

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

Artists, Musicians, Authors



THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

Essential Questions

- How did art, music, and literature impact the cultural rebirth of the African American community during the 1920s?

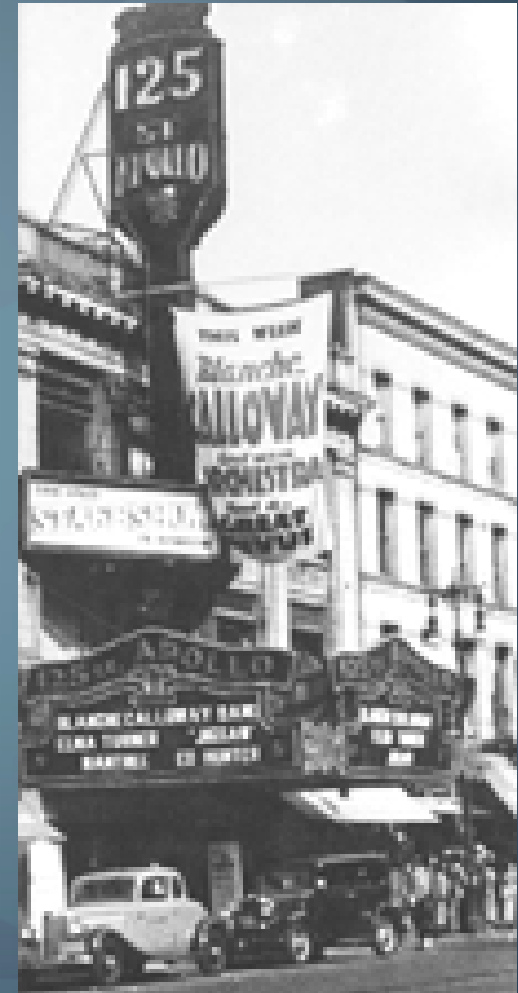


The Great Migration

- Between 1920 and 1930, almost 750,000 African Americans left the South for political, social, and economic reasons.
- Why go North?
 - wider opportunities for prosperity
 - more racially tolerant environments
 - a sense of actual (as opposed to theoretical) citizenship
- Mass exodus from the South called The Great Migration.

Why "Harlem" Renaissance?

- Of the almost 750,000 African Americans who moved North, nearly 175,000 moved to Harlem.
- Harlem is a section of Manhattan, which covers three square miles; therefore, Harlem became the largest concentration of black people in the world.



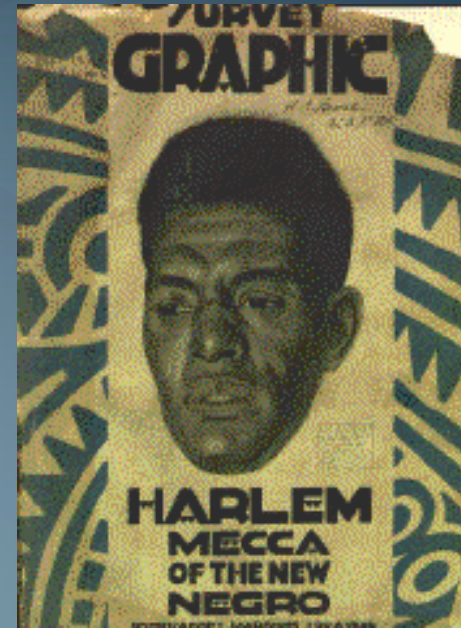
Where is Harlem?

The island of Manhattan



Harlem Renaissance

- The outpouring of talent from the African Americans writers, artists, and musicians who gathered in the city.
- The Harlem Renaissance and the New Negro movement generated an explosion of creativity and fostered a new black cultural identity.



Common Themes

- African Heritage
- Black Southern Folk Traditions
- New African American Voice

Literature of the Harlem Renaissance



Claude McKay



Langston
Hughes



Zora Neale
Hurston

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

(1919)

To listen to Langston Hughes read his poem, click [here](#).

I've known rivers:

*I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.*

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.

*I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.*

I've known rivers:

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

- What is the tone or mood of this poem?
- Why do you think the poem was written and for what audience?
- List two things in this poem that tell you about life in the United States at the time.



Visual Art of the Harlem Renaissance



Palmer Hayden: Fetich et Fleurs (1926)



Aaron Douglas: An Idyll of the Deep South (1934)



Music of the Harlem Renaissance

Cultural Changes



- The 1920s experiences the birth of jazz music.
- Before the 20s music was largely church based, and most people had never heard music like jazz. Jazz was often accompanied by singing that featured improvisation, another new thing for society.
- Louis Armstrong became a cultural phenomenon overnight.
- This was the **Jazz Age**, and jazz music will fill clubs and airwaves across the country



Duke Ellington

- Ellington was a jazz composer, conductor, and performer during the Harlem Renaissance.
- During the formative Cotton Club years, he experimented with and developed the style that would quickly bring him worldwide success. Ellington would be among the first to focus on musical form and composition in jazz.
- Ellington wrote over 2000 pieces in his lifetime.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoDm_O7iiYk



