

DAWN HAMPTON

QUEEN OF CABARET

Dawn always claimed not to be a dancer but to hear her speak and see her move, you couldn't help but feel that "The Light Is On".

She began performing at age 3, as part of the Hampton family band and vaudeville act. She was the youngest daughter of 12 siblings, of which only 9 survived to adulthood.

All the Hampton children were trained to play instruments. During the 40s and 50s Dawn played alto and tenor saxophone with various Hampton family bands.

The Hamptons performed at New York City's Carnegie Hall, Harlem's Apollo Theater, Sunset Terrace, the Savoy Ballroom, as well as the Cotton Club.

By 1958, Dawn settled in New York and focused on her career as a vocalist and cabaret star. In the 70s, she performed at the infamous Continental Baths with artists such as Cab Calloway, Bette Midler, and Barry Manilow.

She has written music and lyrics for movies and plays, and appeared as herself in *Malcolm X*, dancing alongside Frankie Manning and Sonny Allen.



In the later portion of her career, Dawn had open invitations to the Herrang and other Lindy Hop dance camps around the world.

Being a musician, Dawn's classes were much more focused on musicality, listening to the beat, and letting the music be the inspiration for movement.

**9
JUNE
1928**

**-
25
SEPT
2016**

**AGED
88**



This Project was Proudly
Produced By:



SHORTY GEORGE

THE SAVOY'S 1ST STAR

'Shorty' George Snowden was the top dancer at the Savoy Ballroom from its opening in 1927 until the mid-1930s.

Shorty did a 'breakaway', that is, to fling his partner out of the closed hold and improvise a few solo steps on his own, during a dance marathon that began on 17 June 1928 at the Manhattan Casino.

He was barely five feet tall and thus got his moniker 'Shorty' George.

In fact, Shorty's partner, Big Bea', towered over him and they often ended their routine in a comic move where she carries him off the dance floor on her back.

This move was attributed by Frankie Manning as inspiration for his first air step in which his partner started



out on his back and she flipped over his head and landed on the ground.

Shorty George belonged to the first generation of Savoy Lindy Hoppers who introduced the early versions of air steps that later developed into the spectacular air steps routines.

Snowden is often given credit for giving Lindy Hop its name.

As the story goes, there was a charity dance-marathon in New York City in 1928, shortly after Charles Lindbergh's (known as "Lucky Lindy") triumphant "hop" across the Atlantic.

A reporter saw Snowden break away from his partner and improvise a few steps in a style that was popular in Harlem. "What was that!?" he asked.

Snowden thought for a few seconds and replied, "I'm doin' the Hop...the Lindy Hop". The name stuck.

**4
JULY
1904**

**-
MAY
1982**

**AGED
78**



This Project was Proudly
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NORMA MILLER

QUEEN OF SWING

Discovered at the age of twelve by the Savoy Ballroom's legendary dancer Twist Mouth George, Ms. Miller has been in show business ever since.

The pair won a competition at the Savoy and Norma's dance caught the attention of Herbert 'Whitey' White who invited her to join his group of top dancers called Whitey's Lindy Hoppers.



She was the youngest in the group when she joined but her vivacious and outspokenness made her the life of every party.

When Whitey's Lindy Hoppers disbanded in the early 1940s, Norma formed her own dance company and continued dancing before transitioning successfully into comedy and shows in the 1960s.

She later formed the Savoy Swingers in the 1970s and performed at many standard entertainment venues. Importantly, the Savoy Swingers introduced African-American dance history to a new generation through their performances in the New York City public school system.

In 2003, Norma was honoured with a 2003 National Heritage Foundation Fellowship from the National Endowment of Arts for her role in creating and continuing to preserve the acrobatic style swing dance of Lindy Hop.

Norma passed away on 5 May 2019, surrounded by family, friends and music at home in Fort Myers, Florida. She was the last of the Savoy legends.

