

I'm working with the Turkish Embassy in DC, and in the spirit of Black History Month, I wanted to gauge your interest in the story of an unconventional social movement dating back to the 30's with resounding impacts today.

As an overview, during Munir Ertegun's appointment as Turkish Ambassador to the U.S. from 1934-1944, he and his two sons, Ahmet and Nesuhi, were enthralled with the American jazz scene. They converted the second floor of the Ambassador's Residence into a jazz club and began hosting performances featuring the leading black musicians of the time playing for both black and white audiences, defying segregation laws.

The Erteguns were fearless champions of the cause. A group of southern Senators complained about the Ambassador allowing people of color to enter through the front gates. Ertegun responded with a letter clarifying that their friends always come through the front door, and the Senators were welcome to join the concert – through the back door.

Ahmet Ertegun went on to co-found Atlantic Records in 1947, signing artists including Otis Redding, Charles Mingus, John Coltrane, Aretha Franklin, and Ray Charles. The family continued to promote jazz concerts in venues all around DC, calling jazz their "weapon for social action."

The Embassy has a **trove of historical photos** made available through the Library of Congress that you can view [here](#). If you're interested, I would be happy to provide more information and arrange an **interview with current Ambassador Kilic**. It's a powerful story, and we're looking forward to having it told this month.

Thanks,

Dan

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