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**BLACK MONTMARTRE  
DURING THE 1920'S**

**Mémoire de MAÎTRISE**

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And I dedicate this documentary to my family who helped me and believes in me and to the success of the project “Virtual Montmartre” .

## **INTRODUCTION**

The 1920's, a post-war period, was a time when people wanted to feel free, happy and enjoy life as World War I, a time of battles and sadness, had ended. As a part of the celebration of life and freedom, there were also many new movements, organizations, music and dance revolutions. The perfect example is in Harlem, New York, in the United States, with the so called movement "Harlem Renaissance" (1920-1930), name given to the flowering of Black culture and intellectual life during the 1920's, which then flew through other countries landing first in the "City of Light", Paris, and more exactly, in Montmartre.

A myth says that during World War I (1914-1918), African-American soldiers arrived in France with their fanfare, carrying a banjo on one shoulder and a gun on the other. After World War I, their destination was Montmartre, a popular area different from other quarters of Paris, transformed because of their African-American culture which includes their music genre, the so called "Jazz". This music has always been alive but it is difficult to exactly define at its beginnings. Since then, Paris was considered as one of the main foreign capital of Jazz where African-Americans dreamt to live freely, far from the segregation suffered in America.

In order to discover what Montmartre actually represented during the 1920's, a project is in construction called "Virtual Montmartre". The idea of this project came through a friendship

between professors of different universities. Dr. Liliane Gallet-Blanchard and Dr. Marie-Madeleine Martinet from the University of Sorbonne-Paris IV (France) who had first created a Cdrom on “Georgian Cities”. And Dr. Bryan Carter from the Central Missouri State University (United States) who already realized a project, “Virtual Harlem”, and another one, “Virtual Sorbonne”, elaborated also with students from the University of Sorbonne-Paris IV. Their aim is to share Multimedia contribution to the Humanities. It is not at the same time Humanities can be expressed through a new channel accessible of the most spread audience.

“Virtual Montmartre” consists in the construction of a website (URL: <http://www.montmartre-virt.net>) elaborated by professionals on which will be found researches done by professors as well as by M.A. and Doctoral students from France and from the United States. It will include a collection about the African-American culture in Montmartre during the 1920’s, different areas and complementary research being necessary.

For the project, I have written this documentary and created a section of the website, entitled “Black Montmartre during the 1920’s”. For their elaboration, I had to know all about the history of that period, that is to say between the Great Wars, about the African-American culture, Harlem Renaissance, about Jazz music, the history of Montmartre and so, the African-American community of Montmartre and its anecdotes. Furthermore, for this project I had also to pinpoint on a map the clubs and cabarets, such as “Le Grand Duc” or “Bricktop’s”, owned by African-Americans that opened during the 1920’s and closed during the 1930’s.

The first researches were done in different libraries such as the “Bibliothèque du Centre Georges Pompidou”, the “Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne-Paris IV”, the “American Library”, the “Bibliothèque Forney” and the “Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris”, that is where I found a collection of books from French and American authors such as *Harlem in Montmartre*<sup>1</sup> by William A. Shack. Then, in order to find some maps of Montmartre of the

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<sup>1</sup> SHACK, William A. *Harlem in Montmartre*. California: The Regents of the University of California, 2001.

1920's, a difficult mission, I went to the "Archives de Paris", the "Pavillon de l'Arsenal", the "Bureau des Plans de la Ville de Paris", the "Institut Géographique National" and to the "Agence Media-Cartes" (producers of virtual maps). They all had maps but not the one I really needed. I was looking for a clear map where you could only see the streets of Montmartre's Hill and the ones of Pigalle, without any monument or any other indication. The maps that I found were very touristic or did not show all the streets I needed for my presentation. So, a personal drawing of a map has been done. I also visited the "Museum of Montmartre", the "Galeries Roussard" and the "Museum of Publicity", in order to find pictures and posters of orchestras and places of that period<sup>2</sup>. Virtual researches have also been done, looking at websites about Jazz musicians, singers, entertainers, and also about Harlem and Montmartre. And last but not least, I had the opportunity to interview Jazz specialists such as Philippe Baudoin and Daniel Nevers, as well as Monique Y. Wells, a specialist on African-American History, who organizes tours in Paris. I personally met the architect, Edmond Bonnefoy, former Director of the Archives Association in Montmartre.

On the one hand, Jazz music is said to have come from Europe passing to the United States (from New Orleans, Chicago, New York,...): thus a first part will be based on the complexity of the definition of Jazz apprehended both as popular music or by a developed art according to intellectuals, presenting also its creators and the Harlem Renaissance. In order to explain how Harlem went to France, the story of a soldier, James Reese Europe, and his troop, the "Harlem Hellfighters", is very important as he was the one who brought this African-American music to France.

On the other hand, as you arrive in Paris, more precisely in Montmartre, you will understand why African-Americans stayed in Europe and mostly in France. What was the composition of that society? How did they live? What was their culture and traditions like?

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<sup>2</sup> Addresses of places in the Bibliography, p. 60

But also, how it was like to share life with French people, knowing that there was no similar segregation as there was in the United States.

In order to discover the atmosphere in which they lived, you will go through the nightlife in Montmartre. That is when all happened because it mingled incredible places and situations: clubs and cabarets with their music and orchestras, shows and artists, stars and spectators. A very elegant, artistic and intellectual atmosphere sparkled in Montmartre during the “Roaring Twenties”.

## I. From Harlem to France (before the 1920's)

### 1.1 What is “jazz”?

What are the origins of “jazz” as a word and as a music genre? And how did it arrive in Paris? During the 1920's, in Harlem, New York, “jazz” rhythms were heard day and night. However, “jazz” already existed and this African-American music was heard in France thanks to James Reese Europe and his troop.

#### 1.1.1 An unproven etymology of the word “jazz”

*It bugs me when people try to analyze Jazz as an intellectual theorem. It's not-It's feeling.<sup>3</sup>*

*JAS, JASS, JAZ, JASCZ or just plain JAZZ.<sup>4</sup>*

The word “jazz” has been considered as an American-English word in 1909. But a true etymology of it has not been found. There have been too many different hypotheses about its origins in order to have a proven one. However, it is interesting to know about the different hypothesis proposed<sup>5</sup> :

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<sup>3</sup> DOWDELL, D.C. *A Passion for Jazz! Music and History Education*. Copyright 1998. Quotation by Bill Evans, a Jazz musician. <<http://www.apassion4jazz.net/glossary.html>>

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> WILTON, David. *Wordorigins.org*. Last update April 24 2004. Copyright 1997-2004. <<http://www.wordorigins.org/>>

*Many competing theories for the term's origin exist. Some believe that it derives from the name of a musician, either a dancing slave named Jasper from New Orleans circa 1825, or a late-nineteenth century Vicksburg, Mississippi drummer named Charles "Chas" Washington, or a Chicago musician named Jacob Brown.*

*Others claim it is from a foreign language, either New Orleans French ("jaser", meaning to speed up, to chatter, or to make fun), or from Mandingo ("jasi", meaning to act out of character), or from Temne ("yas", meaning to be energetic).*

*And none other than Jelly Roll Morton claimed to have coined the term, saying he started using it in 1902 to differentiate the style from ragtime.*

*Finally, in Ken Burns' PBS documentary "Jazz" (2000), Wynton Marsalis claims that the origin is from the sense of the word meaning copulation.*

*None of these explanations appear to be correct. There is a single 1831 use by Lord Palmerston referring to Talleyrand "jazzing", or chattering and telling stories. This is certainly a non sense variation on the French jaser and is unconnected with the later name for the musical style. Morton's claim of coinage is also undoubtedly false. The claim of African origin is unlikely given that the word comes from San Francisco white baseball, not New Orleans black musicians. And Marsalis is a great trumpet player, but not an authority on etymology. The sexual sense of the word postdates the musical sense and the sexual sense probably comes from the musical style, not vice versa.*

*What we do know about "jazz" is that the first known uses are actually from baseball slang, and mean vim, vigor, and pep. The earliest known uses of the term are from a series of baseball articles by E.T. "Scoop" Gleeson in March 1913 in the "San Francisco Bulletin". In an April issue of the Bulletin, "jazz" is referred to as a "word that has just joined the language." Gleeson claimed that he acquired the word from another sportswriter, "Spike" Slattery of the "San Francisco Call", had heard the term used in a craps game to denote spirit in throwing the dice.*

*The earliest recorded use of "jazz" to refer to the style of music is from 1914 when it is used to describe the syncopated rag style played by San Francisco band leader Art Hickman. The term originally referred to the lively style of Hickman's music and eventually became the name of that style. One of Hickman's musicians, Bert Kelly, claims to have taken the word with him to Chicago in 1914. From there, the term headed south to New Orleans. This is plausible, but unproven.*

*The true etymology of "jazz" is complicated by several infamous errors, which keep recurring in popular accounts of the word's origin. Even the venerable OED2 makes an error. The big dic first cites the term as appearing in 1909 on a gramophone*

*record Uncle Josh in Society. This is an error. The term didn't appear on the 1909 pressing of the record, but on a later, 1919, edition. Also two French dictionaries Le Nouveau Petit Robert (1993) and Grand Larousse Dictionnaire de la Langue Français (1975) référence a 1908 use. These are typos; they should read 1918. Finally, the Ken Burns PBS documentary Jazz promulgates the legend that the term was originally spelled jass. While the musical style was often spelled with a double s in the early years, the earliest spellings are with a double z. All the photos in the documentary showing the "jass" spelling postdate the earliest known use of the word in 1913.*

*So while in the end, we don't precisely know where the word "jazz" comes from, we do know how it came to be applied to music. It began life as a San Francisco sportswriter's term for team spirit and aggressive play and was then applied to the Bay Area music scene. From there it traveled east with musicians until it eventually came to be associated with New Orleans music.*

This extract briefly shows the different possibilities of origins, from sport to an incorrect pronunciation of a noun, to a sexual connotation. Then, according to another virtual source:

*Probably ult. from Creole patois jass "strenuous activity," especially "sexual intercourse" but also used of Congo dances, from jasm (1860) "energy, drive," of African origin (cf. Mandingo jasi, Temne yas), also the source of slang jism.<sup>6</sup>*

After years of research, the origin of the word "jazz" is still unknown. However, the origin of "jazz" as a form of music is better known.

