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Keeping Time: Readings In Jazz History



Synopsis

Drawing from contemporary journalism, reviews, program notes, memoirs, interviews, and other sources, *Keeping Time: Readings in Jazz History* brings to life the controversies and critical issues that have accompanied every moment of jazz history. Highlighting the significance of jazz as a complex and consequential social practice as well as an art form, this book presents a multitude of ways in which people have understood and cared about jazz. It records a history not of style changes but of values, meanings, and sensibilities. Featuring sixty-two thought-provoking chapters, this unique volume gives voice to a wide range of perspectives, stressing different reactions to and uses of jazz, both within and across communities. It offers contributions from well-known figures including Jelly Roll Morton, Billie Holiday, Charles Mingus, Wynton Marsalis, Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, and Miles Davis; from renowned writers such as Langston Hughes, Norman Mailer, and Ralph Ellison; and from critics including Leonard Feather and Gunther Schuller. Walser has selected writings that capture the passionate reactions of people who have loved, hated, supported, and argued about jazz. Organized chronologically, *Keeping Time* covers nearly 100 years of jazz history. Filled with insightful writing, it aims to increase historical awareness, to provoke critical thinking, and to encourage lively classroom discussion as students relive the tangled and conflicted story of jazz. It enables readers to see that jazz is not just about names, dates, and chords, but rather about issues and ideas, cultural activities, and experiences that have affected people deeply in a great variety of ways. Concise headnotes provide historical context for each selection and point out issues for thinking and discussion. An excellent text for a variety of jazz courses, *Keeping Time* can serve as supplementary reading in popular music, American Studies, African American studies, history, and sociology courses, and will also appeal to anyone interested in jazz.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An excellent supplement to narrative or recorded jazz histories. Organized chronologically, the collection of readings is quite easy to read and offers a variety of viewpoints (musicians, interviews, critical essays, reviews, etc.) that highlight major attitudes and trends in jazz history. Walser begins each article with a brief but excellent introduction that locates each reading historically and elucidates the important critical questions that the reading poses, all without ever sounding preachy. (I only give 4 stars simply because it's a collection of older writings; for what it is, it's great.)

While a student in Professor Walser's Jazz class at UCLA, I was one of several students lucky enough to have read every chapter before it made it to press. Every chapter was like a time machine, transporting us back in time to an era where racism and sexism took a toll on some musicians while only strengthening the resolve of others. This book was, at the time, one of the best readings I had done in a long time. In reading direct quotes from the greats of music, you couldn't help but feel a bit inspired. "Keeping in Time" is a gem and should be assigned reading to anyone studying jazz or just wanting to learn more about the many performers who played or sang that one song you liked differently. Professor Walser certainly knows his subject matter well. And in my case, he certainly excelled in the one thing he likes to do: teach.

This book is a collection of various writings by different authors (some musicians, some musical/industry professionals) on all different musicians and the evolution of Jazz. Not just a history of Jazz. Good reading and lots of information.

We used this book in our graduate seminar on jazz. It was so interesting that even before class started I had finished reading the book. Many topics are discussed (roots of jazz, definitions of jazz, hip vs square, future of jazz), many important historical articles are reprinted, many major musicians are interviewed and quoted, and each writing is preceded by a clear explanation by the author of the issues discussed. The selection of topics, the breadth of knowledge given, and the flow of the book, are what make it great.

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