



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

INFLUENCE ON THE ARTS

All month during Specials, students are learning about the Influence on the Arts during Black History Month. Read Below for more information about how African Americans have influenced visual arts, theater, dance, and music. Also be SHORE to check out our more information section with links for stories on myON and in the Media Center.

Below is some information about three influential African Americans in the Visual Arts that were learned about in Art Class:

Visual Arts

ALMA THOMAS



Alma Thomas began her career as a kindergarten teacher, but eventually decided to study Fine Arts at Howard University, where she became the very first graduate to earn a Fine Arts degree from the school. She began her career making representational artwork, but gradually made a shift towards abstract work and color field painting that looks mosaic-like.

KEHINDE WILEY



Kehinde Wiley is a New York City portrait painter who is known for his highly naturalistic paintings of African Americans. In October 2017 he had been chosen to produce a portrait of Barack Obama for the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. He was the first black artist to paint an official portrait of a president for the United States for the National Portrait Gallery.

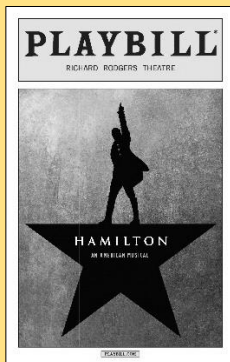
JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT



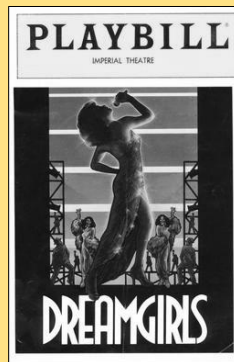
Jean-Michel Basquiat was an African American artist famous for his informal graffiti art during the 1970's. By the 1980's his neo-expressionist paintings were being exhibited in galleries and museums internationally. In May 2017, one of his paintings set a new record high for any American artist at an auction being sold for \$110.5 million.

There are a variety of shows that focus on African American themes or feature majority black casts. Below are 4 famous Broadway shows:

Theater



Hamilton is about the life of Alexander Hamilton created by Lin-Manuel Miranda with a predominately black cast with singing and rapping. The musical opened in 2015 and won 11 Tony Awards including Best Musical.



Dreamgirls follows the story of a young female singing trio called "The Dreams" and how they became music superstars. The original musical opened in 1982 and won 6 Tony Awards and was turned into a major motion picture.



The Lion King is based upon the 1994 Disney animated film. This musical features a majority black cast with music from the movie as well as African music added by Lebo M. The musical opened in 1997, won 5 Tony Awards, and is the highest grossing Broadway production of all time.



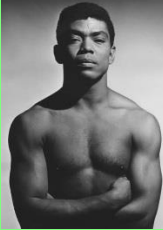
The Wiz is a retelling of *The Wizard of Oz* in the context of modern African-American culture. The original musical opened in 1974 and won 7 Tony Awards and was turned into a motion picture.

DOUBLE SIDED *Flip Me!*

DANCE

Below is some information about a variety of styles of dance that African Americans have influenced and famous dancers that were discussed and learned about during Dance Classes:

MODERN



ALVIN AILEY
Choreographer and Activist who founded the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in New York. He revolutionized African-American participation in 20th-century of modern dance.

TAP



THE NICHOLAS BROTHERS
Performed "flash dancing," a highly acrobatic technique when tapping. With a high level of artistry and daring innovations. They were considered by many to be the greatest tap dancers of their day.

SWING



FRANKIE MANNING
American dancer, instructor, and choreographer one of the founders of "Lindy Hop," and was very popular during the Swing era of the late 1930s and the early 1940s in America.

BALLET



JANET COLLINS
Janet, a ballet dancer, choreographer, and teacher, performed on Broadway, in films, and on television. She was among the pioneers of black ballet dancing, one of the few classically trained black dancers of her generation.

JAZZ



FLORENCE MILLS
American singer, dancer, and performer during the Jazz Age and the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s in NY. She paved the way for African Americans in mainstream theater and popularized syncopated dance and song.

HIP HOP



POPIN PETE
American dancer, choreographer, innovator, one of the originators of the "popping" dance style and member of the Electric Boogaloos. Hip Hop dance today incorporates moves and skills from the previous 5 dance styles mentioned.

Music

Below is some information about two very influential African Americans that were focused on during Music Classes:

ELLA FITZGERALD



Ella Fitzgerald was born on April 25, 1917 in Newport News, Virginia. She was a good student and enjoyed dancing. She performed for her classmates before school and at recess! When she was 17 years old, she entered a singing contest at the famous Apollo Theater in Harlem, New York. From there, she became widely recognized when she produced a version of 'A-Tisket, A-Tasket' in 1938. Ella performed with many well-known jazz musicians. Her professional career lasted most of her life. Her wonderful performances earned her the nicknames "Queen of Jazz", "Lady Ella" and the "First Lady of Song".

CHARLIE PARKER



Charlie Parker was born on March 12, 1955 in New York City. He picked up the saxophone when he was ten years old. When he was 11, his Mother purchased him a saxophone. He began playing and he enjoyed it so much he was practicing between 11-15 hours a day! He found work in a restaurant in Harlem where he met Malcolm X and Redd Foxx. During his career, he joined Dizzy Gillespie and popularized a style of music called "bebop". This style of music relied heavily on the musician's ability to improvise along with what the band was performing at the time. Charlie earned the nickname "Yardbird" because of how much he enjoyed eating chicken. Eventually, he was affectionately called "Bird".

For more information about the African American influence on the Arts, check out the books available at Shore and through our online library!

AVAILABLE ON MYON:

- When Martin Luther King Jr. Wore Roller Skates*
- Booker T. Washington: Great American Educator*
- Muhammad Ali: American Champion*
- Louis Armstrong: Jazz Legend*
- King of Pop: The Story of Michael Jackson*
- Schools in the Civil Rights Movement*
- Jay-Z: Hip-Hop Icon*
- Follow the Drinking Gourd*



Watch the Shore Magnet News every morning for Spotlights on Famous African Americans all month!



LIVE
8:40 AM
EVERY MORNING



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MORE INFORMATION