THE INFLUENCE OF THE "NEW NEGRO MOVEMENT" AMONG JAZZ MUSICIANS

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ABSTRACT

The Influence of the “New Negro Movement” among Jazz Musicians

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The Harlem Renaissance is usually thought of as a literary movement. However, it was much more than that, the Harlem Renaissance was a movement among the arts, music, and literature. The intellectual elite of Harlem saw the Harlem renaissance as new era for the African-American: one where African Americans could rise up from poverty to the middle class, and, shake off the stereotype of the primitive savage. The “New Negro Movement” was started by Alain Locke an W.E.B. Du Bois. Locke would lay the foundation for the movement with his book *The New Negro.* Du Bois on the other hand, would focus on educating African Americans about their African heritage. While integral to the movement, jazz music would be overlooked by Locke and other leaders of the movement. *The New Negro* only devotes a single entry to jazz in historian J.A. Roger’s “Jazz At Home.”

Musicians Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington and William Grant Still would become an integral part of the “New Negro Movement.” Duke Ellington would make great strides as one of the most popular jazz musicians. William Grant Still would excel as a musician and a composer. These two musicians would pave the way for many young musicians.

As leaders of the “New Negro Movement,” each musician had their own goals. Duke Ellington blended the spirituals with jazz and blues to make them more popular. Ellington was not one to sign petitions, instead he let his music do the talking. William

Grant Still aimed to destroy the notion that certain spaces were reserved only for white musicians. He would perform symphonies at some of the most famous stages in America like Carnegie Hall. Still broke barriers as the first African American to compose a symphony. William Grant Still is often referred to as the Dean of African American Composers because of his contributions to symphonic or concert music. Duke Ellington on the other hand would become one of the most famous jazz musicians of all time. The impact of their music on the “New Negro Movement,” cannot be underestimated.

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INTRODUCTION TO 1920s HARLEM

The introduction of jazz in the late nineteenth century and twentieth century began a new era of creativity within the existing African American art and music scene. Historian Charlie Lester's book "The New Negro of Jazz: New Orleans, Chicago, New York, the First Great Migration, and the Harlem Renaissance, 1890-1930" is foundational to the study of Jazz during the Harlem Renaissance. Lester found that poet Amiri Baraka wrote "The blues and jazz adapted new languages, instruments, and music structures, but these art forms of music continued to express a uniquely African outlook. Complex rhythms, call and response, rough vocal techniques, and improvisation were all fundamental African cultural elements that remained strong components in jazz and blues."[1] The techniques of complex rhythms, call and response, rough vocal techniques, and improvisation customary with jazz and blues made the music unlike anything else Americans had heard before. Many scholars and writers have concluded that this style of music evolved from ragtime in the 1890s in New Orleans, Louisiana. Additionally, the blues and jazz built upon each other as each genre developed. After all, one cannot have rhythm without the blues. At the beginning of the twentieth century, spread of jazz northward to the cities of Chicago, St. Louis, and New York. The Great Migration of African Americans from the south to the north allowed Jazz to spread across the nation, as musicians traveled. While the development of jazz in cities like Chicago and St. Louis

[1] Charlie Lester, *The New Negro of Jazz: New Orleans, Chicago, New York, the First Great Migration, and the Harlem Renaissance, 1890 to 1930* (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, 2012), 159.

are important, this paper will focus solely on the growth of jazz in New York City. Jazz had a tremendous effect on the existing African American culture.

In Harlem, jazz was not just music: it was a way of life. Jazz musicians could make a name for themselves playing clubs and bars in Harlem. The upper class of Harlem sought to uplift African Americans from poverty to their well-deserved place among the middle class. The Harlem Renaissance is characterized by the "New Negro Movement." Created by philosopher Alain Locke, the "New Negro Movement" used the arts as a way to erase the old image of African Americans as brutish and savage, with an image of a civilized middle class African American. Music, especially jazz, had a profound impact on this movement, because its broke barriers between African Americans and Whites. Jazz music was enjoyed by both races and was even played by both races. Harlem specifically, was the place to hear Jazz, and many clubs were frequented by African American elites, often referred to as the intelligentsia, and its white benefactors like Carl Van Vechten. Musicians like Duke Ellington and William Grant Still were also able to hone their craft in Harlem. The Nineteen Twenties is a decade marked by change among the arts and racial boundaries of American Society.

The Harlem Renaissance is best known for the cultural progress of African Americans in writing, art, and music. Harlem's elite, included some of the most prolific writers such as philosopher Alain Locke, W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Sterling Brown, Arthur Schomburg, and Carter G. Woodson. These writers sought to uplift African Americans through the arts. The theory that the arts could foster social progress among African Americans is best known as "The New Negro Movement." Alain Locke's anthology "The New Negro" explains the "New Negro Movement" while other authors

explained the cultural contributions of the Harlem Renaissance. Locke writes that "It must be increasingly recognized that the Negro has already made very substantial contributions, not only in his folk-art, music especially, which has always found appreciation, but in larger, though humbler and less acknowledged ways."[2] Thus, the Harlem Renaissance is characterized by the cultural progress of African Americans in writing, art, and music.

It was through the arts that the rest of America would recognize this new class of African American. No longer would African Americans be defined solely by their physical appearance and strength. Instead, African Americans would now be recognized as intellectuals for their cultural contributions to the American arts. Locke writes "The great social gain in this is the releasing of our talented group from the arid fields of controversy and debate to the productive fields of creative expression. The especially cultural recognition they win should in turn prove the key to that revaluation of the Negro which must precede or accompany any considerable further betterment of race relationships."[3] Many jazz musicians and scholars agree that jazz is a social music, and the early practitioners learned from one another. Jazz was learned on the road, in nightclubs and bars which allowed jazz to spread to different venues. The craft was honed as musicians played backup or even took the stage as the front-man for a band. In closing, Locke writes "And certainly, if in our lifetime the Negro should not be able to celebrate his full initiation into American democracy, he can at least, on the warrant of

[2] Alain Locke, "The New Negro," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 15.

[3] Alain Locke, "The New Negro," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 15.

these things, celebrate the attainment of a significant and satisfying new phase of group development, and with it a spiritual coming of Age."[4] Many of these artists, musicians, and writers could at least take comfort in knowing that they contributed to this social movement even if its mission was not realized. In summary, the "New Negro Movement" was a social movement that allowed artists, musicians and writers to create an image of African Americans as middle class.

Despite the popularity of jazz music, it was often referred to as vulgar jungle music. The historian J.A. Rogers presents a conflicted view of jazz in his essay "Jazz At Home." As part of the anthology "The New Negro," J.A. Rodgers does not condemn jazz out right, but instead reviews jazz music indifferently. Rodgers writes "And yet Jazz in spite of it all is one part American and three parts American Negro, and was originally the nobody's child of the levee and the city slum. Transplanted exotic a rather hardy one, we admit of the mundane world capitals, sport of the sophisticated it is really at home in its humble native soil wherever the modern unsophisticated Negro feels happy and sings and dances to his mood."[5] Concerning Rodgers' explanation of the origins of Jazz, one would imagine jazz originated in African jungles. Furthermore, his claim that jazz "was originally the nobody of the levee and the city slum" creates a profane image of jazz in the reader's mind. However, Rodgers view was not as extreme as historian Carter G. Woodson. In Leonard Ray Teel's essay "The Jazz Rage: Carter G. Woodson's Culture

[4] Alain Locke, "The New Negro," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 16.

[5] J.A. Rodgers, "Jazz At Home," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 216.

War in the African American Press," he examines Woodson's view of how the American media had distorted the lifestyle of jazz musicians. According to Teel, "In advocating the criminalization of jazz, Woodson was articulating his heartfelt disgust not only for jazz but the values jazz perpetuated. Throughout the Jazz Age of the 1920s, few African American elites accepted improvisational jazz as having any redeeming musical or social value."[6] With regards to Woodson's condemnation of jazz altogether, he sought to remove its influence from American society. Furthermore, Woodson was not the only member of the African American elite that thought jazz did not have any redeeming musical or social values.

It was the jazz lifestyle that Woodson and other members of the African American elite condemned outright. Teel writes that "Even those avant-garde African American elites who might tolerate the playing of jazz or even admire strains from Duke Ellington could hardly condone the lifestyles associated with jazz. Illicit drinking in speakeasies and night clubs, promiscuous women, dancing, eroticism, often involved Prohibition Era bootleggers and mobsters."[7] In other words, it was thought that jazz created a savage, primitive, and vice indulgent culture that African American elites like Woodson could not support. Instead the African American elite advocated for a more civilized, middle class, intellectual as a result of the "New Negro Movement." Thus, the vulgar image of jazz allowed the African American elite to overlook its importance to the "New Negro Movement."

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[6] Leonard Ray Teel, "The Jazz Rage: Carter G. Woodson's Culture War in the African American Press," *American Journalism 11,* no.4 (1994): 351.

[7] Leonard Ray Teel, "The Jazz Rage: Carter G. Woodson's Culture War in the African American Press," *American Journalism 11,* no.4 (1994): 351-352.

How did this image of vulgarity result in the creation of some of the most celebrated jazz musicians? The primitive and exotic nature of jazz music allowed musicians to gain popularity and respect of their fellow musicians with little or even no formal training in some cases. Of the earliest jazz musicians, J.A. Rodgers writes "Often wholly illiterate, these humble troubadours knowing nothing of written music or composition, but with minds like cameras, would listen to the rude improvisations of the dock laborers and the railroad gangs and produce them, reflecting perfectly the sentiments and the longings of these humble folks."[8] In contrast to the completely improvised rendition of jazz, the musicians of the nineteen-twenties would adopt a more refined form of jazz. Some of the most talented jazz musicians of the Harlem Renaissance including Thomas "Fats" Waller, James P. Johnson, Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington, William Grant Still and many others would change the very nature of jazz music. For example, James P. Johnson is famous for creating what is referred to as stride piano or jazz piano where one hand keeps tempo while the other hand improvises. Duke Ellington on the other hand, is arguably one of the most famous jazz musicians on par with even the great Louis Armstrong. In contrast, William Grant Still is known for composing jazz and other musical masterpieces as a high art instead of the more typical lowbrow jazz that was played in speakeasies and nightclubs. Perhaps one of the most underappreciated jazz musicians, Fats Waller is considered more of an entertainer, because of his comedic performance style more than anything else. Individually, these

[8] J.A. Rodgers, "Jazz At Home," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 218.

musicians would each have their moment in the sun, and each would fundamentally change jazz.

