

sopranos of that time: Malibran, Sontag, Grisi, Parodi and Jenny Lind - The Swedish Nightingale. Her tremendous range of 3½ octaves surpassed Lindis.

Before embarking for Europe in 1853, the artist gave a farewell concert before 4000 enthusiastic listeners. While in Europe, she sang under the patronage of the English nobility and performed at the Command Performance before Queen Victoria in Buckingham Palace on May 10, 1854.

Upon her return to the States in the summer of 1854, she opened a voice studio in Philadelphia, where she occasionally performed in concert until her death in 1876.

THOMAS BOWERS (c. 1836 - 85) was the second son of free parents who were natives of Philadelphia. His father was warden of St. Thomas' A.M.E. Church and had his eldest son John tutored at the organ and piano. John then taught Thomas. At the age of 18 he succeeded his elder brother as St. Thomas' organist.

Although sought after by Frank Johnson to join his band, his promise to his parents to play or sing only classical or religious music prevented him from accepting Johnson's offer.

He made his debut as a tenor and went on tour. Upon his return, he was accepted as a pupil by the Black Swan, and occasionally toured with her.

Bower's magnificent artistic ability accorded him the title of *The American Mario* after Conte de Candia Mario, the most famous Italian tenor of that period. His repertoire consisted of standard arias, oratorios and ballads.

Browers strongly resented the caricature of the Black race that white minstrels presented, and he wrote to a friend, "What induced me more than anything else to appear in public was to give the lie to 'Negro Seranaders' and to show the world that colored men and women could sing classical music as well as the members of the other race by whom they have been so terribly vilified."

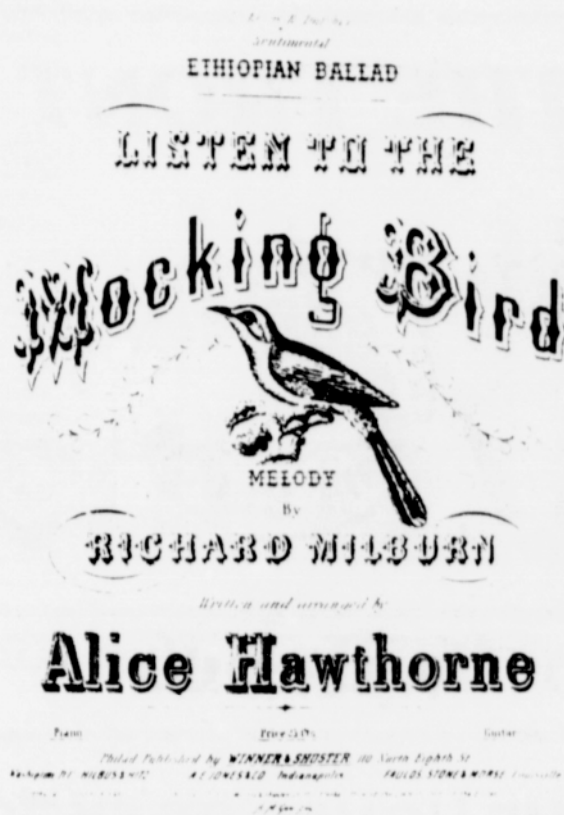
He refused to perform at a concert in Hamilton, Canada unless the management seated a group of Blacks in the first class seats who had been refused admission to that section. Their yield to his demand probably marked the first time that one of his race used his artistic appeal to protest discrimination.

Bower's rejection of white minstrelsy, in fact, all minstrelsy, was shared by many Blacks. These shows as alluded to earlier, were initially composed of a group of whites who performed in Black-face.

It wasn't until the early 1860s that a Black group, Lew Johnson's Plantation Minstrel Company came into being. They, too, blackened their faces and exaggerated their mouths with makeup. The greatest difference, however, is that the whites imitated the Blacks. Since the "genuine article" could not be truly duplicated, the whites specialized in slapstick humor and buffonery. Langston Hughes wrote that Blacks, the "genuine article" in their inimitable ability to use syncopated time and beat, introduced new dances, songs and routines that "...the whites had not appropriated. The stop-time taps, the 'sand' and the 'Virginia essence' (soft-shoe) were introduced. Some early stars were Wallace King, a falsetto specialist who was billed "The Man with the Child Voice" the Bohee Brothers who accompanied their soft-shoe dance with their banjos, and Charles Cruse, a "stand-up" comedian.

