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Peter M. Lefferts

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Will Marion Cook and the Tab Show, with particular emphasis on Hotsy Totsy and La revue nègre (1925)

Peter M. Lefferts
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

This document is a supplement to "Chronology and Itinerary of the Career of Will Marion Cook," a 2017 document which is mounted on-line at http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/musicfacpub/66/. It puts into some kind of order a number of research notes, principally drawing upon newspaper and genealogy databases, that amplify the earlier work in certain respects. This is not a finished, polished effort; it represents work in progress, complete with repetitions, missing data, and the occasional typographical error. I invite queries, amplifications, and corrections, which may be directed to plefferts1@unl.edu. The present document is a first draft of November 2018.

Will Marion Cook (1869-1944) was acknowledged by his peers as the greatest African-American composer of his generation. He is best known for his central role in the creation of a series of full-length musicals for the comedy team of Bert Williams and George Walker, and for his broader engagement with pretty much every leading figure in black musical comedy during the early decades of the 20th century. Emerging now with greater clarity and detail is his involvement for almost forty years, from the 1890s to the 1930s, in writing miniature musical comedies and revues (the "tab shows" of my title) for a different milieu, the variety stage.

In this document, I first write briefly about the history of the mini-musical and tabulate the rich variety of synonyms for it, next explore in some more detail the expression "tab show," which is a new expression for an established genre, and then make some comments about the theatrical miniatures of Will Marion Cook.

Lastly, this document will take up the history of an unusual and influential 1925 tab (actually a tab dance revue) by Cook, initially called Hotsy Totsy and then renamed La revue nègre. I present a short prose overview and some research notes that aim to document the show before and during its Paris run, with an eye to measuring the extent of Cook's contribution to it.

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SOME INITIAL BACKGROUND AND HISTORY FOR THE MINI-MUSICAL

We begin with a brief survey of the mini-musical before 1890 that introduces nothing new or original---that is, nothing that is not well known in the scholarship of the theatre---but will provide necessary context here.
Historically speaking, the miniature musical comedy comes out of the world of the curtain raiser and the afterpiece, which were part of the tradition of legitimate theater from the 18th century forward.

- Curtain raiser
- Main Show (e.g., opera seria, spoken drama; the "big show")
- Afterpiece

These framing miniatures were short comic skits or burlesque parodies, mostly but not invariably musical, which were performed before and after a much longer main show. The curtain raiser and afterpiece were carried over into 19th-century popular theater, and then into the burgeoning new genres for the American variety stage: minstrelsy, burlesque, vaudeville, and, eventually, into the movie palace stage show. In all of the latter, the mini was just one element---an act or turn---on a longer bill. Over the same period, the curtain raiser and afterpiece lost their place as the standard complement to opera and to evening-length spoken drama in first class theaters.

The decline of the tradition of the afterpiece in legitimate theatre needs more documentation than I can offer here. Offenbach, after all, wrote about fifty one-act operettas of this type, and Gilbert & Sullivan's Trial by Jury is another famous example. Nonetheless, as a rule the mini-musical in the late 19th and 20th centuries no longer had a home in legitimate or first class theaters. Rather, they flourished now as a creature of variety, and variety had its home in its own theatres---regarded as second-class or second-tier theaters ("houses") in most markets---which were venues with lower-priced seats that hosted minstrel shows, burlesque, vaudeville, and the movies.

NB: Lest one grow squeamish about the expression "legitimate" theater, remember that the four divisions of theaters in the period in question, as for example in the 1921 Federal Reporter, were "legitimate," "vaudeville," "burlesque," and "moving picture." Big shows---especially full-length musical comedies and drama, but also some minstrelsy, variety, revues---were produced in "legitimate" or "first class" theaters.

The divisions are essential to keep in mind precisely because the mini-musical was no longer a creature of the legitimate stage, but of the variety stage/ vaudeville house/ burlesque house/ and movie palace. The distinctions are nonetheless sometimes blurred, as when it is said that a particular show "played Broadway" when that show held the stage not in a Broadway legitimate theater per se, but rather in one of Broadway’s roof-top theatres, which were essentially cabarets/ night clubs with stage shows, i.e., variety
houses, several stories above the main stage and home to a different genre of stage entertainment.

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The mini-musical really is underappreciated. Its neglect in histories of the musical is profound, yet this is a genre of which one commentator, writing in 1921, observed that "Possibly, with the exception of motion pictures, no class of amusement has grown so rapidly . . . . as the [miniature] Musical Comedy or Tabloid Show."

Just as original half-hour TV sitcoms have a different rhythm and narrative arc than hour-long TV dramas, and both of these have different storytelling conventions and expectations than a two-hour movie (and, moreover, TV sitcoms and dramas used to run for different audiences at different times of night, and you did not watch a movie on your TV once upon a time), so minis and full-evening musicals cannot be assumed to have been cut from the same cloth. This is a topic that demands further exploration, which will not be undertaken here. (Readers, take note!)

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MINI-MUSICALS ON THE VARIETY STAGE

To set the scene for later mini-musicals, the following will briefly identify their place on the 19th-century variety stage in minstrelsy, burlesque, and vaudeville.

1. The minstrel show, new in the 1840s, was a staple of American variety theater for the next 100 years. It began as a two-part form with intermission, but then was enlarged into a three-part structure, with a full-fledged Part III---an elaborate blackface sketch for the entire company, often closing with a spectacular cake-walk---after the olio.

Minstrel show

- **Part I:** full company on stage
- [intermission]
- **Part II:** olio (individual variety acts), with full company finale

_Evolves rapidly into_
• **Part I**: full company on stage
• **Part II**: olio (individual variety acts)
• **Part III**: afterpiece and cakewalk

NB: There are published miniatures called "minstrel afterpiece" (search Google Book for this expression, and see the 13 so named in WorldCat, mostly authored by Harry Newton, etc.). From the late 1890s, there were black individual stars and comedy teams that headlined mini-musicals in tented and theatrical minstrelsy.

Ernest Hogan’s minstrel company performed an extensive repertoire of playlets and mini musicals when touring in Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii in 1899-1900. Sampson, *The Ghost Walks* (1988), pp. 184-185, prints a program for their minstrel show from the Wellington, NZ, Opera House that details how one tab show closed the Grand First Part and a second closed the entire show.

NB: When the Frogs went out on tour in the summer of 1913, their show, which put Bert Williams back in front of black audiences, was structured as a minstrel show with an afterpiece.

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2. American burlesque first flowered in the 1870s---and this is "burlesque on the old lines," not modern striptease. It followed the lead of the minstrel show in its employment of a three-part format with the mini at the end. In burlesque, this mini was most often referred to as a *burlesque*---literally that---or a *burletta*. In a further development, there were already by the later 1880s sometimes two such burlettas, to open and to close the show.

**Burlesque (with Part III *burletta*)**

• Part I: full company on stage
• Part II: olio (individual variety acts)
• Part III: *burletta*

**Burlesque (with Part I & Part III *burlettas*)**

• Part I: *burletta*
• Part II: olio (individual variety acts)
• Part III: *burletta*
NB: Will Vodery wrote many burletta pairs for Hurtig & Seamon. Indeed, when Mark Tucker went "In Search of Will Vodery," one of the missing pieces he overlooked was Vodery's large number of mini-musicals for burlesque.

A further note: as with "minstrel afterpiece," there are published plays subtitled "burlesque burletta."

S. H. Dudley's Creole Company or "Dudley's Creoles," ran an up-to-date show on the burlesque model with two mini-musicals, "A Holiday in Coonville" and "Coonville Society" in 1901:

Part I: A Holiday in Coonville
Part II: Olio, i.e., individual variety acts
Part III: Coonville Society

In the 1902-1903 and 1903-1904 seasons, Dudley appeared in minstrel shows, headlining the afterpiece with numbers entitled "The Jolly Ethiopian," "The Darktown Ping Pong Club," and "Jim Jackson at the Policy Shop" (acc. Abbott and Seroff, Ragged but Right). Dudley then moved up into big shows with his troupe The Smart Set.

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3. American vaudeville, originating in the 1880s, is variety's most famous offshoot, all cleaned up and family friendly. A vaudeville show is usually a two-hour affair, falling into two parts with an intermission. A typical bill might have nine acts (or “turns”) of eight-to-twelve minutes each, with five on the first half and four on the second.

Mini-musicals were one possible component of a vaudeville bill from the later 1880s onward, becoming more and more often a standard feature over the next two decades. The program might put a mini-musical into a single slot, as, for example, in slot 3 (of five, in the first half) or slot 7 (of nine, i.e., in the second half after intermission), or instead, leave it to the very end, as a more extended finale/afterpiece. Longer mini-musicals might absorb one or more neighboring slots on the program. Indeed, as an alternative to locating the mini-musical as an extended afterpiece following the complete main bill, it might be used instead to replace as much as a half of the entire show---the whole of the second part---swallowing the time slots and income of four shorter turns.
NB: In examples of vaudeville bills in Omaha, Neb. at the Orpheum Theatre around 1920, a show might have six short acts, plus two minis: one a drama and one a musical farce.

Vaudeville had always included a fair share of dramatic bits---slender skits and sketches, often extemporized and involving a small comedy team (think of the Marx Brothers, Laurel and Hardy, Burns and Allen). The mini-musical is a bigger event. It will have a book, a cast of anywhere from 10 to up to 50 or 75, with 25 as a reliable norm, a score with a half dozen or more numbers, and all the accoutrements and extravagance of a big show, including up to a half dozen principals, additional solo artists, a male quartette or chorus, an ensemble of dancing girls, lavish scenery, lighting effects, and multiple changes of costume. It might run anywhere up to 60 minutes, which would be an entire half a bill. These mini-musicals were outsized and expensive---alien to the basically minimalist vaudeville aesthetic---and folks loved them.

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VOCABULARY

A rich vocabulary of names grew up around the mini-musical on the variety stage. I have found twenty-odd synonyms and near synonyms that were used frequently in the period from 1895 to 1935, which then mostly disappeared with the death of theatrical vaudeville. No one term predominates, though playlet might have a slight edge overall. One relatively common term, comedietta, was entirely new to me. Some terms are traditionally reserved for specific contexts, as in the case of burletta for the mini in a burlesque show.

- afterpiece
- baby musical comedy
- burletta
- burlesque
- comedietta
- curtain raiser (considerably rarer: forepiece, prologue)
- musical comedietta
- miniature musical comedy
- one-act
- one-act playlet
- operetta
- playlet
- showlet
- sketch, variety sketch
• skit
• two-act
• two-act playlet
• "The Little Giant of Musical Comedies"
• "musical comedy in boiled-down form"
• "curtailed musical comedy"
• "condensed musical comedy"
• “a miniature or 'vest-pocket' edition of musical comedy

And here are five more terms for the mini-musical that will take us into the world of the "tab" show:

• musical tabloid
• musical tabloid play
• tabloid musical comedy
• vaudeville tabloid show
• tab show

NB: Will Marion Cook always deliberately referred to his one-act mini-musicals as “operettas.” He reserved the designation "opera" for a full-evening, big-show musical comedy with spoken dialogue.

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THE EXPRESSION "TABLOID"

Where does the expression “tabloid” come from? This is an ideal question to address through a search of on-line newspaper databases. "Tabloid" is a term of modern invention, coined in 1884 as a commercial trademark for a medical pill or tablet, i.e., medicine compressed into a swallowable tablet. First used figuratively in 1898, it was applied to the news in 1900, and the expressions "tabloid news" and "tabloid journalism" simply exploded into popular use in 1901. It is from this locution that additional figurative uses proliferated so rapidly all over the map. It really captured the public imagination as an embodiment of modern times. In the middle of 1905, Billboard magazine commented that: "Vaudeville has already experienced tabloid melodrama, tabloid minstrelsy, and if the vogue of tabloid things continues, we may soon experience tabloid audiences" (Billboard, 1905). According to one later observer, "This is a tabloid age. For instance, there is Dr. Eliot's Five-Foot Book Shelf [of library classics]. Then there are "little symphony" orchestras,
tabloid musical comedies, and kitchenette apartments” (Lyceum Magazine, 1922).

- 1884 tabloid
- 1898 tabloid used figuratively
- 1900 tabloid journalism
- 1901 tabloid restaurant
- 1901 tabloid vaudeville (and vaudeville tabloid show 1910)
- 1901 tabloid theatrical
- 1901 tabloid tragedy
- 1903 tabloid drama
- 1904 tabloid musical comedy (musical tabloid comedy 1908)
- 1905 tabloid grand opera
- 1905 tabloid melodrama
- 1905 tabloid minstrelsy
- 1907 tabloid comedy
- 1908 tabloid comedy operetta
- 1908 tabloid comedy-drama
- 1910 tabloid comedy playlet
- 1910 tabloid comedy sketch
- 1910 tabloid show
- 1911 tabloid extravaganza
- 1913 tabloid revue
- 1914 tabloid burlesque

and

- **1913 tab show**

Clearly, not all tabloids were musicals. And spoken playlets might be entirely original, or they might be condensations of pre-existing full-length plays.

The expression "Tabloid musical comedy" is found as early as 1904 but it really takes off a decade later, in 1913 and 1914. It is also in the early 1910s that the expressions "tab" and "tab show" began to appear. It is important to acknowledge that these turn up almost exclusively in the trade press. They are vaudeville insiders' casual slang, a catchy shorthand whose use grows to be pretty common in the vaudeville pages of Variety and Billboard. These particular terms, however, are not common coin in the daily press.

NB: The explosion of tabs in the teens coincides with the advent of theater into the confines of Circuit Chautauqua, including condensed versions of operas, opera comique, and operettas.
NB: It is in the later teens, too, that articles begin to appear in the trade press on the tab phenomenon, and when a conventional generic notion of the "tab show" emerges---specifically as mini musical comedy with a couple of principals, a troupe of girls, etc. Billboard has a Tabloids column at this moment (see Billboard, July 12, 1919, p. 18, etc.).

Critical here is the recognition that the expression "tab show" did not originate in something specific and become more general. In particular, it did not first mean miniature musical comedy and then broaden its field of reference. It has always been a term of wide application in the theatrical world, and offered a new name for pre-existing genres. Also, crucial to mention here about how the term is used is that a tabloid theatrical or spoken play need not be a condensation or digest of any specific pre-existing opus, although it absolutely could be Hamlet streamlined to a half hour, or Pinafore chopped to 17 minutes. In the later teens and twenties, the focus of the term tended to narrow and it was most often used to refer an original one-act musical play with significant production values.

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THE "TAB REVUE"

The later teens and '20s in both America and Europe saw a burst of new activity in the genre of the revue. And yes, there is a tabloid equivalent. Although the phrase "tabloid revue" can be traced back at least as far as 1913, it really begins to turn up frequently in 1919. One particularly insightful observation was printed that year in Theatre Magazine: "One of the new modes in vaudeville is the musical revue in tabloid form. These snappy little musical comedies, ranging from thirty minutes to an hour in playing time, are steadily gaining in popularity. . . . Over in London and Paris, the music hall fans demand a revue on every programme. They like a first half of vaudeville and then a girly, tuneful, dancy, musical farce or comedy after intermission."

This is a quotation with several virtues, in that it not only explicitly defines "tabloid revue," but also marks its particularly European popularity, and introduces a slippage that makes the equation of revue with musical comedy. Of course, we nowadays would like the distinction between these two genres to be a neat one---the plot-based book musical and the plotless revue. But frankly, in the Post-WWI era this was not a widely-observed distinction, and "tabloid revue," a fairly recherché expression at best, tended to attract synonyms in the newspapers to illuminate matters for their readers. Thus "the Traffic Club Tabloid Revue," for example, is "a one act musical comedy";
another "tabloid revue" is a "baby music comedy;" and yet another show is described breathlessly as "a musical comedy tabloid revue."

In sum, tabs are not new in the 1910s. Under a rich variety of names, they had been around a very long while. Some were indeed boiled down versions of pre-existing longer works, but the great majority were original playlets. Though the term tab is used more often than not to identify a miniature farce musical comedy, the term continues always to have a less specific and more all-encompassing application, most strikingly, perhaps, around 1920, in the frequent identification of tabloid musical comedy with tabloid revue.

In trade papers, if you read the THEATER pages, you will not know that tabs exist. They are discussed on the VARIETY pages. And these miniatures are more numerous, omnipresent, and thus, I would argue, important to our understanding of the history of musical theater, than is acknowledged by standard narratives of musical comedy on the big stages of Broadway.

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The TAB and AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSICAL THEATER

Where is the mini-musical situated in the world of African American musical theatre? The story (in tabloid form) is that black theater companies of any kind were relatively few up to the end of the 19th century. They were almost without exception minstrel and vaudeville companies, and were mainly itinerant, with one important exception, the personnel that worked at Worth's Dime Museum in Manhattan for two seasons, in 1894-95 and 1895-96. In the 1880s and 1890s, mini-musicals were an important element in the shows of these companies.

Amongst all the companies, the most important for future development were the so-called "up-to-date" big shows that drew on forms from burlesque: Sam T. Jack's Creole Burlesque Company originating in 1890, originally managed by John Isham; then competition in the form of Isham's own Octoroons company of 1895 and Oriental America company of 1896; and Black Patti's Troubadours, which also started up in the fall of 1896. All of these troupes drew heavily on the black actors, writers, and composers associated with Worth's. And it is these companies---their repertoire and their personnel---(rather, for example, than the black minstrel troupes with mini musicals on their bill) that provide the springboard to full-length black musical comedies at the end of the decade.
Sam T. Jack's shows customarily had two mini’s, which were always identified as burlesques, as for example, "a burlesque, The Beauty of the Nile; or Doomed By Fire." They framed an olio.

- Part I: Burlesque
- Part II: Olio
- Part III: Burlesque

John Isham and Black Patti both employed the three-part form with the mini played first. For their closer they placed classical vocal music in Part III, in a spectacular called "Thirty/Forty Minutes around the Operas."

- Part I: Miniature musical comedy
- Part II: Olio (individual variety acts)
- Part III: A Tour Around the Operas

Mini-musicals (tab shows) are an important creative venue for African American composers and producers at least through the 1920s. Irvin C. Miller is the very biggest figure here, especially in shows for Harlem's Lafayette Theater.

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Bob Cole & Billy Johnson's A Trip to Coontown (1897) is the first full-length African-American musical comedy---the first big show. The comedy duo left the Black Patti Troubadours to stage it, and the first iteration of their show was a conflation of (1) what is actually a relatively short musical comedy---almost just a tab, at about a dozen musical items, thus hardly any bigger than their mini for Black Patti, At Jolly Cooney Island, together with (2) a final act of concert numbers. The model here is based on Jack's and Isham's, Black Patti's, and burlesque models (and ultimately, the minstrel show). Cole and Johnson used a three-part structure with a mini as Part I, a variety olio as Part II, and "A Tour Around the Operas" with more serious recital fare as Part III. Here, significantly, elements of olio are interpolated into the mini. The final act is mostly recital fare, with some framing elements to associate it with the mini.

It appears that the mini musical part of A Trip to Coontown grew dramatically in Season 2 (1898-1899), probably to a full evening, with a
growth from around 12 musical numbers to around 18 (and presumably, with the cutting of the final act "recital").

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COOK'S TABS

Over the course of his career, Will Marion Cook was involved with minis and big shows, book musical comedies and revues. He wrote as many minis as big shows, and composed roughly equal amounts of new music for each genre. The distinction between the two begins with scope, of course, but---to repeat---they played in very different kinds of houses, to different kinds of audiences, at different price points, and with different sets of expectations for the evening. Exploring how Cook negotiated these differences in all of his stage works should be at the top of the agenda for future work on this resourceful musician of the theater.