William Grant Still is one of the most famous composers of the Harlem Renaissance. Unlike many other artists, William Grant Still's compositions like *Afro-American Symphony* were meant for the highbrow audiences of concert halls. Jon Michael Spencer explains in his book "The New Negroes and Their Music: The Success of the Harlem Renaissance," how African American music is proof of the success of the Harlem Renaissance. Specifically, chapter three of this book examines the struggles and successes of William Grant Still. According to Spencer "There was a time as Still explained, when certain whites held to the belief that every Negro Musician should only create and preform popular music. If the thought ever entered their minds that a negro musician might aspire to the heights of Beethoven and Mozart, he continued they resolutely pushed the thought aside."[9] In other words, certain whites were unwilling to believe that African Americans could compose music that would even compare to Beethoven or Mozart. Moreover, this Eurocentric belief that jazz musicians were unable to compete with classical musicians presented a prevalent cultural bias within America. Jazz was a genre of music that was still largely in its infancy, while the classical music of musicians like Beethoven had hundreds of years to develop. In contrast to this belief, William Grant Still sought to redefine jazz and other forms of music. Spencer writes that "Still said: ""It is true that some people incline to "stereotype" a Negro composer, expecting him to follow certain lines, for no sounder reason than that those lines were

[9] Jon Michael Spencer, *The New Negros and Their Music: The Success of the Harlem Renaissance* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 72.

followed in the past. But I have pioneered fields previously closed to members of my race, and have found that most people can be won over if they are convinced of one's sincerity""[10] In contrast to the existing stereotype, William Grant Still would write compositions like *Afro-American Symphony* along with arias. Furthermore, for William Grant Still creating compositions worthy of being referred to as high art was necessary to not only change the minds of certain whites, but also to inspire African American musicians to create any style of music. In conclusion, William Grant Still attempted to create music that would change this Eurocentric narrative among American society.

Duke Ellington on the other hand, is one of the most celebrated, if not the most celebrated, jazz musician in American history. As one of the most popular band leaders of the Jazz Age, Duke Ellington would also receive fame for his compositions. Duke Ellington's long career would result in him composing art music and popular music. His composition "It Don't Mean a Thing," could be one of the most popular and recognizable pieces of jazz music. Alternatively, Ellington also wrote many compositions that would be considered high art including "Black and Tan Fantasy" and "Black, Brown, Beige." Vaughn Booker, scholar of religious studies, and African American studies examines the influences behind Duke Ellington's songwriting in his essay "An Authentic Record of My Race: Exploring the Popular Narratives of African American Religion in the Music of Duke Ellington." According to Booker, "Duke Ellington's consistent rhetorical appreciation of his music as essential ""Negro folk music"" also allowed him to present a jazz that existed as an important vehicle for a romanticized concept of an

[10] Jon Michael Spencer, *The New Negros and Their Music: The Success of the Harlem Renaissance* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 73.

African American religious history"[11] For example, the creation of *Black, Brown, and Beige* was heavily influenced by African American history. Furthermore, his use of jazz to promote an African American religious history not only told his own story, but the story of many African Americans. For Ellington, jazz, the Blues, and other forms of music also allowed him to tell a story about his experiences. On the music of Duke Ellington, Booker writes

> Ellington's main goal was that, through music, ""an authentic record of my race written by a member of it shall be placed on record"" alongside the great works of representative in other national cultures in the Western world, and his commitment to a folk understanding of African American existence led to an appreciative but complicated rendering of the form and possibilities of African American life.[12]

Therefore, music was Ellington's way of creating a richer understanding of African American history and culture. He attempted to create a narrative as vast, as rich, and as important as Western culture. *Black and Tan Fantasy* for example, was composed with a fictional story of Ellington trying to stop his physically ill friend from dancing. One of the many interpretations of this short story could represent the importance of jazz dance to jazz music. In summary, the music of Duke Ellington manufactured a new narrative different than the existing history of African Americans.

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[11] Vaughn Booker, "An Authentic Record of my Race: Exploring the Popular Narratives of African American Religion in the Music of Duke Ellington" *Religion and American Culture 25,* no. 1 (2015): 5.

[12] Vaughn Booker, "An Authentic Record of my Race: Exploring the Popular Narratives of African American Religion in the Music of Duke Ellington" *Religion and American Culture 25,* no. 1 (2015): 9.

CHAPTER ONE

THE "NEW NEGRO MOVEMENT"

Jazz had a profound effect on the 1920s. In the early twentieth century, jazz spread rapidly across the United States. Jazz was now just as much at home in Chicago, New York, Kansas City, and St. Louis as it was in New Orleans. However, it can be argued that jazz had a great impact on the Harlem Renaissance. Specifically, the "New Negro Movement," among literature and the arts fostered growth among jazz musicians. On the other hand, many of the leaders of the "New Negro Movement," thought of jazz as simply a lowbrow form of popular music. However, because one of the key components of jazz music is improvisation it was an art form that was constantly changing. Many jazz musicians wanted to elevate jazz from its status as a popular form of music to art music. This paper will focus on the efforts of William Grant Still and Duke Ellington to redefine jazz as an art music. How did these two musicians contribute to the "New Negro Movement?" In what ways do Duke Ellington and William Grant Still embody the "New Negro?" Thus, jazz was indicative of the "New Negro Movement" and William Grant Still and Duke Ellington were examples of the movement's success.

What made the "New Negro Movement" so important to the Harlem Renaissance? The "New Negro Movement" focused on using art as a form of social uplift among African Americans. Biographer Arnold Rampersad wrote an adequate introduction that briefly explains Alain Locke's essay "the New Negro" and touches upon the other essays within *The New Negro* which was republished in 1992. Rampersad writes "To many scholars and critics of the movement known as the Harlem Renaissance that dramatic upsurge of creativity in literature, music, and art within black America that

reached its zenith in the second half of the 1920s *The New Negro* is its definitive text, its Bible."[1] In other words, both the "New Negro Movement" and the Harlem Renaissance were synonymous with an outgrowth of art, music, and literature. Furthermore, the leaders of the "New Negro Movement" placed an incredible emphasis upon the arts, creating a new image of African Americans as middle-class intellectuals. Rampersad also writes "Enlarging this stage we are now presenting the New Negro in a national and international scope. Although there are few centers that can be pointed out approximating Harlem's significance, the full significance of that even is a racial awakening on a national and perhaps even a world scale. That is why our comparison is taken with those nascent movements of folk expression and self-determination which are playing a creative part in the world today."[2] Furthermore, one of the claims of the "New Negro Movement" is that through folk expression of art African Americans would earn their rightful place within the middle-class. The significance of Harlem cannot be underestimated, because it is here that the artists, musicians, and writers of the "New Negro Movement" would meet and exchange ideas. Finally, Rampersad writes "Negro life is not only established new contacts and founding new centers, it is finding a new soul. There is a fresh spiritual and cultural focusing. We have as the heralding sign an unusual outburst of creative expression. There is a renewed race-spirit that consciously and proudly set itself apart."[3] Furthermore, it could be argued that this outburst of

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[1]Arnold Rampersad, "Introduction," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1992), ix.

[2] Arnold Rampersad, "Introduction," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1992), xxvi-xxvii.

[3] Arnold Rampersad, "Introduction," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1992), xxvii.

creative expression is a direct result of the "New Negro Movement." The awakening of this renewed race-spirit has allowed African Americans to foster their creativity through art, music, and literature. In conclusion the "New Negro Movement" promoted the arts as a path to the middle-class.

To further understand the "New Negro Movement," it is necessary to examine the writings of Alain Locke. In his essay *Negro Youth Speaks,* Alain Locke focuses on African American artists and their contributions to the "New Negro Movement." Locke begins by writing "The Younger Generation comes bringing its gifts. They are the first fruits of the Negro Renaissance. Youth speaks, and the voice of the New Negro is heard. What stirs inarticulately in the masses is already vocal upon the lips of the talented few, and the future listens, however the present may shut its ears."[4] Furthermore, it was the younger African American writers, musicians, and artists that were largely contributing to the "New Negro Movement." Jazz music was very popular throughout Harlem with whites and African Americans, but many failed to acknowledge its importance. In this essay, Locke acknowledges many musicians by writing "Then, rich in this legacy, but richer still, I think, in their own endowment of talent comes the youngest generation of our Afro-American culture: in music Diton, Dett, Grant Still, and Roland Hayes."[5] Concerning Locke's acknowledgement of these musicians it is important to note the variety he has chosen. Roland Hayes became an extremely popular spirituals singer after leaving the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Finally, Locke mentions two jazz musicians, Jonathan

[4] Alain Locke, "Negro Youth Speaks," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 47.

[5] Alain Locke, "Negro Youth Speaks," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 49.

Dett, and William Grant Still. Carl Rossini Diton, like Hayes, practiced the spirituals, but unlike Hayes, Diton was a concert trained pianist. Locke also writes about how these musicians, artists and writers have advanced the current state of art. Locke claims that "It has been their achievement also to bring the artistic advance of the Negro sharply into stepping alignment with contemporary artistic thought, mood and style. They are thoroughly modern, some of them ultra- modern, and the Negro thought now wear the uniform of the age."[6] In other words, this younger generation of artists, musicians, and writers should be recognized for creating a modern art. It was the aim of the "New Negro Movement" to advance African Americans through the creation of a new more modern art. Finally of this modern art, Locke writes "In flavor of language, flow of phrase, accent of rhythm in prose, verse and music, color and tone of imagery, idiom and timbre of emotion and symbolism, it is the ambition and promise of Negro artists to make a distinctive contribution"[7] Therefore, it was the mission of African American artists, musicians, and writers to use their various talents to create a distinctive contribution. For example, the music of Duke Ellington made a distinctive contribution to both the "New Negro Movement" and jazz. In conclusion, the unique contributions of African American artists, musicians, and writers were a direct result of the "New Negro Movement."

