singers, composers, and directors demonstrate that while they experienced tremendous obstacles in post-reconstruction U.S. culture, European opera held a promise of genteel uplift to Black Americans parallel to that of Whites.[76] Kristin Turner identifies "startling slippages" between European opera and Black musical comedies that defy neat categorization of both artistic production and audience reception. Many Black Americans saw European and especially Austro-German music as a means for establishing their respectability.[77] Naomi André as well discovers an "interwoven history" of minstrelsy with opera in the U.S. that provided "a complicated, interconnected history for Black musicians."[78]

As Black Americans created, performed, and consumed opera, it became a symbolic site for blurring the color line. By the mid-nineteenth century, numerous Black American composers were drawing their own Black themes into their works. Black American singers were equally well known for their European operatic repertoire.[79] Perhaps the most famous, Sisserietta Jones, included operatic arias alongside coon songs, jubilee shouts, cakewalks, and buck dances in the repertoire of her last performing ensemble, The Black Patti Troubadours.

Along with opera composers Theodore Drury and Scott Joplin, many other Black American musicians established successful performing careers that were nonetheless measured against their White contemporaries by their "Black" nicknames: the Black Patti (Sisserietta

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So proclaimed by the press and public of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Buffalo, Washington and Cincinnati, where their performances given at the leading theaters attracted immense audiences and scored

THE HIT OF THE SEASON.

A revelation of comedy, burlesque, vaudeville and opera, embodying "coon songs," "cake walks," "buck dances" and inspiring grand and comic opera melodies by the most talented and versatile singers, dancers and comedians of the Sunny South, headed by

THE GREATEST SINGER OF HER RACE,

BLACK PATTI,

(MME. SISSIERETTA JONES)

Whose marvelous voice and lyric triumphs are unparalleled. The most popular prima donna in the world with the people of all nations and all races. Countless millions in every part of civilization have been charmed by her phenomenal voice. H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cambridge and other members of the Royal Family of England have honored her with with their distinguished patronage. Her first appearance in conjunction with her own great company, which is also without equal in the wide world.

THREE HOURS OF MIRTH AND MELODY.

THE OPERATIC KALEIDOSCOPE.

Introducing the world-famous BLACK PATTI (Mme. Sissieretta Jones), assisted by Camille Casselle, contralto; Lloyd Gibbs, tenor; C. L. Moore, baritone, and a Chorus of forty trained voices, presenting the following programme of grand and comic opera selections:

"Cavalleria Rusticana,"—Intermezzo—"Ave Maria" (Mascagni)..Chorus
"Faust"—Kirmess Scene (Gounod).....Chorus
"The Bohemian Girl"—The Heart Bowed Down (Balfe)... ..C. L. Moore
"Silent Heroes".....C. L. Moore and Chorus
"IL Trovatore" Verdi. "THE ANVIL CHORUS" Grand Aria. .....BLACK PATTI
"Miserere".....BLACK PATTI and Lloyd Gibbs
"The Daughter of the Regiment"—"Rataplan" (Donizetti).....Billy Johnson and Chorus
"All Hail the Queen" (Cole).....Lloyd G. Gibbs and Chorus
"Grand Duchess"—"The Sabre Song" (Offenbach) Black Patti and Chorus
"Tar and Tartar"—Medley of National Airs, Black Patti and entire Com'y

Chas. Hoffman.....Musical Director
Bob Cole .....Stage Manager

COMING—BROTHERS BYRNE in EIGHT BELLS.

FIGURE 12.8 Advertisement for the Black Patti Troubadours. *St. Paul Globe*, January 8, 1897. Lauding the "countless millions in every part of civilization" who have been charmed by her voice, including royalty across Europe, this advertisement promises "a revelation of comedy, burlesque vaudeville, and opera embodying 'coon songs,' 'cake walks,' 'buck dances' and inspiring grand and comic-opera melodies" headed by "the greatest singer of her race." The show includes "three hours of mirth beginning with a musical skit titled "At Jolly 'Coon'-ey Island." Various other acts follow, with an "operatic kaleidoscope" including numbers by Mascagni, Verdi, and Donizetti by "the world-famous Black Patti."

Jones), the Black Mario (Thomas Bowen), the Black Mahler (Harry Lawrence Freeman), the Black Swan (Eliza Greenwood), and many other Black Nightingales.[80] Their careers are memorialized in Pauline Hopkins's 1903 novel, *Of One Blood*, which, according to Nicole Aljoi, "celebrates the figure of the operatic diva . . . and comments more broadly on the relationship between African Americans and opera."[81]

W. E. B. Du Bois and Wagnerian Opera

As Black artists and audiences occupied U.S. opera houses and concert halls, these venues became symbolic sites for crossing the color line. Both W.E.B. Du Bois (*The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903) and James Weldon Johnson (*The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, 1912) situate key literary crises of racial identity in the European opera house and concert hall. And both authors send their Black protagonists to Germany for their musical epiphanies in literary evocations of two-way cultural traffic on the Black Atlantic.

Du Bois's intellectual development stands as a clear dissolution of national boundaries in Black Atlantic culture. As many have remarked, Du Bois had a particularly strong and persistent interest in the achievements of German culture, especially its universities and its music – an interest strong enough to dismay his critics over Du Bois's seeming insensitivity to rising German anti-Semitism, racism, and militarism.[82] Gilroy points out that Du Bois eventually renounced his cultural analyses "premised on the fixity of the modern nation state as a receptacle for Black cultures."[83] Yet early in the twentieth century he did not equate the situation of the Jews in Germany with that of Black Americans in the U.S., and still perceived the possibility of a Black racial nation on the model of Germany's national prowess.[84] Such an ambition flies in the face of contemporary thought suggesting that high European culture was antithetical to Black Americans. The nexus of Du Bois's longing for a strong Black nation with his further interest in German idealism helped shape, according to Gilroy, the "complex understating of the relationship between race, nation, and culture" evident in Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*.[85]

Du Bois in fact left a clear record of his admiration for German chancellor Otto von Bismarck's powerful leadership, which he identified "with the embodiment of racial spirit."[86] Du Bois believed that Bismarck's authoritarianism "had made a nation out of a mass of bickering peoples," giving the Black intellectual, as he wrote in *Dusk of Dawn*, a model for "the kind of thing that American Negroes must do, marching forth with strength and determination under trained leadership."[87] He sought preparation for that leadership in Germany. In 1892, he left his studies at Harvard for two years at the University of Berlin, a time that awakened him simultaneously to high European culture and a liberated sense of his humanity, and that he described as the happiest in his life. In Germany, he wrote, "something of the possible beauty and elegance of life permeated my soul. . . . I came to know Beethoven's symphonies and Wagner's *Ring*. . . . Form, color and words took new combinations and meanings."[88] Most startling for Du Bois was the realization that what he had thought was White American "was in fact white European and not American at all: America's music is German."[89] The swap of professors denounced in *Jugend's* cakewalk cartoon certainly didn't account for the hopes of this young Black American at the University of Berlin. Yet enjoying the relative rest from American racism in Germany, Du Bois derived some satisfaction when he learned "that the University of Berlin did not recognize a degree even from Harvard University, no more than Harvard did from Fisk."[90]

Along with Bismarck, Du Bois admired Wagner as a towering figure of German culture and was swept up in the Wagnerism of the 1890s. During his time in Berlin, Du Bois heard Wagner and other German composers "cheaply and often" in the balcony seats for students.[91] Sundquist argues that Du Bois absorbed Wagner's molding of myth and national identity "as a race nationalist," stressing that Du Bois's deep admiration for Wagner grew from the fact that both "were engaged in the creation of national heroic art."[92] Du Bois wrote that he visited Wagner's *Festspielhaus* at Bayreuth "from an interest in the development of the human soul . . . which this shrine commemorates and makes eternal."[93]

Wagner's music in fact centers Du Bois's developing sense of racial nationalism in *The Souls of Black Folk*. In the penultimate chapter titled "The Coming of John," the young Black protagonist's recognition of the enormity of his racial predicament agonizingly unfolds during a performance of Wagner's *Lohengrin*. Here John encounters his childhood playmate, the White John, who recoils from his Black friend's presence in high society. Just as in Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, European high art music anchors the moment of epiphany, the dreadful realization that the color line cannot be crossed and the double consciousness cannot be reconciled. But it also anchors Wagner's operas as symbols of striving and overcoming with great meaning to the predicament of Black Americans. When John has killed his White counterpart and faces a lynch mob, the "Bridal Chorus" from Wagner's *Lohengrin* accompanies his reverie of mythic resignation. In the mystic transcendence of John's catastrophic final moment, *Lohengrin* melds the hope of escape from both cultural and physical annihilation and prepares the second, now transcendent journey to the metaphorical "North" of death.[94]

In other writings, Du Bois acknowledges the seeming insignificance of Wagnerian opera to the starving Black farm tenant or the jobless Black college graduate, but insists that Wagner's own personal struggles – poverty and debt; personal humiliation; exile – tell the story of the postbellum U.S. Negro.[95] He writes of Wagner's *Ring* that "It is as though someone of us chose out of the wealth of African folklore a body of poetic material and, with music, scene and action, re-told for mankind the suffering and triumphs and defeats of a people."[96] In his deep identification with Wagner's operas, Du Bois urges that "no human being, white or black, can afford not to know them, if he would know life."[97] As for *Parsifal*, Du Bois acknowledges in 1936 that Wagner's last opera is not readily available in the United States, nor is its "mystical religious experience" easy to understand." Yet from Wagner's theme of the "suffering and sacrifice of the human spirit" one "comes away solemnly," contemplating pain and death, "and that sacrifice of blood that calls only for pain again."[98] Wagner's *Parsifal* expresses, for Du Bois, the terrible reality of his own people's plight in the United States. Thus when *Jugend* and *Simplicissimus* parodied Black American culture as antithetical to *Parsifal's* themes of transcendence, they handily erased the deep connections Du Bois found between the two.