The Georgia Minstrels, a company of talented instrumentalists, singers and dancers was organized by Charles Hicks in 1865. At that time, most theaters into which this type of show was booked, were owned by whites. Difficulty, therefore, was experienced by Hicks when he tried to secure bookings for his troupe, so he sold it to a white man named George Callendar, and success was then guaranteed. The name was changed to Callendar's Original Georgia Minstrels; then to Haverly's International Minstrels; and ultimately Callendar's Spectacular Colored Minstrels. It toured Europe as well as the States with considerable success. The two major stars were Billy Kersands, who could put a cup and saucer in his mouth, and Sam Lucas.

SAM LUCAS (1840 - 1916) was born of free parents in Ohio. Often, then as now, musical careers were subsidized by paying occupations, and Lucas was no stranger to this duality. Barber by trade, he fought on the side of the Union during the Civil War. After the war, he played with several minstrel troupes until minstrelsy gave way to vaudeville and musical comedy. He composed various tunes; *Grandfather Clock*, *Turnip Greens* and *Carve Dat Possum* were the most famous.



Title page of Richard Milburn's "Listen to the Mockingbird," 1855. (Courtesy, New York Library, Schomburg Collection)

Lucas looked and acted the part of a big star. Always well dressed, he constantly wore a large diamond ring that had been presented to him by Queen Victoria, and carried a gold-headed cane that he received from a member of the English nobility. In addition, he wore a large gold watch on a gold fob. These articles were often pawned by the soft-hearted Lucas to rescue a stranded troupe.

WILLIAM HENRY LANE (c. 1825-53) was known professionally as Master Juba. One of the few Blacks to appear with white minstrel troupes, he was known as the greatest of all dancers. Juba was immortalized by the English author, Charles Dickens, who saw him perform at a place in New York called Almack's which was owned by a Black named Pete Williams. During his visit, Juba performed the single shuffle, double shuffle, cut and cross cut while accompanied by a tambourinist. His dance was reminiscent of the steps done at Congo-Square and the music performed at this tavern was the harbinger of jazz and ragtime.

Most of the performers in this brief history have been skilled as instrumentalists or vocalists.

RICHARD MILBURN was a whistler. Barber by trade in the city of Philadelphia, his knowledge of music was limited to accompanying himself on the guitar with rudimentary chording as he whistled. His skill in this medium of music projection was so proficient that he was often asked to perform at the (Negro) Philadelphia Library Committee to enliven their meetings. Leisure time spent in listening to and imitating the songs of birds led him to composing, "by ear" a tune called *Listen to the Mockingbird*.

A white composer/publisher, Septimus Winner, who wrote popular tunes under the pseudonym Alice Hawthorne, was asked to attend a meeting of the Committee to hear this exceptional folk artist. He did so, and transcribed the song for the first time.

The first edition of the music was published in 1855 with the credits: music by Richard Milburn, words by Alice Hawthorne. The sheet music quickly became a best seller, and subsequent printings have omitted Milburn's name with full credit assumed by Winner/Hawthorne.

--POST BELLUM--

The end of slavery brought immediate jubilation that quickly settled into bewilderment and fear, for thousands upon thousands were refugees as have been the many witnesses to any great war. The immediate issue was resettlement: to develop roots, security and a positive self-image. The federal government set the Freedmen's Bureau, and various church and religious groups were instrumental in forging bases for the hapless ex-slaves. Several academic and manual institutions were formed: Atlanta University, Fisk, Hampton, Howard, Johnson C. Smith (known then as Biddle), and St. Augustine.

John Coltrane
1926-1967
Acclaimed composer and performer,
acknowledged leader of the avant-garde in jazz.

Stewart's Cleaners
2701 NE 7th - 281-4372



Countee Cullen
1903-1946
One of America's most gifted poets.

Phil Reynolds
Medical Clinic

15 N. Morris - 287-4523

THE REVEREND
J. GORDON
McPHERSON



(early 20th century pioneer in Utah, Washington and California)

Political activist and humanitarian

Founder and Editor of ten periodicals in the West

is featured in a limited edition monograph of 30 copies

McPherson in the West:
A Selected Bibliography
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