



Jazz Artists at Carnegie Hall

Many legendary jazz artists have performed at Carnegie Hall. Early jazz music was first heard at Carnegie Hall in 1912 as part of a concert of African American music by James Reese Europe's Clef Club Orchestra. This performance foreshadowed many stellar evenings that featured jazz greats who include Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, W. C. Handy, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, Charlie Parker, Oscar Peterson, Sarah Vaughan, Gerry Mulligan, Mel Tormé, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane. The 1938 concert by Benny Goodman and his band—one of the most celebrated events in Carnegie Hall's history—marked a turning point in the acceptance of swing music.

Ella Fitzgerald

"This is the place that made me legitimate. Coming here [to Carnegie Hall] makes me feel like I am coming home. There's just a feeling I get singing here that I don't get anywhere else." Ella Fitzgerald's feature debut at Carnegie Hall was part of a concert that included two other giants of jazz—Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. Between 1947 and 1991, the "First Lady of Song" went on to perform dozens of times. Learn more at [timeline.carnegiehall.org/performers/ella-ftzgerald](https://www.carnegiehall.org/performers/ella-ftzgerald).

Benny Goodman

Critic Bruce Eder called it "the single most important jazz or popular music concert in history: jazz's 'coming out' party to the world." On January 16, 1938, Benny Goodman and His Swing Orchestra performed a landmark debut concert at Carnegie Hall. This was one of the first times that a racially integrated group performed on a major concert stage in the US. More than 80 years later, the live recording of this performance continues to be one of the best-selling jazz albums of all time. Goodman went on to perform many times at Carnegie Hall over the next five decades, in both jazz and classical concerts. Learn more at [timeline.carnegiehall.org/performers/benny-goodman](https://www.carnegiehall.org/performers/benny-goodman).

Louis Armstrong

"We all do 'do, re, mi,' but you have got to find the other notes yourself." Trumpet stylist and singer Louis Armstrong made his debut at Carnegie Hall with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra in 1938, and as a headliner for the first time in 1947. Learn more at [timeline.carnegiehall.org/performers/louis-armstrong](https://www.carnegiehall.org/performers/louis-armstrong).

Duke Ellington

"There are simply two kinds of music: good music and the other kind ..." By the time he made his wartime Carnegie Hall debut on January 23, 1943, Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington was already a star. The success of his debut and his new approach to jazz composition led to Ellington's series of annual Carnegie Hall concerts, on which he always premiered at least one new work. Learn more at [timeline.carnegiehall.org/performers/edward-kennedy-duke-ellington](https://www.carnegiehall.org/performers/edward-kennedy-duke-ellington).