James Weldon Johnson and Ragging the Classics

Similar trans-Atlantic affinities emerge from the vantage point of ragtime and the cakewalk. DuBois's expression in *The Souls of Black Folk* of the "double consciousness" experienced by Black citizens in White America becomes, for James Weldon Johnson, a "double personality," symbolized musically as a contest between European art music and African-American ragtime dance music in the tastes of his protagonist. Likewise Johnson's *The Autobiography*

of an Ex-Colored Man tells the story of an unnamed Black American crisscrossing the musical color line that separates European art music from ragtime, questioning as it goes the concept of nation as a mediator or even a measure of these categories.[99] After abandoning his hopes for a classical music career and a college education, and achieving notoriety in New York as a performer of the new ragtime dance music, the fortunes of Johnson's protagonist turn when he consents to perform at the dinner party of a wealthy White connoisseur. His infamous ragging on Mendelssohn's *Wedding March* at this gathering inspired the whole company of guests "involuntarily and unconsciously" to an impromptu cake-walk.[100]

Next, following his benefactor to Berlin, Johnson's character enjoys entrée into the concert life of the city. At a party of musicians in a high-society Berlin home, a classically trained guest submits a motif from Johnson's ragtime playing to a theme and variations "through every known musical form."[101] Here, the question of miscegenation in the protagonist's own mixed racial makeup plays out in the marriage of European music to Black American ragtime. Experienced as a revelation by Johnson's protagonist, the reversed mimesis in the classical treatment of ragtime inspires his return to the U.S. and his ultimately dispiriting attempt to reconcile his warring musical aspirations.[102]

The broader practice of ragging the classics, symbolic in Johnson's story as a meeting point of Old and New World music, went beyond Mendelssohn to operatic favorites, including many by Wagner. Edward Berlin remarks that Ben Harney, James P. Johnson, Jelly Roll Morton, and Eubie Blake all used popular operatic selections, including Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, for ragging.[103] Reports from Europe confirm the practice of ragging the classics there as well. *The Daily Telegram* tells of a rag in which motives from Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* are transformed into "an abysmal commonplace," and "flippant vulgarities" are wrought from the themes of Wagner's *Tannhäuser.*[104] Yet another critic complained over a decade later of opera tunes filched from *Tosca, Faust*, and *Tannhäuser*, and a particularly insulting dance tune titled "The Meistersinger Rag."[105]

But it was more than just syncopated rhythms these critics objected to. When jazz historian Rudy Blesh observes that cakewalkers "materialized in the flesh"[106] from the pages of ragtime songs, he identifies a prime corruptive element in the practice of ragging the classics – the impulse of the dancing body, and especially the Black dancing body – that brought vernacular movement and classical music into contention as racially and nationally coded art forms. As we see from the lines of a *Chicago Tribune* rhymster, syncopating Wagner included not just ragtime's rhythmic flair, but its animation of Black American dance forms.[107]

"Wagner in Ragtime"

When Wagner's done to ragtime, then
our hearts will all be glad.
"Tannhauser" will be worth the while,
if ragtime may be had.
In fancy now we see the stage filled
up with choryphees
Who trip the Pilgrim's Chorus in the
best of ragtime ways.
And, O, the "Niebelungen Ring" – a
cake-walk here and there.

Valkyries done by show girls who are
more than passing fair;
Green whiskered low comedians who
warble of the Rhine;
And dialect and wooden shoes will
gracefully combine.
When Walter sings his prize song, then
the people will hurrah
Until he bows and gracefully essays
the pas-ma-la.[108]
When Elsa sings, the plaudits will re-
sound unto the skies.
For she will strike high C and praise
"My Big Black Baby's Eyes."
When Wagner's done to ragtime – think
of it, in "Lohengrin"
The bridesmaids in a cake-walk will
come gaily prancing in
And we will hear of Wagner as it
never has been sung
When they put on the endmen in "Der
Gotterdammerung."[109]

In evidence like this of popular attitudes to Wagner's operas and the cakewalk, lines of color, status, and nation seem to disappear. The practice of ragging Wagner seems in fact to share some of the dissimulating features of the cakewalk. "Ragging" standard tunes, as Sundquist contends, "can be likened to the broader act of signifying, the parodic appropriation of a cultural or linguistic 'standard' by a differently styled voice."[110] I contend that the cakewalk and all its gestural coding lurked just below the surface of this parallel musical practice as a physical prankster, able to emerge, as Weldon Johnson says, from the rhythmic pull of the music "that demand[s] physical response."[111] Ralph Ellison has noted that social chaos in all its forms summoned "malignant images of black men into consciousness."[112] Just as in *Jugend's* image of Black men cakewalking with White women, the musical iteration of social chaos some heard in the practice of ragging the classics was a musical miscegenation that brought the bodies of Black dance into uncomfortably close contact with the sounds of White music. Here again, the purported swap between Wagner and the cakewalk comes more clearly into view as a trans-Atlantic cultural merger indifferent to national distinctions.

Another agent of physically charged music was John Philip Sousa, who became a key mediator of the space between Wagnerian opera and American ragtime. Best known for his concert marches, he also introduced Europeans to the "fresh syncopations" and the "hard duple meter" of ragtime and the cakewalk.[113] In European tours with his band between 1900 and 1904, Sousa popularized a repertoire that combined opera overtures, marches, and ragtime hits on a single program.[114] Marches like Sousa's *Washington Post* called for movement that overlapped easily with the two-step rags that often were cross-titled as marches or cakewalks. Terry Waldo notes that dancing instructors often used Sousa marches to teach the new two-step, which replaced the waltz and was interchangeable with the cakewalk.[115]

In the U.S. as well, Wagner and ragtime routinely sidled up to one another in band concerts large and small. Concert programming by Sousa and hundreds of lesser-known community bands across the U.S. reveal an uncanny pattern of Wagner selections followed directly by cakewalks. At Manhattan Beach, listeners in 1899 heard Sousa's band play two cakewalks directly after the "Pilgrim's Chorus" and "Evening Star Romance" from *Tannhäuser*.[116] Across the country at Hollenbeck Park in Los Angeles, the Southern California Band played the "Bridal Chorus" from *Lohengrin* followed by a cakewalk from *Clorindy*.[117] And everywhere in between, selections from Wagner sounded side-by-side with "Bunch o' Blackberries," "Possum Hall Rag" and countless other cakewalk rags.[118] Public music making of this sort indicates that for many, the distant poles of public taste typically ascribed to Wagner and ragtime were in fact bridged easily and often on bandstands and in town squares across the land.

Race-Mixing and Modern Nation Building

Jugend's claim that *Parsifal* was purloined for the price of a cakewalk implies separate and unequal cultural products along with imagery that portends their mixing. Yet in order for the mixture of European art music and Black American dance to rouse public fears of race mixing, they had to carry clearly marked baggage on their Black Atlantic crossings. Wagner's operas carried the unmistakable tag of Europe's high musical culture for turn-of-the-century U.S. audiences looking with admiration to Germany. But what marked the popular cakewalk dance as quintessential to modern American culture for *fin de siècle* Germans? And how did the cakewalk's "modernity" meld perceptions of race and miscegenation in American culture to similar concerns about race purity in Imperial Germany? These questions bring up two broad transatlantic relationships that evade categories of nation: the first has to do with American race relations in the context of industrial modern economies, the second with Black American culture as it conditioned German colonialism.