**2
DEC
1919**

**-
5
MAY
2019**

**AGED
99**



This Project was Proudly
Produced By:



WHITEY'S LINDY HOPPERS

This group of young dancers was put together by Herbert 'Whitey' White who hand-picked them from the top dancers at the Savoy Ballroom during the Swing era.



Whitey rode on the growing interest of downtown socialites to have Lindy Hoppers perform at their parties.

He knew the dancers well and was able to choose exciting dancers that were also socially adept and reliable to make some money doing what they love.

Being somewhat a father-figure, Whitey would often send the dancers downtown with the advice of "Remember, ain't nobody better than you".

This self-respect and pride permeated the Savoy Ballroom which was one of the few places where blacks and whites could meet as equals.

In 1935, Lindy Hop was included into the Harvest Moon Ball, which was New York's prestigious ballroom dance event.

He had an eye for talent and by late 1936, his dancers had officially made it big time

with the top dancers working at the Cotton Club and then getting into a major Hollywood Film "A Day at the Races".

Other films and gigs followed including Hellzapoppin', Manhattan Merry-Go-Round and Hot Chocolates (Cottontail).

Frankie Manning was put in charge of the Cotton Club gig while Whitey was away and he also served as the chief choreographer for all of Whitey's dance groups.

The group was more than a dance troupe. It was a training ground for the most talented social dancers of the Savoy Ballroom for professional gigs, which catapulted them into live performances and film.

Between gigs, dancers always came home to the Savoy Ballroom where the top dancers could shine in a circle of spectators called the Cat's Corner jam.

They also continued to compete in Saturday night contests and this contributed to keeping the standard of the Savoy high.

Whitey's dancers were always first and foremost, social dancers and jazz dance improvisers no matter how far their professional careers went.



This Project was Proudly Produced By:



FRANKIE MANNING

AMBASSADOR OF LINDY HOP

No one has contributed more to the Lindy Hop than Frankie Manning – as a dancer, innovator, choreographer and role model.

Frankie began dancing at the Savoy Ballroom as a teenager.

There were many contests held at the Savoy, and Frankie, together with his dance partner, Frieda Washington, performed the very first air step during one of those contests in 1935.

Frankie performed with Whitey's Lindy Hoppers, founded by Herbert White from 1935 until he joined the U.S. Army during World War II.

Through Whitey's, the Lindy Hop broke into Hollywood and was featured in several films such as *A Day at the Races* (1937) and *Hellzapoppin* (1941).

Once the war was over, demand for swing died down and so Frankie settled into a career with the United States Postal Service for the next 30 years.

In 1986, when Frankie

was near retirement, Erin Stevens called him, asking, "Are you Frankie Manning, the dancer?" He said, "No, I'm Frankie Manning, the postal worker".

