

**THE JAZZ AGE:  
HARLEM RENAISSANCE**





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## Welcome to the BSO Midweeks!

On behalf of the Associate Conductor, Jonathan Rush, the members of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and the BSO Education Department, we are delighted to welcome you to our 2022-2023 Midweek Concert Series. With the BSO's Midweek Concert series as the longest running education initiative at the BSO (running since February 16, 1924), and the first regular educational concert series of any orchestra in the country, we are thrilled to have you join us here at the Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall.

This Midweek Concert Season, we present four concerts: *Calypso Fusion*, *A Spirit for the Holidays*, *The Jazz Age: Harlem Renaissance*, and *Beethoven Lives Upstairs*. Each concert incorporates an Arts-Integrated, STEAM-Activated approach to create a relevant, interactive, and interdisciplinary experience.

## About This Guide

On the next pages you will find the Teachers' Guide for *Calypso Fusion*, written by a highly skilled group of Maryland educators with specialism in Music, Drama, Science, English/Language Arts, and Visual Arts, led by award-winning curriculum writer and editor, Richard McCready.

At the start of the guide is a "Snapshot" of your concert experience. This will give you a sense of what to expect in the concert, along with some thoughts about the various curricular connections, and music we suggest you listen to in the classroom before the performance.

Beyond the Snapshot pages you will find a variety of activities, called "Riffs," to signify the various directions that you can explore in order to prepare for this concert. Each Riff may be used in any order you wish. We have also highlighted the various cross-curricular links that align with each Riff so that you may jump to areas that are of particular interest to you and your students. We hope that your students try at least one activity prior to coming to the concert so they can make the most of their live experience at the Meyerhoff.

Each activity is written to encourage students' natural sense of creativity and exploration. They will be able to read the activity pages or you can read the activities with them. Some of the activities are scientific, some are movement games, some employ and encourage art skills, and some involve storytelling and role-play. You best know your students, their capabilities, and their interests. You should encourage students to try the activities that you feel most appropriate for them and for your classroom. Encourage other teachers in your building to try some of the activities as well.





These guides are designed and intended as a mere starting point for exploration, with the essential piece being the work that is created by the student, for the student. Our ultimate goal is to facilitate a strong connection between the music performed by the BSO and the everyday lives of your students, so that they may continue to take music with them wherever they go.



Please feel free to share your students' work with us at the BSO—we love to see where the ideas from these activities might take your students and all the inspired, arts-integrated work they will produce in the classroom. If you wish to share any materials with us at the BSO, please send them to [education@bsomusic.org](mailto:education@bsomusic.org).



We hope you enjoy this guide, your explorations that are yet to come, the concert experience, and sharing your creative work with us.

Warmly,

Brian Precht  
Interim Director of Education & Community Engagement  
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Katie Hunt  
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## *The Jazz Age: Harlem Renaissance* Concert Program

Below is the list of pieces that will be performed on the *Calypso Fusion* Midweek Concert. Please take a moment to listen to these pieces in advance of the concert on YouTube, Spotify, or iTunes.

- ❖ GEORGE GERSHWIN: Introduction from *Porgy & Bess*
- ❖ JAMES P. JOHNSON: *Harlem Symphony*: III. The Nightclub
- ❖ GERSHWIN: "I Got Rhythm" from *Girl Crazy*
- ❖ JOHNSON: *The Charleston*
- ❖ FLORENCE PRICE: Symphony No. 1: III. *Juba Dance*
- ❖ WILLIAM GRANT STILL: "The Blues" from *Lenox Avenue*
- ❖ STILL: *Symphony No. 1, "Afro-American:"* III. *Animato*



## *The Jazz Age: Harlem Renaissance* Snapshot for Teachers and Students

Today's concert features the music born out of and inspired by the Harlem Renaissance. The Harlem Renaissance was an intellectual and artistic movement that took place during the 1920s and 1930s. It was centered in the Black neighborhood of Harlem in New York City. There African American artists created a wide array of works, from poems and plays to paintings, sculpture, and music.

The artists of the Harlem Renaissance strove for equality in the nation's publishing houses, galleries, and concert halls. Composers like James P. Johnson and William Grant Still wrote symphonies drawing on the African American experience. The spirit of the Harlem Renaissance spread to other major cities. In Chicago, the African American composer Florence Price made headlines with her first symphony.

The music in Harlem was not limited to classical works. Jazz dominated the dance halls and night clubs in the 1920s and 30s. Inspired by blues and ragtime, jazz was born in New Orleans. Jazz was played by small combos at first. As the music grew in popularity, big bands started playing the music. The most famous jazz big bands in Harlem were led by Duke Ellington and Count Basie

Jazz was also played on piano during the Harlem Renaissance. James P. Johnson innovated the "stride" style of jazz piano playing. This music was inspired by ragtime. It was called "stride" because the left hand leaps up and down the keyboard with a steady beat. To play "stride" piano requires a great amount of skill because the left and right hands play independently, with lots of syncopation.

During the Harlem Renaissance, African American composers such as William Grant Still and Florence Price began to incorporate elements of popular music into their classical works. In addition to ragtime and stride, elements of the blues and spirituals found their way in symphonies for orchestras.

The influence of the blues, ragtime and jazz could also be heard in the music of white composers. George Gershwin and Irving Berlin were influenced by Black culture. In works like *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) and *Porgy and Bess* (1935), Gershwin tried to blend European classical music with the blues, stride, and spirituals.

Our program begins with "Catfish Row," the introductory music from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. Based on a book and play called *Porgy* by DuBose and Dorothy Heyward, the opera tells the tragic love story of Porgy and Bess as they struggle to survive poverty and racism in Charleston, South Carolina. *Porgy and Bess* is one of Gershwin's most famous compositions. That said, the opera is not without controversy. Gershwin and the Heywards were white. All the characters in the opera are Black. Although Gershwin and his collaborators tried to portray Porgy, Bess, and the other African American characters with respect and empathy, the opera nonetheless promoted some negative stereotypes of Black culture.



