

WALLACH ART GALLERY

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

HARLEM RENAISSANCE MAN: JOHNNY HUDGINS

Presented in conjunction with the *Uptown Triennial 2020* exhibition.

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Moderator: Jennifer Mock, Associate Director for Education and Public Programs, Wallach Art Gallery

TRANSCRIPT

(BLACK TITLE SLIDE ONSCREEN WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "CONTINUITIES OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE: JOHNNY HUDGINS AND COURTNEY BRYAN COME ON - A TALK BY ROBERT G. O'MEALLY FEATURING MUSIC BY COURTNEY BRYAN" ABOVE THE IMAGE OF ROMARE BEARDEN'S COLLAGE *JOHNNY HUDGINS COMES ON*)

Robert G. O'Meally: I am very grateful to Jennifer (Mock) and to the Wallach Gallery. And I would join her in urging you to see the *Uptown Triennial (2020)* show. It's right in our neighborhood and you can see part of it online, but you can walk over and take a look as well.

I'm very happy to be here, and I'm hoping that we'll have a chance as we meet together this time to have as much fun as anything else. We need some fun out here. As we face another day with the children home from school tomorrow - we're glad to have children home, but quite enough of that some of us would say. And so let's take a break from all of that, and take a look at a performer named Johnny Hudgins.

This is a long shot if ever there was one. In talking about the Harlem Renaissance, I bet every single one of the people on the (Zoom) call, could call the role of the Zora Neale Hurstons, and the Alain Lockes, and that you would never get to Johnny Hudgins, most of you. I wouldn't have gotten to Johnny Hudgins, I don't think, until I was asked to talk about the Harlem Renaissance from an angle that I thought would stir some interest.

We have a special treat tonight of having a silent film by Johnny Hudgins, now complemented by a new score by the composer Courtney Bryan. It's really a wonderful chance to see him and to hear her.

(PHOTO IMAGE OF JAMES BALDWIN AND A JAMES BALDWIN QUOTE ONSCREEN)

I want you to have in mind something that James Baldwin said so brilliantly. As we see this film by Johnny Hudgins, think about what he (James Baldwin) said in his book called *The Devil Finds Work*:

“What the black actor has managed to give are moments - indelible moments, created, miraculously, beyond the confines of the script: hints of reality, smuggled like contraband into a maudlin tale, and with enough force, if unleashed, to shatter the tale to fragments.”

And so I'm less interested in the film that we'll see than I am in Johnny Hudgins, as the actor, with his own “smugglings of contraband” into a movie that is obviously very problematic. It's also a chance to see what a contemporary artist will do with something from 1927. Here's Courtney Bryan working right now, looking back at something from this early period.

I'd also like us to think about what it might be to see a film like this in the Harlem theaters of today, or the Harlem theaters of a much earlier day, when you get an all Black audience looking at some of these films; (this film) which might be taken seriously or provoke tears downtown, but here (in Harlem) might provoke nothing but laughter. There are things here that the filmmaker, Jean Renoir, didn't expect to be funny, but which we might find quite ridiculous and funny now.

(PHOTO OF PIGMEAT MARKHAM AND A RALPH ELLISON QUOTE ONSCREEN)

As we consider the humor of a Johnny Hudgins, I'd like you to consider what Ralph Ellison, the novelist, said about Pigmeat Markham. He said: “Markham's humor was as close to Shakespeare as anything you find in the United States in American literature, even in its uses of the bladder.” - one of his signature spoofs - “I wish some critic would make a study of this.” The part of what I'm thinking about is Ellison and thinking of - like “a study of this”, that kind of humor, including the humor of Black comedians who wore blackface on stage.

(PHOTOS OF COMPOSER COURTNEY BRYAN ONSCREEN)

The star of tonight's show is unquestionably the wonderful Courtney Bryan from New Orleans, who's a fantastic piano player and fantastic composer, whom I can't thank enough.

(BLACK SLIDE ONSCREEN WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS “THANKS ALSO TO JENNIFER MOCK, AIDAN LEVY, STEPHANIE CREASE”)

So thanks to Courtney. Also, thanks again to Jennifer Mock, and to graduate student extraordinaire, Aidan Levy; and to my friend, Stephanie Crease, who's helped me so much with the research that I'll unfold here.

(PHOTO IMAGE OF STEPHANIE CREASE ONSCREEN)

Here's Stephanie (onscreen) - composer, soulful composer. And I like to see the (Holy Rosary) cross there (in the photo). She plays in our church, there's always a soulfulness at work no matter what she does, and you'll see what I mean when you hear play.

(BLACK TITLE SLIDE WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "*SUR UN AIR DE CHARLESTON - FRANCE 1927*" WITH A PHOTO IMAGE OF JOHNNY HUDGINS AND COURTNEY BRYAN ONSCREEN)

I thought I might start, in fact, with a little taste - a preview of a coming attraction. I'm going to play the whole 19-minute movie in a few - at the end of what I have to say, but I thought I'd give you a little preview, give you an idea. And Courtney (Bryan) isn't trying to sync what she's doing exactly to the moving images, she's giving you her reflections on them. You'll see Johnny (Hudgins), the Black American in blackface, (and) you'll see Catherine Hessling, the filmmaker Jean Renoir's wife, in the film, and both of them doing the Charleston with Courtney (Bryan) as our guide. Just a taste.

(VIDEO CLIP OF JOHNNY HUDGINS AND CATHERINE HESSLING DANCING IN *SUR UN AIR DE CHARLESTON* PLAYS ONSCREEN.)

There's Johnny (onscreen).

(VIDEO STOPS PLAYING ONSCREEN. BLACK SLIDE WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "THIS WAS AN UNFINISHED EXPERIMENTAL FILM BY JEAN RENOIR - AN INVITATION FOR OTHERS TO EXPERIMENT WITH FINISHING IT. *SUR UN AIR DE CHARLESTON - FRANCE 1927*" APPEARS ONSCREEN.)

Johnny Hudgins was one of the greatest dancers of his time and - one of the great Charleston dancers - and the idea that this French youngster is going to teach him the Charleston is part of what's ridiculous in the movie. When we see it, it's important to remember that this was not a movie that Jean Renoir, who was a very great filmmaker, ever released; it seems to have been created once he had some extra time, and his wife was on hand, and some props to just put something together, (and) Johnny Hudgins was in town. So it's a wide open experimental movie in which he does some camera tricks as we'll see, but the fact that it wasn't finished I think is something interesting. And that it offers an invitation to us to see what we might do with it, and to Courtney (Bryan), in particular, to see what she might make of it.

