

## ***Sissle & Blake's Shuffle Along***

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*Shuffle Along* was a miracle. In the spring of 1921 hardly anyone believed that a musical written, performed, produced, and directed by American blacks could be presented on Broadway. But on May 23 *Shuffle Along* opened at New York's 63rd Street Theatre, which was then part of Broadway, and promptly made theatrical history.

The show restored authentic black artistry to the mainstream of the American theater. A daring synthesis of ragtime and operetta, it had an enormous impact on the development of the Broadway musical during its most vibrant years. It featured jazz dancing, was the first black musical to play white theaters across the United States, and was a vital part of the black cultural renaissance of the 1920s.

The triumph of *Shuffle Along* and its creators, Noble Sissle, Eubie Blake, Flournoy Miller, and Aubrey Lyles, was a beacon of hope to every black artist in America. Blacks were never again systematically barred from the Broadway stage, as they had been in the decade before the play's opening. On the other side of the ledger, once *Shuffle Along* opened, white entrepreneurs used their power of the purse to mulct black artists.

Today our musical theater is nearly moribund, but fifty-five years ago, when *Shuffle Along* opened, Broadway was a vibrant place, ablaze with the fires of ambition and aspiration. The shows of the period, marvels full of tunes and talents, pulsed with the excitement of those raw and energetic years. There were really *zany* comedians, *beautiful* showgirls, *lavish* costumes, and many wonderful singers and dancers. The exuberantly talented creations of George and Ira Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Vincent Youmans, Oscar Hammerstein II, Lorenz Hart, Richard Rodgers, Irving Berlin, and Cole Porter were eons away from the depressing and uninspired offerings of most of today's Broadway.

Musical comedy had its greatest flowering during the twenties and found expression in many different forms. Perhaps the most totally successful in the genre was the revue, as spectacularly produced by Florenz Ziegfeld, George White, Earl Carroll, and the Shubert brothers. The revue traced its origins at least as far back as the minstrel show.

Beginning as an absurd white parody of black artistry, the minstrel show had evolved into a full-fledged variety show featuring all kinds of novelty acts—singers, dancers, jugglers, contortionists, ventriloquists, and animal acts. Its early headquarters was the saloon, but by the late 1860s the minstrel show had become a "clean," family-type entertainment, ensconced in "Opera Houses" and given a dignified name: vaudeville. Surviving until its gradual displacement by motion pictures, vaudeville was organized into circuits, the most powerful of which was the Keith Orpheum Circuit, headed by E. F. Albee. The gargantuan New York revues of Ziegfeld and the others were really only more elaborate versions of the variety or vaudeville show.

Burlesque, which is often confused with vaudeville, had its own tradition and line of development. Today the terms "burlesque" and "striptease" have become virtually synonymous in the public mind, but the original stage burlesque was a collection of comedy sketches that either lampooned lofty material or treated banal situations with mock dignity; only later would the girlie acts that had been interspersed with the parodies and caricatures become the bulk of the burlesque evening. Burlesque shows had their own system of organization and booking, usually called "wheels." In general, salaries in burlesque were lower, working hours longer, and working conditions more hazardous and less elegant than on the vaudeville circuits. While vaudeville might aspire to a higher-class audience and fare, the low comedy skits of burlesque made no bones about trying to be Art.

The traditional route followed by many of the most successful performers up until quite recently was to go from burlesque to vaudeville to the revue to musical comedy. The last-named, the conventional "book show," essentially fit the variety show into the framework of a story. The growth of this form can be traced from the nineteenth-century farce comedies of Nate Salsbury, Harrigan and Hart, and Charles Hoyt to the shows of Weber and Fields and George M. Cohan in the early years of this century.

Cohan, especially, can be credited with keeping the American vernacular theatrical tradition alive despite the overwhelming influx, in the 1890s and 1900s, of a seemingly endless flood of Viennese operettas, British comic operas, and French *opéras bouffes*, whose principal attractions were their exotic locales and the high sophistication of their music. Against the small-scale musicals of Bolton, Wodehouse, and Kern, and the syncopated offerings of Irving Berlin, was pitted a huge outpouring of operetta, which remained popular from the first Gilbert and Sullivan operetta performance

(*H. M. S. Pinafore*, Boston, 1878) to Sigmund Romberg's last great success (*The New Moon*, New York, 1928). Operetta's outstanding practitioners, on both sides of the Atlantic, included Victor Herbert, Franz Lehár, Leslie Stuart, and Oskar Straus. Even more recently, in the works of Rodgers and Hammerstein and Lerner and Loewe, we find many of the traits of this once-dominant theatrical form.

Burlesque—vaudeville—revue—musical comedy—operetta: all were healthy, alive, and still in the ascendancy when *Shuffle Along* came to Broadway.

There was a time around the turn of the century when the dominant white culture of America appeared ready to accept black artistry on its own terms. Black artists had waged a long, determined struggle ever since Emancipation to break the shackles that had virtually forced them to imitate the white man's grotesque parody of themselves. During the 1890s black artists gradually cast off the bonds of minstrelsy and moved slowly toward the presentation of genuine black musicals on Broadway. The custom of applying burnt cork to black faces began to be discarded, women were introduced into productions, and black musicals entered a new era.

Shows like *The Creole Show*, *The Octoroons*, *Oriental America*, and *Black Patti's Troubadours* led directly to important breakthroughs in the black musical. There was Bob Cole's *A Trip to Coontown* in 1898, the first musical, it is believed, to have been owned, operated, and produced entirely by blacks. That same year, composer Will Marion Cook (who had studied in Europe with Joseph Joachim, the great violinist and friend of Brahms) and the revered poet Paul Laurence Dunbar presented their musical comedy *Clorindy, the Origin of the Cakewalk*, which brought black performers to Broadway in a successful show starring the legendary dancer, songwriter, and comedian Ernest Hogan.

Soon thereafter the Johnson brothers—author James Weldon Johnson and composer John Rosamond Johnson—teamed with Bob Cole to form the Cole and Johnson Company, which created and produced such melodious operettas as *The Shoo-Fly 2 Regiment* (1906) and *The Red Moon* (1908). Another new company was formed by Bert Williams and George Walker, who joined with Cook, Dunbar, and others to create *Dahomey* (1903), the most universally acclaimed black theaterpiece of the era. In *Dahomey* was the first black show to penetrate to the heart of Broadway—Times Square. After its command performance in London it popularized the cakewalk around the world. *Abyssinia* (1906) and *Bandana Land* (1908), with book and lyrics by Alex Rogers and Jesse Shipp, were other notable works by the company that starred the incomparable Williams and Walker.

