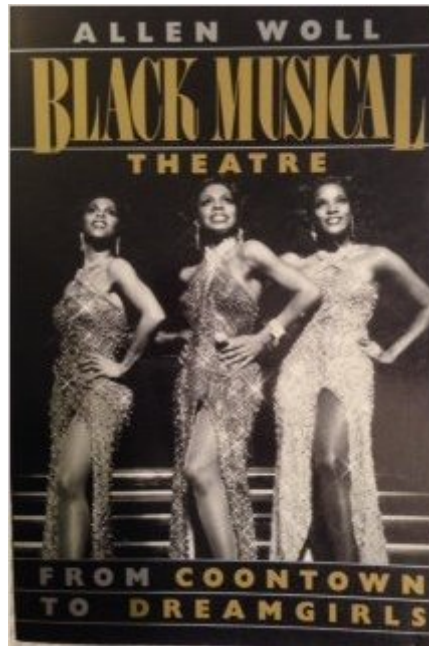




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# Black Musical Theatre (Da Capo Paperback)



## Synopsis

While theatregoers are generally familiar with the names of such pioneers as George M. Cohan, Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern, the names of their black counterparts - Will Marion Cook, George Walker and Bob Cole, among others - are virtually unknown today. Allen Woll aims to remedy that neglect in this book, offering a thoroughly researched account of the evolution of black musical theatre from the turn of the century to the present day.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Theater historian Woll's scholarly yet entertaining account of the rise, fall, and resurrection of the black musical fleshes out a neglected but vital aspect of American musical theater. Woll starts with minstrel shows and "coon songs" and follows the development of the musical through the great shows of the twenties to current-day blockbusters like *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Throughout, stage history has paralleled social history; a subtext of discrimination against black performers and authors underscores Woll's splendid re-creation of the world of Cole and Johnson, Williams and Walker, Florence Mills, and countless others. A discography would have been welcome, but this is a minor complaint about a well-researched and admirable work. Essential for all theater and black studies collections. (Photographs not seen.)-- Eric W. Johnson, Univ. of Bridgeport Lib., Ct. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Black Musical Theatre begins its historical survey with *Clorindy, the Origin of the Cakewalk and A Trip to Coontown*, in 1898, and concludes with the Broadway smash *Dreamgirls*, in 1981. The section on the ragtime pianist and composer Eubie Blake and his popular 1920s show, *Shuffle Along*, attests to early black influence in American musical theater. Prior to the 1920s, black musical theater was enriched by Walker and Williams, Cole and Johnson, Miller and Lyles, and Ernest Hogan. White producers and composers such as George Gershwin (*Porgy and Bess*) who were deeply involved in black musicals are given due coverage, and the problems inherent in relations with whites over such issues as stereotyping are fully examined. Other political issues such as the lack of social criticism in white-created musicals is treated with perception. The photographs are often chosen from the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library, and add a visual dimension to the exposition that will be of great value to students of musical history. Costume and scenery designers will also appreciate the stills from *Hot Mikado*, *Carmen Jones*, and *The Wiz*. Other illustrations include sheet music, performers (such as Louis Armstrong), and programs. The tap dance, gospel songs, jazz, and other elements of musical theater were perfected by black performers and composers, and were an intricate part of the Broadway tradition that has since extended its influence into television, popular music, and film. Both academic and public libraries should buy their share of this readable, socially relevant, thoroughly researched book. -- From Independent Publisher --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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