

Lt. James Reese Europe

(February 22, 1881 – May 9, 1919)

369 U.S Army Infantry “Hell Fighters” Band

American ragtime and early jazz bandleader, arranger, and composer. He was the leading figure on the African Americans music scene of New York City in the 1910s. Eubie Blake called him the "Martin Luther King of music".

Europe was born in Mobile, Alabama, to Henry Jefferson Europe (1848–1899) and Lorraine Saxon (1849–1930).

In 1910, Europe organized the Clef Club, a society for Black Americans in the music industry. In 1912, the club made history when it played a concert at Carnegie Hall for the benefit of the Colored Music Settlement School. The Clef Club Orchestra, while not a jazz band, was the first band to play proto-jazz at Carnegie Hall.