About 1909 this great era of black theater artistry began to come to an end, mainly because of the almost simultaneous deaths of Ernest Hogan, Bob Cole, and George Walker. These men were not only outstanding creators and performers but also managers of their respective companies. Without their business acumen it became a struggle to keep the companies alive and, without other stars of equal prominence to help carry on, their partners (with the exception of Bert Williams, whose famous solo acts enlivened the *Ziegfeld Follies* for some time) abandoned Broadway within two years. Thus began a period of almost total exodus of black performers from the mainstream theaters of New York. Those who remained in the entertainment field would play almost entirely to black audiences.

While the deaths of men like Cole, Hogan, and Walker were probably the most important single factor in the loss of Broadway to black theater, there were other reasons. One, unquestionably, was the worsening of race relations in American cities. As long as the urban black population was relatively small and geographically self-contained, racial friction, while always present, seldom erupted into open conflict. But the huge migration of Southern blacks into Northern cities at this time put additional strains on an already uneasy truce. Then, too, Woodrow Wilson, despite his liberal reputation, did more than any other American president to reintroduce segregation into the federal government. There was also widespread public hostility toward Jack Johnson, America's first black heavyweight champion, who had outraged whites not only by his pugilistic prowess but also by his open companionship with white women. Thus the old blackface minstrel tradition rose again in a new form; white producers and audiences seemed satisfied anew with black-faced white performers like Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor, and Frank Tinney, and few questioned that their work could stand as a satisfactory representation of black artistry.

Black artists, however, gradually countered this trend. A prime mover was James Reese Europe. The principal organizer of black musicians into a kind of union, the conductor who transformed W. C. Handy's "Memphis Blues" into the fox-trot for Vernon and Irene Castle, and the leader of society dance bands, Europe was able to meet wealthy industrialists and other prominent social and political figures. Through these important encounters Europe garnered new sources of support for black artists. When black shows did return to Broadway they were billed as "society fads," for indeed it was through the

patronage of the wealthy that the closed doors began to open a little in the years after World War I. The war also had a temporary salutary effect on race relations, as men who fought together overcame much of the ignorance and mutual suspicion engendered by the long forced separation of the races.

This, then, was the situation in the theater when the songwriting team of lyricist Sissle and composer Blake joined forces with the comedy team of Miller and Lyles in 1921 to write and produce *Shuffle Along*. More even than Cole and Johnson or Cook and Dunbar, Miller, Lyles, Sissle, and Blake were to establish, on the Broadway stage, the humor and music of the American Negro in a pure form. For while there are intimations of ragtime in the work of the earlier men, the overlay of operetta was much stronger there than in *Shuffle Along*. Eubie Blake had already won fame as one of the principal composers of ragtime, that special American blend of European dance form and African rhythm that would influence the entire spectrum of American theatrical and popular music. Ragtime's principal feature is the pitting of complex African syncopation against a strong, implacable basic beat. Blake was to accompany and abet the rise of this music from the bordellos of America to the vaudeville stage, and with Noble Sissle he would gain theatrical experience on the boards that would prepare them both for the arduous job of constructing a viable theater piece. Miller and Lyles can be credited with the successful launching of authentic Negro folk humor onto the nation's stage. The fusion of these two vaudeville teams would return the black man to Broadway in triumph, in an epoch-making stage work without which much that has been individual and original in American musical theater would probably never have happened.

Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake were partners from 1915 until Sissle's death in December 1975. Sissle's upright, religious boyhood (he was born in Indianapolis in 1889, the son of a Methodist minister) was a striking contrast to Blake's turbulent childhood on the streets of Baltimore, where he was born in 1883 to former slaves. While Sissle worked his way through school as a dance band vocalist and singer and reader on the Chautauqua circuit, much of Blake's early training as a virtuoso ragtime composer and pianist was gained in the saloons and sporting houses of the Eastern seaboard. Yet Sissle's elegant, dramatic, church-influenced lyrics and singing style superbly matched Blake's ebullient music and powerful piano-playing.

First Sissle, then Blake joined James Reese Europe's Society Orchestra in New York. During World War I, Sissle and Europe served in the 309th Infantry Division in France, where Europe assembled an outstanding band with Sissle as his tenor vocalist. After the war Europe's orchestra was in the midst of a triumphant American tour when Europe was killed by a crazed drummer from his own orchestra.

Soon after, the orchestra disbanded and Sissle and Blake went into vaudeville as the "Dixie Duo."

Sissle and Blake had had remarkably little contact with other black performers on the road, since vaudeville managers made it a practice not to bill more than one black act per show. In fact, it was only at an NAACP benefit in Philadelphia in 1920 that Sissle and Blake were able to meet the successful comedy team of Miller and Lyles.

Flournoy E. Miller and Aubrey Lyles were a veteran comedy-dancing act who had begun in college theatricals at Fisk University in Tennessee. After a stint in Chicago at Mott's Pekin Theatre and a tour of England, Miller and Lyles had played several years on the Keith circuit. Their blackface act consisted of Southern small-town humor, dance sequences, and a famous fight scene that was imitated by many other vaudevillians for years afterward.

Both acts performed that muggy summer evening, and afterward Miller and Lyles introduced themselves to Sissle and Blake. After a mutual exchange of compliments, Miller and Lyles told the songwriters that their songs had the kind of theatrical flavor they had been looking for; perhaps the two acts could join forces to try to put blacks back on Broadway. Nothing immediate came out of the encounter, but a few months later, by chance, the four met again in New York on the street. They continued their Philadelphia conversation as if no time had passed, but now Miller had something more concrete: one of their sketches, about the complicated maneuvers in a small-town mayoralty contest, had, he thought, possibilities of being developed into a full-length musical.

Miller also felt that the only way to put black performers into white theaters with dignity was through musical comedy, where they could run their own show unhampered. Here was the chance to realize Jim Europe's dream: to restore blacks to the American stage. Sissle, Blake, and Europe had started to move in this direction before the war, but Europe's murder had thwarted their plans; now Miller and Lyles had come along to provide the frame for the undertaking. The four pooled their meager resources and attempted what few believed possible after George M. Cohan—to write, direct, manage, and star in their own show.

*Shuffle Along* was put together quickly. Drawing on their songs and comedy routines, the four assembled a rough sketch of a show that was, in some respects, a fusion of two vaudeville acts—with dance numbers, a more or less continuous plot and an extraneous love interest. All over the country black performers responded to the casting notices. Veterans from the old Williams and Walker and Cole and Johnson companies, standouts of the Lafayette Theatre and other black ensembles, and many eager and talented newcomers were 4 assembled for a show that had no money, no sets, nor any real assurance of being produced at all.

