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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Dance	I.3

SHAKESPEARE'S AMERICAN PLAY

But moral suasion was not the only one which this ingenious drama served. It appears on several memorable occasions in the annals of the American white man's dealings with the Indians whom he had dispossessed. At Williamsburg in the 1750's, the Emperor and Empress of the Cherokee Nation, their son and their aides were guests at a performance of Othello, when they came to renew a treaty. Their attendance at the theatre was a mark of white 'civility and friendship'. Things did not remain entirely on that plane, however, for the historians say the Empress was so deeply stirred by the clashing of naked swords that she sent her attendants to stop the killing on the stage. Almost a century later, in Florida during the Seminole War, the Indians captured a dramatic troupe, and several, arraying themselves in the habiliments of the Othello company, went into their dance.

On numerous occasions, to swing to a new American extreme, Othello has been used for display, when style, money and good clothes were the main point. One of the most gleaming of these displays, when great care was given to the selection of everything for impression's sake, took place on the evening of October 6, 1863, in Washington, D. C. The occasion was the opening of Grover's New Theatre on the site of the present National Theatre. Davenport and Wallack—two of America's finest—were the chief actors, and Othello, of course, was the play. It was witnessed by President Lincoln and his family and private secretary, flanked by members of his cabinet and other distinguished persons.

In the minstrel tradition, Othello was a popular number during the middle years of the nineteenth century. Whatever the race of the Moor, he was certainly a 'natural' for the traditionally black-face comedians on the eastern seaboard. Farther west, even in the gold-fields of California, it is reported that the Happy Hours Company produced a show called *The Comedy of Errors*, *Shylock and Othello*. Its story told the audience that Brabantio had decided to let Barnum present his daughter, Desdemona, on the stage when off she went with a 'naguer' called Othello.

On the regular stage, Othello has been taken to heart perhaps more than any other Shakespearean play. Hamlet and Richard III may have been more popular from time to time, but they have not surpassed Othello in the enthusiasm of their audiences. American theatregoers

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Dance	I.3

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	Collection:	Series.Folder:
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Dance	I.3

THEATRE ARTS

have paid untold millions of dollars to see Othellos and Iagos of every stripe and category. Famous English actors, like Hallam, Douglass, Edmund Kean, Charles Kean, Henry Irving, Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree and the riot-producing Macready, gave America a rainbow-like interpretation of Shake-speare's American play over two centuries and fatly enriched themselves to boot.

At the head of the list of Americans who poured their colors into this rainbow, even while the English actors were invading, was Edwin Forrest. He made the most money and perhaps attached his peculiarities to Othello more than any other American. But tens of thousands cheered the role as delivered by Edwin Booth, J. W. Wallack, Jr., John McCullough, Louis James, E. A. Sothern, Robert Mantell, Walter Hampden and Walter Huston.

Edwin Forrest deserves special mention. His first demonstration as the Moor of Venice was at the Globe Theatre in Louisville, in 1824. For the next four decades he was the Othello of American life, in spite of his declaration that he acted other parts but was King Lear. His bluster and gorgeousness suited the prevailing American conception of the role. Wemyss says that 'his terrific energy in the third and fourth acts held his audience in breathless amazement'. As early as 1836, he was paid \$500 a night by the manager of the Park Theatre for his Othello. And it is recorded that, when his Samson-like strength had gone, he ended his public career reading from Othello for a Boston audience.

