

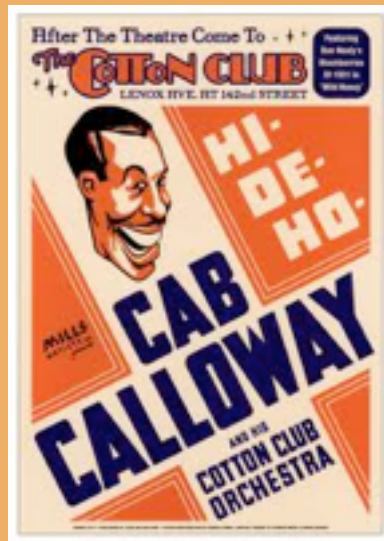


Jazz Age

By: Samantha



Cotton Club



Duke Ellington and His Cotton Club Orchestra, in 1927. (Left to Right): Duke Ellington, Joe Nanton, Sonny Greer, Bubber Miley, Harry Carney, Wellman Braud, Rudy Jackson, Fred Guy, Nelson Kincaid, Ellsworth Reynolds.

The cotton club was only one of a variety of fashionable entertainment clubs in Harlem. Many of these venues were segregated like the cotton club was. White audiences would pack the clubs to hear the new music styles of black performers, such as Duke Ellington, Bessie Smith and many others. The club would usually feature celebrity nights every Sunday. Heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson opened the club in 1920 and originally called it the Club De Luxe. But in 1923 Owney Madden a known bootlegger and gangster, took over the club and called it the Cotton Club. This club helped launch the careers of many black performers, they became very popular and are well known by many today.



The cotton club was located at 644 Lenox Avenue and 142nd Street in New York city.



Owney Madden



Jack Johnson



Bessie Smith

Bessie Smith was considered an “empress of the blues.” In 1923 she sold one million recordings of “Down Hearted Blues.” She was perhaps the most outstanding vocalist of the decade. She recorded on black oriented labels produced by the major record companies. In 1927 she became the highest paid black artist in the world.



George Gershwin



Gershwin began his musical career as a song plugger on Tin-Pan Alley, then soon after began writing his own music. When he was 25 years old he wrote a jazz influenced song "Rhapsody in Blue." It premiered in New York's Aeolian Hall at the concert "An Experiment in Music." It was a musical composition by George Gershwin for solo piano and jazz band that was written in 1924. It combines components of classical music with jazz-influenced effects. It was orchestrated by Ferde Grofé three times in 1924, then finally received its premiere in a concert "An Experiment in Music." It was performed by Paul Whitman and his band, while Gershwin was on the piano. The "Rhapsody in Blue" song basically started his career. It established his reputation as a serious composer and it has become one of the most popular of all American concert songs.

Duke Ellington



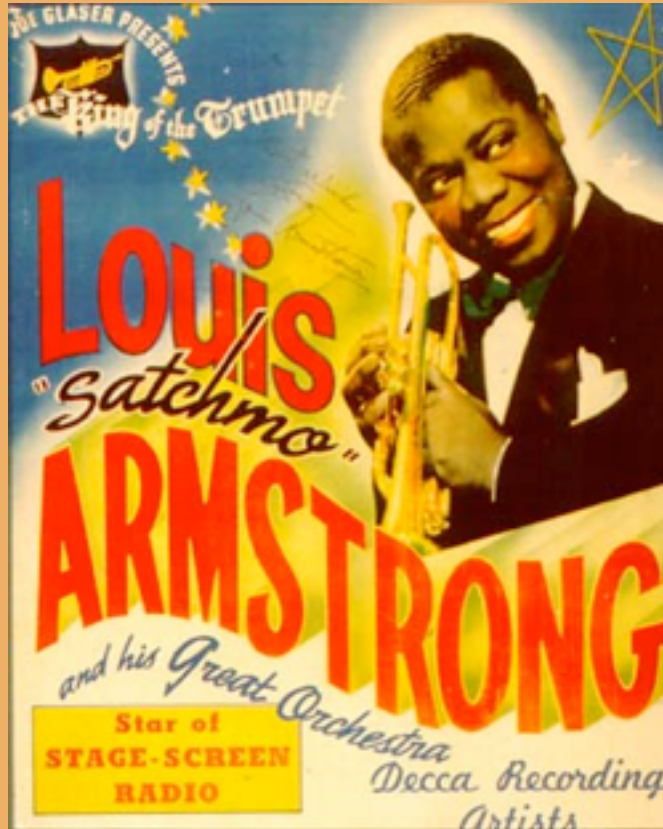
Ellington brought on a whole new level of style with such sophistication to jazz that it had never seen before. He was a gifted piano player who considered himself to be a composer and arranger rather than just a musician. He began playing music as a professional in Washington D.C. in 1917. What really made Ellington's orchestra so popular was becoming the house band at the cotton club. Radio broadcasts from the club made Ellington famous across America.



Louis Armstrong

Armstrong was considered to be the greatest of all jazz musicians. He defined what it was exactly to play jazz. His way with performing still dominates jazz music to this day.

After King Oliver left the city for Chicago, Armstrong got a telegram from his mentor Joe Oliver asking him to join his creole jazz band in Chicago. This was an amazing opportunity for Armstrong, and soon his outstanding playing in the band made him a sensation among other musicians in Chicago.



Armstrong was from a very poor family. He ended up being sent to a reform school when he was 12 after firing a gun on new years eve. Joe "King" Oliver was his favorite musician to listen to at clubs. Oliver was like a father to Louis and gave him his first real concert, and instructed him on the instrument. Louis took his place in "Kid Ory's Band" here and there.

Armstrong later recorded with Bessie Smith's 1925 classic of "St. Louis Blues," and many others. Not long after he made his first Hot Five records, which was the first time he had ever recorded music under his own name. These records are said to speak of Armstrong's creative powers and made him even more famous.



The End :]

