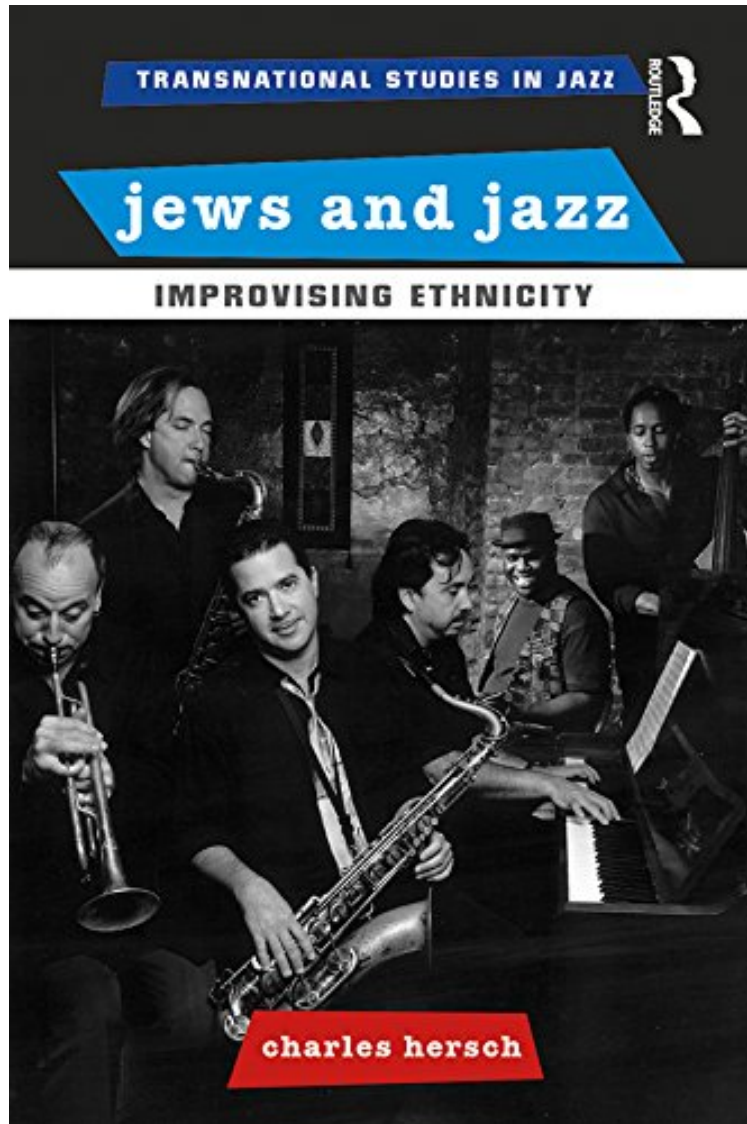


[Library ebook] Jews and Jazz: Improvising Ethnicity (Transnational Studies in Jazz)

Jews and Jazz: Improvising Ethnicity (Transnational Studies in Jazz)

Charles B Hersch

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Charles B Hersch : Jews and Jazz: Improvising Ethnicity (Transnational Studies in Jazz) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jews and Jazz: Improvising Ethnicity (Transnational Studies in Jazz):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An insightful, validating, concise study of mutually beneficial creative endeavorsBy Howard MandelThe history of black and white Americans meeting and mixing via jazz goes back to the music's origins 100 or so years ago -- and Jewish people have played a vital role, beyond their percentage

of the population, not only playing but also producing, presenting, representing, and sometimes finagling over the entertainment-and-art form. Hersch clearly, concisely, insightfully and originally delves into the complexities of the back and forth, essentially symbiotic and in his view (also mine) mutually beneficial relations between African-Americans and Jewish Americans, discussing Louis Armstrong, Willie "the Lion" Smith and Slim Galliard as well as Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw and Norman Granz, taking the story up through Don Byron, John Zorn, Steve Bernstein and Paul Shapiro. The book is detailed and Hersch is an academic, but the book isn't long or pedantic; if you're interested in the subject it's compelling and persuasive. Sent me back to listening to records, and rethinking some of the assumptions I've had, but also validating some of my worked-through opinions, speaking to the positive nature of this creative American enterprise.

Jews and Jazz: Improvising Ethnicity explores the meaning of Jewish involvement in the world of American jazz. It focuses on the ways prominent jazz musicians like Stan Getz, Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Lee Konitz, Dave Liebman, Michael Brecker, and Red Rodney have engaged with jazz in order to explore and construct ethnic identities. The author looks at Jewish identity through jazz in the context of the surrounding American culture, believing that American Jews have used jazz to construct three kinds of identities: to become more American, to emphasize their minority outsider status, and to become more Jewish. From the beginning, Jewish musicians have used jazz for all three of these purposes, but the emphasis has shifted over time. In the 1920s and 1930s, when Jews were seen as foreign, Jews used jazz to make a more inclusive America, for themselves and for blacks, establishing their American identity. Beginning in the 1940s, as Jews became more accepted into the mainstream, they used jazz to "re-minoritize" and avoid over-assimilation through identification with African Americans. Finally, starting in the 1960s as ethnic assertion became more predominant in America, Jews have used jazz to explore and advance their identities as Jews in a multicultural society.

About the Author Charles Hersch is Professor of Political Science at Cleveland State University. He is also the author of *Democratic Artworks: Politics and the Arts from Trilling to Dylan* and *Subversive Sounds: Race and the Birth of Jazz in New Orleans*.