



# Black Legacy Our Past, Present and Future.



## Smooth Jazz

### PAST

**Duke Ellington**

Born: April 29, 1899

Contribution: Entertainment



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Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington was an American jazz composer, pianist, and bandleader. He began performing professionally at the age of seventeen. Many regard Duke Ellington as the most important figure to emerge from the U.S. jazz scene in the twentieth century. The word jazz was too narrow for Ellington, a man whose greatest compliment was to describe others who had impressed him as “beyond category”. In the 1930s, Ellington’s band’s United States audience remained mainly African-American in this period, though the Harlem Cotton Club had a near exclusive white clientele, the band had a huge following overseas, demonstrated both in a trip to England in 1932 and a 1934 visit to the European mainland. The English visit saw Ellington win praise from members of the ‘serious’ music community, including composer Constant Lambert. Through the ranks of Duke Ellington’s Orchestra passed some of the biggest names in jazz, including Johnny Hodges, Cootie Williams, Bubber Miley, Joe “Tricky Sam” Nanton, Barney Bigard, Ben Webster, Harry Carney, Juan Tizol, Sonny Greer, Otto Hardwick, Clark Terry, Jimmy Blanton, Lawrence Brown, Ray Nance, Paul Gonsalves, Wellman Braud, and William “Cat” Anderson. Duke Ellington was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1969, and the Legion of Honor by France in 1973, the highest civilian honors in each country.



## From Rapper to CEO

### PRESENT

**Jay Z**

Born: December 4, 1969

Contribution: Entertainment



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Shawn Corey Carter, better known as Jay-Z, is an American rapper and current president and CEO of Def Jam and Roc-A-Fella Records, co-owns The 40/40 Club, and is a part owner of the New Jersey Nets NBA team. Known for his use of freestyling abilities, flow, and blending of street and popular hip hop, Jay-Z became one of the most respected rappers in the music industry. He’s admired for his ability to craft lyrics from pure memory. Jay-Z co-founded Roc-A-Fella Records with partners Damon Dash and Kareem “Biggs” Burke. Def Jam purchased a 50% stake in the company in 1997 for a reported \$1.5 million. In 2005, Jay-Z bought out Rocawear co-founder Dash for an estimated \$30 million and has sought to expand the company’s reach by developing the S. Carter high-end clothing line. Jay-Z also has a line of Reebok sneakers aptly named The S. Carter Collection, which holds the record for fastest-selling Reebok shoe in history and made him the first non-athlete to have a signature line of sneakers. In the spring of 2006, he is in collaboration with Swiss luxury-watch maker Audemars Piguet. In 2006, an MTV list named him the “Greatest MC Of All Time”.

**What Will You Contribute To The Legacy?**