

The History of Jazz

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Jazz is the most colorful and varied art form in the world and it was born in one of the most colorful and varied cities, New Orleans. From the seed first planted by slave dances held in Congo Square and nurtured by early ensembles led by Buddy Belden and Joe "King" Oliver, jazz began its long winding odyssey across America and around the world, giving flower to a thousand different forms--swing, bebop, cool jazz, jazz-rock fusion--and a thousand great musicians. Now, in *The History of Jazz*, Ted Gioia tells the story of this music as it has never been told before, in a book that brilliantly portrays the legendary jazz players, the breakthrough styles, and the world in which it evolved.

Here are the giants of jazz and the great moments of jazz history--Jelly Roll Morton ("the world's greatest hot tune writer"), Louis Armstrong (whose O-keh recordings of the mid-1920s still stand as the most significant body of work that jazz has produced), Duke Ellington at the Cotton Club, cool jazz greats such as Gerry Mulligan, Stan Getz, and Lester Young, Charlie Parker's surgical precision of attack, Miles Davis's 1955 performance at the Newport Jazz Festival, Ornette Coleman's experiments with atonality, Pat Metheny's visionary extension of jazz-rock fusion, the contemporary sounds of Wynton Marsalis, and the post-modernists of the Knitting Factory. Gioia provides the reader with lively portraits of these and many other great musicians, intertwined with vibrant commentary on the music they created. Gioia also evokes the many worlds of jazz, taking the reader to the swamp lands of the Mississippi Delta, the bawdy houses of New Orleans, the rent parties of Harlem, the speakeasies of Chicago during the Jazz Age, the after hours spots of corrupt Kansas city, the Cotton Club, the Savoy, and the other locales where the history of jazz was made. And as he traces the spread of this protean form, Gioia provides much insight into the social context in which the music was born. He shows for instance how the development of technology helped promote the growth of jazz--how ragtime blossomed hand-in-hand with the spread of parlor and player pianos, and how jazz rode the growing popularity of the record industry in the 1920s. We also discover how bebop grew out of the racial unrest of the 1940s and '50s, when black players, no longer content with being "entertainers," wanted to be recognized as practitioners of a serious musical form.

Jazz is a chameleon art, delighting us with the ease and rapidity with which it changes colors. Now, in Ted Gioia's *The History of Jazz*, we have at last a book that captures all these colors on one glorious palate. Knowledgeable, vibrant, and comprehensive, it is among the small group of books that can truly be called classics of jazz literature.

Ted Gioia

is a critic, historian, pianist, composer, and record producer living in Palo Alto, California. He is the author of *The Imperfect Art*, winner of the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award, and *West Coast Jazz*, which *Jazziz* magazine hailed as a "landmark and a masterpiece."

"An all-encompassing short history of the genre that has dominated 20th-century music."--
The New York Times Book Review

"A miracle of concision, Ted Gioia's *History of Jazz* fills the most conspicuous gap in the music's literature. Marshall Stearns published *The Story of Jazz* 40 years ago, and the need for a work that would update the story, while incorporating new research and insights, has long been apparent.

Gioia does the job with polish, clarity, justice, and surprising completeness--it's the best book of its kind."--Gary Giddins, author of *Visions of Jazz: The First Century* (forthcoming)

from OUP in 1998)

"If you wanted to introduce someone to jazz with a single book, this would be a good choice."--Kirkus Reviews

"Gioia generously considers the obviously major players yet notes hundreds of other musicians, too, always with a perspicacity born out of his own working knowledge...and the literary fluency of the essayist whose Imperfect Art is one of the best younger critics' books."--Booklist

"[The History of Jazz] is a remarkable piece of work, not without its shortcomings or its invitations to argument but, withal, the definitive work: encyclopedic, discriminating, provocative, perceptive and eminently readable. With its publication, it can no longer be said that the literature of jazz falls far short of the music itself.... The sweep of Ted Gioia's narrative is grand, indeed helps us understand just how grand the story of jazz really is.... If you are looking for an introduction to jazz, this is it. If you know and love jazz well, this is your vade mecum. Me, I expect to be reading around in it for the rest of my life."--Jonathan Yardley, The Washington Post

"This well-researched, extensively annotated volume covers the major trends and personalities that have shaped jazz. The excellent bibliography and list of recommended listening make this a valuable purchase for libraries building a jazz collection."--Library Journal

"Ted Gioia's herculean The History of Jazz...navigates this wild country with immense sophistication, scholarship, and wit. In fact, Gioia's History stands a good chance of becoming the standard guide for general readers and academics."--Greg Tate, Village Voice

"An authoritative work of research that doesn't spare the poetic power of words."--James Sullivan, San Francisco Chronicle

"An excellent, well-written text that makes the subject understandable and interesting."--Brian Torff, Fairfield University

"Very well researched, easy to read but extremely articulate. Mr. Gioia has accomplished a seemingly difficult feat with great ease."--Wendel Werner, Roane State Community College

Other Books

Jazz. From the acclaimed Nobel Prize winner, a passionate, profound story of love and obsession that brings us back and forth in time, as a narrative is assembled from the emotions, hopes, fears, and deep realities of Black urban life. In the winter of 1926, when everybody everywhere sees nothing but good things ahead, Joe Trace, middle-aged door-to-door salesman of Cleopatra beauty products, shoots his teenage lover to death. At the funeral, Joe's wife, Violet, attacks the girl's corpse. This novel "transforms a familiar

refrain of jilted love into a bold, sustaining time of self-knowledge and discovery. Its rhythms are infectious" (People). "The author conjures up worlds with complete authority and makes no secret of her angst at the injustices dealt to Black women." –The New York Times Book Review

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