Another theory that influenced music created during the "New Negro Movement" was cosmopolitanism. This theory, also written by Alain Locke, focuses mostly on the influence that one's surroundings has on their art. Historian Paul Anderson's book *Deep*

[6] Alain Locke, "Negro Youth Speaks," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 50.

[7] Alain Locke, "Negro Youth Speaks," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 51.

River: Music and Memory in Harlem Renaissance Thought provides a historiographical overview of the Harlem Renaissance. In the third chapter of Anderson's book, he thoroughly examines Locke's theory of cosmopolitanism. Anderson writes

> There is in America,"" Locke continued in the ""Cosmopolitanism"" lecture ""a considerable number of a transplanted race, who are well on their way toward assimilating American civilization."" Despite the trend of cultural moderation through assimilation. The ideal heritage of that transplanted race will reassert itself not as political ambition or economic greediness but as a distinctive and vital national idea embodied in a race literature, race art, a race religion, and a sense of corporate history and destiny. There will be a divided nationalism. Locke outlined an ideal difference within a geographical unity and you will be surprised to hear me say a cosmopolitanism within a nation.[8]

In other words, the ideal heritage of a transplanted race would result in the creation of its own separate art, literature, religion, and a sense of corporate history and destiny. Additionally, the influence of the "New Negro Movement," would further African American culture by emphasizing the creation of unique art, literature, and music. African Americans as a group were transplanted from Africa. They also brought with them various talents that would now set them apart from groups of people that assimilated to American Civilization in the past. Locke would later further this idea by writing in *The New Negro* "In Harlem Negro life is seizing upon its first chances for

[8] Paul Anderson, *Deep River: Music and Memory in Harlem Renaissance Thought,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001): 123.

group expression and self-determination. It is or promises at least to be a race capital. That is why our comparison is taken with those nascent centers of folk expression and self -determination that are playing a creative part in the world today. Without pretense to their same role to play for the New Negro as Dublin has had for the New Ireland of Prague for the New Czechoslovakia."[9] Concerning Harlem, one cannot ignore the art, literature, and music that was being created by African Americans, and blacks from the West Indies. In Harlem, various influences from African cultures around the world intermingled to create folk art, music, and literature.

Locke and other leaders of the "New Negro Movement," thought of Harlem as the new Mecca of African culture. It was here, where Locke continued to develop his theory of cosmopolitanism and apply it to music. Anderson writes "He folded his anticipation for black cosmopolitanism into a single developmental narrative that moved from the great dialect music of the Spirituals to the petty dialect of popular music, ragtime, and jazz and finally classical jazz and the transition of the speech to formal art music."[10] It was this narrative that would develop into a universal idiom meant to apply to all forms of music. Concerning this quote, one can also identify which styles of music Locke admired the most starting with the spirituals, classical jazz, formal art music and ending with popular music, ragtime, and jazz. Finally, Anderson found an example of cosmopolitanism in Locke's *The New Negro and his Music.* Anderson writes "He rejoiced that African American jazz composers and arrangers like Duke Ellington were

[9]Alain Locke, "The New Negro," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 7.

[10]Paul Anderson, *Deep River: Music and Memory in Harlem Renaissance Thought,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001): 141.

finding the materials for developing ""the more serious aspects of jazz"" in unexpected paths less dependent on forms of musical structure. In particular, the avenues of solo and group improvisation based not on the ""mere guidance of instinct"" but rather on an ever-expanding idiomatic vocabulary offered alternatives to Locke's philosophical mapping of cosmopolitan development."[11] The music of Duke Ellington is used as an example of black cosmopolitanism, because of his emphasis on solo and group improvisation. In other words, Ellington's works like "Black, Brown, and Beige" were examples of cosmopolitanism, because the culmination of solo and group improvisation presented a culmination of the influences present in the song. In summary, Alain Locke's theory of cosmopolitanism was used to explain the influences present in various forms of African American music.

How did the leaders of the "New Negro Movement," specifically Alain Locke, approach black vernacular music? For this information, it is important to consider Locke's book *The Negro and His Music*. This book provides a brief overview of black folk music in America. Alain Locke begins by asking an extremely important question. Locke writes "Is America Musical? America is a great music consumer, but not as yet a great music producer. Music spreads over the whole surface of American life, but there are few deep well-springs of native music as in the folk music of other countries. Negro Music is the closest approach America has to a folk music, and so Negro music is almost as important for the musical culture of America as it is for the spiritual life of the

[11] Paul Anderson, *Deep River: Music and Memory in Harlem Renaissance Thought,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001): 166.

Negro."[12] In other words, America was a musical nation, but prior to the Harlem Renaissance, Alain Locke and other leaders of the "New Negro Movement" could not name a great American composer. Furthermore, American music had not yet cultivated its own unique form of folk music. Locke claimed that this duty of creating a folk music fell to African Americans as a naturally musical people. Commenting on the importance of African American folk music Locke writes "Certainly for the last fifty years, the Negro has been the main source of America's popular music, and promises as we shall see, to become one of the main sources of America's serious or classical music, at least that part which strives to be natively American and not derivative of European types of music."[13] Given that fostering this unique style of African American music was a goal of the "New Negro Movement." It was only natural that African Americans would try to create a style of music that was solely American. Finally, Locke comments on the evolution of African American music by writing "A great folk music deserves and demands a great classical music. People with the folk gift of spontaneous harmony should breed great composers. A folk who can improvise great and moving choral orchestras, for that is what a Negro singing group really is should eventually have great opera, expert symphony orchestras, and skilled virtuosi or technical master musicians."[14] Moreover, the final stage of African American music would include black musicians practicing all

[12] Alain Locke, *The Negro and His Music: Negro Art Past and Present,* (Salem: Ayer Company Publishers, 1991): 1.

[13] Alain Locke, *The Negro and His Music: Negro Art Past and Present,* (Salem: Ayer Company Publishers, 1991): 2.

[14] Alain Locke, *The Negro and His Music: Negro Art Past and Present,* (Salem: Ayer Company Publishers, 1991): 5.

forms of music. Starting with musicians who were great improvisers and ending with performers skilled in a wide variety of musical forms is surely an end goal of the "New Negro Movement."

The "New Negro Movement" was a cultural movement that had a direct result on African American art created during the Harlem Renaissance. The "New Negro Movement" among the arts was designed to uplift African Americans to the middle class. While it could be argued by more conservative whites that the "New Negro Movement" was a form of assimilation. The leaders of the "New Negro Movement" would cite the uniqueness of the arts, literature, and music it created. This unique style of art, music, and literature had many outside influences. For example, in Harlem musicians from many different backgrounds were able to intermingle and exchange ideas. Often this exchange of ideas would result in new music that was a result of cosmopolitanism. However, this was a new form of black cosmopolitanism that Alain Locke claimed was unique to African Americans. One of the places where this new form of cosmopolitanism was apparent was African American music. The spirituals, ragtime, and jazz could only be improved by an educated class of musicians that were technically skilled. This new class of musicians would continue to advance these forms of music into a more refined form like classical jazz or formal concert music. Specifically, this study will look at how the "New Negro Movement," supported the creation of a new unique style of jazz music and the musicians who studied and performed it. Thus, the "New Negro Movement" fostered folk expression that led to a new middle-class of African American artists, writers, and musicians.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SPREAD OF JAZZ

How was jazz music different than other forms of music? As mentioned earlier, jazz was primarily a social music that is learned on the road, and in nightclubs and bars. Jazz was also enjoyed by both blacks and whites alike. What separated jazz from other genres of music? African American historian Eileen Southern's chronological study "The Music of Black Americans," offers an answer to this question. Southern writes

> Jazz is primarily an aural music: it's written score represents but a skeleton of what actually takes place during a performance. Performances of the same work differ from player to player, for each one recreates the music in his or her own individual way. Jazz is learned through oral tradition, as is folksong, and those who would learn to play it do so by listening to others playing jazz. Finally, jazz uses call-and-response style of the blues, by employing an antiphonal relationship between two solo instruments or between a solo and ensemble[15]

These characteristics set jazz apart from other forms of music. For example, Duke Ellington's song *It Don't Mean a Thing* sounds two different ways when it is played by Duke Ellington's Band and Benny Goodman's Orchestra. Another aspect of jazz was oral tradition, in other words many jazz musicians leaned new techniques from one another. One example of this exchange is how James P. Johnson shared his style of jazz or stride piano with many other prominent jazz musicians. Lastly, jazz uses call-and-response

[15] Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997), 368.

style that is evident in many pieces where two solo instruments answer one another or a soloist is answered by an ensemble. In conclusion there are many characteristics of jazz that separated it from previous forms of music.

As jazz traveled across the country, it found a second home in Harlem. Jazz originated in New Orleans, but at the beginning of the twentieth century many musicians migrated across the United States. Many of these musicians settled in Chicago, Kansas City, New York, and St. Louis. However, it was Harlem that presented a new environment for jazz. Historian J.A. Rodgers' essay "Jazz at Home" illustrates the importance of jazz to Harlem. Rodgers writes "Transplanted exotic a rather hardy one, we admit of the mundane world capitals, sport of the sophisticated, it is really at home in its humble native soil wherever the modern unsophisticated Negro feels happy and sings and dances to his mood. It follows that jazz is more at home in Harlem than in Paris, though from the look and sound of certain quarters one would hardly think so."[16] In Harlem, jazz flourished from the nightlife experienced at its many nightclubs and bars. Additionally, places like the Cotton Club or Connie's Inn allowed musicians to experiment with new sounds. Historian David Levering Lewis's study of Harlem's moment in the sun titled "When Harlem was in Vogue" illuminates Harlem's vast social scene. Lewis writes "The Immermans opened Connie's to musicians from other clubs for early morning jam sessions, something unknown at the haughtier Cotton Club."[17] As a result of these early morning jam sessions, that were held at Connie's Inn jazz musicians

[16] J.A. Rodgers, "Jazz At Home," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 216.

