

Impact Statement

Anthony Davis, Grade 12

Sounds from the Army, 2026

Charcoal, acrylic on paper, 25 x 19 inches

Westover High School, Albany, GA

Unsung Hero: James Reese Europe

My Unsung Hero is James Reese Europe. He was a talented musician and a brave leader who made a big impact during his life. I chose him because not many people talk about him, even though he helped change music and history. I admire him because he used his talent to inspire others and stayed strong while serving his country.

James Reese Europe is important because he helped spread jazz music around the world. During World War I, he led the 369th Infantry Regiment band, also known as the Harlem Hellfighters. His band performed for soldiers and people across Europe. Their music brought joy during a hard time and helped lift spirits. Many people in Europe had never heard jazz before, so his performances introduced them to a new style of music. Because of him, African American music started to gain more respect and recognition. He also showed strong leadership by guiding his band and supporting his fellow soldiers. In my artwork, I wanted to show both sides of his life. I included a soldier's uniform to represent his service in the war and music notes to show his passion for music. I used bold and strong colors to show how powerful and important he was. I tried to make my artwork tell the story of how he used music to bring people together, even during difficult times.

I plan to share my artwork with my classmates and others so they can learn about him, too. I hope people will understand how important he was and how his music helped change the world. Overall, James Reese Europe is a true unsung hero because of his courage, talent, and lasting impact on music and history.

Another important aspect is that even while he faced racism, he kept going. He did not give up and proved he was talented and strong. He showed others to believe in themselves even when things are hard. Because of him, more Black musicians got chances to succeed.

James Reese Europe also helped people feel better during the War. His music made soldiers feel less stressed and more hopeful. Even in hard times, his band gave people something to enjoy and look forward to. He worked hard to become successful. He practiced music and led others with confidence. This shows that hard work and effort can help you reach your goals.

People still remember him today because of what he did. His music and leadership made a difference. He showed that you can use your talents to help others and make a change. He also showed how music can bring people together. James Reese Europe played for many different people, and they all enjoyed his music. This shows that music can connect people no matter where they come from.