I first consider the cakewalk as a symbol of American modernity, one that demands attention to the under-gestures and overtones of U.S. slavery still reverberating in the cakewalk's mass appeal in Europe. In their study of German African-Americanophilia, Ege and Hurley place Germany's first wide exposure to U.S. slavery with the 1852 translation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.[119] This exposure continued as American blackface shows entered German variety halls in the late 1870s.[120] Historian Jonathon Wipplinger sees the "racial ruse" of blackface as a crucial component in German understandings not just of American culture, "but of modern mass culture more generally," arguing that the concurrence of Germany's colonial "grab for Africa" and the growing popularity of U.S. blackface in Germany around 1870 created significant "spillage" "between the discourse of Africa and blackness and that of America and African Americans,"[121] a situation that Ege and Hurley agree "Americanized" the pre-existing racial stereotype of the "Neger" in Germany.[122] Wipplinger notes that while blackface was at first received as a curiosity, Germany's belated efforts to join the colonial economic order forced a reinterpretation of "what it meant to be German in modernity."[123] Likewise, Ege and Hurley contend that exposure to Black American performers "reworked Germany's new colonial status," so that the presence of Black people had to be acknowledged in a way that incorporated the increasing geopolitical power of the USA in tandem with the arrival of urban, capitalist modernity.[124] Blackface performers "became a means of negotiating the culture of modernity in a society

appearing to have lost control, of itself and of the other."[125] As an element of blackface comedy that could easily be appropriated into German popular culture, the cakewalk became a way to participate in what German dance historian Fred Ritzel calls the "condescending perspective of the powerful colonial."[126]

Yet how is it, as Jayna Brown asks, that "black bodies came to model for a white populace" the physical expression of urban sophistication and wealth?[127] Considering the cakewalk's adoption by wealthy U.S. urbanites, Brown explains a social assimilation of Darwinism in which being "fit" to survive in the upper echelons of society required displays of physical prowess untouched by the musculature of labor – specifically Black labor.[128] As a demonstration of carriage and grace, the competitive nature of the cakewalk was ideally suited for a modern evolutionist pageant of wealth and leisure on both sides of the Atlantic. Krasner also sees the effect of Darwinism in a willingness among upper class Whites to acknowledge the "superior characteristics of other races."[129] Social displays of physical fitness thus turned to the perceived affinity among Black people for music and dance. The "authenticity" of Black performers' access to "primitive" spontaneity, natural vigor, and joyous temperament, civilized by the "grace" of social cakewalking, thus combined the authentic with the new to appeal to upper- and middle-class Whites' collective class modernism.[130]

Easily detected in the anti-American sentiment of the *Jugend* cartoon, Germany's rushed and unruly transition to modernity aroused conflicting reactions to Darwinism and to the colonial expansion considered vital to the nation's modernization. John Phillip Short explains that in order to "initiate" a wary German citizenry into a modern colonial worldview, ambitions of empire had to be "staged" for a public both curious and dubious of its merits and morals.[131] Viewers of touring cakewalk shows also encountered magic lantern shows, panorama, scientific exhibitions, and *Volkerschauen* – ethnic displays of native life staged for the metropolitan public in city parks and fairways. Along with ethnography museums, these displays participated in the larger sphere of mass culture as tools for manipulating "a collective and naturalized system of construing the world," feeding a "passive consumption" by the masses as a debased form of colonial understanding and fascination with otherness.[132] These public stagings of colonial life bring us closer to understanding how the cakewalk's message of modernity activated fears about race mixing in Germany and registered in images like *Jugend's* cartoon. Eva Blome points out that as Germany began its colonial expansion in the first decade of the twentieth century, its collective identity increasingly centered on the purity of German culture and the German *Volk*, which fostered a colonial discourse "obsessively focused on a threat of miscegenation."[133]

The notion of racial hierarchy was not entirely new in turn-of-the-century Germany. In his historical study of Africans' presence in Germany, Peter Martin describes a shift from a seventeenth-century "afrophile" fascination with the luxurious "sophisticated Moor" in aristocratic quarters to the inferior "Neger" postulated in nineteenth-century scientific theories of racial difference.[134] As a result of this pseudo-science on race, by the 1830s the image of an inferior African had become entrenched in German consciousness: "alien and demonic, instinctual and vicious, without culture, reason or history, as people with animal physicality and childish behavior."[135] Bernasconi locates the beginnings of German anxiety about biological race mixing from even earlier in the eighteenth century, chronicling the long history of accumulated fears that those of mixed race carried disease, infirmity, and spiritual and cultural corruption.[136] By the nineteenth century's turn, these widely accepted

ideas – developed in tandem with similar theories from the United States – were reformulated as moral justification for Germany's disastrous colonial exploits in Africa and its systematic rationalization to the German populace.

Following on private mercantile, scientific, and evangelical contacts from the mid-nineteenth century, Germany pursued its goal of securing national greatness on the world stage by entering the territorial scramble for tropical Africa. Between 1884 and 1891, Imperial Germany established German West Africa (including parts of Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad, Ghana, and Togo), German South-West Africa (Namibia), and German East Africa (Burundi, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Tanzania). Although Germany's imperialist presence in Africa lasted only three decades, the brutality of its policies there, and the consequent economic and political failure of its aims, were the source of intense debate in the German Reichstag and in public discourse.[137] In 1903, at the height of the cakewalk fad, a rebellion in Germany's East African colonies led to massive violence and the death of 75,000 Africans. The following year the Herero revolt against German brutality in South-West Africa led to German General Lothar von Trotha's order for their genocide. These developments required an aggressive ideological campaign back home to build a moral defense for the atrocities committed against native peoples.

Because the brutality of the German occupation included "the subordination of local African women" in tremendous numbers and the segregation of the resulting offspring, concerns over miscegenation openly entered into public discourse.[138] Of even more concern were the consenting marriages between German representatives and African women. Kathleen Reich explains that the frequent practice of intermarriage between German men and African women in South-West Africa led to heightened fears of *Verkafferung*: the progressive lowering of civilization by Whites "going native." Akin to the "amalgamation" panic in the U. S., Verkafferung was understood as "the degeneration of a European to the cultural level of the native" and resulted, according to the German Colonial Dictionary, in the kaffired European being "a lost member of the white population."[139] In response, the German government instituted a ban on mixed marriage in the colonies, including the retroactive annulment of any that had already occurred, stripping the husbands and offspring of these marriages of citizenship, voting, and legal rights.[140]

Miscegenation posed an especially thorny problem because it complicated the "scientific" construction of a hierarchy of human value based on whiteness and blackness. *Mischlingsfrage* – the question of racial mixing – forced a confrontation with "visions of racial purity and racial hierarchy" that could only be maintained in a state of compromise with other social values that honored marriage and fidelity.[141] Also in conflict with these social values were some political exigencies of modern nationhood. Among these, as Helmut Walser Smith explains, was Germany's dependence on the "ordering principle" that understood "the violent collision of unequal cultures as a phenomenon that furthered progress."[142] The lure of U.S. capitalist modernity was inherently tied to the exploitation and control of native peoples, thus requiring an acceptance of race mixing in some degree. Progressive critics such as Richard Dehmel rejected the exclusive ascription of superior and inferior racial qualities, rather seeing racial mixture as "the real engine of all development, since progress could only come about through contact between different cultures."[143] Far more often, however, as Fatima El-Tayib notes, the consequences of race mixing were portrayed as extremely negative.[144]

The second transnational development affecting reception of the cakewalk in Germany lies in the attempt to reconcile the popularity of post-bellum U.S. Black entertainment with

German acceptance of colonial expansion and exploitation. The uncertainty triggered by Germany's colonial crisis turned the threat of race-mixing, first limited to other White nations like France and the U.S., to a genuine threat of *Blutchaos* (blood chaos) and the corruption of German racial purity.[145] Because the cakewalk "invaded" German popular culture so clearly in the context of race mixing, public discourse about the dance was inevitably bound to questions of *Rassenmischung* (race mixing). As Ege and Hurley put it, through the corporeal experience of the cakewalk, notions of white-Germanness and African blackness "became confused."[146] In the confusion, the cakewalk bound American modernity with homeland Germans' own experience of colonial expansion in ways that cross-referenced awareness of blackness as both African and African-American. According to Kusser, groups such as the *Louisiana Amazon Guard* equally invoked the southern United States, the Caribbean, and West Africa, mobilizing abolitionism, American imperialism, and European colonialism all at once.[147]

For German social dancers across class lines, the cakewalk became a conduit to personal experience of American modernity in the form of an embodied racial caricature that meshed with the racist formation of their own national consciousness as an emerging world power. But most importantly, as a dance, the cakewalk took them beyond imaginary identification with Africans and Black Americans to a direct physical enactment of that identification. As African movement via the United States became "natural" in Germans' repertoire of social dances, colonialism was "naturalized" in German political morals. Thus we might see the cakewalk's mixing of bodies – not only the side-by-side proximity of individual dancers, but the incorporation of "primitive" Black movement into a "modern" White citizenry – as a proxy for race mixing that some could excuse on the grounds of its modernity, but others, as we see in *Jugend's* depiction of Black and White people cakewalking together, found troubling.