## *The Jazz Age: Harlem Renaissance* Snapshot for Teachers and Students

The next piece on our program is the third movement of James P. Johnson's *Harlem Symphony*, entitled "The Nightclub." Johnson found great success as a jazz pianist and Broadway composer, but his first love was classical music. *Harlem Symphony* is his most extensive work. Johnson bridged the gap between ragtime and jazz. He was one of the first great jazz pianists in Harlem. His influence can be heard in the music of all the great piano players that followed from Fats Waller and Duke Ellington to Art Tatum and Count Basie. Johnson's *Harlem Symphony* offers a "programmatic travel log" of Harlem, from the subway and Central Park to a nightclub and Baptist mission. The third movement, "The Nightclub," evokes a rollicking night filled with dancing and jazz in one of the neighborhood's famous venues.

Going back to the music of Gershwin, you will be hearing one of his most popular Broadway tunes - "I Got Rhythm." The song was written for Gershwin's musical *Girl Crazy*. *Girl Crazy* was notable for its cast, which included Ethel Merman in her stage debut, and pit orchestra, with clarinetist Benny Goodman, trombonists Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller, drummer Gene Krupa, and Gershwin himself. *Girl Crazy* isn't very popular anymore, but "I Got Rhythm" has endured, thanks in part to generations of jazz musicians. "I Got Rhythm" features a fascinating series of chord progressions regularly referred to as "rhythm changes." Almost as soon as "I Got Rhythm" hit record stores, jazz musicians took the chord progression from "I Got Rhythm" and wrote their own melody over it, creating what is known as a contrafact. Some well-known contrafacts of "I Got Rhythm" include Duke Ellington's "Cotton Tail," Dizzy Gillespie's "Salt Peanuts," Sonny Stitt's "The Eternal Triangle," Charlie Parker's "Steeplechase," Sonny Rollins' "Oleo," and plenty more. Try composing your own melody to "I Got Rhythm" and who knows - you may be the writer of the next great contrafact!

We once again return to the music of James P. Johnson, and this time, we will hear his most famous tune. The Charleston is an instantly recognizable and iconic melody. You could even call it the unofficial anthem of the Roaring Twenties. The Charleston was so popular when it appeared in 1923 that it launched a new dance craze. Johnson's tune makes use of the iconic "Charleston rhythm," which is derivative of the 3-2 "son clave" rhythm heard in Spanish music. Have you ever done the Charleston? Dance along to this tune and let loose!

The latter half of this program is dedicated to the music of the classical composers Florence Price and William Grant Still. First is the "Juba Dance" from Florence Price's *Symphony No. 1 in E Minor*. The "Juba" dance is also known as "hambone" and involves the stomping your feet and slapping your arms, legs, chest, and cheeks. The Juba influenced not only modern tap dance, but also the Charleston dance. Florence Price was an African American composer. She was also the first Black woman to have a symphony performed by a major symphony orchestra. The entire symphony is steeped in African American culture. The third movement employs rhythms reminiscent of banjo plucking and fiddling and features a lighthearted melody. Price incorporated the Juba dance into several other works, including her *String Quartet No. 2* and *Symphony No. 3*.



## *The Jazz Age: Harlem Renaissance* Snapshot for Teachers and Students

The first excerpt, titled “The Blues,” was composed in 1937 as part of a large-scale work for orchestra, chorus, and narrator titled *Lenox Avenue*. In 1938 the music was transformed into a ballet. The composition is named after Lenox Avenue, “the heart of Harlem” in the 1930s. In later years, the street was renamed Malcolm X Boulevard. Lenox Avenue was one of the most important streets in the world for African American culture. Still based his *Lenox Avenue* on his experiences in Harlem. The selection of this work you will hear today, “The Blues,” is an excerpt from the ninth movement. This particular melody has been adapted for solo instruments, including piano, violin, clarinet, and trumpet.

We end today’s program with the third movement from Still’s groundbreaking *Symphony No. 1, “Afro-American.”* Still’s first symphony was premiered in 1931 by the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. For twenty years the symphony held the distinction of being the most widely performed American symphony. When Still published his symphony in 1935, he included epigraphs from poems by Harlem Renaissance poet Paul Laurence Dunbar at the beginning of each movement. For the third movement, Still quoted two lines from the poem “An Ante-Bellum Sermon.”

“An’ we’ll shout ouag halleluyahs,

On dat mighty reck’nin’ day.”

Still labelled this movement “Animato,” and he often referred to it by the name “Humor.” Listen closely – do you hear a melody in this piece that you heard earlier in today’s concert? The countermelody of this movement bears a striking resemblance to Gershwin’s *I Got Rhythm!* Contrary to what you might assume, Still wasn’t quoting Gershwin when he included this melody in his symphony. Instead, he was drawing attention to a melody that Gershwin borrowed from him!

The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra is joined today by our Artistic Partner, Wordsmith. Based in Baltimore, Wordsmith makes hip-hop with a strong motivational message. His mission is to entertain and education through a message of purpose while providing clean, quality, marketable Music for the Masses. Wordsmith has provided fresh narrations for several works with the Baltimore Symphony, including Saint-Saëns’ *Carnival of the Animals* and Stravinsky’s *A Soldier’s Tale*. The future looks bright for Wordsmith as he officially opened his nonprofit “Rise with a Purpose, Inc.” and delivered his first TED Talk via Johns Hopkins University. Wordsmith will recite the poetry of Harlem Renaissance poets Langston Hughes and Gwendolyn B. Bennett throughout our program, specifically Hughes’ *Harlem* and *Negro Dancers* as well as Bennett’s *Heritage*.