[17] David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem was in Vogue* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 210.

were able to exchange new techniques and experiment with new sounds. In other words, nightclubs like Connie's Inn allowed jazz musicians to learn from one another. The nightlife of Harlem also created a social scene that exposed jazz musicians to a form of oral tradition. In conclusion, jazz found a second home among Harlem's nightlife.

As jazz spread across the United States and Europe, it was praised for its elements of primitivism and exoticism. Many scholars and critics during the Harlem Renaissance, thought of jazz a lower more primitive form of music. In rare instances, jazz was even referred to as jungle music. Anthropologist Frank Salamone examines the primitive and exotic qualities of jazz in his essay "Jazz and Its Impact on European Classical Music." Salamone writes "primitivism is an aesthetic theory strongest in France, that holds that what is most authentic in jazz is that which is most African. Thus, the more Dionysian a performance the more African and thus authentic it is. The more music stresses ""pure"" emotion and direct expression of that music the more authentic the music. Authenticity is seen in the African side of jazz, while its European side is seen as inauthentic."[18] In other words, the French appreciated jazz for its more African qualities. The more raw and emotional pieces of music were seen as the purest forms of African jazz in France. To reinforce primitivism, J. A. Rodgers writes in "Jazz at Home," that "The Negroes who invented it called their songs the ""Blues,"" and they weren't capable of satire or deception. Jazz was their explosive attempt to cast off the blues and be happy, carefree happy, even in the midst of sordidness and sorrow."[19] More importantly jazz's primitive qualities were

[18] Frank Salamone, "Jazz and its Impact on European Culture," *The Journal of Popular Culture 38,* no. 4 (2005): 733.

[19] J.A. Rodgers, "Jazz At Home," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 217.

sheer emotion and raw talent which created the most authentically African music. Jazz in a sense was the illustration of African American happiness. In a like manner, Salamone writes "Whether following primitivistic theories or not, it is true as Gunther Schuller indicates, that European composers viewed jazz as an exotic music. It was something other than the normal. There was dichotomy in short of ""us"" and ""them."" Whether the other was demonized or romanticized as a noble savage, the major point is that the Other was different from the normal in some significant way."[20] Moreover, this created a paradox about the authenticity of jazz. Many musicians went to France seeking to learn from great musicians like Nadia Boulanger. Unfortunately, these new skills that many musicians learned would be overlooked in France, because of their love of a more African jazz. On this subject Salamone writes "Throughout jazz history, the concept of Africa has served as an index of authenticity. The less ""African"" and ""European"" a performance for example the less likely jazz musicians are to find it acceptable. Conversely, the more authentic even flawed a performance the more it is perceived to be approaching an African essence, or ""Soul.""[21] Despite their immense talent, many jazz musicians were expected to play a uniquely imperfect piece for French amusement. Yet many jazz musicians returned to America, with a more refined style of practicing jazz. Thus, jazz was welcomed and appreciated in France for its more primitive and exotic elements.

Through the blending of African and European styles, jazz musicians sought to create a form of classical jazz. As discussed earlier, many jazz musicians returned from

[20] Frank Salamone, "Jazz and its Impact on European Classical Music," *The Journal of Popular Culture 38,* no. 4 (2005): 739.

[21] Frank Salamone, "Jazz and its Impact on European Culture," *The Journal of Popular Culture 38,* no. 4 (2005): 741.

France to America after learning new skills like composing. With these new skills, jazz musicians put a new emphasis on creating a style of high art worthy of the title of classical jazz. J.A. Rodgers writes "Jazz proper, however, is in idiom rhythmic, musical and pantomimic thoroughly American Negro; it is his spiritual picture on that lighter comedy side, just as the spirituals are the picture on tragedy side."[22] Further, it is this form of classical jazz that would be praised by the "New Negro Movement." It is this new uniquely African American form of classical jazz that would ascend to the concert stages of Carnegie Hall. Literary scholar Ron Welburn, defines classical or symphonic jazz in his essay "Duke Ellington's Music: The Catalyst for a True Jazz Criticism." Welburn writes "A working definition of symphonic jazz is appropriate here. By symphonic jazz I mean the music composed for symphony orchestras or chamber ensembles that possesses elements of jazz rhythm, melodic contour, and the kind of harmony associated with blacks. It aroused critical attention in the early Twenties that perhaps properly falls into the realm of classical music and formal music critical theory and practice."[23] Concerning this definition it is only natural that symphonic jazz was performed by large bands like Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra or Duke Ellington's Orchestra. Many of the pieces composed for symphony orchestras or chamber ensembles like William Grant Still's "African American Symphony" were celebrated. This new style of jazz not only followed the good graces of the intelligentsia, but also resulted in the patronage of high standing whites like Carl Van Vechten. Many of Duke Ellington's symphonic jazz pieces like "Black and Tan Fantasy"

[22] J.A. Rodgers, "Jazz At Home," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance,* ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925) 219-220.

[23] Ron Welburn, "Duke Ellington's Music: The Catalyst for a True Jazz Criticism," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music 17,* no.1 (1986): 112.

and “Black, Brown and Beige” were performed in concert halls and theaters from the East Coast to the West Coast, and even as far away as France. Therefore, classical or symphonic jazz was a more refined form of jazz that was meant to be played by symphony orchestras and chamber ensembles in concert hall and theatres.

Jazz is a distinctly African-American form of music. Evolving from ragtime, jazz began at the end of the nineteenth century in New Orleans. As the popularity of jazz increased, many musicians traveled north to the cities of St. Louis, Kansas City, Chicago, and New York. Jazz found a second home among the thriving social scene of Harlem. What was seen as a low form of popular music by the “New Negro Movement,” quickly became a high art. Many successful jazz musicians including Sydney Bechet, Duke Ellington, and Louis Armstrong traveled to France. The French praised jazz for its primitive and exotic qualities. In France, jazz musicians would perform jazz that sounded more African while studying with European musicians. These jazz musicians returned to America with a more refined craft. This new style of jazz that blended African and European techniques would eventually become classical or symphonic jazz. Symphonic Jazz was meant to be performed by symphony orchestras and chamber ensembles in concert halls and theatres across America. Additionally, symphonic jazz attracted the attention of the “New Negro Movement” and upper-class whites. Symphonic Jazz was celebrated as a high art that elevated jazz musicians as artists. These jazz musicians like Duke Ellington were praised for their various talents and techniques. Thus, as jazz developed, it was enjoyed and praised by people around the world.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DEAN OF AFRICAN AMERICAN COMPOSERS: WILLIAM GRANT STILL

Often referred to by musicians and other scholars as the "Dean of African American Composers," William Grant Still is revered within the art music community. William Grant Still's original aim was to elevate black music to be respected within the art music community. No longer would African Americans be relegated to playing so-called "jungle music." William Grant Still's music library alone consisted of many arias, symphonies, and operas that set him apart from other Harlem Renaissance composers. Musicologist Jon Michael Spencer's book "The New Negroes and Their Music: The Success of the Harlem Renaissance" is an all-encompassing text on the music of the Harlem Renaissance which relegates the life and times of William Grant Still to the third chapter. Spencer writes

All of these compositions fall into what Still identified as three stylistic periods. The first of which consists of his student works composed under the influence of French composer Edgard Varèse with whom he studied in New York from 1923-1925. The works of this second stylistic period were the ones that especially fit in with the New Negro musical philosophy of capturing the life, ambitions, struggles, and passions of the Negro race within musical forms. In 1934, three years after the premiere of the *Afro-American Symphony* Still moved to Los Angeles, where he began his third stylistic period and collaborated on several music projects with Verna Arvey a Jewish concert pianist and journalist who became his wife five years later. This period lasting from 1934 to the time

of his death in 1978, began the same year that Locke considered the second generation of Renaissance artists to have begun.[24]

While each period is important to William Grant Still's mastery and creation of music this section will focus mostly on his second and third stylistic periods. William Grant Still's most famous work the *Afro-American Symphony* was composed and premiered during his second stylistic period. Many of the works composed by William Grant Still that had a direct impact upon "the New Negro Movement" were created during his second stylistic period. The third stylistic period which started in 1934 the year before the collapse of the Harlem Renaissance is when he created his universal idiom for the New York World's Fair in 1939. This third period is also characterized by his operas like *Troubled Island* which focused on the history of Haiti. William Grant Still's *Afro-American Symphony* and his *Symphony in G Minor* two of his most famous works were composed during his second stylistic period. To paraphrase the words of Jon Michael Spencer, William Grant Still's contribution of over one hundred compositions in the form of symphonies, operas, ballets and orchestral works, are why he is referred to as the "Dean of African American Composers" by musicians, musicologists, and many other scholars.[25] Thus, William Grant Still's gigantic musical library would have a tremendous effect upon "The New Negro Movement."

It was in Harlem that William Grant Still would begin his career as a composer. Still's exposure to composing in Harlem through the tutelage of Edgard Varèse was just

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[24] Jon Michael Spencer, *The New Negroes and Their Music: The Success of the Harlem Renaissance* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press 1997), 80-85.