(BLACK TITLE SLIDE WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "...AND TO WRESTLE WITH THE QUESTION OF THE MEANING OF A BLACK ACTOR WHO APPEARED IN BLACKFACE. *SURE UN AIR DE CHARLESTON - FRANCE 1927*" ONSCREEN)

We also, as we see this, have to wrestle with the question of what it might mean for a Black actor to decide to appear in blackface. Once the blackface thing was over, Johnny was out of business. And once the kind of - this particular kind of clown act and dance performance was no longer popular, he was no longer an actor. So you don't - he doesn't appear in "soundies" (short

American musical films), he's just in these silent films in a very short career. What does the blackface mean? That's the question that hangs over me, and I don't know that I have the answer, but I'm going to try to propose a few tonight.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH PHOTO OF JOHNNY HUDGINS AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS "THE FILM IS AN ARCHIVAL TREASURE - OFFERING ONE OF THE FULLEST ACCOUNTS OF THE STAGE ACT OF JOHNNY HUDGINS (1896-1990) - HIS STYLES OF COMIC DANCE, AND OF THE CHARLESTON" ONSCREEN)

The film is for one thing an archival treasure, because we do get to see a great dancer - one of the greatest of his time - doing the most popular dance of the, of that era, The Charleston. We get to see a master dancer at work. Johnny Hudgins, from Baltimore, born in 1896, lived to 1990. We get to see his idea of comedy, and there's almost nowhere else to see him do what he does.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH A PHOTOS OF NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS AND OTHER ARCHIVES RELATED TO JOHNNY HUDGINS AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS "SPEAKING OF ARCHIVES, THERE ARE MAJOR JOHNNY HUDGINS HOLDINGS AT EMORY AND COLUMBIA" ONSCREEN)

The film itself is an archival treasure and I might say, speaking of archives, Johnny's scrapbooks are at Emory University in Atlanta; one of them is at our Columbia library, so particularly graduate students wanting to follow up have a trove of material to look at. For somebody who was traveling in Europe in the 1920s, we think of Sidney Bechet and Josephine Baker, (but) Johnny Hudgins was there early as well and there's much to learn about him.

(BLACK SLIDE ONSCREEN WITH A FILM STILL FROM *A NIGHT IN DIXIE* AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS "IN HIS TIME HE WAS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR BLACK PERFORMERS. HERE'S EVIDENTLY HIS FIRST ONSCREEN APPEARANCE, IN *A NIGHT IN DIXIE* (1925)" ONSCREEN)

Let's take another sighting of Johnny (Hudgins) and in an early film called *A Night in Dixie*. It's one of these films where, whatever else is going on, the moment that is most valuable to us now is when they finally do cut to the nightclub and there is this (dance) scene. Some say the first time The Charleston was on screen - I'm not sure about that - but anyway, let's take a look. You'll see a variety of dancers. Come on, I'll signal when Johnny is about to come on.

(FILM CLIP FROM *A NIGHT IN DIXIE* PLAYS ONSCREEN)

The music is quite dim, it's not original (sound on Zoom).

Here they (the dancers) come forward.

Here comes Hudgins with the hat. Watch him go.

(FILM CLIP STOPS PLAYING ONSCREEN. BLACK SLIDE WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "HE REGARDED HIS STAGE ACT AS ALL HIS OWN - AND IN AN IMPORTANT COURT CASE WON A SETTLEMENT NAMING HIM AS THE OWNER OF HIS IMPROVISED ACT" AND AN INDISTINGUISHABLE IMAGE APPEARS ONSCREEN.)

The dancers from that era like to say that the moonwalk and so many dances that we have today are old stage tricks. They were moonwalking long before Michael (Jackson) was born.

Here's another place where we get to see him. It's significant - as you watch him do his act here - it's significant to realize that at one point a Broadway choreographer used some of his act. And when he complained, she told him "well look, you know, it's just public domain improvised stuff." He said, "yes, public domain - that's *my* stuff" and he took her to court and won the case. Think about that as we watch him do this short (film from) 1927.

The gloved hand is one of his signature moves, as we'll see.

(SILENT FILM CLIP PLAYS ONSCREEN.)

And he's a pantomimist, so he's used to working on the empty stage, peeping out and... The hat is also a signature. He's called "The Black (Charlie) Chaplin". And he's got his own way of doing things. He's known for dancing at - more from the waist down, than up top. Watch him go.

In the film, they'll do slow motion stuff, but he had his own slow motion. This is not film tricking, this is Johnny Hudgins.

He was called the "Wah-Wah Man". Sometimes he would pretend to make a sound with his, gesturing with his hand, and the trumpet player in the pit would go "wah wah" - "wah wah", he was known for that.

(FILM CLIP STOPS PLAYING ONSCREEN.)

So these are signature moves that he called his own.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH PHOTO OF JOSEPHINE BAKER AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS "HE AND JOSEPHINE BAKER PERFORMED TOGETHER IN *CHOCOLATE DANDIES* (1924) AND WERE SOON AFTER TAKING OFF FOR PARIS" ONSCREEN)

He and Josephine Baker performed together early, early in the 20s, and traveled to Europe together and elsewhere on a variety of different kinds of shows.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH ANOTHER PHOTO OF JOSEPHINE BAKER AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS "HUDGINS ACCUSED JOSEPHINE OF 'STEALING' ASPECTS OF HIS COMIC STYLE" ONSCREEN)

He was, he fell out with Josephine, and said that her comic act was such an imitation of his. These things are hard to - although he won the court case, Josephine had her own way of doing things too, of course.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH PHOTOS OF JOSEPHINE BAKER AND JOHNNY HUDGINS AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS "OFF-STAGE EACH HAD OTHER STRONG PERSONAE" ONSCREEN)

And it's important to realize that both of them had their own elegant side, crossed-eyes and other kind of foolishness notwithstanding.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH PHOTO OF A NEWSPAPER CLIPPING WITH THE HEADLINE "JOHNNY HUDGINS OPENS CABARET IN PARIS", AN IMAGE OF ROMARE BEARDEN'S COLLAGE *JOHNNY HUDGINS COMES ON*, AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS "BEFORE AND AFTER HIS TRAVELS IN EUROPE AND SOUTH AMERICA, HUDGINS WAS A HUGE DRAW AT THEATERS IN HARLEM. (ROMARE BEARDEN IS THIS TALK'S CO-STAR)" ONSCREEN)

It's significant to me here, if we're going to call him a Harlem Renaissance man, that he was very popular in Paris, okay; he was popular in South America, he's popular all over Europe. But he was very, very popular at the Lafayette theater in Harlem too, popular as a comedian there.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH IMAGE OF ROMARE BEARDEN'S 1981 COLLAGE *JOHNNY HUDGINS COMES ON* ONSCREEN)

And here it's significant as we look at a Romare Bearden collage called *Johnny Hudgins Comes On*, that this artist (Romare Bearden), when he was tracking sources of his own artistic inspiration to quilters and singers and to gardeners in the South, Johnny Hudgins makes an appearance as somebody who had an influence on him (Romare Bearden). He and Al (Albert) Murray wrote the captions that went with these particular collages, and look at this one. Bearden and Murray write:

"He was my favorite of all the comedians. What Johnny Hudgins could do through mime on an empty stage helps show me how worlds were created on an empty canvas."

