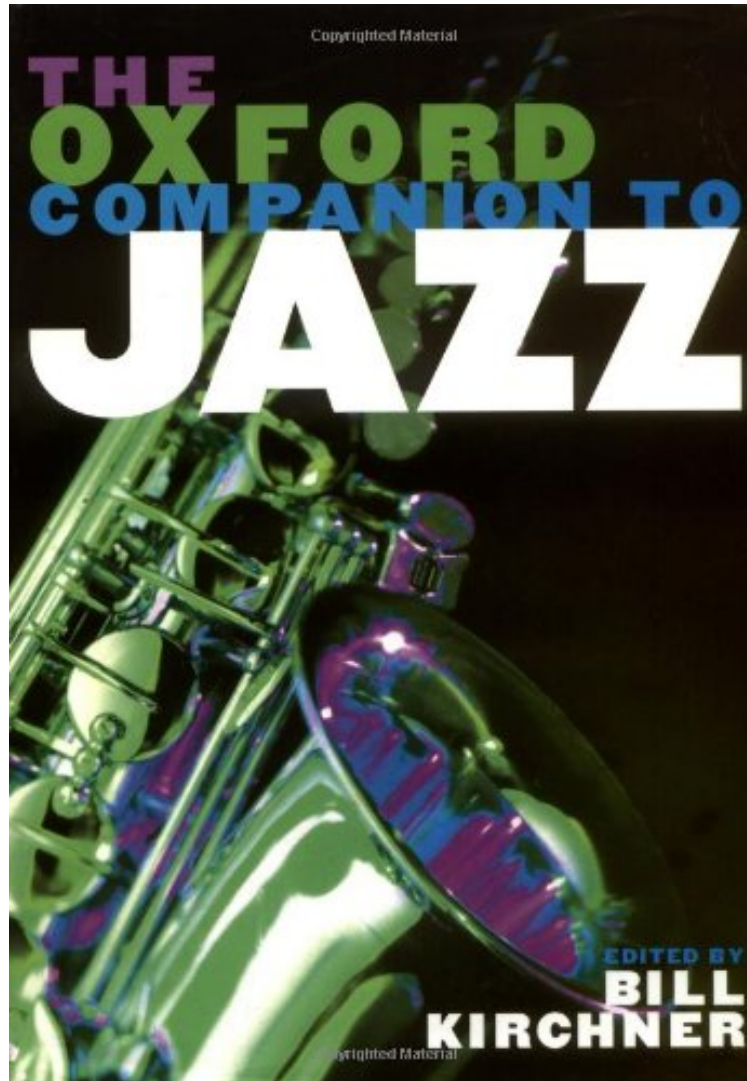


The Oxford Companion to Jazz

From Oxford University Press

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From Oxford University Press : The Oxford Companion to Jazz before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Oxford Companion to Jazz:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Jazz 101 ... and 201, 301, 401, and part of the graduate courseBy Eric SedenskyYou'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. I was particularly fascinated by learning which musicians played with what other famous musicians in their formative years, and the collaborations and recordings that led to them becoming influential and important. The level of detail in this book is incredible, which for a devoted student of jazz such as myself is a godsend, but for more casual jazz fans might at times be daunting. For collectors of recordings, I don't think there is a more thorough resource listing of important recordings anywhere, with the possible exception of *The Penguin Guide to Jazz Recordings: Ninth Edition*. (The Penguin Guide being arguably more useful in its alphabetized listing by artist, the Oxford companion being more useful in its linear structure and the aforementioned detailing of artist relationships, information which is much more difficult to extract from the Penguin volume.) For identifying and filling gaps in one's personal discography, I think the Oxford companion is indispensable. Each of the essays is written by a different jazz expert or critic, from Wall Street Journal writers and record company copy writers to ad men and self-taught music experts. With so many essays over such a broad spectrum going into such depth and detail, you would expect there to be a lot of repetition and rehashing of stories and information, but the editor, Bill Kirchner, has done an admirable and efficient job of putting these essays in an extremely readable order, with necessary edits (probably) throughout to limit redundancy. The way these essays are assembled has the added advantage that while there is much to be gained from reading them in order, it is not required that they be read in order at all. It is easy enough to skip to the subject matter and detail one wishes to explore and read that essay and related essays in any order desired, saving time and effort but still covering the jazz subjects one is interested in. This is a book that I took the time to read carefully and completely, and I still feel like I need to go through it once or twice more to receive the full dose of knowledge contained here. Although I will be putting this book on my shelf, I will keep it handy when purchasing and listening to recordings as I continue my jazz education and journey. Go ahead and get started on your master's degree in jazz by buying and reading this five star book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Must have for any student of music history By Matthew Shaw This text offers invaluable information on the history of jazz and its influence on music. I needed it for a college course, but this is one of the most intriguing academic readings I have had in my education. I would recommend that the reader be prepared with knowledge of music theory to fully appreciate all of what the articles offer, but it isn't too complicated for those that may not understand and there is a gold mine of historical facts. I would recommend this text to read for leisure even if you're mildly interested. The articles are very well written and the detail makes this text a perfect source for music historians. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Resource!!! By Leon De Vose, III I am in the Rutgers Newark Jazz History and Research M.A. program. This is an invaluable supplement to the texts and articles that are mandatory.

