The Storm is Passing Over

Teacher's Guide

A Teachers' Guide to
The Storm is Passing Over: Celebrating the Musical Life of Maryland's African-American Community from Emancipation to Civil Rights

The exhibition

"The Storm is Passing Over," a traveling and on-line exhibition, uses photographs, manuscripts and memorabilia to document the lives of Maryland's African-American musicians. It tells the stories of their struggles and achievements during the long years of segregation, from Reconstruction to the passage of the first Civil Rights Act in 1964. The exhibition was organized by the Peabody Institute in cooperation with the Enoch Pratt Library and Coppin State College and will travel through the State of Maryland through the year 2000.

The exhibit features well-known personalities like Eubie Blake, Billie Holiday and Cab Calloway, as well as lesser-known figures who played a significant role in the musical life of Maryland. Among the latter are A. Jack Thomas, one of the first black bandmasters in the U.S. Army and the first African-American to conduct the all-white Baltimore Symphony Orchestra; classically trained violinist and composer Henderson T. Kerr, who led a society orchestra in and around Baltimore from 1902 until about 1920; W. Llewellyn Wilson who taught generations of musicians at Douglass High School, including bandleader Cab Calloway and soprano Anne Brown, the first Bess in George Gershwin’s opera Porgy and Bess.

The exhibition also examines the hardships imposed by segregation on African-American musicians: the rigors of touring when few public accommodations were available to black artists, and concert halls, especially in the South, refused to present them.

The exhibition's special brochure for schools is organized in sections: Historical Background, The Church, Ragtime and Jazz, Bands and Classical Music, Frederick Douglass High School, Touring Segregated America, Pennsylvania Avenue, The World at War and the Civil Rights Struggle.

---

Topics and Questions for Discussion

Historical Background
What set Maryland's African-American communities apart from those in other states after the Civil War?

What resources made it possible for African-American communities to be self-sustaining?

What forms of musical expression existed within Maryland's African American communities?

Many of the best jazz musicians had classical training and could perform music of many styles, from gospel to grand opera. Name all the musical styles you know and any artists who sing in that style.

The Church

How was the Reverend Tindley educated and how did he contribute to the world of church music?

In what ways do churches contribute to the musical life of African American communities today?

Ragtime and Jazz

Where did young musicians like Eubie Blake perform before the invention of radio and television? How did Eubie Blake resist the injustices of segregation?

When jazz became popular, many people criticized this new form of music. What were their concerns? Can you relate them to the criticisms aimed at some forms of popular music today?

Bands and Classical Music

Why were bands important in the 1920s and 1930s? Do bands have the same roles today?

Frederick Douglass High School

Anne Brown said of her years at Douglass that they were "the only instance where racial segregation had a positive effect." What did she mean by that? Why did she leave Baltimore for New York?

What other famous musicians studied at Douglass High School?
Touring Segregated America

What are some of the problems you would encounter if you were an African-American musician traveling in segregated America?

What kind of things did Cab Calloway do to make touring easier and safer for his musicians?

Pennsylvania Avenue

Find out all you can about the significance of The Royal Theatre and the clubs along Pennsylvania Avenue.

Why do you think the Royal and these clubs closed?

The World at War and The Struggle for Civil Rights

What critical events of World War II helped bring about the end of segregation?

What prompted the desegregation of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the Peabody Conservatory of Music?

What was the legislation that brought the end of legal discrimination in public places in America?

Why do you think "The Storm is Passing Over" was chosen as the title of this exhibition?

Activities

To learn more about Maryland’s African-American musical heritage:

Interview older family members or friends, asking them to share their memories of the cultural life of their communities, for example, band concerts, church choirs, school music, dances. Did they participate as listeners or musicians?

Read first-hand accounts of concerts at the Royal Theatre and other musical events in the Afro-American newspaper (visit the Enoch Pratt Library on Cathedral Street to view microfilm of back issues of the Afro American), and prepare a report for class discussion.
Visit the Maryland Historical Society, the Archives of the Peabody Institute, the Eubie Blake Center and the African-American collection at the Enoch Pratt Library on Cathedral Street.

Attend a musical event at a local school and, if possible, interview one of the performers and report on the event to your class.

Visit your local library to find recordings by or books about one or more of the musicians mentioned in the exhibit.

-------------------

**Finding The Storm "On-line"**

Teachers and students can view captioned images and full descriptive text from "The Storm is Passing Over" on-line at http:\\www.peabody.jhu.edu/archives/storm. The site provides up-to-date information on locations and visiting hours.

-------------------

**Exploring the Internet**

Explore the following sites on the internet related to African-American music and musicians and report on what you learn.


[http://www.library.advanced.org/10854/tindley.html](http://www.library.advanced.org/10854/tindley.html)  
[http://www.scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/sgo/texts/tinley.html](http://www.scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/sgo/texts/tinley.html)  
- Devoted to Charles Albert Tindley and his music.

[http://www.utm.edu/~davidms/jazz/cab.html](http://www.utm.edu/~davidms/jazz/cab.html) - Cab Calloway, his orchestra and his music.

[http://wwwtotalswing.com/articles/a_cab1.htm](http://wwwtotalswing.com/articles/a_cab1.htm) - Cab Calloway - The Hi Di Ho Man by Nuffie Calloway.

[http://www.peabody.jhu.edu/concerts-and-events/pn/sept98/ennis.html](http://www.peabody.jhu.edu/concerts-and-events/pn/sept98/ennis.html) - Ethel Ennis -- Baltimore’s First Lady of Jazz
Eubie Blake, ragtime musician and Marylander.

Memories of You/Eubie Blake. The Maryland Historical Society site devoted to the Eubie Blake collection.

Suggested Readings for Teachers

Books


Bernice Johnson Reagon, editor: *We'll understand it better by and by: pioneering African American gospel composers.* (Washington, D.C.: 1992)


Cab Calloway and Bryant Rollins: *Of Minnie the Moocher & Me.* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976)


Audio-visual material at the Enoch Pratt Free Library (http://www.pratt.lib.md.us):

*Visiting with Blanche and Cab Calloway.* 13 min. video
Blanche and Cab Calloway reminisce about their lives and careers. Produced and directed by Suzanne Tibbetts-Lach.
Enoch Pratt Free Library XX(729209.1)
Minnie the moocher and many, many more. 50 min. film
A nostalgic tour through the great Harlem jazz clubs of the 1930s and '40s, by Cab Calloway.

Stompin' at the Savoy
Columbia JCL 2639
Enoch Pratt Library MP10.W38S8

Compact Discs:

Ella Fitzgerald with Chick Webb
GRP Records 11105 99212
555 West 57th St
New York, NY 10019

The Best of Cab Calloway
Columbia 0 7464 48901 2

Crying in the Chapel
The Orioles
KRB Music Companies
KRB5129-2

The Orioles Sing Their Greatest Hits
Collectibles COL-5408
Collectable Records Corp.
Box 35
Narbeth, PA 19072

Billie Holiday’s Greatest Hits
Decca GRD-653

If Women ruled the World
Ethel Ennis
Savoy Jazz

The Great American Songbook
Billie Holiday
Verve 314 523 003-2

Porgy and Bess
Decca
MCA Classics 0881-10520-2
Spinnin' the Webb
Chick Webb
GRP Records GRD 635

Ellis Larkins "At the Maybeck"
Concord

Blanche Calloway and Her Joy Boys 1925-1935
DK 003
Classics 655 by Andy Kirk