Nor did pure English and American actors monopolize the part. Italian, German, French and Yiddish performed it, playing in their own language, sometimes with entire foreign-language casts, frequently with English-speaking actors. Salvini's rendering of Othello was one of the exciting theatre events of the 1880's and 1890's. Audiences were not sure that he was doing Shakespeare, but they thrilled to him just the same. One writer has described his 'Italianate' interpretation thus:

Desdemona, not yet disrobed, alarmed by the menace in Othello's look and manner, gradually retreated as she replied to his interrogations until she reached the left-hand corner of the stage by the footlights. As played by Piamanti — a lovely woman and magnificent actress — she was the personification of pitiful, protesting love gradually resolving into speechless terror. Salvini, convulsed, with fixed and flaming eyes, half-crouched,

	Collection:	Series.Folder:
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Dance	I.3

AMERICAN MINSTRELSY

The beginnings of American theatrical minstrels dates back to 1799 when a notice first appeared in a Boston paper that a black face (burnt-cork) performer was to appear at the Federal Theatre in a number entitled, "The Gay Negro Boy" with banjo accompaniment. The first of the American performers of distinguish hemself as a minstrel of many was Robert Farrell, who billed as "Zip Coon" and George Washington Dixon who appeared at the Lafayette Theatre in New York in 1828.

However it was Thomas D. Rice who was known as "Jim Crow" who introduced the negro minstrel performer to wide audiences in this country and abroad and established its popularity which was to last late into the beginning of the 20th century. His talents were particularly suited for interpretations of many types of negro characters but the song and dance with which he was best identified was a typical distry verse: "First on de heel tap, den on de toe, Ebry time I wheel about I Jump. Jim Crow." He made his debut in London and was extremely popular.

The first troupe of minstrels was organized in New York in 1842 and consisted of four performers who sage played the bones, danced and did character sketches. They called themselves the Virginia Minstrels and gave their first performance at Bartlett's Billiard Rooms in the Bowery. They subsequently toured the country with great success. One of the members of the Virginia Minstrels, Dan Emmett wrote their tunes of which the most popular and best known were "Old Dan Tucker", Which and the immortal "Dixie."

Perhaps the most celebrated and best known of all minstrel men was E.P.

Christy. He organized a troupe that was to be known as the original

Annula, Were rest popular

E.P. Christy Minstrels in 1846. They toured the states with great

success and made tours to England.

	Collection:	Series.Folder:
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Dance	I.3

- 1. Sheridan and Mack: Irish Clog-Dancers. ca. 1863
- 2. Duncan Brothers: American Sand, Jig and Trick Clog-Dancers. N.Y. ca. 1860
- 3. Mike Kernan and Andy Hughes. American Clog-Dancers. ca. 1867
- 4. Leah Peasely: Famous sand Jig-Dancer. N.Y. 1872
- 5. The Two McCarthys. Champion Irish Jig-Dancers. ca. 1870
- 6. 7. The French Twin Sisters. American Clog- and Jig-Dancers. ca. 1880
- 8. Wheately and Traynor: Irish jiggers in their comedy skit, "John and Pat Malone". ca. 1880
- 9. Dermott and Doyle: Champion clog-dancers of England. Ca. 1880
- 10. Sheridan and Mack, wearing championship clog- and sand-dance belt. Appeared at Tony Pastor's in N.Y. ca. 1865
- 11. Charley Diamond: American song and dance artist. N.Y. 1865
- 12. Gallagher, Griffin and Devere; in their speciality, "Idle Moments", introducing skipping rope, songs, dances, reels, quick changes and their artistic triple statue clog and waltz-clog. An Australian Trio appearing in America. San Francisco. ca. 1880

	Collection:	Series.Folder:
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Dance	I.3

- 1. Handbill for "The New York Variety Troupe" ca. 1885
- 2. Leppe and Fanny Delano. Niles, Michigan. ca. 1890
- 3. Ella Kirtland. The Highland Fling Specialty. 1879
 - 4. The Lockfords. 'Adagio' Dancers. Paris and N.Y. ca. 1916
 - 5. Adelaide and Hughes in "Monte Christo Jr." The Winter Garden

4.-Les-Urbanis:-French-Specialty-Tries-eas-1928-

- 6. Les Urbanis: French Specialty Trio. ca. 1928
- 7. Ray Bolger: Tap specialty dancer, 1939. Compare with Black-Face Minstrel Dandy ca. 1879
- 8. Jack Donahue. Tap dancer. ca. 1930