1895-96: **Clorindy** for Worth’s Dime Museum variety stage as curtain raiser or afterpiece, for Worth’s own resident company, in the fall

1896-97: **Cannibal King** for Isham’s **Oriental America** as curtain raiser in the fall

1898-99: **Clorindy** in the summer of 1898, a roof garden variety show finale/afterpiece, that then went on the vaudeville circuits in 1898-1899 season; **Clorindy** ran an hour, then 45 minutes, then a half hour

1900, summer: **Jes Lack White Fo'ks**

1900-1901, Christmas/New Year: **Uncle Eph’s Christmas**, for Hogan’s company, over the holidays, who also did a remounted **Clorindy**

1905, summer: Hogan's Memphis Students company in **Songs of the Black Folks**, a summer show roof gardens mini-revue, starring Hogan and Abbie Mitchell; Memphis Students show runs a half hour with Hogan.

1905-1906: Tennessee Students company (i.e., the Memphis Students under a new name, with Abbie Mitchell but without Ernest Hogan) on variety stages in Europe and US, with a mini revue involving singing, dancing, and comic bits; the company and its show may share the same name (needs checking); starring Abbie; running time of 20 minutes; in
London, they are last on the bill with the exception of the biograph; they begin with a first part “on the classical music order” including Abbie singing “Suwanee River,” and then eccentric dancing; credit for their success is due Will Marion Cook (NY Clipper, December 23, 1905, p. 1122); Abbie is singing Cook’s “Mandy Lou” and “When Melinda Sings” (NY Morning Telegraph, November 20, 1905, p. 10); in the summer of 1906, "Abbie Mitchell and her 25 Tennessee Students" are on the variety program at Hammerstein’s (New York Times, June 3, 1906, p. X5)

1906-1907: Tennessee Students, with Abbie, are “presented by Will Marion Cook in a picturesque singing specialty” (NY Dramatic Mirror, December 15, 1906, p. 16); they are singing the songs of the South (NY Dramatic Mirror, January 26, 1907, p. 16)

1909: “Hawaiian Romance, Musical Drama of the South Sea Islands” (named in Variety ads in 1909)

1909, late spring/summer: Roseland, “Negro Sketch” for 25 people, for Williams and Walker cast members from Bandanna Land

1909, summer: Lime-Kiln Klub, for the Bandanna Land cast

1911, fall: Darkeydom: Songs of the Sunny South and Black Bohemia (two tabs) for Cook’s own company

1912, in summer: Turkey Trot Opera, for Black Patti company members

1913: The Traitor, at the Lafayette, for the Negro Players

1913: Soldiers, at the Lafayette, for the Negro Players

1914: Clorindy revival, at the Lafayette, for the Negro Players

1917, in early fall: Jazzland, Lafayette Players ensemble members

1923: Clef Club show as mini-review

1925: Hotsy Totsy, a tab dance revue for the variety stage employing Cook’s own company; Hotsy Totsy, renamed La revue nègre, filled a half bill in the fall in Paris, running after intermission, but it was described as designed to allow for inflation to a full evening.
1929, spring: **Swing Along**, for the Lafayette; it had a cast of 75, including Will Marion Cook’s Singers and Band, and Vodery’s **Show Boat** chorus girls. Displacing all the vaudeville acts at Harlem’s Lafayette Theatre for one week, it filled half of a program on a split bill with a movie. Care was taken in the papers to describe **Swing Along** as *not just another revue*. It was called "a radical departure from the ordinary revue type of entertainment. An interesting little story runs through the play. During the unfolding of the story, the principal characters, most of them vaudeville headliners, "strut their stuff"." **Swing Along** was hoped and expected "to make theatrical history in Harlem," and then to be incorporated into a Ziegfeld production or perhaps "take its place with the presentations in the motion picture palaces of the Publix Circuit, with whom Mr. Vodery is associated." None of this came to pass, however, and no further Cook projects saw the stage.

1930, in January: **Dust and Dawn** (**Dusk and Dawn**), Cook’s last documented mini, never made it into production. It was a version of the composer’s recurring opera project of the 1920s and 30s. Eager to see it reach the stage in some form, he apparently had it accepted as a mini at the Lafayette in early 1930. Struggling to put it into shape, he turned to the assistance of friends and family---"Duke Ellington, Jimmy Johnson, Porter Granger, Mercer Cook and Gus Smith." But all this high-powered talent could not get it off the ground; rehearsals were postponed, and then the show dropped from sight. It bobbed up four years later as a full-length show, indeed a veritable extravaganza for Broadway---anticipated for December 1934---calling for a cast of 200, and said to be the culmination of 14 years of work. But the announcement was premature, and neither as mini nor as big show did **Dust and Dawn** make it to the stage.

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**NICHES for TABS**

In addition to their place on the variety stage generally speaking, Cook’s minis filled certain niches---the one-week stint at a local vaudeville house, the Christmas-time fill in, the summer star vehicle, and the summer let’s-keep-the-company-in-rent-money gig---that were not part of the big show’s world at all on the legitimate stage.

**WHO IS THE SHOW WRITTEN FOR?**
A pertinent question for Cook. He did not write on spec, unless that is what Hawaiian Romance was. He wrote with an ensemble in mind that had a need for material. The tab could be a vehicle with which to highlight an individual star or team, such as Ernest Hogan, or Abbie Mitchell, or Williams & Walker. It could be for a company, such as the Williams & Walker Bandanna Land company sans its stars, or the Black Patti Captain Jasper Co. sans Black Patti, or for the Negro Players/Lafayette Players at the Lafayette. Or it could be for his daughter and son-in-law, as in Hotsy-Totsy/La revue nègre.

**MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

A tab cannot run for a whole theatrical year in the same venue, like a mainstage show. It is always a creature of variety/vaudeville and the rhythms and the economics of that genre.

The measure of success for a tab has very much to do with who the show is for, and the immediate situation. Longevity means success, but a short run does not mean failure. A show may only run for a half week or full week only; this is perfectly normal. (A resident company at the Lafayette or the Pekin needed weekly changes of material to hold their local audience, and could never take a show on the road.) Or it may be a summer show and run for the entire summer at one venue in Manhattan, and this is a measure of huge success (e.g., Clorindy, or The Memphis Students). When a tab stays put for more than a week (or two or three), it will require refreshing with new songs to keep bringing the audience back. It may succeed in its purpose if it keeps a company together between spring and fall runs, and buys food, a bed, and travel expenses over the Christmas break. Either a run for one full fall or spring season on the road, or for a full summer at on a rooftop variety stage high over Broadway, is a really good showing.
Will Marion Cook, *Hotsy Totsy*, and *La revue nègre* (1925)

A *Variety* headline and article of August 26, 1925, which made all the prominent black newspapers a week later, announced a show that Will Marion Cook was taking to Paris in the fall:

"Colored Tab for Paris With Will Marion Cook/
Will Marion Cook is composing the music
and Mr. Cook is to accompany the show as its orchestral leader."

The content of the article makes clear that the *tab* in question is *Hotsy-Totsy*, (which in Paris would be called, less colorfully and more generically, *La revue nègre*). The literature about Cook is remarkably silent about his participation in the creation of this famous show. Marva Griffin Carter's 2008 biography for Oxford University Press mentions it not at all. Other scholars (including biographers of Sidney Bechet, Claude Hopkins, and Josephine Baker) who acknowledge something about Cook's participation, don't pursue it in depth, as it is not in their remit, and thus offer no real sense of who Cook was in this context or what the *Variety* article implies. The material below grows out of other work on Cook, including on his mini musicals and revues. It attempts to outline the circumstances of his involvement in *Hotsy-Totsy*—how deep it was, what his contribution was, and indeed, how much of this storied show as it eventually opened in Paris on October 2, 1925 might actually be able to be attributed to Cook.

*La revue nègre* is often said to be only the second all-black revue-type show from America to hit Europe. The first in this accounting would be *Chocolate Kiddies*, which sailed in May 1925, followed by the *Hotsy Totsy/La revue nègre* troupe, which sailed in September 1925. (*Florence Mills and Blackbirds*, with Will Vodery and the Plantation Orchestra, sailed for Europe in May 1926.) But there had been, in fact, prior shows (Cook took his Southern Syncopated Orchestra to Europe in 1919 in a revue-type show, and in one form or another that company continued at least into 1922, while Cook himself brought over a second revue in 1921, and there are others, as Andy Fry reminds us). And one must keep in mind that *La revue nègre*, in distinction to the shows just named, was a miniature—a tab revue, and definitely *not* a big show destined for the main stage of a legitimate theatre that would run for a full evening. And it was a *tab dance revue* to boot.

**IMMEDIATE BACKGROUND**
There is a great story to tell here, and it starts when the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, a theater with a storied past, changed ownership in March 1925 and switched to a music hall format (i.e., vaudeville/variety), opening in that guise in early April 1925. (It was, of course, strikingly unusual that the storied Théâtre des Champs-Elysées had been turned into a Music Hall.)

Mrs. Caroline Dudley Reagan (1890-1984), a monied white American liberal socialite and heiress turned arts patron and theater producer, was living at the time in Paris with her husband Daniel, a wealthy businessman, who was the commercial attaché at the US Embassy in Paris. He had become associated with the Paris Office of the US Department of Commerce as a trade commissioner in 1924. Mr. and Mrs. Reagan were active in cosmopolitan artistic circles centered on the salons of Carl Van Vechten in New York and Gertrude Stein---literally their next-door neighbor---in Paris.

Dan and Caroline Reagan together had been---and separately would continue to be---very much a part of the NYC scene around the Van Vechten salon/circle, etc. Her husband was well known in this scene even after they separated, and turns up in Van Vechten letters, etc., to the end of the decade and perhaps longer. Her two sisters are also very artsy and embedded in the scene.

One sister, Katherine, unmarried, a painter, was living in Paris. The other is poet Dorothy Dudley Harvey, whose husband was Henry B. ("Harry") Harvey. The daughter of Dan and Caroline is Sophie Reagan Herr (1921-2012). Caroline's second husband was Joseph Delteil (1894-1978). She left an unpublished memoir that was seen by J.-C. Baker.

In Paris in 1925 the sisters lived at sixième étage, no. 6, Place du Pantheon, in on-line references, but in J.-C. Baker's book (p. 105), the Reagans and their child lived across the street from Gertrude Stein (Stein lived at 27 rue de Fleurus; she helped get the Reagans their place at 26 rue de Fleurus; they all live just to the west of the Luxembourg Gardens). Perhaps the sisters together lived at one address, with Daniel and Caroline living at the other until their separation.

When the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées changed hands, Reagan immediately volunteered to provide them with something exotic and au courant, namely an American Negro stage show. Sailing to New York with contract in hand for a six-week booking, she spent from mid May to mid July making little or no progress buying a company to put on her show. (Carl Van Vechten was still
calling the show merely "proposed" in a mid July entry in his daybook.) And then Reagan was tipped, by someone, to go meet Will Marion Cook.

Caroline was diving into this new area perhaps in part because her marriage was starting to break up. After Caroline left Paris for NYC in May 1925, she and her husband did not live together again, and they moved to divorce in early 1926 (Chicago Tribune, April 2, 1926, p. 18; Chicago Tribune, April 3, 1926, p. 5). Nonetheless her husband's name is on the printed Parisian program for La revue nègre as "Directeur." The Dudley sisters are named as responsible for costume and some of the décor.

Caroline Reagan ended up losing lots of money on this venture. Indeed, daughter Sophie Reagan recalled to J.-C. Baker that she thought "Josephine was one of the causes of the divorce between my parents because my father lost his savings in La Revue Negre" (J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, p. 131). In Chicago Tribune, April 2, 1926, p. 18, it says that "The show was an artistic success, but a financial failure in Paris, Brussels, and Berlin. In Berlin the show broke up for lack of money."

Reagan probably was aware of at least three shows, From Dixie to Broadway, Chocolate Kiddies and Chocolate Dandies, that bore some resemblance to what she was after. These were big, full evening shows.

Florence Mills was starring in the big show From Dixie to Broadway, which closed for the season in early May.

Sissle and Noble's big show In Bamville = Chocolate Dandies had been out on the road for a while. Chocolate Dandies closed for good at the end of its US road swing in late May 1925. It was in Rochester in the week of May 1; in Newark for a week from May 4; in Baltimore the week of May 10; and at Werba's in Brooklyn beginning the week of Sunday May 17; [the performers refused to start the show on Saturday, May 23, because some hadn't been paid in months, acc. J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, p. 79]; the company has scattered by May 29.

Chocolate Kiddies, a newly assembled big show, sailed to Europe on May 6 with lots of talent, and the troupe was seen off at the docks by a huge crowd.

Note also:
THE YEAR 1925 IN NEW YORK CIRCLES

NB: For Carl Van Vechten (and Vanity Fair) the year 1925 was the year of the Negro (with a series of Van Vechten essays in the magazine, Covarrubias drawings, etc.).

Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven* is publ. by August 1926 (forecast on list of summer reading in June; one rev. is Aug. 15 + Aug. 21 + Aug. 22 etc.);

Some or all of the Covarrubias drawings for his *Negro Drawings* (publ. 1927; copyright 21 October 1927) are from *Vanity Fair*, according to an author's note in the 1927 publication; they appeared first in *Vanity Fair* in 1924-1925; No. 7, "Charleston," is the initial image from which the curtain of the show was made, which in turn became the front cover of Spencer Williams sheet music published in Paris. Was it an image of Louis Douglas, who was back in NYC from June 15?

The Covarrubias drawing "Jazz Baby" appeared in *Vanity Fair* in December 1924; a Langston Hughes poem in Alain Locke, ed., *The New Negro* (1925) was illustrated by the Covarrubias drawing "Blues Singer"; the cover of Langston Hughes's *The Weary Blues* (1926) is a Covarrubias caricature of a black piano player

"He is especially interested in negro types, and this summer a collection of his negro caricatures was on exhibition in Paris under the auspices of one of the leading Parisian artists" (Los Angeles Times, September 24, 1925, p. A2).

Caroline Reagan arrived back in the US from Paris on May 8, 1925. She probably lived with her sister and husband at their place on 5th Ave. and 12th Street. Reagan wanted some authentic negro vaudeville (in effect, a mini revue). She really knew nothing and nobody, and so turned initially to guidance from her white Harlem Renaissance friends.

As a measure of how slow her project was to get underway, the Van Vechten daybook records a chat with Reagan about her "proposed Paris Negro Vaudeville act" on Saturday, 18 July 1925, and it was not until three months after her return to New York, i.e., in August, when things finally got moving. At that moment, Carl Van Vechten sent her way his friend Donald Angus, who then served as "secretary-treasurer-manager
of the company." He came on board the project around August 27 and accompanied them to Europe.

Why was she set on sponsoring a revue?

One particularly insightful observation was printed in 1919 in Theatre Magazine (and already cited above): "One of the new modes in vaudeville is the musical revue in tabloid form. These snappy little musical comedies, ranging from thirty minutes to an hour in playing time, are steadily gaining in popularity. . . . Over in London and Paris, the music hall fans demand a revue on every programme. They like a first half of vaudeville and then a girly, tuneful, dancy, musical farce or comedy after intermission."

What Mrs. Reagan was buying to bring back to France was a revue, specifically a TAB REVUE. Tabs, as discussed above, were tabloid shows, that is, miniaturize musicals or reviews that played on the music hall or variety stage, NOT on the legitimate theater stage, and not playing for a full evening. Tabs and full-length shows played in different houses, on different circuits, under different management, and with different conventions for the make-up of the troupe. Tabs might displace anywhere from a couple of vaudeville turns up to a half a show.

Into late June or thereabouts, Reagan had hoped to win the services of the brightest star on the African American stage, Florence Mills, along with her troupe. This intention gets into an early notice for the fall season published in Paris: Florence Mills' name appeared in a July 9 program of the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées as the fall's coming attraction (J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, p. 92). Mills, however, who was currently in vaudeville for the summer season with a tab version of her full-length show, turned down Mrs Reagan.

The Plantation was a New York roof club over the Winter Garden at Broadway and 50th Street; here, the latest Plantation revue, Tan Town Topics, was scheduled to open on June 5, 1925, and it initially had been expected that the show would star Florence Mills; this show was then delayed almost three weeks, opening Tuesday, June 23, possibly because the talent was not all lined up. (This is the first appearance of this title at the Plantation or anywhere else. It will be the name of subsequent revues at this theater and in other venues for two decades.) The show featured a cast of 14, including "the famous octette of plantation steppers" (New York Sun, June 27, 1925, p. 5); the star was Ethel Waters, plus 8 Plantation Beauties, and Will Vodery's Plantation
Orchestra (NY Sun, June 23, 1925, p. 35; NY Evening Post, June 23, 1925, p. 12)

Why the delay, and where was Florence Mills? To begin with, Florence Mills decided to take a break after the close of the season in her own show, the "spectacular, racy review" From Dixie to Broadway, in early May (they are at the Hippodrome in the week of Saturday May 2). After just a couple of weeks off, she then worked in vaudeville, at least from the week beginning Sunday, May 17 (at Albee's in Brooklyn with a special production for a "two-a-day") accompanied by Will Vodery with the complete orchestra that had backed her in the last season, and "eight dusky steppers"; thus she preferred vaudeville to doing the Plantation's revue this summer; her show is excerpts from her longer revue (the best songs and scenes, the most delightful numbers). Vodery commitments to Florence Mills may also have slowed his participation at the Plantation.

Mills' previous season's show had a relatively big company of 25, including a standard dancing chorus of eight girls, plus the band (Brooklyn Daily Eagle, August 2, 1925, p. 2E), equivalent to Chocolate Kiddies' 24/25 plus an additional 12 in Wooding's Orchestra. Tan Town Topics had a cast of fourteen, starring Ethel Waters and 8 Plantation Beauties (a.k.a. the Octette of Plantation Steppers), with Will Vodery's Plantation Orchestra. (Eddie Rector and Ralph Cooper, a dance team, were also part of the show.) Hotsy Totsy was just about the same size, with a cast of 14 or so plus the band.

The Plantation Club management asked Cook to step in and help fix things up (J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, p. 83). Was Vodery responsible for bringing in Cook, and was he actually doing Cook some kind of favor? In any event, Cook was a great "show doctor" and lined up the necessary talent and material.

Perhaps Cook brought in Ethel Waters as the star. (Given Cook's hand in Tan Town Topics, Ethel Waters was likely the recommendation of Cook, although, to be fair, the Plantation Club was a very prominent showcase and Ethel was probably the biggest black female star in town, so perhaps Cook's intercession was not necessary; however, the Bogle biography of Ethel says it was Earl Dancer who got her in the show). As far as a starting date, June 23 was cutting it tight for Ethel ("America's ebony comedienne") because as late as the week before, she and Earl Dancer were still on the road singing and dancing on B. F. Keith's big time circuit in vaudeville, doing the skit "Negro Folk Songs, Sayings, and Dances" (e.g., Boston Herald, June 14, 1925, p. C 11; Boston Herald, June 16, 1925, p. 5).
Reportedly, it was Cook who added Josephine Baker to the chorus (J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, pp. 82, 83). Baker became available for Tan Town Topics after the close of Chocolate Dandies in late May 1925. Baker at this moment is just a dancer (an end girl), and she became was a chorine in the summer review, apparently also understudying Ethel Waters. A very young "eccentric dancer," Baker previously had been one of the budding stars (for a year and a half) of Sissle and Noble's In Bamville = Chocolate Dandies; she had first gained some attention in the second season of Sissle and Blake's Shuffle Along. For her, taking part in Tan Town Topics was a welcome source of secure summer income.

TURNING TO WILL MARION COOK

Stymied in her own efforts, Caroline Reagan was tipped to see Cook by someone, and she turned to Cook for advice and assistance in choosing the talent for her intended show.

Why turn to Will Marion Cook? What was he to her and those that advised her?

Cook was a veteran violinist, pianist, conductor, composer, song writer, lyricist, librettist, arranger, orchestrator, stage manager, and director. Born in 1869, he was hands down the leading African American creative figure of his generation in musical theatre. He had been putting together tabs and big shows in American since 1895. Now, at age 56, he was referred to in the papers as the old master and he encouraged others to call him “Dad.” He was the venerated survivor of a generation (including the late Bert Williams, George Walker, Bob Cole, and Ernest Hogan) who had first begun to make their mark in musical theater 30 years before.