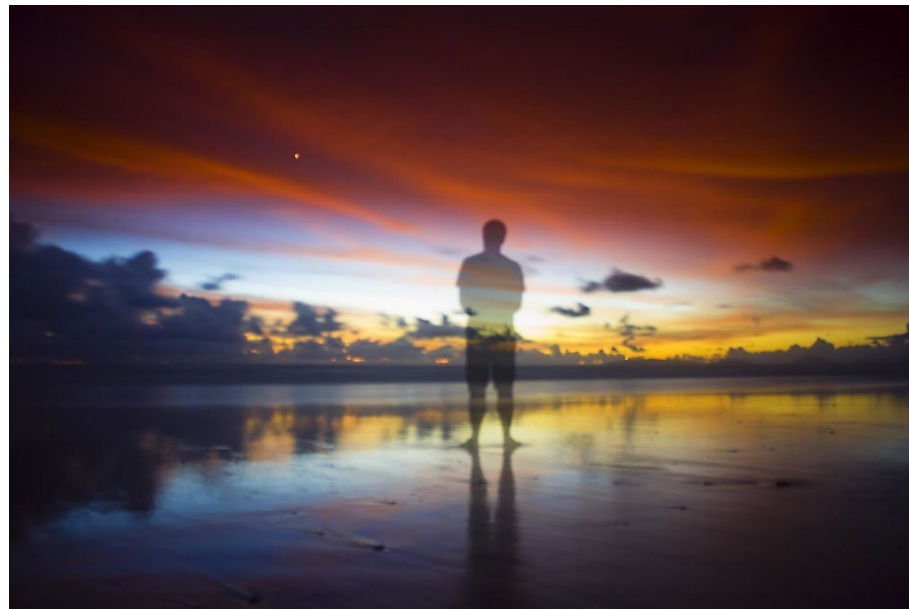




## Riff One: Soul Seekers



Juba is a sort of dance described as a "thigh slapping art form" that came from West African traditions. Enslaved people performed this percussive dance by slapping various parts of the body, especially the hips, thighs, chest and arms, and also stomping. These percussive sounds were fun to perform, but even included secret codes to communicate at times! Let's juba...



### Activity Idea



The juba dance was brought from the Kongo to Charleston, South Carolina. Plantation owners feared that enslaved people were hiding secret codes in their drumming patterns. So instead of using drums, the enslaved people used their bodies to make music to accompany their dancing and singing. This became known as "patting Juba." Today, it is sometimes called "Hambone." Watch this short video of [PATTIN' JUBA--A Spirit-Cleansing Ceremony](#) led by Sule Greg Wilson. Though this is a fun activity to perform, more importantly, Sule shows us how juba can serve as a purging ceremony to reduce stress.



[Click here to see the exact spot in the video to learn Sule's "funky version" of the juba pats and claps.](#)

*(Lyrics provided below are the words of Sule from his instructional video)*

*Juba this and juba that. Juba killed a yellow cat.*

*Way down and double trouble, juba!*

*Juba this and juba that. juba killed a yellow cat.*

*Way down and double trouble, juba!*

*Juba maw and juba paw and juba for your mother-in-law*

*Juba you and juba me and this is what we do to keep our spirits free!*

The BSO will perform Florence B. Price's "Juba Dance" from Symphony #1. Price was the first African-American woman to be recognized as a symphonic composer and to have her music performed by a major orchestra. [Click here to hear a sample of this work.](#)

## ***SOUL CONNECTION***

[The Harlem Renaissance](#) was an outward expression of the collective soul of the African American experience in the 1920's. Expression of self is the identity of many writers, musicians, artists, dancers, actors, and activists.

Have you had the chance to see The Pixar animated film *Soul*? A middle school band teacher named Joe lives a life he never expected. He is a great jazz musician that travels to another realm to help someone find their passion, which helps him discover what it means to "have soul". Joe learns that a person's spark in life isn't just finding what your purpose would be on this earth, but to find joy, happiness, and enthusiasm in living.

Check out [Young Minds Inspired resource](#) that provides printables that correspond with Pixar's *Soul* with activities such as "Let's Get Jazzed", "Meet Some Jazz Legends", and "Dear Future Self". Learn more about the history of jazz as well as make some thoughtful insights about what matters most to YOU and your passions in life.



## Resources

The Secret History of Juba Dance by Enslaved Africans From Kongo

<https://face2faceafrica.com/article/the-secret-history-of-juba-dance-by-enslaved-africans-from-kongo>

- ❖ Pattin' Juba Video Instruction  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYOhW-eArvE>
- ❖ Drop Me Off in Harlem - Check out this website to learn more about the Harlem Renaissance!  
<https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/interactives/harlem/faces/index.html>
- ❖ Pixar's *Soul* Printables  
[https://ymiclassroom.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/soul-nov2020\\_kit-1.pdf](https://ymiclassroom.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/soul-nov2020_kit-1.pdf)



## Curriculum Connections

### Fine Arts Standards

- ❖ **Connecting**
  - 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
  - 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

### English Language Arts Practices

- ❖ E7: They come to understanding other perspectives and cultures.

### Social Studies Practices

- ❖ SS2: Applying disciplinary tools and concepts in civics, economics, geography, and history.



## Riff Two: Neighborhood News



Get inspired by the thriving variety of Black-owned newspapers operating during the Harlem Renaissance that reflected the news and views of their communities. Then create your own newspaper that reflects your own family, neighborhood, school, or other community that you care about and want to show the world!



