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Sunday, September 19, 2021

DUKE ELLINGTON'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Company: Am. Tap Dance Foundation

Venue: Duke Ellington Statue

Location: New York, NY

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Duke Ellington Birthday Celebration - Photo courtesy ATDF

THE AMERICAN TAP DANCE FOUNDATION AND THE DUKE ELLINGTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS PRESENT DUKE ELLINGTON'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION - A Free, Outdoor, Special Event!

Performances by the Duke Ellington Center Big Band, Musicians, Dancers, and Vocalists
Sunday, September 19 from 2-4PM at The Duke Ellington Statue, 5th Avenue and 110th Street in Manhattan

Tony Waag, executive director of [The American Tap Dance Foundation](#), and Mercedes Ellington, CEO/Artistic Director of [The Duke Ellington Center for the Arts](#), announced today the return of their FREE, annual outdoor event to commemorate Duke Ellington's birthday. This year's celebration will take place on Sunday, Sept. 19, from 2-4pm at the [Duke Ellington Statue in Harlem](#), 5th Avenue and 110th Street, NYC. Co-produced by the American Tap Dance Foundation and The Duke Ellington Center for the Arts, the Ellington birthday celebration will include performances by The Duke Ellington Center Big Band and a host of musicians, dancers and vocalists.

Programming will feature the Duke Ellington Center Big Band (musical director Eli Yamen) with guest artist conductor George Caldwell and violinist Sandra Billingslea; actor Miles Purinton in a piece from Ellington's *Shakespearean Suite*; *City of Jazz* recited by Mercedes Ellington, Tony Waag and his rendition of *I'm Just a Lucky So and So* from *Sophisticated Ladies*, Karen Callaway Williams & Sharon K. Janda in *Sugar Rum Cherry* from Ellington's *Nutcracker*, and DeWitt and Jennie Fleming in *Come Sunday/David Danced Before the Lord* from Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concert*.

Additional cast members include vocalists Marion Cowings, Antoinette Montague and Ty Stevens, ballroom dancers Michael Choi and Vanda Polyakava, belly dancer Anna Pipoyan, tap dancer Dexter Jones, and Mark Mindek on stilts.

"I'm thrilled the American Tap Dance Foundation is back to celebrate 'The Duke' at his famed statue in Manhattan's Harlem neighborhood. Duke Ellington was a key figure in the perpetuation of the idea that tap dance IS music, and tap dancers are indeed musicians that create music with their feet. Tap grew up next to its kissing cousin jazz. Tap and jazz are undeniably attached at the hip," said Mr. Waag. Duke Ellington was inducted into the ATDF International Tap Dance Hall of Fame in 2017.

About the American Tap Dance Foundation

The American Tap Dance Foundation (ATDF) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization committed to establishing and legitimizing Tap as a vital component of American dance through creation, presentation, education and preservation. ATDF is recognized as a local, national, and international leader in the field and continues to further three main objectives: to perpetuate tap dance as a flourishing contemporary art form on a National and International level; to provide a basis for the growth of tap dance by teaching new generations through comprehensive educational programs; and to preserve the artistry of the early generations of tap masters.

Find us at [atdf.org](#)

About The Duke Ellington Center for the Arts

The Duke Ellington Center for the Arts is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which honors and preserves the legacy of the great Duke Ellington through performance and educational outreach. The Center focuses on scholarship, education, and documentation of accurate

Ellington history through performances connected to the legacy of Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (1899-1974). Considered one of America's greatest composers with over 3,000 compositions attributed to him, he is a seminal figure in the history of American music, renowned the world over. Find us at decfa.org.

About Duke Ellington

Duke Ellington called his music "American Music" rather than jazz and liked to describe those who impressed him as "beyond category." He remains one of the most influential figures in jazz, if not in all American music and is widely considered as one of the twentieth century's most prolific composers and best-known African American personalities. As both a composer and bandleader, Ellington's reputation has increased since his death, with the continuous thematic repackaging of his signature music, often becoming best sellers. Posthumous recognition of his work includes a special award citation from the Pulitzer Prize Board.

Am. Tap Dance Foundation
5th Avenue and 110th
New York, NY, 10029

Schedule
September 19, 2021: 2:00pm

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