From Across the Pond

Volker Langbehn has shown how constant exposure to the visual culture of colonial politics – through postcards, advertising, and sheet music covers – became another form of social regulation in Germany by "naturalizing" the colonial order and the social/racial hierarchies it presupposed.[148] Not surprisingly, many German-composed cakewalks employ various plantation myths that justified slavery in the U.S. and that also normalized Germany's colonial expansion into Africa.[149] To conclude my reflections on the cakewalk as a supra-national product of the Black Atlantic, I consider a German-composed cakewalk – "Molly Mein Kleiner Nigger" (Molly My Little Negro Girl)—and some inferences we might draw from the title of the popular stage production it came from: *Über'n grossen Teich* (Across the Great Pond). The cover sheet of "Molly" depicts the faces of infantilized "piccaninnies" pastorally framed by cotton blossoms (Figure 12.9 and Example 1). In the same vein, the German song text adds sentimentalized tropes of Black American slavery to the syncopated ragtime and dance steps that made the cakewalk a symbol of the modern colonial order.[150] The text tells of an enslaved Black man's longing for his sweetheart Molly, forming a seemingly innocent tale of desire but for the "irksome cotton picking" and menacing bloodhounds that keep them separated.

"Molly Mein Kleiner Nigger" was part of a stage review by composer and director Adolf Philipp (1864–1936) that depicted lively scenes of contemporary life in America for audiences in Germany. Philipp was born in Lübeck and became a successful writer and producer of musical theater and operetta in Germany. He crossed the pond himself in 1890 to launch

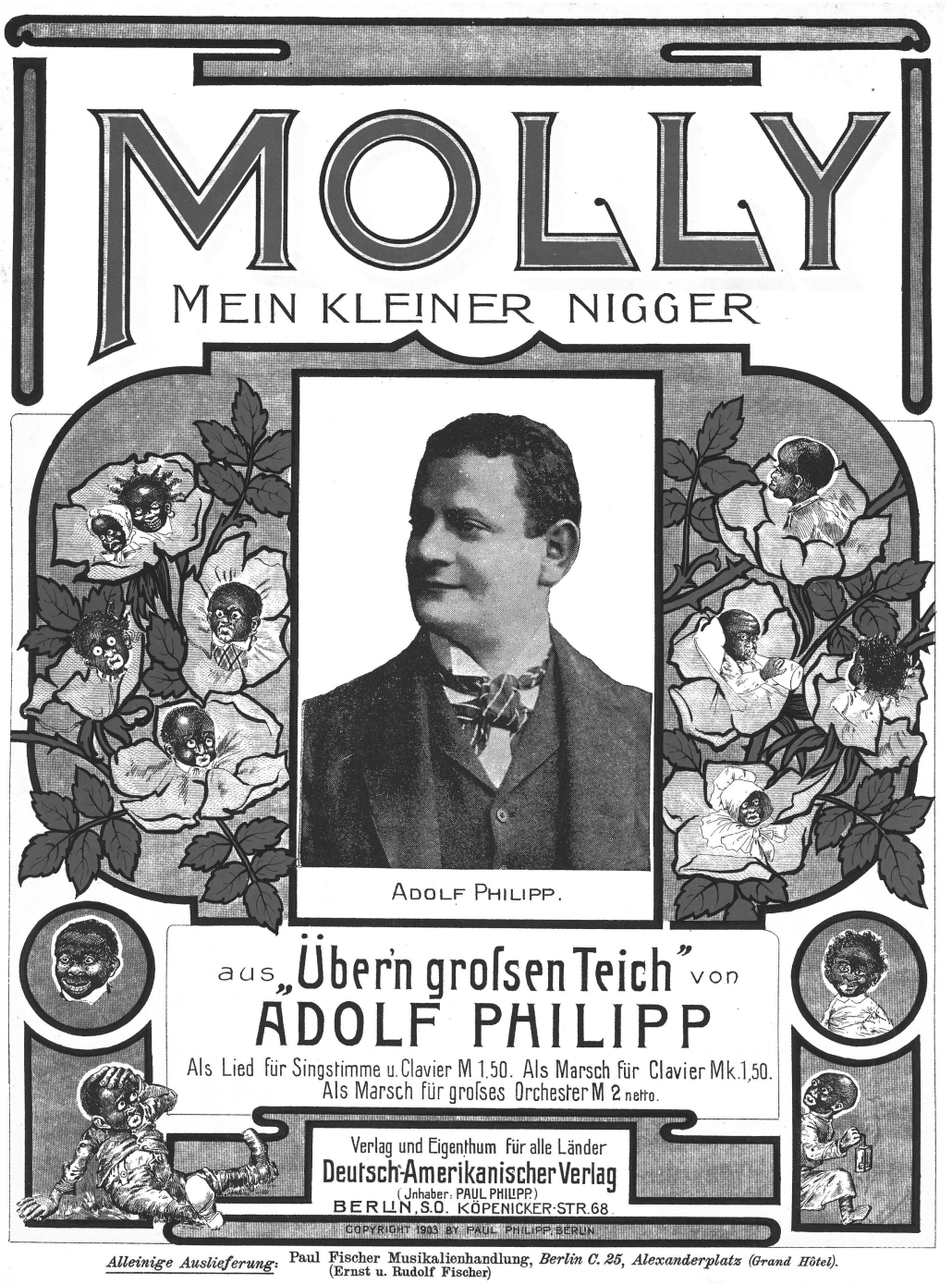
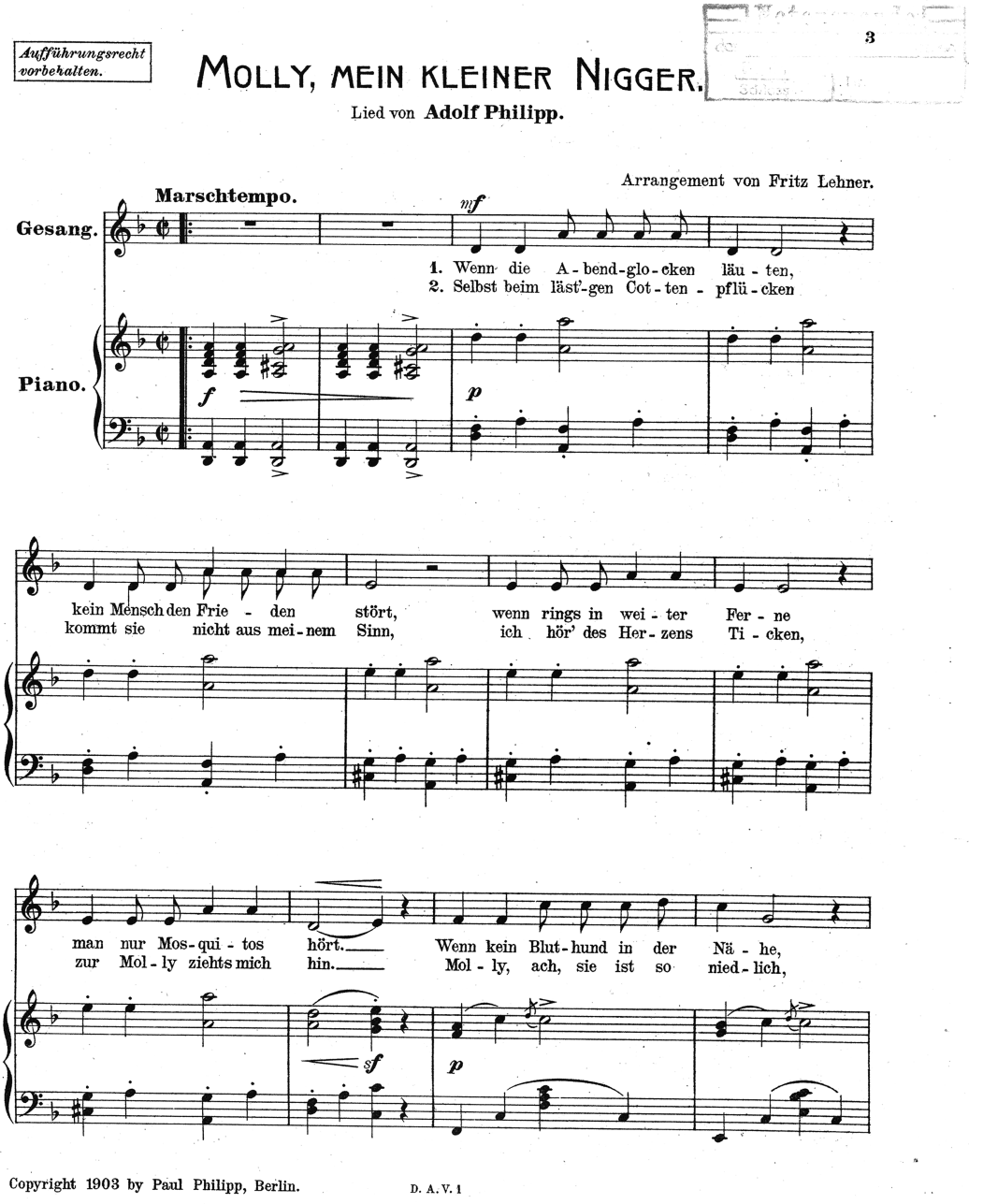


FIGURE 12.9 Adolf Kunz. "Molly Mein Kleiner Nigger." From *Über'n grossen Teich*. Berlin: Deutsch-Amerikanische Verlag, 1903.