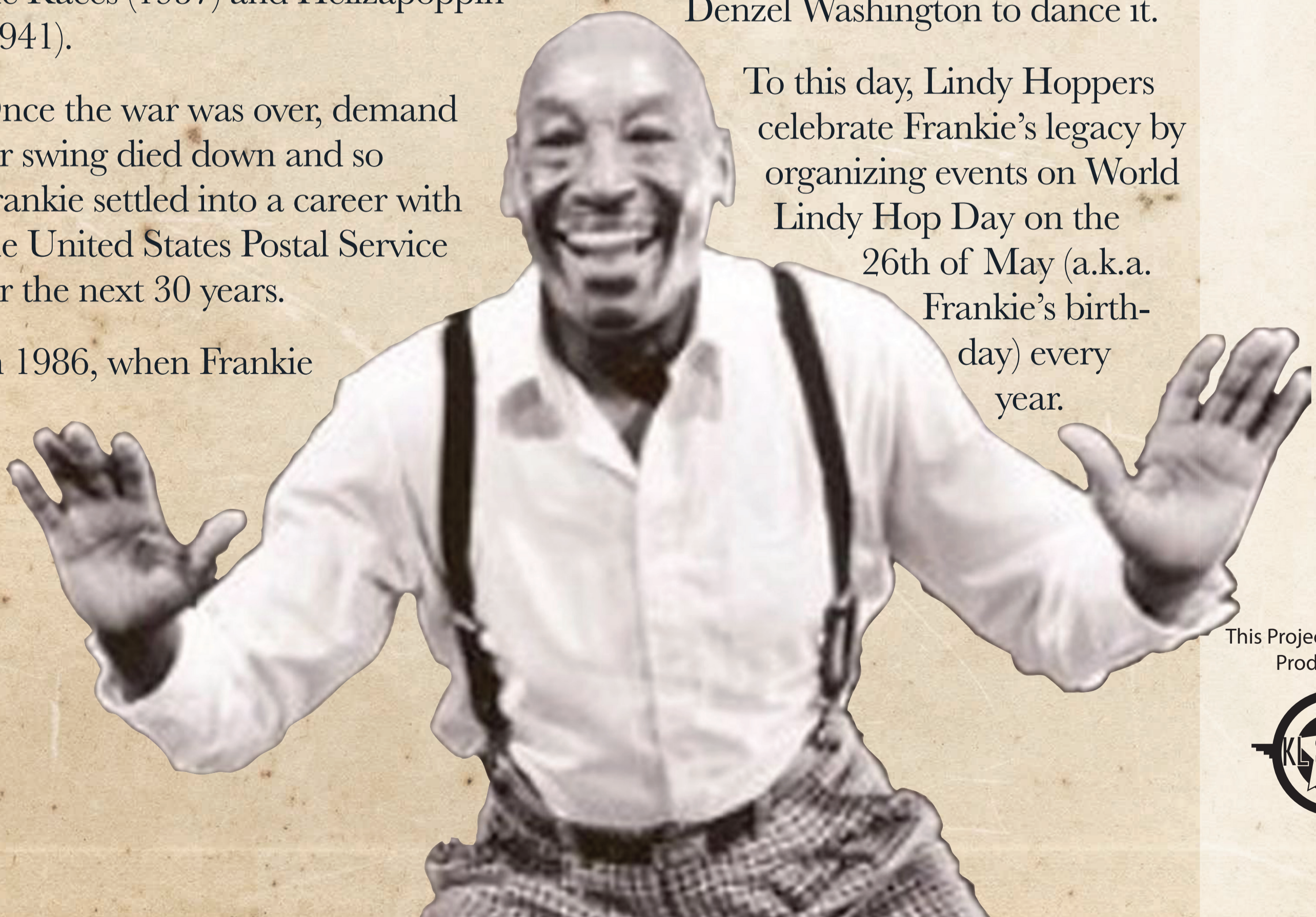
Stevens managed to convince Frankie to come back and revive swing, teaching it to the younger generation, and from there, Frankie began travelling the world, teaching the Lindy Hop.

Frankie also co-choreographed a Broadway musical, *Black and Blue*, for which he received a Tony Award in 1989. He also choreographed the Lindy scene in *Malcolm X* and trained Denzel Washington to dance it.

To this day, Lindy Hoppers celebrate Frankie's legacy by organizing events on World Lindy Hop Day on the 26th of May (a.k.a. Frankie's birthday) every year.

**26
MAY
1914**
–
**27
APRIL
2009**

**AGED
94**



This Project was Proudly
Produced By:



DUKE ELLINGTON

AMERICA'S GREATEST COMPOSER

The highest compliment Edward Kennedy Ellington knew how to pay to a fellow musician was to refer to him as being “beyond category.”

Born in Washington D.C., Ellington started playing the piano as a child. At the age of 15 he composed his first song and at 17 started playing professionally. He earned the nickname “Duke” in his childhood because of his gentlemanly ways.