### **1.1.2 Origins of Jazz music**

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<sup>6</sup> HARPER, Douglas. *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Copyright 2001. <<http://www.etymonline.com/j1etym.htm>>.

Nowadays, when you say “Jazz”, you automatically think about music: but about very different genres, you can imagine a Black orchestra playing in a club, you also think about Blues which is at the heart of Jazz and about Swing. It is said that the music called Jazz was born around 1895, in New Orleans, in the United States. This explains that some may say there are traditional folk-songs origins from the continent. African-American created Jazz mixing their traditional cultures and the influences that the United States brought to them. The New Orleans style was the first Black music to be known all around the world.

Jazz is a form of musical expression of African-American culture. It came from African elements: rhythm, hymns, spiritual songs and Black workers’ songs. It has an emotional and improvisational character full of feelings.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jazz music was completely different from the other music styles that existed. The basis of Jazz was mainly about improvisation by more than one player at a time. Composers used to write songs and before it was finished it became a Jazz piece of song. They did not really need to compose; it was about rhythm and feelings:

*The real power of jazz... is that a group of people can come together and create... improvised art and negotiate their agendas... and that negotiation is the art.<sup>7</sup>*

As it was explained before, the first Jazz was played by African-Americans and Creole musicians in New Orleans. And then, Jazz music traveled around the United States and the world, being the dominant force in the 20<sup>th</sup> century music.

### **1.1.3 The evolution of Jazz music**

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<sup>7</sup> WYNTON, Marsalis. *Jazz*, a film by Ken Burns. *Op. cit.* <<http://www.apassion4jazz.net>>.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jazz music was not really accepted not only because of its cultural origins but also because it suggested low social class, and Jazz was synonymous to noise. However, when white orchestras started to imitate Jazz during the 1920's it became a major entertainment.

It is said that the pioneer "Black New Orleans Jazz Band" of Buddy Bolden was formed in the 1890's:

*"Charles "Buddy" Bolden, the Elusive Father of Jazz", often cited as the first jazz musician, may well be the most enigmatic figure the music has ever produced. No recordings survive of this seminal figure.<sup>8</sup>*

That is when other players appeared such as Clarence Williams (1898-1965) and later with the "Hot Jazz", Louis Armstrong (1901-1971), only to give an example. Jazz was heard all over the United States and the world, spreading to Chicago, New York, but also Paris, Rome, where Jazz was very well accepted as there was no segregation. It met its "Golden Years" which were the 1920's and since then, Jazz never stopped to be played.

So many Jazz orchestras were formed with professional singers and musicians who traveled performing exquisite and rhythmic harmonies in extraordinary clubs and cabarets, and even in the streets.

In order to tell all about the exact evolution of Jazz, thousand of pages could be written. However, you can keep in mind the components of Jazz which are Blues, vocal and instrumental which included: Ragtime, Dixieland Jazz, Swing, Bebop, Cool Jazz, Hard-Bop, Latin-Jazz, Jazz-Rock as well as Free Jazz.

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<sup>8</sup> GIOIA, Ted. *The History of Jazz*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. p. 34.

Now that you know more about “jazz” as a word and as a genre of music, one can concentrate on an African-American movement called “Harlem Renaissance” which lasted from 1920 until 1930.

## **1.2 Harlem Renaissance**

### **1.2.1 The creation of an African-American cultural movement in Harlem**

After World War I (1914-1918), African-Americans moved from a rural South to an urban North. They settled in the center of New York City, on the island of Manhattan and more exactly in Harlem, because there were discussions going on about Black culture and civil rights. At that time, there was segregation and the United States were on their way for the abolition of slavery and the rights for African-Americans:

*In this new setting, however, an entire cultural elite had come together, drawing confidently on the full range of human expression-in poetry, fiction, visual arts, music, history, sociology, and various other disciplines in which creative thought could flourish. (GIOIA, 94).*

That is when, in 1919, the African-American cultural movement was born, then known as the “New Negro Movement” and after called “Harlem Renaissance”:

*Most historians accept 1925 as the established date of the New Negro Movement’s flowering of artistic expression, later called the Harlem Renaissance.<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> SCHMIDT CAMPBELL, Mary, DRISKELL, David, LERING LEWIS, David and WILLIS RYAN, Deborah. *Harlem Renaissance: Art of Black America*. New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc. Publishers, Times Mirror Book, 1997. p. 106.

Harlem Renaissance represented not only a literary, artistic and musical movement but also a social movement against segregation and the denial of their rights. So, African-Americans transformed Harlem into an artistic and literary center in order to exalt their culture, their history and gain confidence. They did it through all kinds of art works:

*...An era in which black people were perceived as having finally liberated themselves from a past fraught with self-doubt and surrendered instead to an unprecedented optimism, a novel pride in all things black...<sup>10</sup>*

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, different associations were founded by African-Americans such as the “National Association for the Advancement of Colored People” (NAACP), created in 1909 and dedicated to securing full civil and political rights for African-Americans. There was also the “Urban League”, in 1910, and the “Universal Negro Improvement Association” (UNIA), by Marcus Garvey, both also to preserve civil rights.

African-Americans were much influenced by a magazine, *The Crisis* (1910-1934), published by William Edouard Burghardt Dubois, and a book, *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, by Alain Leroy Locke (1927), where he describes the migration as “something like a spiritual emancipation”<sup>11</sup>. W.E.B. Dubois, member of the NAACP, and Alain Locke were both sociologists and writers considered as leaders of the Harlem Renaissance. They had the same ideology: maintain their history and culture alive through arts, gain respect and fight for their rights:

*Perhaps no voice was heard more often than that of Alain Locke. America’s first Black Rhodes Scholar, Locke carried the twin banners of aesthetician-philosopher and historian-critic for the New Negro Movement. His dream was to found a “Negro School of Art” in Harlem, which made him the ideal catalyst for the entire Black arts movements.<sup>12</sup>*

<sup>10</sup> POWELLAND, Richard J. (*Re/Birth of a Nation*). *Harlem Renaissance 1920-1930 CE*. Stanford University. Copyright 2004. <<http://www.stanford.edu/~tshih/HarlemRenaissance.html>>.

<sup>11</sup> LOCKE, Alain. *New Negro: An Interpretation*. Textbook Binding, Johnson Reprint Corp. (June 1968).

<sup>12</sup> in *Harlem Renaissance: Art of Black America*. p. 106.

This movement attracted many Black readers, writers, artists, musicians, many of whom lived in Harlem. The New Negro Movement lasted only a decade, from 1920 to 1930, because then came the Great Depression<sup>13</sup>. However, the African-American culture continued to live and they saw the goal of their fight in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's.

### **1.2.2 Artists and Intellectuals of Harlem Renaissance**

In this movement of integration and equality, there were leaders, as we already said, such as W.E.B. Dubois who used to hold many congresses for the NAACP in foreign countries. In February 1919, he held the first Pan African Congress in Paris. There was also Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican who fought for civil rights and of course Alain Locke, a sociologist who wrote about urban pluralism saying:

*The peasant, the student, the businessman, the professional man, artist, poet, musician, adventurer and worker, preacher and criminal, exploiter and social outcast, each group has come with its own special motives... but their greatest experience has been the finding of one another.*<sup>14</sup>

These three leaders with their ideology and their strength to gain their goal influenced the majority of the writers, artists, intellectuals, musicians who had migrated in Harlem and even in Paris.

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<sup>13</sup> 1929: Wall Street stock market crash ("Black Thursday") ushers in a social and economical crisis. 1933-1945: American President Franklin D. Roosevelt takes care of it with his political "New Deal".

<sup>14</sup> REUBEN, Paul P. *PAL : Harlem Renaissance : A Brief Introduction*. Harlem Renaissance: An Assessment from Huggins. Nathan I. *Harlem Renaissance*. NY: Oxford UP, 1971. Last update September 6, 2004. <<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap9/9intro.html>>.