So you might think of it, think of him (Johnny Hudgins) that way; as somebody who's fun to see, but who, for a young genius, sees something that he can work with and learn from.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH AN IMAGE OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE BASKETBALL TEAM WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "THE FIGURE OF JOHNNY HUDGINS MAKES US THINK AGAIN ABOUT THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE AND WHO MAKES THE TEAM (THE 'RENS' PLAYED THE RENAISSANCE BALLROOM)" ONSCREEN)

Seeing Hudgins makes us wonder if he was on the Harlem Renaissance team. I taught at Howard (University) for some years, and my senior professor there, Sterling (Allen) Brown - I asked him about the Harlem Renaissance (and he) said: "Oh man, I couldn't make that team. No, that was a rough team." And of course, Sterling was full of fun, but he was reminding me that there was a Harlem Renaissance basketball team that played at the Renaissance Ballroom, the Rens. And they were tough. We know about the Harlem Globetrotters, but don't forget the Rens. And saying that it's sort of a joke, but it's also reminding us that there are a lot of different ways to look at the Harlem Renaissance. There's a Harlem Renaissance in literature, and there's a Harlem Renaissance in sports as well.

(BLACK SLIDE ONSCREEN WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "MAKES US RE-THINK FRAMINGS OF THE 'HARLEM' 'RENAISSANCE'

- NOT JUST HARLEM: D.C., CHICAGO, NEW ORLEANS, PITTSBURGH, KANSAS CITY, DETROIT, CHARLESTON
- NOT JUST CITIES, NOT JUST THE NORTH
- NOT JUST THE UNITED STATES, THE DIASPORA
- PART OF THE GLOBAL MODERNISMS: THE NEW WOMAN, NEW SCIENCE, GLOBAL POLITICAL MOVEMENTS (GARVEY, THE COMMUNIST PARTY, OTHERS)
- NOT JUST POETRY AND NOVELS; MUSIC, PAINTING, FILM - AND DANCE
- NOT JUST THE ARTS; POLITICS, JOURNALISM, SPORTS, SCIENCE
- NOT JUST THE 1920S (COULD WE ARGUE THAT A PERIOD OF MODERN BLACK CREATIVITY IS STILL BLOOMING TODAY?)")

They make us, this makes us think about the Harlem Renaissance not just in Harlem - not just in (Washington) D.C., Chicago, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, Detroit, Charleston. It's, there's a Harlem Renaissance going on all over the United States. It's not just in cities. It's not just in the North. It's not just in the United States. Brent (Hayes) Edwards' first book tracks Harlem Renaissance activities through the Black diaspora, and also in Europe where Black people are meeting one another from all over the world. It's part of a global modernism at a time when we're talking about the "new science", the "new woman"; there are global political movements of all sorts, and not just (Marcus) Garvey, not just the Communist Party, but there are other ways in which there's a global movement going on that involves Black people.

And so I think it, to me, it's very exciting to think of the Harlem Renaissance as not just poetry, not just novels, but that has all of these other dimensions. And if we ask ourselves what was happening in film, and what was happening in music, what was happening in dance, then I think we open up the lens and see a lot more than we knew that we were going to see. Last year when I taught my Harlem Renaissance course, I had a student saying: "Can we do the Harlem Renaissance in California?" And then she said: "Oh, there's so much going on, maybe just northern (California) - maybe just San Francisco - maybe just a section of northern, San Francisco." There's so much Harlem Renaissance to consider.

And if we ask ourselves, what is the Harlem Renaissance then? Before we come to dance, I like Ralph Ellison's definition that (it) was "a sophisticated moment" when we knew that what we'd

had in the 19th century, with (Frederick) Douglass and (indecipherable) and (Scott) Joplin and others, was not going to be what we would have now. There were going to be new voices, there were going to be new developments; a surging of creative energy. And then we are not locked into a particular place because it's happening all through Black America. And we're not, it's not happening in a particular form; it's happening in style, it's happening in theater, it's happening all over the place - a sophisticated moment.

(BLACK SLIDE ONSCREEN WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "AS WE LOOK BACK, DANCE MAY BE THE HARDEST ART FORM TO RECORD:

- THE CAMERAS ARE USUALLY MISPLACED
- WRITTEN ACCOUNTS ARE UNRELIABLE
- EACH PERFORMER, AND EACH PERFORMANCE, IS DIFFERENT
- DANCES ARE 'HANCED DOWN' THROUGH MENTORING AND ON-THE-SPOT LEARNING/COPYING/COMPETING
- ALL OF WHICH MAKES THESE FILM RECORDS OF A GREAT DANCER ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT")

Dance is one of the hardest forms to capture, because it's done and then where is it? The cameras that try to catch it usually miss the feet - in some of what we just saw, the camera is off of the feet. And if you do just the feet, some of it's happening above; there are things that are happening to the side and all around that the camera doesn't see. Written accounts are unreliable, labanotation (system of recording human movement, originated by Rudolf Laban) - some of you know what I mean - will tell you a lot, but it won't tell you everything that you need to know. Each performer, each performance is different anyway, and so it's hard to say: "I think I'm going to capture the (dances) - I want to write about the dances of the 20s, where are they?" And I think it's a problem that dance historians have to confront, and we do have what footage that we have, and thank goodness for them.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH PHOTOS OF BOOK COVERS ONSCREEN.)

There are certain books that are very important if you're going to study Black dance. The bible is the one in the middle (of the image), *The Jazz Dance (The Story of American Vernacular Dance)* by Jean and Marshall Stearns. The best of them all, in my view now, is Jacqui Malone's book *Stepping On The Blues (The Visible Rhythms of African American Dance)*, as she's looking at, particularly at what she calls vernacular dance. Not just the dances on stages, but dances of the marching football teams, and of the step shows, and of the variety shows like "The Temptation Walk" and those kinds of dances. To some of these other - Katrina Hazzard-Gordon and Lynne (Fauley) Emery (are) also important dance scholars. In their - in the latter cases, looking at stage dance as well as dances done at parties.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH PHOTOS OF DIFFERENT DANCERS IN MOTION AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS "BEARDEN OFTEN SAID THAT THE GREATEST MODERN SCULPTURE IN THE U.S. WAS CREATED ON THE DANCE-FLOORS OF THE SAVOY BALLROOMS OF THE

NATION. HERE WAS ROBERT FARRIS THOMPSON'S *AFRICAN ART IN MOTION*'
ONSCREEN)

