



Rhythm for Sale

Grant Harper Reid

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Rhythm For Sale the Chanticleer Grand Prize Journey Award Winning 5 Star book that was voted by the IndieReader Staff as one of the Best Self-Published books of 2015. Bookawards.com 2015 Gold Award Winner. The book is a deeply researched account of Harlem Renaissance producer Leonard Harper's life story.

Grant Harper Reid has documented Harper's tale with a very careful chronological arrangement of the details and facts. The book comes alive because of Reid's entertaining and descriptive writing style. Because of the contents in *Rhythm For Sale*.

A Harlem, N.Y. street was named "Leonard Harper Way" in 2015.

Reid begins with Leonard Harper as a young Alabama pickaninny boy dancing in Medicine shows in the racist South. After leaving Alabama, Harper tours the country with his song and dance partner Osceola Blanks, and they wind up performing at the Empire Theater in London. As a married couple Harper and Blanks, arrive back in the States smack dab in the middle of the Harlem Renaissance. Master pianist Duke Ellington moves in with them. Harper is hired to be the main in-house producer at Harlem's fabled Connie's Inn nightclub.

Harper opens up his downtown Times Square Dance Studio. He teaches the Marx Brothers, Ruby Keller, Adele Astaire and Busby Berkeley's chorus-line in the fine art of (Dirty Colored), dancing with "that little extra something in the butt department." He forms his famous chorus-line the Harperettes, who jiggle and joggle in skimpy outfits while setting dance floors on fire. Leonard Harper produces in at least eight nightclubs and theaters just in New York City alone. The Cotton Club, the Hollywood Inn, Al Capone's Grand Terrace Cafe, the Lafayette Theater and the Apollo Theater all owe their status and particular place in nightclub and theater history to Harper and his fast variety revues. He rules the nightclub and Black Musical Comedy world on *The Great White Way* and uptown in Harlem. *Black And Blue* and *Ain't Misbehavin* all came from Harper's *Hot Chocolates* and only *Rhythm For Sale* tells the true story behind the making of that all-time legendary Broadway sensational revue.

The book is full of celebrities and gangsters who come and go. Ethel Waters, Cab Calloway, Chick Webb, Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Lena Horne, Dutch Schultz and Lucky Luciano are all integral players in Harper's show business world. Grandson Grant does not disappoint. These real life characters come to life. No cardboard cutout characters are in this book.

Rhythm for Sale finely peels away beyond the surface to reveal what lurks underneath the facade. Like a master chef, the author delves deep inside the ingredients of Leonard Harper's complicated personal life. We examine his relationships with his possessive mother, jealous brother, crippled and bitter wife, sexy girlfriends and his loving daughter.

The book ends with Harper's 1943 downfall. When his variety revue form of Colored Musical Comedy is , deemed out of date with his audience time on earth expires. His sad downfall is inevitable as the master stager is trapped and held captive of his past success. Perhaps the racial pigeonhole that forced him into working for only small-time Harlem nightspots caused his death.

"Clearly Leonard Harper was just about the most important contributor to the entertainment mystique that enveloped Harlem in the 1920's and 1930's. He essentially invented the nightclub floorshow, Harlem style that everyone, uptown and down, then emulated. He was one of the great dancers of his generation and one hell of a stage director and choreographer. Without him, I doubt we would have Broadway musicals as we know them today."-Barry Singer author of Black And Blue.

"Harper's extraordinary accomplishments as an artist and innovator spanned the worlds of vaudeville, cabaret, burlesque and Broadway musical comedy. "-Jed Bernstein President of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

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