On the one hand, the writers who participated in the Harlem Renaissance were Countee Cullen (1903-1946), Langston Hughes (1902-1967), James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938), Gwendolyn B. Bennett (1902-1981), Claude McKay (1890-1948), Arna Bontemps (1902-1973), Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960), Alice Dunbar-Nelson (1875-1935), Jean Toomer (1894-1967), Nella Larsen (1891-1964), Angelina W. Grimke (1880-1958), Jessie Redmon Fauset (1884-1961), Marion Vera Cuthbert (1896-1989), Esther Popel (1896-1958), Ida B. Wells-Barnett (1862-1931) and Anne Bethel Spencer (1882-1975), to whom can be added Alain Locke and W.E.B. Dubois. They wrote poems, short stories and also books. Many of these writers occupy an important place in American Literature, such as Langston Hughes:

*Cross*

*My old man's a white old man  
And my old mother's black.  
If ever I cursed my white old man  
I take my curses back.  
If ever I cursed my black old mother  
And wished she were in hell,  
I'm sorry for that evil wish  
And now I wish her well  
My old man died in a fine big house.  
My ma died in a shack.  
I wonder were I'm going to die,  
Being neither white nor black?<sup>15</sup>*

Among the artists, there were painters (who were not as well known as the writers) such as Aaron Douglas (1899-1979), William H. Johnson (1901-1970), Palmer Hayden (1890-1973), Hale Woodruff (1900-1980), Edward Burra (1905-1976), John T. Biggers (1924-2001), Lois Mailou Jones (1905-1998), Malvin G. Johnson and Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000). But also, Augusta Savage (1892-1962) and Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller (1877-1968) who were the best sculptors of the movement.

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<sup>15</sup> DIESMAN, Jill. *Jill Diesman's Home Page*. Northern Kentucky University (NKU). Copyright 2003. <<http://www.nku.edu/~diesmanj/hughes.html>>. HUGHES, Langston. *Cross* (poem).

However, an interesting point can be made on four Black artists who were influenced by Alain Locke's ideology: Aaron Douglas with his religious and Black history style, considered as the "Father of Black American Art"; Palmer Hayden showing myths and dancers or musicians on his paintings; William H. Johnson with his primitive paintings and Black Christianity; and Meta Warrick Fuller and her sculptures expressing the spiritual Harlem Renaissance.<sup>16</sup>

They all studied and worked in Paris. Through their work (paintings and sculptures) they participated on the development of African-American Art affirming their racial identities as individuals:

*Meta Fuller's art bridged the gap between a well established Black presence in European art circles and the gradual acceptance of the Black artist's work at home. She labored to uplift the level of visual literacy among her own people to direct their artistic taste to important forms of creative expression within Black culture. Aaron Douglas, Palmer Hayden, and William H. Johnson continued Fuller's legacy. Each of these artists responded favorably to the call by Alain Locke and the founders of the Harlem Renaissance to look among themselves and to the art that would be lasting in its appeal and interest within the Black community. Harlem, the place, provided the necessary ingredients for such a cultural revolution.<sup>17</sup>*

One of the best photographers of Harlem, along with Roy DeCarava (born in 1919), was James Van Der Zee (1886-1983). He photographed people and events in Harlem during the 1920's such as the "Croix de Guerre" given to the African-American soldiers who battled with the French Army during World War I, Henry Johnson, Countee Cullen but also unknown places and persons:

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<sup>16</sup> See Annex, p. 83.

<sup>17</sup> *Harlem Renaissance: Art of Black America*. p. 155.

*He captured the life and spirit of Harlem and its people during two world wars, the literary and artistic Renaissance, the hard times of the Depression, and the glorious era of swing.<sup>18</sup>*

On the other hand, between the African-Americans who migrated to the North, there were dancers, singers and musicians who brought Jazz music to New York City as well as to Chicago and St Louis. But Jazz was heard in Harlem thanks to celebrities such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Bessie Smith or Florence Mills, who used to perform in nightclubs, dance halls, roadhouses and speakeasies, such as Harlem's most glamorous nightclub, "Cotton Club" (opened in 1923), or the beautiful ballroom, "Savoy". They had created, with their colleagues, a feast atmosphere in Harlem which had the reputation to be elegant and lively. However, many of these personalities went to Europe taking their performances with them which therefore, had a lot of success.

### **1.3 The Arrival of James Reese Europe, his band, the "Harlem Hellfighters" and their Music in France**

#### **1.3.1 James Reese Europe, from his youth to the departure of the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment to France (1880-1917)**

In the 1900's, French citizens had discovered African-American music, but during World War I, they met the Jazz King, a soldier, bandmaster and also songwriter, James Reese Europe (1880?-1-1919), who died without knowing that his music would be played all over the world and enjoyed by everybody. That is why it is important to present this person:

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p. 155.

*In the common parlance of the times, Europe was considered a “Race Man”, a person filled with pride in his race and a strong commitment to racial progress.<sup>19</sup>*

James Reese Europe was born in Mobile, Alabama, on February 22, 1880. His parents were both musicians, they moved to Washington D.C. when Europe was ten years old and there, he started violin and piano lessons. In 1894, he competed for a music-writing contest and he won the second place after his sister who won the first place. In 1904, James, nicknamed Jim, moved to New York City where he started to play in a nightclub. One year later, Europe was chosen to write music for the Students of the University of Memphis, thanks to Joe Jordan. Europe has been an influence for many songwriters but he did not know that.

In 1910, he founded and became director of an African-American organization, “The Clef Club”. This Black musicians’ association served as a club and as booking agent for musicians in hotels and nightclubs. “The Clef Club Orchestra” performed for the first time at Carnegie Hall on May 2, 1912. The organization gained success, however, in 1914, Europe left the Clef Club and created the “Tempo Club”.

In 1915, it was war in Europe. During a congress in April 1917, after the sinking of the ship “Lusitania”, American President Wilson declared war to Germans. The organization of military troops was already being prepared. In June 1916, the recruitment and training of the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, later called “The Harlem Hellfighters” began in order to fight against Germans.

On September 1916, Europe, wanting to join the army, was enlisted as a soldier in the army and then got a promotion to become first sergeant. Europe was asked by his commander William Hayward to form a military band as part of the combat unit. He had difficulties to

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<sup>19</sup> SHACK, William A. *Op. cit.* p. 12-13.

recruit musicians, he even went to Puerto Rico where he found thirteen young musicians and by the end he had a sixty-five musicians' band.

On May 1917, the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry went to a camp in New York but then, they were sent to a training camp in Spartanburg, South Carolina. They joined the 27<sup>th</sup> Division but the Mayor of Spartanburg, J.T. Floyd, did not want Black soldiers in his camp. They were insulted by White citizens and suffered from racism. However, the Harlem Hellfighters, being strong and faithful, did not stop their training and they departed with the regiment for France, aboard the "SS Pocahontas" on December 14, 1917.

### **1.3.2 "The Harlem Hellfighters" in France: a success as soldiers and as musicians** **(1918-1919)**

The regiment arrived in Brest, France, on New Year's Day 1918, the first African-American unit to set foot on French soil. The Hellfighters entertained troops and citizens being under the commands of General John Pershing. Throughout the war, James Reese Europe continued to write songs and French people enjoyed the band's music and performances, so, they were sent to do a tour and perform in many cities of France. On August 18, they did one concert in Paris and as they were applause they stood eight weeks there. They also had the opportunity to play in Britain and in Italy. Nevertheless, their last concert took place in Aix-les-Bains, on May 16, 1918, as they had to go back to the headquarter. General Pershing had orders to not let the Hellfighters combat against Germans and on the consequence, they joined the 16<sup>th</sup> Division of the French Army, under the name of the "369<sup>th</sup> American Infantry Regiment". In this Division, and while they were fighting, these Black soldiers were very well treated by French soldiers, being good friends and racism was absent.

Europe's band returned successfully to New York City on February 12, 1919, leaving French people curious about American Jazz. The band played again in New York, during the

victory parade on February 17, 1919, and they left for a tour in order to perform all over the United States:

*Now with drums silenced, brass horns muffled, the men entered the trenches with other fighters of the 369<sup>th</sup>. The band said to have “jazzed its way through France” now forced its lines “to the very banks of the Rhine, where the world woke up and found [the hundred master jazzers] on the day armistice was signed”. (SHACK, 20)*

After the combat, many soldiers decided to stay in France because they were treated as human beings, there was equality and freedom. Europe, back home, was a success but unfortunately, he died during a concert in Boston, on May 9, 1919. One of the percussionists, Herbert Wright, became angered by James' orders and he attacked him with a knife during intermission. The next day, the papers wrote: *The Jazz King is dead*<sup>20</sup>.

James died two months after Hellfighter's famous recording for Pathé, he had brought the American Art form to Europe and he was even considered as an American hero both in front of a war and in front of an orchestra. The 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry was awarded the “Croix de Guerre” by French in order to thank them and as Captain Little wrote:

*France had given to them the collective citation which gave to their beloved regiment the honor of flying the Croix de Guerre streamers at the peak of its colors. France had kissed colored soldiers--kissed them with reverence and in honor, first on the right cheek and then on the left.*<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> POLATNICK, Gordon. *Fuller up the Dead Musician Directory*. <<http://elvispelvis.com/stabbing.htm>> Copyright 1997.

<sup>21</sup> *Harlem in Montmartre*, p. 20

The stay of a Black military band in France was surprising as they were the first one to go to Europe, they joined the French Army and fought against Germans and they brought a new style of music which French people admired.

James Reese Europe, the leader, would not see the great evolution of Jazz in that continent. Meanwhile, the news that France was associated to freedom was heard in Harlem, and that is when Harlemists began to leave for France in order to make their dream come true.

*Nevertheless, for many blacks France was associated with the idea of freedom.*<sup>22</sup>

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## **II. The Black Society in Montmartre (during the 1920's)**

### **II.1 The African-American Dream**

#### **2.1.1 A dream about freedom in France**

In 1919, the Harlem Hellfighters came back to the United States as heroes. As they told the adventure they lived in France, Harlem's citizens heard about the nice welcome the soldiers

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<sup>22</sup> FABRE, Michel. *From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France 1840-1980*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1999. Introduction, p. 1.

received by French people, about their hospitality, the way they were treated : equally and respectfully, a fact that did not happen back home, where racism was heavy.