The artist Romare Bearden said that as far as he was concerned, the greatest sculpture in the United States was being created on the Savoy Ballrooms of the United States. Those dancers and the way they moved, and the way they take to the air, and the contortions, and the different shapes, were very inspiring to him as an artist. Robert Farris Thompson's book *African Art in Motion* looks at African dancers as sculptural forms, and reminds us that certain things we see just as things on a case, were meant to be danced, and to be part of movement.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH IMAGES OF PEARL PRIMUS DANCING AND A ROMARE BEARDEN
PIECE DEPICTING DANCERS AND MUSICIANS TOGETHER ONSCREEN)

Here's (Romare) Bearden again, in one of his works where the dancers are commemorated, and they're part of what Sterling (Allen) Brown used to call the "triumvirate". He said without the singer and the dancer and the instrumentalists all together, you're not getting the full meaning of what was going on at these, these are public dances. And it's as if you see (Duke) Ellington in the middle here as the leader of a public rite. Lionel Hampton is also in the background, and some of the great dancers including, perhaps, Pearl Primus, pictured here.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH MORE PHOTOS OF DANCERS IN MOTION AND ROMARE
BEARDEN'S PIECE FROM THE PREVIOUS SLIDE ONSCREEN)

You can think what (Romare) Bearden meant when he said these shapes inspired him, and you saw this incredible art. He said people would say, "well, there's no art in the Black community" - what?? It's every - it so infuses the culture, if you know where to look for it.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH IMAGE OF ANOTHER ROMARE BEARDEN PIECE DEPICTING THE
CHURCH AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS "BEARDEN MADE CLEAR THAT DANCE HAD
RITUAL FUNCTIONS, SACRED AS WELL AS SECULAR" ONSCREEN)

One place to look for it, as far as Bearden - Bearden is also a Harlem Renaissance appearance in this talk, as you see - he made clear that dance had ritual functions, which we'll talk a bit more about later, as we try to see how Johnny Hudgins was infusing his own meanings in these films where he appeared. Here's (Romare) Bearden's image of the church. And notice that here, as a woman is getting the (Holy) Spirit, and her head back, and feeling the presence of God, notice that on the upper right hand corner there's somebody dancing. It's a musical experience, it's a spoken experience, it's a spiritual experience, it's a dance experience.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH CLOSE-UP IMAGES OF ROMARE BEARDEN'S PIECE ONSCREEN)

Here's a blow up (image) of that, of the holy dancer feeling the (Holy) Spirit. And so it's these kinds of background realizations (that) I think help us read Johnny (Hudgins), help us understand what he's doing, blackface or no blackface.

(BLACK SLIDE ONSCREEN WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS “THE FACT THAT HE DOES THE ‘CHARLESTON’ IS SIGNIFICANT

- SEVERAL DANCERS CONFESS TO HAVING INVENTED IT
- DANCE HISTORIANS ASSOCIATE IT WITH THE DEEP SOUTH, AND WITH BLACK SOCIAL DANCES DONE IN CHARLESTON S.C. AND ELSEWHERE, LONG BEFORE IT WAS ‘DISCOVERED’ BY STAGE-SHOW AUDIENCES AND THE MOVIES
- THE CITY OF CHARLESTON HAS DEEP MEANING FOR BLACK AMERICANS - AS THE MOST TRAVELED PORT OF ENTRY FOR ENSLAVED AFRICANS
- DANCE HISTORIANS TRACE THE CHARLESTON’S STANCES AND STEPS TO KONGO DANCES, ANCIENT TO MODERN TO CONTEMPORARY. SEVERAL MOVES OF HIP-HOP AND BEYOND REVIVE THOSE OF THE CHARLESTON.
- IT WAS FIRST PRESENTED IN STAGE SHOWS THAT SOME SAY MARKED THE BEGINNING OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE”)

The fact that he's associated with The Charleston, and that he's in a movie called *Charleston - (Sur un) Air de Charleston* - is significant, and it's something I was pondering. Several dancers confessed to having invented it, or having first proposed it to (the) public, but the historians tell us that it's been there a long time. And it's associated with the Deep South, and rightly named as a Charleston, South Carolina dance; but others in, along the coast of the Carolinas and Georgia seem to have been doing something like that early in the century, in the 20th century, and perhaps a bit before (that). And, of course, the city of Charleston has deep meaning for African Americans. Not far from that city was the major port through which the enslaved Africans first hit this soil. So it's a sad and moving and disturbing and beautiful place, Charleston, with that history that goes with it.

Several people, including Jacqui Malone, talk about these dances and their African backgrounds. (Robert Farris) Thompson sees Kongo moves in The Charleston, just as he sees hip-hop moves in the Kongo, and back and forth. And these turbulent associations with the influences going back and forth.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH SCREENSHOT IMAGE OF TEXT WRITTEN BY SALLY SUMMER ONSCREEN)

Here's Sally Summer, another important dance critic, saying that in 1923, in the show *Runnin' Wild*, The Charleston burst on stage and into the hearts of the American public. James P. Johnson has the song “Charleston” composed for the show. And so as - but as she says, “The Charleston (had) been popular.... long before the 1920s... probably originated in the South”, and so on. “Marshall Stearns reports its existence in 1904, and the late tap dancer (Charles) “Honi” Coles said in about 1916, as a youngster, he learned a complete version of the dance.”

(BLACK SLIDE WITH SCREENSHOTS IMAGES OF TEXT WRITTEN BY SALLY SUMMER ONSCREEN)

I found myself reading about those who found the dance disturbing. Sally Summer, who points out that The Charleston, as she puts it in that blue section of what I've quoted here:

“... roused the ire of the guardians of public morality. Warning that The Charleston would lead to sexual and political dissolution, the dance was condemned by several clerics, and banned in several cities.”

If you read Ishmael Reed's novel *Mumbo Jumbo*, there's much ado about the dangers that Black culture will be bad for you; that it will drive you crazy, it will drive you happy, and (that it) should be controlled.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH PHOTO OF JOSEPHINE BAKER DANCING AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS “JOSEPHINE BAKER DOES THE CHARLESTON” ONSCREEN)

The Charleston is also associated with Josephine Baker, and I think that as we do our course on the Harlem Renaissance and include Josephine Baker, let's include Johnny Hudgins. They are doing different takes on this dance. Here she is in one of her early films.

(FILM CLIP OF JOSEPHINE BAKER DANCING PLAYS ONSCREEN)

It's so fabulous to see this woman.

