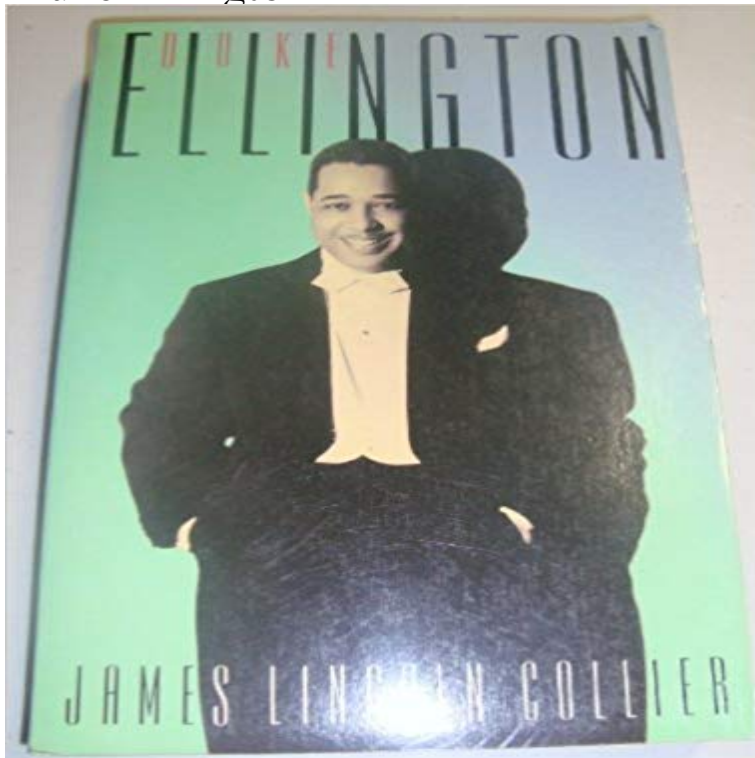


Duke Ellington



Music lovers everywhere have hailed Duke Ellington as one of the greatest geniuses of jazz. Yet, aside from Ellington's own rather unrevealing autobiography and a collection of reminiscences of his band members, no in-depth biography of this preeminent figure of twentieth-century music and entertainment has previously existed. James Lincoln Collier fills this gap with his definitive critical biography of both the man and his music. Author of the highly acclaimed *Louis Armstrong: An American Genius*, Collier tells the full story of Edward Kennedy Ellington from his childhood as the pampered and adored only son of a middle-class Washington black family to his death in 1974 when over ten thousand people mourned at his funeral and *The New York Times* obituary proclaimed him America's greatest composer. The volume features such highlights as the formation of Ellington's band, which ultimately included some of the greatest names in jazz history such as Barney Bigard, Johnny Hodges, Cootie Williams, Lawrence Brown, and Paul Gonsalves; his arrival at the legendary Cotton Club in Harlem in the 1920s; his involvement with his manager Irving Mills, who manipulated and cheated him and even put his own name on some of Ellington's songs, but also made him famous; and his relationship with his family, including his troubled relationship with his son, his marriage, and his many affairs. Above all, Collier focuses on the creation of the music, from the classic songs such as *Sophisticated Lady* to the sacred concerts of Ellington's last years. He argues that we need to view Ellington not strictly as a composer, but more importantly as an improvising jazz musician. The whole band served as his instrument. Not all will agree with Collier's controversial assessments, but this compelling biography will enthrall jazz buffs as well as anyone interested in a

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Duke Ellington

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