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137 Old Ridgefield Road
Wilton, CT - 06897
www.wiltonlibrary.org
203.762.3950

NEWS

Contact: Janet Crystal

Direct dial number: 203-762-6324

E-mail: jcrystal@wiltonlibrary.org

www.wiltonlibrary.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wilton Library brings Broadway talk to town June 1

Wilton, CT – Broadway shows are still a few months away from opening, but Wilton Library is bringing the sense of Broadway to town with a virtual visit from Caseen Gaines, author of *Footnotes*, on Tuesday, June 1, 7 to 8 p.m. Gaines’s engaging account captures the triumphant story of the all-Black Broadway musical that changed the world forever.

Footnotes: The Black Artists Who Rewrote the Rules of the Great White Way recounts how Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake, along with comedians Flournoy Miller and Aubrey Lyles, overcame poverty, racism, and violence to harness the energy of the Harlem Renaissance and produce a runaway Broadway hit. The show launched the careers of many of the twentieth century’s most beloved Black performers. Born in the shadow of slavery and establishing their careers at a time of increasing demands for racial justice and representation for people of color, Sissle, Blake, Miller, and Lyles broke down innumerable barriers between Black and white communities at a crucial point in American history. Author and pop culture expert Caseen Gaines leads the audience through the glitz and glamour of New York City during the Roaring Twenties to reveal the revolutionary impact one show had on generations of Americans, and how its legacy continues to resonate today.

From the publisher, “Opening night was going better than any of them could have expected, but the performers knew the rapturous applause was obscuring the truth: there was a good chance someone was going to get killed at any moment, and it was likely to be one of them. When the curtain rose on *Shuffle Along* in 1921, the first all-Black musical to succeed on Broadway, no one was sure if America was ready for a show featuring nuanced, thoughtful portrayals of Black characters—and the potential fallout was terrifying. But from the first jazzy, syncopated beats of composers Sissle and Blake’s inspired musical numbers, New York audiences fell head over heels for *Shuffle Along*, which was unlike anything they had seen before.

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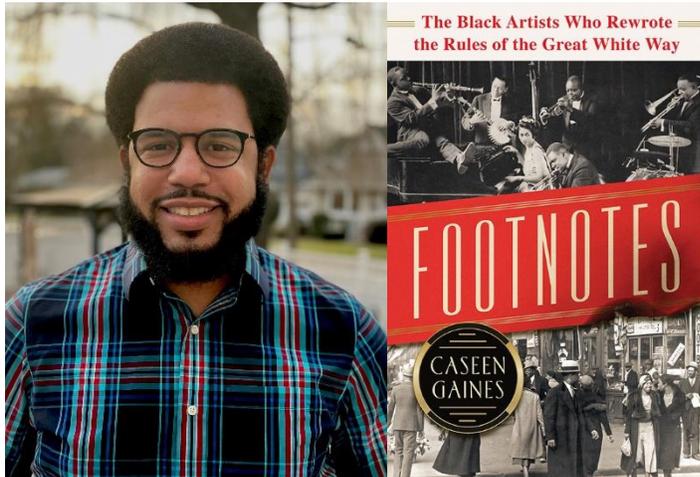
Before *Hamilton*, before *The Wiz*, and even before *Porgy and Bess*, there was *Shuffle Along*, an unforgettable theatrical achievement that paved the way for innumerable Black actors, dancers, musicians, and composers and left an indelible mark on our popular culture and our lives.”

Author and journalist Caseen Gaines has written for *Rolling Stone*, *Vanity Fair*, and *NY Mag*. He holds an MA from Rutgers University in American Studies, focusing on racial representations in popular culture.

This is a virtual author talk therefore registration is required. An email link will be provided to all registrants a few days before the event. Books are available for purchase through elmstreetbooks.com. A portion of the proceeds benefits Wilton Library. The media sponsor is *GOOD Morning Wilton*. Please visit www.wiltonlibrary.org for program details and to register.

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Caption: Author Caseen Gaines visits Wilton Library virtually to discuss his new book, *Footnotes*, on Tuesday, June 1, from 7 to 8 p.m. *Footnotes* is the triumphant account of the all-Black Broadway musical that changed the world forever. It is the story of how Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake, along with comedians Flournoy Miller and Aubrey Lyles, overcame poverty, racism, and violence to harness the energy of the Harlem Renaissance and produce a runaway Broadway hit that launched the careers of many of the twentieth century’s most beloved Black performers. Registration is required. Books are available for purchase through elmstreetbooks.com. A portion of the proceeds benefits Wilton Library. The media sponsor is *GOOD Morning Wilton*. Visit www.wiltonlibrary.org for program details and to register. Wilton Library, 137 Old Ridgefield Road, Wilton, CT; www.wiltonlibrary.org; 203-762-3950.