(FILM CLIP STOPS PLAYING ONSCREEN)

So to remember that part of what she (Josephine Baker) was doing was just fantastically graceful and athletic, but also comical. And she was part of a long tradition of appearing on stage and crossing your eyes and having fun and being silly and goofy, being clownish.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH IMAGE OF ROMARE BEARDEN'S COLLAGE *JOHNNY HUDGINS COMES ON* AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS “BEARDEN HELPS US SEE JOHNNY HUDGINS AS AN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT FIGURE - ALONGSIDE FLORENCE MILLS AND CHICK WEBB (FROM BALTIMORE), PICTURED HERE” ONSCREEN)

And so I think, if we look back at the Bearden collage (*Johnny Hudgins Comes On*), we see him (Johnny Hudgins) as a clown who was suggesting things to the artist, a beautiful clown. We see him alongside Florence Mills, with whom he appeared in early shows, the great dancer. It's probably (William Henry) “Chick” Webb's band - it looks like Chick at the bottom, and underneath the Lafayette sign you see the drummer whose eye is looking up in the lower left of that frame. Chick Webb, like Hudgins, from Baltimore. I don't have them performing together, but doubtless they would know one another on these circuits. And there was a Baltimore Harlem Renaissance, that's for sure. You start naming the Baltimore jazz musicians: Clarence Holiday, the father of Billie Holiday, (James Hubert) “Eubie” Blake, and of course, Chick (Webb) I've already named. And then many others from that city; they go back and forth to D.C., where

(Duke) Ellington is from. You see what I mean, you don't have to go to New York to find the Harlem Renaissance, it's all over the place.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH IMAGE OF A ROMARE BEARDEN COLLAGE DEPICTING JOHNNY HUDGINS AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS "HERE'S ANOTHER PORTRAIT OF HUDGINS, THIS TIME WITH ELLINGTON. THE LADY COULD BE LADY DAY, ANOTHER BALTIMOREAN. NOW JOHNNY IS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPORTANT HARLEM RENAISSANCE SITES: THE APOLLO AND THE COTTON CLUB" ONSCREEN)

And Bearden does a second portrait of Johnny Hudgins; in this piece associating him now with the Apollo Theater. It may be Billie Holiday that's in this - Billie Holiday, as I mentioned, from Baltimore - in this frame with him. The Cotton Club is named in (the) lower right (of the frame). If we blew up that picture, we'd see that that's (Duke) Ellington's band that Hudgins is associated with again. And remember what I said about the triumvirate: you've got the singer, the dancer, and the instrumentalists together. And notice here the hand kinda peeping around the corner, he's (Romare Bearden) invoking something about Johnny and his act.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH SAME ROMARE BEARDEN COLLAGE FROM PREVIOUS SLIDE AND WHITE TEXT THAT NOW READS "STERLING A. BROWN CALLED THE SINGER-INSTRUMENTALIST-DANCER COMBINATION A BLACK CULTURAL TRIUMVIRATE. BECAUSE OF INTERNATIONAL RADIO BROADCASTS, EVEN THE SEGREGATED COTTON CLUB CELEBRATED THE BLACK COMMUNITY (LISTENING BACK HOME)" ONSCREEN)

I mentioned this already: the singer-instrumentalist-dancer triumvirate. And I think it's significant to mention that since we see the Cotton Club sign - and remember that the Cotton Club was segregated - even that was part of the Black community's Renaissance. It sensed that something new was happening. The radio hookups in the Cotton Club meant that the people around the corner, who couldn't get admitted, could hear the music anyway. And the people around in Denver, Colorado, and Los Angeles, and Wichita, and all around the country were listening to those Cotton Club broadcasts. And they couldn't see Johnny Hudgins, but that was part of the show as well.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH A ROMARE BEARDEN COLLAGE DEPICTING DANCERS AND MUSICIANS TOGETHER WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "THIS COLLAGE CELEBRATED THE ELLINGTON, CHICK WEBB, AND LIONEL HAMPTON BANDS AS DANCE BANDS. ELLINGTON WAS A GREAT PIANIST AND COMPOSER/CONDUCTOR. ALONG WITH THE DANCERS, ALL WERE LEADERS OF A PUBLIC RITUAL" ONSCREEN)

The (Romare Bearden) collages are archival sources too. We see these pictures of the Ellingtons here, and the Lionel Hampton there, and some of these great dancers (BLACK SLIDE WITH SAME BEARDEN COLLAGE AS PREVIOUS SLIDE WITH WHITE TEXT THAT NOW READS "HARLEM TOOK TO THE AIR" ONSCREEN) associated with the Cotton Club and also with public dance halls like the Savoy Ballroom, where the dancers would do the

Charleston. And eventually they would take to the air during the Lindy Hop. Some people talk about the Lindy Hop - named after (Charles) Lindbergh's "hop" across the ocean, as an inspiration for that dance - would say that it's drawn from steps associated with The Charleston.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH IMAGES OF A ROMARE BEARDEN ALBUM COVER DEPICTING BILLIE HOLIDAY WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "HERE'S ANOTHER BEARDEN PORTRAIT OF LADY DAY - AND OF THE ARTIST COMING THROUGH THE CURTAINS WHERE SHE (AND BASIE-ITES) HOLD FORTH" ONSCREEN)

Here's another portrait of Baltimorean Billie Holiday by (Romare) Bearden, and I particularly love this one because it's an album cover that Bearden made versus a collage. And here of course is Billie, and it's Billie, Billie, Billie. His friend, Billie Holiday. But who is that stepping through the curtains, if not Bearden himself. I think his point - and here's the Basie Band (Count Basie Orchestra) now, and these people are associated with (William James "Count") Basie. But the idea that the artist emerges through the example of these musicians, and that you could be inspired by the - whether it was the song, or the instrumentals, or the dance, they were all inspiring to you.

(BLACK SLIDE ONSCREEN WITH CLOSE-UP IMAGES OF ROMARE BEARDEN'S DEPICTIONS OF JOHNNY HUDGINS, A CONJURING WOMAN, AND CIRCE. THERE IS WHITE TEXT THAT READS "I ALSO SEE BEARDEN'S HUDGINS AS ONE OF THE ARTIST'S MAGICAL FIGURES - AKIN TO THE CONJURERS WHO COULD TRANSFORM THE WORLD")

I also see Johnny Hudgins, again, pictured on the left, as one of Bearden's magical figures, like his Conjure Woman in the middle there, like his Circe on the right with Odysseus; these masked figures who could change their shapes, and change the world through which they moved. The Conjure women and men, we're told, stood between one world and the next, and brought you messages back and forth from the ancestors, and drew their power from ancient sources.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH IMAGE OF ROMARE BEARDEN'S COLLAGE DEPICTING A CONJURE WOMAN ONSCREEN)

"A conjure woman was greatly feared", Bearden said; "It was believed that she could change her appearance." So Bearden putting together all these different - the leaves, and the African mask portions, and other cut-outs from magazines, makes this point that this is a very, very complicated lady and that she could change things up, and she could get you in trouble if you didn't do the right thing.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH DIFFERENT IMAGES OF ROMARE BEARDEN'S 'MAGICAL FIGURES' WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "MOST OF BEARDEN'S FIGURES OF MAGICAL TRANSFORMATION ARE WOMEN" ONSCREEN)