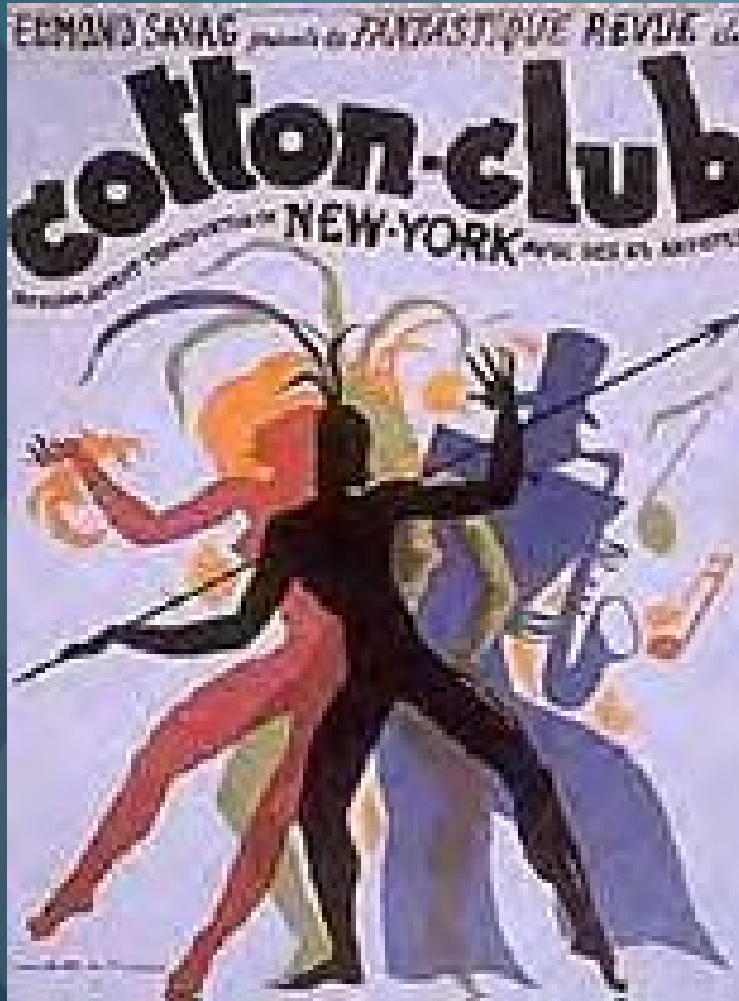
105

(MED. SLOW SWING) **EAST ST. LOUIS TOODLE-OO**
-DUKE ELLINGTON / BOB HALEY

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the piece 'East St. Louis Toodle-oo'. It consists of five staves of music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo and mood are indicated as 'MED. SLOW SWING'. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and triplets. Above the staves, there are handwritten chord symbols: C-, C-/E^b, F-^b/D, F-^b, C-/E^b, C-/G, F-^b, F-^b/A^b, C-/G, C-/E^b, F-^b, G⁷/D⁹, C-, A^b7, G⁷/A^b, C-, C-/E^b, F-^b/D, F-^b, C-/E^b, C-/G, F-^b, F-^b/A^b, C-/G, C-/E^b, F-^b, G⁷/D⁹, C-, B^o7, B^b-7, E^b7. The score is written in black ink on a white background.

•What is the tone or mood of this recording?

The Cotton Club



- The Duke Ellington Orchestra was the "house" orchestra for a number of years at the Cotton Club. The revues featured glamorous dancing girls, acclaimed tap dancers, vaudeville performers, and comics. All the white world came to Harlem to see the show.
- The first Cotton Club revue was in 1923. There were two new fast paced revues produced a year for at least 16 years.

Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong



- Louis Armstrong was a jazz composer and trumpet player during the Harlem Renaissance.
- He is widely recognized as a founding father of jazz.
- He appeared in 30 films and averaged 300 concerts per year, performing for both kids on the street and heads of state.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAlrpx4oUnE>



CONDUCTOR
EJEM0002C

Essential Jazz Editions Set #2:
Louis Armstrong, 1926 - 1929

As recorded by Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five, 1927
HOTTER THAN THAT

Composed by **LILLIAN HARDIN ARMSTRONG**
Transcribed by **RANDY SANDKE**
Edited by **DAVID N. BAKER**

J = 106

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes parts for Bb Clarinet, Bb Cornet (Bb Trumpet) with 'St. Mute' marking, Trombone, Guitar, Banjo, and Piano. The second system includes parts for Clarinet, Trumpet, Trombone, Guitar, Banjo, and Piano. The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 106. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The first system covers measures 1-8, and the second system covers measures 9-16. Chord symbols are provided for guitar and banjo. The piano part features a steady accompaniment with some melodic lines.

Bessie Smith



- Bessie Smith was a famous jazz and blues singer during the Harlem Renaissance.
- Smith recorded with many of the great Jazz musicians of the 1920s, including Louis Armstrong.
- Smith was popular with both blacks and whites

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gXShOJVwaM>



Back Water Blues Lyrics

When it rains five days and the skies turn dark as night
When it rains five days and the skies turn dark as night
Then trouble's takin' place in the lowlands at night

I woke up this mornin', can't even get out of my door
I woke up this mornin', can't even get out of my door
There's been enough trouble to make a poor girl wonder where she want to go

Then they rowed a little boat about five miles 'cross the pond
Then they rowed a little boat about five miles 'cross the pond
I packed all my clothes, throwed them in and they rowed me along

When it thunders and lightnin' and when the wind begins to blow

When it thunders and lightnin' and the wind begins to blow
There's thousands of people ain't got no place to go

Then I went and stood upon some high old lonesome hill
Then I went and stood upon some high old lonesome hill
Then looked down on the house were I used to live

Backwater blues done call me to pack my things and go
Backwater blues done call me to pack my things and go
'Cause my house fell down and I can't live there no more

Mmm, I can't move no more
Mmm, I can't move no more
There ain't no place for a poor old girl to go

How did it impact history?

- The Harlem Renaissance helped to redefine how Americans and the world understood African American culture. It integrated black and white cultures, and marked the beginning of a black urban society.
- The Harlem Renaissance set the stage for the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s.