Most recently (and most relevantly), Cook had spent four years---1919 to 1923---on stage in Europe, playing London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and Budapest with his Southern Syncopated Orchestra, his Cotton Blossoms troupe, and his World Famous International Orchestra and Entertainers, as well as doing stints in variety there as an act with his ex-wife Abbie Mitchell. Moreover, his son-in-law, Louis Douglas had been performing in Europe since 1903, and---sometimes with Cook's daughter Marion---had been performing in Europe and South America since the end of World War I. In New York City in 1925, Cook was, therefore, the single most well-connected, cosmopolitan, and experienced African American musician and music theatre professional.
with whom to consult about Mrs. Reagan's show in respect to European musical theater and the European variety stage. 

And Cook had just pulled together **Tan Town Topics** at the Plantation.

Exactly when Reagan met Cook is an open question. But J.-C. Baker recounts that she jumped on a bus and headed uptown to Harlem in July, and went straight to the theater where Cook had a small office.

J.-C. Baker says Cook was allowed to choose the talent, and he chose Louis Douglas (J.-C. Baker, *Hungry Heart*, pp. 88, 91). Mercer Cook reports that she told Cook about her plans and her six-week contract from the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, and that it was Cook who urged her to consider adding Josephine Baker.

It was presumably sometime in July when Cook introduced Reagan to Josephine Baker, perhaps only after the Ethel Waters gave Mrs. Reagan her refusal; it could not have been much earlier than the very latest June, given when **Tan Town Topics** opened, and since Mills is still expected to be Reagan's star in an ad that runs in July, it really must be July or even later; Josephine does not leave **Tan Town Topics** until mid August.

This assignment worked for Cook, who was catching his breath between creating **Tan Town Topics**, which opened June 23, and his upcoming creative work on one or more full-length musical shows that were forecast for the fall season (**Whirl of Dixie** and **Too Bad**). As it turns out, he would commit, and then de-commit, to joining Reagan's show himself.

A highlight of Cook's summer was the graduation of his son Mercer from Amherst, where he was Phi Beta Kappa and winner of a big senior prize (June 17), followed by Mercer's wedding (June 24) and embarkation with his bride for Paris on their honeymoon and a year at the Sorbonne (July 19). Mercer's older sister Marion came back from Europe with her husband Louis on June 15 to show off the first grandchild and celebrate with Mercer, and cousins Hartwell Cook and Louise Cook were in town as well. All those of Mercer's generation were living at his grandmother's place at 124 W. 124th St. this summer, while Cook was living in a studio at a friend's house (the Spillers), fourteen blocks to the north, at 232 W. 138th St.---just west of 7th Avenue in Striver's Row.
Cook had to find Mrs. Reagan a troupe, that is, a star, some principals, and an ensemble, together with a band. Clearly, what they were hoping to do was hire both a star and an intact supporting cast---an established team. But for Reagan and Cook, hiring a headlining star in an established revue turned into a different problem, namely, assembling the whole enterprise from scratch.

Reportedly, Reagan and Cook auditioned forty groups (J.-C. Baker, *Hungry Heart*, p. 94). But July was already late to be lining up commitments for the fall, and Cook and Reagan were frankly unsuccessful. With Cook as scout and go-between, and with Florence Mills off the table, Reagan tried to lure other established stars and their associated ensembles, such as the troupe led by Irvin C. Miller at the Lafayette (that Miller show might have been the Running Wild revival, which played the Lafayette that summer), and the Tan Town Topics company assembled at the Plantation by Cook and led by Ethel Waters (J.-C. Baker, *Hungry Heart*, p. 92). These troupes likewise could not be tempted en masse.

Ethel remember a Reagan offer (for Florence, then Ethel, then Josephine). With Ethel might come the entire Tan Town Topics troupe. J.-C. Baker, *Hungry Heart*, p. 000 reports that at first Cook and Reagan were going after the entire troupe of Tan Town Topics, but that that fell through and then they turned to other performers, etc. This seems to mean that they were going after both Ethel Waters and also the octette (the 8 girls) and perhaps more; Ethel’s full ensemble numbered fourteen in the show.

A shift of direction was needed. With time running short, Cook took the necessary steps to assemble a stage show from scratch. And, with the family talent gathered in New York City in mind, he chose to design not a standard musical variety revue, or a tab revue, but specifically a TAB DANCE REVUE.

A dance revue, typically dialogue free, intermixes pure dance numbers and songs, and every song is itself developed into a dance or accompanied by dance. These dance numbers might engage in storytelling in pantomime, or instead present more abstract, virtuosic solo and ensemble patterns of tap and drill.

J.-C. Baker, *The Hungry Heart*, reports that Caroline Dudley Reagan did narration, in a comment that seems paraphrased from her unpublished memoir. She would occupy herself backstage with pacing and keeping track, almost like a prompter, or simply nervously repeating to herself what is going on out on stage. “Backstage, Caroline Dudley Reagan
paces. She has given herself the role of narrator. 'Side by side with my artists'."

It is worth remembering that Josephine Baker had no songs or lines in the original Hotsy-Totsy, as far as we can tell.

Cook needed a star---a central figure to build the show around---and when Florence Mills and Ethel Waters were taken off the table, he shifted gears to a male artist, his urbane, European based son-in-law, the great dancer Louis Douglas.

Douglas had been dancing on the stages of London and Paris for over 20 years, since he first came to Europe in 1903 at age 14. He had risen to be a principal on the bill at major venues in England and in Paris, and he worked and toured in full length reviews starring Mistinguett and Chevalier. Think of him as a suave, black (and sometimes blackface) Vernon Castle, Maurice Chevalier, or Fred Astaire, blended with a bit of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson.

Louis Douglas arrives in the states on June 15 with his wife, Cook's daughter Marion, and granddaughter Marion; the NY Age, Saturday, June 27, 1925, p. 6 says he is back in NYC for a short stay. He is roped into the Reagan project by Cook, probably in July but perhaps as late as August. Obviously, it must have been after the approach to Cook by Reagan. The dates do not suggest that Douglas was called back to the US by Cook specifically to help create a show.

As events unfolded, Cook ultimately created a dance vehicle for Louis to star in. Later, Louis directed the group, and many later accounts give him full responsibility from the start: e.g., the Courier (Pittsburgh Courier, July 16, 1927, p. 8) says that "he formed the revue"; a French handbill says "Caroline Dudley presents "La Revue Negre" in 7 acts, by Louis Douglas"; "Louis Douglas, est précisément l'auteur et le conducteur de la revue nègre des Champs-Elysées" (Comoedia, October 8, 1925, p. 2); the German papers say (in translation) that "The Negro Louis Douglas is the author of this review."

As principals in the company Cook added three relatively obscure women who would be new at this level of responsibility for carrying the show. First there was his daughter, Marion Cook Douglas, a sophisticated dancer who sometimes had had the opportunity to pair with her husband Louis in Europe. Think of her as an Irene Castle, Adele Astaire, or Ginger Rogers.
Then, as Marion’s alter ego, in a manner of speaking, he cast a young protégée, the up-and-coming grotesque comedic dancer Josephine Baker, only 19 years old, whom he had just hired for Tan Town Topics earlier that summer as a member of the chorus line and perhaps as the understudy to Ethel Baker.

The third female principal was the only real singer in the show (and thus the closest equivalent to a Florence Mills or Ethel Waters), another young American-based up-and-comer, the singer and dancer Maud De Forest.

Josephine, like Maud, was a principal artist, but not intended to be showcased as the star. Josephine was no singer or comedian; she was not yet not known for verbal stuff, just for grotesque dancing. Hiring Josephine is part of a switch of gears away from a Florence Mills/Ethel Waters female at the top of the bill, and redirecting top billing to a male figure, Louis Douglas. The real replacement for Ethel Waters, i.e., as a principal singer, though not a headlining star, is Maud De Forest.

At the moment, Josephine was in Tan Town Topics, which eventually ran at least to the end of August. Reportedly, Waters was planning on beginning to tour locally in vaudeville while still appearing at the Plantation Club in September or October (NY Evening Post, Friday, August 14, 1925 and NY Evening Post, Friday, August 28, 1925). She added new numbers to her act in mid-August (NY Evening Post, Friday, August 14, 1925), and this may be when Josephine Baker left the cast, though Josephine is singled out in a Variety review of the show published a couple of days later (Variety, August 19, 1925, p. 43); the Variety article on Cook’s tab for Paris is exactly one week later.

Cook needed some additional male dancers to balance the female principals. He gave a principal (but not starring) role to his nephew, the established dancer and choreographer Hartwell ("Hartie") Cook. The other principal male dancer in the original company was Honey Boy Thompson.

Cook may also have planned for the participation of his niece Louise, who was also a dancer. And Cook made a place on stage and in the band at the last minute for his buddy Sidney Bechet, the great jazz clarinetist and saxophonist.

Scrambling to find a band, Cook had a stroke of luck, landing intact a group of six that had been playing that summer at an Asbury Park, NJ resort under the direction of pianist and leader Claude Hopkins. They were primarily musicians from Washington, DC who knew Cook’s son Mercer from his high school years there, and some had played with Duke Ellington, Mercer’s close
friend, who lived across the street from Cook's family home in Washington in 1917-1918, and actually named his son, born in early 1919, after Mercer Cook. The bandsmen were young---mostly between 20 and 25. Claude Hopkins himself was just 22, and the trumpeter, Henry Goodwin, may have been just 15. They had no strong prospects after the summer season ended, so they were game to travel on Mrs. Reagan's dime, and to absorb Bechet into their number.

Finally, unable to hire away an intact female chorus line, an essential element in a 1920s tab, Cook built one from scratch with any available talent he could corral---mostly very young women, in their early 20s, from the stage show accompanied by Hopkins' band in Asbury Park, or from other Asbury Park clubs. Evelyn Anderson, just 18, was working at the "Smile-A-While Inn" with the Claude Hopkins band; he was just 22 and she was just 18; Mabel Hopkins, Bea Foote, and Marguerite Ricks were working together at another cabaret.

1925, in August: Caroline Reagan drops in on Carl Van Vechten on August 10 to talk about lack of progress on the Negro show she is taking to Paris.

1925, in August: Spencer Williams returned from Europe to New York on August 12.

SIDNEY BECHET: J.-C. Baker reports that Bechet came on board after the band and girls had been found, and that he asked to join the group (J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, p. 94); this must all have been in quick succession, since the show reportedly rehearsed at Club Basha; Bechet may possibly have been lured in after he saw initial rehearsals there. Temptation presented itself because he reportedly had been having trouble at the club (arguing with his partner) and want to leave the Club and get out of town.

Bechet was a Cook pal. He was the young musician whom Cook in 1919 "took from the Little Pekin Cafe [and who] stormed Europe with his clarinet playing" as a member of Cook's Southern Syncopated Orchestra, who contributed music to Cook's "Running Wild," and whose music was to be featured in Cook's 1924 Negro Nuances (Chicago Defender, March 22, 1924, p. 7). Bechet looms large in the eventual dance revue for Paris, with featured appearances in the revue's Overture and in the NYC peanut vendor skit, as well as taking a part in the Bootlegger's Quartet, so a major part of the development of the scenarios for the revue must post-date his agreement to participate. Bechet played with Ellington ca. 1924 in Ellington's first (or one of his earliest) NYC gigs and probably
into early 1925, and this might have come about through Cook's connection to Ellington. The Club Basha Orchestra and the Club Basha Entertainers were featured on the radio in 1925-1926.

In sum, the troupe was very young (ridiculously young), and inexperienced, and very, very strong on dancers, while actually light (and relatively weak) on singers; Maud de Forest is the biggest name as a singer. Dancing is the thing that this tab dance revue was intended to be known for, and its central figure was dancer Louis Douglas.

The entire crew was hurriedly thrown into rehearsal in mid August, when all the talent was finally available and Josephine had left Tan Town Topics. They faced the necessity of boarding ship for Europe in just four weeks time. They began with separate rehearsals, perhaps in free spaces. The band rehearsed in the basement of the William Spiller house where Claude Hopkins and Cook were staying, at 232 West 138th Street, while the girls drilled at Sidney Bechet's club in the basement at 2493 7th Ave. at 145th and 7th (J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, p. 94). Full rehearsals began by August 26 at one of the so-called Harlem Casino's, probably the Renaissance Casino at the corner of 138th and 7th, a half a block from where Cook was staying.

In one of his memoirs, Claude Hopkins much later recalled that the band had just two weeks to prepare, so his band may have only been able to leave its Asbury Park gig this close to the end of August.

Dancer Evelyn Anderson remembers "It was the end of August, and hot as hell when we came to New York" (J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, p. 94)

Reagan visited Van Vechten on August 26, and they went to see a rehearsal at the Harlem Casino. Only at this moment did he make the suggestion that she engage Donald Angus.

The Harlem Casino perhaps means the Manhattan Casino at 155th and 8th, the big Clef Club venue opposite the Polo Grounds, or else, even more likely, the Renaissance Casino at 137th-138th and 7th, just a block to the east of Striver's Row, but not the older "Harlem Casino" at 124th and 7th that had become a Loewe's vaudeville house and movie palace in 1910.

Variety runs an article on Cook and his Tab Show on August 26, and the Chicago Defender re-runs it on September 5; something similar appears in Pittsburgh Courier, September 5, 1925, p. 10: principals are Louis and Marion
Douglas and Maud De Forest, while "Will M. Cook wrote the music and will go with the aggregation as orchestra leader."

Only by now, a month before sailing, a basic scenario has had to have been drafted so Miguel Covarrubias could design the flats, after Mrs. Reagan's friend John Dos Passos, an artist as well as a novelist, turned down her request to do them; and, of course, a scenario needed to be solidified to complete casting the show. In J.-C. Baker's narrative, Covarrubias comes on board after the company is set (p. 94).

How many flats or backdrops were needed and designed? Four. Presumably these were taken overseas as sketches on paper, and then realized quickly in the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, not manufactured and shipped. The Covarrubias designs influence Paul Colin, and hence, the curtain, the program, and some sheet music. (See below.)

And only by now could most costumes be made, at Caroline's sister Dorothy Dudley's house on 12th Street (J.-C. Baker). "Les Dudley sisters, Susan Smith et M. Covarubias ont signé les costumes d'une substantielle abracadabrance et les decors bien assortis" (Paris, La Presse, November 3, 1925, p. 2).

Presumably the company members are now getting some pay from Reagan.

**COOK'S ROLE IN HARLEM**

Cook was in effect the show's writer, musical arranger, director, and producer, with Mrs. Reagan possessively looking over his shoulder. (Reagan enjoyed bringing her society friends to the rehearsals of her show up in Harlem.) What he created was a sequence of scenes, choosing for each the necessary music and arranging and orchestrating it in close consultation with the dancers. Louis Douglas oversaw the choreography. Cook had to balance the suggestions and demands of the patron with the checkbook, Mrs. Reagan, on the one hand, and the capacities and endurance of the dancers and singers, above all Louis Douglas, on the other hand. Douglas, who was the headlining star, ended up with a leading role on stage in almost every scene.

As we know from the Variety article of August 26, Cook was at this moment called the show's composer. That is trade press parlance, and we are not to take away from it that he invented from scratch the music for any of its songs or dance numbers. Rather, the score of Hotsy Totsy was a pastiche—a compilation score such as Cook had put together many times in the past. In
this instance, most of the tunes were by the popular and prodigious song-writer Spencer Williams and his frequent lyricist partner, Jack Palmer.

In J.-C. Baker's narrative, Spencer Williams and Jack Palmer do the music and lyrics (p. 95), but the way to describe it is that Cook assembled a score from pre-existing Williams and Palmer songs. Spencer Williams is very much a song writer, but not a show writer/creator/maker/assembler. And not an orchestrator/arranger. Previously, for Running Wild, Cook played a similar role in working with the songs of Johnson and Bechet. And subsequently, for the Donald Heywood numbers in the later show Miss Calico/Africana, Heywood is the song writer but someone [Cook] had to orchestrate, arrange, produce, manage, direct.

Variety says Cook is the composer, but that could mean, as we know, the arranger/orchestrator, creating a compilation/pastiche score of Williams material.

From Parisian papers in the later fall:

La Presse, November 3, 1925, p. 2, writes of the music, “Les musiques qui semblent sorties de la gorge du diable, sont de MM. Jack Palmer et Spencer Williams.”

and in Comoedia, November 10, 1925, says: “Musique de Spencer Williams et autres fameaux compositeurs nègres américains.” [Also in a program reproduced in Le tumulte noir, p. 93.]

Cook's signature contributions would have been the vocal ensemble writing and the development of the Palmer/Williams songs into more extended dance numbers for soloists and the ensemble. (In his two Darkydom playlets of 1911, Cook's surviving libretto specifically indicates where “development” was called for, stretching perhaps three musical number into the better part of 45 minutes on stage.) This is creative work that for the most part would have survived the last-minute changes to the show in Paris.

All of this work, and the omnipresence of Mrs. Reagan, apparently got to be too much for the notoriously tempermental Cook, who reportedly exploded and backed out in early September, with Hartwell Cook following him off the show. The inevitable Variety headline read "European Trip Dodged by Will Marion Cook," but the article softened the embarrassment by describing the
new show he was already at work on. Very possibly, Spencer Williams was approached to go abroad with the troupe only at this moment.

Bessie Taliaferro, who lived in the Spiller house at the time and thus had a front row seat on the entire effort (and was found by J.-C. Baker, many decades later, still living in the Spiller house) says Cook quarrelled with Louis Douglas and Mrs. Reagan. She remembered that Cook fell out first with Louis Douglas and then with Mrs. Reagan (J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, p. 95).

1925, in September: Carl Van Vechten writes in his daybook for September 6 about seeing "Trent, the musician who has been with Mrs. Reagan's show" outside the Lafayette; this was a reference to Jo (Joseph Hannibal) Trent (1892-1954), a song writer-lyricist who had collaborated with Duke Ellington on some songs for Chocolate Kiddies earlier in the year; he had been writing songs with Ellington since 1923.

1925, in September: Reagan has been bringing her society friends up to Harlem to see the rehearsals of her show. Carl Van Vechten writes in his daybook for September 9 that he went to a rehearsal of Hotsy-Totsy at the Harlem Casino; Caroline Reagan was there with her sister and brother-in-law; he meets Spencer Williams there. This is a week before the troupe sails.

1925, in September: the crisis at the passport office on September 10, a story told by J.-C. Baker (p. 95).

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AN ASIDE: THE NAME HOTSY TOTSY

Hotsy Totsy was the original name of the revue, and was used to identify both the show and the troupe.

The expression is new circa 1922 and explodes into popularity in 1925, so it is certainly appropriate. A song of 1923 in music theater in 1924 is "Hotsy-Totsy Town," and huge song hit of 1925 was "Everything is Hotsy-Totsy Now" (words by Irving Mills, music by Jimmie McHugh); Irving Mills, the "discoverer of Ellington," made a demo recording (not released) of this song with backing by Ellington on piano in the summer of 1925; Irving Mills and Jimmie McHugh were the Hotsy-Totsy Boys and also Hotsy-Totsy Girls in 1925-1926; there was a Hotsy-Totsy Hour on radio in 1925; a Hotsy-Totsy Club opened in NYC by early 1926; Jimmie Cooper's had a new Hotsy-Totsy revue in Philadelphia in early 1926 with Tim Brymn and his famous jazz orchestra; Irving Mills and
His Hotsy-Totsy Gang was a studio recording group that he put together which recorded in 1928-1930.

Caroline Dudley Reagan herself was partial to "Hotsy Totsy" but wires a different name, La revue nègre, to Paris (Hungry Heart, p. 93).

