

# Echos of Harlem: Selective Realism in *Blues for an Alabama Sky*

## Synopsis and Background

*Blues for an Alabama Sky* is about a family of friends struggling with materialistic themes such as the Great Depression and the economic hardship that came after the Harlem Renaissance. As designers, *Blues for an Alabama Sky* is a play where it's important to show the black experience during the Great Depression and the Harlem Renaissance, create a space the audience feels they can relate closely to, and help the audience feel the emotion and the characters' need to escape from, or succeed out of, their current environment..

Selective Realism- A form of realism that is sometimes literal and sometimes not

Themes: self-destruction, financial struggle, romance, and the pursuit of hopes and dreams.

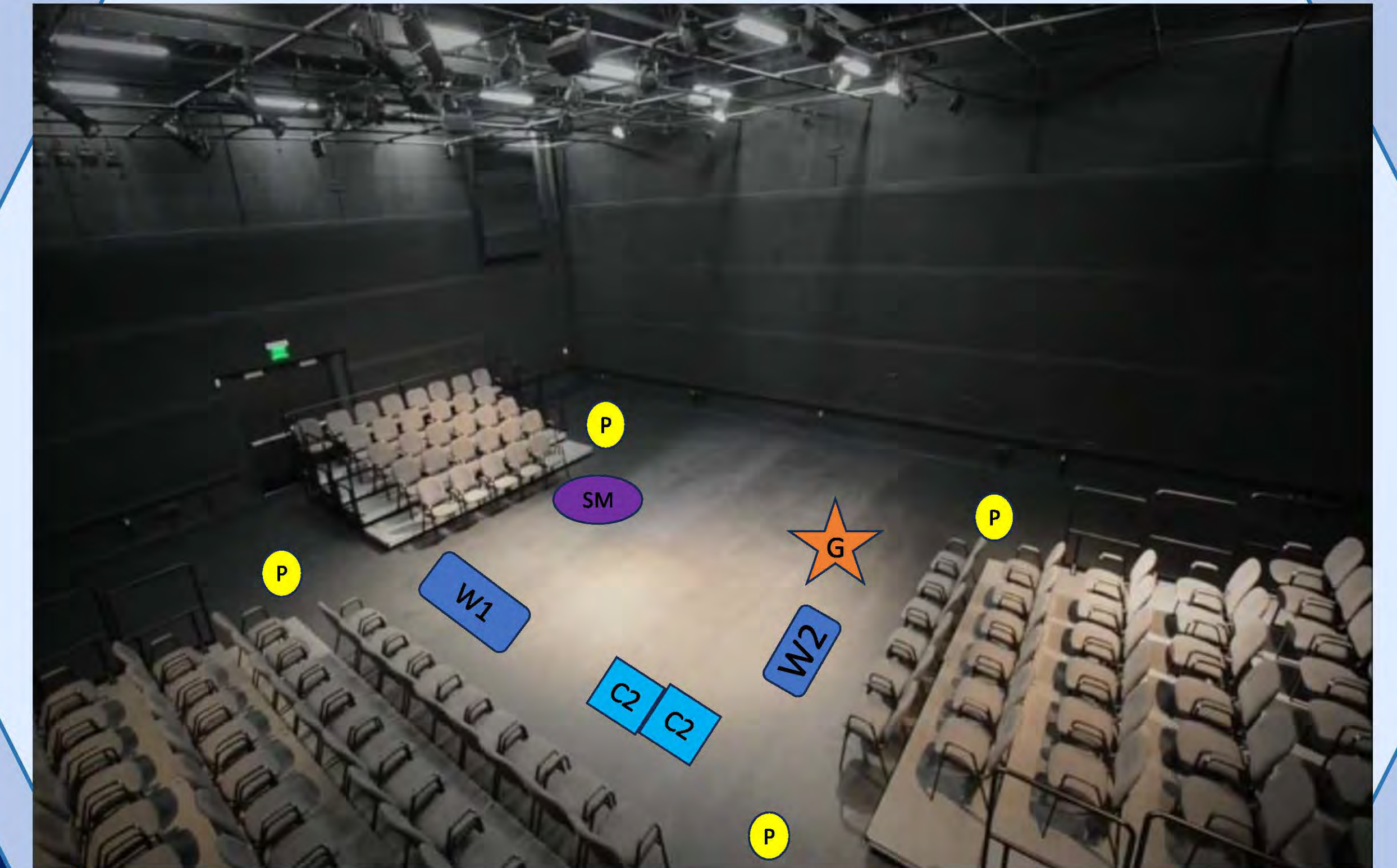
Harlem Renaissance- An intellectual and cultural revival of African American music, dance, art, fashion, literature, theater, politics and scholarship centered in Harlem, Manhattan in the 1920s and 1930s

*Blues...Sky* is about Angel, a Nightclub Singer, her whirlwind romance with Leland, a traveler from Alabama, and the ramifications on her relationships with Guy, a fashion designer, Sam, a doctor, and Delia, a family-planning clinic founder.

By Drake Willis, Grant McGee, Maddie Watkins, and Ruben Monsivais  
Faculty Advisor: Angela Bacarisse

By having limited stage scenery and utilizing the stage of a Black box, bleeding the set into the audience becomes easier! The goal is to have the audience feel like they are watching the lives of an average Harlem resident living their life.

