

# Fats Waller: A Jazz Legend Whose Music Still Swings

Thomas "Fats" Waller was born on May 21, 1904, in Harlem, New York City. His father was a Methodist minister and his mother was a pianist. Waller began playing the piano at an early age, and by the time he was a teenager, he was already a skilled performer.



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

by Alyn Shipton

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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In the early 1920s, Waller began playing in rent parties and speakeasies in Harlem. He quickly developed a reputation as a talented pianist and entertainer, and he soon began to land gigs at some of the most prestigious jazz clubs in the city.

In 1927, Waller made his recording debut with the song "Handful of Keys." The song was a huge hit, and it helped to establish Waller as one of the most popular jazz musicians of the era.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Waller continued to record and perform extensively. He also appeared in several films, including "King of Burlesque" (1936) and "Stormy Weather" (1943).

Waller's music was a blend of stride piano, blues, and ragtime. His playing was characterized by its infectious rhythms and his use of improvisation. Waller was also a gifted singer and entertainer, and his performances were always filled with humor and personality.

In 1943, Waller died of a heart attack at the age of 39. He was posthumously inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1984.

Fats Waller was one of the most influential jazz musicians of the 20th century. His music continues to be enjoyed by millions of people around the world, and his legacy as a jazz icon is secure.

### **Fats Waller's Impact on Jazz**

Fats Waller had a profound impact on the development of jazz music. His innovative approach to piano playing helped to shape the sound of jazz, and his infectious personality and stage presence made him a favorite with audiences around the world.

Waller's music was a blend of different styles, including stride piano, blues, and ragtime. He was also a gifted improviser, and he was always able to come up with new and exciting ways to play the piano.

Waller's influence can be heard in the music of many later jazz musicians, including Count Basie, Duke Ellington, and Thelonious Monk. His music

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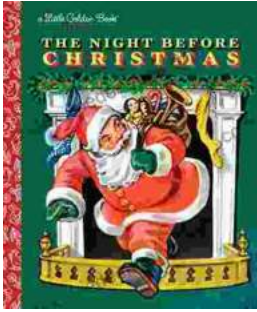
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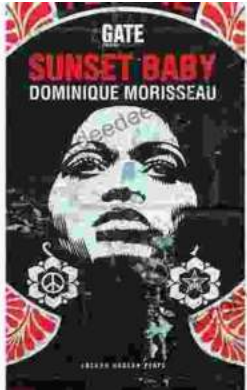
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