### Activity Ideas



African American communities have been publishing their own newspapers since very early in American history. Did you know that the very first Black owned and operated newspaper in the United States was established the same year that slavery was abolished in New York State? [“Freedom’s Journal”](#) was founded in 1827, and soon after Frederick Douglas founded the paper [“The North Star”](#) (named for the star that led enslaved people north to freedom.) Black owned and operated presses have been an important part of American life ever since.





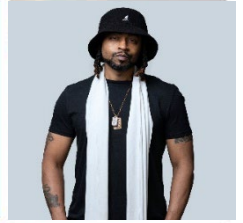
Early Black newspaper publishers recognized the need “to plead our case. Too long have others spoken for us.” They used the power of the press to condemn the misrepresentation and stereotypes perpetuated by white-owned media, and to truthfully represent the details of everyday life in the communities they served. Articles of local interest, church news, profiles of community members, marriage, birth and death announcements, local sports victories, and even celebrity gossip filled the pages of these newspapers alongside, strong calls for racial justice and editorials denouncing regional injustices. But their influence spread well beyond their local community.



Chicago. Newsboy selling the Chicago Defender, Jack Delano, April 1942. From the Farm Security Administration – Office of War Information photograph collection. [//www.loc.gov/item/2017829258/](https://www.loc.gov/item/2017829258/)

During the Great Migration and the Harlem Renaissance, northern papers like the [Chicago Defender](#) and the [New York Amsterdam News](#) made their way into Southern cities and the rural south, in spite of local bans against them. They were read out loud in small groups, snuck into homes and meeting halls, and their pages enticed even more people to make their way to the cities of the north to participate in the urban economy and partake of the blossoming art and entertainment scenes there.

.....and many of these newspapers are still around today! (Click the links above to read the most current editions.)



## Baltimore's Big Contribution

One of the biggest contributions to the Black newspaper press was right here in Baltimore! The [Baltimore Afro-American](#) newspaper, otherwise known as the Afro, is the oldest continually running Black family owned and operated newspaper in the country. It was founded by John H Murphy, Sr., a former enslaved man, with \$200 from his wife, Martha Howard Murphy. Together they created a “platform to offer images and stories of hope to advance their community.” Here are some amazing facts about the Afro-American:

- Gave artist [Romare Bearden](#) one of his first jobs as a cartoonist for the paper
- Became the first Black newspaper to hire female sportswriters (Lillian Johnson and Nell Dodson)
- Hired the first Black female foreign correspondent in WWII (Elizabeth Murphy Phillips Moss)
- Fought to obtain equal pay for Maryland's Black school teachers.
- Joined with the NAACP to sue the University of Maryland Law school to admit Black students
- Launched “The Clean Block” campaign which is still in existence today. The campaign developed into an annual event aimed at improving the appearance of, and reducing crime in, inner-city neighborhoods.



Paul Henderson (1899-1988), photojournalist for the Baltimore Afro-American newspaper from 1929 through circa 1960.



One of the recent locations of the paper in Baltimore (on Charles Street): Marylandstater, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



## Inspired? Make your Own “Community” Paper!

If you were to make a newspaper that shared important things about a community that you are a part of, what would you want to share with the world? Use the following templates to tell the story of a community that you belong to and is important to you. That could be your family, your neighborhood, your place of worship, your school, your chorus or band, etc. Highlight what you love about your community by giving your paper an interesting name and sharing as many different aspects of it as you can. See how many of the following traditional newspaper sections you can include:

- News of the community
- Upcoming events
- An advice column
- An editorial opinion about something you want to change

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- A comic strip
- A crossword puzzle with community themed clues
- A sports column
- Interviews
- A food and recipe column
- “Overheard” - a quotes and rumors section
- Reviews of movies, plays, restaurants, etc.

Can't decide on a community to highlight? Use one of the templates below to write and share about yourself!



A large rectangular frame containing a worksheet layout. At the top is a wide banner with a ribbon effect. Below the banner is a horizontal header box. The main area is divided into four sections: a large vertical column on the left with 15 horizontal lines; a vertical column on the right with 10 horizontal lines and a small rectangular box at the bottom; a square box at the bottom left with a small rectangular box at the bottom; and a vertical column on the bottom right with 5 horizontal lines and a small rectangular box at the bottom.





Breaking News!

The \_\_\_\_\_ Times  
(write your name here)

EXTRA  
EXTRA!  
Read all about me!

My Exclusive Story Told Here for the First Time!

Draw a picture of yourself here

Write about a memorable event in your life

**Superhero Spotlight**  
Write a mini article about someone who inspires you.

**My Favorite Things!**  
Write about something you love.

**Say What?**  
What's your motto or phrase that represents you?



## Resources

- ❖ More Information About “Freedom’s Journal”  
[https://www.pbs.org/blackpress/news\\_bios/newbios/nwsppr/freedom/freedom.html](https://www.pbs.org/blackpress/news_bios/newbios/nwsppr/freedom/freedom.html)
- ❖ Information About Frederick Douglass and “The North Star”  
<https://transcription.si.edu/project/14480>
- ❖ Romare Bearden Foundation  
<https://beardenfoundation.org/>

## Links to Current Issues of Black-Owned and Operated Papers

- ❖ Chicago Defender  
<https://chicagodefender.com/>
- ❖ New York Amsterdam News  
<https://amsterdamnews.com/>
- ❖ Baltimore Afro-American  
<https://afro.com/about-us/>



## Curriculum Connections

### Fine Arts Standards

- ❖ **Creating**
  - 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
  - 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
  - 3: Refine and complete artistic work.
- ❖ **Performing**
  - 4: Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation.
  - 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
  - 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- ❖ **Connecting**
  - 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
  - 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.



## Curriculum Connections



### English Language Arts Practices

- ❖ E2: They build strong content knowledge.
- ❖ E4: They comprehend as well as critique.
- ❖ E5: They value evidence.
- ❖ E7: They come to understanding other perspectives and cultures.

