

THE 1920S

This concert featuring the *Impressions in Jazz* Orchestra and special guests *Swing Dynamite* will present music and dance made popular during the “Jazz Age” of the 1920’s.

At the beginning of the 1920s, the Dixieland style of jazz had already been established in New Orleans. A fusion of African American musical styles and Western musical techniques and theory, Dixieland jazz featured three voices (cornet, clarinet and trombone) and a rhythm section. African Americans moving north to escape racism, violence, and a devastated southern cotton industry, would spread this style of music throughout the United States.

In Chicago, Joe Oliver would become the “King” of jazz. His ensemble would eventually become a hybrid of the New Orleans style jazz band and the nationally popular larger dance band. Louis Armstrong would join “King” Oliver and then move on to New York to play with Fletcher Henderson’s band. He would later return to Chicago to record his famous *Hot Five* and *Hot Seven* hits. Oliver missed out on the opportunity of a lifetime when he lost a long-term engagement at New York’s famous Cotton Club to a young Duke Ellington. With a weekly radio broadcast and a constant influx of famous clientele at the Harlem nightclub, Ellington would quickly become one of the most well known musicians in North America.

Like jazz, dance of the 1920s originated in African American communities and thrived in the speakeasies that sprung up in the wake of Prohibition. The *Charleston*, the *Black Bottom*, the *Cakewalk* and other dances transitioned through the “*Breakaway*” to eventually become the *Lindy Hop*.

With the invention of the phonograph record and the emerging popularity of radio, this new sound and style caught hold across the continent and came to represent the sophistication and decadence of the 1920’s.