

Starr-Waterman

American Popular Music

Chapter 3: "Catching as the Small-Pox": Social Dance and Jazz, 1917–1935

Key People

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (1899–1974): Composer and pianist widely regarded as one of the most important American musicians of the twentieth century.

Eubie Blake (1883–1983): Ragtime pianist and composer who began his career with James Reese Europe's orchestra in 1916 and, along with Noble Sissle, launched the first successful all-black Broadway musical, *Shuffle Along*.

James "Bubber" Miley (1903–1932): Influential trumpeter who created his signature sound by combining two types of mutes and creating a deep growl in his throat.

James Reese Europe (1880-1919): African American musical director hired by Vernon and Irene Castle; career as a popular dance musician skyrocketed, but continued to devote energy to establishing a black symphony orchestra that would specialize in the works of African American composers.

Justo Don Azpiazu (1893–1943): Leader of the Havana Casino Orchestra who gave American audiences their first taste of authentic Cuban music.

King Joe Oliver (1885–1938): Cornetist and mentor to Louis Armstrong who led King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band and made some of the first recording by black musicians from New Orleans.

Louis Armstrong (1901–1971): Brilliant cornetist and singer affectionately known as "Satchelmouth" or "Satchmo" who built a six-decade musical career that challenged the distinction that is sometimes drawn between the artistic and commercial sides of jazz music.

Nick LaRocca (1889–1961): Leader of a white group from New Orleans called the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, recordings of "Livery Stable Blues" and "Dixieland Jass Band One-Step" were released in 1917.

Noble Sissle (1899–1975): Instrumentalist and composer who began his career with James Reese Europe's orchestra in 1916 and, along with Eubie Blake, launched the first successful all-black Broadway musical, *Shuffle Along*.

Paul Whiteman (1890–1967): Leader of the Ambassador Orchestra, by far the most successful dance band of the 1920s. His assumption of the title "King of Jazz" was part of an attempt to promote a watered-down, "safe" version of jazz to the public, but he also made some important contributions to jazz music and defended jazz against its moral critics.

Vernon and Irene Castle: Ballroom dance superstars who attracted millions of middle-class Americans into ballroom classes, and expanded the stylistic range of popular dance.