EXAMPLE 12.1 Adolf Kunz. "Molly Mein Kleiner Nigger," mm 1–12. From *Über'n grossen Teich*.

© *Paul Philipp. Berlin:* Deutsch-Amerikanische Verlag, 1903.

a theater career in the United States. After performing for several years in German-language comic and lyric operetta roles with Gustav Amberg's company in New York, Philipp established and directed the Germania Theater in 1893. His enterprise became the principal competitor of Heinrich Conried's German-American musical theater housed at the Irving Place Theater.[151] When the success of Conried's theater forced Philipp to return to Germany in 1903, he debuted the very popular *Über'n grossen Teich* in his next venture, the Deutsch-Amerikanisches Theater in Berlin (complete with a "cowboy orchestra" and an "American bar").[152] The Berlin theater journal *Bühne und Brettl* (Stage and Cabaret) wrote that Philipp's new theater had achieved a remarkable success in its first season "with its cheerful scenes from the life of German-Americans."[153] Featuring "cakewalks and up-to-date lyrics, pretty dancers and tasteful décor," Philipp's productions suited modern Berliners' taste for "everything that is under the Stars and Stripes."[154] Meanwhile, Conried had given up his stake in the Irving Place Theater to become director of the Metropolitan Opera. And as we have seen, at the moment Conried was wrangling *Parsifal* from Bayreuth for New York Wagnerites across the pond, Philipp was peddling "Molly Mein Kleiner Nigger," a U.S.-themed cakewalk, to Berliners infatuated with American modernity.

What then are we to make of the "swap" of Wagner's *Parsifal* for the American cakewalk? In whose interest were these cultural exemplars best understood as nationally coded cultural goods? And by which narrative of national and racial purity should we understand and interpret their supposed exchange? If *Jugend's* satirists thought the cakewalk was a purely American encroachment on a purely German operatic repertoire, they did so, as Kusser points out, in a utopian view of colonial Germany, "with its dreams of purity and segregation," that fueled colonial racism and the logic of colonization.[155] The popularity of the cakewalk in Germany and the suspicions of miscegenation and social disorder it aroused suggest that the allure of American modernity and colonial power brought the question of blackness and whiteness into German consciousness in terms that were anything but black and white. Where *Jugend's* cartoon visually proposes a choreography of mixed-race modernity, its caption projects a nationalist cultural paradigm that the transatlantic history of the cakewalk insistently refutes. In fact, *Jugend's* seemingly playful commentary hinges multiple sails that swing to both sides of the Atlantic, filled by the winds of high art music, vernacular dancing, and the racial implications they carried. As a test case of this paradigm, the cakewalk's exchange for *Parsifal* in 1903 appears to cross not only the social and racial barriers of Du Bois's color line, but to contest the natural barrier of "the pond," instead exhibiting multiple Black Atlantic crosscurrents eroding the concept of nation in the reality of modern experience.

Notes

My gratitude goes to the librarians at California State University, Sacramento, for their steadfast efforts to secure my research materials throughout the Coronavirus pandemic: Debra Ahrens, Alberto Pulido, Rachael-Joy Davis, Alexandrea Rubianes, Jared Jensen, and especially Astra Gleason. I also wish to thank Paul Johnson and Alex Hassan for helping me locate Adolf Kunz's *Cakewalk – Kuchentanz*. And special thanks go to Heidi Ostermaier for managing the trans-Atlantic acquisition of Adolf Philipp's "Molly." I am indebted to Elizabeth Campbell and Julia Frankenbach for reading and commenting on a draft of this chapter.

A note on terms: I use "Negro" when it appears as such in a primary source, and to translate the historical German *Neger* into English. Following *The Chicago Manual of Style*'s recent recommendation, Black and White are capitalized when referring to a person's race or ethnicity, except in original material where they were not.

1 Sarah Maza, *Thinking About History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), p. 45.
2 Astrid Kusser, "Cakewalking the Anarchy of Empire around 1900," in *German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory*, edited by Volker Langbehn (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 100.
3 In 1951, Wagner's heirs chose *Parsifal* to reopen the post-war Bayreuth Opera House. Kira Thurman, "Black Venus, White Bayreuth: Race, Sexuality, and the Depoliticization of Wagner in Postwar West Germany," *German Studies Review* 35/3 (October 2012), p. 612.
4 "Invaded by American Music," special cable from Berlin in *The Inter Ocean* (11 October 1903), p. 10. This report also appeared in the *Omaha Bee* and the *St. Louis Dispatch*.
5 "Invaded by American Music."
6 "Cake-Walk Imperator (Cake-Walk Emperor), *Lustige Blätter* (22 April 1903), pp. 8–9.
7 EGO, "Der Cake-Walk," *Wiener Caricaturen* (15 March 1903).
8 Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 40.
9 Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, pp. 2, 15.
10 Joseph Horowitz, *Wagner Nights: An American History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 34. John Graziano agrees that from a cultural standpoint, the U.S. up to the early twentieth century was "a debtor nation" whose principal export was ragtime, "vernacular music associated with the brothel." John Graziano, "African Americans, Europe, and the Quest for Cultural Identity," in *Musik und kulturelle Identität*, vol. 2, edited by Detlef Altenburg and Rainer Bayreuther (Kassel: Bärenreither, 2012), p. 522. On Wagner's centrality to German nation building see also Thurman, "Black Venus, White Bayreuth," pp. 608–610.
11 When the Wagner family rejected Damrosch's offer of $500 for rights to produce *Parsifal*, Damrosch purchased a pocket score of the opera in London, ascertained that the fine for violation of copyright was only $250, and promptly had the parts copied for his New York Oratorio Society, earning the lasting ire of the Wagner family. Deems Taylor recounts the twenty-three-year-old Damrosch's piracy in a remembrance of the composer. Deems Taylor, "Walter Damrosch," Damrosch-Blaine Collection, Library of Congress, Box 1, Folder 8.
12 Horowitz, *Wagner Nights*, p. 260.
13 Horowitz, *Wagner Nights*, p. 261.
14 M. Baumfeld, "Die 'Parsifal'-Aufführung in Newyork," *Neue freie Presse* (8 January 1904).
15 For chronology of the dispute between Conried and the Wagner heirs see Montrose J. Moses, *The Life of Heinrich Conried* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1916), pp. 231–254.
16 Moses, *The Life of Heinrich Conried*, pp. 253–254.
17 "Wagner in America," *Simplicissimus* (14 January 1907), p. 671. Artwork by Ernst Heilemann.
18 See Daniela Smolov Levy, " 'Parsifal' in Yiddish? Why Not?" *Musical Quarterly* 97/2 (Summer 2014), pp. 141–143. Mention of a ragtime production by Weber and Fields in which "the flower girl chorus will be a strong feature" is in Bert Leston Taylor, "Parsifal for the Masses," *Puck* (4 May 1904).
19 The flower maidens in Wagner's *Parsifal* represent earthly pleasure as they attempt to seduce first the Knights of the Grail and then Parsifal himself with their dances.
20 Theodor Wolff, "Der 'Cake walk'," *Berliner Tageblatt* (20 January 1903), p. 1.
21 Wolff, "Der 'Cake walk'." Turn-of-the-century Americans' plunder of European art finds literary description in E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime*, where a newsman attempting to interview architect Stanford White on the shipping docks of New York marvels at the unloading of old-world treasures. "[He] had a vision of the dismantling of Europe, the uncluttering of ancient lands, the birth of a new aesthetic in European art and architecture." E.L. Doctorow, *Ragtime* (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 16. The troves of European art in Pierpont Morgan's library in fact become, in Doctorow's tale, the final bargaining tool in the Black struggle for justice in White America.
22 *Salt Lake Tribune* (6 March 1903), p. 4. Others respond to Wolff in *The Lincoln Star* (23 May 1903), p. 10; "Why Europe Complains," *San Francisco Call* (14 April 1903), p. 6; *New York Tribune* (11 February 1903), p. 8; "Cakewalk in Europe," *Arizona Republican Phoenix* (23 February 1903), p. 7.
23 "Where We Lead," *San Francisco Call* (17 July 1903), p. 6.
24 "Where We Lead."
25 Astrid Kusser, *Körper in Schieflage: Tanzen im Strudel des Black Atlantic um 1900* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013), p. 222.