### Social Studies Practices

- ❖ SS2: Applying disciplinary tools and concepts in civics, economics, geography, and history.
- ❖ SS3: Gathering and evaluating evidence.
- ❖ SS4: Developing claims and using evidence.
- ❖ SS6: Taking informed action.



## Riff Three: Make a Joyful Dance



The Harlem Renaissance was filled with joyful dance - in famous dance and music clubs, at house parties, even in contests in the street. Many were reactions to and rejections of rules of the past or included moves that were common in dances from the African diaspora. Dancing was both a rejection of subjugation, a joyous “work-around” the limitations others put on you, and a way of honoring happy traditions and integrating them into the present in new ways. Dancing was liberation!

Many of these dances became extremely popular and spread around the world, and several are still popular today. Learn about four joyful dances of the Harlem Renaissance and then try to make your own dance moves that reflect something about your life and family traditions or are a joyful rejection of injustice. Maybe your dance can go viral, too!







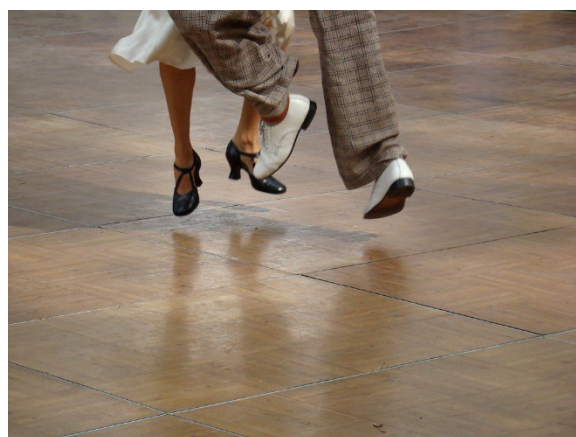
**Stepping**



**The Moonwalk (Shuffle)**



**The Charleston**



**Lindy Hop**



## Activity Ideas

### Stepping

Drum rhythms were often used to communicate messages among enslaved people in early colonial North America. However, in the aftermath of the [Stono Rebellion](#) in South Carolina in 1739, lawmakers began to outlaw drums (as well as other African Instruments) to prevent this source of communication. But that didn't stop the connection between people. Enslaved men and women simply replaced drums with the rhythmic sounds of their own bodies through percussive dancing, known as stepping.

Stepping and tap-dancing also became an integral part of the dance numbers in the entertainment clubs in Harlem during the Harlem Renaissance. It inspired much of the dancing in "[Shuffle Along](#)," a wildly popular Broadway musical, which was the first with an all African-American creative team. The composer was [Eubie Blake](#) who was [born in Baltimore](#) and the cast included [Paul Robeson](#) and [Josephine Baker](#).

One of the most famous tap duos of the time were the [Nicholas Brothers](#), who performed at The Cotton Club, among other clubs and theaters, in Harlem. They were responsible for the popularity of tap expanding worldwide with their astonishing dancing. You can watch their AMAZING dancing here (you won't believe the end sequence!)

[Nicholas Brothers The greatest dance sequence](#)

Step also expanded its influence as fraternities and sororities at historically Black colleges and universities (known as [HBCUs](#)) changed step into the style many recognize today. Each specific organization has popular step routines that are taught and passed down through its members and most incorporate a specific chant honoring the sorority or fraternity. This step tradition is also common at many high schools today.

Watch the Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women Step Team::

<https://youtu.be/OTcA7FdXKzk>



## The Shuffle

Eventually, many plantation owners outlawed dancing as well. Since dancing was defined as a full body movement, shuffling one's feet to mimic fast walking and sliding while keeping the upper body still or, alternately, only moving the upper body while keeping the feet gliding, became the next work around. The dancing could not be stopped! "The Shuffle" was also an adaptation of several African dances performed in the Ivory Coast, particularly the Zaoli, a traditional dance of the Guro people (who speak the Guro language.) Each Guro village has a Zaoli dancer (always male) who performs during funerals and celebrations to "increase the productivity of a village that it is performed in, and is seen as a tool of unity for the Guro community, and by extension the whole country." (Wikipedia)

Watch a video of Zaouli with a techno remix (that also includes links to videos with traditional music) here: [African shuffle dance \[Masque Zaouli Cote D'Ivoire\]](#).

Watch closely! You will see some of the same movements in the Moonwalk, the Running Man, and in recent [shuffle TikTok challenges!](#)

## The Charleston

The most viral dance sensation from the Harlem Renaissance was The Charleston. The history of The Charleston goes back to the coast of Charleston, South Carolina. It is based lightly on the "Juba," a dance brought to Charleston by enslaved African Americans and performed by dock workers in the early 1900's. The Juba involves rhythmic stomping, kicking, and slapping, and it became a kind of early viral challenge dance on the docks.

But it was thanks to the song, "[The Charleston](#)" by James P. Johnson, from the Broadway show "Running Wild" that solidified The Charleston as a dance craze. White audiences embraced the dance and soon Charleston marathons and dance contests were everywhere! Even the term "flapper" refers to the way in which participants would flap their hands in the air while dancing the Charleston. The rocking steps of the Charleston also influenced modern swing dance and inspired other popular dances like the "mashed potato" in the 1960s.



### Try the Charleston!

1. Begin in a standing position facing forward with your palms parallel to the floor.
2. Step forward with your left foot. Lightly step your right foot forward and tap it in front of your left.
3. Step backward with your right foot. Then step backward with your left foot and tap it behind your right.
4. Swing your arms side to side or front and back as you move your feet.
5. To make it swing, add a twist in your hips by balancing on the balls of your feet and moving your heels in and out as you step forward and back.