Miller and Lyles had known Al Mayer, who had formerly worked for E. F. Albee and had booked their act on the Keith circuit. Mayer was friendly with the Cort family, father John and son Harry, whose once-gigantic theatrical empire was crumbling as a result of the financial recession of 1921. Everyone was broke just then, including Mayer himself: Miller, Lyles, Sissle, and Blake chipped in \$1.25 each so that Al could take Harry Cort to lunch to discuss the new project. The Cort family agreed to audition the show..

We ran down a few songs, [recalled Blake] and Old Man Cort—well, he just sat there with a glum look on his face. When we did our theme song, "Love Will Find a Way," the old man didn't say anything. Nothing. He just got up and walked out, saying, "Thank you, boys. Thank you very much." I thought we were dead for sure, but it turned out the old man liked the song so much he said he'd help us and give us a theater, sets, some old costumes, if we would just give his son Harry an interest in the show.

The 63rd Street Theatre was a dilapidated lecture hall, without a proper stage or orchestra pit; the crew would still be building on the stage well into the New York run. The "old costumes" were discards from two flops, Eddie Leonard's *Roly-Boly Eyes* and Frank Fay's *Fables*; "they still had sweatmarks under the arms," Blake recalls.

Up until rather recently, the usual practice for a Broadway show was to try out on a road tour and then, if the show lasted, bring it into town. The *Shuffle Along* company rehearsed in Harlem in preparation for the tour, but when the time came to go on the road it was discovered that no one had the money to pay the company's train fare to Trenton, New Jersey, their first stop.

We got down to Penn Station [said Blake] and I was ready to turn around and go straight home, but Sissle wouldn't let me. He said we'd get there somehow, and we did. I think Sissle still felt Jim Europe's hand guiding us....

During the rehearsals a shabbily dressed man had hung around the theater. Everyone noticed him and knew him—a Mr. Gasthoffer or something—and assumed he was just a sad old derelict, come to ogle the showgirls.

But Al Mayer knew him and said we should get him to stay with us on tour. When we were at the station, Al went to him and sold him onehalf of his share in the show to get us on the way to Trenton.

The *Shuffle Along* itinerary traced a helter-skelter course, jumping and doubling back over town, hamlet, theater, auditorium, barn, and movie house throughout New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

We'd play one-night—if we were lucky, twonight —stands. No one knew us, so they'd only book us for a short time. We'd get good reviews in one town, but before they could do us any good we'd be on to another town—that is, if we had the money. One night Sissle and I were sitting on the steps of a building, and Sissle was writing out checks. They weren't any good until we could wire the box-office receipts into the New York bank—we were always one day behind at the very least. I looked up. "Sissle," I said, "do you know where you're sitting?" "No," he said, and looked around. We were sitting on the steps of the jailhouse, writing bum checks! We broke up in a fit of laughing and couldn't stop.

The plot of *Shuffle Along* was an expansion of a Miller and Lyles vaudeville sketch known as both "The Mayor of Dixie" and "The Mayor of Jimtown." It concerns a three-way mayoralty race in a small Southern town. The candidates are Steve Jenkins (played by Miller), Sam Peck (Lyles), and Harry Walton (Roger Matthews), to whom "I'm Just Wild About Harry" is sung during the campaign. Jenkins and Peck are partners in the grocery business as well as rival candidates for Mayor of Jimtown.

Jenkins and Peck promise each other, if elected, to name the other chief of police. Meanwhile, each is stealing from the grocery store cash register to finance his campaign and to hire a private detective to watch the doings of the other (it's the same detective, of course).

With the help of an unscrupulous campaign manager (Tom Sharper, played by Sissle), Steve Jenkins wins the election. Peck's candidacy is undermined by his overbearing suffragette wife (Mattie Wilks). As chief of police, Peck discovers that his only duty is to "salaam the mayor." Peck interprets 5 "salaam" to mean slam, and a dancing, tumbling fight between the two ensues. To time-steps and a little buck-and-wing, Miller, who was tall, kept one hand on Lyles' head while the shorter Lyles kept swinging and missing.

In the end, the reform candidate, Harry Walton, throws the two scoundrels out and justice prevails in Jimtown.

Despite a diligent search I have not been able to find a script of *Shuffle Along*. According to Sissle and Blake, Miller, who wrote most of it (and later wrote scripts for the *Amos 'n' Andy* radio shows), gathered his ideas in an unusual way. Whenever he was in a new city he would frequent barber shops, pool-rooms, taverns, and general stores, where he would pick up tortured words like "regusting" and "relover" and other comic notions that would fire his imagination.

Riding into town with an \$18,000 deficit, *Shuffle Along* began preparations for its New York opening. The show was tight and ready, but there were worries.

One day Blake ran into Jesse Shipp, a writer for the old Williams and Walker shows, and told him he and Sissle had written a song called "Love Will Find a Way." "You're crazy," Shipp told him, and walked off, shaking his head. Honest, unburlesqued romantic love interest in a black show was dangerous ground: white audiences might boo the show off the stage.

Noble Sissle remembered:

On opening night in New York this song had us more worried than anything else in the show. We were afraid that when Lottie Gee and Roger Matthews sang it, we'd be run out of town. Miller, Lyles, and I were standing near the exit door with one foot inside the theater and the other pointed north toward Harlem. We thought of Blake, stuck out there in front, leading the orchestra—his bald head would get the brunt of the tomatoes and the rotten eggs. Imagine our amazement when the song was not only beautifully received, but encored. During the intermission we told Blake what we had been doing, and he came near to killing us. But the biggest moment of all came near the end of the show, with a number called "The Baltimore Buzz." I sang it while Blake and the orchestra played like fury and the girls danced up a storm. People cheered. I almost fell off the stage when I looked out into the auditorium —there was old John Cort dancing in the aisles! His faith in us had been borne out. That night it looked like we were home.

The critical reaction to *Shuffle Along* was generally favorable. Since the show came to town without much advance notice, several of the papers were slow to review it and some sent their second-string critics. Mixed reviews came from the *Globe* and *Morning Telegram*, while even some of the more positive notices criticized the flimsy book and staging and the inadequate production.

But the vast majority of those who saw and wrote about *Shuffle Along* were captivated by it. Burns Mantle, in the *Daily News*, said that it was "interesting as a novelty, the song numbers are full of melody and everybody dances." The *Evening Journal* described it as "a breeze of super-jazz blown up from Dixie!" The *Mail* stated that the "principal asset of the new entertainment is the dancing and the jazz numbers." The *Evening Post* called it "a good deal better than a number of musical plays offered this season—it's well worth hearing." Strong praise came from *Billboard*: "real, wholesome and filled with a spirit of liveliness and good humor which amazes anyone who has endured the languid efforts of ordinary Broadway musical affairs." The influential Heywood Brown told his *Evening World* readers that "*Shuffle Along* is well worth your attention.... No musical show in town boasts such rousing and hilarious teamwork."