	Collection:	Series.Folder:
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Dance	I.3

- 1. Mlle. Leontine in three poses as "Queen of the Amazons" in the original production of "The Black Crook." N. Y. 1866
- 2. 3. 4. 5. Eight post-card of "The Black Crook" chorus: Niblo's Gardens. N. Y. ca. 1870
- 6. Speciality act of the Rinaldo Brothers: celebrated high-kickers and clog-dancers interpolated into "The Black Crook." N. Y. 1870

	Collection:	Series.Folder:
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Dance	I.3

- 1. Troupe of Franch music-hall skirt-dancers. Paris. ca. 1890
- 2. The Floradora Girls. N. Y. 1898

31/4/21621614/946461/41/11/1918/

- 4. Some Babes. N. Y. 1925
- 3. A Ziegfeld Chorus. N. Y. 1916
- 5. Keith's Hippodrome Dancing Girls. ca. 1922
- 6. Musical Comedy Girls. Kansas City. ca. 1925
- 7. Billy Watson's Original "Beef Trust" Burlesque Company. ca. 1926
- 8. The Rockettes. Radio City Music Hall. 1940

	Collection:	Series.Folder:
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Dance	I.3

- "Walking for Dat Cake." Performed by Harrigan and Hart's Minstrel. Wood engraving music cover. N. Y. 1877
- 2. "Colored Aristocracy." Lithographed music cover. N. Y. 1899
- 3-9. Le Cake Walk: danced by negro children at Le Nouveau Cirque. Paris ca. 1920
- 14.15. Le Cake Walk. Postcards by G. Mouton. Paris ca. 1900
- 16. Cake Walk: German Musical Number. Colored half-tone plate from Jugend. Munich ca. 1913
- 17. Dan Genaro and Ray Baily: Famous Cake Walk Artists. N. Y. ca. 1965

	Collection:	Series.Folder:
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Dance	I.3

AMERICAN COLORED WOOD-ENGRAVINGS 1860-1875

These were advertisements of large three-sheet posters, stuck up on buildings to advertise traveling minstrel-shows. An advance man would carry a scrap-book filled with these samples. Local bookers would select the ones they desired.

These beautiful prints are carefully realized exaggerations of favorite minstrels such as E. P. Christy, ca. 1860, McIntyre and Heath, ca. 1877, Johnson and Powers, ca. 1878, and Lew Dockstader, ca. 1885. Sanford and Wilson, Charley Howard, Dave Reed, ca. 1875, Birch and Bacchus, 1879, and Jim McAndrews, ca. 1875.

- 2. Billy Backus at the Banjo: San Francisco Minstrels, 1875
- 3.
- 1. The Great Can-Can Dance: Johnson & Powers San Francisco Minstrels, 1878
- 3. E. P. Christy at the Banjo. ca. 1860
- 4. "The essence of old Virginia": Danced by Dave Reed. ca. 1875
- 5. J. W. McAndrews selling his famous watermelons. ca. 1875
- 6. A lady of fashion. ca. 1870
- 7. Sanford, of Sanford and Wilson, as the old colored washerwoman. ca. 1870

	Collection:	Series.Folder:
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Dance	I.3

