

# The black who is not black must not be black \*)

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In March 2022, "social media activists" stormed against the performance of the opera "Jonny spielt auf" by Ernst Krenek at Munich's Gärtnerplatztheater. Their protest was directed against the "blackfacing" of the title character. Those in charge of the theater gave in to the pressure, removed the black make-up, reprinted the programs and canceled the play in the next season.

In 1997, in a production by Patrice Bart, the swans in the 2nd and 4th acts of Tchaikovsky's ballet "Swan Lake" were painted white at the Staatsballett in Berlin. A dark-skinned dancer was outraged by referring to "racism".



## Should cultural events like the following be avoided in the future?



American singer and entertainer Al Jolson played the title role in the 1927 film "The Jazz Singer" in the blackface makeup of the minstrel shows.

The Georgian dancer Vakhtang Chabukiani had his entire body covered in dark makeup for his title role in the 1960 ballet film ballet "Otelo" with music by Aleksis Machavariani.



South African soprano Noluvuyiso Mpfu was made up in the facial whites of Elizabethan England as Maria Stuarda in Donizetti's opera at Cape Town Opera in 2015.

Soprano Birgit Nilsson sang the role of the Chinese princess Turandot in Puccini's opera at the Metropolitan Opera, in Seattle and Vienna with her face painted yellow.



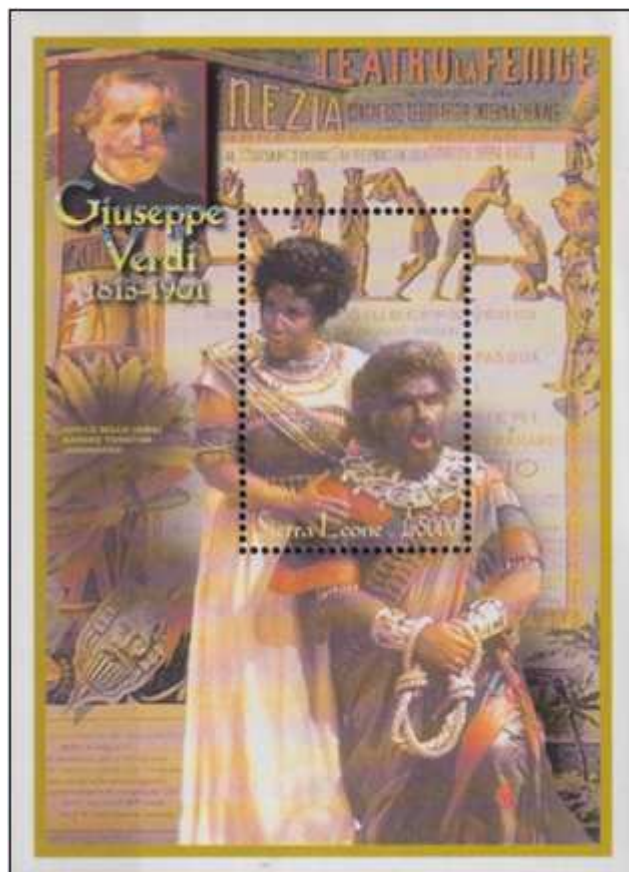
Actor and singer Eddie Murphy not only played a role in the film "Coming to America" whitefacing.

Black actor Dooley Wilson, the piano man in the movie Casablanca, was a member of a Beijing Theater. By 1908 he sang the song "Mr. Dooley" in a Whiteface imitation as an Irish singer.



The Swedish actor and singer Warner Oland played the detective Charlie Chan in a TV series from 1931. In the film "The Colorful Veil" he embodied a Chinese general as Greta Garbo's partner.

Aprile Millo, American soprano of Italian descent, sang the lead role in an acclaimed 1991 production of "Aida" at the Metropolitan Opera. She was accompanied by the Armenian bassist Barseg Tumanyan on stage - both in "blackfacing".



Lori Phillips in the title role of "Turandot" was just one of many opera singers who adapted their faces to the culture of the piece.

**Otello has to remain black, otherwise opera will degenerate into boulevard theater ... and further bans on representation are threatened. What then becomes of Rigoletto's fool's hump, Falstaff's fat belly and the intercultural misery of Madama Butterfly? ...**(Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 14.5.2019)