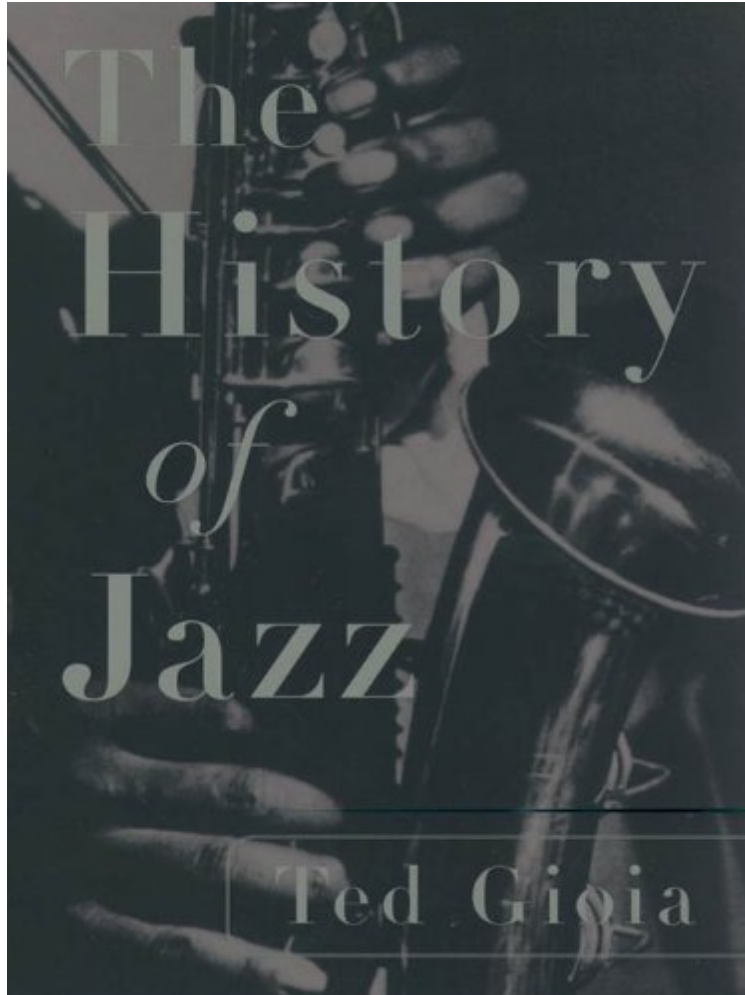


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## The History of Jazz

*Ted Gioia*

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**Ted Gioia : The History of Jazz** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The History of Jazz:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very readable and informative. By Customer I am certainly not a musician, and just a casual listener of jazz music. However, I found this book very interesting, informative and readable. I found it piqued my interest in learning more about the history of jazz, and some of its great performers and performances. Gioia does an excellent job - with minor exceptions - of interweaving three themes throughout the book. He sets the scene in American history - his historical accounts of 18th and 19th century New Orleans are particularly fascinating - in which the music existed. He does a great job of providing detailed accounts of the great jazz performers and their music. My personal view is that very little awareness of the artist or his / her most noted works is needed to appreciate and understand these descriptions. The third theme is the changes in the styles / trends / preferences of jazz music over the years. Certainly some understanding of music theory is helpful here, but not essential. I found the book highly readable, although it is a long read. The two minor quibbles I have about the book are

the vocabulary, and the last chapter. The vocabulary is certainly at a fairly high level. I am certainly glad I had my dictionary app handy on multiple occasions. The vocabulary manifests itself in both musical jargon - which I presume is unavoidable - and in use of words such as interstices (on multiple occasions). The last chapter reflects the challenge of any historian - to try to identify trends and their future historical significance - that are contemporary to the writing of the book. As other reviewers have noted, Gioia resorts to listings of names of artists on multiple occasions that add little depth or value to the writing, or are of little help to the reader. However, in the same chapter, Gioia's comments about the impact of present day technology on the distribution of and access to jazz music are very insightful, as is his linkage of his comments on Joshua Redman to the rise of formal jazz musical education and instruction. Overall, as a casual listener of jazz music, I highly recommend this book. In fact, I have already purchased Gioia's latest work - *The Jazz Standards* - as a result of his deepening of my interest in this musical genre. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. So far an excellent read. Lots of facts and the backstory I ...By Customer So far an excellent read. Lots of facts and the backstory I knew nothing about. Lots of specific music cited, too bad there isn't some way to link from the book to another medium and listen to what he's talking about as you are reading. Now, I'm switching between the book and Youtube. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This narrative, complete in many ways especially the state ...By Customer This narrative, complete in many ways especially the state of jazz in today's world, the book from my perspective missed the inclusion of some incredibly important individuals in the development of this story.

Jazz is the most colorful and varied art form in the world and it was born in one of the most colorful and varied cities, New Orleans. From the seed first planted by slave dances held in Congo Square and nurtured by early ensembles led by Buddy Belden and Joe "King" Oliver, jazz began its long winding odyssey across America and around the world, giving flower to a thousand different forms--swing, bebop, cool jazz, jazz-rock fusion--and a thousand great musicians. Now, in *The History of Jazz*, Ted Gioia tells the story of this music as it has 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 ("the world's greatest hot tune writer"), Louis Armstrong (whose O-keh recordings of the mid-1920s still stand as the most significant body of work that jazz has produced), Duke Ellington at the Cotton Club, cool jazz greats such as Gerry Mulligan, Stan Getz, and Lester Young, Charlie Parker's surgical precision of attack, 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 Knitting Factory. Gioia provides the reader with lively portraits of these and many other great musicians, intertwined with vibrant commentary on the music they created. Gioia also evokes the many worlds of jazz, taking the reader 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. He shows for instance how the development of technology helped promote the growth of jazz--how ragtime blossomed hand-in-hand with the spread of parlor and player pianos, and how jazz rode the growing popularity of the record industry in the 1920s. We also discover how bebop grew out of the racial unrest of the 1940s and '50s, when black players, no longer content with being "entertainers," wanted to be recognized as practitioners of a serious musical form. Jazz is a chameleon art, delighting us with the ease and rapidity with which it changes colors. Now, in Ted Gioia's *The History of Jazz*, we have at last a book that captures all these colors on one glorious palate. Knowledgeable, vibrant, and comprehensive, it is among the small group of books that can truly be called classics of jazz literature.