



# Harlem Heyday

*Jack Schiffman*

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Harlem Heyday vividly describes the special magic of Harlem's "Heyday Years" - from the thirties to the seventies - which left a singular and enduring imprint on the world of entertainment. The author, son of the guiding spirit of the Apollo Theatre and witness to the enchantment and excitement of these years, recounts many amusing anecdotes about the singers, dancers, musicians and comedians who performed there and at the Lafayette. He follows the evolution of their art and describes how the early pioneers paved the way for the black superstars of today.

The Apollo Theatre was just another uptown variety house when Frank Schiffman and Leo Brecher took over the old "Hurtig and Seamon" in 1935. This was the birth of a unique institution in American cultural history. Almost every black entertainer in modern history has, at one time or another, strutted across the stage of the Apollo. Legendary performers like Billie Holliday, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Nat "King" Cole, and Charlie "Bird" Parker, as well as acclaimed modern entertainers like Lena Horne, Richard Pryor, Stevie Wonder, Flip Wilson, and Diana Ross and the Supremes are all part of the colorful and dramatic story of the Apollo.

Harlem Heyday is heavily illustrated with photographs of the stars of the "uptown" theaters and choice memorabilia, including vintage theater programs and newspaper advertisements. There are chapters detailing the history of Harlem, jazz, the blues and gospel music, and dance and comedy at the Apollo.

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