- 1. The Kinneham Sisters: skirt dancers. ca. 1885
- 2. The Hengler Sisters. Tambourine speciality. Chicago ca. 1885
- 3. The McCoy Sisters. (Bessie, was the wife of Richard Harding Davis.) Highland Fling. ca. 1890
- 4. The Hengler Sisters: Speciality High Kick. Chicago ca. 1885
- 5. 6. 7. 8. Edith Rayner: A member of the famous London Gaiety Girls Troupe. N.Y. 1890
- 0.-Baby-Russell,-daughter-ef-Ida-Russell,-in-a-skipt-dance-and-s
- 9. Baby Russell, daughter of Ida Russell, in a skirt dance and splits (Le grand Ecart) (Richmond, Indiana) ca. 1895
- 10. The Goldsmith Sisters, High Kickers. N.Y. 1894
- 11. Belle Stokes, specialty dancer, in "Dr. Bill". Pose taken from French music hall singers imitating a dog, begging. Cf. Nini-patte en l'air: Pour faire le chien.
- 12.-Emma-Ballard-in-her-specialty-veil-dance.-Besten-1890
- 12. Emma Ballard in her specialty veil-dance. Boston 1890
- 13. Eunice Hill in her splits: N.Y. ca. 1890

	Collection:	Series.Folder:
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Dance	I.3

- 14. Yberri. N.Y. ca. 1890
- 15. Minnie Renwood. N.Y. ca. 1890
- 16. Dorothy Denning. N.Y. ca. 1890
- 17. Adelaide Early. N.Y. ca. 1890

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Dance	I.3

- 13. 14. 15. 16. Kitty O'Neill, the most famous girl Irish jigand clog-dancer. 1870. The colored woodcuts are models of large posters, from which local bookers could choose.
- 17. Gibson and Binney, celebrated clog-dancers: 1880

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	Dance	I.3

 Sheets from Minstrel Song Books. Wood-engravings by Avery and J. W. Orr. N.Y. ca. 1850. Showing such famous early personalities as Henry Neil, Charles White, Masters Marks and Frank Brower.

"The Dancing Lucy Long" is a parody of a famous Baltimore clipper sea-chantey. "Vilikins and his Dinah", an enormously popular English music-hall song has a vignette parodying Fanny Elssler in her famous Cachucha, ca. 1840. The other couple satirize "High-Society" social-dancing.

- 2. Sheridan and Mack in their famous trick Clog-Dance. ca. 1875
- 3. Sam Devere, Blach-Face Comedian. 1870
- 4. Joe Murphy. Black-Face Comedian, leaning to read music. 1862
- 5. Sheridan and Mack in their trick-clog. ca. 1875
- 6. Two colored wood-engraved vignettes of Minstrel Troupe. ca. 1855
- 7. Hogan and Hughes: Black-face song and dance team of Bryant's Minstrels: 1869
- 8. Iden Mason: parody of an Elegant Soldier. ca. 1870
- 9. Courtright and Gilbert in "Big and Little"
- 10. Arnold Brothers Minstrels. 1885
- 11. Parody of the provincial medicine-show. ca. 1870
- 12. Series of four trade cards showing minstrel medicine-show.
 Advertising Lion Spices: Toledo, Chio: Chromo-Lithograph.
 ca. 1880

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Dance	I.3

Play Bill, advertising Daddy Rice, the original "Jim Crow." Wood-engraving signed A. A. Lansing. Philadelphia. Dated Sept. 5, 1835

Life in Philadelphia: Plate 13: The Negro Waltz. Aquatint by Charles Hunt. Published by Harrison and Isaacs. London. ca. 1820

"Zip Coon": American Lithograph Music Cover. N. Currier. N.Y. 1834

- 4 9. American wood-engraved vignettes of minstrels, ca. 1840
- 10. Ethiopian Quadrilles. Lithograph music-cover. N.Y., ca. 1845
- 11. "Jim Crow" (Daddy Rice). Hand-colored American wood-engraving. ca. 1835
- 12. Christy's Melodies: Music-cover, lithograph. N.Y. 1847

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Dance	I.3

- 1. Lew Dockstader's Minstrels: colored wood-engraving. N.Y. ca. 1885
- 2. Collage, advertising the San Francisco Minstrels. Wood-engraving. Hartford, Conn. ca. 1870