## Set



Key:  
W1/W2 - Window units/Vanity C1/C2 - Couch pieces  
G - Gramophone/Record player SM - Sewing Machine  
P - LIVE BAND CHAIRS

## Costumes

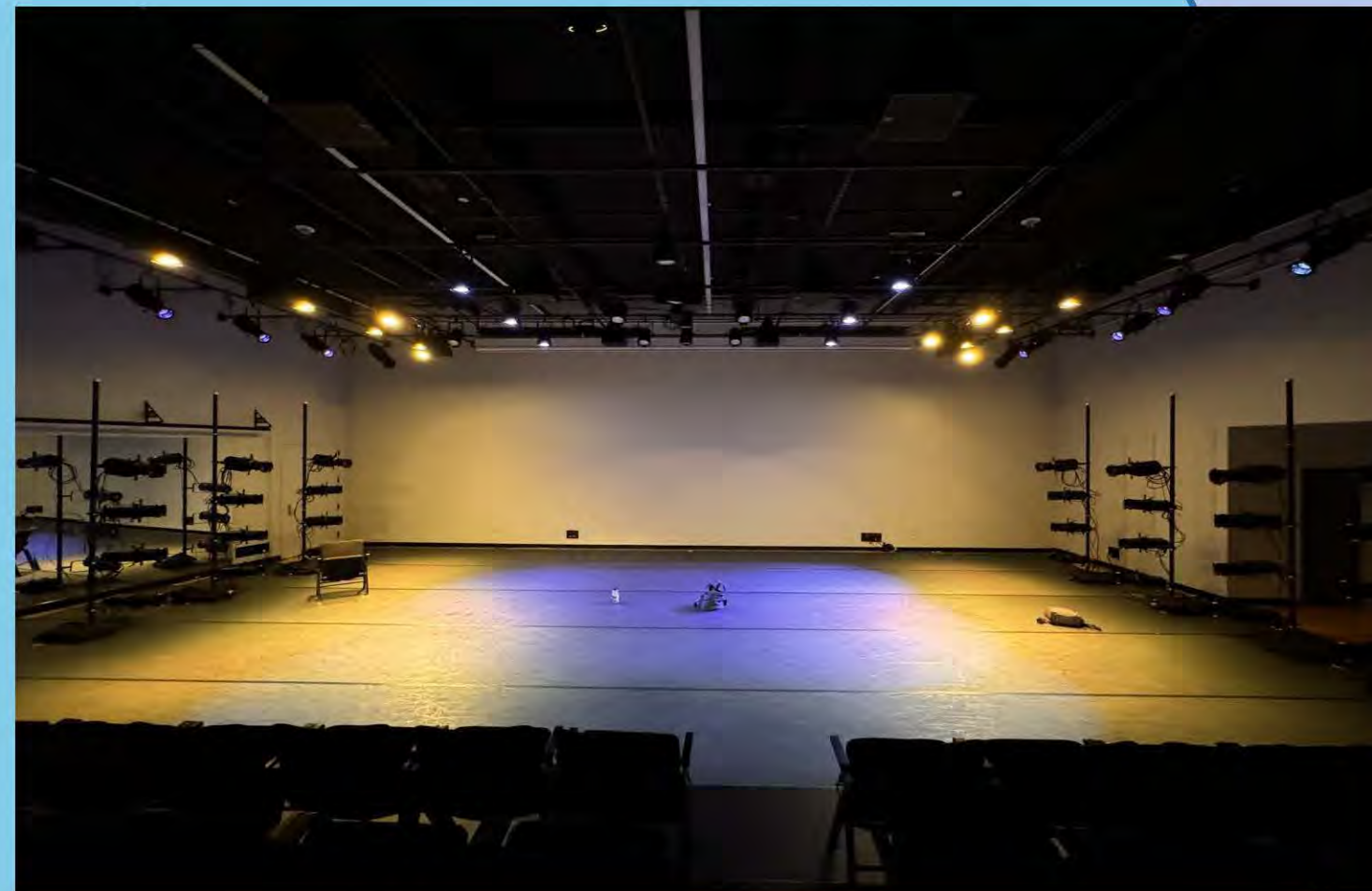
The costumes will aid in showcasing the time-period with the silhouettes as accurate as possible, while also playing as reflections of the characters themselves and in turn letting the audience know the kind of person they are.

Delia will wear soft colors like pinks and creams and is more plain. Angel will wear blues and purple and is more bold. Leland wear browns and blacks and is very neat while Sam wear greens and is always dressed nice. Guy wears reds and has a dramatic style.



## Lighting

Lighting designs are inspired by historical and environmental elements, as well as designs mentioned by the playwright. The colors of the lighting reflect the dingy households and apartments that predominately relied on natural lighting for their establishments.



The cascade of lighting on the floor and set produce arbitrary lines that contrast with blurred lines between the two apartments represented on stage.

## Sound

Scan this QR Code to follow along with the notes in a Youtube Playlist!



My goal for this design is to bring the audience in on both a literal front and a psychological front through three means: first- I plan on Guy having a record player where music will come from naturally, secondly- with live music integrated into the performance through street musicians who appear onstage providing ambiance and mood, and lastly- I intend on having artificial cues playing in certain points to narrow in on the psychology of a given character.