

Langston Hughes



Poet, Activist, Novelist and Playwright

- Born: 1 February, 1901
- Died: 22 May, 1967

Importance to the Harlem Renaissance:

- His first book of poetry “The Weary Blues” published in 1926 was a highly influential poem and became amongst his most notable works.
- His poetry was renowned for being addressed specifically towards Black people during the 1920’s in America which differed from most other Black poets of the era.
- Hughes’ work portrayed working class Black Americans lives as full of ‘struggle, laughter, joy and music’.
- He challenged racial stereotypes, championed African American culture, and sought to educate his audience.
- His life and works were vital for contributing to the artistic revolution that became known as the Harlem Renaissance.

Louis Armstrong



Jazz Musician

- Born: August 4, 1901
- Died: July 6, 1971

Importance to the Harlem Renaissance:

- Amongst the most influential figures in Jazz Music, influencing writers from the Harlem Renaissance such as Langston Hughes
- He was known during his time in Harlem as “The World’s Greatest Trumpet Player” and flourished early on as part of a band.
- His musical abilities brought together both Black and White Americans during the 1920’s and 1930’s and was key to bringing jazz music to the forefront of African American culture.
- He went on to have an incredibly successful solo career, with his songs ‘What a Wonderful World’, and ‘We Have All the Time in The World’.
- He directly influenced the Harlem Renaissance with his musical ability, his charismatic performances, and the way in which he united both Black and White Americans with his music.

Eric Walrond



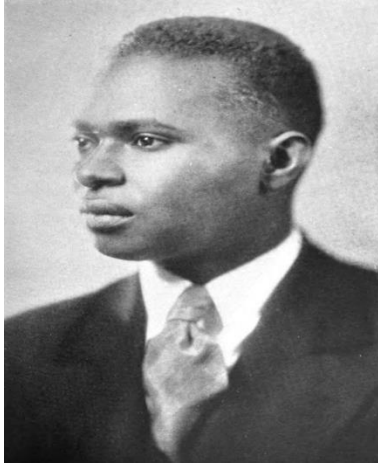
Writer and Journalist

- Born: 18 December, 1898
- Died: 8 August, 1966

Importance to the Harlem Renaissance:

- Walrond's fictional works encapsulated the experiences of working class Black Americans and how they fought racial prejudice and economic exploitation.
- His published work "Tropic Death" was hailed as one of the outstanding works of the Harlem Renaissance, in which it positioned the beautiful scenery of the Caribbean, with harsh descriptions of misery and death to accompany it.
- His work as an editor in the 1920's served to highlight and present realistic representations of racism in the United States.
- Walrond had a lyrical writing style that made him unique and his brutal honesty about racism in the U ensured he was remembered as one of the most important writers from the Harlem Renaissance.

Countee Cullen



Poet, Novelist, Writer, and Playwright

- Born: May 30, 1903
- Died: January 9, 1946

Importance to the Harlem Renaissance:

- Whilst at New York University, Cullen had various works of poetry in several important magazines at the time such as *Crisis* and *Opportunity*.
- He was a close friend of Eric Walrond, and even dedicated his well-known poem “*Incident*” to Walrond.
- He was notable for being part of the LGBT community, which was not only incredibly rare for the time, but also illegal.
- He had many relationships with different men, with each one being overshadowed by the shame and secrecy that unfortunately accompanied many same-sex relationships at the time.
- Cullen was admired by Harlem Renaissance contemporaries such as Duke Ellington who commended Cullen for confronting a history of oppression and ‘shaping a new voice of great achievement’.

Marcus Garvey



Political Activist

- Born 17 August, 1887
- Died 10 June, 1940

Importance to the Harlem Renaissance:

- Garvey was the founder of the UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association), a Black nationalist organisation that focused on African American development.
- His ideas were seen as radical at the time, and his beliefs became known as Garveyism.
- His ideas of Black separation from White society clashed with the beliefs of other black activists such as W.E.B Du Bois who believed in racial integration.
- Garvey believed that Black Americans needed to be financially independent of White people and owned numerous businesses in the United States.
- He was a very controversial figure for his radical beliefs, and his legacy has seen him both idolised and chastised.
- He has been described as the leader of 'the largest Black mass movement in modern history'.