



October 2018 Her Story ENewsletter Pianists

Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, honoring composer, musician and singer Carole King, is currently playing on Broadway. This month's enewsletter not only features Carole King but another musical sensation as well, Hazel Harrison. Enjoy reading about these two amazing musical women.

The first American-trained musician asked to play with European orchestras, Hazel Harrison was born in 1883 in Indiana. She began playing the piano at age four and was earning extra money for her family by playing at parties and dances by the time she was eight years old. In 1904, she was asked to play with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. After her return to the U.S., Harrison played a concert at Kimball Hall in Chicago in 1910. A music critic decided to help her further her music education in Europe and successfully spearheaded the effort to raise the funds. Harrison returned to Germany to studio piano in 1911.



Hazel Harrison

Over the course of her musical career, she played concerts in major cities and performed special events with major orchestras but was not asked to join them due to the fact that she was African American. Instead, she first joined the faculty of Tuskegee Institute and then became the head of the piano faculty at Howard University. She guest lectured at other universities and established the Olive J. Harrison Piano Scholarship at Howard University, to honor her mother.



Carole King

Considered the most successful female songwriter of the last half of the twentieth century, Carole King, like Hazel Harrison, began playing the piano at an early age. She started learning basic piano skills when she was three and her mother started giving her real lessons when she four, after her parents discovered that she had perfect pitch. An avid learner, she made demo records with her friend Paul Simon during the 1950s when she was a teenager. She and her first husband Gerry Goffin wrote the Shirelles' 1960 hit Will You Love Me Tomorrow, the first hit #1 hit by an African-American girl group. She would later record that song herself.

After her divorce, King moved to Los Angeles and pursued singing and writing. Her 1971 album Tapestry was a big success. She earned four Grammy awards for the album; it remained on the charts for six years and sold over 25 million copies. When she overcame her reluctance to perform live shows, her career and reputation skyrocketed. King has written an autobiography, has received the Kennedy Center Honors, and was the first woman to receive the Gershwin Prize for Popular Song. The latter award is bestowed by the Library of Congress on songwriters for a body of work. Beautiful: The Carole King Musical opened on Broadway in 2014. There are also several touring companies of the show.

Hazel Harrison and Carole King are among the more than 850 women profiled in our book Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America. Women's accomplishments continue to inspire and encourage us. Continue to help us tell women's stories!

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