But the two most enthusiastic and helpful reviews came in *Variety* from "Ibee" (Jack Pulaski) and in the *New York American* from veteran Alan Dale, whose aversion to most musicals was legendary. Eubie Blake recalled:

It was Alan Dale's review that really made people want to see the show. We were afraid people would think it was a freak show and it wouldn't appeal to white people. Others thought that if it was a colored show it might be dirty. One man bought a front-row seat for himself every night for a week. I'd noticed him—down in the pit you notice things in the audience. Finally after the whole week was past, he came up and told me that now he could bring his wife and children because there was no foul language and not one double-entendre.

Shortly after the reviews trickled in, *Shuffle Along* began offering special midnight performances on Wednesdays. The purpose was to draw theater people, who could not see it any other time. Their word of mouth was very important to the show's success. "White show people spread the word first," recalled Sissle. Then came politicians and other celebrities. And it soon became a society fad.

*Shuffle Along* had just about every current dance step—except the waltz. Given Blake's propensity for waltzes from the very earliest, this seems odd; in fact he had planned a waltz for the show, an elegant one in the suavest English style, which he had written in 1920. One day he played it for Lottie Gee, the leading lady, for whom he intended the number. Miss Gee had been in several Williams and Walker and Cole and Johnson productions, and her backlog of experience was as impressive as her beauty. "How can you have a waltz in a colored show?" she asked when he had finished playing. Blake said:

I reminded her of a waltz, "When the Pale Moon Shines," which had been in a colored show. Lottie answered, yes, she had been in that show, and the song wasn't a hit. Well, she had me there. "Make it a one-step," said Lottie. A onestep! That cut me to the quick—she was going to destroy my beautiful melody! I loved that waltz! Then Sissle went along with her. He was always more commercial than I was. All right, I said, I'll make it a one-step.

The new one-step was not a particular hit in the show, even with Lottie Gee singing it with a background of six dancing chorus boys.

Something seemed to just miss in its presentation [Sissle recalled] and we were about to throw the song out of the show in Philadelphia, where we were playing prior to taking it into New York.

One night one of the chorus boys was sick, and Bob Lee, a member of the singing ensemble, was drafted to replace him in the number. Bob couldn't dance very well, so we sent him on stage leading the line so that he would be the last off and not in the way of the others when they made their exit.

Miller and Lyles and myself were making a change and Blake was in the pit conducting, when all of a sudden we heard a roar of laughter from the audience. Lyles said, "I bet Bob Lee fell down." Then there was terrific applause and we all three ran to the wings to see what happened. Blake flew up out of the pit, wild-eyed: "Keep him in! Keep him in!" he yelled, and disappeared. We thought he had gone nuts, but by then the encore was on. Then we saw. Bob Lee could not do the steps the other fellows were doing and couldn't get off the stage, so he dropped out of line and with a jive smile and a high-stepping routine of his own stopped the show cold.

In New York "I'm Just Wild About Harry," the song they had almost thrown out, became a sensation, Bob Lee taking nine to ten encores a night.

Within a year after *Shuffle Along* had opened, "Harry" had been recorded by a number of well-known dance bands of the era. But Blake remembers Paul Whiteman's efforts with special fondness: "Every time 'Harry' would die, Pops would get Roy Barge to make another arrangement."

The "Harry" story has an important postscript that was related by Sissle and Blake in a July 25, 1967, letter they sent former President Harry S. Truman along with a manuscript of the song for the Harry S. Truman Library.

The interesting thing about "Harry" was that it actually was written as an election song in a show whose plot was almost a parallel occurrence to the 1948 Presidential Campaign. The story was about the race for Mayor in a small Southern town. Our hero, Harry Walton, was the underdog in his race just as you were in the Election of 1948. Although we did not have a Chicago Tribune telling the people that his rival had been elected, it first appeared that one of the candidates opposing Harry in our race had won. Oh, yes, our Harry had more than one opponent just as you did in 1948. Well, a friend asked the ingenue how she felt about Harry when he'd apparently lost. She replied, "I'm just wild about Harry," and went into the song. Harry won our election, and of course, won the Election of 1948.

We remember that when you came back to Washington after your first whistlestop tour in 1948, the Metropolitan Police Band was at the station to meet you. They struck up our song and someone in the Democratic National Committee, we never knew whom, decided that it would be the ideal campaign song for you. 7 The rest is history, very happy history for us, for the song became an even bigger hit in 1948 than it had been in 1921. Of course, every song writer wants his song

to be sung by outstanding artists and to be associated with important people, but never in our fondest dreams did we think that you would come along to help our song.

The pit band of *Shuffle Along* always drew comment because it played without music, having committed the entire score to memory. "We did that because it was expected of us," remembers Blake. "People didn't believe that black people could read music—they wanted to think that our ability was just natural talent." Talent there was aplenty in the orchestra, but hardly raw or unschooled. Each member of the *Shuffle Along Orchestra* was as skilled a musician as Blake; several had had concert careers. Two were later prominent figures in the history of American music. Hall Johnson, the violist, was the founder of the Hall Johnson Chorale and a prolific composer of large-scale choral works. The oboist, William Grant Still, is considered the dean of black American composers; his *Afro-American Symphony* is a well-known part of the symphonic repertoire.

Whereas in American white musicals it has not been uncommon for relatively untrained performers to be successful, in this black musical many performers were already trained and sophisticated beyond the usual scope of white musical comedy singers, dancers, and instrumentalists. Denied work in the white theater because of their color, here they found a job and a chance to show their considerable virtuosity—small wonder that the critics and public found the level of performance in *Shuffle Along* so much higher than what they were used to!

The list of performers who went on to later success is long and impressive; Josephine Baker, Florence Mills, and Paul Robeson are only a few examples. Robeson, the bass-baritone, had just finished Rutgers College and had begun studying law when William Hann (who had headed Hann's Jubilee Singers, of which Noble Sissle had been a member as a boy) temporarily left the show's Four Harmony Kings Quartet when his mother died. Robeson was put in to replace Hann as bass during his absence, and when Hann returned to his post, Will Vodery, one of the orchestrators of *Shuffle Along* and choral master of Lew Leslie's *Plantation Revue*, took Robeson on to sing in the chorus in the Leslie show.

