

12. The Birthday Party Waltz, 1883

Horace Weston (1825-1890, USA)

Arranged by Rachel Barton Pine and David Bontemps

Edited by Rachel Barton Pine

(Allegro $\text{♩} = 152$)

Violin 1

Violin 2

5

10

14

19

25

Musical notation for measures 25-30. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature. The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. Handwritten annotations include checkmarks above notes and a '4' above a measure in the upper staff.

31

Musical notation for measures 31-37. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and two sharps key signature. The lower staff has a bass clef and two sharps key signature. A first ending bracket spans measures 34-35, and a second ending bracket spans measures 36-37. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present in measure 36. Handwritten annotations include checkmarks and a '4' above notes.

38

Musical notation for measures 38-43. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and two sharps key signature. The lower staff has a bass clef and two sharps key signature. The music continues with eighth and sixteenth notes. Handwritten annotations include checkmarks and a '4' above notes.

■ Horace Weston

Horace Weston (1825–1890) was an American composer and banjo player. He was born to free parents in Connecticut before the Civil War. He learned to play several instruments when he was a child. But he is most famous for playing the banjo, which he learned to play by ear when he was 30 years old. He became a **virtuoso** banjoist, and he played in popular theater performances of the day called **minstrel shows**. In fact, he became one of the biggest stars in minstrelsy in the mid-1800s!

In 1873, Weston toured Europe with a minstrel company that was performing ***Uncle Tom's Cabin***. His performances there were highly praised, and he made history as the first Black performer to be featured in a

special role. He was one of the first African-American musicians to become famous as a banjo player, and his style influenced many other musicians. He composed several pieces of music for banjo, including "The Birthday Party Waltz."

A **virtuoso** is a highly skilled musician.

Minstrel shows were an American form of entertainment that was popular in the 1800s and early 1900s. Minstrel shows included comic skits, dancing, and music that presented negative **stereotypes** about African Americans. At first, Black characters were played by White performers wearing black makeup. Later, Black people started performing in minstrel shows too. Even though minstrels portrayed Black people in negative ways, they were still one of the only ways for talented Black actors and musicians to perform professionally at that time.

A **stereotype** is a common but oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

Uncle Tom's Cabin is a book published in 1852 by the White American author Harriet Beecher Stowe, and it was also adapted into a stage play. The story presented African-American characters in disrespectful ways, but it also presented the horrors of slavery for White readers throughout the country. For this reason, it helped to spread anti-slavery ideas leading up to the Civil War.

