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New York, NY

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Bethesda, MD

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Modeler

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Ella Fitzgerald

As a child, Ella Fitzgerald made people laugh when she told them she was going to be famous. She who laughs last, of course, laughs best: Fitzgerald became a supremely talented figure on the American music scene of the 20th century.

Fitzgerald was born on April 25, 1917, in Newport News, Virginia, and was still very young when she moved with her mother to Yonkers, New York. In 1932, after her mother died, Ella went to live with her aunt in Harlem. By the time she was 16, she was on her own, dancing on the street for tips. Intending to show off her dancing skill, she entered an amateur competition at the Apollo Theater in November of 1934. At the last minute, she decided to sing instead, and was pronounced the winner. Not long after, at the Harlem Opera House, she won another talent competition. Her success as an amateur brought Fitzgerald to the attention of bandleader and drummer Chick Webb, who hired her to sing with his orchestra.

From such humble beginnings, great careers can be made. Over the years, Fitzgerald won 13 Grammy Awards and many other honors, including the National Medal of Arts, presented to her in 1987 by President Ronald Reagan. She was one of five artists awarded Kennedy Center Honors in 1979. In 1989, the Society of Singers created an award for lifetime achievement, called it the "Ella," and made her its first recipient.

By the time of her death in 1996, Fitzgerald had long been known as "the first lady of song."



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Ella Fitzgerald



ONE OF THE MOST distinctive and instantly recognizable singers of both jazz and popular tunes, Ella Fitzgerald was widely known as “the first lady of song.” Her extraordinary vocal range and flexibility, combined with her gift for pitch, rhythmic sense, and flawless diction, made her a favorite of fans, songwriters, and other singers. In a recording career spanning decades, there were countless highlights.

Ella Fitzgerald®

In 1938, with bandleader Chick Webb and his orchestra, Fitzgerald had a number one hit record with “A-Tisket, A-Tasket,” a novelty song she co-wrote with Van Alexander, based on a child’s rope-skipping rhyme. In this early phase of her career, Fitzgerald showed her mastery of swing music.

The song “Flying Home,” recorded in the autumn of 1945, is widely considered a masterpiece of scat singing—the vocalizing of nonsense syllables, often as if the singer were an instrumental soloist. Ella’s scat reflected her growing interest in bebop, a jazz style that improvised around chords and harmony, as well as melody. Her recordings of songs like “Lady Be Good” and “How High the Moon” consolidated Fitzgerald’s reputation as a jazz singer; the latter title became one of her signature tunes.

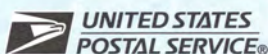
An early highlight among Fitzgerald’s several dozen albums was *Ella Sings Gershwin*, recorded in 1950. The later *George and Ira Gershwin Songbook* is cited by many as one of Fitzgerald’s most special collections; her *Duke Ellington Songbook* also has many admirers. Her collaborations on record with Louis Armstrong, including *Ella and Louis*, were among her most popular efforts.

Ella Fitzgerald continued to perform until only a few years before her death, when worsening health compelled her reluctant retirement. She died at her home in Beverly Hills, California, on June 15, 1996. Fans and colleagues alike mourned the passing of this beloved singer, of whom Ira Gershwin once remarked, “I never knew how good our songs were until I heard Ella Fitzgerald sing them.”



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Ella FITZGERALD

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

FIRST DAY OF ISSUE CEREMONY

January 10, 2007, 11:00 a.m.
The Allen Room, Frederick P. Rose Hall
Home of Jazz at Lincoln Center
New York, NY

PRELUDE

JUILLIARD JAZZ ENSEMBLE
The Juilliard School

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

NANCY WILSON
Song Stylist

NATIONAL ANTHEM/LIFT EVERY VOICE

THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY CHORUS
Peter Frost, Director of Music

INVOCATION

REV. DR. CALVIN O. BUTTS, III
Abyssinian Baptist Church, New York, NY

WELCOME

KATHERINE E. BROWN
Executive Director, Jazz at Lincoln Center

MUSICAL TRIBUTE TO ELLA

JENNIFER SANON *Vocalist*
JONATHAN BATISTE *Piano*
PHILLIP KING *Bass*
JOE SAYLOR *Drums*

OFFICIAL STAMP DEDICATION

DELORES KILLETTE
*Vice President and Consumer Advocate,
United States Postal Service*

REMARKS

PHOEBE JACOBS
*Executive Vice President, Louis Armstrong
Educational Foundation*

RAY BROWN, JR.
Son of Ella Fitzgerald

CLOSING

NANCY WILSON

SPECIAL GUESTS

VINNIE MALLOY
*New York District Manager/Postmaster,
United States Postal Service*

BARBARA A. MCKINZIE
*International President, Alpha Kappa Alpha
Sorority, Inc.*

PAUL DAVIS
Artist

SYLVIA HARRIS
*Member, Citizens' Stamp Advisory
Committee*

JESSICA HELSAND
*Member, Citizens' Stamp Advisory
Committee*

MARUCHI SANTANA
*Member, Citizens' Stamp Advisory
Committee*

Ella FITZGERALD



was 16, she was on her own, dancing on the street for tips. In November 1934, Fitzgerald entered an amateur competition at the historic Apollo Theater to show off her dancing skills. At the last minute, she decided to sing instead and was named

the winner. Not long after that, at the Harlem Opera House, she won another talent competition.

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MANY REMEMBER FITZGERALD as one of America's most distinctive singers of jazz and popular tunes and widely known as "The First Lady of Song."

THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE honors Ella Fitzgerald, jazz singer, and Grammy Award winner with the 30th stamp in its popular Black Heritage commemorative stamp series.

ART DIRECTOR ETHEL KESSLER lauds the stamp portrait of Fitzgerald by illustrator Paul Davis of New York, for the way it captures the joy and excitement of Fitzgerald's music.

BORN APRIL 25, 1917, IN NEWPORT NEWS, VA, Fitzgerald was still very young when she moved with her mother to Yonkers, NY. From an early age, she loved to sing and dance. Although charmed by her performances, people laughed when she told them she was going to be famous. In 1932, after her mother died, she went to live with her aunt in Harlem. By the time she

Photograph: Ella Fitzgerald Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

FITZGERALD
COMMEMORATIVE
STAMP

Ella



BLACK HERITAGE



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE
Ella
FITZGERALD
JANUARY 10, 2007 NEW YORK, NY 10199



UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE

first day of issue ceremony

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