

21L.423J/21M.223J

Reading Questions: Session 12

Who was Fanny Kemble and what was her relation to African-American music?

What are the African forms and styles of singing visible/audible in African-American singing in the 19th C.?

Describe the European influences in African-American singing in the same period.

What are some new dimensions of African-American songs that are neither African nor European but a synthesis of both traditions?

Who were the Fisk Jubilee Singers?

What was the prehistory of the American minstrel show? Were there models in other countries and traditions?

What are the American origins of the minstrel show? Who were Thomas Rice and Dan Emmett? Which tunes are associated with these men?

Describe the minstrel show in mid-nineteenth-century form (from the Hans Nathan article). What instruments are associated with the minstrel tradition?

What is the racial/racist factor, and how did it change? What is suggested by a “Jim Crow?” A “Zip Coon?” A “Sambo?”

In the Winans article, the music is described. Do you know any of these songs? How did the content of the shows’ music change?

What are the distinguishing features of the spiritual, and what were typical performance practices?

Describe a minstrel show. Were they indigenous or do they have counterparts in other countries? What was the content of minstrel shows? Were they racially neutral?

Were “minstrels” black or white?

What kind of music did minstrel shows feature?

What was the tone and meaning of the texts of minstrel show songs? Where did the tunes come from?

Where did the spirituals come from?