



WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

April 29, 2009

Warm greetings to everyone gathered in Harlem to celebrate the 110th birthday of jazz legend Duke Ellington. I'm delighted to join you as the last remaining 1939 A train rides along in honor of this great American icon.

Art in all its forms is a celebration of culture, encouraging us to gain a deeper understanding of our place in the world. Music challenges us to explore our boundaries and to celebrate our diversity, uniting people in a common expression of humanity. An artist of consummate skill and creativity, Duke Ellington played a vital role in enriching our nation's vibrant jazz history. Through his extraordinary career, the landscape of music in the 20th century was forever altered, and even today, Ellington's special gifts continue to excite the ears, hearts and souls of millions of listeners around the world. As a jazz lover and a great fan, I am pleased that you have all come together to "take the A train" -- a symbolically meaningful gesture that pays tribute to this musical genius and to his countless artistic contributions to the cultural life of New York City and our entire nation.

Best wishes for a memorable event.

Bill Clinton