

## Duke Ellington

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Edward Kennedy <sup>“Duke”</sup> Ellington (April 29, 1899–May 24, 1974) was a composer, pianist, and big-band leader: **who figures prominently**

~~A prominent figure~~ in the history of jazz.; Ellington’s music ~~stretched~~**extended** into various other genres, including blues, gospel, film scores, popular, and classical. His career spanned more than 50 years and included leading his orchestra, composing an inexhaustible songbook, scoring for movies, and **completing** world tours. **He also recorded for many American record companies and appeared in several films.** ~~Due to~~**Through** his inventive use of the orchestra, or big band, and thanks to his eloquence and extraordinary charisma, he is generally considered to have ~~elevated~~**altered** the perception of jazz **significantly, elevating the genre** to an art form on a par with other, traditional **music** genres ~~of music~~. His reputation ~~increased~~**continued to grow** after his death, **and in 1999** the Pulitzer Prize Board ~~bestowing~~**bestowed on him** a special posthumous honor **in 1999**.

Ellington ~~called~~**termed** his music <sup>“American Mmusic”</sup> rather than jazz, and liked to describe those who impressed him as <sup>“beyond category,”</sup>. ~~These included including~~ many ~~of the musicians who were~~ members of his orchestra; **While** some of ~~whom~~**these jazz musicians** are considered among the best **in jazz** in their own right, ~~but~~ it was Ellington who melded them into one of the **most well**-known **jazz** orchestral units in the history of jazz. He often **composed tailored his compositions** specifically ~~for~~to the style and skills of these **talented** individuals; —such as <sup>“Jeep”</sup>s Blues<sup>”</sup> for Johnny Hodges; <sup>“Concerto for Cootie”</sup> for Cootie Williams, which later became <sup>“Do Nothing Till You Hear from Me,”</sup> with Bob Russell’s lyrics; and <sup>“The Mooche”</sup> for Tricky Sam Nanton and Bubber Miley. He also recorded songs written by ~~his~~ bandsmen; such as Juan Tizol’s, **whose** <sup>“Caravan”</sup> and <sup>“Perdido”</sup> ~~which~~ brought the <sup>“Spanish Fttinge”</sup> to big-band jazz.

~~Several~~**A number of** members of the orchestra remained ~~there with Ellington~~ for several decades. After 1941, he frequently collaborated with composer-arranger-pianist Billy Strayhorn, whom he ~~called~~**dubbed** his <sup>“writing and arranging companion.”</sup> ~~Ellington recorded for many American record companies, and appeared in several films.~~

Ellington led his band from 1923 until his death ~~in 1974~~. His son, Mercer Ellington, who had already been handling all **of the** administrative aspects of his father’s business for several decades, led the band until his own death in 1996; ~~At that point which time;~~ the original band dissolved. **However, under the guidance of pianist and composer** Paul Ellington, Mercer’s youngest son and **the** executor of the Duke Ellington estate, ~~kept~~**The Duke Ellington Orchestra going from Mercer's death onwards** still continues to perform today.

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