Probably the most famous performer to emerge from *Shuffle Along* at the time was Florence Mills. Sissle recalled:

We gave her her big chance and she saved us one of our biggest headaches. The first soubrette we had was Gertrude Saunders, for whom "Daddy, Won't You Please Come Home" and "I'm Craving for That Kind of Love" had been written. She was the sensation of our show—stopped it cold every night. But like so many artists in show business who had become a sensation overnight, Gertrude, in spite of our efforts at persuasion, left the show, and we had just got started! She was our next-to-closing big smash....

Florence and her husband, U.S. (Slow Kid) Thompson, were always together in the same shows. Slow Kid was a dancer, and they were both in the Keith circuit in an act called "The Tennessee Ten." I only knew her slightly as the singer in a little gingham dress who made a sensation in Swanee River with her birdlike voice. The four of us ate together that night at our boardinghouse, and when Florence and Kid left the dining room, my wife Harriett said, "Why don't you give Florence a chance to replace Gertrude?" I smiled and said, "Why, she's a ballad singer. Gertrude's part calls for dancing and singing blues." Harriett told me Florence was singing "I'm Craving for That Kind of Love" at Baron Wilkins' nightclub, and at her insistence I went to see her without saying anything to my partners. The next night I told them we were saved, but Lyles, in his dry way, said, "She ought to sing—she has legs like a canary." She was Dresden china, and she turned into a stick of dynamite.

Florence Mills was hardly the earthy creature "I'm Craving for That Kind of Love" had been written for, but she gave to the part, by all accounts, an ingenuousness that added greatly to the ensemble. Noble Sissle has called her "lovable," and not many performers can project such a feeling on stage.

While we have been favored with a few recordings of Bert Williams, George Walker, and some of the other early figures of the black theater, we have not been left with a single recording of Florence Mills. By the time she left *Shuffle Along* for the *Plantation Revue* and international stardom, it was already clear that her delicate constitution was being strained. On November 2, 1927, she died of appendicitis. Her funeral was the occasion of the greatest outpouring of grief Harlem had ever known; more than 250,000 people lined the streets, many fainting as the cortege passed by. Only in her early thirties at her death, she was probably the most beloved performer of her race. Those of us who never heard her will never know what it was in that birdlike voice that endeared Florence Mills to so many and made her an enduring legend.

Josephine Baker also had her start in *Shuffle Along* as a thirty-dollar-a-week chorus girl.

We had turned her down when she tried out for us in Philadelphia [Sissle recalled] because she was not yet sixteen. We had wanted to hire her but by law we couldn't. She was heartbroken.

In fact it appears that Josephine Baker was either fourteen or fifteen years old when she tried out for *Shuffle Along*. The daughter of an East St. Louis washerwoman, she had quit school to join the company.

We produced a number-two company to play one-nighters through New England while we were still in New York. Word got back to us that a comedy chorus girl had joined the company after we had rehearsed it and sent it out on the road—it was Josephine. She had slipped out on the road to join that company because she thought we didn't like her or want to hire her. How glad we were to get her.

Josephine Baker joined the number-one company in Boston in August 1922 during its post-Broadway tour. She clowning her way to stardom as the cross-eyed, out-of-step whirling dervish at the end of the chorus line.

Every place we went [Sissle noted] people buying tickets asked: "Is the little chorus girl here who crosses her eyes?" In time she became the highest-paid chorus girl of her day and the most acclaimed. She had a wonderful disposition and kept us in stitches off the stage as well as on.

For Sissle, the showgirls were "the heart of *Shuffle Along*" and its life also. Several besides Josephine Baker went on to prominent careers. Freddie Washington became famous as an exotic dancer and as lead actress in *Imitation of Life*. Elida Webb became a choreographer and director of Broadway musicals and floor shows, black and white. Katherine Yarborough went to study opera abroad and was apparently the first black artist to appear with a white opera company (in *Aida*, Chicago, 1933).

After fourteen months in New York, and long runs in Boston and Chicago, the company continued its tour to Milwaukee, Des Moines, Peoria, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Toledo, Grand Rapids, Detroit, Buffalo, Rochester, Philadelphia, Atlantic City—all across America until the summer of 1923. Playing white theaters to mixed audiences, *Shuffle Along* broke ground Williams and Walker had never tested.

What *Shuffle Along* meant, as a human experience to all the company, was the opening of doors that had been tightly closed to most of them. From this distance it is probably impossible to gauge the enormous impact the show had on the American musical theater on all levels, but it was certainly the first and most telling example of black influence on American show business at large.

The jazz dancing introduced in *Shuffle Along* had an immediate effect on white shows. Florenz Ziegfeld and George White opened special studios and hired showgirls from *Shuffle Along* to teach the white girls the jazz dance steps. There was seldom a night that the *Shuffle Along* Orchestra, or Sissle and Blake as a duo, were not hired to entertain after the show in the homes of the rich.

The show opened doors to further efforts by black composers and lyricists, including James P. Johnson (*Runnin' Wild*, *Keep Shufflin'*), his protégé Thomas W. "Fats" Waller (*Hot Chocolates*), Andy Razaf, Maceo Pinkard (*Liza*), Creamer and Layton, Luckey Roberts, and Donald Heyward. A few of their shows ran two hundred performances, most of them much less—but all of them were training ground and exposure for a whole generation of black performers, many of whom, like Ethel Waters, are still known and loved today. The renaissance of the black performer in the twenties is probably directly traceable to the success of *Shuffle Along*.

Perhaps its most pervasive (although least acknowledged) influence has been felt in American Popular music. One has only to listen to a few minutes of Broadway show music written before *Shuffle Along* and music written after it, to sense the emergency of something faster-paced, more syncopated, more American. From the show the explosion of the black American musical style was to fan out in all directions beyond Broadway to permeate the spirit of Jazz Age.

Taken in its entirety, *Shuffle Along* cannot be more accurately described than by the words the company chose themselves: "a musical mélange." For it was a mélange of past, present and future values, musical styles and cultural influences.



Raunchy, delicate, romantic, syncopated, it was all those things. It was a series of fragments, bits, individual moments, each valid, brief, and pointed. But the unity was something like the unity in plurality of American itself-held together by its very disparateness and many-faced character in a way that any hierarchical would violate. In short, there was no reason at all that *Shuffle Along* should have worked-and that is evidently just why it did.

### ***The Recordings***

Much like the show itself, this assemblage of old recordings is a musical *mélange*, featuring songs and artists from the epochal *Shuffle Along*.

When *Shuffle Along* opened, there was no such thing as an original cast album. Since discographical research on black musical comedy performers of the first decades of our century are even scantier than that for white performers, it is impossible to make blanket assertions about who did and who did not record. But it does seem that from *Shuffle Along's* original cast only Sissle and Blake and Gertrude Saunders, who was in the cast for only a brief period, made recordings of the songs from the show.

