



Photos by Ruth Morgan

Voices of Youth Reflections on Harlem's rich musical tradition.

Nana has old dusty albums
That she says
She ain't gonna clean
Because
That retains the soul

Dizzy's cheeks blowin'
Like a bullfrog
Billie's Blues
Singin' about *Strange Fruit*

Big Bands blarin'
Upbeat riffs riffin'
Ella & Cab & Sarah
Scattin' like alley cats
Through a long, silver microphone
Hi Dee Hi Dee Hi Dee Hiiiiiii...

Jazz – the new language!
Expressin' the Black community
Messages from history...
Bright notes from
Darkened souls

—Excerpts from group poem by students from
Frederick Douglass Academy II and artist/
educator Jade Banks

Harlem is red, white and blues
music soaring through the air
Negro spirits rising from the
ocean and meeting an indigo
melody there
A transitional phrase linking out
presence to the past
And our spirit to the future
Where we are truly free at last

—Excerpt from group poem by
IMPACT Youth Ensemble

Believe and retrieve...
Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington,
Billie Holiday, Cab Calloway,
Lena Horne
Count Basie, Lionel Hampton,
Dizzy Gillespie
Jazz is your Grandparents'
Hip-Hop
Rapper's Delight, Mary J. Blige,
Faith Evans
Ludacris, Common
Ashanti, Ciara, Amerie
Def Jam, P. Diddy, Jay-Z
Dr. Dre, Teairra Mari
Jazz is your Grandparents'
Hip-Hop
Jazz, jazz, jazz
Jazz is your Grandparents'
Hip-Hop

—Iyana White,
Harlem Educational Activities Fund

I like music and I do rhythm
I live in Harlem, and...I feel like
I'm rich
And it makes me dance,
And it makes me have "soul"
in me...
It makes me feel so good...
so good...
I got it in me!!!
and it's excellent...

—Miche Gorham Jr.,
2nd Grade, G.P. Brown Computer School

Music makes me jump up...
Makes me out of my brain...
Makes me sing...
Makes me snap my fingers...
Makes me stomp my feet...

—Autumn Simpson,
2nd Grade, G.P. Brown Computer School

Back in the day we listened
to hip hop
For the soul and the beat and
the be bop
Now all that's gone
Like a grassless lawn
Like an unfinished song
That won't be heard any longer

Back in the day we used to brake
But now in the days we do
the shake
Back in the day there was all the
hottest moves
Going from the Bird to the Spank then
the Hustle
From showing your own
creativity
To conforming what's on TV
It used to be about
self expression
To born individualist forced
to oppression
From making what you want
To flaunting what you got
Back then
All them hip hop believers
Made their own steps

—Excerpt from group poem by Mott Hall II
students Tiffany Bedford, Nkili Birmingham,
Yvette Cole, Sarah Diwa, Meagan Floyd,
Santiago Garmaise, Anabel Leger, Kadija
Maurice, Natalia Monterroso, Arame Niang,
Carisma Torres, and Cristy Villegas and artist/
educator Jive Poetic

In Harlem You can smell the music
Taste the music
See the music
Hear the music
You can touch the music

Harlem is music.

—Excerpt from group poem by Harlem
Educational Activities students
and artist/educator Benja K. Little

harlem is... MUSIC