

# harlem is... MUSIC ACTIVITIES

Link to site page: <https://www.harlem-is.org/music>

## Music Activity #1: Musical Traditions

Harlem is the home to many musical traditions including classical, jazz, rhythm & blues, fusion, hip-hop, the blues, gospel, and latin music. Do you know instruments and sounds define these traditions? Can you name two musicians or singers who made their name in one or more of these genres? Read the background essays for two or more of the musical traditions of Harlem and make note of these facts. How do these musical traditions reflect the social histories of Black Americans? Select a musical tradition to create a playlist on Spotify, Apple Music, or Spotify with tracks by artists featured in these histories.

## Music Activity #2: Landmark Institutions

Music plays a huge role in the cultural landscape of the Harlem community today. Select one of the landmark institutions to study and conduct internet research on the kinds of programs and events they produce today. For example, what new musical traditions are emerging in Harlem now that you see presented as part of The Apollo Theater's "Digital Stage" and "Music Café"? How are these institutions cultivating community connections through their live performance events and education programs?

## Music Activity #3: Legacy Keepers

There are people living in Harlem today with huge musical talent who have major careers from their voices and their instruments. Some of the legacy keepers featured in this exhibition are names you know, some of them you have yet to discover. Read the biographies of two legacy keepers and discover what inspired them to make music and the journeys they have travelled throughout their careers. These biographies were written using oral history interviews conducted by school-aged youth. What questions might you ask these legacy keepers if you had a chance to interview them today?

## Music Activity #4: Craig Harris Video

Musician Craig Harris created a special musical performance program for this **harlem is...** project. View the video of Craig Harris to learn more about his artistic practice and his dedication to the vibrant spirit of Harlem. [\[Watch the Craig Harris video\]](#)

## Music Activity #5: Study Music Traditions in Your Neighborhood

Where are the local music venues in your neighborhood and who are the legacy keepers there that contribute to the music scene in your hometown? Create your own local exhibition by interviewing local musicians and documenting community music venues. For guidance, see the [Making a Difference Curriculum Guide](#) on this site.

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## Music Activity #6: Student Tributes

The youth that conducted the oral history interviews with the harlem is...Music Legacy-Keepers wrote a series of poetic tributes to express, in their own voices, appreciation for the singers and musicians who created some of the most popular music in the world. Read the student tribute panel "Voices of Youth: Reflections on Harlem's Rich Musical Tradition" [\[download student reflections from this page\]](#) to learn more about the language of music and the names of some of the musicians the students studied. One student wrote the poetic verse, "Harlem is red, white and blues music soaring through the air Negro spirits rising from the ocean and meeting an indigo melody there...". You can write a tribute poem in honor of the musical traditions in your neighborhood. See the [Making a Difference Curriculum Guide](#) for writing lessons and templates.

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