Most of his figures of magic are figures of revelation and transformation; figures who could shapeshift and change things. And I think that when he puts Johnny as one of those people who showed him what he could do as an artist, that's part of what he meant; that here was this magic man who was part of a long tradition of shapeshifters.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH IMAGE OF A ROMARE BEARDEN PIECE FROM HIS ODYSSEY SERIES ONSCREEN)

In Bearden's Odyssey Series, Odysseus here, masked for protection in the underworld, encounters Tiresias, also masked. These figures (are) trying, in the case of Odysseus, to find out what the news was from the other side of the world, from the world of the dead - what's going to happen in the future, he wants to learn.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH PHOTO OF JOHNNY HUDGINS DANCING IN *SUR UN AIR DE CHARLESTON* AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS "I'M WRESTLING WITH THE FACT THAT JOHNNY HUDGINS APPEARED IN BLACKFACE WHEN WE KNOW IT WAS ASSOCIATED WITH MINSTRELSY, AND WITH RIDICULING BLACK PEOPLE, AND ASSOCIATED WITH RITUALS ASSERTING WHITE POWER" ONSCREEN)

And of course, like people watching this with me, I'm wrestling with the fact that nevermind all that, why was the brother in blackface? When we know that blackface was associated with minstrels and i.e. white people - women and men - "blacking up" to ridicule Black Americans. It's important to remember that they were also admiring Black Americans. And so there's lure and loathing in this. But why would he (Johnny Hudgins) want to have anything to do with it? Well, part of the answer is just simply that that was the convention of that time. In some theaters you couldn't go on stage unless you went in blackface. And it became his prop; Johnny Hudgins was accustomed to doing that, and it became this thing.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH IMAGE OF A ROMARE BEARDEN PIECE DEPICTING A DRUMMER AND WHITE TEXT WITH A BEARDEN QUOTE ONSCREEN)

Bearden in one interview says: "We all live in a mask" anyway. "We all have a hundred different identities. Sometimes a mask can be a truer indicator of a person than his" - it should be 'than' - "than his true face." This is another self portrait I think, where Bearden presents the drummer - oh wait, is he a drummer, or are those painter's sticks? Or are those musician's batons? That's a drum... I think he (Bearden) wants to make the point that we are many people in one and that the mask can be very revealing, and it can be part of who you are, quite integrally speaking.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH WHITE TEXT OF A RALPH ELLISON QUOTE ONSCREEN)

Bearden's friend Ralph Ellison said that:

"America is a land of masking jokers" anyway. "Franklin, the practical scientist, statesman and sophisticated lover, allowed the French to mistake him for (Rousseau's)

Natural Man. Hemingway poses as a nonliterary sportsman, Faulkner as a farmer; (Abe) Lincoln allowed himself to be taken for a simple country lawyer - until the chips were down."

And then (Ralph) Ellison writes:

"Here, the" - so called - "'darker' act makes brothers of us all. America is a land of masking jokers. We wear the mask for purposes of aggression as well as for defense, when we're projecting the future and preserving the past. In short, the motives hidden behind the mask are as numerous as the ambiguities the mask conceals."

(BLACK SLIDE WITH PHOTOS OF PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR AND A PORTION OF HIS POEM "WE WEAR THE MASK" IN WHITE TEXT ONSCREEN)

As soon as he says "we wear the mask", he's quoting Paul Laurence Dunbar, whose poem that - "We Wear the Mask" - if you don't already know, you might take a look at that. (Paul) Laurence (Dunbar) says:

"We wear the mask that grins and lies,
(It) hides our cheeks and shades our eyes, -
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
 We wear the mask."

And so it's just, it's interesting to think about these African masks, these masks that were strategically worn to keep enemies at bay; we wear the mask for protection, as well as for aggression, as (Ralph) Ellison says.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH PHOTO OF JOSEPHINE BAKER ONSCREEN)

Here's Josephine Baker in blackface. There are many of these early performers who did it. I think it's a mistake to say: "Oh, it's because they hated themselves. Oh, it's because they knuckled under to white power." I think they had their own agendas, and as (James) Baldwin says, while they're doing that, they're looking through the mask and doing something that they cared about as well.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH A FILM STILL OF JOSEPHINE BAKER DANCING IN THE MOVIE *MIDNIGHT IN PARIS* ONSCREEN)

So the, for instance, Josephine Baker is caught in a very, very stupid scene in one of her movies - I can't think which one it is at the moment - but at a certain point, she jumps out and does the Conga and it's the real thing. It's as if she said, you know, whatever else is happening: "Excuse me, I'm part of the Harlem Renaissance. I am celebrating a Black diaspora that many people may not know about right now, (but) maybe in the future they will."

(BLACK SLIDE WITH IMAGE OF A ROMARE BEARDEN COLLAGE DEPICTING MUSICIANS WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "AS A GROUP, BEARDEN'S MASKED MUSICIANS ARE AGENTS OF POWER" ONSCREEN)

So as a group, Bearden's masked musicians are part of this phalanx of the powerful people that he celebrates.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH IMAGE OF A ROMARE BEARDEN COLLAGE DEPICTING JAZZ MUSICIANS ONSCREEN)

So many of the musicians that he presents are masked, and they have their own purposes that are much more complicated than can meet the eye automatically.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH IMAGE OF ROMARE BEARDEN'S PIECE *AUTUMN LAMP* DEPICTING A GUITAR PLAYER APPEARS. THEN A BLACK SLIDE WITH BEARDEN'S PIECE DEPICTING DUKE ELLINGTON AND LOUIS ARMSTRONG WITH A PIANO AND AN AFRICAN MASK ONSCREEN)

Here (in this image) are (Duke) Ellington and (Louis) Armstrong associated with African masks.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH IMAGE OF A ROMARE BEARDEN PIECE DEPICTING LOUIS ARMSTRONG ALONGSIDE AFRICAN MASKS WITH BLUE TEXT THAT READS "CERTAINLY LOUIS ARMSTRONG CAME FROM A TRADITION OF MASKS AND MASQUERADE" ONSCREEN)

How can we forget that, in the case of (Louis) Armstrong, he's from New Orleans where there's a long tradition of masking and masquerading. It's also (in) Mobile (Alabama) - there are other cities where they have Mardi Gras, where they have traditions of masking. And masking is not just an African thing, of course. And so you have traditions of masking all through the country, and so why is it a big surprise that you have this.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH A ROMARE BEARDEN COLLAGE DEPICTING CIRCUS PERFORMERS WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "HUDGINS IS ALSO ONE OF BEARDEN'S CLOWNS" ONSCREEN)

Hudgins is also in Bearden's - (is) one of his clown figures and figures of possibility that way.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH CLOSE UP IMAGES OF ROMARE BEARDEN'S DEPICTION OF JOHNNY HUDGINS FROM *JOHNNY HUDGINS COMES ON* AND OF TRAPEZE ARTISTS WITH AN E.E. CUMMINGS QUOTE IN WHITE TEXT ONSCREEN)

And in doing this talk, reminded me of the e. e. cummings play where a character says:

“Damn everything but the circus... The average ‘painter’, ‘sculptor’, ‘poet’, ‘playwright’, ‘composer’ cannot leap through a hoop from the back of a galloping horse, make people laugh with a clown’s mouth, orchestrate twenty lions... Imagine a human being who balances three chairs, one on top of another, on a wire, eighty feet in the air with no net underneath, and then climbs into the top chair, sits down, begins to swing...”

