



Where Art Happens!

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The DIVA Center offers a unique view into early 20th Century African American photography and cinema during October. The Center features a national exhibit of photography by Charles Harris; a festival of Early African American cinema; and invited guest speakers.



On October 14th, DIVA will open a touring exhibit of 31 photographs by Charles "Teenie" Harris. The photographs, reflecting African American urban life from the Depression to the Civil Rights Movement, were selected from the Teenie Harris Archives of the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and organized by the August Wilson Center for African American Culture. The exhibit, *Charles*

"Teenie" Harris: Rhapsody in Black and White, will be on view at DIVA through November 22nd.

From 1936 to 1975 Charles "Teenie" Harris was the staff photographer for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, one of the nation's oldest and most influential Black newspapers. From children playing in the stream of an open fire hydrant on a hot day to celebrities like Louis Armstrong and Jackie Robinson, Harris captured more than 80,000 images of urban African American life during a time of significant change. His remarkable ability to capture the essence of a story with a single photograph earned him the nickname "One Shot," and the intimacy of his photos are evidence of the trust he engendered in his subjects.



Professor Deborah Willis, co-curator of the touring exhibit, will present a free DIVA Gallery Talk about Harris's photography at 5:30 PM on Friday, October 17th. Professor Willis, on the faculty of the Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, is one of the nation's leading historians of African American photography.

The photographic exhibit coincides with an October 26th Hult Center presentation of "One Shot" choreographed by Ronald K. Brown, and performed by his company EVIDENCE. "One Shot", combines contemporary dance and Charles Harris's photos in a fascinating and unusual performance. Also

included is a performance of "Grace", a journey of the spirit choreographed by Brown for Alvin Ailey and is considered a masterpiece of contemporary dance.

Choreographer Ronald K. Brown has been praised by *The New York Times* as "One of the most profound choreographers of his generation." The Sunday afternoon event includes a post-performance discussion with Ronald K. Brown and dancers. Brown is also a co-curator of the Charles Harris exhibit.

Dovetailing with DIVA's Harris exhibit is a festival of Early African American Film Festival selected from the cinema archives of the Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum (MCLM) in Culver City, California.

The festival, October 14-15-16, features four films selected by MCLM President and Chief Executive Officer, Avery Clayton. All screenings starts at 7:00 PM. The admission is on a \$3-\$6 sliding scale.

The films Mr. Clayton has selected are historically significant productions that are in contrast to the mainstream films of the period that often presented African-Americans in demeaning stereotyped and prejudicial comedic roles. These early films attempt to present African-Americans as individuals with the same-shared humaneness and humanity as their contemporaries.

The festival includes four musicals, a popular genre of the time, starring some of the musical giants of the early 20th century including Ethel Waters, Lena Horn, Louis Armstrong, Kenneth Spencer, John William Sublett, Oscar Polk, Mantan Moreland, Willie Best, Fletcher Rivers, Leon James Poke, Ford Washington Lee, Bill Bailey, Paul Robeson, Daniel L. Hayes, Nina Mae McKinney, William Fountaine, Harry Gray, Fanny Bell DeKnight, Everett McGarrity, Victoria Spivey, Milton Dickerson, Robert Crouch, Walter Tait, the Dixie Jubilee Singers, and Butterfly McQueen, to mention a few.

The schedule includes:



Tuesday, October 14th - *Cabin In The Sky* (1943) 78 minutes. Ethel Waters, Lena Horn, and Eddie Rochester' Anderson are caught in a musical version of the Faust legend in which Little Joe, a man killed over gambling debts, is given six months to redeem his soul and become worthy of entering Heaven. Without redemption his soul will be condemned to Hell. The film was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Song, "Happiness is a Thing Called Joe".

Wednesday, October 15th - *Song of Freedom* (1936) 70 minutes. Paul Robeson plays John Zinga, a black dockworker with a great baritone singing voice who is discovered by an opera impresario and is catapulted to fame as an

international star. Feeling alienated from his African past, and out of place in

England he, by chance, learns of his connection with an ancestral African tribe. Reunited with his people and heritage, he plans to improve their lives by combining the best of western and traditional African ways.

Thursday, October 16th - Double Feature

Hallelujah. (1929) 109 minutes. The film tells the tale of Zeke Johnson (Daniel L. Hayes), a sharecropper, and his relationship with a dancer, Chick (Nina Mae McKinney), who manipulates him with her seductive charm. Though at times the film may seem to contemporary sensitivities contrived and condescending, "Hallelujah" stands out from other films of the period with its positive and relatively un-stereotyped treatment of an African-American subject. It was the first all black cast Hollywood produced sound film. "Hallelujah" earned King Vidor an Oscar nomination for Best Director.

Stormy Weather. (1943) 72 minutes. The story is a high energy World War II musical cavalcade in which Lena Horne and Bill Robinson play a husband and wife team who struggle to make it in show business; she as a singer and he as a tap dancer. The film provides rare "mainstream" leading roles for some of the era's greatest African-American entertainers.



At 8:30 PM on Wednesday, October 15th, Avery Clayton, President and Chief Executive Officer, of the Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum (MCLM) and the Early African American Film Festival curator, will give a gallery talk titled: "The Evolution of the Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum: From a Backyard Collection to a Major American Cultural Institution".

The MCLM houses one of the largest collections of materials related to African American Culture in the nation. This historical resource all began with a personal collection of material by Mr. Avery's mother, Mayme Agnew Clayton, Ph.D. (1923-2006) The collection once occupied home, garage, and storage facilities around Los Angeles growing to include 30,000 rare and out-of-print books; over 9,500 sound recordings; 75,000 photographs dating from the mid-1800s; and the largest black film collection in the world with over 1,700 titles including works by Oscar Micheaux, the most prolific black film maker of all time.

Today the collection is housed in the Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum in Culver City, California. The center's goal is to advance research, public edification, and establish it as a research and education center. The facility has become a repository for endangered African American collections; a museum for contemporary art and a media center for film and live-performances.