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.

From Booklist This new collection of 60 essays surveys the entire history of jazz and purports to contain "a thoroughness found in no other single jazz reference." The essays, written by 59 current jazz performers, writers, and

scholars, are much longer than the typical Oxford Companion entry. The average length is 13 pages, although the range is anywhere from 7 to 22 pages. There is one black-and-white photograph per article. The essays provide overviews of different styles and periods. Other topics include the roots of jazz, biographies of performers, examinations of individual jazz instruments, an analysis of the impact of jazz on American culture, and a discussion of jazz outside the U.S. Arrangement is loosely chronological. Does this volume rival the 1,358-page New Grove Dictionary of Jazz (1988) for the title of "most comprehensive dictionary of jazz ever published"? Possibly. Although the New Grove Dictionary of Jazz is arguably more reference-friendly because of its alphabetical arrangement and see also references, the Oxford book has an excellent index. However, because of the essay format, it is sometimes difficult to find information on a specific performer or term. For this reason, some libraries may wish to consider putting this volume in the circulating rather than in the reference collection. The scope of the New Grove Dictionary of Jazz and the Oxford Companion to Jazz is similar, although Grove offers unique, unparalleled coverage of jazz nightclubs, festivals, and libraries and archives with significant jazz collections. Unlike Grove, which provides bibliographies and selected recordings at the end of individual entries, Oxford only offers a selected bibliography at the back of the book and an "Index of Songs and Recordings" to facilitate finding where a song is discussed in an essay. Though Grove was reprinted in 1994, it was not updated. The Oxford book includes a greater number of recent jazz artists. In an informal search for 27 current jazz artists, 50 percent of them were mentioned in Oxford, while only 25 percent were found in Grove. For example, Grove appears to exclude drummers Joey Baron and Dennis Chambers, trumpeter Dave Douglas, and more-mainstream musicians like Joshua Redman and Jo Lovano, all of whom are mentioned in Oxford. Some of the current artists also appear in another Oxford publication, *Biographical Encyclopedia of Jazz* (1999). Libraries with a jazz collection will find this new volume a welcome addition, whether its purpose is to act as a reference resource or provide insightful stack reading. According to Kirchner, the intended audience is everyone, from novices to seasoned jazz aficionados; the book does indeed have a wide range of appeal. Some of the essays are downright scholarly, while others are less erudite in tone (though not in content). Recommended for all university, college, and public libraries with patrons interested in jazz. RBB Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Despite the wide range, the focus is clear--the unique American sound of jazz and those giants most closely associated with its creation and production."--Jeff Waggoner, *The New York Times Book* "This book contains a collection of some of the very best writing available concerning jazz."--Lee Bash, *Jazz Educators Journal* "A milestone among publications dedicated to jazz."--Francesco Martinelli, *Musica Jazz* (Italy) "More than a treatise on jazz, this book is a compilation of articles on all phases of the music, contributed by musicians and professional writers who speak for the art firsthand. Highly recommended for everyone interested in jazz."--the late Benny Carter About the Author Bill Kirchner is a composer-arranger, saxophonist, jazz historian, record and radio producer, educator, and leader of the Bill Kirchner Nonet. He has won both Grammy and NAIRD Indie awards, and he teaches jazz composition and jazz history at the New School University, the Manhattan School of Music, and New Jersey City University.