And the other character says: “I’m glad I never saw that - makes me dizzy just to think of it.” And the other one says: “I never saw that either.” But the guy (character) who says it, “ME”, (says) - “nobody can do it.” And then the main character says: “That’s because I am that.” (Said) in another way, “that’s all I ever see.” So I think, just as e.e. cummings is suggesting, Bearden is quite inspired by these circus figures in the sense of possibility.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH WHITE TEXT ONSCREEN THAT READS “CONSIDER THE LONG TRADITION OF BLACKS BLACKING UP, AND OF BLACK AUDIENCES LOVING IT

- FOR BLACKS OF A CERTAIN ERA, IT WAS AN INHERITED CONVENTION THAT YOU COULD NOT SHAKE
- YES, IT’S ASSOCIATED WITH MOCKING BLACK AMERICANS”)

And so there's a long tradition of Blacks “blacking up” and of Black audiences loving it. It's something that yes, it has this background of minstrelsy; yes, it's associated with invoking a certain hierarchy and mocking Black Americans. But for Black Americans doing it, it meant something else.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH WHITE TEXT ONSCREEN THAT READS

- “RACIST OVERTONES: FOUL AIR OF ‘PRIMITIVISM’ (EVEN IF THE TERMS ARE REVERSED)
- FUTURISTIC MOVIE
- POST-WAR APOCALYPSE/ENNUI - THE HOPE THAT BLACK CULTURE WILL SAVE DEPLETED EUROPE
- EXPERIMENTAL TRICKS IN A FILM NEVER RELEASED”)

As we move towards watching the film now, please bear in mind that there's a foul air of “primitivism” about it, (a) kind of contemptible presentation of the monkey as part of this. We're in postwar France; everything seems bombed away, and what's left except these “primitive” people and their impulses. And so we have that to think about. It's also a futuristic movie. It's a brother from another planet arriving in another era in a spaceship. And so that's something interesting to consider, and to consider the whole tradition of futuristic works by (W.E.B.) DuBois and many others.

It's a movie about postwar Europe and the sense of collapse and of boredom, and the idea that perhaps Black culture would rejuvenate the Europeans, just as it often happened in the United States with the idea that somehow Black culture would rejuvenate a dying culture here.

Notice that this is a film by an experimental filmmaker, whose tricks with slow motion and things appearing and you draw something on the wall and suddenly appears - that's where he's most excited about what the film can do.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH TWO PHOTO IMAGES OF COURTNEY BRYAN ONSCREEN)

It's (the film) incomplete, and sister Courtney Bryan looks back and says, "what am I gonna do with it now?" And so she's offered her own composition. So as you look at this film, please listen to it now, as we look back at this and look straight at her, looking back to and adding her own voice.

(BLACK SLIDE WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "SAY HELLO TO COURTNEY BRYAN" ONSCREEN)

She was very kind to record a word about what she's done as a composer and so please... I'm happy to introduce Miss Courtney Bryan.

(VIDEO CLIP OF COURTNEY BRYAN SPEAKING PLAYS ONSCREEN)

Courtney Bryan: Hello, my name is Courtney Bryan, and I'm a composer and pianist. I wanted to just say a few words about what you're going to hear, along with what you're going to see. I had a great conversation with Professor O'Meally about Johnny Hudgins - who I'm just being introduced to - and (about the) idea of setting some music that I already have to this silent film.

I wanted to say a few words about the music. It's a piece I did some years ago called "Songs of Laughing, Smiling and Crying". For that project I collected all these different pieces from different artists across different styles and times, all dealing with themes of laughing, smiling, and crying. And what I did was use a program called Logic Pro. Logic Pro was able to take these recordings and remix them together and create something different.

Part of my inspiration for the piece was just wondering: "What would it be like to collaborate with some of the artists I always wanted to collaborate with? Like Louis Armstrong or Tupac or Michael Jackson or Dinah Washington?" And so all these artists in the piece, I'm able to perform with them through technology, because on the piano - it's a concert led piece - I perform along with the recordings that I've already pre-set, and we go through all these various emotions and styles and sounds.

So for this piece, for "Charleston Parade", I selected different parts of "Songs of Laughing, Smiling and Crying" that I thought would really be interesting to hear, along with the images of Johnny Hudgins and all the images of "Charleston Parade". So you'll hear some voices that are

familiar to you, and it'll be interesting to hear what you hear, and also how that is in conversation with the images. So I hope that you enjoy and thank you.

Robert G. O'Meally: Courtney Bryan is a national treasure.

(BLACK TITLE SLIDE WITH A FILM STILL IMAGE OF JOHNNY HUDGINS AND A PHOTO IMAGE OF COURTNEY BRYAN WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "ORIGINAL SCORE BY COURTNEY BRYAN, *SUR UN AIR DE CHARLESTON*, FRANCE 1927" ONSCREEN)

And so here we are with (the film) - it's seventeen minutes long, you'll hear the score. And please ask yourselves with me: what's in it for Johnny here? And for the Black audience involved in a sophisticated moment, is there an inspiration that makes you aware that there's a whole new world out there for you? Never mind what else ever else is going on - is there something in here that he's smuggling in that celebrates the community, and inspires a Romare Bearden, and that's in cahoots with a Josephine Baker in making the world anew?

Take a look, you'll see that Renoir's wife is in this, Catherine Hessling; it's so silly that she would be teaching the great dancer to dance. And there are primitivist gestures through here - she (Catherine Hessling's character) says, "I don't eat dark meat" - there are racist things that are said. But what's in it for Johnny? And also ask yourselves too: I'm a composer, what is this piece about "laughing and smiling" have to do with this movie?

(SCREEN GOES BLACK)

(TITLE CARD APPEARS ONSCREEN - "*SUR UN AIR DE CHARLESTON*, DIR. JEAN RENOIR, 1927, ORIGINAL SCORE BY COURTNEY BRYAN". THEN THE ORIGINAL FILM PLAYS ONSCREEN, TIME STAMP 49:48.