Van Vechten letter to Gertrude Stein of September 9, 1925 refers to "the Hosty-Totsy Co." and says that Donald Angus is going along (he and Reagan connected c. August 27). Angus meets Stein in Paris, and both write back to Carl Van Vechten about their encounter.


A Parisian newspaper announcement of the forthcoming show speaks of the "débuts de la troupe nègre des Holsy-Tolsy [sic], dirigée par miss Joséphine Baker [sic]" (Paris-soir, September 26, 1925, p. 5)

An image of Josephine and Louis Douglas dancing in front of the band at stage left was published in Vienna in Die Bühne, v. 92 (August 12, 1926, p. 23), with a caption identifying them all as the Hotsy-Totsy-Truppe; Life magazine re-published this image a quarter century later (Life 30/14 (April 2, 1951), p. 60), where it is captioned "In 1924 [sic] Version of "Le Jazz Hot, Miss Baker Scores First Paris Hit at Champs Elysees Theater with "Hotsy Totsy" Troupe."

OFF FOR EUROPE

1925, in September: The troupe left New York City on the Cunard Lines' Berengaria on Wednesday, September 16, 1925 (New York Times, September 16, 1925, p. 39 and etc., etc.; the Van Vechten letter to Stein also says Wednesday); some sources say it sailed on Tuesday, September 15, instead, but many solid hits report the 16th: the mails close at 6:00 am and the ship sails at 10:00 am; the passengers surely boarded the day or evening before, given that the ship sailed at 10:00 am.

Cook was there to see them off (J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, p. 97).

1925, in September: A second story thread accompanies this show: Variety has the headline "Some Colored Artists Dodged Paris Trip" and says Cook did not board the Berengaria but instead stayed behind to stage
and produce *Too Bad*, and Hartwell Cook, also under contract, also did not make the trip
*(Variety, September 30, 1925, p. 8; Chicago World reprints this story under the title "European Trip Dodged by Will Marion Cooke" in Chicago World, October 29, 1925, p. 7).

**TOO BAD**

On the very day the *Hotsy-Totsy* troupe sailed for Paris, there was news of a new musical, *Too Bad*, book by Jesse Shipp and Abbie Mitchell with music by Basha and Haywood, from the stories of Octavus Roy Cohen, slated for DC on October 26: "'Too Bad' Colored Show From Cohen's Serial Story"
The farce tentatively called *Too Bad* is slated to open October 26 in DC; the book is by Jesse A. Shipp and Abbie Mitchell, lyrics by Andy Razaf and Russe [sic; Russell] Simmons; music by Sidney Basha [sic; Bechet] and Donald Haywood [sic; Heywood], ensembles by Will Marion Cook ("Will M. Cook attending to the singing and producing"), and dances by Louis Douglas and Leonard Harper. Cast is to include Abbie Mitchell, Ethel Waters, Richard B. Harrison [the old friend and dramatic reader], Billy Mills, Sydney Kirkpatrick, Ada Ward, Laura Bowman, and John Rucker. This is an impressive, elite, older, established group with ties to Lafayette companies in NYC and Chicago *(Variety, September 16, 1925, p. 7; Cleveland Plaindealer, October 18, 1925, p. 85 [Drama Section, p. 7]); Billy E. Jones, "New York Notes, Chicago Defender, September 26, 1925, p. 6, and same in Variety, September 26, 1925, p. 7)*.

**THE SHOW IN PARIS**

The *Hotsy-Totsy* troupe arrived at Cherbourg on the morning of Tuesday, September 22, and went a couple of hours by train immediately to Paris, just 4 days before the preview and 10 days before the premiere.

They lacked their artistic leader and conductor (Will Marion Cook) and a key principal dancer (his nephew Hartwell Cook). Cook’s son-in-law, Louis Douglas, with no real experience of running a troupe, was now in charge. Thus, even if Louis Douglas was nominally senior and in charge, there was no real boss (*Hungry Heart*, p. 110). Even after shipboard rehearsals, when they hit Paris on Tuesday, September 22, they were clearly adrift and in trouble. Understandably, the theatre managers acted quickly, pulling in an
experienced French producer-director, Jacques Charles, for advice. Joé Alex, and possibly some additional chorus girls, were brought in now.

The story as told by J.-C. Baker (Hungry Heart, p. 110) is that they floundered for eight days in Parisian rehearsals, with some amending by André Daven and Rolf de Maré, and then Jacques Charles was pulled in just forty-eight hours before the opening, which would mean well after the preview.

Jacques Charles indeed writes of being pulled in 48 hours before the opening, but it is possible to read him thusly: Andre Daven and Rolph de Mare saw the very first rehearsal, and then turned to him at 9:00 am, 48 hours before the preview, to ask if he would show up at a 10:00 rehearsal and give advice (thus ca. 9 days before the opening). This would put the preview on Saturday. This suggests a crazy scramble, and not much spine or vision from Reagan or Douglas, but it does give all parties much more time to work with Jacques Charles. (Joë Alex was found in Paris and brought on board at the very, very last minute. A bigger and more athletic man than Louis Douglas, he had the strength to carry Josephine around. (If the preview had the Danse Sauvage, then this scenario of Jacques-Charles intervening before the preview fits best.)

In a 1986 documentary film, French social historian Alain Weill said “everybody saw that there was no director and that it was a complete mess. All these crazy black entertainers messing around with no real idea of what the show was going to be. So the people from the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées called upon Jacques-Charles . . . ” (Benetta Jules-Rosette, Josephine Baker in Art and Life, p. 105). Weill is obviously exaggerating, but the general sense that things were not clicking is surely accurate.

One problem for the French theater folks was at least in part that the show was too unblack for Parisian tastes and expectations---too slick and full of complex tap-dancing, etc. Dominated by the dancing of Louis Douglas, whosed professional career had unfolded since childhood entirely in Europe, it was very up-to-date and Parisian, thus not primitive enough! See the comments by Jacques Charles, for example. Jacques also observes that Joë Alex and Josephine were given their scene to provide a rest from jazz and tap dance, offering a sensual dance in the style of the French pair Tilly and Millio.

Most could not be changed, of course, at this late hour, but Charles found ways to tweak and re-order, and famously, it was he who coaxed Josephine Baker into stripping naked but for a waistband of feathers and a flesh-colored thong
in order to dance the Dance Sauvage in the finale with a new addition to the company, the athletic Joë Alex.

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A review of Louis Douglas in *Africana* gives us some insight into what the original *Hotsy-Totsy* appeared like to the eyes of seasoned French theatrical professionals:

"Second to Miss Waters on the bill---and in his own way equally as splendid, is Louis Douglas. When he appears on the stage one is immediately transported to distant shores. His mannerism, style of dancing and make-up are of the European music halls and safes. He is the complete antithesis of Miss Waters. She is distinctly racial! He is absolutely foreign. And when they work together in a satirical scene as the Countess Josephine and her Count, we have a marvelous example of two distinct heights to which colored performers can rise. Mr. Douglas is a real artist and has [a] sense of humor tinged with pathos that is most appealing. He is a brown Charley Chaplin"

(Pittsburgh *Courier*, shortly after July 21, 1927, 2nd section, page 2: "Geraldyn Dismond Reviews Broadway Shows").

This echoes with the comment of Jacques Charles (p. 156) on what he saw when the troupe first rehearsed in Paris: "L'erreur était d'avoir voulu faire parisian!! Il fallait faire nègre!"

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**WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HOTSY-TOTSY BEFORE ITS LAST-MINUTE REVISIONS IN PARIS?**

What had Will Marion Cook put together for Mrs. Reagan?

*Hotsy Totsy*, a tab show, was built to take up the entire second half of an evening’s variety bill, so it ran about forty-five minutes to an hour. We know its contents somewhat from surviving programs and journalistic descriptions, but much is missing in the picture. We have the names of hardly any of the songs, for example. There were last-minute revisions before the premiere, but we do not know how many and of what sort (the famous Danse Sauvage aside!). Moreover, and not sufficiently taken account of by the secondary literature, is how the show evolved over its eleven weeks in Paris, out of the
entirely normal necessity to keep it fresh so that audience members would return to see it again. It underwent a significant revision after about three weeks, and again at the four-week mark, and then endured a major overhaul after another four weeks when it moved to a smaller hall, the Théâtre de L’Etoile, while adding and subtracting personnel. By design, it was never stable, and yet, confusingly, modern accounts often mention added scenes and turns as if they had belonged to the show from the beginning to the end of its time in Paris. Some of the changes, at any rate, are now easily pinpointed through a clutch of digitized, on-line, searchable Parisian newspapers.

The original seven scenes are a Mississippi Steamboat Race for the full troupe, with two steamboats on the backdrop; a New York street scene featuring Sidney Bechet and Louis and Marion Douglas with skyscrapers akimbo as the backdrop; a Louisiana Camp Meeting featuring Maud De Forest singing a spiritual, with the outline of a Methodist church on the backdrop; a number featuring the dancing girls---the Eight Charleston Steppers, or "Les Strutting Babies"; a number called “Darkie Impressions,” featuring Josephine Baker; a number called “The Talking Feet,” featuring Louis Douglas; and the finally the "Charleston Cabaret," set in a Harlem nightclub, and again featuring the whole troupe.

The backdrops were commissioned in New York by Mrs. Reagan from the gifted young Mexican celebrity artist Miguel Covarrubias. They could not have been begun until the scenarios had been established for each scene, and thus not until all the talent was on board. Given that there seem to have been only four backdrops, we can begin to work out a bit more about the original concept for the production. In all probability, just two scenes played “in four,” i.e., to the depth of the full stage with the entire company and significant props. These were the first and the last, the steamboat scene and the nightclub scene. The second and third scenes with their own backdrops---the New York street scene and the church scene---would have played "in two," with a shortened stage in front of a backdrop and with no significant number of props. The remaining three novelty scenes---essentially the olio---would have played in succession in front of the "olio curtain" ("in one"), while the backdrop, props, and company for the finale were being set up behind it.

How might it be possible to recover the Harlem version of Hotsy Totsy from the Parisian La revue nègre? In simplest terms, we need to reverse engineer the story by taking what we know about Cook over his long career and look for what would not fit his sensibility. For starters, and with a high degree of probability, we can hypothesize that what he planned out with Mrs. Reagan was in a historical and geographical sequence, from the levee and rural church...
in the deep south to an urban street scene and nightclub in the north. This is not at all unique or unusual. In fact, it is entirely conventional---such a progression had been a cliché of black musicals and revues for decades. For instance, just citing recent precedent, Florence Mills herself was doing a show called From Dixie to Broadway in 1925, and Chocolate Kiddies, the big African American stage show that sailed for Germany in May 1925, had a section that was described as "From spirituals on a plantation in the South to a sketch in Harlem, ending with a Jig Walk-Charleston."

Crucial here for the argument, though, is that Cook was a progenitor of, and advocate for, precisely such designs across his whole career, beginning as early as the concert by Negro musicians that he took to Carnegie Hall in 1893, and he was a stickler for accuracy and authenticity. In this light, it is a jarring anachronism to learn that in Paris Josephine crawled onto the stage, sang the "Boodle am Shake," and danced the Charleston on the levee in scene one. Given that Jacques Charles added the equally anachronistic Danse Sauvage to the night club scene, I suspect that the Charleston schtick was moved from the finale to the opening, leaving Louis Douglas and Josephine just to do the even newer Black Bottom in the Finale before she goes all primitive.

Louis Douglas' 1927 revue, Black Follies, at least as it played in Italy, had six scenes---Cotton Plantation, Melody Plantation, Mississippi, A Street in New York, Specialties, and A Negro Cabaret in New York City---that sound quite a bit like my proposed original order for Hotsy Totsy (Adriano Mazzoletti, Il jazz in Italia: dale origini alle grandi orchestre [Turin: EDT, 2004], p. 208).

NB: To be fair, there is a counterargument to the pure south-to-north, past-to-present sequence that I am arguing for in the Harlem version of Hotsy-Totsy. In a letter by Cook to the New York Times of December 26, 1926, he puts the origins of the Charleston and Black Bottom in their crude state in "the Cotton Belt, the levee, the Mississippi River," and the Charleston specifically "in the islands lying off Charleston, S. C." Thus, the dances could represent the old as well as the new, and the South as well as the North. My hypothesis is that in Hotsy Totsy, the Charleston and Black Bottom both represented the newest night club dances of the moment—the latest rage in the Roaring Twenties in New York's clubs. But Cook could have put the Charleston on the levee (though not, it should be noted, on the Atlantic coast islands) in a gesture towards historical accuracy as he knew it.
The program for the premiere orders the camp meeting and NYC skyline street scenes so that new and old---North and South--alternate in that order (levee, NYC streetscape, camp meeting, night club) rather than that the new succeeds the old (levee, camp meeting, NYC streetscape, night club). But Cook's prior schemes are historical, and suggest that he would have wanted old before new in Hotsy Totsy. In Cook's Miss Calico of 1926 there is an element that in all likelihood was copied from Hotsy Totsy, presenting "A genuine church revival meeting taken from life, showing the typical Negro of the South, in prayer." Surely, I argue, Cook had in mind to contrast two aspects of southern life---on the docks and at some dusty crossroads church, with two aspects of northern urban life---on the streets and in the clubs. Thus, in the revue as it premiered in Paris, I suspect the hand of Jacques Charles in what would have been a simple swap in order between the two scenes played on the half stage, in addition to modifications in the opening and closing scenes that gave new material to Josephine Baker (and made her a star).

There is a general, generic, and pretty conventional comment about biography (and the writing of history more generally) to be made here, which is that we need to be mindful to be rigorously prospective, not retrospective, in our point of view. To understand what the sturdy little tab Hotsy Totsy was in its various iterations, to understand how and why it changed, how it influenced Parisian music hall culture, and what its own progeny were, we need to get out of the blinding light of Josephine Baker, and attempt to assess what this modest show was day by day, moving forward from its origins in a Harlem basement in the heat of late August 1925. Only in this way can we grasp what Hotsy Totsy, or La revue nègre, means for our assessment of the accomplishments and the frustrations of the short-tempered old master, Will Marion Cook.

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FIRST RUN

The Hotsy-Totsy troupe arrived in France on a Tuesday just ten days before the premiere, and a preview involving a run-through of two tableaux was held four days after arrival, after three days of rehearsal (i.e., six days before the Friday, October 2 premiere).

A review of the show after its opening, in Comoedia, October 8, 1925, tells the story that "La direction de Champs-Elysées avait eu l'idée de nous presenter quelques scènes de cette revue en séance privée, avant de montrer le spectacle complet au public."
Held on Saturday morning, September 26; exactly a week before the premiere would be Friday the 25th, while four days after arrival would be the 26th; rehearsal on 23, 24, 25; scarcely 50 folks (“cinquante à peine”) came during daylight hours (ca 10:00 am) to the main hall to see a rehearsal.

(Claude Hopkins testimony as cited by Lotz remembers the pre-opening show for the press as after “several weeks [sic] of rehearsal” (Lotz (1997), p. 314); This preview is to drum up interest, both via its select audience and via the newspaper reviews that came out over the next couple of days. They presented the most spectacular material they had: the two big, full-stage scenes, i.e., the levee scene and the New York nightclub.

Le Gaulois prints a descriptive account by G.-F. Moirinat of this event on Monday the 28th (p. 1): "Il est une heure du matin. Nous sommes cinquante à peine dans l’immense salle du théâtre des Champs-Elysées, gens de plume et de pinceau, gens de théâtre et de qualité…"; this article possibly hints that more than one or two scenes were done: "Et dans un tourbillon les danses succèdent aux chansons et les chansons aux danses."

The show enjoyed a seven-week run at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées from Friday, October 2, 1925 through Wednesday, Nov. 18. The contents of the revue changed every couple of weeks (see below), to bring back repeat customers.

While in town, the troupe was the toast of Paris. Comoedia, October 10, 1925, p. 5 says “La Revue nègre est acclamée chaque soir par les salles les plus élégantes de Paris.”

The American expatriate socialites Gerald and Sara Murphy held a party for the entire cast, which Gertrude Stein attended, and shortly thereafter Stein met Paul Robeson and his wife, yielding a short essay by Stein, "Among Negroes." [One source thinks these dates might be November 6 and December 16--??]; NB: Gertrude Stein and Caroline Dudley Reagan are neighbors; Stein is at #27 and the Reagans, including daughter Sophie, are at #26 rue de Fleurus (J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, p. 105).

On Saturday, November 7, the troupe opened the program of a giant social event, the Sourée d’Adieux à l’Exposition des Arts Décoratifs, at the “grande sale des fetes de l’Exposition au Grand Palais.” All items on the bill were dances by leading figures on the Parisian stage; the artistic
program began with "La Revue nègre, grand succès du théâtre des Champs-Elysées" and the final number featured Josephine Baker and Honey Boy Thompson (e.g., Le Gaulois, November 6, 1925, p. 2; Journal des débats politiques et littéraires, November 7, 1925, p. 4, etc.).

In early November, with a shift in the contents of the first half of the evening program at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, a newspaper review mentions that the revue continues to end the evening at the theater; it "terminait le spectacle." Mentioned as part of the revue are above all Josephine Baker, but then also "Louis Douglas, Sidney Bechet, Charleston Steppers, Honey Boy, Charleston Chorus, Spencer Williams, Joë Alex, Mmes Maud de Forest, Lydia Jones, Hazel Valentine, Beatrice Foote, Marion Cook. Les musiques qui semblent sorties de la gorge du diable, sont de MM. Jack Palmer et Spencer Williams. Les Dudley sisters, Susan Smith et M. Covarubias ont signé les costumes d'une substantielle abracadabrance et les decors bien assortis" (La Presse, November 3, 1925, p. 2).

THE SHIFT IN VENUE

Then the revue moved to a smaller Parisian theater, the Théâtre de L'Etoile, for a four-week run from Saturday, November 21 through Wednesday, December 16 for a grand total of two-and-a-half months in Paris (just under 11 weeks).

At the new theater, what they presented was billed as "la nouvelle version" or "deuxième version," with "nouvelles scènes" (see below).

NB: Some later accounts say the show spent 14 weeks in Paris (e.g., Pittsburgh Courier, July 16, 1927, p. 8), but that would be 3+ months, while in fact it ran 2+ months: 7 weeks at the first theatre and 3+ weeks at the second.

Tommy Woods comes on board now.

Hopkins memoirs: Hopkins memoir/Stanley Dance says the troupe comprised eight chorus girls, a dance team (Louis & Marion Douglas), a comedian (Baker) and a soubrette (Forrest); Hopkins memoir/Vaché says there was a novelty dance team, "Mutt and Jeff"; an acrobatic dancer, Tommy Woods; plus DeForrest, Joë Alex, and Louis Douglas; with Tommy Woods on board, this had to have been at the second
theater.
Hopkins, in a much later and not entirely reliable memoir (cit. Lotz, p. 313), recalls the troupe as eight chorus girls, a comedian [Honey Boy], three novelty acts (incl. "Mutt and Jeff?", or did he mean the three olio turns on ther short stage?), a dance team (probably Louis and Marion Douglas, or "Mutt and Jeff", or Tommy Woods etc.?), the band, and Baker as a lead attraction.

Possibly, in this version of the show late in the fall, Tommy Woods and Honey Boy Thompson are the duo that gets dubbed "Mutt & Jeff" by the troupe, borrowing the name of a popular athletic dance and comedy team active in Paris on the variety stage of the 20s (from 1922-1924 and later), including on bills with Mistinguett; the variety duo themselves borrowed their names from the comic strips; Later, in *La Semaine a Paris*, December 30, 1927, the Mutt & Jeff duo are called “Mutt and Jeff (clowns noirs).”

On Tuesday, December 3, members of the troupe performed dances from *La revue nègre* of Mrs. C. Dudley for another big benefit gala, this time at l'Opéra as the last act on the bill of a grand charity event, "Festival de la danse à travers les ages" (*Le Gaulois*, December 2, 1925, p. 2, etc.).