That is why many of these soldiers decided to stay in France. Harlem's citizens were curious about France and they dreamt about the freedom they could have in France. That is when many African-Americans left New York in order to realize their dream:

*Many of them expatriated to Paris to experience her "joie de vivre"; others came to escape the grip of racial bigotry and political and economic oppression.<sup>23</sup>*

In France, however, citizens were waiting for these African-Americans to come. They got a taste of their culture during World War I and they wanted more. The fact that they were Black did not matter.

*Stylish Parisians fetishized Blacks before their American counterparts. As Lincoln Kirstein remarked: "To us, Harlem was far more an arrondissement of Paris than a battleground of Greater New York".<sup>24</sup>*

African-Americans left in order to live a sort of privileged life and to escape from segregation.

### **2.1.2 A dream about Harlem in Paris**

After the Harlem Hellfighters's music success in France, many African-Americans including artists and musicians went to Paris, in order to be free to play their music and to

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<sup>23</sup> WESTON, Electra. *Noir Montmartre TOURS*. PARISOUL Production. Copyright 2002.  
<<http://parisoul.online.fr/noirmontmartretours.htm>>

<sup>24</sup> WATSON, Steven. *The Harlem Renaissance: Hub of African-American Culture 1920-1930*. New York: Circles of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Pantheon Books, 1995.

develop their culture. That was their dream, bring the Harlem Renaissance movement to Paris, as well as Jazz music:

*I knew that Paris had [historically] been a city where black people could live outside the box of racism, and I was curious about what that would mean for me.<sup>25</sup>*

Here is a quotation from Josephine Baker, when she arrived in Paris in 1925, which explains the freedom of an artist:

*... and we were on our way to the hotels -in Montmatre, the section of artists of all races, no prejudice, no racism- at the right time, without a fuss.<sup>26</sup>*

As Parisians encouraged these new talents and especially their music, Paris was becoming one of the first foreign capitals of Jazz :

*Better employment opportunities and the chance to live in a discrimination-free environment prompted expatriation. In Paris, demand was high for black musicians to fill the bandstands of the small nightclubs that began to proliferate along the narrow streets of Montmartre.<sup>27</sup>*

As Montmartre kept its traditions, Pigalle transformed looking like Harlem where Jazz music could be heard in many nightclubs and where dollars would later reign. As a result, for

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<sup>25</sup> *Stanford Magazine*. Stanford Alumni Association. Copyright 2004. „Bringing Another Paris to Light“, by Katrina Alison Jaggars.

<<http://www.stanfordalumni.org/news/magazine/2001/novdec/showcase/horizons.html>>. Quotation by Ricky Stevenson.

<sup>26</sup> <<http://parisoul.online.fr/noirmontmartretours.htm>>. Quotation by Josephine Baker.

<sup>27</sup> *Harlem in Montmartre*. p. XVI.

African-Americans, France meant “freedom”, Paris became a “Mecca” and Montmartre an African-American cultural place thanks to its Black society.

## **II.2 Harlem in Montmartre**

### **2.2.1 Description of the society**

Before the arrival of African-Americans in Paris during World War I, Montmartre looked like a country town as it is a hill and it had many mills but was already a place of art. Of course, the population was almost a hundred percent French, having their traditions, their typical French cabarets such as the “Lapin Agile”, with their French music and songs. The few expatriates were Europeans. However, before World War I, African-Americans had already traveled to Paris, they were writers, artists and cultured persons with money, in order to experience European life :

*After slavery was abolished, black leaders came to France to visit the land of the egalitarian principles born of the Revolution as well as to partake of the splendor of a grandiose culture. Among them were Frederick Douglass; Booker T. Washington, president of Tuskegee Institute at the height of his fame; and Mary Church Terrell. But there were also artists like Blind Tom, the pianist, and Roland Hayes, the classical singer, and painters such as Henry Ossawa Tanner, who settled in Paris in 1891 and died there in 1937.<sup>28</sup>*

By that time and even during the 1920’s, you had to have a lot of money if you wanted to travel because the voyages to Europe from the United States were very expensive, and even more after the end of a war, as the cost of life was high :

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<sup>28</sup> FABRE, Michel. *Op. cit.* Introduction, p. 3.

*If you said you were going to Europe, everybody knew you had money.*<sup>29</sup>

In the 1920's, when a small community of African-Americans settled in Montmartre, up and down the hill, the district had undergone rapid changes in a short period of time knowing that it was a traditional Parisian district since the 1900's. Montmartre had welcomed a new society and a new culture, looking more like a city's district than a country one, and the first place in Europe where to stop, a kind of Harlem in Paris surrounded by attractions.

Meanwhile, because of the money and the long voyage which was a kind of adventure, there were few African-Americans in Paris. They were mostly men and, according to Ada Bricktop Smith, she was the second African-American entertainer to settle in Paris, after Florence Jones :

*The few white Americans I saw were very rich--you had to be rich to travel to Paris in those days—and it took only the two nights to see just about every Negro American in Paris. Opal Cooper, Sammy and Harvey White, Charlie “Dixie” Lewis, Bobby Jones, and maybe ten other Negro musicians were the only Negro men in Paris when I got there. They all wore tuxedos and looked so handsome. Some of them had wives, but they weren't in the business. After Florence, I was the second Negro female entertainer to arrive.*<sup>30</sup>

William A. Shack also describes in his book this small African-American society:

*An African American community soon formed on the Right Bank, consisting mainly of itinerant musicians—young unmarried males. There were few women and, in 1929, perhaps fewer than a dozen children. It featured none of the cultural institutions associated with the black metropolises from which its inhabitants came; and the spirituals and choirs of Negro church, the pillar of black communities elsewhere, were not evident on the Montmartre musical scene.*<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> SMITH, Ada Bricktop and HASKINS, James. *Bricktop*. New York: Welcome Rain Publishers, 1999. p. 83.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p. 86.

<sup>31</sup> SHACK, William A. *Op. cit.* p. XVII.

*We can only estimate the size of the African American population in Paris at any time between the Great Wars. The black community was small, constantly in flux, and perhaps never exceeded a few hundred individuals in the mid-1920's. (SHACK, 133)*

Even if the number of African-American inhabitants was small (unfortunately it is difficult to define it because there had only been one census done in 1926 which did not detail if the person was white or black American what is more, African-Americans were sometimes confused with French West Indians) they were noticed because of their exoticism, their intellectuality and their art.

### **2.2.2 African-American expatriates**

As you already know, the African-Americans who came to France during World War I were soldiers and musicians. Many of them decided to stay and live in France because of racial egalitarianism and in order to live a life which could be said privileged. They felt welcomed:

*Before the First World War black American visitors to France had represented only chosen few—generally affluent, educated, cultured. Within a year the arrival of thousands of black American troops on French soil changed things radically...<sup>32</sup>*

As well as soldiers, musicians, writers, painters, dancers, singers and even politicians decided to follow the troop. It was like a kind of vogue, of fashion. If you had money, you had to go to the “City of Light” and try your luck.

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<sup>32</sup> FABRE Michel. *Op. cit.* p. 47.

Most of Montmartre transformation was done thanks to artists and intellectuals such as Langston Hughes or W.E.B. Dubois and even Bricktop, who brought the Harlem Renaissance to the hill. They lived as if they were in Harlem, New York, but free:

*Much of excitement of Paris was to be found in the street life of Montmartre, he said: Any time you walked down the streets you'd run into four or five people you knew—performers, entertainers, all kinds of people who had real talent in them...you'd start to go home, and you'd never get there. There was always some singer to hear or someone who was playing. You'd run into some friends and they were off to hear this or to do that and you just went along. It seemed like you just couldn't get home before ten or eleven in the morning.<sup>33</sup>*

There was even an African-American welterweight boxer, Panama Al Brown, who went to France in 1926 and became a circus performer with Jean Cocteau who helped him. However, you ended out being famous as everybody knew everybody and they all had special qualities:

*...Panama Al dressed elegantly, enjoyed public appearances immensely, and frequented bars and jazz clubs. He drifted away from professional fighting and tried his hand as a circus entertainer, engaged by the Cirque Medrano to tap-dance, sing, lead a jazz band, and skip rope to swing tunes under the big top. (SHACK, 39)*

All these African-Americans expatriates made their community look elegant and fashionable. Montmartre adopted an intelligent, artistic, cultured and wealthy society, that is to say, a high class society. French people also adopted them, enjoying Jazz music, admiring the black beauty and accepting their traditions.

### **II.3 Sharing Life with French Citizens**

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<sup>33</sup> SHACK, William A. *Op. cit.* p. 33. Quotation by Sidney Bechet.

### **2.3.1 Black Culture in Montmartre**

African-Americans arrived in France mentally prepared and faithful, as they knew that French claimed for their music and their exoticism:

*...The New York Age of 8 February 1919. The headline heralded the new musical era in France: "French Now Want Colored Musicians From the United States". And when those musicians came, they headed straight for Montmartre. (SHACK, 25)*

The art, style and music of Montmartre's Black community was new to French citizens who were then fascinated. African-Americans were able to perform and live their culture freely as there was no segregation. French did not mind if they had dark skin, on the contrary, they admired it because it was exotic:

*Douglas liked Paris because he did not feel any color prejudice there. The Negro was not an object of ridicule there, he believed, possibly because blacks had often been in Paris as artists or scholars rather than as slaves.<sup>34</sup>*

According to the African-American History, Black culture came from Africa, being brought later to the United States during slavery. When African-Americans were in Paris, they lived as if they were in America, cooking their traditional meals, "chitlins" for example, having their own fashion style and, of course, their own music, Jazz and Gospel. Their culture was, and still is today, very rich, that is why French tried to copy them. They learnt how to dance, how to play an instrument with Black rhythms. African-Americans were a great inspiration for European writers and artists, such as Pablo Picasso or Boris Vian for example. The fact that they were in France made the Harlem Renaissance movement look glamorous

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<sup>34</sup> FABRE, Michel. *Op. cit.* p. 32.

and exotic. They respected French citizens and the French respected African-Americans. The Black community was unique but they hardly spoke French that is why they did not really shared life with French citizens.

