



ELLA FITZGERALD



'The First Lady of Song'.

EARLY LIFE

Ella was born Ella Jane Fitzgerald on 25th April 1917 in Newport News, Virginia, USA. Her parents separated when she was young and she moved to Yonkers, New York with her mother and step-father. Ella's half-sister, Frances, was born in 1923.

Ella thought of herself as a tomboy. She loved jazz music and had a beautiful voice from a young age. In 1932, her mother tragically died in a car accident and she went to live with her aunt. Ella didn't like her new life and began skipping school and her grades dropped dramatically. She got into trouble and was sent to a strict school. Ella was treated badly at the school and at age 15, she ran away and found herself living alone and penniless.

CAREER

Ella's first stage was the street – she made a living by singing and dancing on the street corners of New York. One night, she entered a talent competition on 'Amateur Night' and won first place – the crowd loved her sweet, tuneful voice! It wasn't long before big band leader, Chick Webb, offered Ella her first singing job. Together, they travelled all over the country performing in jazz clubs - Ella's career was starting to take off.

Ella's first No. 1 hits included 'A-Tisket, A-Tasket' and 'I Found My Yellow Basket' in 1938.

After Webb's death, Ella became the leader of the band, which she renamed as 'Ella Fitzgerald and Her Famous Orchestra'. In 1942, she left the band to start a solo career. While her career took off in 1946, it reached its peak in the 1950s and 1960s, when she earned the nickname the 'First Lady of Song' for her popularity and talents. Her ability to mimic instrumental sounds and her vocal improvisation of *scatting* became her signature techniques. Ella tried every musical style, from bop to swing. She mastered show tunes, pop, opera, and blues - continually taking her music to new places until the day she retired.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Ella made history by winning a Grammy Award in 1958, the first won by any African-American woman. Over the course of her career, she recorded over 200 albums and more than 2,000 songs, and sold more than 40 million albums. She won 14 Grammy Awards and was given the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1967. In 1987, she received the National Medal of Arts and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She was awarded the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People Equal Justice Award and the American Black Achievement Award as well.



DEATH AND LEGACY

On 15th June 1996, Ella Fitzgerald died of a stroke in her Beverly Hills home. Hours later, signs of remembrance began to appear all over the world. Ella was the most popular female jazz singer in the United States for more than half a century and her music continues to be listened to by millions.

FIND OUT MORE...

[HTTP://WWW.ELLAFITZGERALD.COM/ABOUT/BIOGRAPHY](http://www.ellafitzgerald.com/about/biography)

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/MYRC-3OF1D0](https://youtu.be/Myrc-3Of1D0) - IT DON'T MEAN A THING – ELLA FITZGERALD AND DUKE ELLINGTON

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. When was Ella born?
2. Where did she first live in New York?
3. What was the name of Ella's first No. 1 hit?
4. How many songs did Ella record in her lifetime?
5. What is her legacy?