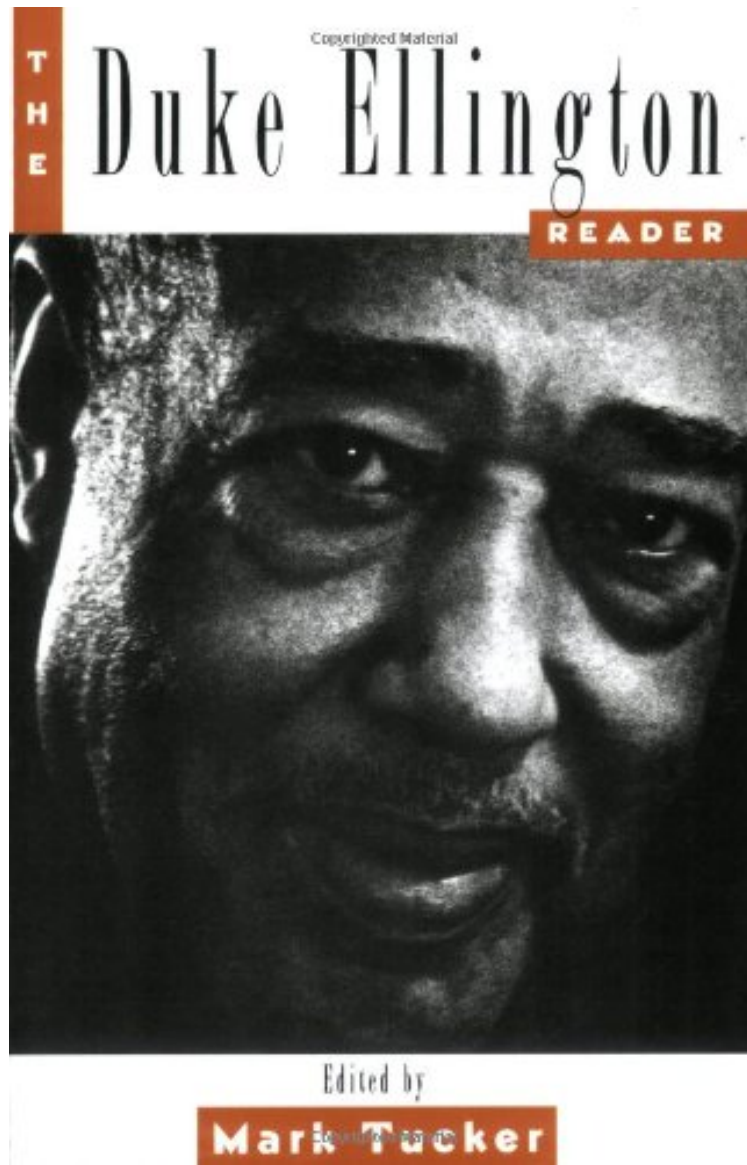


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The Duke Ellington Reader

From Mark Tucker

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From Mark Tucker : The Duke Ellington Reader before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Duke Ellington Reader:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Marvelous anthology! By Orion Mark Tucker, the jazz historian and author of the definitive biography of Duke Ellington, has here collected and published the best compilation of articles by critics, observers, musicians from the Ellington Orchestra, and by Duke, himself, that can be found. The articles range from a single page to 15 or so pages in length and range from the 1920s to the 1970s. The Reader is over 500

pages, but it is filled with the tastiest, prime rib articles that a reader can consume. This probably sounds like hyperbole, but this is a great book by writers who thought long and hard about the music and life of Duke Ellington. I read the book start to finish, and I listened to Duke's recordings over again as I read. There's at least four years of music school in this fine book to learn from. One man's view, but I think this is an important book that all Americans should read. It's a book whose concern is the life and music of one of the very best of us. If you know and love Duke's music, you'll love this book. If you don't know Ellington and his music, buy and read this book, buy and listen to his recordings. Several of the writers here claim that Duke was America's foremost composer. I would not discount their view, especially now, almost 40 years after Duke's death. His orchestra, as many have pointed out over many years, was his instrument. Duke, when asked about his relationship with jazz, almost always responded that he wasn't sure, exactly, what jazz was, but that his own intention was to compose music of the American negro, what today we would call Afro-American music. No one did this as richly or as inventively or as swingingly. Plus the man could flat play the piano!

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A masterful piece of scholarship
By jive rhapsodist
What do I have to say about this collection? Maybe not much, but when I saw that there was only one review I decided that I needed to add something. Why? Because if you care about Duke Ellington's music, the people who contributed to making it, and the history of its reception, then **YOU CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT THIS BOOK!!!** Mark Tucker's early death robbed the world of an incredibly important scholar, and his self-effacing brilliance as an editor is everywhere in evidence in this tome. Most of the key articles that one needs to read in order to get a picture of Duke's path to centrality in the Jazz Canon (and the pantheon of American Music in general) are reprinted here, and you cannot perhaps really appreciate how fantastic that is unless you spent half of your young life tracking them down one by one - as I did.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Book
By J. Yambra
This is a great book! Not a bio, but all kinds of great interviews, articles, and reviews. This is a book for the true Duke Ellington fan that already knows a lot about his life, etc. I highly recommend this book.