**THEN ON TO THE CONTINENT**

Leaving L'Etoile, the revue went from Paris to Brussels for Christmas, appearing there on stage from Friday through Sunday, December 18-27, and then went on to Berlin for a run at the Nelson theater for two months, from New Year's Eve, December 31, to February 25.

Reviews of the show on the road in Germany in early 1926 indicate that it was travelling in pretty much the early October 1925 Parisian version.

In Berlin at the Nelson, Douglas is called “Regisseur, Tänzer, und Karicaturist”; Maud De Forest is called “Die Managerin der Truppe” (*Berliner Tageblatt*, January 4, 1926, p. 4).

Josephine Baker jumped the show in Berlin and returned to Paris to star in the Folies-Bergère (*NY Age*, March 27, 1926, p. 1). Without her, they go on to Vienna (in March) and Spain (in March), fully breaking up no earlier than the end of April 1926, though individual members in addition to Josephine had begun to peel off. Maud De Forest stepped in
as the female star, carrying Baker's load. Some accounts say Louis Douglas left on account of bad health after Berlin, but he is with the troupe with Maud De Forest for a run beginning April 22 in Nice (Nice, L'Eclaireur du dimanche, April 24, 1927, p. 31).

THE HOTSY TOTSY LEGACY

Similar shows run by Louis Douglas and others, with many of the same performers, continued to hold the boards (and often called Negro Revue with a subtitle), for most of the next decade on European stages (hits in French and German papers by searching “Louis Douglas”, etc.).

Douglas is back in Berlin in the summer of 1926 with Black People with Honey Boy Thompson, Bobby Goins, etc. (Berliner Tageblatt, July 14, 1926, p. 4); see details in Lotz & Fry; mentioned in Chilton because Bechet participates a little, sometimes; Maud De Forest and Bobby Goins, etc., are in Black People in early 1927 in Vienna at the Ronacher-Theater (Vienna, Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung, February 4, 1927, p. 10; Vienna, Neues Wiener Journal, January 29, 1927, p. 10; Vienna, Wiener Salonblatt, February 20, 1927, p. 13, etc.).

Another example is a Negro Revue by a similar company called The Southern Delights, starring Honey Boy Thompson, Maud De Forest, Miss King-Reavis, etc., playing in Geneva in late 1926 (Paris, Comoedia, November 30, 1926, p. 5; Pittsburgh Courier, January 1, 1927, p. 3).

In the United States, some elements of the revue seem to have emerged again in Will Marion Cook’s 1926 version of Miss Calico, with the "Revival Meeting" skit in Act I and "Shadows on the Wall" in Act II.

Then there is Africana in 1927, which grows out of Miss Calico. Louis Douglas comes back to the US in order to stage/direct its dances and ensembles, and he casts himself in a number with Ethel Waters in the second part where they are "Countess Josephine" and her Count. After a short time, with everything in good working order, the Douglas role is turned over to the show's composer, Donald Heywood, and Douglas returns to Europe for the fall season.

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CONTENTS of *La revue nègre* in Paris in October

A half-hour to an hour-long show; at 45 minutes, this show filled the second half of a music hall evening’s bill, according to Variety, August 26, 1925 and all the Parisian papers. After moving to the smaller Parisian theater, they did the show three times a night, according to a quote in Lotz.

No dialogue. A revue did not have to have any. (*Chocolate Kiddies* had no dialogue.) One German review says that there are no spoken words and that the show mostly also dispenses with songs and is pretty much “merely a presentation of dances,” which sounds right. So, there is not much singing. Maude De Forest is the only real singer on board. Josephine and Marion are mentioned as singing only in German reviews. NB: The dancing girls had to sing, since Maude Hopkins reportedly had to learn how to sing in order to participate!

Orchestral introduction and, initially, seven vaudeville-style tableaux---in effect, just four principal tableaux, i.e., those numbered 1, 2, 3 and 7 below, for soloists and ensembles, plus 4, 5, 6 like vaudeville turns in an olio featuring the ensemble or one of the stars (the chorus line with Douglas, then Josephine alone, then Louis Douglas alone).

Just two major scenes required full stage and backdrop, i.e., the levee and the night club, while two played a shortened stage, but still in front of a backdrop, i.e., the skyscrapers akimbo and the camp meeting.

The seven tableaux essentially feature the full ensemble in numbers 1 and 7 (and maybe 3), with some principals standing out, and then a turn for each principal in nos. 2-6, with lots of Louis Douglas.

For a German commentary on the original October Parisian production with many specific details, see:
A review of the show during its Berlin run is Ottomar Starke, "Revue Negre," *Der Querschnitt* 6/1 (1926), pp. 118-120; Starke describes the seven original scenes, so it seems that they took the original on the road; the descriptions are important; this is also the most complete source of references to music performed in any version of the show. Lotz relies on this significant witness for many details.

The initial Flanner (Genet) review for the *New Yorker* was short and negative, and almost fifty years later, in an introduction to a collection of her essays from Paris, she remembers that "for the first week's run the cast and routine of the performance were completely disorganized . . . . they were never twice alike."

What is really needed, it seems, is a re-reading of the numerous early reviews and responses that cuts through the amazing purple prose that the revue generated, differentiating the ones commenting on the preview from the ones commenting on opening night or later, and extracts a sequential account of what went on. Rose (1989) says it was different every night anyway (quoting Flanner?). Material from the show as seen in Germany (where it seems to have reverted to the original), is VERY helpful.

Flanner, who found the music unmelodic, writes a reference to Baker coming in on her belly, but has nothing to say about the notorious final number. Flanner's later memoir describes the finale, though.

We actually know very few of the musical numbers they must have performed, and perhaps just three new songs written by Spencer Williams after the departure from New York. Were they part of the show when it first opened?

Big early review in *Le Gaulois*, October 6, 1925, p. 4 mentions three scene locales: the Mississippi, Louisiana, and cabaret scenes.

Could the original have been linearly chronological from 1870 to present, and from rural South to urban North?

Could there have originally have been a strict alternation of big full stage with backdrop, and specialty turns played before the curtain? (See *Variety* description of *From Dixie to Broadway*, for ex.)
THE INDIVIDUAL NUMBERS IN OCTOBER

Orchestral introduction:
the musicians filed on stage and set up stage left; they played in front of a curtain with the image of a black man dancing on checkerboard squares (Rose (1989), p. 18); “Un rideau malicieusement brossé par un Picasso d’outre-Atlantique” (Le Galois, September 28, 1927, p. 1). An original program says the "Ouverture" was "Shimmy-Sha-Wabble." Blake, Tumulte noir (1999), p. 180, likely following this program, also says Bechet played Shim-me-sha-wabble (Spencer Williams, 1917) in this show.
In Le Figaro review of the premier (October 7, 1925, p. 4): the curtain has a geometric design plus some negro faces: “un rideau brossé par quelque Picasso de Talahassee ou d’Honolulu et ou se relevant, parmi la bigarrure des dessins geometriques aux eclatantes couleurs, des faces lippues trouees d’immenses yeux noirs”;
the band comes in and plays, then a solo [Bechet on the saxophone, if the preview is any guide], then they all play again; then the curtain rises and the scene is "sur le quai, devant la mer, parmi les tonneaux alignes de rhum ou de tafia."

1. Mississippi Steamboat Race (Ensemble; Douglas; DeForest; Baker)
a levee scene; contemporary references including programs and a
review in November in *La Rampe* affirm that this is the opening scene; this is appropriate because one imaginatively takes off from the dock on a journey into the show, as well as from the South to the North; Blake (1999) and Rose (1989) call this the first tableau; this is the old South; Rose (1889) and Wood (2000) say that the entire cast of 25 was on stage, Maude sings, Douglas dances; secondary sources say Josephine enters doing the Boodle-am shake (e.g., acc. Blake, *Tumulte noir*, 1999; did Blake get this from a program?); and segues into the Charleston; did she just dance the Charleston, or did she also sing the song by J. P. Johnson and Cecil Mack?

If the introduction featured the band on stage, it sounds reasonable that in the segue to tableau one, the band stayed put as the curtain rose to expose a stage full of people in front of the steamboat backdrop. A photograph of the Mississippi Steam Boat Race scene in Blake, *Le tumulte noir* (fig. 52, p. 94) shows a painted backdrop of the Memphis and Natchez; there are also images of Baker in front of the same backdrop; J.-C. Baker cites Dudley memoirs that she chose the Memphis and the Natchez.

NB: the historically famous US steamboat race between the Natchez and the Robert E. Lee took place in 1870.

On stage, eight female dancers in a chorus line and also on stage, a band of seven (tuba, trombone, trumpet, conductor, drummer, alto saxophonist, and clarinetist---so tuba but no string bass, and no piano) on the left (stage right); *Life* magazine picture has the band on the right (stage left), in front of the same freckled house curtain that can be seen in the *Le tumulte noir* image;

A review of the preview describes this scene as beginning with the dancing girls and jazz band, then "Une splendide nègresse, à la voix grave, chante une complainte ou passe las nostalgie des pays aux arbres fantastiques," and then Josephine Baker, whose supple and athletic dancing was "ponctués de chants très doux ou de ululements irrésistiblement enfantins," though it is not clear whether Baker was singing or whether the troupe was singing in support of her dancing; the scene closed with ensemble dancing (*Le Journal*, September 29, 1925, p. 4).

Probably the Bootleggers Quartet is in this scene after it gets formed in Paris: Mercer Cook memoir says he gets involved in rehearsals in Paris
and pushes for a quartet; [L and Mercer: The "Bootlegger's Quartet" was Spencer Williams, Sidney Bechet, Mercer Cook, and Louis Douglas]; surely this is the same as "Le Camp Meeting Quartette"; Mercer also recalled that "I just had to walk on the docks in front of the two big boats. It was easy money" (J.-C. Baker, *Hungry Heart*, p. 108); it is likely the case that the two names for the male quartette refer to its appearance in the scene on the docks (as bootleggers) and also in the scene by the rural church (the camp meeting).

Baker is "a comic ragamuffin cavorting amid dockhands and their sweethearts"; she crawls on stage and sings the "Boodle am Shake" and does the Charleston; Klaus Benesch and Kerstin Schmidt, eds., *Space in America: Theory, History, Culture* (2005), chapter by Michel Fabvre, "The Ring and the Stage," p. 523 says the scene shows "Josephine, an urchin in tatters, joking with stevedores and their girls in an idealized vision of the Old South."

http://www.pemward.co.uk/page_1155473499796.html (accessed 12/16/14):

The show began with a big ensemble number – a Mississippi river dock scene – introducing all twenty-five performers. As the scene climaxed, there was an extraordinary apparition, described thus by French critic Pierre de Régnier:

A strange figure in a ragged undershirt ambles onto the stage looking like a cross between a boxing kangaroo and a racing driver... She is in constant motion, her body writhing like a snake or more precisely like a dipping saxophone. Music seems to pour from her body. She grimaces, crosses her eyes, wiggles disjointedly, does a split and finally crawls off the stage stiff-legged, her rump higher than her head, like a young giraffe.

"Des toiles de fond, naïvement peintes, représentent une course de steamers sur le Mississipi [sic] .... Sur les bords du fleuve, des negres chantent, des petites filled passent en dansant, avec d'amples robes aux couleurs drolement heurtés" (*Comoedia*, October 8, 1925, p. 2).

2. New York Skyscraper (Sydney Bechet, and Marion and Louis Douglas)
the curtain rises to NYC streetscape with skyscraper backdrop; Bechet is
a pushcart vendor playing "Tin Roof Blues" (acc. Blake, *Tumulte noir* [1999]); was this song title taken from a program? (this song was published in 1923); in any event, a memorable clarinet solo by Sydney Bechet, alone with his pushcart, dressed in a raincoat and an old hat; the scene represents life after migration to the North; some memoirists recall that this was the opening scene (e.g., see Jules-Rosette, p. 47), but some recall the Steamboat Race instead, incl. Rose (1989); the newspapers (e.g., *Comoedia*, October 8, 1925 and *Querschnitt* review) confirm that this is the second scene.

Modern secondary sources repeatedly describe Bechet as a peanut vendor, but an early October review (below) calls him a "marchand d'oranges" and a photograph of the scene shows a sign above Bechet's pushcart advertising oranges.

John Chilton (*Sidney Bechet: The Wizard of Jazz*, p. 76) quotes a description by Hopkins' band member, trumpeter Henry Godwin: "[Bechet] would come out on stage wheeling a fruit cart, with imitation fruit piled high on it, and dressed in a long duster [dust coat]. He'd come shuffling along slow, and then he'd leave the cart and start to play the blues" [so a fruit vendor and not a peanut vendor]; Rose (1989) says Louis Douglas and Marion Cook come on stage as a couple of lovers and dance to the music, and then disappear, leaving Bechet alone again; they are a jazz columbine and a jazz harlequin; *Hungry Heart*, p. 115 also mentions the harlequin number.

A contemporary revues mention columbine and harlequin, and the "marchand d'oranges":

"une Colombine de bronze doré se fait lutiner par un Arlequin ironique, dont le masque noir traditionnel a envahi la face entière, tandis qu'un marchand d'oranges et de bas de soie souffle dans une aigre clarinette près de son éventaire roulant" (*Comoedia*, October 8, 1925, p. 2).

A review of this number in *Der Querschnitt* confirms that it is Louis and Marion here (*Der Querschnitt*, p. 119; see also Lotz (1997), pp. 315, 318):

"Im New York Skyscraper mit der kühnen Dekoration eines sich ins Unendliche verjüngenden Wolkenkratzers fährt ein Straßenverkäufer in Waterproof und einem Ich-hab-ihn-getragen-Hut seine fliegende Ware auf einem Wägechen auf die Szene. Das ist der Saxophonist Sidney Bechet, der für die Jazz-Colombine Marion Cook und den Jazz-Arlequin Douglas den schönsten Jazz spielt, den man je gehört hat. Das seidene
Arlequinkostüm ist kleinkariert, rot und blau, mit Rüschchen, und steht gut zu dem schwarzen Gesicht. Marion im Degazeröckchen ist ganz hellhautig und ein Engel."

A photo of this scene is printed in Schack, Harlem in Montmartre, where the woman is identified wrongly as Josephine.

Reagan remembers, according to J.-C. Baker, that the Covarrubias set design was "the skyscraper that leaned, while Bechet played" (J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, p. 94). A 1926 image in Blake, Le tumulte noir, p. 100, that is by Pol Rab and comes from an illustration by Rab in Stéphane Manier, Sous le signe du jazz (Paris, 1926), shows a sketch of this backdrop; the sketch is related to an earlier image by Pol Rab that was published in La Rampe (La Rampe November 1, 1925, p. 19), but without the church. Both sketches have the leaning skyscrapers, as does a Colin image from his 1929 lithographs.

3. Louisiana Camp Meeting (Maud De Forest and Josephine Baker)

DeForrest sings a "shout" called "Same Train" (acc. Blake, Tumulte noir (1999), p. 94; is this from a program or just from its mention in Der Querschnitt?; the song is a well-known spiritual; A Methodist church has been scrawled on a giant blackboard as backdrop; a 1926 image in Blake, Le tumulte noir, p. 100, that is by Pol Rab and comes from an illustration in Stéphane Manier, Sous le signe du jazz (Paris, 1926), shows a sketch of this backdrop (the sketch is related to an earier image by Pol Rab that was published in La Rampe [La Rampe November 1, 1925, p. 19], but without the church).

At first the scene may have been shorter and simply a chance for Maud to sing some kind of shout or spiritual or gospel number; see the "authentic" revival scene in the later Miss Calico, with Abbie doing a number; moreover, this tableau works well as the second scene rather than the third if the original plan by Cook was chronological.

In this scene, acc. Rose (1989) and Wood (2000), Baker and De Forest are two brides expecting to marry the same man, and they fight, and leave, with the man alone, Louis Douglas, dancing around his top hat. However, in Josephine (1976/1977), Baker remembers that "a boisterous takeoff on a black wedding" was a later addition ca. November 1.
The wedding scene gets a December mention:
"Le tableau de la noce noire, entre autres, est plein de saveur et de grotesque humour" (Paris, Les Echoes des Anciens Combattants, no. 15 (December 1925), p. 14)

A staged photo survives of Douglas and Baker with Douglas in blackface, wearing a tuxedo and top hat and carrying a cane, while Josephine is in a black dress with white jacket over it, wearing high boots and an elaborate hat; this could well be an image derived from the wedding scene, although the backdrop behind them is Colin’s painted stage curtain.

An early Parisian review describes the scene: "un village de la Louisiane, dessiné au trait en blanc sur noir . . . .
“devant l’église du petit village, quatre nègres se détachement de la foule et chantent une mélodie plaintive, étrangement émouvante; un orage éclate, ou une querelle, ou les deux, et de la foule en movement, émergent des silhouettes gesticulantes” (Comoedia, October 8, 1925, p. 2).

From Ivan Goll's October review:
"In front of a church that could have been painted by Chagall, dressed in bourgeois skirts like women going to market, they dance around a white, bespectacled pastor strumming a banjo . . . . They dance a dance one might expect in a lunatic asylum."

And from Ottomar Starke's early 1926 review:
"Das Louisiana Camp-Meeting ist ein Cauchemar, zu welchem eine dicke, alte, auf weiß-schwarz-punktierte Figurantin nicht unerheblich beiträgt. Eine Methodistenkirche ist mit Kreide auf eine riesige Schultafel als Hintergrund gezeichnet. Beachtliches Gesindel treibt sich hier herum."

In Cook's Miss Calico of 1926 there is an element that in all likelihood was copied from La revue as a vehicle for a principal singer, "A genuine church revival meeting taken from life, showing the typical Negro of the South, in prayer. In this scene Miss Abbie Mitchell will render one of her song hits, 'Little Gal.'"

4. Les Strutting Babies (the eight Charleston Steppers)
the Eight Steppers plus Louis Douglas do "A Jazz Charleston Drill"; this is the first of the olio numbers; probably done in front of the curtain; the
Pol Rab sketch mentioned above shows Louis Douglas in a uniform, and it is likely he appeared as a kind of drum major here.

5. Darkey Impressions (Josephine Baker)
"Eccentric Dance"; eccentric dances and images against a shadowed screen; the second of the olio numbers; quote in Lotz calls this Josephine's "big number"; probably done in front of the curtain; a number in the later Miss Calico is "Shadows on the Wall," which could be along the same lines; acc. Jayna Brown in Babylon Girls, Josephine mimics "a series of animal dances"; Josephine repeats this act in the 1932 film Zou Zou; a clip of this scene from the film is on-line at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVPJd3kaKQR (accessed 02/18/2015); it lasts under two minutes

6. Les pieds qui parlent (Louis Douglas)
"The Talking Feet"; "My Feet Talk"; tap-dancing, featuring Louis Douglas; this is the third and final olio number;

Ivan Goll writes: "The leader, director, and principal dancer of the troupe is Louis Douglas, the equal of the perfect Baker. He is the only one who wears a dark black mask, while all the others are nearly light brown. He has a gigantic white mouth. But his feet! They are what inspires the music. The orchestra takes its lead from them, not the other way around. He walks, he drags, he slips — and the beat rises from the floor, not from the flutes, which merely offer their accompaniment in secret. One number is called "My Feet Are Talking." And with his feet he tells us of his voyage from New York to Europe: the first day on the boat, the third in the storm, then the trip by railroad and a race at Longchamp."
probably was performed in front of the curtain.

An early Berlin review (Berliner Tageblatt, January 4, 1926, p. 4) says of Douglas that that "er stept uns under anderem mit Füssen, Armen und Oberkörper seine ganze Legbensgeschichte vor."

