

# ENTERTAINMENT



The Associated Press

Duke Ellington

## Finally, A Special Pulitzer Prize For Duke Ellington

By Shekeria Smith  
Staff Writer

Finally, the Pulitzer Prize Committee awarded a special Pulitzer to Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington, the great American composer and musical icon who died in 1974.

"He was a little disappointed, actually very disappointed, when he didn't win one during his lifetime, and he always shrugged it off by saying, 'Maybe God thinks I'm too young.'" said Mercedes Ellington, the late composer's granddaughter at the April ceremony to announce the winners.

The special music citation was given posthumously on the centennial of Ellington's birthday.

The Pulitzer board said the award was given "in recognition of his

musical genius, which aesthetically evoked the principles of democracy through the medium of jazz and thus made an indelible contribution to art and culture."

"It just shows that Duke Ellington's music is timeless and still lives in the present," said jazz trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, himself a Pulitzer winner. "Even though it was awarded posthumously, his music is still very alive and vibrant and meaningful today."

Mr. Marsalis is the director of New York's Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra which is saluting the work of the famous composer throughout the year.

Ellington was the most famous of Monday's honorees, which included a kindergarten teacher, a former poet laureate and a highly respected essay writer.

### Los Angeles-based Dance Theatre Performs

By Shekeria Smith  
Staff Writer

On Friday, March 26, 1999, the Los Angeles-based Lula Washington Dance Theatre performed before a

huge Moore Hall Auditorium crowd. Applause and laughter filled the air as the youth-oriented dance ensemble performed over six song and dance selections.

## "Nas" Returns, Will Success Follow?

By: Ronel Brewer

Arts and Entertainment Editor

First he was "Illmatic" then "It Was Written", now he simply says "I Am!" This quiet, mild-mannered man has focused his career on changing the shape and sound of rap. He has brought an unsurpassed level of artistic innovation, transformation, and liberation to the world of Hip-Hop. He gained national attention in the rap world when he dropped his debut album "Illmatic" in 1994, which featured intricate poetic verses detailing street dynamics and ghetto traccails. His lyrical ability brought the best out of others. In the song "Life", 25 year-old Nasir Jones brought another artist to the forefront of the industry, doing a duet with AZ. Their styles paralleled each other so much that you may not have been able to tell who was who. Two years later, Nas (aka "Nas Escobar") reappeared on the scene with a mafioso style which left a yellow brick road for others to follow. "It Was Written" balanced material excess with knowledge of self. Now in 1999, Nas presents (along with his clothing line, Willie Esco) "I Am."

Nas has never had a problem

gaining the of respect of other rappers. He's never been known as a maker of "Feel Good Music." His lyrics tend to amaze people while his tounge twists smooth sounds. His lyrics can be read from the sheet like poetry. Being backed by some of the music industries top production virtuosos like Timberland, DJ Premier and the Track Masters, Nas has a style all his own.

As the deaths of Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G. affected the whole world of hip-hop, they also had their affect on Nas. On his latest album, Nas dedicates a track to the two deceased rap icons titled: "We Will Survive." The entire album merges the sounds of the east and west coasts, while attempting top remove the senseless wall that separates this musical world. Nas and fellow rap artist "Scareface" trade verses on the track "Favor for Favor." Then, he surprised all his followers with a track featuring "Mr. Feel Good" himself, Puff Daddy. That in itself speaks volumes for the unity and solidarity in the current climate of hip-hop. Like the Berlin Wall, so falls the division between "east coast vs. west coast" or "underground vs. commercial rap."



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