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The Oxford Companion To Jazz (Oxford Companions)



Synopsis

Jazz and its colorful, expansive history resonate in this unique collection of 60 essays specially-commissioned from today's top jazz performers, writers, and scholars. Contributors include such jazz insiders as Bill Crow, Samuel A. Floyd Jr., Ted Gioia, Gene Lees, Dan Morgenstern, Gunther Schuller, Richard M. Sudhalter, and Patricia Willard. Both a reference book and an engaging read, the Companion surveys the evolution of jazz from its roots in Africa and Europe until the present. Along the way, each distinctive style and period is profiled by an expert in the field. Whether your preference is ragtime, the blues, bebop, or fusion, you will find the chief characteristics and memorable performances illuminated here with a thoroughness found in no other single-volume jazz reference. The Oxford Companion to Jazz features individual biographies of the most memorable characters of this relatively young art form. Sidney Bechet, King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke, Bessie Smith, Duke Ellington, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Charles Mingus, John Coltrane, and the divas of jazz song--Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, and Sarah Vaughan--come to life in thoughtful considerations of their influences, often turbulent personal lives, and signature styles. In addition, this book looks at the impact of jazz on American culture--in literature, film, television, and dance--and explores the essential instruments of jazz and their most memorable players. The Oxford Companion to Jazz will provide a quick reference source as well as a dynamic and broad overview for all lovers of jazz, from novices to aficionados.

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Customer Reviews

You've bought a bunch of Duke Ellington and Miles Davis recordings, and you've listened to them over and over. You've taken some classes on arranging and improvisation at the local community college. You've honed your chops in a local band or two, maybe even performing on a regular basis. Or maybe, you haven't done anything except become interested in jazz and now you're just naturally curious and inquisitive about it. Maybe you just feel that a broader knowledge of jazz music would help you enjoy it more, so you want to understand: how did jazz get from where it started to where it is today? What musicians played with what other musicians and how did their styles emerge and evolve? How did rags become swing, become be-bop, become post-bop, become free, become modern? What record producers signed which artists and what songs became "standards" and when? In other words, you want to understand jazz history, beginning to end. In that case, this is the book for you. This book is around 800 pages divided into about 75 different chapters (essays). Each chapter is accompanied by a storied black-and-white photo of a piece of the subject matter, the photos by themselves being intriguing and worthwhile. (1,000 words each?) The text covers the history of jazz, more or less chronologically, from its inception up to about the year 2000. It contains many of the stories and anecdotes that most jazz musicians will be familiar with from reading CD liner notes and Googling or Wiki-ing things they were curious about when they heard them, but it will also relate much more back story and lines of interconnectedness that may have been missed along the way.

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