Eubie Blake and his *Shuffle Along* Orchestra recorded for Victor a medley of "Bandana Days" and "I'm Just Wild About Harry." Noble Sissle and His Sizzling Syncopators, which included veterans of the Jim Europe Orchestra, recorded a few numbers for Emerson (also available on Regal under the pseudonym Leonard Graham and His Jazz Band). Especially striking, and included here are the recordings of "Baltimore Buzz" and "In Honeysuckle Time," both of which Sissle sang in the show. Sissle and Blake's piano-vocal of "Love Will Find a Way" is also here, as is Blake's solo medley of "Baltimore Buzz" and "In Honeysuckle Time."

Sissle and Blake's piano-vocal of "Bandana Days" was made for the little-known Paramount label.

Gertrude Saunders with Tim Brymn's orchestra recorded "I'm Craving for That Kind of Love" and "Daddy, Won't You Please Come Home" for Okeh. It is hard to know if Miller and Lyles ever recorded anything from *Shuffle Along*, but the Okeh recording titled "The Fight" gives some idea to their style.

Perhaps the most intriguing and rarest records on this album are the Pathes recorded by Noble Sissle and James Reese Europe's 369<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry ("Hell Fighters Band"). "How Ya' Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm," "Mirandy," and "On Patrol in No Man's Land" were made in 1919 with, as far as we know, Europe himself the leader. "Gee, I'm Glad That I'm From Dixie" was recorded after Europe's death.

These four numbers were among those Sissle and Blake performed in their own special slot late in the second act of *Shuffle Along*. Blake would leave the pit and join Sissle onstage to give audiences "A Few Minutes With Sissle and Blake" before the show's finale, "Baltimore Buzz." "Gee, I'm Glad That I'm From Dixie" was usually their opener and "On Patrol in No Man's Land" their closing number.

Paul Whiteman's recording of "Gypsy Blues" is an example of a *Shuffle Along* song performed by the leading white dance band of the era.

All of the Sissle and Blake recordings are from the author's collection and were transferred to tape at Yale University's Historical Sound Recordings Collection with the assistance of its curator Richard Warren. These transfers were played for Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake, who gave important help on correct speeds.

Other recordings, notably the Paul Whiteman, the Miller and Lyles, and the Gertrude Saunders were generously made available by Miles Kreuger, president of the Institute of the American Musical, which has the most comprehensive collection of theatre recordings anywhere. These were transferred by Arthur Kendy at the CBS Recording Studios, who also dealt with the difficult problems of equalization and reduction of surface noise without sacrificing the basic quality of these old acoustic recordings. Leroy Parkins, who is familiar with the work of Sissle and Blake, was also of invaluable assistance.

## Note

During the morning of December 17, 1975, while Arthur Kendy and I were working on the recording of "Mirandy," I received word of Noble Sissle's death. This album is a tribute to his memory.

*Robert Kimball*  
*January 1976*

Most of the material in these notes is adapted from *Reminiscing With Sissle and Blake* by Robert Kimball and William Bolcom (The Viking Press, New York, 1973).

## THE SONGS

Published versions of songs are given here. Patter and nonmusical material are not included. Unless otherwise noted, the words and music are by Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake.

## Side One

### Band 1

#### ***Bandana Days; I'm Just Wild About Harry***

EUBIE BLAKE AND THE SHUFFLE ALONG ORCHESTRA

**(Although this is an instrumental arrangement with no vocal, lyrics are shown below: for "Bandana Days," see lyrics below—side one band 4.)**

(Refrain)

I'm just wild about Harry  
And Harry's wild about me.  
The heav'nly blisses of his kisses  
Fill me with ecstasy.  
He's sweet just like chocolate candy.  
And just like honey from the bee.  
Oh, I'm just wild about Harry  
And he's just wild about  
Cannot do without,  
He's just wild about me.

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### Band 2

#### ***In Honeysuckle Time***

NOBLE SISSLE AND HIS SIZZLING SYNCOPATORS

(Verse) Everybody knows Emaline,  
She's the pal of every other gal in town.  
Everybody loves Emaline,  
She's the gal that all the fellas hang around.  
But every pal and gal will soon be singing the  
blues,  
When they hear the latest news.

(Refrain) In honeysuckle time  
Sweet Emaline  
Said she be mine  
And in the wedding line  
There'll be no hesitating  
For the preacher will be waiting

When the knot is tied  
With "Em-y" by my side  
All the fellows will be jealous and feeling kinda  
rough,  
When I come along with Emaline astruttin' "my  
stuff,"  
Hot dog, my soul, goin'-a-knock 'em cold,  
Why, I'll be worth my weight in gold  
In honeysuckle time  
When Emaline said she be mine.

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### **Band 3**

#### ***Love Will Find A Way***

NOBLE SISSLE, VOCAL; EUBIE BLAKE, PIANO

(Verse) Come, dear, and don't let our faith  
weaken,  
Let's keep our love fires burning bright.  
Your love for me is a heavenly beacon,  
Guiding me all through love's darkest night.  
Don't start minding  
Or fault finding,  
No matter how dark one's path may grow.  
Fate won't hurry,  
Well, don't worry,  
We'll just keep our hearts a-glow.

(Refrain) Love will find a way  
Though skies now are gray.  
Love like ours can never be ruled  
Cupid's not schooled that way.  
Dry each tear-dimmed eye  
Clouds will on roll by  
Though fate may lead us astray  
My dearie, mark what I say  
Love will find a way.

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### **Band 4**

#### ***Bandana Days***

NOBLE SISSLE, VOCAL; EUBIE BLAKE, PIANO

(Verse) Why the dearest days of my life  
Were bandana days, bandana days.  
Though filled with turmoil, trouble and strife,  
Dearest mem'ries will live always.

(Refrain) In those dear old bandana days,  
Cane and cotton ne'er forgotten,  
Bandana days.  
And those quaint old bandana ways,  
When our dads were courting our dear mummies,  
They were sure some bashful Sammies.  
And in all their bandana plays,  
Banjos strummin', they'd be hummin'  
Bandana lays.  
And in the pale moonlight  
They'd swing left and right  
In those dear old bandana days.