[25] Jon Michael Spencer, *The New Negroes and Their Music: The Success of the Harlem Renaissance* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press 1997), 80.

the beginning. His professional career working with, and arranging music for W.C Handy would allow him to perfect his technique. Jon Michael Spencer writes

> While it was from his formal study at Oberlin and later with Chadwick and Varèse that Still acquired his ""mastery of form and technique,"" it was from his professional experiences as a performer and arranger of black music that he acquired his ""mastery of mood and spirit."" In addition to playing oboe in and arranging for Eubie Blake's orchestra for the 1921-22 production of *Shuffle Along*, Still played Oboe and cello for W.C. Handy's band and later arranged blues and jazz scores for the bands of Don Voorhees, Sophie Tucker, Artie Shaw, Willard Robison, and Paul Whiteman.[26]

In other words, William Grant Still's training with George Chadwick and Edgard Varèse were just as important as his early career playing with and arranging for the bands of many popular artists like W.C. Handy and Paul Whiteman. The convergence of many artists in Harlem would prove beneficial to William Grant Still's early career. Still was not happy though with simply being a popular composer. His true ambition was to compose art music that would set African American composers apart from their white counterparts. Spencer claims "So with his ""mastery of form and technique"" ""mastery"" with a masterful black or African difference Still confidently overcame many of the racial barriers that had long relegated the Old Negro to ancillary positions in

[26] Jon Michael Spencer, *The New Negroes and Their Music: The Success of the Harlem Renaissance* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press 1997), 75.

American society."[27] William Grant Still would break down many barriers with the production of his first symphony. William Grant Still's "Afro-American Symphony" would set him on a path to greatness.

The *Afro-American Symphony* would grant William Grant Still the praise and status he needed to be a successful composer. Spencer writes that "Still was credited with being the first Negro to compose a symphony that was performed by a prominent symphonic orchestra, the *Afro-American Symphony* which premiered on October 29, 1931, under the direction of Howard Hanson under the Eastman School of Music."[28] Never before had an African American composer achieved this much success before the release of Still's masterpiece. The *Afro-American Symphony* would catch the attention of many prominent leader within the "New Negro Movement." However, William Grant Still's first symphony would receive mixed reviews. Philosopher and leader of the "New Negro Movement," Alain Locke would claim "The ""Symphony,"" however, has a moving simplicity and directness of musical speech. It too has a folk theme, treated in contrasted moods with corresponding rhythms, making for a combined symphony and tone epic of the Negro experience."[29] This high praise from Alain Locke referring to a symphonic piece that would be classified as jazz was unheard of. Shortly after the release of the "Afro-American Symphony," Locke would start a correspondence with Still that would blossom into a highly beneficial friendship. In contrast to the high praise of Alain

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[27] Jon Michael Spencer, *The New Negroes and Their Music: The Success of the Harlem Renaissance* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press 1997),75.

[28] Jon Michael Spencer, *The New Negroes and Their Music: The Success of the Harlem Renaissance* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press 1997), 75-76.

[29] Alain Locke, *The Negro and His Music: Negro Art Past and Present,* (Salem: Ayer Company Publishers, 1991):115.

Locke, music critic Olin Downes would not be so kind. Jon Michael Spencer uses Olin Downes' review in the *New York Times* as an example of the negative press for the premiere of the *Afro-American Symphony*. Spencer claims that Downes wrote, ""It is not Negro music diluted with the conventions of the white, nor yet is it cast in the forms of negroid expression which has also become conventional. Mr. Still does not indulge in Harlem jazz, but harks back to more primitive sources for brutal, persistent, and barbaric rhythms.""[30] To say that this was not the misnomer that Still wanted would be a gross understatement. In fact, Still would later equate Downes to the white club owners oppressing jazz bands by only allowing them to play the more primitive "Jungle music." Musicologist Eileen Southern writes in "The Music of Black Americans," that "One reason for listeners' initial and continued attraction to the *Afro-American Symphony* was its modern ""American"" sound. Still was the first American to employ the blues and jazz in a symphonic work; previously, black composers had confined their use of Negro folk idioms in concert works to spirituals, worksongs, and dance songs."[31] Still's use of blues and jazz music in a symphonic work would be important for other jazz composers moving forward. One of William Grant Still's legacies was his ability to pave the way for the next generation of African American jazz composers. However, it would be the praise and attention of Alain Locke that would benefit Still's career moving forward.

Still's ability to impress Alain Locke would result in a beneficial partnership. It is important to note that Alain Locke was the leader of the "New Negro Movement." His

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[30] Jon Michael Spencer, *The New Negroes and Their Music: The Success of the Harlem Renaissance* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press 1997), 82.

[31] Eileen Southern, "The Music of Black Americans,"(London: W.W. Norton and Company 1997), 433.

books “The New Negro” and “The New Negro and his Music” were foundational to the movement. Locke would recommend Still for various composing jobs, and in return Still would ask Locke to critique drafts of his compositions. For example, Spencer writes about the exchange of correspondence for the ballet *Sahdji.* This exchange between the two would result in Still composing the music for this ballet. Spencer writes, “Twice Still sent the manuscript back to Locke saying he could not do it. The first time, Locke mailed it back with a plea that Still continue. The second time, he sent it back registered mail with no comment at all. With initial hesitance, because of the technical difficulties surrounding the huge cast, Still agreed to compose the work.[32] However, this partnership between Still and Locke would result in a lot more than just the casual exchange of correspondence. Locke’s influence over Still would not just result in additional work. Musicologist Joseph Patrick Franke’s Master’s thesis William Grant Still’s Vision for American Music examines the current historiography surrounding William Grant Still’s biography along with his musical and ideological influences. Franke writes, “Ideologically, Still would be influenced by several writers of the Harlem Renaissance: most prominent of these would be Alain Locke.”[33] While Franke mentions the ideological influence of Alain Locke, he does not expand to include the names of other Harlem Renaissance writers that influenced Still. Perhaps this simply reinforces the importance of Alain Locke as Still’s primary ideological influence. For example, Franke could have referenced Langston Hughes “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” by

[32] Jon Michael Spencer, *The New Negroes and Their Music: The Success of the Harlem Renaissance* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press 1997), 82.

[33] Joseph Patrick Franke, “William Grant Still’s Vision for American Music,” (University of Pittsburgh, 2012),21.

stating that like Claude McKay's wished to be known as a poet rather than a Negro Poet, William Grant Still sought to be a composer rather than a Negro Composer.[34] Yet Franke never goes into greater detail about the other writers from this time period that influenced Still ideologically. Franke however, does provide more correspondence between Locke and Still than Jon Michael Spencer. He provides correspondence between Locke and William Grant Still on the publication of Locke's book "The Negro and his Music." Franke writes "Locke's desire to learn whether his expressions concerning African American Music communicate ideas that parallel with that of a major African American Composer of the time that he was not simply expressing opinion but that he was providing direction. Still's reply was effusive ""The book is fine; I think you have produced a monograph that is much better than anything that has been done before on the same subject, and I am sure that it will prove a valuable piece of research to many people… Congratulations on a fine piece of work!""[35] This exchange between Locke and Still show that Locke thought of Still as his equal. Locke did not want to publish his work without first seeking out an expert and trusted friend within the community of African American composers. Furthermore, Still's response provides the praise necessary for Locke to move on publishing the book without a hint of romanticism applied to Locke's writing. In conclusion, the friendship between William Grant Still and Alain Locke was beneficial to both parties in the form of returns on their work.

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[34] Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," *The Nation 122,* no. 3181 (1926): 692-694.

[35] Joseph Patrick Franke, "William Grant Still's Vision for American Music," (University of Pittsburgh, 2012), 40.

William Grant Still's *Afro-American Symphony,* would be followed by his *Symphony in G Minor* which was subtitled "Song of a New Race." It is often said by scholars that these two pieces were meant to be paired within conjunction with one another. Jon Michael Spencer writes "Critical responses to Still's *Symphony in G Minor,* which was performed by the San Diego Symphony Orchestra under the composer's own baton, perfectly illustrates how, in all of the foregoing compositions of Still's third period, the two-tiered mastery of ""form and technique"" and ""mood and spirit"" was intended to work on its hearers by conveying both the rational and the emotional and thereby to undermine the racial essentialism of white fabrication."[36] Therefore, Still did not follow the same method to produce the *Symphony in G Minor* as other symphonies he produced during his third stylistic period. Joseph Franke comments upon Still's attempt to undermine the racial essentialism of white fabrication. Franke claims that "Locke had occasion to hear Still's *Symphony No. 2 in G minor* and wrote to Still that ""Just the point that Downes made about the lack of formal symphonic development was to me the main virtue for if we are to represent the Negro and for that matter modern life there must be fresh and unexpected improvisational movement. not the predictable steps and return re-tracings of traditional style."" Later in the same letter Locke also remarks that ""It is so strange that nowhere among Negro musicians do you find any real interest in new works and experimenting""[37] In other words, Still's attempt to get back to basics truly represented the African American as unpredictable rather than sticking to the traditional

[36] Jon Michael Spencer, *The New Negroes and Their Music: The Success of the Harlem Renaissance* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press 1997), 87.

[37] Joseph Patrick Franke, "William Grant Still's Vision for American Music," (University of Pittsburgh, 2012), 41-42.

symphonic format. This also harkens back to the fundamentals of jazz music by utilizing improvisational techniques. Spencer also cites an unnamed reviewer for the *San Diego Tribune* by writing ““Integrity of craftsmanship, as well as the thought and feel and feeling of this very quiet, modest man left its imprint upon his music so that his impulse to portray his race the Negro, as it is today, was clearly perceived in his symphony. We missed the rather wild frenzy which frequently characterizes Negro music, but recognized the new philosophy and temper of the Negro, today, a “‘‘desire to give to humanity the best that their African heritage has given them.’””[38] In summation, this reviewer is equating that Still's *Symphony in G Minor* represents the replacement of the stereotype of the "Old Negro" with the new philosophy of the "New Negro," who is modest, middle class, and has a desire to use his African heritage to add to his community. Thus, William Grant Still's *Symphony in G Minor* is an adequate representation of the "New Negro Movement," happening and Harlem and across the nation.