Here's an easy video tutorial to learn the Charleston:

[How to dance The Charleston from the 1920s](#)

### The Lindy Hop

Lindy Hop is a type of swing dance which also originated from Harlem and continues to be extremely popular. It was first danced in the famous [Savoy Ballroom](#) by African American dancers in 1928 and it said the name "Lindy Hop" was inspired by aviator Charles Lindbergh who 'hopped' the Atlantic ocean in 1927. While it also uses elements of the 1920s Charleston it's a style most well-known for acrobatic aerials of lifts and flips. Imagine the joy of flying through the air!

The Lindy Hop was also one of the first dances that Black and white dancers could do at the same time and in the same place. Dancing **was** liberation!

[The 1920s Dance Phenomenon that Broke the Race Barrier](#)

Watch young Lindy-Hop Dancers from Baltimore! If you look closely, you'll see every dancer do the Charleston steps at the beginning of their performance!

[Black Lindy Hop Matters](#)





### Now it's your turn!

What kind of dance moves make you feel joyous and free? High kicks? Leaps? Spins? Having a partner safely swing you around? Now think about what kind of gestures and movements you can take from an everyday activity in your life and combine them. Can you make a “Best Day at School” dance? How about a “Happy Cooking” dance or a “Toothbrushing” dance or a “Playing with a Pet” dance? What about an “I Am Beautiful” dance? Pick music of your own or Johnston’s “Charleston” for your dance. Teach it to a partner and perform it together. Record and share your joyful dance sequence and make your own #dancechallenge for the BSO!



## Curriculum Connections

### Fine Arts Standards

- ❖ **Creating**
  - 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
  - 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
  - 3: Refine and complete artistic work.
- ❖ **Performing**
  - 4: Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation.
  - 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
  - 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- ❖ **Connecting**
  - 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
  - 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

### Social Studies Practices

- ❖ SS3: Gathering and evaluating evidence.
- ❖ SS6: Taking informed action.



## Resources

- ❖ The Stono Rebellion  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stono\\_Rebellion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stono_Rebellion)
- ❖ Shuffle Along  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shuffle\\_Alone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shuffle_Alone)
- ❖ Eubie Blake  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eubie\\_Blake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eubie_Blake)
- ❖ Eubie Blake Cultural Center  
<https://www.eubieblake.org/>
- ❖ Paul Robeson  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Paul-Robeson>
- ❖ Josephine Baker  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Josephine-Baker>
- ❖ The Nicholas Brothers  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas\\_Brothers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas_Brothers)
- ❖ The Nicholas Brothers Greatest Dance Sequence!  
<https://youtu.be/LBQOfyR75vY>
- ❖ Historically Black Colleges and Universities  
<https://hbculifestyle.com/what-is-an-hbcu/>
- ❖ Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women Step Team  
<https://youtu.be/OTcA7FdXXzk>
- ❖ The Zaouili Dance (with Modern Music)  
<https://youtu.be/r5B5WgsFVBo>
- ❖ Current TikTok Shuffle Dance Challenges  
<https://youtu.be/5QzaUqMelQo>
- ❖ The Charleston Music  
<https://youtu.be/o8fCX1DU3Jw>
- ❖ The Charleston Dance Tutorial  
<https://youtu.be/Z0oHxvensok>
- ❖ The Savoy Ballroom  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Savoy>
- ❖ How Lindy Hop Broke the Race Barrier  
<https://youtu.be/b10TxZGnQBQ>
- ❖ Black Lindy Hop Matters (Baltimore Dancers)  
<https://youtu.be/WWge4gu4ZPg>



## Riff Four: Happy Feet



How does music make you feel? How does music make you move? In this activity, you will choose to respond to a piece of Jazz music by either drawing, writing a poem, or creating a dance.



### Activity Ideas

The Harlem Renaissance was a time period after World War I that was a celebration of African American heritage. In Harlem, a large predominantly African-American neighborhood in New York City, a talented and determined group of writers decided to use their work to express pride in being African American. The most common style of music heard in Harlem was Jazz, an original American music style. Jazz began life in New Orleans, but quickly spread to other US cities, including Chicago, Detroit, and New York.



1. Close your eyes and listen to [Happy Feet](#), by Baltimore native Cab Calloway. The lyrics are printed, and the music will get your feet dancing! Turn to a friend and talk about how the music made you feel, talk about what you heard. Jot instruments down to remember them. Here is a link to an [Instrument Spotter's Guide](#).

Happy feet! I've got those hap-hap-happy feet!  
Give them a low-down beat  
And they begin dancing!  
I've got those ten little tip-tap-tapping toes  
When they hear a tune  
I can't control the dancing, dear  
To save my soul!

Those weary blues can't get into my shoes  
Because my shoes refuse  
To ever grow weary  
I keep cheerful on an earful  
Of music sweet;

Just got those hap-hap-happy feet!

2. Here is your time to create! Play the song again. Choose a partner (or work on your own) and discuss whether you want to A) create a 20 second dance, B) compose 8 or more lines of poetry, or C) draw a picture in response to Minnie the Moocher.
3. For the dance, create a few movements, dance steps, or gestures that express your feelings.
4. For the poem, use words that express your thoughts, using the names of the instruments, motions, and other sounds and sound effects/onomatopoeia.
5. For the picture, use basic drawings of instruments you hear, lines, shades, repeated shapes, collage paper pieces and glue, etc. in your drawing.





## Resources

- ❖ Instrument Spotter's Guide  
<https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/media-and-interactives/media/music/instrument-spotters-guide/>
- ❖ More Information on the Harlem Renaissance  
<https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/interactives/harlem/faces/index.html>



## Curriculum Connections

### Fine Arts Standards

- ❖ **Creating**
  - 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- ❖ **Connecting**
  - 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

### Social Studies Practices

- ❖ SS3: Gathering and evaluating evidence.
- ❖ SS4: Developing claims and using evidence.
- ❖ SS6: Taking informed action.



