



Some of These Days: Black Stars, Jazz Aesthetics, and Modernist Culture

James Donald

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With peerless talent and unrivalled international presence, few stars shone brighter in the heady firmament of the Jazz Age than Josephine Baker and Paul Robeson. Electric, charismatic, and unforgettable, both ignited the modern imaginations of cosmopolitan centers across Europe. Unabashedly themselves, they inspired poets, architects, novelists, and filmmakers across London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna with their indomitable artistic energy.

But *Some of These Days* extends beyond pure dual biography to recreate the rich community of artists who interacted with-and were influenced by-Baker and Robeson. James Donald highlights how the sense of excitement and artistic renewal ushered in with the 'New Negro Movement' reverberated far beyond Harlem. Throughout this chronicle, Donald underscores the relationship of African American aesthetics to the modernist movement that flourished from the 1920s until the end of World War II. Vivid portraits of artists like T. S. Eliot, HD, Carl Van Vechten, Marlene Dietrich, Jean Gabin, and Adolf Loos, among others, animate the study. Traversing countries and artforms, *Some of These Days* illustrates the immense cross-cultural collaboration of film, song, dance, and literature that coalesced to create modernist culture-where the new rhythms of the machine age were gleefully embraced, allowing art to consider the new possibilities of cosmopolitanism in a modern world.

Engagingly written and lavishly illustrated, *Some of These Days* recovers not just the romance, excitement, and uncertainty of Baker and Robeson's storied rise to stardom but also the political and cultural legacy of the movement that they embodied.

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