THE FOLLOWING TEXT APPEARS IN THE FILM, TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH SUBTITLES INTO ENGLISH SUBTITLES: "THE YEAR 2028, A FEW YEARS AFTER THE WAR. AN AIRCRAFT IS GETTING READY TO LEAVE CENTRAL AFRICA... ON THE AIRCRAFT, AN EXPLORER... DESTINATION EUROPA DESERTA, AN UNKNOWN LAND...")

Robert G. O'Meally: We're getting camera tricks, and showing off new techniques, and new movies. (Referring to slow motion of Catherine Hessling dancing.)

(IN THE FILM A BLACK SCREEN WITH WHITE TEXT THAT READS "CHARLESTON!" APPEARS.

THE FOLLOWING TEXT APPEARS IN THE FILM, TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH SUBTITLES INTO ENGLISH SUBTITLES:
JOHNNY HUDGINS CHARACTER: "I HAVE FINALLY DISCOVERED MY ANCESTORS' TRADITIONAL DANCE... BRAVO! SHOW ME MORE OF THAT WONDERFUL DANCING! THEN YOU CAN (WORD INDISTINGUISHABLE) AND EAT ME."

CATHERINE HESSLING'S CHARACTER: "ME? EAT YOU? I DON'T THINK SO! BLACK MEAT MAKES ME SICK!")

Robert G. O'Meally: Early camera tricks. (Referring to Catherine Hessling's character drawing a phone with chalk and a real phone then appearing.)

(THE FOLLOWING TEXT APPEARS IN THE FILM, TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH SUBTITLES INTO ENGLISH SUBTITLES:

CATHERINE HESSLING'S CHARACTER ON THE PHONE: "HELLO? I CAN'T HEAR YOU. WHO IS IT? YOU WISH TO TALK TO HIM? JUST A MINUTE..."

JOHNNY HUDGINS' CHARACTER ON THE PHONE: "HELLO? I CAN'T HEAR A THING! I'VE DISCOVERED THE CHARLESTON, THAT TRADITIONAL WHITE DANCE... AND I'VE DECIDED TO LEARN IT!"

AFTER THEY DANCE, THE FOLLOWING TEXT APPEARS IN THE FILM, TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH SUBTITLES INTO ENGLISH SUBTITLES: "THE EXPLORER TURNS OUT TO BE QUITE GIFTED AND HIS TEACHER INDEFATIGABLE... BUT SOON, HE GETS DIZZY..."

AFTER CATHERINE HESSLING'S CHARACTER DECIDES TO LEAVE WITH JOHNNY HUDGINS' CHARACTER THE FOLLOWING TEXT APPEARS IN THE FILM, TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH SUBTITLES INTO ENGLISH SUBTITLES: "THAT IS HOW WHITE ABORIGINES CULTURE BECAME FASHIONABLE IN AFRICA. THE END."

FILM ENDS ONSCREEN, TIME STAMP 1:09:22.

BLACK SCREEN APPEARS WITH PHOTO IMAGES OF COURTNEY BRYAN AND WHITE TEXT THAT READS "THANKS!")

Robert G. O'Meally: So in conclusion - I was watching, I see quite a few family members out there (in the Zoom audience), and I want to let you know that I do see you and I'm very glad to see you. And by way of summary, I would say our Harlem Renaissance includes the usual suspects I won't name - but don't forget Chick Webb, don't forget Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday. Don't forget Josephine Baker. Don't forget Romare Bearden. Don't forget Johnny Hudgins.

There he (Johnny Hudgins) is with that fantastic vitality, that fantastic limberness, suggesting new worlds, Bearden says. He's part of that sophisticated moment. You have to look through the muddy water of this film - with it's little racist overtones, and silliness, and it's got a soft porn business - and see what the Harlem audiences were looking for, which is a chance to see the great man himself on screen.

If the European Renaissance could last over a period of centuries and across many countries, let's let the Harlem Renaissance include these people and make its way on up, as Courtney (Bryan) suggests with her collage of a piece; right on up to Nat King Cole, and on up through Dinah Washington, and all the way up to Tupac (Shakur), and to Courtney herself, perhaps one of the highest tide-riding surfers on the cresting wave of the Harlem Renaissance.

Thanks for your attention. I hope you've enjoyed what you've seen tonight.

(SCREEN GOES BLACK BRIEFLY, THEN VIDEO OF JENNIFER MOCK APPEARS
ONSCREEN)

Jennifer Mock: Professor O'Meally, I want to thank you so much on behalf of the Gallery. I want to also extend great thanks to Courtney Bryan for creating that - for scoring; that was an incredible, incredible experience. Yulanda McKenzie, I'd like to also thank, from the Jazz Center (Columbia University Center for Jazz Studies).

Johnny Hudgins. I want to say his name again, let's really thank Johnny Hudgins for this evening. For returning him, bringing him back, making him come alive for us again, and (for) seeing it with twenty-first century eyes and providing us with the way to see this, to understand this, and to be able to talk about it - thank you, Professor O'Meally, for that.

And I'd like to thank all of you in the audience for joining us this evening. You have been so warm and wonderful in the chat. You've been sharing feedback along the way. Go ahead, I see we have somebody sharing the clap emoticon. This is the time if you want to turn on your cameras, now we'd love to see your faces. Let's show Bob (Robert O'Meally) a big round of applause of appreciation. I think that's what we miss the most - if we were all in the room together, I know right now we would be applauding. But as we do this, and as we applaud, I want to really thank all of you, again, for welcoming us into your homes, into your personal spaces and taking this time to join us tonight; especially for those of you here in New York City, where we are receiving news again of what's coming, coming into play again.

We're going to be coming back - we're going to be taking a week off - but we're coming back on December the second for the next of this two-part series. Professor O'Meally is going to be joining us again for part two of the "Harlem Renaissance Men". And he's going to be talking about Jack Johnson, and I know that we all can't wait for that.

I also have the pleasure of also just sharing with the audience tonight - we're about to announce by the end of this week that we'll be opening registration for a program that we're just about to launch, and that is going to be the "Uptown 2020 Triennial Town Hall: Building for the Future". This is going to be a program that is going to be looking to Harlem community organizations and individuals to share and reflect on the space that we are living in right now, and how this moment is shaping this experience, but (also) what we need to be looking towards for the future and building back and returning for strength.

And so with those notes, I just wanted to leave you and say again, thank you to the audience. Thank you to Professor O'Meally. Thank you to Courtney Bryan. Thank you to Johnny Hudgins. And a big round of applause and thanks to all of you. I look forward to seeing you again on December the second. In between, stay well, take good care. We'll see you again very soon. Good night, everyone.

Robert G. O'Meally: Bye bye.

(VIDEO OF JENNIFER MOCK ENDS AND THE UPTOWN TRIENNIAL 2020 LOGO APPEARS
ONSCREEN)