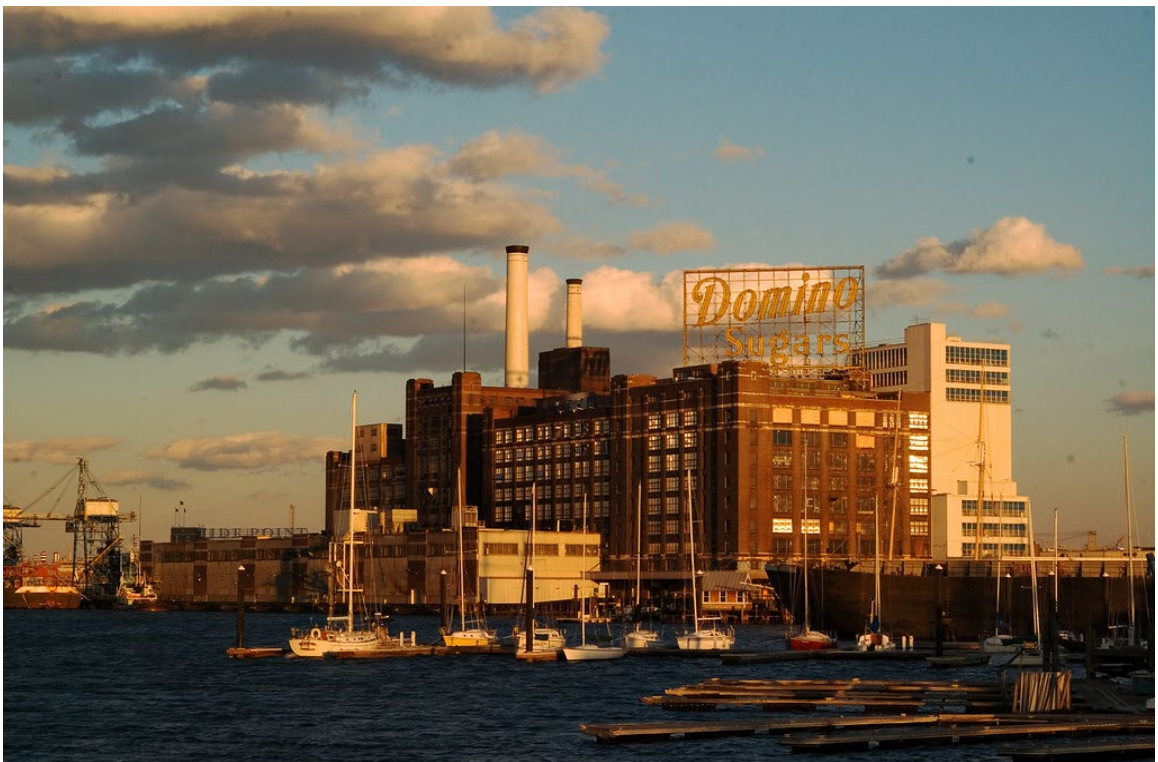
# Riff Five: Cityscape Renaissance



History can be very exciting or very blah. Let's spice up the world and leave our mark on American History the way the artists of the "Harlem Renaissance" did. Wait, you don't know what the Harlem Renaissance is? Let's find out and make some art!



Romare Bearden, *The Block*, 1971





## Activity Idea

The “great migration” was the relocation of over 6 million African Americans from the rural south to the work force of urban, northern cities in the United States. They brought with them a LEGACY beyond the lens of enslaved people. The great migration influenced the Harlem Renaissance. Watch this read aloud entitled [\*The Great Migration: An American Story\*](#), written and illustrated by Harlem Renaissance artist, Jacob Lawrence, to learn more.

One of the places many of these newly relocated migrants called home was Harlem, in New York City. The Harlem Renaissance lasted roughly from 1910s - the mid-1930s. Along with economic and educational opportunities came a time of intense creativity. This period was coined the golden age of African American culture. It started with a group of writers who used their work to celebrate African American heritage. These writers were the force behind and inspired musicians and artists of their time. Romare Bearden (1911-1988) and Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000) are two famous African American artists whose families moved north during the early parts of the great migration who were artistic forces of the Harlem Renaissance.

Ready to leave your mark on history? Let's make some art inspired by Romare Bearden and Jacob Lawrence and your version of America. Romare Bearden and Jacob Lawrence captured the thriving cities around them. Both of these artists used collage to depict their cities. It is your turn to create a collage of your city and help shape America through art.

## The Challenge

Collage comes from the French word coller meaning to glue. It is a piece of art made of various materials that are glued together. Time to make a collage about your city or invent your own city to tell your story about your place.



## Supplies

- 9x12 paper (color or choice)
- 9x6 colored papers
- Newspaper
- Photographs
- Magazines
- Crayons
- Markers
- Other materials of choice for adding color

## Directions

1. **Preplan:** Sketch 10 or more of the buildings you see every day. If you want to, you can invent and design your own building.
2. Select a 9x12 piece of paper in the color of your choice for the background.
3. **Draw Buildings:** On whatever color of paper you want, draw 5-8 buildings using a black or dark gray crayon or marker. Make them tall to reach into the sky.
4. **Cut and Glue:** Cut out your buildings. Plan where they are going to go. Overlap some of your buildings to create visual interest. Put a small line of glue around the edges of your building and put them in place.
5. Add windows and doors to your buildings.
6. Add details like cars, signs, and people to your cityscape.
7. Draw other details as needed.

## Extension

Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden often made several images to tell a story. This is called a series. If you like, you can work by yourself or with a partner to create your own series to tell your story.





