

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

Pas De Duke

(1976; New Production – 2026)

Choreography by Alvin Ailey

Restaged by: Matthew Rushing

Music by Duke Ellington

Costume Design by Rouben Ter-Arutunian

Lighting Design by Chenault Spence

Alvin Ailey's modern dance interpretation of a classical pas de deux feels as fresh and stylish as it did when it premiered 50 years ago. The choreography is elegant and deliciously flirtatious, capturing the sassy sophistication of Duke Ellington's jazz music and accentuating the dancers' exuberant virtuosity as they engage in a playful game of one-upmanship.

Pas de Duke was originally created in 1976 as a showcase for Judith Jamison and Mikhail Baryshnikov. She was a reigning star of modern dance, and he was one of the world's most famous ballet dancers, having defected from the Soviet Union two years earlier. Mr. Ailey made brilliant use of the dancers' physical and stylistic differences, along with America's two great art forms – modern dance and jazz music. Since then, it has been performed by generations of dancers who have each put their own unique twist on the choreography. *The New York Times* has praised it as "one of those special dances that lives in new ways with each new set of performers."



Ailey's Constance Stamatiou and Yannick Lebrun in Alvin Ailey's *Pas De Duke*.
Photo by Paul Kolnik.

"A test of physical endurance ... unlikely balance of glittering play and high-powered technical feats from ballet, jazz and modern dance, all set to the soaring, pulsing music by Ailey's beloved Duke Ellington." - *The New York Times*

Duke Ellington

Born in Washington, D.C. in 1899, composer, pianist and band-leader Duke Ellington was one of the most influential figures in the history of music. In the early 1930's his band established its fame at the Cotton Club in New York City, with a sound Ellington called "American Music" rather than jazz. In his fifty-year career, the "Duke" played over 20,000 performances in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East as well as Asia, and is best remembered for the over 3,000 songs that he composed before his death in 1974, including It Don't Mean a Thing if It Ain't Got That Swing, Sophisticated Lady, Mood Indigo, Solitude and Satin Doll. Ellington's popular compositions set the bar for generations of jazz, pop, theatre, and soundtrack composers to come.

***Pas De Duke* Music Credit Information:**

Music: "Such Sweet Thunder" (1957)

"Sonnet for Caesar" (1957)

"Sonnet to Hank Cinq" (1957)

"Clothed Woman" (1948)

"Old Man's Blues" (1930)

Composed by: Duke Ellington

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