Following this pattern of using folk songs as part of the influence upon his compositions is William Grant Still's *Symphony No. 4* subtitled: "Autochthonous." This symphony is one of the last compositions in what Franke would classify as William Grant Still's nationalistic period. Franke writes "One example of Still's particular brand of ““new”” nationalism would be his *Symphony No. 4*, subtitled ““Autochthonous.”” The subtitle alone hints at its nationalistic purpose, because the primary definition of autochthonous is ““indigenous or native.”” A secondary meaning provides greater

[38] Jon Michael Spencer, *The New Negroes and Their Music: The Success of the Harlem Renaissance* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press 1997), 87.

insight: ""Originating where found; indigenous; native."" The first definition with its use of the ethnic terms ""indigenous"" and ""native"" implies some kind of content derived from these sources."[39] In agreeance with this quote, one would consider that Still used indigenous or native sounds, or incorporated native folk songs into his *Symphony No. 4*. What Franke terms William Grant Still's nationalistic period is characterized by Still's use of the music of the underrepresented groups such as African Americans or native rhythms. Franke claims that "Still observed, ""As the subtitle indicates, the *Fourth Symphony* has its roots in our own soil, but rather than being aboriginal or indigenous, it is intended to represent the spirit of the American people,"" a spirit that is rooted and fostered in a sense of the place of its discovery, not the race which it resides. A more perfect example of the progression of Still's compositional ideologies could not be imagined, especially one that demonstrates the change from expressing the emotions of African Americans to expressing the emotions of all Americans."[40] In other words, Still was using his voice as representation for the emotions of all Americans. Never before had a composer gone from performing the music of his own people to performing music that represented all of America. Thus, William Grant Still's *Symphony No. 4*, is an example of a new form of folk song for all Americans.

William Grant Still has been rightfully assigned the title the "Dean of African American Composers." His contribution of over one hundred works cannot be overlooked. Still is also known for breaking down racial barriers as the first African

[39] Joseph Patrick Franke, "William Grant Still's Vision for American Music," (University of Pittsburgh, 2012), 50.

[40] Joseph Patrick Franke, "William Grant Still's Vision for American Music," (University of Pittsburgh, 2012), 51.

American to compose a work for symphony orchestra. Alain Locke and William Grant Still benefitted from a reciprocal partnership where they would exchange work. Still caught the attention of Locke shortly after the release of his *Afro-American Symphony*. Arguably William Grant Still's most well-known piece, the *Afro-American Symphony* initially received mixed reviews, but was successful in granting Still a certain amount of status. William Grant Still's next composition *Symphony in G Minor* is often seen as a companion piece to the *Afro-American Symphony*. This piece takes a more simplistic approach and focuses on early jazz techniques like improvisation. One of the final pieces from what Joseph Franke refers to as Still's nationalistic period is his *Symphony No. 4* subtitled "Autochthonous." This composition follows Still's pattern of incorporating folk songs into his music. However, his *Symphony No.4* also marks a new era for folk song as he produces something that is meant to represent the spirit of America. Musicologist Gayle Murchison essay "Dean of African American Composers or Harlem Renaissance man: The New Negro and the Musical Poetics of William Grant Still" examines the music of William Grant Still and those scholars and artist that influenced him. Murchison writes "Still's musical poetics reflect the ideals of the Harlem Renaissance. Throughout his writings resonated with many of the themes expressed by Dubois and Locke and amplified them. Still also moved the ideals of the Harlem Renaissance in his music from the realm of abstract thought about the role of music to the aural realm of musical composition and performance. Thought the Harlem Renaissance ended in the early 1930s, Still continued these themes until his death, attesting to their enduring mission."[41]

[41] Gayle Murchison, "Dean of African American Composers or Harlem Renaissance Man: The New Negro and the Musical Poetics of William Grant Still," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly 53,* no.1 (1994), 54-55.

Therefore the music of William Grant Still had a profound impact on the “New Negro Movement.” Still’s music expressed many of the themes that W.E.B. Dubois and Alain Locke were using as the intellectual basis of the “New Negro Movement.” The music of William Grant Still, and the example he set as an African American composer would pave the way for other musicians of color. Still played stages that were once closed off to African Americans, because they were thought of as white. Before William Grant Still, very few African American musicians played concert halls. After Still, more African American musicians were given opportunities to play in concert halls across the United States and Europe. Thus, the impact of William Grant Still’s music upon the “New Negro Movement,” as the “Dean of African American Composers,” his influence upon this movement cannot be underestimated.

CHAPTER FOUR

JAZZ ROYALTY: DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington one of the most famous jazz musicians and composers would begin his musical career during the Harlem Renaissance. His famous composition *It Don't Mean A Thing* would go on to become synonymous with the swing era.

The music of Duke Ellington was heavily influenced by his religious upbringing. Religious scholar Mark Sumner Harvey explains in his essay "New World A'Comin': Religious Perspectives on the Legacy of Duke Ellington" that many of Duke Ellington's compositions were influenced by the spirituals he learned in church. Harvey claims "Duke Ellington had a devout faith instilled by his mother during his formative years growing up in Washington D.C. Regular attendance at Baptist and Methodist church services and Sunday School classes nurtured this and his lifelong enthusiasm for reading the Bible. Moreover, the social dimension of the black religious experience with its emphasis on participation and transmission of heritage and values must have influenced him also."[42] Many of the spirituals that Ellington learned from a young age would later influence two of his greatest compositions: *Black and Tan Fantasy* and *Black, Brown and Beige*. Ellington would use the fast paced nature of jazz to popularize the spirituals for the masses. Harvey takes his claim about Ellington's religious influence further by writing "The spirit in which Ellington approached his music and his band was thus in line

[42] Mark Sumner Harvey, "New World A'Comin': Religious Perspectives on the Legacy of Duke Ellington," *Religion and Intellectual Life 6,* no. 3-4 (1989), 208.

with that of African American religious tradition and with its antecedent African tradition wherein music, and also dance, were primary expressions of religious understanding and practice."[43] In other words, Duke practiced a religious manner with his band and his music. The evidence provided by Sumner suggests that Duke Ellington's religious upbringing had an effect on his music. Thus, Duke Ellington sought to make the spirituals more popular for the masses using jazz.

Early in his career, Duke Ellington's Orchestra was hired to play at the Cotton Club which was on of Harlem's most prestigious clubs. David Levering Lewis claims that "Cotton Club shows were Zeigfeldian in their gaudiness, and almost too athletic to be sensuous, with feathers, fans, and legs flying in time to Ellington's tornado renditions of compositions like house songwriter Jimmy McHugh's ""When My Sugar Walks Down the Street.""[44] Shows at the Cotton Club became renowned for their artistic and sensuous nature. These shows appealed to whites who wanted to see the mythical African jungle full of barbarism, sex, and strange sounds. During his tenure at the Cotton Club, Duke Ellington developed a style of jazz that can only be referred to as jungle style. Musicologist Kimberley Hannon Teal's article "Beyond the Cotton Club: The Persistence of Duke Ellington's Jungle Style" discusses Ellington's stay at the Cotton Club. She then focuses on how Duke continued to use jungle style long after leaving the Cotton Club. Teal writes "Although he did not travel to a jungle to do so, Ellington did in fact discover music that was unfamiliar to him and adopt it in to his own compositional language in

[43] Mark Sumner Harvey, "New World A'Comin': Religious Perspectives on the Legacy of Duke Ellington," *Religion and Intellectual Life 6,* no. 3-4 (1989), 208.

[44] David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem was in Vogue* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 210.

works that would eventually be tied to Africa at the Cotton Club. The jungle style is a perfect example of how Ellington often found new musical ideas: from the musicians with whom he worked."[45] Ellington's jungle style was based on the sounds of a mythical Africa. The jungle style that Ellington developed was more accustom to the clubs of Harlem than the jungles of Africa.

In agreeance with the black stereotypes that were reinforced by the minstrel shows, popularized by the Cotton Club. The third chapter of Lisa Barg's dissertation titled "Between Theater and History "Black and Tan Fantasy," examines both Ellington's song *Black and Tan Fantasy* and the short film that accompanies it. Barg writes "It was during his tenure at the Cotton Club from 1927-1931, that the name and sound of Duke Ellington became linked in the popular imagination with that of ""jungle style"" jazz or ""jungle music."" Like other forms of black entertainment in the 1920s, the shows at the Cotton Club updated familiar vaudeville-minstrel stereotypes of African Americans, freely mixing nostalgic representations of Plantation life with erotic scenarios set, variously, in the ""African"" jungle, the deep south, and Harlem."[46] In other words, it was the foreign nature of the shows at the Cotton Club that attracted outsiders. Duke Ellington's jungle style would follow him long after he left the Cotton Club. In conclusion, Duke Ellington's employment at the Cotton Club influenced the style of jazz he continued to play.

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[45] Kimberley Hannon Teal, "Beyond the Cotton Club: The Persistence of Duke Ellington's Jungle Style," *Jazz Perspectives 6,* no.1-2 (2012), 130.

[46] Lisa Barg, "Between Theater and History: Duke Ellington's "Black and Tan Fantasy," in *National Voices/Modernist Histories: Race, Performance and Remembrance in African Music, 1927-1943* (Stony Brook: SUNY Press 2002), 118.

One of Duke Ellington's most famous compositions *The Black and Tan Fantasy* is often associated with his jungle style jazz. However, Lisa Barg claims that "It should come as no surprise, then, that what we have come to consider two of Ellington's most defining jungle styke pieces, "Black and Tan Fantasy" and "East St. Louis Toodle-O" were composed and recorded prior to his employment at the Cotton Club."[47] Since these two pieces of music were created before his time at the Cotton Club, it could be argued that his jungle style jazz already existed beforehand. Instead of his jungle style jazz being created at the Cotton Club it is more likely that he refined this style of jazz during his employment. Historian of music and culture David Metzer's article "Shadow Play: The Spiritual in Duke Ellington's "Black and Tan Fantasy" examines the use of spiritual music in one of Duke Ellington's most famous compositions.

The more technical aspects of Ellington's *Black and Tan Fantasy* are examined by various scholars. Metzer writes "Black and Tan Fantasy" presents an ironic reversal of those works and the musical and religious propriety that defined them. The jazz work does not treat its spiritual in such a pious manner; rather it uses blues idioms to distort the melody. This transformation as seen in the contemporary reviews of the piece, fascinated listeners and with the later appearance of the beguiling work in a film movie-goers as well."[48] Duke Ellington's *Black and Tan Fantasy* allows him to present a spiritual in a new light by using blues idioms. This new style appealed to listeners and allowed a spiritual to reach a much larger audience. Metzer also claims that "Black and Tan

[47] Lisa Barg, "Between Theater and History: Duke Ellington's "Black and Tan Fantasy," in *National Voices/Modernist Histories: Race, Performance and Remembrance in African Music, 1927-1943* (Stony Brook: SUNY Press 2002), 122.

