

For Immediate Release
November 10, 2003

Contact: Dell M. Hamilton, 617.495-3611,
dhamilt@fas.harvard.edu

Noted Author, Historian Robin D. G. Kelley Discusses the Fusion of Africa and Jazz

Cambridge – Noted social historian, Robin D.G. Kelley, Professor of African American Studies and Anthropology at Columbia University, chronicles the collaboration between American and African musicians and their efforts to revitalize jazz during the 1950's and 1960's at the Nathan I. Huggins Lectures, a three-day lecture series taking place at Harvard University.

On the first day of the series, Kelley explores the period when American jazz musicians like Randy Weston and Art Blakey traveled to Africa in search of musical inspiration and returned with what was then known as "High Life" music, which incorporated West African and Caribbean traditions. On the second day, Kelley discusses the "Drum Wars" when American musicians who incorporated African drums into jazz were not considered "authentic" enough to play African rhythms. On the final day of the series, Kelley covers the artistic and political struggles faced by musicians like Hugh Masekela, Kippie Moeketsi, Abdullah Ibrahim and Jonas Gwangwa under the South African apartheid system.

The author of over 100 essays and articles, Kelley has also written several influential books, most recently *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (2002), *Three Strikes: The Fighting Spirit of Labor's Last Century* with Howard Zinn and Dana Frank (2001), and *To Make Our World Anew: A History of African Americans* (co-edited with Earl Lewis, 2000). His work has also appeared in scholarly publications such as the *African Studies Review*, *Callaloo*, *Social Text*, and the *Journal of American History*, as well as the *New York Times*, the *Nation*, and *Rolling Stone*.

The Nathan I. Huggins Lectures are named after the first W. E. B. Du Bois Professor of the Humanities at Harvard and honor the memory and contributions of Nathan I. Huggins (1927-1989). Huggins served as the chair of the Department of African and African American Studies between 1980 and 1984 and 1987 and 1989. Co-sponsored by the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research, the Department of African and African American Studies, the Department of History of American Civilization and Harvard University Press, the lectures were designed to bring distinguished scholars to deliver three lectures on a topic related to African American history.

Who: Robin D. G. Kelley, Professor of African American Studies and Anthropology at Columbia University

What: Nathan I. Huggins Lecture Series

Speaking in Tongues: Jazz and Modern Africa

- Uhuru Africa: Spiritual Strivings in the Age of Decolonization
- Drum Wars: Africa Speaks, America Answers
- Marabi Modernists: Swinging Under Apartheid

When: Tuesday, November 18, Wednesday, November 19 and Thursday, November 20.
All lectures begin at 4 P.M. with a reception immediately following.

Where: Thompson Room, Barker Center, Harvard University,
12 Quincy Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge.
Free and open to the public. Wheelchair accessible.