Here are some quotations of anecdotes with French people, according to Bricktop and Langston Hughes:

*I was beginning to consider Paris my home. Light housekeeping in my apartment brought me in touch with the simple French people—shopkeepers, flower sellers, pharmacists. I liked them, and they liked me. They laughed at my French, but they did so in a warm, friendly way. I started realizing that even the simple people had elegance and chic. A showgirl could put on any sort of gown, draw a belt tight or loosen it, and look stunning.<sup>35</sup>*

*Hughes contacts with the French—generally limited to working class and to people he met in the street, in shops or out of necessity—were diverse. At times he was almost chased by employees as he sought some work ; a team of bricklayers shouted “dirty foreigner” at him, but he was able to explain such hostility as “anti-foreign feeling among French workers because so many Italians and Poles had come to Paris and were working for even lower wages than the underpaid Frenchmen” (Big Sea, 155). At least they did not shout “dirty nigger” at him! Conversely, he fondly remembered the elderly French couple who let him have a cheap room in their quiet working-folks hotel on the Rue Nollet.<sup>36</sup>*

As French were discovering and enjoying African-Americans’ invasion, there is an interesting subject in African-American culture that is: the Black beauty, which fascinated the French.

### **2.3.2 Black Beauty**

In Europe as well as in the United States, before slavery was abolished in 1865, after the Secession War, Blacks have been considered as inhuman, as ugly people because of the dark color of their skin, because of the texture of their hair and their large features.

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<sup>35</sup> Bricktop. p. 93.

<sup>36</sup> FABRE, Michel. *Op. cit.* p. 65.

In 1830, “minstrel shows” appeared, performed by White actors in order to caricaturize Blacks. They used to look like clowns, they painted their faces with coal and their eyes and mouth were exaggeratedly painted in white. They were an entertainment for White Americans. Later, in 1860, even Blacks performed in those minstrel shows imitating themselves trying to look very ridiculous.

Furthermore, Blacks were caricaturized in advertisements such as “Banania” (cocoa powder) in France or “Gollywog” (cloth black doll) in England. However, some still exist today.

In Harlem, New York, in order to perform in a club, such as the “Plantation”, with a Black band girl, you had to be Black but your skin had to be very light-colored, you had to have straight hair and thin features. When Josephine Baker joined the “Shuffle Along” musical show, in 1921, she had to lighten her skin to look like the other girls’band:

*Il fallait que je réussisse à tout prix, raconta plus tard Joséphine Baker, et c’est pourquoi je passais chaque matin une demi-heure à me frotter le corps avec un demi citron pour m’éclaircir la peau et à préparer une mixture pour mes cheveux. Je ne pouvais me permettre de prendre le moindre risque.<sup>37</sup>*

The 1920’s and 1930’s were a “Golden Era” for Black beauties. Parisians had a taste for exotic entertainment and they discovered it thanks to Josephine Baker’s performance in the “Revue Nègre”, October 2, 1925, who then became a Black beauty: she was even called “Black Venus”.

On the one hand, fashion style was the same for White and Black people, they followed the 1920’s trend. But, on the other hand, what was very important for Blacks, and almost a ritual, was hair style and make up. Even if Black color was very chic at that time, a fact favorable to Blacks, they wanted to look European. Men and women, mostly singers and musicians, used

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<sup>37</sup> AROGUNDADE, Ben. *Black Beauty*. Paris: Les Editions du Collectionneur, 2001. p. 38.

to do their hair very flat and straightened. They got the result thanks to an iron and a home made mixture called “congalene” (egg white, washing powder and potatoes) which damaged their hair and produced a bad smell. That hair style was called “conk”.

Otherwise, a part from that style, they would also wear wigs or hair pieces made from horse hair:

*Les cheveux étaient défrisés au fer, coiffés en arrière et aplatis sur le crâne ou en une coupe au carré extra plate séparée par une raie au milieu. D'autres préféraient les crans.<sup>38</sup>*

During the Golden Era, if you were Black you were “in”. Parisians admired African-American exoticism. However, what is contradictory is that Black people wanted their skin to be lighter in order to look like Europeans. So, for that, they used to scrub their skin with lemon.

Parisians were fascinated by African-American culture, even if they did not really shared life with Montmartre’s Black community, they were curious about them and enjoyed their arts.

In that Black society, glamour and exoticism were very present because of African-Americans’ attitude as they would take care of their looks, hair and skin in order to look like Europeans. Their style was atypical but in vogue.

You could admire these Black beauties and culture mostly during the night, in Montmartre. At that moment of the day, African-Americans and French people shared life enjoying Montmartre’s street and cabarets, thanks to stars, Jazz and shows, where dreams came true.

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p. 38.

### **III. Nightlife and Stars of Montmartre (during the 1920's)**

#### **3.1 Black Stars and Personalities**

During the 1920's, a great Jazz period in Paris, Montmartre was the place to be, mostly during the night. The atmosphere of the nightlife was created thanks to the clubs and cabarets, music and dances, and its people, African-American artists.

In order to know who these stars and personalities were, it is important to write short biographies about them, starting with the most known, Josephine Baker, then Sidney Bechet, Ada "Bricktop" Smith, Eugene Bullard, Langston Hughes and Louis Mitchell.<sup>39</sup>

### **3.1.1 Josephine Baker, the "Black Pearl" (1906-1975)**<sup>40</sup>

Even if many biographies have been written about Josephine Baker, for this written work, some lines must present her.

Freda Josephine McDonald was born in 1906 in St. Louis, Missouri. She dropped out of school when she was twelve years old and she started to perform at age thirteen. In 1922, she joined the tour of "Shuffle Along", the first all black Broadway musical show, and in 1924 she performed with the "Chocolate Dandies" where the audience appreciated her.

In 1925, she traveled with an orchestra from New York (Sidney Bechet made part of it) to Paris, in order to perform in a new show, "La Revue Nègre", at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, where she captivated the audience and she immediately became a star because of her dances, songs and exoticism. She even made records and movies:

*Josephine always remained what she was—a great, great actress—and she played it, and she lived in another world.*<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See Annex. p. 80.

<sup>40</sup> Official site of Josephine Baker. <http://www.cmgww.com/stars/baker/home.html> (Not available since September 2004)

<sup>41</sup> *Bricktop*. p. 110.

Josephine decided to live in France even if she fought against racism in the United States. She gained popularity and lived a rich life. Meanwhile, she used to spend her nights in Montmartre and she even opened her own nightclub, “Chez Josephine”, (40, rue Fontaine). Baker married four times and adopted twelve children from around the world and she called them “The Rainbow Tribe”.

During World War II, Josephine served the French Red Cross, then, in 1940, she became active in the French Resistance movement, and later, she worked as a correspondent agent. Josephine was awarded the Croix de Guerre and received a Medal of the Resistance in 1946, because of her undercover work. In 1961, she received the Légion d’Honneur from Charles de Gaulle.

At age 68, Josephine performed for the last time at the Bobino Theatre in Paris and she died from a cerebral hemorrhage on April 12, 1975. Josephine became the first American woman to receive French military honors at her funerals.

### **3.1.2 Sidney Bechet, a great Jazz pioneer (1897-1959)<sup>42</sup>**

Sidney Bechet was born in New Orleans in 1897, one of the main cities of Jazz, and died in Paris in 1959, another Jazz city. Bechet has been one of the best Jazz musician from the 1910’s until the 1950’s living a rich life. Since his childhood, he knew how to play the clarinet and the soprano saxophone, which was his favorite instrument. He played in many cities: New Orleans, Chicago, New York, Paris, London, Berlin and with many orchestras such as the “Louis Mitchell’s Jazz Kings” (1919), “Clarence Williams Blue Five” (1923), “Noble Sissle Orchestra” (1931) and of course, next to Josephine Baker, for the “Revue Nègre” (1925). He did many recordings in the United States as well as in France, where he got a hit record of “Summertime” (1938), and was one of the best soloists of early Jazz.

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<sup>42</sup>*The Sidney Bechet Society Ltd. (SBS)*. Formed in July 1997. Copyright 1999. Last update: July 11, 2004. <<http://www.sidneybechet.org>>.

By the way, there is an anecdote to tell, which is the Bechet and McKendrick (a banjo player) fight. In 1928, one night at “Bricktop’s” nightclub, they both argued and fought being both armed. At the end, three persons were wounded. Eugene Bullard paid some fees but it was not enough. Both spent a year in a French jail and had to pay a fine of 10.000 francs. After release, both were deported and Bechet went to Germany, he got the possibility to return to Paris, only 20 years later.

