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# Jazz 101: A Complete Guide To Learning And Loving Jazz



## Synopsis

Anyone interested in learning about a distinct music--jazz--will welcome this newest addition to the popular 101 reference series. Noted anthropologist, critic, and musical scholar John F. Szwed takes readers on a tour of the music's tangled history, and explores how it developed from an ethnic music to become North America's most popular music and then part of the avant garde in less than fifty years. Jazz 101 presents the key figures, history, theory, and controversies that shaped its development, along with a discussion of some of its most important recordings.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

John F. Szwed is currently a professor of anthropology, African and African-American studies, music, and American studies at Yale University. He has written seven books on music and African-American culture and numerous articles and reviews on related subjects. His honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Fellowship. He lives in Connecticut.

In this idiosyncratic introduction to jazz, John Szwed's tone is refreshing--he's not ideological (jazz writers have a tendency to be dismissive of certain styles or artists), he recognizes that jazz didn't end in 1960 (see Ken Burns), and his notes on landmark recordings are concise gems. Grover Gardner's reading is entirely competent, but he's like a pianist with great chops and no swing. To be fair, he's hindered by the book's disorganized structure and by the editorial decision to include the

CD catalog numbers in the narration. A more creative production would have brought out the strengths of this book. D.B. Â© AudioFile 2004, Portland, Maine-- Copyright Â© AudioFile, Portland, Maine --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Not so much a history of jazz but an examination of what jazz has been from beginning to present. The focus is on the music first and the music makers second. Explores the disagreements about how jazz was created and what is and isn't jazz while remaining objective. Very detailed, covering many aspects but very easy to follow. Perfect for a beginner requiring only a desire to really learn, but does not require great deals of effort. It is a fun read. Very useful for non beginners as well.

I'd actually give this 3 and a half stars, sort of a C+ in my opinion. Anyway- I've learned a lot from this book and use it more as a reference material than as a "can't wait to read more" type of thing. The author sometimes is a little circular in his opinions too- especially when he tries to define Jazz or a given era. Plus, with something like this, it almost screams for a companion sampler CD, or a publishers website or something. Many times he refers the reader to hard to find or out of print CDs/records (for instance making use of Smithsonian recordings which are not easy to get). On the other hand, I have made a good list of recordings and artists I haven't heard yet, and I feel like I listen with a much more educated ear now- even though I've been a big fan of Jazz for many years. So- it's recommended, but be prepared to do some home work along side the reading in order to actually hear what the book is discussing.

thanks for the introduction. I actually learned what kind of music I liked it is cool jazz and west coast jazz. I didn't know there was a difference. I like Miles Davis. I don't like any thing boarder line blues and I don't like anything older than my dad. My dad used to listen to swing music. Thanks for the clarification. Good book for online teaching.

Professor Szwed's book is aptly titled and provides a fairly comprehensive history of jazz from it's beginnings to the present. He clearly states that no book covering such a diverse genre can escape being incomplete when it comes to recognizing individual artists, nor escape the inevitable opinions and prejudices of diverging thought on direction and contribution. To this end he succeeds handily. The novice who is interested in jazz, and not yet opinionated enough to have adopted one of the contentious theories of "what jazz is", will find much information on the origins and stylistic forms of jazz music, jazz art and ultimately, jazz life. However, the more seasoned jazz fan might

just as easily find himself in mental argument with the author almost from the get go. This is regrettable since it leads to rejection of much of the foundation material important in having a true understanding of the music. To those of us who believe jazz is divinely connected to the blues, much of Szwed's commentary could be viewed as heresy. But, to others who feel jazz includes almost all forms of improvisation the author's keen insight on sociological and twentieth century demographics play particularly well. He goes so far as to dip his toe in the muddy waters of Kenny G's authenticity, though slyly demurs from opining on just what this cretin is actually blowing through his horn (there, I told you jazz opinion can be contentious!). My only criticism of this work is Szwed's listening examples which are carefully detailed and highlighted throughout the book. While they specifically meet the example criteria he is aiming for, many more accessible (read enjoyable) substitutes exist. All in all, an excellent intro and the best \$10 item in the jazz supermarket.

All the questions you've asked about what, when, who wrote and performed, where are answered in this very compact and readable book.

This is a great example of how to write an introductory book on a topic that might daunt some people. Szwed presents the major styles, players, and even some of the controversial issues of jazz with clarity and infectious enthusiasm. Just as importantly, he's not afraid to keep it intelligent, unlike a lot of introductory books. Like the subtitle promises, this book really can help you learn and love jazz. It sure fueled my passion for the music.

My husband is the biggest Jazz fan that I know of. This book was on his Christmas list, so it was a must to buy it for him.

As far as playing jazz, no other art form, other than conversation, can give the satisfaction of spontaneous interaction. Stan Getz This is an interesting book for someone looking into Jazz for the first time. I wish it had played more of the music in this audiobook but the discography is great. If I were to listen to this again, I would try to stop and find the music, listen and then continue the audiobook. This book seemed to go into more detail than my great courses on Jazz but I enjoyed that one better because it had listening samples and the instructor was a fine musician himself. I enjoyed the book and recommend it to those with like interests. I borrowed this book from my local library.

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