26 A portrait of the "Creolin" Dora Dean by Ernst Heilemann (who also created the image in Figure 12.2) appeared in *Berliner Leben* (Berlin Life) along with paintings of five other society women. *Berliner Leben* 5/1 (1902), pp. 4–5. The text for this photo feature notes that Heilemann "paints the great ladies of society in their carefully composed postures and toilets, the others in their more relaxed grace and bold costuming fads."
27 Reviewed in *Der Artist* (1 December 1901). Cited in Rainer Lotz, "The 'Louisiana Troupes' in Europe," *Black Perspective in Music* 11/2 (Autumn 1983), pp. 135–137. Lotz gives detailed itineraries of the various "Louisiana" troupes that visited Germany in *Black People: Entertainers of African Descent in Europe and Germany* (Bonn: Birgit Lotz Verlag, 1997), pp. 187–198. On pseudo-scientific exhibitions of Dahomey Amazons in Germany from the 1890s see John Phillip Short, *Magic Lantern Empire: Colonialism and Society in German* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), p. 149.
28 Members included Olga Burgoyne, Dora Dean, Belle Davis, Aida Overton and Mattie Wilkes.
29 Lotz, *Black People*, pp. 189–190. Cited from *Der Artist* (1 December 1901).
30 Ann Dreesbach, *Gezähmte Wilde: die Zurschaustellung "exotischer" Menschen in Deutschland, 1870–1940* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2005), p. 86.
31 Lotz, "The 'Louisiana Troupes' in Europe," p. 139. For a listing of African-American touring artists in Vienna, see James Deaville, "African-American Entertainers in 'Jahrhundertwende' Vienna: Austrian Identity, Viennese Modernism and Black Success," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 3/1 (2006), p. 98.
32 Jayna Brown, *Babylon Girls: Black Women Performers and the Shaping of the Modern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 137. "That's How the Cake Walk's Done" by J. Leubrie Hill begins with these lines: "The Cakewalking craze, it's a fad nowadays/ With black folks and white folks too/And I really declare it's done ev'ry where/Though it may be something new to you." Rather than steps, the chorus delivers a variety of tips on proper form: "Be sure to have a smile on your face/Step high with lots of style and grace." See Thomas L. Riis, ed., *The Music and Scripts of in Dahomey* (Madison: A-R Editions, 1996), pp. 163–166.
33 Tom Fletcher, *100 Years of the Negro in Show Business* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), p. 115. George Williams, Bert Walker, and Aida Overton Walker were the original stars of this full-length musical comedy.
34 See David Krasner, "Rewriting the Body: Aida Overton Walker and the Social Formation of Cakewalking," *Theatre Survey* 37 (November 1996), pp. 66–92.
35 Linda Braun, "Dancing in Step with Society: American Popular Dances and the Urban Body Between Regulation and Amusement in Imperial Berlin (1900–1914)," *Body Politics* 7/4 (2016), p. 50.
36 James Deaville, "Cakewalk in Waltz Time? African-American Music in *Jahrhundertwende* Vienna," in *Reverberations: Representations of Modernity, Tradition and Cultural Value in-between Central Europe and North America*, edited by Susan Ingram, Markus Reisenleitner, and Cornelia Szabó-Knotik (Berlin: P. Lang, 2002), pp. 22–23.
37 *Vossische Zeitung* (22 February 1903). The *Berliner Morgenpost* quips that not only through the Monroe Doctrine and the Morgan shipping trust, but also now in a new area of Yankee competition, "the 'cake walk,' that much-known Negertanz, looms like a bogeyman." Seen every night at the Apollo, this production introduced the "Europeanized copy" with a White couple followed by three Negro pairs who demonstrate "the original." *Berliner Morgenpost* (14 February 1903), p. 6.
38 *Vossische Zeitung* (1 March 1903; 12 March 1903).
39 *Berliner Tageblatt* (29 April 1903).
40 Deaville, "African-American Entertainers," pp. 108–109.
41 *Wiener Caricaturen* (30 August 1903), p. 3. Sander Gilman examines the image of Black performers on the Austrian stage in *On Blackness without Blacks: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1982), pp. 57–82.
42 Ernst v. Hesse-Wartegg, "Cakewalkomanie," *Vossische Zeitung* (13 March 1903), p. 1.
43 Hesse-Wartegg, "Cakewalkomanie." Thompson relates that masters often invited guests and European observers to their plantations "to show off their performing slaves" and to wager on their talents against slaves from neighboring plantations. Katrina Doyne Thompson, *Ring Shout, Wheel About: The Racial Politics of Music and Dance in North American Slavery* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), p. 10.

44 Hesse-Wartegg, "Cakewalkomanie," p. 1.
45 Henry Luis Gates, *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 26.
46 Peter Wood, " 'Gimme de Knee Bone Bent': African Body language and the Evolution of American Dance Forms," in *The Black Tradition in American Modern Dance*, edited by Gerald E. Myers (Durham, NC: American Dance Festival, 1988), pp. 7–8. See also Zeese Papanikolas, *The American Cakewalk: Ten Syncopators of the Modern World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), p. 53; Krasner, "Rewriting the Body," p. 83.
47 For narratives of slaves mocking the European minuet, polonaise, cotillion, and schottische, see Thompson, *Ring Shout, Wheel About*, p. 109; Kusser, "Cakewalking the Anarchy of Empire around 1900," p. 88; Eric J. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 278; Brooke Baldwin, "The Cakewalk: A Study in Stereotype and Reality," *Journal of Social History* 15/2 (Winter 1981), pp. 207–209; Papanikolas, *An American Cakewalk*, pp. 52–53; Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis, *They All Played Ragtime* (New York: Oak Publications, 1971), p. 96.
48 Cited in Baldwin, "The Cakewalk," p. 208.
49 Brown, *Babylon Girls*, p. 130.
50 Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, p. 280. See also Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, pp. 25–26; William C. Cook, "Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke: Traditions of Afro-American Satire," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 13/1 (Spring 1985), p. 112. Cook's title is drawn from Ralph Ellison's "Change the Joke and slip the Yoke," first published in *Partisan Review* in 1958. Reprinted in Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1953), pp. 45–59.
51 Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, pp. 282, 294.
52 Cook, "Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke," p. 111.
53 Cook, "Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke," pp. 112, 120.
54 W.T. Lhamon, Jr., "Optic Black: Naturalizing the Refusal to Fit," in *Black Cultural Traffic: Crossroads in Global Performance and Popular Culture,* edited by Harry J. Elam, Jr. and Kennell Jackson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), pp. 111–161.
55 Lhamon, "Optic Black," p. 112. For a corresponding process of cultural co-option in music see Matthew Morrison, *Blacksound: Making Race and Popular Music in the United States* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014).
56 Lhamon, "Optic Black," p. 118.
57 Lhamon, "Optic Black," p. 118.
58 Lhamon, "Optic Black," p. 124.
59 Kusser, *Körper in Schieflage*, p. 17.
60 Papanikolas, *The American Cakewalk*, p. 47.
61 Baldwin, "The Cakewalk," p. 212.
62 Cited in Baldwin, "The Cakewalk," p. 212.
63 Terry Waldo, *This Is Ragtime* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1976), p. 25. Blesh and Janis call this "a subtle but devastating caricature of the white *Übermensch,* employing the blackface like an African ceremonial mask, and through the whole thing insinuat[ing] his way onto the white stage." Blesh and Janis, *They All Played Ragtime*, p. 85.
64 Krasner, "Rewriting the Body," p. 73.
65 W. Fred, "Aus gutter Gesellschaft," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* (13 March 1903), pp. 1–2. W. Fred. is the pen name for art critic and journalist Alfred Wechsler (1879–1922).
66 The conversation likely refers to Gustav Klimt's portrait of celebrity socialite Serena Pulitzer Lederer, wife of industrialist August Lederer. Klimt displayed the painting, clearly reminiscent of Whistler's "Symphony in White" series of portraits of American women, in 1901 at the tenth exhibition of the Vienna Secession. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436820.
67 Fred, "Aus gutter Gesellschaft," pp. 1–2.
68 Braun, "Dancing in Step with Society," p. 41.
69 Braun, "Dancing in Step with Society," pp. 42–44.
70 James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1995), p. 50. First published in 1912 by Sherman, French, and Co., Boston.