[48] David Metzer, "Shadow Play: The Spiritual in Duke Ellington's "Black and Tan Fantasy," *Black Music Research Journal 17,* no. 2 (1997), 139.

Fantasy" rejects the restraint and musical decorum of the spiritual arrangements, which were largely modeled on European concert idioms. Instead, it charges its spiritual with a blues intensity that yields a series of bizarre sounds unheard of inside either the concert hall or church, including Miley's ""choking and wailing"" and Nanton's ya-yas and comical horse whinny."[49] As a result, of this many people were exposed to the spiritual nature of *Black and Tan Fantasy.* These strange noises that were made by Duke Ellington's bandmates were designed to grab the attention of the listener. Lisa Barg accurately summarizes a review of *Black and Tan Fantasy* by writing "For Darrell, at first a comfortably comic popular tune, a series of novelty effects for racial fun. Became an uncanny musical object its ""twisted beauty"" challenged his notions of cultural and racial categories in an alluring musical drama. Darrel's account describes the experience as kind of a sonic haunting. The efficacy of this haunting, I am suggesting testifies to the transformative power of mimicry and masking."[50] In short, what Darrell thought was some silly popular song, turned out to be a thing of sheer beauty a musical drama unlike anything he had heard from a black band before. Thus, Ellington's use of the spiritual in his *Black and Tan Fantasy* used blues idioms, and a series of strange sounds to reach a new audience.

The popularity of Duke Ellington's *Black and Tan Fantasy* was magnified by a short film titled *Black and Tan*. This film is about fifteen minutes in length and closes with Duke Ellington playing the *Black and Tan Fantasy*. Lisa Barg writes "Thus far I

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[49] David Metzer, "Shadow Play: The Spiritual in Duke Ellington's "Black and Tan Fantasy," *Black Music Research Journal 17,* no. 2 (1997), 143.

[50] Lisa Barg, "Between Theater and History: Duke Ellington's "Black and Tan Fantasy," in *National Voices/Modernist Histories: Race, Performance and Remembrance in African Music, 1927-1943* (Stony Brook: SUNY Press 2002), 154.

have considered two specific theatrical contexts for "Black and Tan Fantasy": The Cotton Club and Miley's down home preacher act. Murphy's *Black and Tan* brings together aspects of both these theatrical settings. In the process the film captures visually the convergence of the sounding drama of Ellington's music and the primitivist fantasies of black life and culture."[51] To clarify, when Barg writes Murphy's *Black and Tan,* she is referring to the director Dudley Murphy who worked closely with Carl Van Vechten to produce several short films. Over the course of several scenes the audience does see a place that looks very similar to the Cotton Club in the climax of the film. Additionally, the climax of the film is dependent on a character's ability to dance to the music without falling ill because of a heart condition. David Metzer writes "The film *Black and Tan* builds around a performance of the title work, a fleeting story of romantic sacrifice and a gorged mise-en-scène, both of which elaborate upon thematics discussed upon in this essay: primitivism, the spiritual, distortion, and death."[52] The primary aim of this film, was to engage moviegoers the same way that the *Black and Tan Fantasy* had engaged its listeners. This drama provided a story that embodied the *Black and Tan Fantasy* with scenes of primitivism, the spiritual, distortion and death.

The final scene set in the Cotton Club expresses three out of the four of these themes: the primitive nature of Cotton Club shows, distortion of the dancer's dream to be able to dance on stage again, and her death towards the end of her big number. Metzer claims that "Although touching, this melodrama was not what drew audiences to the film.

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[51] Lisa Barg, "Between Theater and History: Duke Ellington's "Black and Tan Fantasy," in *National Voices/Modernist Histories: Race, Performance and Remembrance in African Music, 1927-1943* (Stony Brook: SUNY Press 2002), 157.

[52] David Metzer, "Shadow Play: The Spiritual in Duke Ellington's "Black and Tan Fantasy," *Black Music Research Journal 17,* no. 2 (1997), 152.

The marquees hyped the Cotton Club Orchestra, and ""jungle syncopation,"" sounds and sites about which most moviegoers had only read. The film did not disappoint. Not only did it present a glitzy stage that could only be found in a spot like the Cotton Club, but it offered a primitivist spectacle, including the advertised primal rhythms as well as the trademark jungle dress, the scant feather and bead outfits worn by Washington and the chorus girls."[53] Instead of attending this film, because of the popularity of Ellington's *Black and Tan Fantasy*, many moviegoers went to experience the atmosphere of a show at the Cotton Club. The appeal of the Cotton Club Orchestra and the primitivist rhythms and dress for many it was like traveling to a mythical African jungle without leaving the United States. Murphy's *Black and Tan* would not mark the end of Duke Ellington's work with film music, he would later write music for *Symphony in Black* and *Anatomy of a Murder*.

Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown and Beige* presents a retelling of African American history. As mentioned in the title this is a song in three parts, each part focuses on an important time in African American history. For example, "Black" begins with Africans arriving in the New World as slaves. Musicologists Lisa Barg and Walter van de Leur explain in their essay "Your Music has Flung the Story of 'Hot Harlem' to the Four Corners of the Earth!: Race and Narrative in Black, Brown and Beige" examines each part of *Black, Brown and Beige.* Barg and van de Leur write "Notably, Ellington concludes this 1931 article by announcing his intentions to compose ""a rhapsody unhampered by any musical form"" portraying ""the colored races in America in the

[53] David Metzer, "Shadow Play: The Spiritual in Duke Ellington's "Black and Tan Fantasy," *Black Music Research Journal 17,* no. 2 (1997), 153.

syncopated idiom."" He continues: ""I am putting all that I have learned into it in the hope that I shall achieve something really worthwhile in the literature of music, and that an authentic record of my race written by a member of it shall be placed on record.""[54] This composition would span the history of African Americans starting with 1629 in New Amsterdam. Ellington's masterpiece would tell a story that would run counter to the white narrative that existed. The fourth chapter of Lisa Barg's dissertation "Race, Narrative and Nation in Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown and Beige*" focuses upon the impact of Ellington's composition and how it approaches race in America. Barg writes "reflecting the tripartite form of the narrative poem, *BBB's* three movements represent African American history as a continuous progressive, but unfinished historical saga waiting for an unspecified future time when full and equal citizenship for African Americans will be achieved." To clarify, each part of *Black, Brown and Beige* would represent a significant time in African American history. The end result of this narrative was not realized by the time *Black, Brown and Beige* was released.

Unfortunately, Ellington's *Black, Brown and Beige* would not receive nearly as much praise as his *Black and Tan Fantasy.* Barg writes "Like *Black and Tan Fantasy*, BBB freely mixes ""high"" and ""low"" urban and rural, and secular and sacred themes. However, in contrast with the considerable critical acclaim generated by his early ""three minute masterpiece."" BBB and Ellington more generally was attacked by jazz critics an

[54] Lisa Barg and Walter van de Leur, "Your Music has Flung the Story of 'Hot Harlem' to the Four Corners of the Earth!: Race and Narrative in Black Brown and Beige" *The Musical Quarterly 96*, no.3-4 (2013) 432.

composers alike after its Carnegie Hall premiere in 1943."[55] While, there were similarities between *Black and Tan Fantasy* and *Black, Brown and Beige,* Duke Ellington received many negative reviews for this composition. His newest masterpiece would be attacked for its lack of form, its length, its new sound unlike his earlier work, and many other reasons.

Despite all the bad press, that Ellington would receive early on, this work would be redeemed by musicologist Scott DeVeaux. Barg found that "DeVeaux's important revisionist account of BBB s reception provides a long overdue corrective to such critical aporias by situating Ellington's project within the historical and political contexts ignored by his critics. These contexts include African American struggles for civil rights and solidarity. World War II discourses of consensus, and the outpouring of symphonic works on American themes, commonly known as "musical Americanism."[56] In other words, the difference between DeVeaux's review and the reviews of jazz critics and composers was his ability to comment on the historical and political contexts that were ignored by Ellington's other reviewers. Jazz critics AND composers were only able to focus upon the more musical aspects of *Black, Brown and Beige* like the sound, form or lack thereof, and its flow. Thus, Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown and Beige* reveals an African American history told from a new perspective in an attempt to create a new record of his race.

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[55] Lisa Barg, "Race, Narrative, and Nation in Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown and Beige*" in *National Voices/Modernist Histories: Race, Performance and Remembrance in African Music, 1927-1943* (Stony Brook: SUNY Press 2002), 173.

[56] Lisa Barg, "Race, Narrative, and Nation in Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown and Beige*" in *National Voices/Modernist Histories: Race, Performance and Remembrance in African Music, 1927-1943* (Stony Brook: SUNY Press 2002), 174.

Duke Ellington blended the sacred with jazz in an attempt to create a new narrative of African American history. Ellington started his career at the Cotton Club where he perfected his jungle style jazz. Here Duke Ellington and his orchestra gained popularity by playing primitivist rhythms at the equivalent of minstrel shows that reinforced black stereotypes. The sounds of the jungle were encouraged, women wore primitive garb that could only be compared to the showgirls of Las Vegas today, but even more revealing. Prior to his employment at the Cotton Club, Duke Ellington would compose his first masterpiece *Black and Tan Fantasy.* This composition would receive plenty of praise for its intriguing sound. This was one of the first instances of Duke Ellington blending the spirituals with jazz rhythms, and blues idioms. Duke Ellington felt compelled to share the spirituals with the masses, because of his Christian upbringing. This song would also mark his entry into film music as Dudley Murphy approached him about turning it into a short film. Murphy's *Black and Tan* attracted a wide audience for reasons other than hearing the *Black and Tan Fantasy.* The marquee attracted viewers based on the prestige of the Cotton Club Orchestra and the "African" nature of Cotton Club shows.