In 1923 he moved to New York, where he formed a band that performed in Broadway nightclubs. They were regulars at The Cotton Club and by this time their performances were broadcast almost every night.

The band also made hundreds of recordings and appearances on film. Regulars of his band included Bubber Miley, Johnny Hodges, Rex Stewart, Joe Nanton and Cootie Williams.

From 1931 until near the end of his life, Ellington went on tour with his band.

Although the demand for big band jazz declined in the '40s and '50s, his band continued touring. They rose back into prominence with their performance at the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival.

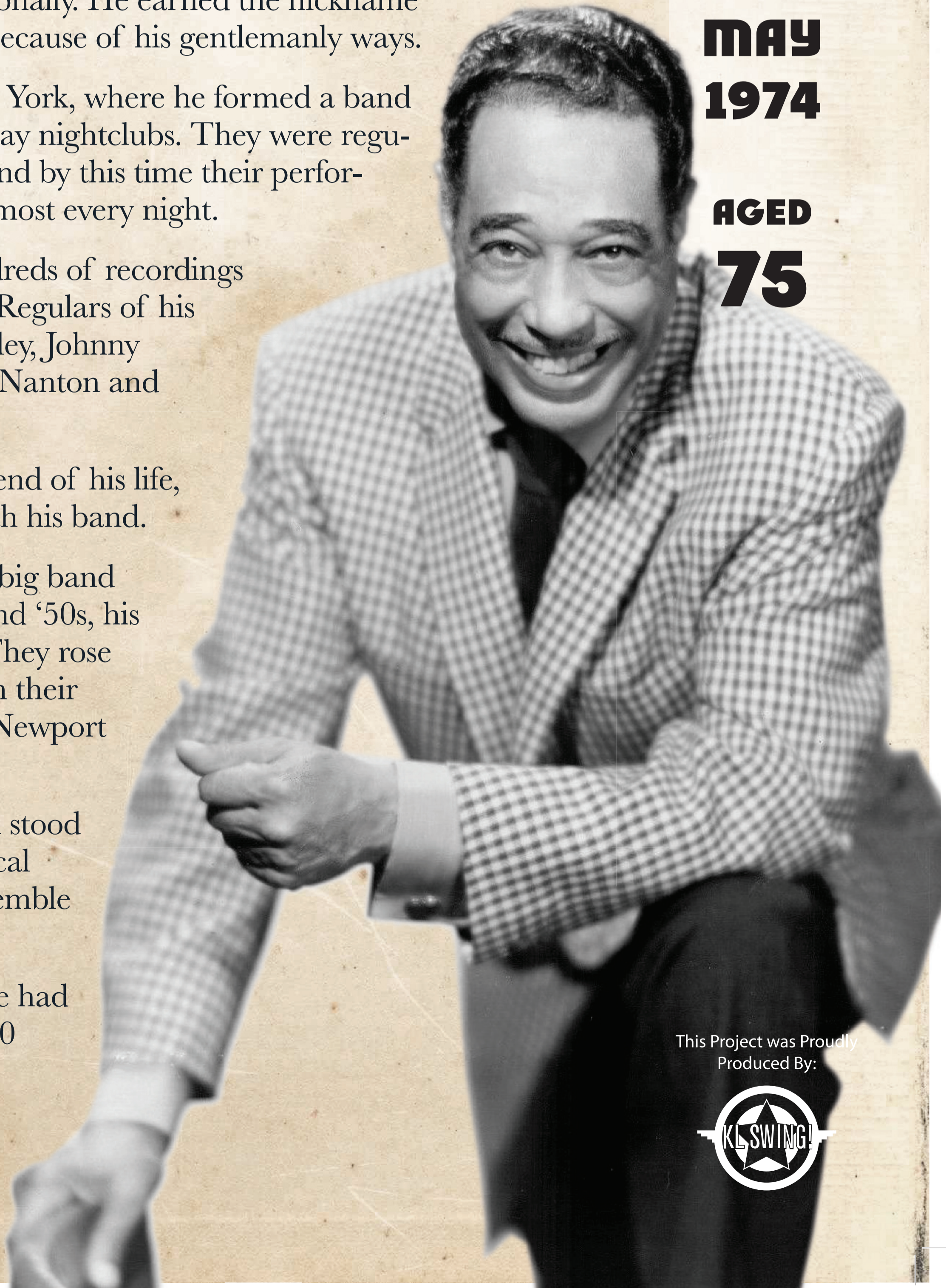
As a bandleader, Ellington stood out with his sense of musical drama and distinctive ensemble sound.