71 Kuser, *Körper in Schieflage*, p. 246. The social flexibility, as Jayna Brown argues, did not extend equally to Blacks and Whites. Brown, *Babylon Girls*, p. 129. James Weldon Johnson memorializes the tension in mixed race clubs in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, pp. 48–51.
72 Larry Hamberlin, "National Identity in Snyder and Berlin's 'That Opera Rag,'" *American Music* 22/3 (Autumn 2004), p. 381.
73 Hamberlin, "National Identity," p. 393.
74 Hamberlin, "National Identity."
75 "Among the Spectators," *New York Times* (25 December 1903), p. 2.
76 Kristin M. Turner, "Class, Race, and Uplift in the Opera House: Theodore Drury and His Company Cross the Color Line," *Journal of Musicological Research* 34 (2015), p. 9.
77 Turner, "Class, Race, and Uplift in the Opera House," p. 6.
78 Naomi André, *Black Opera: History, Power, Engagement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018), p. 31.
79 On Black opera and concert singers see Carolyne Lamar Jordan, "Black Female Concert Singers of the Nineteenth Century: Nellie Brown Mitchell and Marie Selika Williams," in *Feel the Spirit: Studies in Nineteenth-Century Afro-American Music*, edited by George R. Keck and Sherrill V. Martin (Westport, CN: Garland, 1988), pp. 35–48; Ronald Henry High, "Black Male Singers of the Nineteenth Century: A Bibliographic Study," in *Feel the Spirit: Studies in Nineteenth-Century Afro-American Music*, edited by George R. Keck and Sherrill V. Martin (Westport, CT: Garland, 1988), pp. 117–134; Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1983).
80 See Julia J. Chybowski, "Becoming the 'Black Swan' in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America: Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield's Early Life and Debut Concert Tour," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 67/1 (Spring 2014), pp. 125–166; Nicole N. Aljoe, "Aria for Ethiopia: The Operatic Aesthetic of Pauline Hopkins's of One Blood," *African American Review* 45/3 (Fall 2012), pp. 277–290; Sarah Schmalenberger, "Debuting Her Political Voice: The Lost Opera of Shirley Graham," *Black Music Research Journal* 26/1 (Spring 2006), pp. 39–87; Turner, "Class, Race, and Uplift in the Opera House," pp. 1–32; Naomi André, Karen M. Ryan, and Eric Saylor, eds. *Blackness in Opera* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012).
81 Aljoe, "Aria for Ethiopia," pp. 282–283. On Pauline Hopkins, see also Daphne A. Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 284–303.
82 Kenneth Barkin, "W. E. B. DuBois's Love Affair with Imperial Germany," *German Studies Review* 28/2 (May 2005), pp. 285–286.
83 Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p. 127.
84 Barkin, "W. E. B. DuBois's Love Affair with Germany," p. 287.
85 Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p. 125. On Wagner's *Parsifal* as an exemplar of German idealism see Roger Scruton, *Wagner's Parsifal: The Music of Redemption* (London: Allen Lane, 2020).
86 Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, p. 576. The handwritten script for Du Bois's valedictory address at Fisk University lauding Bismarck's leadership is held at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b196-i026. The pomp of German pageantry and the passion of German patriotism so impressed the young Du Bois that he trimmed his mustache to the style of the Kaiser's and continued to do so for the rest of his life. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Autobiography* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), p. 169.
87 Cited in Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 260. See also Du Bois, *Autobiography*, p. 126.
88 Du Bois, *Autobiography*, p. 156.
89 Du Bois, *Autobiography*, p. 157.
90 Du Bois, *Autobiography*.
91 Du Bois, *Autobiography*, p. 169.
92 Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, p. 577.
93 W.E.B. Du Bois, "Shrines," *Pittsburgh Courier* (17 October 1938). Reprinted in Herbert Aptheker, *Newspaper Columns by W.E.B. Du Bois,* vol. 1 (White Plains, NY: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1986), p. 124. Alex Ross contends that Du Bois used Wagnerian myth "as a model for a heroic new African-American spirit, one that would make use of its own legends." Alex Ross,

Wagnerism: Art and Politics in the Shadow of Music (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020), p. 272. Ross, however, characterizes this spirit not as nationalist, but cosmopolitan, "aiming to nurture a Negro consciousness while opening that consciousness to the wider world," just as Gilroy links Du Bois "to the formation of 'the Black Atlantic.'"

94 See Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, pp. 522–523; and Charles J. Fontenot, Jr., "DuBois's 'Of the Coming of John,' Toomer's 'Kabnis,' and the Dilemma of Self-Representation," in *The Souls of Black Folk: One Hundred Years Later*, edited by Dolan Hubbard (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), pp. 147–148. Russell A. Berman presents a thorough analysis of Du Bois's interest in Wagner and German thought in "DuBois and Wagner: Race, Nation, and Culture between the United States and Germany," *German Quarterly* 70/2 (Spring 1997), pp. 123–135.

95 Du Bois, "Opera and the Negro Problem," *Pittsburgh Courier* (31 October 1936). Reprinted in Aptheker, *Newspaper Columns by W.E.B. Du Bois*, p. 129.

96 W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Ring," *Pittsburgh Courier* (31 October 1936). Reprinted in Aptheker, *Newspaper Columns by W.E.B. Du Bois*, pp. 130–131.

97 Du Bois, "Opera and the Negro Problem," in Aptheker, *Newspaper Columns by W.E.B. Du Bois*, p. 129.

98 Du Bois, "Parsifal," in Aptheker, *Newspaper Columns by W.E.B. Du Bois*, p. 130.

99 Along with the cakewalk, Johnson credits ragtime music, as "a world-conquering influence" of Black culture. Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, p. 41.

100 Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, p. 56. Earlier in the novel, Johnson identifies the cakewalk and ragtime music as two of the most universally appealing products of Black culture. Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, p. 41.

101 Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, p. 66. Blesh and Janis maintain that ragging classics could only go one way. "Negro ragtime could transform Mendelssohn's *Spring Song* into something African, but *Maple Leaf* played by [the white musician Mike] Bernard was only a white conservatory piece." Blesh and Janis, *They all Played Ragtime*, p. 224.

102 On the history of miscegenation in the United States see Elise Lemire, *Miscegenation: Making Race in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

103 Edward A. Berlin, *Ragtime: A Musical and Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 67. Eubie Blake remembers the all-Black bands of Baltimore playing funeral marches "straight" on the way to the cemetery, "but coming back they'd rag the hell out of the music." Waldo, *This Is Ragtime*, p. 13.

104 "Jazzing the Masters," *Metronome* (December 1923). Cited in Karl Koenig, ed., *Jazz in Print (1856–1929): An Anthology of Selected Early Readings in Jazz History* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2002), p. 269.

105 Figaro, "Whispers from the Wings," *Musical Opinion* 50/595 (April 1927), p. 678. Cited in Alexandra Wilson, *Opera in the Age of Jazz: Cultural Politics in 1920s Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 111. In his reflections on jazz, S. Mendl devotes an entire chapter to the "ransacking" of classic musical works. Adaptations to the needs of dancers by rag composers go beyond a mere new version of an established work to a "perversion" (he discovers Handel's Hallelujah Chorus in "Yes! We Have no Bananas"). This constitutes a "difference in kind" from more subtle and forgivable borrowings. R.W.S. Mendl, *The Appeal of Jazz* (London: Philip Allan and Co., 1927), pp. 134–161. American composer Felix Arndt's rag titled "An Operatic Nightmare: Desecration No. 2" (1916) was billed as a "pianistic distortion" of opera classics. Another piece by Arndt, "Desecration Rag: A Classic Nightmare," consisted of solo piano "ragtime perversions" of Dvorak, Liszt, and Chopin.

106 Blesh and Janis, *They All Played Ragtime*, p. 96.

107 "Wagner in Ragtime," *Fort Worth Telegram* (2 August 1903), p. 9. Reprint from *Chicago Tribune*.

108 "La Pas Ma La" was an 1895 ragtime hit by Black entertainer and composer Ernest Hogan. The Pas Ma La also referred to a comedy dance step performed by Hogan on the minstrel stage and inscribed in the lyrics of the song.

109 "Wagner in Ragtime," p. 9.

110 Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, pp. 289–290.

111 Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, p. 46.

