

# Fats Waller: A Jazz Legend's Life and Times

Thomas "Fats" Waller (May 21, 1904 – December 15, 1943) was an American jazz pianist, organist, composer, singer, and comedian. He was a major figure in the Harlem Renaissance, and one of the first jazz musicians to achieve international fame.

Waller was born in New York City, and began playing the piano at an early age. He was a child prodigy, and by the age of 15 was playing professionally in local clubs. In the 1920s, he became a regular performer at the Cotton Club in Harlem, where he gained a reputation as one of the most exciting and innovative jazz pianists of the day.



## Jazz Life and Times: Fats Waller (Jazz life & times)

by Alyn Shipton

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In addition to his piano playing, Waller was also a gifted composer. He wrote some of the most popular jazz standards of the era, including "Ain't Misbehavin'", "Honeysuckle Rose", and "On the Sunny Side of the Street." He also wrote music for Broadway shows and films.

Waller was a larger-than-life personality, and he was known for his flamboyant style and his infectious sense of humor. He was a popular figure on the radio and in films, and he helped to bring jazz to a wider audience.

Waller died of pneumonia in 1943 at the age of 39. He was a major figure in the world of jazz, and his music continues to be enjoyed by people all over the world.

### **Fats Waller's Childhood and Early Career**

Thomas "Fats" Waller was born on May 21, 1904 in New York City. His father was a minister and his mother was a schoolteacher. Waller began playing the piano at an early age, and by the age of 15 was playing professionally in local clubs.

In the 1920s, Waller became a regular performer at the Cotton Club in Harlem. The Cotton Club was one of the most popular night clubs in the United States, and it featured some of the biggest names in jazz, including Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Cab Calloway.

Waller quickly became one of the most popular performers at the Cotton Club. He was known for his flamboyant style and his infectious sense of humor. He was also a gifted pianist, and his playing was both technically brilliant and soulful.

### **Fats Waller's Career as a Composer**

In addition to his piano playing, Waller was also a gifted composer. He wrote some of the most popular jazz standards of the era, including "Ain't Misbehavin'", "Honeysuckle Rose", and "On the Sunny Side of the Street."

Waller's songs were often characterized by their catchy melodies and humorous lyrics. He wrote songs about love, life, and the joys of jazz. His songs were popular with both jazz fans and the general public.

Waller also wrote music for Broadway shows and films. His most famous Broadway show was "Ain't Misbehavin'," which opened in 1978 and ran for over 1,000 performances.

### **Fats Waller's Later Career and Death**

In the 1930s, Waller began to tour extensively throughout the United States and Europe. He also appeared in several films, including "King of Burlesque" (1936) and "Stormy Weather" (1943).

Waller died of pneumonia in 1943 at the age of 39. He was a major figure in the world of jazz, and his music continues to be enjoyed by people all over the world.

### **Fats Waller's Legacy**

Fats Waller was one of the most important figures in the history of jazz. He was a gifted pianist, composer, and entertainer who left an indelible mark on the world of music.

Waller's music continues to be enjoyed by people all over the world. His songs have been recorded by countless artists, and they have been featured in films and television shows.

Fats Waller was a true pioneer of jazz. He helped to shape the sound of jazz, and he introduced the music to a wider audience. He was a brilliant

musician and a gifted entertainer, and he will always be remembered as one of the greatest jazz legends of all time.

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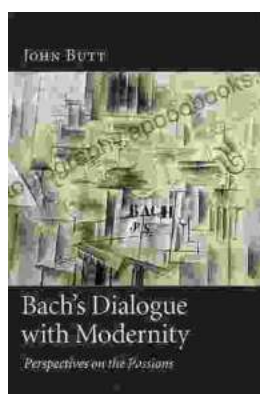


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