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Band 5

**Daddy, Won't You Please Come Home**

GERTRUDE SAUNDERS, VOCAL; TIM BRYMM AND HIS BLACK DEVIL ORCHESTRA

(Verse) I feel dejected, sad and blue  
I've been neglected, lonely too;  
My daddy went away and quit me cold,  
Believe me when I say he ruined my very soul.  
I surely miss his loving smile,  
His hugs and kisses set me wild.  
Today he called me on the 'phone,  
And when he said "Hello," you should have  
heard me moan:

(Refrain) Oh, Daddy, Da-da-da-Daddy,  
Daddy, won't you please come home?  
Dad-dy, Da-da- Dad-dy  
Now how long are you going to roam?  
Why since you went away  
Both night and day  
Dad-dy Dad-dy, Dad-dy, Dad-dy's  
All I can say.  
Oh, Dad-dy, Da- Da-da- Daddy  
Daddy, won't you please come home.

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**Band 6**

***Baltimore Buzz; In Honeysuckle Time***

EUBIE BLAKE, PIANO

**Band 7**

***Gypsy Blues***

PAUL WHITEMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA

(Although this recording is a dance-band arrangement with no vocal, lyrics are shown below.)

(Verse) I was talking to a gypsy  
And this is what she had to tell me  
When my palm she read,  
I asked her when I would wed,  
And she shook her head.  
And then what did she say?  
I don't know because I ran away.

(Refrain) Now I've got the gypsy blues,  
And I'm sorry that I did refuse  
To wait and listen to her gypsy news  
Maybe she was just in doubt,  
And some line was trying to figure out  
And tryin' to find what it was all about.  
I would give all my weight in gold  
To know what she was about to tell me  
But if she had said that my sweetie I'd lose  
They'd have to bury me.  
Rather than to start a ruse,  
Why I ran away and I got my dues,  
That's why I got those ipsis gypsy blues,  
Gypsy blues.

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**Band 1**

***I'm Craving For That Kind of Love***

GERTRUDE SAUNDERS, VOCAL; TIM BRYMM AND HIS BLACK DEVIL ORCHESTRA

(Verse) I'm wishing and fishing  
And wanting to hook  
A man kind like you find  
In a book  
I mean a modern Romeo  
I do not want a phoneo  
He may be the baby  
Of some vamp, Oh, babe!  
At vampin' and lampin'  
I'm the champ.  
And if I once get him  
Why, I'll just set him  
Beneath my parlor lamp, And let him

(Refrain) Kiss me, kiss me  
Kiss me with his tempting lips  
Sweet as honey drips  
Press me, press me,  
Press me to his loving breast  
While I gently rest  
Breathe love tender sighs  
Gaze into his eyes  
Eyes that will just hypnotize  
Then, I know he'll  
Whisper, whisper,  
Whisper to me soft and low  
Something nice, you know.  
Honey, honey,  
Honey, when there's no one near  
My baby dear will  
Huddle me  
Cuddle me  
Sing to me  
Cling to me  
Spoon to me  
Croon to me  
Sigh to me  
Cry to me  
I'm craving for that kind of love.

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**Band 2*****The Fight (Dialogue)***

FLOURNOY MILLER AND AUBREY LYLES

**Band 3*****Gee, I'm Glad That I'm From Dixie***

NOBLE SISSLE AND ORCHESTRA

(Verse) Conductor man, wave your hand,  
Start this train a-movin' for old Dixie land  
I can't wait, don't hesitate  
Tell that engineer to hit his fast escape.  
Time for me to bend the knee  
Standin' in that door waiting there to see  
Down at the station  
There'll be a demonstration  
Of Southern hospitality.

(Refrain) Gee, I'm glad that I'm from Dixie  
Down where the Swanee River's flowing  
That's where this choo-choo am a-going  
I hope you make a bee-line through old Virginia  
Cross the Carolinas into Alabam'  
Then give me time to send a telegram  
That I'se comin'  
Yeah comin'  
So weep no more my lady  
Oh, gee I'm glad that I'm from Dixie  
So I can get a Dixie welcome home. (Etc.)

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**Band 4*****Mirandy***

NOBLE SISSLE, VOCAL; LT. JIM EUROPE'S 369<sup>TH</sup> U.S. INFANTRY ("HELL FIGHTERS") BAND

(Words and music by James Reese Europe, Noble Sissle, and Eubie Blake)

(Verse) The darktown dude of Jacksonville  
Is a jaspar nicknamed Sandy,  
This dusky dude of Jacksonville  
Has a gal they call Mirandy.  
She's a long, tall, seal-skin brown  
With a loose and careless way.  
If you ask Sandy about Mirandy  
You will hear him say:

(Refrain) There ain't no gal as sweet as my  
Mirandy,  
Why 'lasses candy  
Is like a big round ball of bitterness  
When you taste those lips of sugar sweet  
(Oh, boy I) say you'll fall down at her feet and  
weep  
You know the whole world's jealous of me and  
my Mirandy  
I'm her dandy,  
I'm only waiting for the time  
When the village bell will chime that old rhyme  
For I've bought that wedding band  
From an expensive jewelry man  
(alt. From Mr. Tiffany that  
jewelry man)  
For Mirandy that gal o' mine.

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#### **Band 5**

##### ***How Ya' Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm***

NOBLE SISSLE, VOCAL; LT. JIM EUROPE'S 369<sup>TH</sup> U.S. INFANTRY ("HELL FIGHTERS") BAND  
(Words by Sam M. Lewis and Joe Young, music by Walter Donaldson)

(Refrain) How ya' gonna keep 'em down on the farm,  
After they've seen Paree?  
How ya' gonna keep 'em away from Broadway,  
Jazzin a-roun'  
And paintin' the town?  
How ya' gonna keep 'em away from harm?  
That's a mystery;  
They'll never want to see a rake or plow,  
And who the deuce can parlez-vous a cow?  
How ya' gonna keep 'em down on the farm,  
After they've seen Paree?

#### **Band 6**

##### ***On Patrol in No Man's Land***

**Noble Sissle, vocal; Lt. Jim Europe's 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry ("Hell Fighters") Band**  
(Words and music by James Europe, Noble Sissle, and Eubie Blake)

(Verse) What's the time? Nine  
All in line  
All right boys, now take it slow  
Are you ready? Steady. Very good Eddie  
Over the top let's go.  
Quiet, quiet else you start a riot  
Keep your proper distance follow 'long  
Cover brother and when you see me hover  
Obey my orders and you won't go wrong.



(Refrain) There's a Minnenwurfer coming-look out (bang!)  
Hear that roar, there's one more.  
Stand fast, there's a vary light.  
Don't gasp or they'll find you all right.  
Don't start to bombing with those hand grenades  
There's a machine gun, holy spades!  
Alert, gas, put on your mask.  
Adjust it correctly and hurry up fast.  
Drop! There's a rocket for the Boche barrage,  
Down, hug the ground, close as you can, don't stand.  
Creep and crawl, follow me that's all.  
What do you hear? Nothing near. All is clear.  
Don't fear.  
That's the life of a stroll when you take a patrol  
Out in no man's land. Ain't it grand?  
Out in no man's land.