## Resources

- ❖ Harlem Renaissance Party by Faith Ringgold  
<https://youtu.be/9a6N7r8bj7c>
- ❖ Watch Romare Bearden Create a Collage  
<https://faea.org/FAEAApps/Conference/Handouts/22/RomareBeardenSymbolism.mp4>
- ❖ Learn More About Romare Bearden Here  
<https://beardenfoundation.org/>
- ❖ Learn More About Jacob Lawrence Here  
<https://youtu.be/4FSNdp8wrgw>



## Curriculum Connections

### Fine Arts Standards

- ❖ **Creating**
  - 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
  - 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- ❖ **Performing**
  - 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- ❖ **Connecting**
  - 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

### English Language Arts Practices

- ❖ E5: They value evidence.
- ❖ E7: They come to understanding other perspectives and cultures.

### Social Studies Practices

- ❖ SS6: Taking informed action.

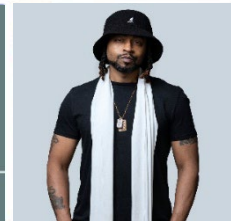


## Riff Six: Renaissance Metamorphosis



The Harlem Renaissance was a transformative time of creative expression in all forms for African Americans. This cultural metamorphosis of music, art, dance, poetry, fashion, theater, literature, and politics greatly influenced people of both that time and for years to come. Jazz clubs were a place for people to relax, celebrate, experience joy and showcase talents that would be trendsetting moments in time. Prior to the age of social media, word of mouth, photography, and music technology played a huge part into the spread of traditions that we know today. We will explore mainstream jazz clubs and venues that influenced nightlife in NY, and their impact on the culture of artistic expression of the African American experience.





## **Activity Idea**

Read the descriptions of some of the venues that were essential to the “viral” moments of the Harlem Renaissance. How did the influence of the Harlem Renaissance spread without the use of social media and the digital tools that we have today?

### **The Savoy Ballroom**

Located on Lenox Avenue in Harlem, New York, The Savoy Ballroom was pivotal to the advancement of African American performers in the Harlem Renaissance Era. Their non-discriminatory policies were revolutionary during the time, as they were the first and only integrated ballroom during the Harlem Renaissance. This venue was 10,000 square feet and could fit up to 4,000 people! In The Savoy Ballroom, the only thing that mattered was your ability to dance and enjoy the trendsetting moves such as the Lindy Hop and Snake Hips. Langston Hughes, the prolific author and poet, wrote poems and stories painting a lyrical picture of The Savoy Ballroom’s influence in dance. Their “Battle of the Bands” would take place during the Swing Era, allowing people to experience multiple bands at the same venue. Radio broadcasts would bring the sounds of Big Bands to the living rooms of Americans nationwide.

### **The Cotton Club**

Another major venue of Lenox Avenue, The Cotton Club was a legendary jazz club that launched the careers of some of the most influential performers of the Harlem Renaissance. Heavy hitters like Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway made their debuts in The Cotton Club as leaders of the big house bands and orchestras. Performers such as Louis Armstrong, Ethel Waters, Lena Horne, and the Nicholas brothers increased the club's popularity by gracing the stage. Though only African American people were allowed to perform, the club had non-Black celebrity appearances regularly. Similarly to other clubs during the time, radio played a large role in its increased popularity.



## The Apollo

Located at 253 West 125th Street in Harlem, New York, The Apollo Theater became one of the top venues for live theatrical performances. It played a large role in promoting the music of the swing, jazz, bebop, soul and blues genres. African American comedians, dancers, singers, and musicians would perform regularly. The Apollo Theater introduced its Amateur Night in 1934, a trademark of the venue that continued for over 50 years, with winners that later became famous like Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday. In 1937, it was the largest employer of African American theatrical workers in Harlem, New York and the only theater in NYC hiring African American people as backstage workers.

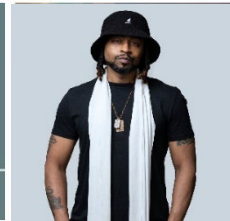
## Did you know?

Baltimore had many clubs that were popular during the Harlem Renaissance? Similarly to New York, Baltimore's Pennsylvania Avenue was a hot spot for performers, providing them with creative opportunities. Cab Calloway, the famous singer and band leader of the Harlem Renaissance, grew up in Baltimore in his adolescent years and would regularly perform on Pennsylvania Avenue venues after his debut at The Cotton Club. "The Avenue" had a host of restaurants, clubs, venues and hotels that was the epicenter of African American entertainment. Establishments such as The Royal would host performers like Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and others who could not perform at certain Baltimore venues due to strict segregation policies.

## Extension Activity

1. By yourself or as a group, choose one of the following influential buildings that you would like to recreate (The Savoy Ballroom, The Cotton Club, The Apollo, The Royal)
2. Brainstorm ways that this venue could serve your community. (What type of entertainment would you have?)
3. Create a poster, radio advertisement, or newspaper description that would attract customers to your club.





## Resources

- ❖ Whitey's Lindy Hoppers 1939 (The Big Apple)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trsX4GWdc94>
- ❖ Duke Ellington & His Cotton Club Band - Old Man Blues (1930)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ih97QJmkgUo>
- ❖ Rhythm & Blues on 125<sup>th</sup> Street, Vol. 1 (Live at the Apollo Theater) Part 1  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GBeZQYME5c>



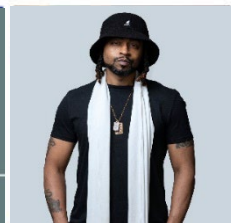
## Curriculum Connections

### Fine Arts Standards

- ❖ **Responding**
  - 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.
  - 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- ❖ **Connecting**
  - 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
  - 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

### Social Studies Practices

- ❖ SS1: Developing questions and planning inquiry.
- ❖ SS3: Gathering and evaluating evidence.
- ❖ SS4: Developing claims and using evidence.



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