### **3.1.3 Ada Smith, better known as “Bricktop” (1894-1984)**

Ada Beatrice Queen Victoria Louise Virginia Smith was a singer, dancer, saloon entertainer and nightclub owner. Ada was born in Alderson, West Virginia. In 1910, she moved to Chicago in order to become a comedian. She performed in theatres and entertained in cabarets, later in New York, she performed in nightclubs such as the “Cotton Club”. In 1911, a nightclub owner, Barron Wilkins nicknamed her “Bricktop” because of her freckles and her bright red hair, since then, she was known as “Bricktop” (a name she gave to some of her nightclubs):

*He smiled some more. “You know what?” he said, and pointed to my mop of red hair. “I think I’ll call you Bricktop”.  
And that’s how I got my name. At the time, there was only one well-known Bricktop in the country. She was a white woman with red-gold hair who was a prostitute in Chicago.<sup>43</sup>*

In 1924, as she was gaining fame in Harlem and Chicago, she was called by Eugene Bullard in order to work for him in Paris, in his cabaret, “Le Grand Duc” (52, rue Pigalle). She went being twenty-nine years old, and she was the second Black female to arrive in Paris after Florence Embry Jones. In Paris, she became famous, she lived in Pigalle and between 1924

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<sup>43</sup> SMITH, Ada Bricktop. *Op. cit.* p. 34.

and 1939, she opened several cabarets where she used to perform and welcome the jetset of the 1920's, such as Cole Porter. Before World War II, she left Paris and went to New York. Between 1943 and 1951, she owned clubs in Mexico City, Rome, Paris but not as successful as the 1920's "Bricktop's" in Paris. Ada was a great hostess, she had the French glamour and all the African-American culture. Bricktop died in 1984 in New York:

*Bricktop is truly one of the most legendary and enduring figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century American cultural history. Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Waugh wrote about her, T.S. Eliot put her in a poem, and Cole Porter wrote "Miss Otis Regrets" for her to sing. She gave Duke Ellington his first New York break and shepherded a young Josephine Baker. Everybody who was anybody haunted Bricktop's club in the Paris of the 1920's and 1930's and the Mexico City and Rome of the three decades following. And she was a friend, entertainer, confidante, mother hen, and sometimes banker to them all.<sup>44</sup>*

### **3.1.4 Eugene Jacques Bullard, 1<sup>st</sup> Black American war aviator (1894-1961)**

Eugene Jacques Bullard was born in Georgia in 1894, where he suffered from racism. At age 10, his dream was to live in France and so he sailed to Europe in a German ship. He landed in Scotland where he survived singing and dancing. Then he went to Liverpool where he started boxing and as he was good he fought in London and Paris in 1913 and 1914. While he trained for boxing, he also sang and danced with a troop. In 1914, Eugene enlisted in the army as World War I broke out. He got wounded in Verdun and later he became a combat pilot for the French aviation because Americans did not allow Black Americans to become pilots. He fought with the French Army and earned the Croix de Guerre plus fifteen medals in 1918.

After the war, Eugene settled in Montmartre, being the manager of a cabaret, "Le Grand Duc", and stayed in the Jazz atmosphere until War World II, when he worked for the French

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* Back of the book.

Resistance. Eugene Bullard was a generous man in search of freedom and justice. He died in Harlem in 1961:

*As Bechet recalled of Bullard, “he’d made himself the kind of man people around Paris had a need for. The cabarets, the clubs, the musicians—when there was some trouble they couldn’t straighten out by themselves, they called on Gene”.*<sup>45</sup>

### **3.1.5 James Langston Hughes, a great Harlem Renaissance writer (1902-1967)**

Langston Hughes was born in Missouri in 1902. He studied engineering but dropped out and continued writing poetry, plays, stories which appeared in the NAACP publication. One of his finest essays is entitled: “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (1926).

*We younger hero Negro artists now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they aren’t, it doesn’t matter. If they are not, their displeasure doesn’t matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, as strong as we know how and we stand on the top of the mountain, free within ourselves.*<sup>46</sup>

In 1923, he traveled to Europe, Africa and even Russia and returned to Harlem in 1924. Hughes lived a short period of time in Paris, living in Montmartre Hill and working in “Le Grand Duc” as a dishwasher and a waiter. He was the one who prepared a meal and reassured Bricktop who was in tears when she just arrived in Paris. She did not know who he was until years later when Carl Van Vechten told her:

*Years later Carl Van Vechten was in my place and he said, “Bricky, have you any of Langston Hughes’s books?” I said no, but I’d like to have some. And Carl said, “You*

<sup>45</sup> SHACK, William A. *Op. cit.* p. 45.

<sup>46</sup> ALEXANDER Scott. *The Red Hot Jazz Archive*. James Langston Hughes, *The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain*, essay appeared in the *Nation* in 1926. Copyright 1977. <<http://www.redhotjazz.com/hughes.html>>

*know who Hughes is, don't you Brickly?" And I said, "No, only by reading about him." He said, "Langston Hughes was that colored boy that was working here when you came." I said, "What?"*

Hughes devoted his life to writing and was considered as a prolific writer of the Harlem Renaissance Movement. He died of cancer in 1967, in Harlem New York.

### **3.1.6 Louis Mitchell and the "Mitchell's Jazz Kings" (1885-1957)**

Louis Mitchell was born in 1885 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Band leader, drummer, entertainer and nightclub owner, he was one of the first to bring the African-American Jazz music to France, thanks to his orchestra, the "Mitchell's Jazz Kings":

*Mitchell got together a seven-man group and left for France. He settled with his wife and son in the heart of Montmartre, at 69 rue de Clichy, a street that would soon be dotted with small nightclubs featuring black jazz. The Mitchells opened their home to the growing expatriate community of black American civilians and former soldiers who remained in France after discharge and extended the welcome mat to musicians fresh from home anxious for advice on "how to do it" in Paris ; they became an early symbol of "jazz as family" in Montmartre.<sup>47</sup>*

Mitchell had already traveled to Europe in 1912 and before leaving for France in 1918, he performed in New York with the "James Europe Clef Club Band". In the 1920's, the "Mitchell's Jazz Kings" performed at the "Casino de Paris", thanks to Jean Cocteau. Later, in 1924, he opened his own nightclub, "Mitchell's", which was then renamed "Chez Florence".

Mitchell was invited by Pathé to record some discs. At the beginning of World War II, he returned to the United States and died in Washington D.C., in 1957.

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<sup>47</sup> SHACK, William A. *Op. cit.* p. 24.

After these six short biographies of some of the personalities and stars that made Montmartre's nightlife so famous and magic, the myth of Montmartre and the story of Pigalle and its clubs are following.

## **3.2 Cabarets and Clubs in Pigalle**

### **3.2.1 Pigalle and not Montmartre**

Jazz music has been played in different districts of Paris, such as Montmartre, Montparnasse, Saint Germain-des-Près or Champs Élysées. But, a point must be made on the location, and here, it is about Montmartre.

Before the XX<sup>th</sup> century, the district of Montmartre, that is to say the hill ("la Butte"), was not part of Paris. Montmartre and Paris were separated by a boulevard that surrounds the hill, which was called "Boulevard du Paradis" (Paradise Boulevard) and the area was called the "Nouvelle Athènes" (New Athens) because of the creation of studios for artists. When you were on the hill you did not pay taxes but, when you were down the hill, on the other side of the boulevard, that is to say Paris, you had to pay taxes.

The hill of Montmartre was divided into two areas: the northern area was the country side and the southern area, where you have a view above Paris, was the city side. On the hill of Montmartre, there were about twenty-six mills and one of them is the so called "Moulin Rouge" cabaret. Montmartre was said to be a dangerous and popular place. According to the architect Edmond Bonnefoy, there were a hundred and eighty cabarets for two hundred and fifty stores in Montmartre before 1860. The myth says that the regiments arrived in France with their fanfare, carrying a banjo on one shoulder and a gun on the other.

The separation between Montmartre and Paris lasted until the beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, when Montmartre became part of Paris. However it was a special place, there were

already cabarets such as the French cabaret, “Lapin Agile” which was called before “À ma Campagne”. Jazz music got there because it was a popular area, and as Jazz was considered as popular music, Montmartre was the place for it.

However, as it was said earlier, Montmartre completely changed after World War I when Jazz music and the African-American community arrived. On the “Boulevard du Paradis”, cabarets, nightclubs and bars already existed and that is where all happened:

*After the armistice they transformed the Montmartre quarter in Paris, which Parisians called la Butte, into the jazz capital. Cultural transformation also took other forms in la Butte. Street life, soul food, strolling, clothing, and hairstyles—all familiar elements of Harlem’s ambience—gave the quarter the name Black Broadway in Black Paris, or Harlem in Montmartre. Commonly referred to in the Negro press as the “Race Colony”, the musicians and other entertainers formed a community that thrived for two decades.<sup>48</sup>*

There is a difference between Montmartre up the hill and Montmartre down the hill, an area called “Pigalle”. It includes the boulevards, rue Blanche, rue Fontaine, rue Pigalle, all the streets and Places which are down the hill. That is where Jazz music was mostly played. The hill kept its typical French cabarets which once in a while had some Jazz orchestras performing. Meanwhile, all the African-American cabarets such as “Le Grand Duc” or “Bricktop’s” were in Pigalle, mainly located on three streets, almost close to one another.<sup>49</sup>

After clearing the point on Montmartre and thanks to the maps which are in the annex (p. 66), the description of some African-American nightclubs and cabarets will be done in order to discover them thanks to some stories, anecdotes and to know who used to go there and what was the atmosphere like.

<sup>48</sup> SHACK, William A. *Op. cit.* p. XVI.

<sup>49</sup> See Annex. p. 66.