Ellington would continue to work in film music long after the popularity of *Black and Tan* faded. He would later complete a musical narrative on African American history: *Black, Brown and Beige.* The aim of this tripartite was to create a narrative that ran counter to the existing story of African American history written by whites. Duke Ellington wanted to create an accurate portrayal of his race for record told by a member of his race. This composition would start with 1629 and end with a future that had not been realized yet where African Americans shared equal citizenship with whites.

How was Duke Ellington impacted by the "New Negro Movement?" Duke Ellington was by no means a race leader like WEB Du Bois or Alain Locke. He preferred to keep his feet firmly planted in the world of music rather than signing petitions and leading marches. WEB Du Bois like Duke Ellington sought to uncover the history of African Americans. Ellington recorded *Black, Brown and Beige* in an attempt to educate Americans on the unaltered history of African Americans. In a more direct way, WEB Du Bois held Pan-African conferences where he and other race leaders traveled to Africa to meet with Presidents and Prime Ministers of African nations. Ellington's work in the field of music is more than sufficient though as an example of the "New Negro Movement." Thus, the music of Duke Ellington combined the sacred and the secular to tell a new narrative of African American history.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: THE MUSIC OF HARLEM AND THE IMPACT OF THE "NEW NEGRO MOVEMENT"

The "New Negro Movement" which aimed to raise African-Americans to be middle-class came to fruition during the Harlem Renaissance. The leader of this group was without a doubt Alain Locke who authored "The New Negro." Locke however, wanted the movement to be credited with its work among the spirituals which had already been accepted by the white majority. Even more important than the influence of the spirituals was jazz. Harlem was a second-home to many of the jazz musicians that had traveled north to escape the segregated south. The night life of Harlem allowed many musicians to be discovered at various shows performed at clubs on Lenox Avenue. Musicians like Duke Ellington and William Grant Still would use jazz and other forms of music to make a name for themselves. Thus, jazz allowed musicians and other artists to achieve a middle-class status that was unheard of before the 1920s.

Many of these prominent African Americans became race leaders. Duke Ellington would go onto create *Black, Brown and Beige* a composition that attempted to shed new light on the heritage of African Americans. This epic drama started with the first blacks that set foot in New Amsterdam and ended with an equality among blacks and whites that had not yet been reached. As a composer, William Grant Still would pave the way for many musicians to play on stages that were considered only playable by whites. His premiere at Carnegie Hall was hailed by many African Americans. Still would continue to breakdown barriers by playing at these new stages. He even helped Alaine Locke with

his book "The New Negro and his Music" released in 1935 towards the end of the Harlem Renaissance. W.E.B. Du Bois focused on educating black on their African history. He traveled to Africa several times to meet with leaders of those nations in what would come to be known as the Pan-African Conferences. Langston Hughes is still revered as one of the greatest African American poets. In conclusion, there were many ways for African Americans to support the "New Negro Movement."

Harlem was a cultural epicenter where many African American musicians were able to hone their craft. As mentioned in the introduction, J.A. Rodgers explained how Harlem was the new home of jazz. Harlem was home to African Americans, Caribbean immigrants and many other groups.[57] Harlemites as these residents would be called, were introduced to many distinct sounds. Here is where Locke's theory of cosmopolitanism comes into play. The undeniable intersection of all these sounds created a new sound that was as unique to Harlem as New Orleans Jazz was to New Orleans.[58]

Musicians like Duke Ellington and William Grant Still would create music that was new and unique in Harlem. Duke Ellington created a "jungle" style of jazz all his own at the Cotton Club. The Cotton Club was where the jungle of Africa met the city streets of Harlem. Residents went to see outlandish shows that reinforced primitive stereotypes like the black savage. Duke Ellington's three-minute masterpiece *Black and*

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[57] J.A. Rogers, "Jazz At Home," in *The New Negro Voices of the Harlem Renaissance*, ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 216.

[58] Paul Anderson, *Deep River: Music and Memory in Harlem Renaissance Thought*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001): 123.

Tan Fantasy would gain critical acclaim on this stage as a short film. With the assistance of his orchestra, Duke Ellington really could do anything, and his bandmates helped him fine tune pieces. After his stay at the Cotton Club, Ellington would release his racially charged *Black, Brown and Beige,* a new narrative of black history. This epic drama sought to educate African Americans on their long history in the United States, and a dream of equal citizenship that had not yet been reached. *Black, Brown and Beige* was his contribution to the "New Negro Movement." A new unadulterated history of African Americans meant to educate and inspire musicians, and new race leaders to take up the mantle of the "New Negro."

William Grant Still under the tutelage of Edgard Varesè, would create compositions that would be celebrated for their folk aspects. The *Afro-American Symphony* for example, was hailed as the first symphonic piece created by a black composer. He would not stop there though; Still would create a massive body of work. This catalog of over a hundred works would not be complete withot his *Symphony in G Minor* and *Autochthonous. Symphony in G Minor* was a companion for the *Afro-American Symphony*. The first song: *Afro-American Symphony* represented African Americans historic rise to the 1920s where they could achieve a modicum of freedom. *Symphony in G Minor* was subtitled: *Song of a New Nation,* a new symphony for a new race of African Americans. *Autochthonous* meaning indigenous, attempted to create a new style of folksong that represented the American people. Thus, the music of William Grant Still would make new contributions to American folksong.

As a member of the "New Negro Movement," William Grant Still tried the dominance of whiteness. William Grant Still would be the first African American

composer to play concerts at stage that were thought of as white spaces. Carnegie Hall for example, was a stage that was dominated by white artists. William Grant Still wanted to change the idea that musicians of color could not play in concert halls. His contributions to concert music would pave the way for younger musicians. William Grant Still was a trailblazer who would receive many accolades including first black symphony composer and the first black man to compose an opera. In conclusion the contributions of William Grant Still, not be overlooked as he opened new venues to African American musicians.

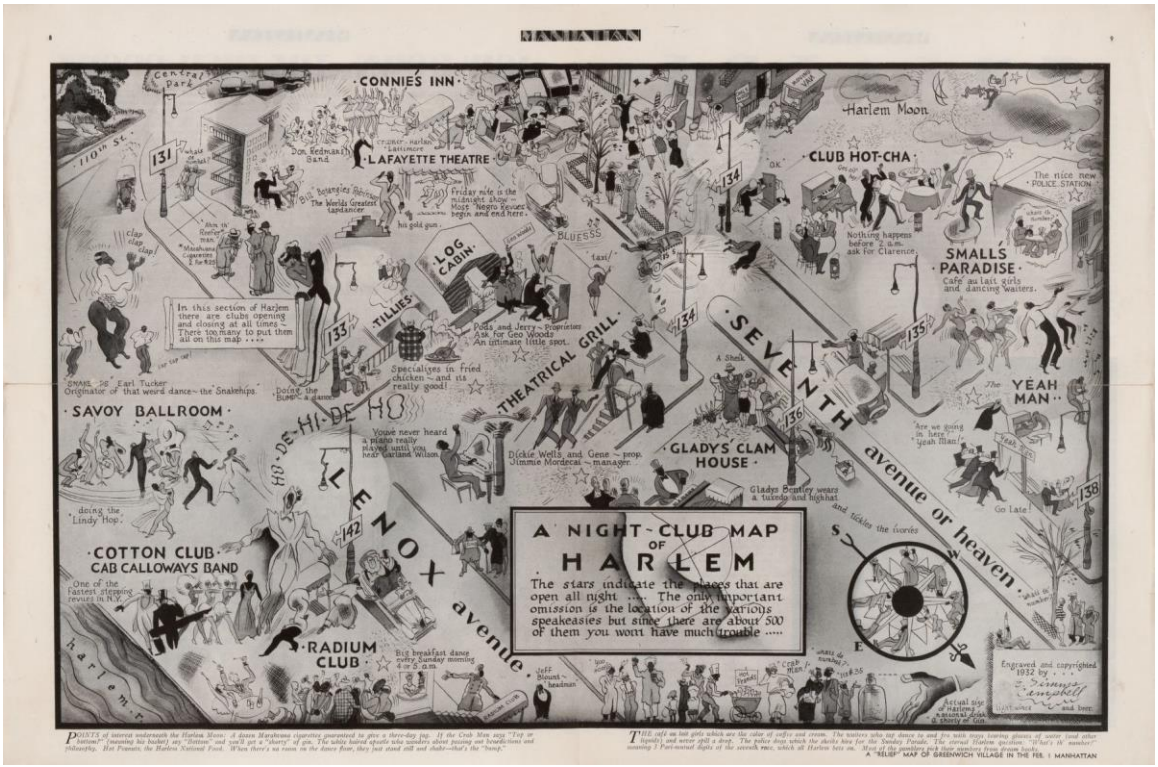
The progress of the "New Negro Movement" was a direct result of influence of jazz music. Jazz requires many musicians to improvise to the extreme that no two performances sound the same. This focus on improvisation, required jazz musicians to think on their feet, and be able to change direction quickly. The spread of jazz across the western hemisphere is directly related to its popularity. In France for example, jazz embraced the jungle, and the French admired compositions that sounded like they emerged from the jungles of Africa.

The leaders of the "New Negro Movement" like Alain Locke began to change his mind about the profane nature of jazz, because of its popularity. He realized that jazz like other forms of music was an art. Famous musicians including Duke Ellington and William Grant Still became race leaders.

The "New Negro Movement" roared forward, but its work is not yet finished. This black middle-class intellectual does not stand on equal footing with his white counterpart even today. Thus, until there is equality among people of color and whites, as claimed by Duke Ellington in *Black Brown and Beige.* Until this final roadblock is dismantled, and, the measure of a man is no longer reflected by the color of his skin. The

music of Duke Ellington and William Grant Still will provide inspiration for the next leaders of the “New Negro Movement.”

Appendix



Dudley Murphy's Black and Tan a short film based on Duke Ellington's Black and Tan Fantasy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLJmgzMnOjQ&t=2s

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