7. Charleston Cabaret (Ensemble, Douglas; Baker and Alex, etc.)
back to the full stage; a show in a show, set in a Harlem nightclub in whose stage show there is singing, one-stepping, and tap-dancing, acc. Rose (1989), and then we are transported to Africa, featuring the Savage
Dance/Danse Sauvage, and finally, acc. Rose (1989), Louis Douglas appears as a waiter in the nightclub and dances around the Danse Sauvage couple; this sounds very much like the final number Cook's Black Bohemia of 1911;

"Enfin, nous échouons dans un cabaret de New-York... On nous offre un vertigineux cocktail de danses" (Paris-soir, October 6, 1925, p. 5)

"un cabaret aux lumières voilées s'ouvre sur la nuit bleue et se peuple de personnages bizarres" (Comoedia, October 8, 1925, p. 2).

Ottakar Starke refers to the Cocktail Dance here. He also says that Josephine performs the "Danse de Sauvage" with both Joë Alex and "the Babies," i.e., the women.

Among the changes at the very end of October, "La chanson de Miss Maud de Forest avec ses partenaires masculins, dans la dernière scène, est la nouveauté la plus intéressante. On a atténué... les audaces de la danse sauvage de Miss Joséphine Baker et Joë Alex, et imposé quelques voiles transparents aux nudités bronzées des Charleston Steppers" (Comoedia, November 5, 1925, p. 5). In context, this reinforces Starke's later mention that the Danse Sauvage had the participation of the women dancers.

I have not seen a single reference to the expression Danse sauvage in Parisian newspaper advertisements or reviews in the Fall of 1925, until Josephine and Joe are linked with it in a newspaper review of the revised show at the Champs-Elysées in early November (Comoedia, November 5, 1925, p. 5).

The Danse Sauvage is named as an individual item on the bill, separate from the nightclub scene, when the show moves to L'Etoile later that month. In the revised show for L'Etoile, with seven tableaux, "Un cabaret la nuit dans le quartier nègre de New-York" is the second scene, while "La danse sauvage" is the sixth scene (Le Journal, November 20, 1925, p. 4).

Josephine will later reprise the Danse Sauvage in the Folies Bergère and in one of her movies.

Philip Ward, “The electric body: Nancy Cunard sees Josephine Baker”
They had to wait for the finale to see more of her [i.e., Josephine, but this is wrong]. With partner Joë Alex she executed a sort of improvised *pas de deux*, billed as a ‘danse sauvage’. Many years later Janet Flanner, the veteran *New Yorker* correspondent, recalled the impact of that ‘savage dance’ [in her book, *Paris Was Yesterday*]:

She made her entry entirely nude except for a pink flamingo feather between her limbs; she was being carried upside down and doing the split on the shoulder of a black giant. Midstage he paused, and with his long fingers holding her basket-wise around the waist, swung her in a slow cartwheel to the stage floor, where she stood, like his magnificent discarded burden, in an instant of complete silence... A scream of salutation spread through the theatre. Whatever happened next was unimportant. The two specific elements had been established and were unforgettable – her magnificent dark body, a new model that to the French proved for the first time that black was beautiful, and the acute response of the white masculine public in the capital of hedonism of all Europe – Paris.

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**CHANGES MADE DURING THE RUN IN PARIS**

There were amendments at least twice to the contents of the revue while it was on its initial run, and then a bigger change was made upon the move to the second theater, which presented what was called the “deuxième version.” This refreshing is what one would expect, and it would have been done in order to get repeat business.

The original booking is said to have been for six weeks, which would have carried it to November 13 (and it eventually ran just under a week longer than that, to November 18). However, just three weeks in, there were changes in the air. *Le Gaulois*, October 23, 1925, p. 4 speaks of a notice about “deux scènes différentes.”

*Le Gaulois* carries the notice that Louis Douglas has created some new scenes that will be presented this evening: "On parle notamment d'un "Bal de Carnaval negre" qui sera une fete de couleur, de rythme et de burlesque" (*Le Gaulois*, October 24, 1925, p. 6; also in *L’Action Française*, October 24, p. 4; also in *La Presse*, October 25, 1925).
A week later, four weeks in, by late October/early November, there are yet more changes; this second revised version of the show, still at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, has "nouvelles scenes"; see citations in Le Gaulois, October 30, p. 4 (but NOT yet from October 28 or October 29; also in Le Temps, La Presse, etc.); Le Journal, November 11, 1925, p. 4 has an advertisement announcing "Scénes nouvelles"; a brief review of the revised show says they have tamed down the audacity of the danse sauvage a bit, amongst other changes (Comoedia, November 5, 1925, p. 5)

NB: the program published in Le tumulte noir is from October 30, apparently.

October 30 is exactly four weeks to the day after the premiere, which sounds exactly right for a shift of material. This version runs for three weeks. Then the shift of theaters.

The show featured nine (9) theatrical sketches at some point, acc. a program reproduced in Roueff and Le tumulte noir, and in some secondary accounts; this “grand spectacle en neuf tableaux” is how the show is described in an early ad (Comoedia, October 4, 1925, p. 6; Comoedia, October 8, 1925, p. 4), but in no other Gallica hits. How does this square with all other reports of seven? Answer: Nine tableaux captures the situation when the show was altered late in the run at the first theater; La semaine a Paris, October 30, 1925, p. 65 says “Du 30 a 12 nov.: Une revue nègre (en 9 tableaux) avec Joséphine Baker et Louis Douglas”

Among the changes, "La chanson de Miss Maud de Forest avec ses partenaires masculins, dans la dernière scène, est la nouveauté la plus intéressante" (Comoedia, November 5, 1925, p. 5)

By one later account by Josephine, to extend the duration, two additional scenes were added: "a musical crap game" and "a boisterous takeoff on a black wedding" (Josephine (1976/1977), p. 56); presumably this extension had to be done without adding any other backdrops by Covarrubias, so they must have amended some of the original tableaux. Wedding seems to have been tied in to the Camp-Meeting scene? Crap game may have featured the Bootlegger Quartet on the levee, i.e. an added schtick for an added feature? No sign of these scenes in French papers searched on-line. Is it at all possible that they were from later (i.e. 1926 and later) Louis Douglas revues? or later
shows for Josephine, mis-remembered by her as belonging here? Still, they push the scene count from seven to nine.

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AT THE THEATRE DE L'ETOILE

The revue opened at its new location on November 21.

Some newspaper listings for the Theatre de L'Etoile, upon the shift in venue, say "première représentation de la Revue Nègre, nouvelle version, avec Louis Douglas, Joséphine Baker, Tommy Woods, Maud de Forest, les huit black Babies et le Hopkin's Jazz, le premier du monde" (e.g., Le Matin, November 20, 1925, p. 5). Others mention now, in addition, "les 12 [or "douze"] Charleston Steppers."

or "première représentation de la deuxième version de la "Revue Nègre" interprétée par M. Louis Douglas, Milles Joséphine Baker et Maud de Forest dans les principaux roles" (Le Gaulois, November 21, 1925, p. 5)

NB: Louis Douglas is the first name given. Douglas is still getting top billing.

An advertisement for the show as it was opening at the Theatre de L'Etoile on November 21 (Le Journal, November 20, p. 4; Le Matin, November 21, p. 4), reports that Josephine Baker had been absent, but now “fera une rentrée sensationnelle.” Possibly she had stepped away for a few days when Joë Alex left the show.

With these seven principal tableaux (“nouvelles scènes”), and no steamboats or camp meeting, they surely did not take the Covarrubias backdrops with them when they changed theaters:

1. Douglas, tambour-major.
2. Un cabaret la nuit dans le quartier nègre de New York.
3. Le parc de la lune.
4. Le Cygne Noir?
   Parodie de la Pavlova dansant le cygne de Saint-Saëns
   [NB: Pavlova herself was dancing this at the same moment in the Champs Elysees Music Hall]
5. Le match de boxe.
6. La danse sauvage
7. Le cake-walk
avec

Louis Douglas
Le roi des danseurs

Josephine Baker
L'étoile noir que se lève

Tommy Woods
Le danseur en caoutchouc [he's "rubbery"]

Maud De Forest
La chanteuse de blues

Honey Boy
Le danseur électrocuté

Les 8 Black Babies
danseuses noires

Les 12 Charleston Stepper [probably 8 girls and 4 men]

et le
Hopkins Jazz
le premier jazz du monde

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NOTES ON THE TROUPE MEMBERS

It is hard to pin down the number of members of the troupe, principally because that number was actually changing on a regular basis. The number who rehearsed in New York was not the same as the number who went to Paris, and the number who went to Paris was not the same as the number who performed on stage in Paris, which was also changing, etc.

It would be great to have the Berengaria passenger manifest, and this may very well exist.

Pretty much everyone was very young, not out of their early to mid 20s, so born from ca. 1897-1905; this is the generation of Cook's own children---and especially from Mercer’s circle (and Ellington) in DC. They are mostly getting their first big break here: Baker (b. 1906) and De Forest (b. 1898), for example, were at this moment both minor figures. Louis Douglas was the biggest star, especially in Europe, but to make a distinction---in Europe, he was a principal but not yet much of a headlining star on his own, and not much of a show builder. Claude Hopkins (1903-1984), the same age as Mercer, was a graduate of Howard and the child of parents who were of the faculty of Howard---so a DC and Howard connection to WMC; Bechet (1897-1959); Ernest Hill (1900-1964); Joe Hayman (b. 1903); Daniel Doy (b.c. 1901) went to school in DC with Mercer Cook; Henry Goodwin, with DC connection (1901-1979). Spencer Williams (1889-1965) and Louis Douglas (1889-1941) were relatively older---by a half a generation---than this group.

Most of the troupe's members did not make much of a splash individually, and their later careers are mostly not as headliners.

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Variety art. in August says that it is a troupe of 20.

Variety, September 30, 1925, p. 8 says “among those going” were Louis and Marion Douglas, eight girls, and Josephine Baker.

There were 22 singers and dancers, including Josephine and 21 other singers and dancers, according to a 1927 account at the first time Josephine returned to NYC after her European successes (see, e.g., Buffalo (NY) Evening News, Tuesday, June 27, 1927, p. 15).
A cast picture taken on the dock in France has 18 adults and child Marion; looks like 7 women and 11 men; seems short on women while the 11 men could be the seven-piece Hopkins band plus Louis Douglas, Spencer Williams, Honey Boy Thompson, and Mercer Cook.

For *Hotsy Totsy* on stage as it initially evolved in Harlem, think: the star (dancer Douglas); two principal girls (Marion Douglas & Josephine Baker); Marion is for more suave pairings with Louis Douglas, while Baker contributes comedic and grotesque dancing; two principal men (Hartwell Cook and Honey Boy Thompson) for hot and grotesque dancing and comedy; the only real singer a female vocalist who can also dance (Maud De Forest); eight chorus girls; and a band of seven, for a total of 21. Add Spencer Williams and we are up to 22.

Or were there just six chorus girls at the end of August?

There were 25 artists (singers, dancers) and musicians by October 2, acc. *Le Gaulois*, October 4, 1925, p. 00. If 25 is an exact rather than approximate number of performers, that means something on the order of 6 featured cast members, 8 "girls" and 4 "boys", plus 7 band members; some of this number were added right away in Paris (Joë Alex and two or more of the girls)

At the time of the switch to the second theater, *Le Gaulois* reports that the troupe consisted of Josephine Baker, Louis Douglas, Sydney Bechet, Maud de Forest, Marion Douglas, Joë Alex, Honey Boy, the eight Charleston Babies, the Camp Meeting Quartet ["Le Camp Meeting Quadrette" (sic)] and the famous Charleston Jazz-Band (*Le Gaulois*, Nov. 28, 1925; *Le Gaulois*, December 2, 1925, p. 2). That would be 26, if there were no overlaps; if Bechet is the only overlap, then that is 25.

NB: Other sources make it clear that Tommy Woods only joins the revue now, and with Bechet overlap plus Tommy Woods, we are at 26 again. Other indications suggest that Joë Alex leaves now, and perhaps Woods is his replacement.

**THE STAR**

1 dancer Louis Douglas (b. 1889 - 1941), age 36; Louis Douglas, especially prominent as a principal in shows in Paris in 1923 and 1924, who had worked with at the Parisian club Ba-Ta-Clan and on tour to South America with dancer Mistinguett in 1923, and was well known to
Jacques Charles, was the best-known figure to Parisians. By age and long experience, he was the most senior member of the ensemble. On one printed program, he is called the director ("mise-en-scène"), and in Comoedia, October 8, 1925, p. 2 he is called “l'auteur et le conducteur de la revue nègre des Champs-Elysées”; back in the US at the debut of Africana he is called the director of La revue nègre for Josephine Baker (NY Times, July 2, 1927, p. 21); Lotz cites German reviews that calls him leader, director, principal dancer, author of this show. This is his first show as the headliner, though he promptly gets overshadowed, of course, by Josephine. Still, one observer says "he is "the equal of the perfect Baker"; see Daniel Albright, ed. Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 378-80 at p. 380.


From Ottomar Starke in Der Querschnitt (Berlin, early 1926):
"Douglas exzellenz in einem Bootleggers-Quartett, einem a-lovers-Quarrel und einem Excentric-Dance. In ersterem ist auch der Komponist Spencer Williams selbst zu bewundern. Im zweiten der ausgezeichnete Honey Boy."

THE OTHER PRINCIPALS

2 dancer Marion Cook Douglas (1900-1950), age 25; she is basically a ballroom and step dancer, the counterweight to Josephine, who is more comic (grotesque) and acrobatic. Not a star, but a principal in her own right, well known on the Parisian stage in partnership with her husband.

3 vocalist Maud De Forest (Maude De Forest; Maud De Forrest; Maude De Forrest,) (1898 - ; born in DC; and her family is in Philadelphia), age c. 27; she is close to 10 years older than the youngest girls; if it is the right individual, she was the daughter of John and Catherine (Cate) Moss, and widowed by the age of 21 (US 1920 Census; US 1940 Census).

Singer, dancer, comedian; some French accounts call her fat or dumpy and this gets repeated endlessly (it is probably from Jacques Charles),
but this needs to be put into perspective; she was not as skinny as Josephine but by today's standards she was not heavy at all, and she took over for Josephine as chief dancer as well as singer; an early Berlin review called her the manager of the troupe (Berliner Tageblatt, January 4, 1926, p. 4) and says of Maud that "Die Managerin der Truppe, Maud de Forest, hat, wenn sie Chasons singt, einen Montmartreterton, der nich übel ist."

Maud is named in newspaper hits from around 1921 forward, e.g., she is with the "Sunkist Southerners" on Gus Sun Time in Northern Ohio in 1921 (Billboard, June 11, 1921, p. 125); in 1922 she is a member of the "Black Swan Troubadours" appearing on stage with the star of the show, Ethel Waters, accompanied by Fletcher Henderson and "The Black Swan Jazz Masters" (Greensboro (NC) Record, May 26, 1922, p. 9; Billboard, June 10, 1922, p. 56); her recordings for Black Swan Records, featuring "Doo Dee Blues" and Roamin' Blues," are for sale in 1923; in May 1923 she is a member of the chorus of the show Plantations Days (Indianapolis Star, May 29, 1923, p. 10); she is said to have been in Whitney and Tutt's North Ain't South in the 1923-1924 season; in February 1924 she is in George McClennon's new offering, doing songs, music and comedy in The Radio Fiends (Chicago Defender, February 23, 1924, p. 6); she is with the Seven-Eleven touring company in September 1924 (Cleveland Gazette, September 6, 1924, p. 2); she is in Harry Steppe's big show, Dancing Around, in November 1924 (Chicago Defender, November 8, 1924, p. 7); she is still with the Harry Steppe show in vaudeville and burlesque in 1925, singing the blues again with George McClennon (Pittsburgh Courier, March 21, 1925, p. 12; Detroit Times, April 6, 1925, p. 10).

After La revue negre, she danced and sang in Europe on her own as solo dancer and as lead dancer in a female ensemble in 1926, etc.; she has robust and agile legs for dancing the Black Bottom, in one account. often still associated with Louis Douglas, e.g., she was a member of a troupe built by him in 1926, Black People; a Negro Revue by a company called The Southern Delights (= Black People), starring Honey Boy Thompson, Maud De Forest, etc., playing in Geneva in late 1926 (Journal de Geneve, November 27, 1926, p. 6; Pittsburgh Courier, January 1, 1927, p. 3);

and in 1927, she was in Black Follies; in September 1927 she is with another company in Geneva as the star of the Ballet Créole in songs and a sketch (Journal de Geneve, September 17, 1927, p. 6 with biggest coverage of her; see also Journal de Geneve, September 18, 1927, p. 8; Journal de Geneve, September 20, 1927, p. 6).
De Forest is back in the US in May 1929, leaving from Poland after four theatrical seasons in Europe mostly starring in black revues, and she is now resting with her parents in Philadelphia (Chicago Defender, September 7, 1929, p. 6). She is a principal the all-colored revue Ginger Snaps in 1930, with sketches and lyrics by Homer Tutt and music by Donald Heywood (Billboard, January 11, 1930, p. 7). She is on stage in Philadelphia in 1930 (New York Age, November 1, 1930, p. 6). She gives her occupation as entertainer in the 1932 Newark, N.J. City Directory and again as entertainer in the 1934 Washington, D.C. City Directory.

Josephine Baker (1906-1975); age just 19; grotesque comedic dancer, often in blackface; she has been up to now a comedic end girl in the chorus line; she makes faces and strikes awkward poses; she had been in Shuffle Along and then stood out in Chocolate Dandies (Jersey City Journal, May 2, 1925, p. 9), and she is said to have understudied the lead in Tan Town Topics, but in Hotsy Totsy she was stepping up for the first time from end girl to principal. Putting her fourth in the present list might seem odd, but, for example, in the Pittsburgh Courier, September 5, 1925, p. 10, she is not named as a principal at all---only Louis and Marion Douglas and Maud De Forest are identified as principals. Of course, in Paris, Josephine is given an amplified role in the first and last scenes, and she is an immediate, huge, breakout success and becomes a headlining star.

Le Journal, November 20, p. 4 and Le Matin, November 21, p. 4, report that Josephine Baker had been absent from the show, but now “fera une rentrée sensationnelle.”

She leaves the show for good in Berlin in February 1926 to return to Paris and join the Folies Bergère.

When does Josephione begin to sing? She is mentioned as a singer in Ottomar Starke’s review of the show in January in Berlin, including the song "Give me just a little bit," which is also mentioned by Ivan Goll, who heard it in the show in October, so possibly Josephine is already singing when the show hits Paris; when she is singing, of course, she is in all probability not dancing. I have seen no French commentary from the Fall of 1925 in which she is said to sing. Commentators mention instead her phyrical comedy---clowning, her facial expressions ("ses grimaces"), and her grotesque, flexible, and acrobatic body ("ses contorsions").
Ottomar Starke, indicatively, identifies her big number ("ihre grosse Nummer") as "Darkey Impressions," which, of course, is her one solo turn.

5 dancer Honey Boy; "Honey Boy" is William "Honey Boy" Thompson; less frequently with "Honeyboy" as one work; hard to track biographically, but probably born ca. 1900, and getting his first mentions on the press in Running Wild, 1923-25; originally, one of two principal male dancers, alongside Hartwell Cook and just under Louis Douglas in the billing; an MC, comedian, singer, and dancer; a “song and dance comedian”; a “star hoofer and mime”; a soft-shoe dancer; an acrobatic dancer and a master of comic expression; no mention in Comoedia, October 8, p. 2 review, but in Comoedia, October 8, p. 4 advertisement, so he is one of the original troupe; also, named in La Presse, November 3 and in a newspaper reference on November 7, 1925, at the time of the renovated show for the Théatre des Champs-Elysées; he is paired with Josephine as the final number on the dance program of the big November 7 farewell soirée (soirée d’adieux) for the Exposition des Arts décoratifs; he stayed with the troupe when it left Paris for Berlin, etc.; in Le Journal, November 25, 1925, p. 5 he is “Le Danseur Electrocute.”