Duke Ellington is universally recognized as one of the towering figures of 20th-century music, both a brilliant composer and one of the preeminent musicians in jazz history. From early pieces such as *East St. Louis Toodle-O*, *Black and Tan Fantasy*, *It Don't Mean a Thing*, and *Mood Indigo*, to his more complex works such as *Reminiscing in Tempo* and *Black, Brown and Beige*, to his later suites and sacred concerts, he left an indelible mark on the musical world. Now, in *The Duke Ellington Reader*, Mark Tucker offers the first historical anthology of writings about this major African-American musician. The volume includes over a hundred selections--interviews, critical essays, reviews, memoirs, and over a dozen writings by Ellington himself--with generous introductions and annotations for each selection provided by the editor. The result is a unique sourcebook that illuminates Ellington's work and reveals the profound impact his music has made on listeners over the years. The writers gathered here represent a Who's Who of jazz criticism: Gunther Schuller, Whitney Balliett, Martin Williams, Gary Giddins, Stanley Crouch, Albert Murray, Nat Hentoff, Hugues Panassie, Stanley Dance, to name just a few. Their writings span Ellington's entire career, from the days when Duke Ellington's Washingtonians appeared at New York's Club Kentucky ("Probably the 'hottest' band this side of the equator"), to the Duke's glorious reign at the Cotton Club, to his later years as global ambassador of American music. Tucker has included some of the classic essays written about Ellington, such as R. D. Darrell's "Black Beauty," the first significant critical essay on Ellington's work and still one of the most important; Richard O. Boyer's lengthy *New Yorker* profile "The Hot Bach," printed here in its entirety; and Martin Williams's "Form Beyond Form," one of the best capsule introductions to Ellington's art. Throughout the book, the reader receives a balanced overview of Ellington's life as composer and performer, as public personality and private individual. Tucker provides a number of pieces on Ellington's compositions, including an entire chapter devoted to critical response to Ellington's *Black, Brown and Beige*, and there are also many moving pieces on Ellington the man, such as Ralph Ellison's tribute to Ellington on his 70th birthday, and Stanley Dance's funeral address. Finally, Tucker rounds out the collection with profiles on many of the outstanding musicians who worked with Ellington, among them Johnny Hodges, Bubber Miley, Billy Strayhorn, Ivie Anderson, Sonny Greer, Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton, and Ben Webster. This is a landmark volume in jazz criticism, a kaleidoscopic portrait of Duke Ellington's creative world, documenting his extraordinary achievements as composer, songwriter, bandleader, and pianist. It is an essential companion for Ellington enthusiasts, jazz fans, and serious students of American music.

.com This superb anthology covers the entire length of the composer's career, from his landfall in Manhattan in 1923 to the Old Master period of the early 1970s. There are dozens of reviews, essays, appreciations, and memoirs, written not only by music critics but by such heavy hitters as Ralph Ellison, Simone de Beauvoir(!), and Blaise Cendrars. The book also includes a selection of Ellington's own dicta--be sure not to overlook his 1937 polemic from "Down Beat": "Ellington Refutes Cry That Swing Started Sex Crimes!" Superbly edited and endlessly intriguing, the Reader is an essential volume for Ellington nuts and neophytes alike.

From Publishers Weekly
Perhaps America's greatest composer and musician, Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (1899-1974) is the subject of several biographies and an autobiography, *Music Is My Mistress* (1973). This first historical anthology of writings about Ellington's life and

music, ably edited by Columbia University music professor Tucker (*Ellington: The Early Years*), is a treasure chest of some 100 essays and remembrances by such authors as Ralph Ellison, Gunther Schuller, Stanley Crouch, Nat Hentoff, Albert Murray and Stanley Dance. Typically, the essays, originally published between 1923 and 1986, include general commentary (by R. D. Darrell, Martin Williams and others), musical analysis (a chapter on Ellington's composition, "Black, Brown and Beige"), more than a dozen interviews with Ellington, profiles of Ellington band members (Johnny Hodges, Billy Strayhorn, Ivie Anderson, Sonny Greer and Ben Webster), reviews of performances and recordings (including the first published reviews of Ellington's music), and some of Duke's own writings. The volume also includes the complete text of Richard O. Boyer's 1944 *New Yorker* profile. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From *School Library Journal* YA-A wonderfully comprehensive volume devoted to the music of Duke Ellington. Tucker includes over 100 articles, interviews, critical essays, reviews, memoirs, plus over a dozen of Ellington's own writings. The authors of these selections include jazz critics such as Nat Hentoff, Stanley and Helen Dance, and Martin Williams, to name a few. Examples of Ellington's musical scores are interspersed throughout this marvelous anthology. With a few exceptions, the arrangement is chronological from 1917 when Duke first played professionally to 1974 when he died. The focus here is on the genius of his music within the context of the American social scene. A worthwhile addition to any library. Pat Royal, Crossland High School, Camp Springs, MD Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.