Horne, Lena,
in full LENA CALHOUN HORNE (b. June 30, 1917, Brooklyn, N.Y.,
U.S.), black American performer, a versatile singer and actress who
first came to fame in the 1940s. She was an advocate of the Civil
Rights Movement and of women's rights.

Horne was born to a family of scholars, activists, and performers. Her
beauty helped to win her a spot as a dancer in the Cotton Club in
Harlem, New York City, and by age 18 she was touring as a singer
with popular bands. In the 1940s she launched her film career,
appearing in Cabin in the Sky (1942), Stormy Weather (1943), Till the
Clouds Roll By (1946), Death of a Gunfighter (1969), and The Wiz
(1978). One of her first recordings, Lena Horne at the Waldorf-Astoria
(1957) was a long-running bestseller, and her first featured
performance on Broadway--in the musical Jamaica (1957)--won her a
New York Drama Critics Poll Award for 1958.

When her one-woman show, Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music,
made its debut on Broadway in 1981, critics lauded it as her
masterpiece and hailed her with many awards, including a special
Tony award, two Grammy awards for the original cast album, and New
York City's highest cultural award, the Handel Medallion. In 1984 she was recognized at the Kennedy
Center Honors in Washington, D.C., for her contributions to the arts.