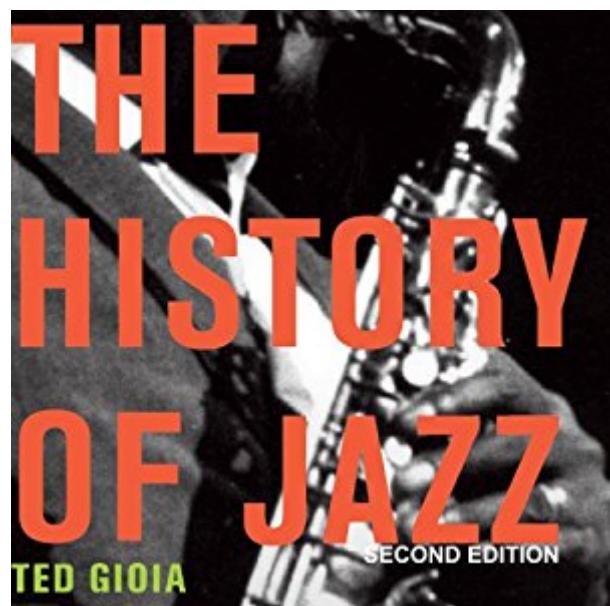


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The History Of Jazz, Second Edition



Synopsis

Ted Gioia's History of Jazz has been universally hailed as a classic - acclaimed by jazz critics and fans around the world. Now Gioia brings his magnificent work completely up-to-date, drawing on the latest research and revisiting virtually every aspect of the music, past and present. Gioia tells the story of jazz as it had 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, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington at the Cotton Club, cool jazz greats such as Gerry Mulligan, Stan Getz, and Lester Young, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie's advocacy of modern jazz in the 1940s, 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 current day. Gioia provides the listener with lively portraits of these and many other great musicians, intertwined with vibrant commentary on the music they created. He also evokes the many worlds of jazz, taking the listener 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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Having taken up jazz as a hobby in my early forties, I've had a lot of catching up to do, not only from the standpoint of learning jazz and how to play it, but understanding what it is, where it came from, and where it is going so that I can make my jazz performances work within the context of the art form. This is not easy at my age (over 50 now) and meager talent level. I'm happy to say, though, that Ted Gioia's book, *The History of Jazz*, has really helped me fill in some gaps in my jazz education, so that I am once again inspired to continue my musical education, both as a player and a jazz writer. Mr. Gioia's history is thorough and well thought through. Like any good history book, it follows the chronology of its subject matter faithfully, but what the author excels at is giving a taste of where the present or past will lead, as well as why and how it will get there. Then, when you reach the new material, the new artists, the new performers and the new types of jazz, you have a very real understanding of what happened, what had to happen, and who made it happen. I've often thought that a timeline showing the various artists' relationships to one another - who played with who, when, and for how long - would be one of the most constructive tools to understanding jazz (I even went so far as to begin constructing my own), and Mr. Gioia's book comes quite close to being a literal (if not visual) timeline very much along those lines. That's what really makes this book worth reading, but it doesn't stop there.

Some people take on projects that, while possible to accomplish, are impossible to accomplish perfectly. Ted Gioia, a veteran musician and scholar, released this "second edition" of his jazz history about a year ago, updating his original work from a decade earlier. Look what he took on: "Present a history of an American musical form that is a century old, complicated by prejudice and poverty and wide variations of creativity, commercialism and rebellion, involving dozens of instruments, thousands of artists, and in many cases songs that can be performed at various lengths with one to 30 musicians and recorded between the 1920's and the turn of the 21st century. And by the way, do it in less than 400 pages of narrative." How the hell does one organize such a project in a way that will not just enlighten most interested readers, but keep from boring them if they only care about the music and artists most prevalent in only one or two of the ten decades examined? Well, Mr. Gioia is not universally successful, of course. For me, a casual jazz fan for the past 50 years, I have a fair amount of interest in the early years of the form, a huge interest in the way it went between 1946 and '66, and very little interest in the state of jazz over the past 30 years. Other readers will approach the book with opposite enthusiasms or indifferences. I would give his ten chapters "star" ratings of one to five for readability, based on my life experience with the music, while for the purposes of teaching readers how jazz came to be, and what it once was, and what it

became, and where it seems to be heading, all his chapters deserve a high ranking. How would YOU organize such a task?

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