



The Great Jazz Day

Charles Graham, Dan Morgenstern, Dan Morgenstern Rutgers University

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And what a day it was, when nearly sixty jazz greats gathered on a Harlem street one morning in August 1958 for what was, incredibly, the photographer Art Kane's first professional shoot. Art Blakey, Charles Mingus, Coleman Hawkins, Sonny Rollins, Mary Lou Williams, Thelonious Monk, Lester Young, Dizzy Gillespie, Count Basie, Marian McPartland. . . .No one knew how many would show up at 10:00 A.M. for what was planned as the centerfold for *Esquire* magazine, but at the appointed hour they began coming—by subway, by taxi, and on foot. What resulted became the most famous jazz photograph ever—instantly recognizable to jazz fans the world over and the inspiration for the 1995 Oscar-nominated documentary *A Great Day in Harlem*. This remarkable photograph and the outtakes and candids shot that day—reproduced here in elegant duotone on high-quality paper—are complemented by biographical information on all the musicians in the photograph and by essays from some of the greatest jazz writers of our time—Whitney Balliett, Ralph Ellison, Gary Giddins, and Dan Morgenstern. "This is pure American cultural history," said Philip Elwood of the San Francisco Examiner, "capturing not just a day, but an era."

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