

Duke's Diary



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The two-volume Duke's Diary provides a fascinating insight into the life and times of one of the greatest figures in American music, the incomparable Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington. Using contemporary photographs, newspaper reports, advertisements, reviews, and narrative, both volumes chronicle Duke's life, performances, and recording sessions. Volume I briefly sets out the first 21 years of Duke's life, and then, as his career begins to take off, coverage of his life and performing engagements becomes more in-depth, going from month-by-month to almost a day-by-day diary, from his opening at Harlem's famous Cotton Club in December, 1927, to his orchestra's extended European tour in 1950. Dozens and dozens of rare photos, including illustrations of posters from many of his venues, reprints of news articles about him and his band, even his first listing in the phone book for his band "The Duke's Serenaders" (1918), enliven every page. Volume II begins with Duke's return from his band's European tour in June of 1950 and concludes with his death in 1974. The Ellington Orchestra's complete itinerary, including all known club, concert, theatre, television, film, and jam session appearances are included, as well as a selected list of Duke's recordings although this volume is not intended as a discography. Vail's unique concept, which pairs photos and news articles with brief diary-style entries, has resulted in a work of enduring interest and charm for every fan

of this immensely talented musician. The visual impact created by the stunning array of photos is powerful; readers will feel as though they have been accompanying the great man on his journey through life.

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