### 3.2.2 American Nightclubs

During the “Crazy Years” (“Années Folles”), that is to say, the 1920’s, nightlife in Montmartre was a kind of heaven and hell. It mingled a festive atmosphere with a dangerous one because French citizens as well as Americans enjoyed Jazz music, shows, the glamour and the magic of Montmartre’s cabarets and nightclubs:

*Harlem-style nightclub culture rapidly paved the streets of Montmartre. Like missionaries of Jazz, black American musicians spread the gospel of hot sounds in tiny cafés and a few sumptuous settings that attracted rich and famous British and American tourists and French socialites.<sup>50</sup>*

Thus, some nights could turn out to be a nightmare because of fights created by drunken people who often were armed:

*The Bechet-McKendrick incident capped Henry Crowder’s growing disillusionment with the cabaret scene in black Montmartre. On a small scale it seemed to mirror nightlife in the rest of Montmartre: raucous, drunken street behavior that broke out almost nightly and often ended in fights resulting in serious injury or even death. (SHACK, 46)*

There is a quotation by Joel A. Roger which describes very well the atmosphere in Montmartre:

*Joel A. Roger, in his column “The Pepper Pot” for the Pittsburgh Courier, sketched a picture not dissimilar to Sidney Bechet’s.*

*The Boulevard de Clichy is the 42<sup>nd</sup> and Broadway of Paris. Most of the night life of Paris centres around it, and most of the colored folks from the States, too. If you hear that some friend from the States is in Paris, just circulate around this boulevard from the Moulin Rouge down the Rue Pigalle as far as the Flea Pit [at the corner of Pigalle and La Bruyère]. And it is a hundred to one shot that you’ll encounter him or her, at*

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<sup>50</sup> SHACK, William A. *Op. cit.* p. XVII.

*least twice during the night. Most of the colored folk live in this neighborhood. (...)*  
(SHACK, 33-34).

In order to have an idea of how were the places where mostly French and Americans enjoyed their nights, five nightclubs owned by African-Americans will be described.

First of all, there is the famous nightclub “Le Grand Duc” which was located on 52, rue Pigalle. Eugene Bullard opened it in 1924, it was one of the most popular clubs in Paris. You could eat soul food and listen to Jazz music:

*Bullard’s Grand Duc was the place musicians back in Paris between engagements went to “jive”, to receive messages, to swap gossip and tales from home, and to meet other black musicians or folks newly arrived in Paris. It also nurtured the musical talents of the stars of the Paris Harlem Renaissance. (SHACK, 29).*

According to Bricktop, the first owner of “Le Grand Duc” was George Jamerson, a gangster from an important French family.<sup>51</sup> Many personalities frequented “Le Grand Duc” during the 1920’s, such as Cole Porter, Spencer Williams, Mabel Mercer, the Prince of Wales, Mistinguett, Picasso... And the nightclub gained its success thanks to the singer and performer, Florence Jones:

*As Le Grand Duc’s success grew, Bullard hired “the exactly one female Negro entertainer in Paris”, Florence Embry Jones, wife of the pianist Palmer Jones. Pretty, perky, and said to be arrogant, Florence was the singer, hostess, and all-around star of Le Grand Duc. Parisians loved her style. A similarly creative, flamboyant fashion in clothing would become a trademark of Bricktop’s and Josephine Baker’s. Night after night, Florence Jones filled Le Grand Duc with celebrities, making the club an enormous success. (SHACK, 30-31)*

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<sup>51</sup> Bricktop. p. 86.

When Florence left “Le Grand Duc” in 1924, Bullard called for Bricktop, the singer and dancer who was performing in Harlem. Together they made a success, even if at the beginning Bricktop did not like the place, and Bullard was able to buy the place:

*“My, this is a nice little bar. Now where’s the cabaret?”  
There was a long silence. Then Gene said, “But this is the cabaret. This is Le Grand Duc.”  
I burst into tears.<sup>52</sup>*

*The partnership of Bullard and Bricktop shaped Le Grand Duc into one of the favorite nightclubs of international celebrities in the 1920’s and early 1930’s. Bullard brought tough, genial management and hospitality; Bricktop brought exciting musical entertainment glossed with the flair of a table-hopping hostess who made every patron feel like a celebrity. (SHACK, 32)*

In 1926, Bullard offered Bricktop to own “Le Grand Duc”. She did it during a whole year. Bullard and Bricktop did not get along very well and so, she decided to open her own place.

While the Jamersons were still the owners of “Le Grand Duc”, and while Bricktop was still working for them, she had opened a small club of her own, the “Music Box”, located not far from “Le Grand Duc”, on rue Pigalle. The business went well for her because she knew personalities and she got opportunity to give a party to the Prince of Wales at the “Music Box”, where Cole Porter was present. Unfortunately, even if the club was working fine, she had to close because Bricktop could not have a permanent license:

*The club was a fantastic success. The Music Box had a short life, however. We didn’t have a regular license. We had what was called a provisoire, a temporary license that was good until someone complained about us. I never found out for sure, but I believe*

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<sup>52</sup> SMITH, Ada Bricktop and HASKINS, James. *Op.cit.* p. 85.

*the complaints about us came from other club owners who were jealous. (Bricktop, 117)*

As it was said earlier, Bricktop became the owner of “Le Grand Duc” for a year. And in 1926, Bricktop opened what she called “*a combination nightclub, mail drop, band, and neighborhood bar for the most elegant people*” (Bricktop, 125), it was called “Bricktop’s”, located on rue Pigalle, a name advised by her friend Cole Porter and a name she gave to most of the places she opened in different cities:

*“What should I call it?” I wanted to know.  
 “Bricktop’s,” he said. “That’s the only thing you should call it. It’s your place, it’s you. You’re the reason why people come.”  
 How right he was! (Bricktop, 119)*

“Bricktop’s” lasted ten years (1926-1936) during which it had welcomed most of the best Jazz bands, such as Duke Ellington’s one or the singer-dancer Florence Jones, all the jetset of Paris and even personalities, for example Dwight Fiske, Helen Morgan, Marilyn Miller, Michael Farmer, coming from Italy, England or America and who stopped at “Bricktop’s” as they were on holidays in Paris. The place was very charming and chic:

*Bricktop’s was a lovely room. The lighting came from underneath, illuminating a magnificent glass floor laid out in big panels. The walls were lined with banquettes lit from behind. There were only about twelve to fourteen tables. It was a warm, intimate place where I could entertain my friends the way I wanted to. (Bricktop, 119-120)*

The place was a success thanks to the help of Cole Porter who always advised her and brought great clients to “Bricktop’s”, *“In a way, Bricktop’s was Cole Porter’s club”* (Bricktop, 122). During the Golden Era, Bricktop also opened a small place, the “Band Box”, which was a kind of bistro.

In 1931, “Bricktop’s” moved to 66, rue Pigalle. The place was bigger, very elegant and she managed it with any problem. The club was always packed and she asked Mabel Mercer, a singer and dancer, to work with her.

“Bricktop’s” was famous during the 1920’s, but during the 1930’s, Bricktop did not have enough money to maintain the club so, it closed in 1936 and then, 66, rue Pigalle became a rock club called the “New Moon”. She had opened a smaller place in Montmartre, then one in Biarritz but not as popular as the first “Bricktop’s”. In 1939, Bricktop left France and lived in different cities, New York, Mexico City and Rome, where she managed to open nightclubs that generally did not last very long.

The band leader Louis Mitchell opened the cabaret “Mitchell’s” in 1924. It was first located on rue Pigalle, then on rue Fontaine and at the end on 61, rue Blanche. Mitchell renamed it “Chez Florence” for the demand of the singer and entertainer, Florence Embry Jones, who, before working at “Mitchell’s” she used to work at “Le Grand Duc”.

“Chez Florence” was also a popular nightclub with great Jazz bands and welcoming celebrities from all over the world. It was the place where new African-American expatriates used to go because Louis and his wife Tony were great advisers and a very welcoming family.

The nightclub was later sold to an Italian-American, Joe Zelli, who already owned other clubs. But the place closed its doors in 1935, while it was acquired by Madame Régine:

*He’d been forced to close his place. I never found out exactly why. It may have been because Florence left. Also, Louis was a big gambler, and he probably got in so deep he lost the club. He would later open a new Chez Florence, even tough there was no*

*Florence, and Chez Florence would be around years and years. When I was looking for a place, however, Louis had a closed-up club. (Bricktop, 115)*

The “Zelli’s” club situated on 16bis, rue Fontaine opened its doors in 1922. The owner was Joe Zelli, the person who bought “Chez Florence”. He owned other clubs, the “Royal Box” at 16, rue Fontaine and also the “Tempo Club” in rue Caumartin. It is said that Joe Zelli was not an honest person.

According to William A. Shack, “Zelli’s” did not have the elegance of “Bricktop’s” or “Le Grand Duc”:

*Zelli’s reputation as being “the only place in Paris that was open all night and everybody who was anybody went there,” passed shortly to Bullard’s Grand Duc and Bricktop’s soon-to-be-opened club, both without the sleaziness of Zelli’s. his was “a big, raffish, cavernous room lined with tables decorated with B-girls whose business was to ‘mount the check’.” It resembled a dime-a-dance all on San Francisco’s old Barbary Coast, including a mediocre jazz band and gigolos to guide women “of a certain age” up and down the dance floor.<sup>53</sup>*

“Zelli’s” was always crowded and people enjoyed the place because of its special atmosphere. There were caricaturists, such as Zito, a friend of Josephine Baker, and gigolos like Pepito, one of Josephine’s lovers. Consequently, as the club was not in order, the police went there many times and the place closed in 1932.