By the end of his career he had composed more than 3,000 songs and performed over 20,000 times.

**29
APRIL
1899**

**-
24
MAY
1974**

**AGED
75**



This Project was Proudly
Produced By:



LOUIS ARMSTRONG

FORCE OF JAZZ

**4
AUG
1901**
-
**6
JULY
1971**

**AGED
69**

Louis Daniel Armstrong aka “Pops”, “Satchmo” & “Ambassador Satch”

Armstrong was born on August 4, 1901 in a poor section of New Orleans nicknamed “The Battlefield”. In 1912, he was sent to the Colored Waif’s Home where he learned to play the cornet. As his reputation grew, he replaced Joe “King” Oliver in Kid Ory’s band. He also played on the riverboats where he met legends such as Bix Beiderbecke.

He moved to Chicago in 1922 to join King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band as second cornet, where he stayed for 2 years. He left to join Fletcher Henderson’s Orchestra in New York where he transformed them

into the first swing jazz big band.

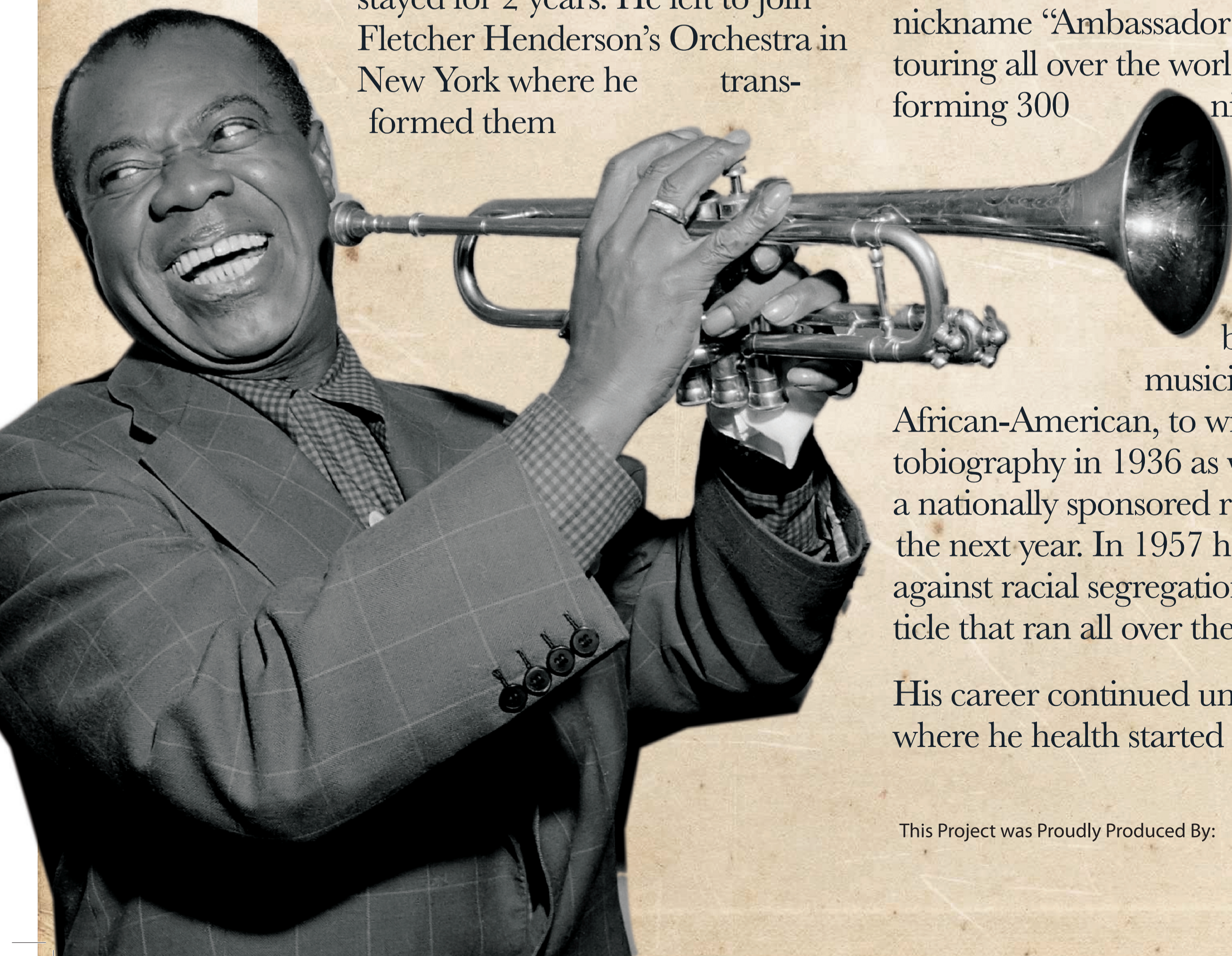
The next year he returned to Chicago where he switched to the trumpet. Together with his Hot Five and later Hot Seven bands they produced 60 records; some of the most important and influential jazz recordings. He sang on these records which helped to popularise scatting.