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## **Band 7**

### ***Baltimore Buzz***

#### **Noble Sissle, vocal, and His Sizzling Syncopators**

(Verse) There have been a thousand raggy draggy dances  
That are danced in ev'ry hall  
And there have been a thousand raggy draggy prances  
That are pranced at ev'ry ball  
But the bestest one that "wuzz"  
Is called the Baltimore Buzz  
So

(Refrain) First you take your babe and gently hold here.  
Then you lay your head upon her shoulder,  
Next you walk just like your legs were breaking,  
Do a fango like a tango,  
Then you start the shimmy to shaking.  
Then you do a raggy draggy motion  
Just like any ship upon the ocean  
Slide  
And then you hesitate  
Glide  
Oh, honey ain't it great!  
You just simply go in a trance  
With that Baltimore buzzing dance.

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Sissle & Blake. (Eubie Blake Music EBM-4).

### **Reissues of early Sissle and Blake recordings.**

Eubie Blake—Volume I: Blues and Rags (Biograph BLP-1011Q).

Eubie Blake—Volume II: 1921 (Biograph BLP-1021Q).

These two records include twenty-two of Eubie Blake's thirty known piano rolls.

## **BLACK MAN IN A WHITE WORLD, 1895-1940: CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

**1895** September 18. In his famous "Atlanta Compromise" speech, black educator Booker T. Washington recommended that Negroes submit to white political domination and instead concentrate on achieving economic power, which he felt would eventually lead to social and political reforms.

**1898** Bob Cole's "A Trip to Coontown," the first musical comedy written by a black for black actors.

**1899** April 4. Birth of Edward K. ("Duke") Ellington.

**1900** August 23-24. National Negro Business League organized in Boston.

**1903** W. E. B. Du Bois's book "Souls of Black Folk" stirred opposition to Booker T. Washington's policy of Negro submission to white political and social oppression.

**1905** July 11-13. W. E. B. Du Bois, Monroe Trotter, and other left-wing black intellectuals organized the Niagara Movement at a meeting in New York attended by delegates from fourteen states. They demanded social and political equality for blacks.

**1908** December 26. Jack Johnson became first black heavyweight boxing champion.

**1909** February 12. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) formed after race riot in Springfield, Illinois. Founders included both black and white leaders.

**1910** National Urban League founded in New York by George E. Haynes—first black to obtain college degree from New York School of Social Work—to solve problems of blacks in the cities.

**1911** A black, William H. Lewis, was appointed Assistant Attorney General of the United States.

**1912** September 27. W. C. Handy's "Memphis Blues"—first blues composition ever published—went on sale in Memphis, Tennessee.

**1915** NAACP and other black groups protested against D. W. Griffith's "Birth of a Nation," the famous silent movie concerning Reconstruction.

**September 9.** Carter G. Woodson, a black historian, founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Its most significant publication, the "Journal of Negro History," is still published today.

**1917** Beginning of jazz migration, when Joe Oliver went from New Orleans to Chicago, later to be joined by Louis Armstrong and other musicians.

**1920** August 2. Marcus Garvey addressed 25,000 people in Madison Square Garden in New York at the first national convention of his Universal Improvement Association. Although Garvey was a charlatan whose promises to lead the Negro to an African empire were false, his activities did much to further promote the spirit of black nationalism in the 1920s.

**1920** November 3. Charles Gilpin played leading role in Eugene O'Neill's "Emperor Jones" at the Provincetown Playhouse.

**1921** May 23. "Shuffle Along" opened at New York's 63rd Street Theatre.

**1922-1930** Harlem Renaissance took place. It marked an outpouring of black literary and artistic talent centering around an idealization of Harlem life. Leading authors of the period included Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, and James Weldon Johnson.

**1923** A brilliant black musical, "Runnin' Wild," opened at New York's Colonial Theater.

**1924** Florence Mills starred in "Dixie to Broadway," a black musical revue.

**1924** Fletcher Henderson, first of the popular "Big Band" jazz musicians, opened at Broadway's Roseland Ballroom.

**1925** November 11. Louis Armstrong began to make his Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings, landmarks in jazz history.

**1934** October 26. Charles H. Houston, Assistant Dean of Howard University Law School, chosen director of a legal campaign against segregation and discrimination coordinated by NAACP and American Fund for Public Service.

**1935** Langston Hughes' play "The Mulatto" spoke out against a society in which white was considered good and black evil, urging blacks to be proud of their color.

**1936** Mary McLeod Bethune named director of Division of Negro Affairs of National Youth Administration. Prior to her appointment, by Franklin Roosevelt, she was president of Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Florida.

**1936** December 8. As a result of NAACP's efforts, wage differentials between black and white teachers were eliminated in Montgomery County, Maryland ("Gibbs v. Board of Education").

**1938** November 8. First black woman elected to state legislature (in Pennsylvania).

**1940** Richard Wright's book "Native Son" depicted the terrifying everyday life of Southern blacks.

**1940** October 16. Appointment by President Roosevelt of Benjamin Oliver Davis, Sr., as Brigadier General, the first black to achieve such a high post.

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### **Side One** Total time 20:30

Band 1 . . . . .3:14

Bandana Days; I'm Just Wild About Harry  
Eubie Blake and the Shuffle Along Orchestra  
(recorded July 15, 1921. Victor 18791-B)

Band 2 . . . . .2:28

In Honeysuckle Time  
Noble Sissle and His Sizzling Syncopators  
(recorded April or May, 1921. Emerson 10385. Regal 9102 as "Leonard Graham and His Jazz Band")

Band 3 . . . . .3:00

Love Will Find A W a y  
Noble Sissle; Eubie Blake, piano  
(recorded June, 1921. Emerson 10396)

Band 4 . . . . .2:36

Bandana Days  
Noble Sissle; Eubie Blake, piano  
(recorded late 1921 or early 1922. Paramount 12002-B)

Band 5 . . . . .3:03

Daddy, Won't You Please Come Home  
Gertrude Saunders and Tim Brymm and His Black Devil Orchestra  
(recorded c. May, 1921. Okeh 8004)

Band 6 . . . . .2:27

Baltimore Buzz; In Honeysuckle Time  
Eubie Blake, solo piano  
(recorded July, 1921. Emerson 10434)

Band 7 . . . . .3:23

Gypsy Blues  
Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra  
(recorded Oct. 5, 1921. Victor 18839)

**Side Two** Total time 18:10

Band 1 .....3:19

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Francis Goelet (1926–1998), Chairman

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