Josephine Baker used to spend her nights in Montmartre. She once met Zito (“Zelli’s” caricaturist) who had to take her out one night but, as he was sick he asked his cousin, Pepito (“Zelli’s” Italian gigolo) to take care of her. Pepito took control on Josephine’s life, but during

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<sup>53</sup> SHACK, William A. *Op. cit.* p. 30.

that story, Josephine opened her own club, “Chez Josephine”, in 1926, located on rue Fontaine. Of course, the place was a success because she was successful and the place was glamorous:

*Marcel Sauvage (...) quotes Baker as saying that “the first cabaret called Chez Josephine was in rue Pigalle” and that “Pepito set up the cabaret in rue Fontaine.” (SHACK, 147)*

During the 1920’s, many nightclubs and cabarets opened in the Pigalle’s district. Between the ones already described, there were also “Kiley’s” on 6, rue Fontaine, “Shanlay’s” or the “Clover Club” on rue Caumartin. But also French places called “dancings”, such as “The Acacias” on 49, rue des Acacias, “The Florida” on 20, rue de Clichy and also “Le Perroquet” on 16, rue de Clichy. Today, some still exist such as the “Moulin Rouge” or the “Casino de Paris”, French places where African-American performances were showed.

Now that you know more about Montmartre’s glamorous nightclubs, it is interesting to learn about the Jazz music that was played in such places and which were the Jazz orchestras that performed, creating a festive atmosphere enjoyed by the public.

### **3.3 Jazz music: its players and its lovers**

#### **3.3.1 Jazz orchestras and shows**

During the 1920’s, every night, Jazz music could be listened to in nightclubs of Montmartre. A Jazz style coming from New Orleans, Chicago and Harlem. French audience appreciated a lot, however, French musicians were not very happy because every club of Paris, especially in Montmartre, asked for Black American musicians to play, so it was difficult for French musicians, during those years, to find a place were to play.

The American Jazz style music was played by different orchestras such as the “Mitchell’s Jazz Kings”, an entirely Black orchestra, with its band leader, Louis Mitchell. They got a five year contract to perform in the “Casino de Paris”. And in 1923, Mitchell left the group which was then renamed the “Real Jazz Kings”. Furthermore, Sidney Bechet was one of the instrumentalists from 1919 to 1920:

*Mitchell, then in New York to recruit for the orchestra, instead formed a seven-man group he called Mitchell’s Jazz Kings and headed off to France in 1918 to give free concerts for weary Allied troops.[...] Mitchell’s Jazz Kings were engaged by the Casino de Paris, a music hall in rue de Clichy but south of Montmartre, where they stayed five years. (SHACK, 5-6)*

There was also the “Southern Syncopated Orchestra”, founded by Will Marion Cook in 1919. It included Sidney Bechet, Arthur Briggs and thirty-four more musicians and twenty singers. The group performed until 1921. They played all over Europe, including Paris.

Arthur Briggs and Noble Sissle were both soldiers of the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. They both decided to stay in Europe and live thanks to music. Biggs even formed his own band in 1922, the “Savoy’s Syncopated Band”.

According to William A. Shack, Paul Whiteman, the “King of Jazz”, performed in 1926 with his band at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées:

*As one writer described Whiteman’s orchestra, it had “the elegant precision of a well-oiled machine, a kind of ‘Rolls-Royce of dance music but whose effect remained pedestrian and predictable. (SHACK, 57)*

Before Whiteman appeared at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, on 2 October 1925, the “Revue Nègre”, a musical show opened, produced by Caroline Dudley Reagan, starring twenty-five musicians and entertainers, including Josephine Baker and Sidney Bechet. It was a brilliant and successful show.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Black musical show, which had always been compared to the “Revue Nègre”, was “Blackbirds”, produced by Lew Leslie and Edmund Sayags. They performed in 1926 at the “Moulin Rouge”. The stars included singer and dancer Florence Mills, succeeded after her death, in 1927, by Adelaide Hall, and musician Sidney Bechet. They had a lot of success but were more criticized than the “Revue Nègre”. The last performance was on September 1, 1929.

Paris welcomed hundreds of African-American musicians, singers, dancers and entertainers who performed for a few months and sometimes in two or more orchestras at a time, like Sidney Bechet used to do.

The few examples that have been quoted give you a brief idea of the 1920’s performances. The Jazz music played in orchestras and shows had to be remembered, that is why, recordings have been done in America and in France. Furthermore, Jazz music had and still has lovers. Thus, associations and magazines have been created in order to remember and keep alive Jazz forever.

### **3.3.2 1920’s Jazz Souvenirs**

In Paris, during the Golden Era, Jazz orchestras and shows had captivated the French audience. They could continue listening to it in their houses because of the recordings done, mostly in the United States.

According to Daniel Nevers, a Jazz specialist, there were four main studio recording companies such as “Pathé”, “Odéon”, “Gramophone” and “Columbia”. He also explained that between 1923 and 1927 no records of American orchestras done in France because all came from the United States and thought France did not need to do recordings. Louis Mitchell recorded with “Pathé” in 1921 as well as Josephine Baker and Sidney Bechet.

But, according to Bricktop, records were very expensive in France:

*Fletcher Henderson and Duke Ellington records were pure gold in Paris; you could buy them, but once the tax had been slapped on them, you had to pay an outrageous price.*<sup>54</sup>

Otherwise, they could listen to Jazz on the radio, on “Radio LL” (Lucien Lévy) which in 1935 was named “Radio Cité”. Or, they could read about Jazz. According to Philippe Baudoin, another Jazz specialist, in 1929, the “Revue du Jazz” appeared, a pro magazine run by a band leader. Thus, a magazine called “Jazz” existed but it had nothing to do with Jazz, it was about dance and music hall.

Between Jazz lovers, it did not matter if you were black or white or French or American, they enjoyed the same music and would do anything in order to keep Jazz lasting. That is how, in 1932, an association called the “Hot Club of France” (HCF) was founded by French Jazz lovers, one of them being Hugues Panassié (born in 1912), in order to remember the Jazz of the 1920’s. They organized concerts, formed a band, wrote books and created, in 1935, a magazine (in French and English) entitled “Jazz Hot”. HCF and its magazine still exist today.

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<sup>54</sup> Bricktop. p. 138.

## **CONCLUSION**

To conclude, here is a summary of this written work and some lines about the 1930's and the immortal Jazz music.

During the "Roaring Twenties", a community of African-Americans settled in Montmartre, an area nicknamed "Harlem in Montmartre", "Broadway in Paris" or "Black Montmartre". In this quarter of Paris, African-Americans lived as if they were in Harlem, New York. They had brought there Harlem Renaissance culture during which the variety, creativity and richness of art works made by African-Americans showed the desire they had to fight for their identity, equality and rights. That small community went to Paris thanks to James Reese Europe and his band's experience.

French welcomed African-Americans as equal human beings because there was no segregation, a fact African-Americans suffered back in the United States. Bricktop would say: "*I always looked at people as just people*"<sup>55</sup>. African-Americans transformed Montmartre, where many American nightclubs opened, such as "Le Grand Duc", being always crowded and famous. In those places, Jazz music was played by great musicians, singers and entertainers like Bricktop and Sidney Bechet. That music genre captured the French public who would always ask for Black Jazz musicians to perform and would later be the influence for French artists such as Boris Vian (1920-1959) and Charles Trenet (1913-2001). They loved it and also admired this new society because of their joyful culture, beauty and exoticism. By the way, their female model was Josephine Baker, an exotic star in France thus ignored in the United States.

During the 1930's, the glamorous, musical and happy atmosphere of Montmartre continued as well as in Montparnasse, St. Germain-des-Près, Champs Elysées and in the Latin Quarter. Jazz and Black culture was on vogue in Paris. French Jazz lovers founded associations such as

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<sup>55</sup> *Bricktop*. p. 99.

the “Hot Club of France” (HCF), as well as magazines and many Jazz artists had done recordings.

However, in 1929, because of the Great Depression in the United States, people stopped traveling as there was an economic crisis. France felt that situation when World War II triggered off. Almost all the nightclubs closed, people did not have money anymore, Germans invaded Paris and most of the African-Americans left France.

Fortunately, Jazz music has always been present thanks to Jazz lovers and souvenirs. Furthermore, Paris has been considered, until today, as one of the foreign capital of Jazz.

The researches I have done in libraries, archives, books and thanks to the interviews I have done, helped me to write this documentary and create the site that is included in the annex, both entitled “Black Montmartre during the 1920’s”. My goal with this written work is to give an idea of how was life in Montmartre during the Jazz Era, the 1920’s. But also, to help the group of professors and students, from the University of Sorbonne-Paris IV and the Central Missouri State University, with whom I am working on the project “Virtual Montmartre” (URL: <http://www.montmartre-virt.net>). You will find in it information about Jazz music, stories of Montmartre, pictures and interviews of specialists.

This written work leads me to write a thesis which will also be a part of the project. The thesis will be entitled: “Aspects de l’arrivée du Jazz et de la culture noire américaine à Montmartre durant les années 1920 et 1930“, (Aspects of the arrival of Jazz and the Black American culture during the 1920’s and 1930’s).

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#### **Bibliothèque Université Sorbonne-Paris IV**

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#### **Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris**

24, rue Pavée

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**The American Library, Paris**

10, rue du Général Camou

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**The Key Biscayne Library, Miami**

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**Les Archives de Paris**

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**Musée de Montmartre**

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