As the demand for Swing music died down in the ‘40s, he started working with smaller ensembles. It was in the ‘50s that he earned the nickname “Ambassador Satch”, touring all over the world, performing 300 nights a year.

Pops was the first, as both a jazz musician and an

African-American, to write an autobiography in 1936 as well as host a nationally sponsored radio show the next year. In 1957 he spoke out against racial segregation in an article that ran all over the country.

His career continued until 1968 where he health started to decline.



This Project was Proudly Produced By:



COUNT BASIE

BARON OF RHYTHM

The only count I know is Count Basie.

—Dawn Hampton

William Basie was born on 21st August 1904 in New Jersey. As a child he learned to play the piano. He dropped out of high school to work for a vaudeville at a local theatre, operating the lights as well as improvised piano accompaniment for silent films. This theatre would later become the Count Basie Theatre.

Basie moved to New York where he joined a vaudeville group and toured with them until he got stuck in Kansas City after they disbanded. He joined Walter Page's Blue Devils in 1928 where he was introduced to the big band sound.

In 1935 he joined Bennie Moten's band until Moten passed in 1935. He would then form his own 9 piece band, Barons of Rhythm. The band had regular performances and were on the radio often.

It was during one of the radio broadcasts where he was called "Count" so as to match his contemporaries Duke Ellington and Earl Hines. The band was renamed The Count Basie Orchestra in 1937 when they made their first recording.

During the swing downtime of the '50s, Basie was forced to disband his orchestra. For the next two years, he lead smaller ensembles. After this period he reformed his orchestra, leading them to produce some of their best work.

Basie lead the band for almost 50 years, recording over 480 albums. He was a pianist known for his understated yet captivating style and was credited for creating the use of two split tenor saxophone and emphasising rhythm sections.

Count Basie was the first African-American to be awarded a Grammy in 1958, the first of 9.

**21
AUG
1904**
—
**26
APRIL
1984**
**AGED
79**



COUNT BASIE
And His Orchestra

This Project was Proudly Produced By:



XXX
Exclusive Management
WILLIAM MORRIS AGENCY
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