112 Ralph Ellison, "Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke," in *Shadow and Act*, edited by Ralph Ellison (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1953), p. 48.
113 Fred Ritzel, "*Negerständchen* – Über amerikanische Einflüsse auf die Tanz- und Unterhaltungsmusik der wilhelminischen Ära," in *Studien zur Instrumentalmusik: Lothar Hoffman-Erbrecht zum 60. Geburstag*, edited by Anke Bingmann, Klaus Hortschanskz and Winfried Kirsch (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1988), p. 501. See also Ritzel, "Synkopen-Tänze," p. 168. On Sousa's European tours see Marshall Stearns and Jean Stearns, *Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance* (New York: Schirmer, 1964), p. 123; Susan Cook, "Flirting with the Vernacular: America in Europe, 1900–45," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, edited by Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 152–185, 160; Baldwin, "The Cakewalk," p. 215.
114 On a previous visit to Germany in 1890, Sousa made the pilgrimage to Wagner's *Festspielhaus* in Bayreuth and visited the grave of the composer "he respected above all others." Paul E. Bierley, *John Philip Sousa: American Phenomenon* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1973), p. 54.
115 Waldo, *This Is Ragtime*, p. 13. Fred Ritzel observes that the same music was used for different dances – cakewalk, two-step, turkey trot, marches – depending on variation in tempo. Ritzel, "*Negerständchen*," pp. 503–504.
116 *Standard Union* (Brooklyn) (30 June 1899), p. 3.
117 *Los Angeles Times* (14 October 1900), p. 20.
118 Not surprisingly, Sousa's own marches also became popular material for ragging, a phenomenon captured in Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem "The Colored Band." "You kin hyeah a fine perfo'mance w'en de white ban's serenade, An' dey play dey high-toned music mighty sweet, But hit's Sousa played in ragtime, an' hit's Rastus on Parade, Wen de colo'ed ban' comes ma'chin' down de street." Berlin, *Ragtime*, p. 9. See notes 19 and 20. See also Blesh and Janis, *They All Played Ragtime*, p. 57; Paul Laurence Dunbar, *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1922), pp. 178–179.
119 Moritz Ege and Andrew Wright Hurley, "Periodizing and Historicizing German Afro-Americanophilia: From Antebellum to Postwar (1850–1967)," *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 12/2 (July 2015), p. 5. For analysis of post-war perspectives on blackness in Germany see Pricsilla Layne, *White Rebels in Black: German Appropriation of Black Popular Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018).
120 Rainer Lotz reports on more than one hundred Black performers in Germany in 1896 alone, not to mention Whites performing in blackface. Lotz, "Black Troubadours," pp. 261–262.
121 Jonathon Wipplinger, "The Racial Ruse: On Blackness and Blackface Comedy in 'fin-de-siècle' Germany," *German Quarterly* 84/4 (Fall 2011), pp. 459–460.
122 Ege and Hurley, "Periodizing and Historicizing German Afro-Americanophilia," p. 8.
123 Wipplinger, "The Racial Ruse," p. 458.
124 Ege and Hurley, "Periodizing and Historicizing German Afro-Americanophilia," p. 8.
125 Wipplinger, "The Racial Ruse," p. 471.
126 Ritzel, "Synkopen-Tänze," p. 182.
127 Brown, *Babylon Girls*, p. 130.
128 Brown, *Babylon Girls*, pp. 130–132.
129 Krasner, "Rewriting the Body," p. 79. See also Eva Blome's discussion of Joseph-Arthur Gobineau's belief in artistic innovation blended with primitive virility as a positive byproduct of race mixing. Eva Blome, "Fantasies of Mixture, Politics of Purity: Narratives of Miscegenation in Colonial Literature, Literary Primitivism, and Theories of Race (1900–1933)," in *The Persistence of Race: Continuity and Change in Germany from the Wilhelmine Empire to National Socialism,* edited by Lara Day and Oliver Haag (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), p. 53.
130 Krasner, "Rewriting the Body," pp. 80–81.
131 Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, p. 3.
132 Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, pp. 14–16. Rainer Lotz notes that millions saw exhibits of African entertainers. The first German Colonial Exhibition in 1896 brought 103 Africans from all the German colonies, often to merchandise such goods as tobacco and bananas. Lotz, *Black People*, p. 252.
133 Blome, "Fantasies of Mixture, Politics of Purity," p. 44.
134 Peter Martin, *Schwarze Teufel, edle Mohren: Afrikaner in Geschichte und Bewusstsein der Deutschen* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2001), pp. 12–13.

135 Martin, *Schwarze Teufel*, p. 13.
136 Robert Bernasconi, "After the German Invention of Race: Conceptions of Race Mixing from Kant to Fischer and Hitler," in *Remapping Black Germany: New Perspectives on Afro-German History, Politics, and Culture*, edited by Sara Lennox (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), pp. 93–95.
137 See C. Aisha Blackshire-Belay, "In Search of Africa in the German World: Transcultural Migrations," in *Crosscurrents: African Americans, Africa, and Germany in the Modern World,* edited by David McBride, Leroy Hopkins and C. Aisha Blackshire-Belay (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1998), pp. 121–122. For a general history of German colonialism see Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History*, translated by Sorcha O'Hagan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
138 David McBride, "Missions, Medicine, and Colonia Technologies: Africa and German Colonialism in the *Mittel-Afrika* Era," in *Crosscurrents: African Americans, Africa, and Germany in the Modern World,* edited by David McBride, Leroy Hopkins and C. Aisha Blackshire-Belay (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1998), pp. 129–151, 131–132.
139 Cited in Blome, "Fantasies of Mixture, Politics of Purity," p. 49. On amalgamation in the U.S. see Tavia Nyong'o, *The Amalgamation Waltz: Race, Performance, and the Ruses of Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); Lemire, *Miscegenation: Making Race in America*.
140 Kathleen J. Reich, "Racially Mixed Marriages in Colonial Namibia," in *Crosscurrents: African Americans, Africa, and Germany in the Modern World,* edited by David McBride, Leroy Hopkins and C. Aisha Blackshire-Belay (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1998), pp. 159–164, 160. See also Blome, "Fantasies of Mixture, Politics of Purity," p. 46.
141 Helmut Walser Smith, "The Talk of Genocide, the Rhetoric of Miscegenation: Notes on Debates in the German Reichstag Concerning Southwest Africa, 1904–1914," in *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy,* edited by Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox and Susanne Zantop (Ann Arbor University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. 116.
142 Walser Smith, "The Talk of Genocide, the Rhetoric of Miscegenation," p. 114.
143 Fatima El-Tayib, *Schwarze Deutsche Der Diskurs um 'Rasse" und Nationale Identität 1890–1933* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2001), p. 50.
144 El-Tayib, *Schwarze Deutsche*, p. 50.
145 El-Tayib, *Schwarze Deutsche*, p. 50.
146 Ege and Hurley, "Periodizing and Historicizing German Afro-Americanophilia," p. 10.
147 Kusser, *Körper in Schieflage*, p. 223. Kira Thurman's study of the Fisk Jubilee Singers' tour to Germany shows that as early as 1877 "two powerful transatlantic topics – abolitionism and colonialism – had begun to overlap." Kira Thurman, "Singing the Civilizing Mission in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms: The Fisk Jubilee Singers in Nineteenth-Century Germany," *Journal of World History* 27/3 (September 2016), p. 457.
148 Volker Langbehn, "Satire Magazines and Racial Politics," in *German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory,* edited by Volker Langbehn (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 116.
149 An example is Richard Vollstedt's 1903 "A Hilarious Negro Wedding, op. 215," billed as a "humorous Cakewalk," and cited by Fred Ritzel as a characteristic example of "the benevolent, condescending contempt for black music culture that was often observed in the context of colonial arrogance in Germany." Ritzel, "Synkopen-Tänze," pp. 170–171.
150 Other cakewalks by German composers include Paul Lincke, *Negers Geburtstag, American Cake Walk* (Coons Birthday Cakewalk); R. Schrader, *Der Cake-Walk oder Kuchentanz* (The Cake-Walk or Cake-dance); T.W. Thurban, *The Brooklyn Cakewalk*; Willy Spencer, *On the Banks of the Swaneeriver: Cakewalk and Two-Step*; Harry S. Webster, *Die Lustigen Neger* (The Merry Negroes).
151 John Koegel, *Music in German Immigrant Theater: New York City, 1840–1940* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2009), pp. 200–202. Koegel relates that Conried crossed "the pond" himself sixty-nine times during the 1880s and 1890s to recruit personnel for his Irving Place Theater. Koegel, *Music in German Immigrant Theater*, p. 129.
152 "News of Plays and Players," *New York Times* (7 May 1903), p. 9. Cited in John Koegel, "Adolf Philipp and Ethnic Musical Comedy in New York's Little Germany," *American Music* 24/3 (Autumn 2006), p. 295.
153 *Bühne und Brettl* (9 November 1903), p. 17.

154 *Bühne und Brettl* (9 November 1903). Another show by Philipp, *Im wilden Westen* (In the Wild West), was set in the American West among Native Americans. See Koegel, "Adolf Philipp and Ethnic Musical Comedy," pp. 295–296. Karl May's popular western novels and the presence of Wild West shows on German stages had a parallel popularity to that of the cakewalk. On Germans' fascination with Native Americans, see H. Glenn Penny, *Kindred by Choice: Germans and American Indians since 1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013). On the image of Africans in German colonial literature see Gilman, *On Blackness without Blacks*, pp. 119–128.

155 Kusser, *Körper in Schieflage*, p. 246.