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Dance	I.3

- 1. Lester and Allens: Minstrels: Postcard of Poster. ca 1900
- 2. Hart, Sweatnam and Ames: "The Black Bride" Negro Speciality. ca. 1900
- 3. Billy Emerson in his famous Sunflower Dance. ca. 1870
- 4. Lamont and Ducrow. "The Happy Hottentots" ca. 1890
- 5. Raymond Hitchcock in black face, replacing George Evans in "Honey Boy". Washington, D.C. ca. 1905
- 6. George Primrose of Primrose and West's Minstrels, famous soft-shoe dancer. ca. 1905
- 7. McIntyre and Heath in their first song-and-dance. ca. 1874
- 8. George M. Cohan dancing in "Little Johnny Jones."
- 9. Earl Benham of the Cohan and Harris Minstrels. ca. 1910
- 10. Home Town Jazz Band. ca. 1925
- 11. Bill Robinson in "The Big Broadcast of 1935"

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	Dance	I.3

The Minstrel Shows

Background

The Golden Age

Personalities

Clog Step and Jig

Skirt Dancers: Highkickers

Specialty Acts: Vaudeville

The Cake Walk

Minstrels in Musical Comedy

Precision Dancers and Girl Troupes

"The Black Crook"

"The Black Crook"

Extravaganza

Loie Fuller 1870-1928

Isadora Duncan: Historical Background

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Dance	I.3

- 1. Hand Bill for Ethiopian Serenaders. Wood-engraving. Baltimore. 1847 (Advertising the famous "Pat" Harrington)
- 2. Advertisement and Announcement of Hooley and Campbell's Minstrels. Baltimore. 1861
- 3. Haverly's Minstrels: Booker's card. Springfield, Mass. 1883
- 4. Business letter. Burton and Burke's Minstrels. Wood-engraving. New Bedford, Mass. 1888
- 5. Program and Dance Card of Amateur Minstrel Entertainment. Chromolithograph. Brooklyn. 1878
- 6. Negro dances on the levee. Colored engraving. ca. 1880
- 7. Hand Bill of Charley Pettingill's Minstrels. Wood-engraving. Great Falls, N.Y. 1868

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Dance	I.3

- 1. "Bress My Soul". Minstrel Parade. Wood engraving. ca. 1870
- 2. "Amy Robsart", spectacle based on Sir Walter Scott's novel,
 The Minstrel's Dance. Woodcut. ca. 1870
- 3. "The Brigands." Entrance of the Mountaineer's ballet. Woodcut. ca. 1870
- 4. " Folly!" Model for large poster. Colored woodcut. ca. 1870
- 5. Esmeralda (Annie Russell): (Daniel Frohman managed the Madison Square Theatre when this spectacle played. David Belasco was stage-manager, his first job in New York.) Carlotta Grisi in 1844, created this famous role of the gypsy girl with her goat taken from Victor Hugo's Notre Dame de Paris.
- 6. 7. 8. 9. Models for Posters of Extravaganza Artists. Colored woodcuts. ca. 1870
- 10. Irene Verona, Burlesque star, in the 14th Street Theatre.
 "Evangeline" 1886
- 11. Pearl Andrews. ca. 1885
- 12. Burlesque Artist as Hiawatha. 1885
- 13. The Doherty Sisters. Speciality dancers. ca. 1890

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Dance	I.3

- 1. 2. 3. Colored lithographs referring to the original Niblo's garden production. N. Y. 1866
- Play Bill from provincial tour of a "Black Crook" company.
 Memphis, Tenn. 1872
- 5. Advertisement and Notice of Purchase referring to "The Black Crook." Buffalo 1867
- 6. Pas de Demons from "The Black Crook", dedicated to the danseuse Galleti. Lithographic music cover. St. Louis, Mo. ca. 1870
- 7. Wood engraving of ballet-scene from "The Black Crook." N.Y.ca.1870
- 8. "The Black Crook". Miniature model used for stereopticon slide.
 N. Y. ca. 1870
- 9. Ballet scene from "The Black Crook": Woodcut. N. Y. 1866