Before the revue, he appeared in the cast of Runnin' Wild for two years, to the end of the show's run at the end of March 1925 or a bit later (Buffalo Courier, January 4, 1925, p. 60; Brooklyn Eagle, February 15, 1925, p. 2 E, etc.), and he could have met Cook then, since Cook built that show. I have not found a prior mention of him.

From Ottomar Starke in Der Querschnitt (Berlin, early 1926): "Douglas exzelleniert in einem Bootleggers-Quartett, einem a-lovers-Quarrel und einem Excentric-Dance. . . . Im zweiten [apparently a reference to the "Quarrel"] der ausgezeichnete Honey Boy."

Staying in Europe after the revue, Thompson also was a member of at least one troupe led by Louis Douglas in 1926, Black People (Berliner Tageblatt, July 14, 1926, p. 4; Berliner Börsenzeitung, July 15, 1926, p. 9); a Negro Revue by a company called The Southern Delights, which is actually Black People under another name, starring Honey Boy Thompson, Maud De Forest, Baby Goins, King-Reavis, Willie Robbons, etc., played in Geneva at the Comedie in late 1926 (Geneva, Journal de Geneve, November 27, 1926, p. 5; Paris, Comoedia, November 30, 1926, p. 5; Billboard, December 18, 1926, p. 81; Pittsburgh Courier, January 1, 1927, p. 3); he was in another Douglas production touring Europe in
1927-1928, Black Follies.

Later references tend to mention him in association with Josephine in Paris, e.g., "The Black Cat, a Greenwich Village standby of old, has inaugurated a new show headed by "Honey Boy" Thompson, once a member of Josephine Baker’s revue in Paris" (Wall Street Journal, December 12, 1935, p. 6); and “an entertainer better known on the Continent than here. He was with Josephine Baker in many of her Paris revues” (Chicago Defender, January 9, 1936, p. 11); he was the emcee at the Kinney Club in Newark in the later 1930s; in 1940 he was the member of a choir in a show for the 1940 NY World’s Fair called "Old Gay New Orleans" (Kansas City Plaindealer, May 24, 1940, p. 3, in a Floyd Snelson column); during WWII, he was a USO Camp Shaw Entertainer; he was on the first black Hospital Tour in January 1945 (Hill & Hatch, p. 531, note 9); he was active into the 1940s and 1950s in clubs in NYC (e.g., Small’s Paradise Club); he appeared on the 1950 Versatile Varieties show on NBC television; he is home mending a broken leg in 1952 (NY Age, August 9, 1952, p. 11); in 1957, Jet called him an “old time vaudeville comic and dancer” (Jet, November 14, 1957, p. 63).

THE SUPPORTING CAST

6 composer Spencer Williams (1889-1965), in 1925, age c. 36 (i.e., of the same generation as Louis Douglas); he had just returned from France to the US on August 12, 1925. A month later, he’s headed back with Hotsy Totsy. He writes songs and gets to be on stage in the male Quartette. When the show left Paris for Brussels in December 1925, he returned to the US, embarking at Le Havre on December 16, 1925 and arriving in New York City on December 23, 1925. He is back in Europe shortly thereafter. Ottomar Starke in Der Querschnitt (Berlin, early 1926) reports that "Douglas exzellenz in einem Bootleggers-Quartett, einem a-lovers-Quarrel und einem Excentric-Dance. In ersterem ist auch der Komponist Spencer Williams selbst zu bewundern," so by this account he is back with the troupe pretty quickly. Williams writes for Josephine at the Folies Bergère, participates onstage in other revues, then tours in Europe until 1928. He returned to the US from Bremen to NYC on February 25, 1928. He went back to Europe for good in 1932.

7 Sidney Bechet (sometimes Sydney) 1897-1959; clarinet, saxophone, flute, singer; he was 28 at the time of this show, so he was one of the oldest of the youngsters, and he had had prior experience in Europe; he had been
with Cook's SSO in 1919 and stayed in Europe until 1922; a great friend of Cook;
Bechet returned to Europe with the revue in 1925, and left it in Berlin in February 1926, probably around the time that Josephine left; he stayed in Europe until 1929.
In the revue, he had a featured role in the Overture and the New York street scene, and he sang in the Bootleggers' Quartet.

8-14 the eight chorus girls; "Les huit Charleston Babies"---or "les huit Black Babies" or "Les 8 Black Babies" (in newspapers at the time of the switch in late November); Ottomar Starke calls them "the Babies"; the counting of cast members gets a little iffy here---this is seven women, plus Maud De Forest or Marion Cook (as below), and it could be that only six chorus girls were picked up in New York, with perhaps Lydia Jones, and possibly others, joining immediately or a few weeks down the road in Paris.

In one early October review, the women were called the Charleston Chorus, an expression also used in one early November review; synonymous with the troupe of Charleston Steppers in early October (e.g., Comoedia, October 8, 1925, p. 2; L'Action française, October 20, 1925, p. 2); but distinguished from the Charleston Steppers in later November (e.g., in Le Journal, November 25, 1925, p. 5). With the move to L'Etoile in later November there are twelve "Charleston Steppers," e.g., "les huit Black Babies, les douze Charleston Steppers," so counting the 8 women plus 4 men;
NB: the expressions "eight steppers" and "Charleston steppers" are quite common and current at this time in the mid 1920s

Variety, September 30, 1925, p. 8 said eight girls sailed, plus Marion and Josephine, with no mention of Maud.

In 1940, Mercer Cook recalled that Louis Douglas staged the show, Claude Hopkins and a six-piece orchestra furnished the music, and the chorus line of eight consisted of six chorus girls and two end girls who did special numbers (Baltimore Afro-American, August 17, 1940, p. 14) (Were the end girls originally Maud and Marion? or even Maud/Marion and Josephine?)

Two roof-top rehearsal photos (one of the women alone, the other with bandmembers) show eight women, without Josephine.
J.-C. Baker describes Man Ray photographs that show six girls (Hungry Heart, p. 112).

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The eight (seven names here are six plus Lydia Jones; adding Marion or Maud makes eight, while Marion or Maud plus Josephine raises the total of women to ten, as in Variety, September 30, 1925):

Evelyn Anderson (1907-1994); not mentioned by the French papers; she was 18 in 1925, and lived to be 87; late in life, Anderson recalled that in summer 1925 she was in a revue at the Smile Awhile Inn in Asbury Park, NJ. where the Hopkins Band was playing (NY Times, October 2, 1989, p. C14); it is likely that it is she and Joseph Hayman from Hopkins' band who travelled from Cherbourg to NYC together on August 19-25, 1926

Beatrice Foote [sometimes Bea, sometimes Bee; born 3 Sept. 1898; NC]; she was 25; she was mentioned in the French papers (e.g., Paris, La Presse, November 3, 1925, p. 2); later a vocalist; Bea Foote was an entertainer at the New Roseland Club in Asbury Park, N.J. in June 1925 (Billboard, June 13, 1925, p. 48; J.-C. Baker, p. 94); probably it is ashew who is returning from Le Havre to NYC on March 11-20, 1926 along with Marguerite Ricks; she is active on stage in the US at least through the 1930s.

Mabel Hopkins [c. 1902, from 1940 Census; Claude's wife]; she was around 23; not mentioned in Fr. papers; Claude and Mabel Hopkins returned from Cherbourg to NYC, travelling March 27-April 2,1926

Lydia Jones; mentioned in the French papers (e.g., Paris, La Presse, November 3, 1925, p. 2); a Lydia Jones is named as a chorus girl of Chocolate Kiddies earlier in 1925 (NY Age, May 9, 1925, p. 6; Chicago Defender, May 23, 1925, p. 7) and also in a surviving program of this troupe from Berlin in May 1925; did she jump to the new revue?

Marguerite Ricks [28 July 1900; Ohio]; she was 25; in variety from at least 1920; travelling on the TOBA circuit, Marguerite Ricks was at the Monogram in Chicago in July 1925 (Pittsburgh Courier, July 11, 1925, p. 9; Chicago Defender, June 13, 1925, p.7); likely it is she who is returning from Le Havre to NYC on March 11-20, 1926, along with Bea Foote; likely the same performer, she appears mainly in Chicago through the 1930s and is "one of the torrid singers of the day" (Chicago Defender, January 7, 1939, p. 18).
Hazel Valentine; mentioned in the French papers (e.g., Paris, La Presse, November 3, 1925, p. 2); a chorus girl of this name is in the chorus line in a big revue at Ciro's in New York in March 1926 (Chicago Defender, March 13, 1926, p. 7); an "olde tymer" recalls that in 1928 Lew Leslie assembled a second road company for his Blackbirds while the first company was still playing Broadway, and that one of the dancing girls was Hazel Valentine (Chicago Defender, July 30, 1955, p. 7)

Marie Woods; mentioned in Fr. papers as Marie and Mary (e.g., Comoedia, October 29, 1925, p. 4); a chorus line girl of this name is in an LA revue in 1927 (Chicago Defender, June 25, 1927, p. 7)

and

Maud De Forest or Marion [Cook] Douglas

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As remembered by Evelyn Anderson to Jean-Claude Baker, Mabel Hopkins, Bea Foote, and Marguerite Ricks were all working together at a cabaret in Asbury Park when they were hired.

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La Presse, November 3, 1925, p. 2 mentions some of the girls including these five: Maud de Forest, Lydia Jones, Hazel Valentine, Beatrice Foote, Marion Cook.

In a little piece about a number of the principals of the troupe taking tea (Comoedia, October 29, 1925, p. 4), those named are Josephine, Marie Woods, Maud de Forest, Louis Douglas and Sidney Bechet.

In a little piece, with photo, four of the troupe are named visiting the offices of L’Intransigeant, including Mlle Mary Woods, M. Douglas, Mlle Maud De Forrest, and Mlle Josephine Baker (L’Intransigeant, November 12, p. 5).

[A surviving program in a Paris archive (see Roueff; Le tumulte noir) has nine names; Lotz (1997), p. 313 (and Storyville art.) has these nine names, citing a handbill in the Robert Pernet collection; the list seems not entirely accurate: Evelyn Anderson, Beatrice Foote, Mabel Hopkins, Lydia Jones,
Marguerite Ricks [not Hicks], Jap Salmons, Sadie Thompson, Hazel Valentine, Marie Woods; seven were evidently American-based, and two added in Europe; however, it is possibly that Lydia Jones was also already in Europe and jumped from Chocolate Kiddies to this new revue

[Hopkins/Vaché journal has ten names; the usual seven plus three more: Evelyn Anderson, Marion Douglass, Bea Foote, Mabel Hopkins, Sadie Hopkins, Lydia Jones, Marguerite Ricks, Jap Salmons, Hazel Valentine, Maria Woods]

Seems that they picked up the following two in Europe:

(i) Sadie Hopkins [no relation to Claude and Maude]/Thompson [said to be English]; the name Sadie Thompson does not appear in the French press, but the name Sadie Hopkins does; a Sadie Hopkins was in the SSO in England and performed in Europe in the 1920s and 30s; not an American; two May 1921 hits in Parisian papers place her with SSO, in a list with another female vocalist, Mme King-Reavis, and a male vocalist, M. C. Layton = Mr. C. Layton, drummer Buddie Gilmore, conducted by M Welmore/Welmon; Rye says he is "E. C. Layton"; Hattie King-Reavis, in the NYSO and SSO, had recently returned from Europe two months before in NY Age, May 3, 1924, p. 7

(ii) Jap Salmons [an odd name and untraceable so far]

Gertrude Stein's "Among Negroes" in her Useful Knowledge (1928) mentions meeting Josephine Baker, Maud de Forrest, Ida Lewelyn and Miss Dudley, along with a separate, later meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Paul Robeson (who we know to have made their visit in November); Stein meets the Revue nègre women at a party held by the famous American expatriate socialites Gerald and Sara Murphy; see much biblio. on this couple, including Amanda Vaill, Everybody Was So Young: Gerald and Sara Murphy: A Lost Generation Love Story (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

Ida Lewelyn is not in the other cast lists above and turns up, in fact, nowhere else at all; the Stein literature thinks she's black, but in context, surely she is a white friend/companion/assistant/ of Mrs. Reagan. In other words, two socialites bring along the two biggest female stars from the show.
THE GIRLS, again

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<th>A program names 9:</th>
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<td>Evelyn Anderson</td>
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<td>Sadie Thompson</td>
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<td>Marie Woods</td>
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In an article devoted to Claude Hopkins in the Pittsburgh *Courier*, August 1, 1931, p. 7, some members of the troupe are named, including Margaret [sic] Ricks, Evelyn Hayman [sic] (married name of Evelyn Anderson?), Bee [sic] Foote, Marian Cooke [sic], Lydia Bourke [sic] (married name of Lydia Jones?); the same names are repeated in *Courier* article in May, 1932.

THE BAND

15-20 Dudley's Famous Charleston Jazz Band: Claude Hopkins' six-piece Charleston Jazz Band, plus Bechet; lots of consistent refs., incl. handbill in Robert Pernet collection and Hopkins memoirs (incl. Storyville art); Hopkins, Goodwin, Doy, and Johnson are all from DC; all the men are quite young; the band it is a Dixieland-like ensemble that included:

Claude Hopkins, leader and pianist; 1903-84; he just turned 22 in Aug; he was a graduate of Howard and the child of parents who worked at Howard: Albert W. and Gertrude D. Hopkins; thus, a strong DC and Howard connection to WMC; married to Mabel; Claude and Mabel Hopkins returned to NYC from Cherbourg on April 2, 1926

Henry Goodwin, trumpet; 1901-1979; also a DC man;

Daniel R. Doy (born June 21, 1901) and Henry C. Goodwin (born January 2, 1901) return together on the S.S. Vestris from Buenos Aires to New York, leaving September 13, 1926 and arriving October 6, 1926. Henry C. Goodwin is in the 1928 Washington City Directory as a musician.
Daniel Doy, trombone; b. June 21, 1901 - ; also a DC man; “poor health”; “died early”; possibly died ca. 1928, after which he is no longer in DC Directory; Bessie G. Doy, his widow, is named in the 1931 Directory; he went to school in DC with Mercer Cook (acc. John Chilton) and is in DC directories as a musician in the 1920s, to at least 1928; had tuberculosis, plays piano as well as trombone, dies young; Daniel R. Doy (born June 21, 1901) and Henry C. Goodwin (born January 2, 1901) return together on the S.S. Vestris from Buenos Aires to New York, leaving September 13, 1926 and arriving October 6, 1926.

Joseph (Joe) Hayman, alto sax; 1903-1981 (born in Little Rock, Ark.); returned to the US in August 1926 on the same ship as Evelyn Anderson; later in life a druggist

Ernest "Bass" Hill, bass; 1900-1964

Percy Johnson, drums; ca. 1900-1939; also a DC man; Percy Johnson was a high school DC close buddy of Ellington, and played with him in 1919 in DC; from *La revue nègre*, he jumps to the Chocolate Kiddies band; Johnson, identified as an artist in a jazz band, returns from Hamburg to Birmingham on October 14, 1926 with band members including Sam Wooding, Herbert Flemming, etc.; with the same band, he returns from Buenos Aires to NYC on August 9, 1927. He died in DC in 1939.

How much did they read arrangements now, or instead just play?

Musicians regularly associated with Claude Hopkins include the trumpet, sax, trombone, bass, and drummer; in fact, this is Hopkins's summer 1925 band, complete, plus Bechet; In *World of Swing: An Oral History of Big Band Jazz*, Hopkins is interviewed, and remembers an Asbury Park band with Henry Goodwin, Bass Hill, Percy Johnson, and others, and in *Hungry Heart*, p. 94, it was this Asbury Park version of the band that Reagan and Cook heard and hired.

An article on Hopkins in Pittsburgh *Courier*, August 1, 1931, p. 7, says the band was his "Bohemians"

Evelyn Anderson recalled that Hopkins Band was playing at the
Smile Awhile Inn in Asbury Park, NJ. and she was in the revue there, and they all got hired (NY Times, October 2, 1989, p. C14).

THE MALE QUARTET

Le Camp Meeting Quartette (or "Quadrette"), a name in French papers from October to December associated with La revue; Spencer Williams, Sidney Bechet, Mercer Cook, and Louis Douglas; no new names to add to the roster here, aside from Mercer

= Bootleggers Quartette [used by Lotz (1997), p. 313-14 and Mercer Cook, and see also handbill in Robert Pernet collection (cit. Lotz (1997) and Storyville art)];

but take note: "Bootleggers Quartet" is an expression not seen in any French newspaper.

Mercer Cook memoir says he gets involved in rehearsals in Paris and pushes for a quartet; [L and Mercer: The "Bootleggers Quartet" was Spencer Williams, Sidney Bechet, Mercer Cook, and Louis Douglas]; Mercer also recalled that "I just had to walk on the docks in front of the two big boats. It was easy money" (J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, p. 108); this sounds as if the Bootleggers Quartet was featured in the first (levee) scene, as well as in the Camp Meeting scene.

MEN ADDED IN PARIS:

Mercer Cook (b. 1903), is just age 22, but a stage veteran from childhood; while honeymooning and doing post-graduate work in Paris that fall, he sang in the Quartette; also, he helped translate letters sent to Josephine by admirers (J.-C. Baker, Hungry Heart, p. 119).

Joë Alex, dancer (Joé, Joe Alex, a native of Martinique); he was based in Paris from 1918 or before; actor, dancer and choreographer in stage plays, variety, revues; first hits on him are all in Gallica in 1918;

Hired in Paris for the show, to fill the gap due to the loss of Hartwell Cook; a friend of Louis Douglas.

Called one of "les vedettes de ce spectacle," along with Louis Douglas (Le Petit Journal, October 17, 1925, p. 4), he partners with Josephine in la
"danse sauvage" in the Charleston Cabaret scene.

Alex did not go with the troupe to Brussels in December; he probably left the show in November at the time of the change of venue to L'Etoile; Tommy Woods appears with the troupe at this moment and probably is the replacement for Alex;

Joê Alex goes back to the Parisian stage in the three-act comedy by Caumery, *Bécassine et Bamboula*, taking the part of Bamboula, opening December 17 (*Comoedia*, December 17, 1925, pp. 5, 6; *L'écho de Paris*, December 24, 1925, p. 5); he enjoys an active subsequent career in Paris; he joins *Chocolate Kiddies* by September 1926 (*Hamburger Nachrichten*, September 1, 1926, p. 8) but then appears later in the fall in "Olive Chez les Negres", a Fantasie-operette" (e.g., *Le Siècle*, November 29, 1926); etc., etc.

Tommy Woods (1901-1945); a famous jazz dancer; an eccentric dancer; an acrobatic dance performer; a tap dancer; rubber-legged; an agile soft-shoe dancer; "a dapper dancer"; he was an addition to the troupe in Paris in November 1925.

"Little Tommie Woods"; Tommy Parris Woods (born ca. 1901 in Alabama; died 1945 in LA); son of the ventriloquist Johnnie Woods and Anna Clark. He was another relative youngster in *La revue nègre*, though a seasoned stage veteran; he had been on stage from at least 1915 on the S. H. Dudley Circuit in black vaudeville (*Indianapolis Freeman*, May 15, 1915, p. 1 ("a clever lad"); *Chicago Defender*, May 22, 1915, p. 6); and was touring in 1917 (*Ragged But Right*, p. 173).

As a principal, he was a headliner---the porter---in the original 1921-1923 *Shuffle Along*; and then was in *Running Wild* for a year from 1923 to the end of September or into early October 1924 (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, September 28, 19214, p. 436); during that run, he took part in Will Marion Cook's January 27, 1924 show, "Negro Musical Night"; he appeared on a vaudeville bill at the Lafayette in May 1924 (*NY Age*, May 31, 1924, p. 6).

Woods was then in Europe from later October 1924 to fall 1926 or 1927; he was already in France in 1924 on the road and with a colored floor show at the Moulin Rouge, Billy Pierce's *Brown Skin Review*, that sailed for Le Havre on October 29, 1924 (*Billboard*, November 15, 1924, p. 6; *Chicago Defender*, October 17, 1925, p. 7; *Chicago Defender*,...
November 8, 1925, p. 6).

