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The Last Darcy: Bert Williams, Black-on-Black Minstrelsy, and the African Diaspora

By Louis Chude-Sokei

Duke University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, The Last Darcy: Bert Williams, Black-on-Black Minstrelsy, and the African Diaspora, Louis Chude-Sokei, The Last "Darcy" establishes the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century comedian Bert Williams as central to the development of a global black modernism centred in Harlem's Renaissance. Before integrating Broadway in 1910 via a controversial stint with the Ziegfeld Follies, Williams was already an international icon. Yet his name has faded into near obscurity, his extraordinary accomplishments forgotten largely because he performed in blackface. Louis Chude-Sokei contends that Williams's blackface was not a display of internalized racism nor a submission to the expectations of the moment. It was an appropriation and exploration of the contradictory and potentially liberating power of racial stereotypes. Crucially, Chude-Sokei argues that Williams's minstrelsy negotiated the place of black immigrants in the cultural hotbed of New York City and was replicated throughout the African Diaspora, from the Caribbean to Africa itself. Williams was born in the Bahamas. When performing the "darcy," he was actually masquerading as an African American. This black-on-black minstrelsy thus challenged emergent racial constructions equating "black" with African American and marginalizing the many diasporic blacks in New York. It also dramatized the practice...



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