

Jimmy  
Blanton



and

Duke  
Ellington



By Addison Affleck



# First Impressions



Once upon a time, in 1939, 40 year old Duke Ellington strolled into the, “Asta La Vista Bar” after hours in St. Louis Missouri, and heard a man playing a song called “Moonlight Bay” (A popular song from 1912) on the bass and hired him on the spot due to his impressive pizzicato. This man’s name was Jimmy Blanton and this moment was going to change his musical career forever.

# Jealousy



Duke Ellington introduced Jimmy to the bass player he already had, Billy Taylor, and they decided to have 2 bassists in the band. Unfortunately, Billy Taylor quit the band during a set and (supposedly) said, "I'm not going to stand up here next to that young boy playing all that bass and be embarrassed." He was embarrassed of Jimmy's amazing skills.



# A connection



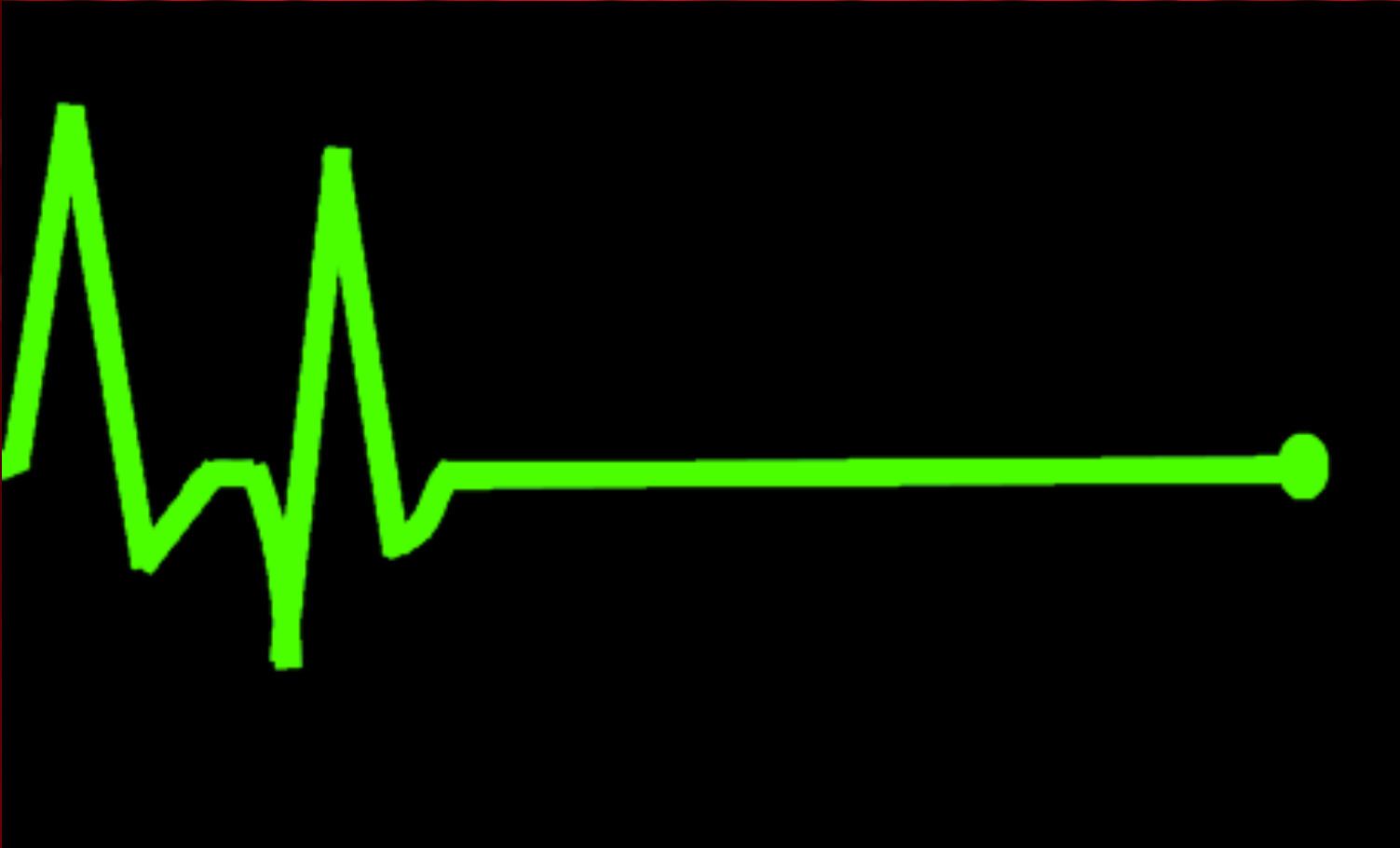
Duke Ellington had a strong connection with Billy. He featured Jimmy more than any jazz bass player had ever been featured in his band. He often put Jimmy front and center on the bandstand. Duke Ellington even made duo records with Billy for Columbia shortly after Jimmy joined the band (which were the first commercially recorded piano–bass duets.) He also got to play for Duke Ellington’s big band selections. This was all because of his beautiful and incredible pizzicato, his steady rhythm, and beautiful sound.

# A Sad Goodbye



Unfortunately, at the end of 1941, Jimmy had to leave Duke Ellington's band because of his poor health.

# Death



And in 1942, Jimmy Blanton's story ended, at the age of 23, Jimmy Blanton died of tuberculosis.



# Sources

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