There is no mention of him in the Comoedia, October 8, 1925, p. 2 review, or elsewhere in Parisian papers writing about the show, until his name is cited in late November Parisian newspaper articles and ads at the time of the move of the revue on November 21 to l'Etoile with the "nouvelle" or deuxième" version (e.g., Le Figaro, November 21, 1925, p. 4); first mention of him with the troupe in an American newspaper reference only occurs in the very late fall (NY Age, December 26, 1925, p. 6), reporting at second hand a letter of Louis Douglas. He may have joined the troupe expressly to replace Joë Alex as one of the two principal male dancers, the other continuing to be Honey Boy Thompson; in Le Journal, November 25, 1925, p. 5, and other ads, Woods is “Le Danseur En Caoutchouc.” He stayed with the troupe when it left Paris for Berlin (Berliner Tageblatt, January 4, 1926, p. 4; Berliner Börsenzeitung, January 7, 1926, p. 10).

Woods is "Just From Europe" in a show at the Lafayette beginning August 23, 1926 (NY Age, August 21, 1926, p. 6), while in the fall of 1927 he was “just back from three years in Europe” and featured with “The Nine Blackbirds” in 1927 (Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, October 30, 1927, p. 62); he is dancing in the US in a colored revue in 1928 and 1929 (“Plantation Days: A Red Hot Colored Revue”) over the Orpheum vaudeville circuit (an agile soft-shoe dancer; the world's greatest eccentric dancer, according to one advertisement in 1928-29); he was in burlesque doing "an unusual soft-shoe number" in 1929 (Cleveland Plain Dealer, March 27, 1929, p. 25); he was with S. H. Dudley in "Plantation Revue" in 1934, doing "Russian Dances" (Kansas City Star, August 18, 1934, p. ). He died in LA on March 1, 1945 (Chicago Defender, August 24, 1940, p. 21; Chicago Defender, March 24, 1945, p. 18; Chicago Defender, March 31, 1945, p. 17; California Death Index).

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MIGUEL COVARRUBIAS

Four backdrops for Hotsy Totsy were executed by Miguel Covarrubias (1904-1957), just 21, who had arrived in NYC in 1923 at age 19. He was doing drawings of African Americans for Vanity Fair in 1924-1925 that were
collected and published in *Negro Drawings* (1927). The young Mexican artist was likely put in touch with Caroline Dudley Reagan by Carl Van Vechten or someone else from that writer's circle.

Presumably the Covarrubias designs were taken (or mailed) overseas as sketches on paper, and then realized quickly in the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, not manufactured and shipped. His designs directly and heavily influenced Paul Colin, and hence, Colin’s work on the curtain, the poster, the program, and some sheet music.

An interesting question is whether Louis Douglas, upon his return to the US in mid 1925, was the subject of any of the Covarrubias images, or provided poses.

1925, in August: a month before sailing, the basic scenario had to have been drafted so Covarrubias could design the flats, after friend John Dos Passos, an artist as well as a novelist, had turned down Reagan's request to do them. In J.-C. Baker’s narrative, Covarrubias comes on board after the company is set (p. 94).

Covarrubias had not yet done stage designs aside from one for the "Rancho Mexicano" scene in Rogers and Hart’s *Garrick Gaieties* in May/June 1925; We do not know how many sets/backdrops he designed for the revue, but probably just the four for the big scenes (steamboats, rural church, New York skyline, New York cabaret), with other scenes playing out in front of the curtain.

Some or all of the Covarrubias drawings for his *Negro Drawings* (publ. 1927; copyright 21 October 1927) are from *Vanity Fair*, according to an author's note; this would have been in the 1924-1925 issues; drawing No. 7, "Charleston," is the initial image from which the curtain of the show was made by Colin, which in turn became the front cover of Spencer Williams sheet music published in Paris. Was it an image of Louis Douglas, who was back in NYC from June 15?

"He is especially interested in negro types, and this summer a collection of his negro caricatures was on exhibition in Paris under the auspices of one of the leading Parisian artists" (Los Angeles *Times*, September 24, 1925, p. A2).

Further, in this same time frame, Covarrubias' "Jazz Baby" appeared in *Vanity Fair* in December 1924; a Covarrubias drawing, "Blues Singer,"
illustrated a Langston Hughes poem in Alain Locke, ed., *The New Negro* (1925); and a Covarrubias caricature of a black piano player is on the cover of Langston Hughes' *The Weary Blues* (1926). Moreover, Covarrubias went on to do eight plates for the 1926 W. C. Handy edition of blues songs.

**PAUL COLIN**

In Paris, the Covarrubias sets and costume design provided the inspiration for French poster artist Paul Colin (1892-1985), working in Paris at speed, to create images for the show's curtain, poster, program, and sheet music cover. This was one of his very first commissions at the start of a long, prolific, and celebrated career as a theatrical poster artist and set designer.

NB: When the show moved to the Theatre de l'Etoile, another poster, in the Colin idiom, was made by Orsi.

Another Colin poster in the same idiom from a little, over a year later advertises the *Bal Nègre*, with Josephine Baker, a one-time only event at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées on February 11, 1927.

Some images from the 30 that Colin provided for Josephine Baker's *Les Mèmoires de Joséphine Baker* (Paris: Editions Kra, 1927), and some images by Colin for his portfolio of lithographs, *Le tumulte noir* (Paris: Editions d'Art Succès, 1927), may in some cases preserve stylized renderings of scenes from the revue, as well as of Josephine shortly afterward at the Folies Bergère.
SPENCER WILLIAMS SONGS

Spencer Williams (1889-1965) was a prolific composer, lyricist, pianist, and singer, but not a show writer or director or producer. Over the years 1925-1927, his collaboration with lyricist Jack Palmer (1900-1976) on songs is important to the history of La revue nègre, and to Josephine Baker's subsequent appearances at the Folies Bergère. Williams published two songs from the revue in Paris in the fall of 1925, and appeared on stage in it as a singing member of the Bootlegger's Quartet.

Exactly what music was heard at the premier of the revue is a bit of a mystery. It is not reported in the papers which or how many of his songs went into the show, or how many were by other composers. At least one program (of the 7 tableaux version) reports one or more songs, but no one has described the full contents of that program.

[NB: The surviving programs in Parisian archives need checking.]

NB: Palmer and Williams are identified as the musical team for La revue in an early program, and in Parisian newspaper hits (La Presse and La Rampe) in early November 1925. But another printed program for the show (9 tableaux version) says the music was by Williams and unspecified others ("Musique de Spencer Williams et autres fameux compositeurs nègres américains") and this language is also in an advertisement in Comoedia, November 11, 1925, p. 6.

Palmer is a white lyricist who worked with lots of black artists. He and Williams evidently collaborate on just eight published songs (from WorldCat) over the years 1924-1927, of which the biggest hits were "Everybody loves my baby" and "I've found a new baby." Their songs of 1925 probably were mostly all done and in the pipeline before La revue nègre. Williams has other songs coming out in 1925 and 1926, as does Palmer, but most of the Palmer songs are also Williams, while Williams also works more with others. Songs were sometimes recorded before they were published, and may predate the year of publication by a year (songs of 1925 publication may have been written in 1924, etc.).

Williams arrived in NYC from Le Havre on August 12, 1925, and turned right around to go over again with Hotsy Totsy. Then, when the troupe left Paris for Brussels in December, he once more sailed from Le Havre for NYC (December 16-23, 1925). It was not long, though, before he was back again in Paris. Williams wrote for Josephine for the Folies Bergère in the spring 1926 and the 1926-1927 seasons, and he wrote other
songs for the Folies Bergère in 1926-1927 that were not for Josephine; sometimes he worked with Josephine on the lyrics, while he normally collaborated on them with prolific and popular French composer Maurice Hermite. Another collaborator sharing attributions with Williams and Hermite in this milieu is the hard-to-trace George E. May. Williams and Hermite published around a half dozen songs in Paris in 1927, and May is associated with a slightly smaller number. Williams returned again to the US in 1928 (Chicago Defender, October 27, 1928, p. 6).

NB: Some of the Spencer Williams songs recorded by Josephine in 1926 and 1927 are unpublished. (See below.)

SOME RELEVANT SONGS

1917 "Shim-Me-Sha-Wabble," Spencer Williams (NY: Stern, 1917); LoC copyright notice received May 10, 1917; a very big hit in 1917; it is called the overture in an original program for La revue nègre (where it is called "Shimmy-Sha-Wabble"), and Le tumulte noir, p. 180, says it was played by Bechet in La revue nègre; this song is mentioned in La Semaine a Paris on 2/15/1929, but does not otherwise turn up in the digitally searchable French press.

PALMER and WILLIAMS

1924 "Everybody Loves My Baby (but my baby don't love nobody but me)," Jack Palmer and Spencer Williams (NY: Clarence Williams, 1924); a big hit for Palmer and Williams; LoC copyright September 18, 1924.

1925

1925 “Papa De-Da-Da (New Orleans Stomp),” Spencer Williams, Clarence Williams, and Clarence Todd (NY: Clarence Williams Music Publ., 1925); LoC copyright December 27, 1924

1925 “Give me just a little bit of your love,” Jack Palmer and Spencer Williams (NY: Handy Bros., 1925); this song is mentioned in the Ivan Gol review from late October 1925; LoC copyright December 30, 1924.
1925 “She’s my Sheba, I’m her Shiek, I’m his Sheba, he’s my Shiek,” Jack Palmer and Spencer Williams (1925; announced as just written in *Billboard*, June 6, 1925, p. 22); LoC copyright February 23, 1925.

1925 “Boodle-Am: A brand new Charleston Pat,” Jack Palmer and Spencer Williams (NY: Handy Bros., 1926); also cited in an example, but not printed in full, in W.C. Handy, ed., *Blues: an anthology* (NY: 1926, repr. 1972, a publication with frontispiece and eight major illustrations by Covarrubias) LoC copyright February 27, 1925.

This song by Palmer and Williams is being sung by Ruby Mason at a Club in Atlantic City (Floyd Snelson column in *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 6, 1925, p. 10); it is sung over the radio in December 1925 (*San Francisco Chronicle*, December 15, 1925, p. 12)

Some secondary sources, including J.-C. Baker and Jody Blake (drawing on an original program?), say that Josephine danced to the "Boodle-am shake" in the first scene on the docks.

1925 “If I had my way 'bout my sweetie,” Jack Palmer and Spencer Williams (1925); LoC copyright July 8, 1925

1925 “[I'm] Gonna hang around my sugar till I gather all the sugar that she's got,” Jack Palmer and Spencer Williams (1925); *Billboard*, August 22, 1925, p. 21, says it will be a contribution of theirs to the fall crop of songs;
In September 1925, Ellington and his Washingtonians record "I'm Gonna Hang around My Sugar," and also Williams's "Trombone Blues" (words by Ted Nixon) LoC copyright 1925.

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Two songs from *La Revue nègre*

1925 “No one can love me. Like the way you do. Chant et piano ("Revue Negre.")”, words and music, Spencer Williams (Paris: W. A. Johnson, 1925); LoC copyright April 19, 1926
Ethel Waters records this song in NYC on 29 April 1925, so the song predates the fall 1925 show.

The cover of the Paris edition in 1925 is reproduced as Color Plate 5 in Le tumulte noir; this cover is derived from the Covarrubias opening curtain for the revue according to that book. One copy in BnF. See Covarrubias, "Charleston," pl. 7 in Negro Drawings.

1925 “Dance With Me (Danse avec moi),” words and music, Spencer Williams. Like the above, this song was published in 1925 in Paris by W. A. Johnson, with one copy reported in BnF. LoC copyright renewal says it was copyright October 30, 1925; it used the same cover art as "No one can love me," "d’apres decors de Covarrubias"---only the titles have been swapped one for the other.

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1926 “I’ve found a new baby: fox trot,” Jack Palmer and Spencer Williams (NY: Clarence Williams, 1926); copyright 1926; also, sometimes "I found a new baby"; a big hit; ad for this song in Billboard, February 27, 1926, n.p. and Variety, March 13, 1926, p. 3, calls it an overnite hit; recorded three times in January 1926, including by Clarence Williams, Fletcher Henderson, and Ethel Waters, so it had to have been around in late 1925.

One French reference says explicitly that it was written for Baker for La revue nègre, though she really was not a singer in that show; Josephine Baker records it in Paris in October/November 1926, with "Skeedle um," for Odeon; the song is mentioned in a Josephine Baker letter to the Chicago Defender (10/30/26, p. 7) as a Spencer Williams song she is recording for Odeon.

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Folies Bergère numbers:

1926, in April: in Philadelphia Courier (Philadelphia Courier, April 17, 1926, p. 11; something quite similar in Baltimore Afro American, April 24, 1926, p. 000), Josephine is now with the Folies Bergère "singing all new numbers written and composed by Spencer Williams . . . who also wrote the music for La Revue Negre."
The songs mentioned as "new" and "for the Folies" include "I want to yodel," "Skeedle-um," "Charleston Feet," and a dance number, "Moroccan Dreams (Dance Afrique)," as below. Ditto in the *Afro American*, where there is an article about Josephine that says that her songs are: "Want to Yodel," "Skeedle-um," "Charleston Feet," and her oriental dance number "Moroccan Dreams (danse afrique)."

1926 "I want to yodel," Spencer Williams (unpubl);
Acc. J.-C. Baker (*Hungry Heart*, p. 101), Spencer Williams writes this song on shipboard for Josephine in September 1925 and it becomes a big hit of *La revue nègre*. The *Querschnitt* revue (January 1926) mentions this song.

The *Courier*, though, says it is a new number written for Josephine for the Folies Bergère, along with "Skeedle-um," "Charleston Feet," and the dance number "Moroccan Dreams" (Pittsburgh *Courier*, April 17, 1926, p. 11), and it is sung by Josephine at the Folies in spring 1926 and recorded by her in November 1926.

It is mentioned as Josephine's one song at the Folies, where she is otherwise dancing (Cleveland *Plaindealer*, August 15, 1926, p. 73 [Dramatic Section, p. 3], in Eleanor Clarage's column, "The After-Beat," here devoted to "The Famous Folies Bergere")

1926 "Charleston Feet" (Spencer Williams, unpubl., for Josephine Baker at Folies Bergère); The *Courier* says it is a new number written for Josephine for the Folies Bergère (Pittsburgh *Courier*, April 17, 1926, p. 11)

1926 "Moroccan Dreams (danse Afrique)" (Spencer Williams, unpubl., for Josephine Baker at Folies Bergère); The *Courier* says it is a new number written for Josephine for the Folies Bergère (Pittsburgh *Courier*, April 17, 1926, p. 11)

1926 "Skeedle-Um: the hit of the "Folies Bergère," Paris," Spencer Williams and Irving Bibo (publ. score in WorldCat., 1926); LoC copyright office 1927); [a.k.a. "Skeedle-up"]
The *Courier* says it is a new number written for Josephine for the Folies Bergère (Pittsburgh *Courier*, April 17, 1926, p. 11); recorded by Josephine in October/November 1926 and/or 1927; mentioned in Josephine Baker letter to the Chicago *Defender*, October 30, 1926, p. 7, as a Spencer Williams song she is recording for Odeon.
She writes the Chicago Defender (Chicago Defender, October 30, 1926, p. 7) and says "I am now recording for the Odeon Record company . . . ." "I've Found a New Baby," "Skeedle-Up," "Wait Until We Get Alone," "Lonesome Lovesick Blues," and "If You Know What I Am."

1926 "Lonesome Lovesick Blues" (Spencer Williams, unpubl.? or published by Clarence Williams in NYC); recorded by Josephine in 1927 [NB: a song of this title, a dance number, was recorded and advertised in 1921; Harlem Renaissance Lives (ed. Gates) says Blanche Calloway recorded a song of this title in 1925]; mentioned in Josephine Baker letter to the Defender (Chicago Defender, October 30, 1926, p. 7) as a Spencer Williams song she is recording for Odeon.

1926 "Wait Until We Get Alone," mentioned in Josephine Baker's letter to the Defender (Chicago Defender, October 30, 1926, p. 7) as a Spencer Williams song she is recording for Odeon; no publication, but LoC copyright with James P. Johnson

1926 "If You Know What I Am," mentioned in Josephine Baker letter to the Defender (Chicago Defender, October 30, 1926, p. 7) as a Spencer Williams song she is recording for Odeon.

1927

1927 "I Love Dancing," Spencer Williams and George E. May, music; Spencer Williams and Josephine Baker, lyrics (Paris: Les éditions du Music Hall et Enoch et cie., 1927); for Folies Bergère; recorded by Josephine in 1927

1927 "Black Bottom Ball: A Black Bottom Stamp," music, Spencer Williams and George E. May, music; lyrics, Josephine Baker and Spencer Williams (Paris: Editions du Music Hall, 1927); also publ. by Clarence Williams in NYC; the US copyright is renewed in 1954; for Folies Bergère; although the Black Bottom was danced by Louis Douglas and Josephine Baker in La revue nègre, it was not identified as such at the time, and it hits the Paris stage and the Paris papers as "la danse nouvelle" at the end of 1926.

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Important review-articles about the show were authored by Ivan Goll and Ottomar Starke.

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Goll mentions the singing of "Swanee River" and "Give Me Just a Little Bit."

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Ottomar Starke (1886-1962) was a German writer, feuilletonist, social critic, set-designer (stage designer), painter, and illustrator. A review by Starke of the Berlin appearance of La revue nègre appeared in Der Querschitt, Band 6/1 (1926), p. 117-119. A full text of the 1970 Kraus reprint of this journal, digitized by McGill University, is available at

Starke's review mentions many individual musical numbers by name. He heard both Josephine and Marion singing. There is no mention of the two new songs identified in their sheet music covers as for the show that were published in Paris in Fall 1925 by Williams.

Josephine sings:

"Boodle-Am" (P&W, 1925), with "the Babies"
"I want to yodel" (Williams, unpublished, 1925)
"Give me just a little bit" (P&W, 1925) [singing this number is also mentioned by Ivan Goll]
Josephine dances:
the Charleston "Sadie Snow"

Maude de Forest sings:
"Everything my sweetie does"; a song with this title was recorded in 1925 by jazz and blues singer Rosa Henderson, but without a named composer and it is apparently unpublished as sheet music; Could this title be a mis-hearing of the title of the 1925 Palmer and Williams song "If I had my way 'bout my sweetie"?
"Same train"
"Papa de Dada" (P&W, 1925)

Marion Cook sings:
"Swanee River" [singing this number is also mentioned by Ivan Goll]

The Strutting Babies are featured in:
"Boodle-Am", with Baker Jazz Drill, with Douglas
"Sadie Snow", with Baker Les Strutting Babies, with Honey Boy Thompson Cocktail Dance Danse Sauvage, with Baker and Alex
Comment: There is a kind of familiar set piece about *La revue nègre* that many accounts repeat, at about the same length, with only slight differences in content and emphasis. Tellingly, a few glaringly incorrect details (e.g., Bechet as peanut vendor) get reported over and over.

JAZZ AND NEGROPHILIA AND FRANCE
AND HARLEM GOES TO MONTMARTRE


http://www.plaisirsdujazz.fr/chapitre-deux-sommaire


1996/1997 Storyville art on Louis Douglas, not seen in full, probably by Lotz, and probably same content as 1997 ref. here immediately above; cites a handbill in Robert Pernet collection, and German reviews, etc. [NB: Post J.-C. Baker book]


ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS OF RECENT VINTAGE CITED BY FRY (fn 15, pp. 34-35):


AND CLOSER TO THE DAY:


JOSEPHINE BAKER BIOGRAPHIES

These, too, usually give about the same amount of space to the revue (i.e., a chapter or the equivalent) as in the books above.


Draws on personal contacts with Sophie Reagan, Mercer Cook, etc., etc.


**AUTOBIOGRAPHIES, etc., by Josephine Baker**


