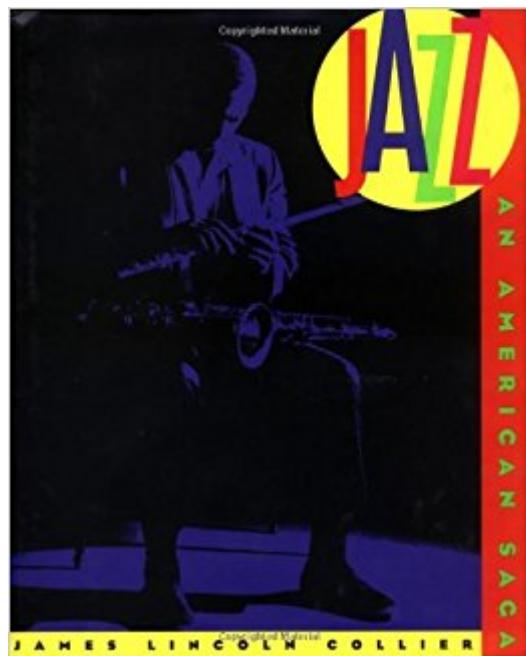


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Jazz: An American Saga



Synopsis

One thing we can be sure of is that jazz was invented in America. From the small sunlit barns that dotted the Louisiana countryside around the turn of the century to the booming nightspots in New York in the 1920s, America has always been the home of jazz. But how did jazz get started? Who were its first musicians? And what was it about America that made it the birthplace of this century's greatest music? Newbery Honor-winner and jazz critic James Lincoln Collier tackles these questions and others, tracing the history and evolution of jazz in America. Beginning with the African tribal music transported here by slaves, Collier reveals the roots of jazz in gospel and ragtime before launching into a discussion of Dixieland, swing, bebop, the cool school, free jazz, and fusion. Along the way, we meet the great personalities who shaped the music: giants like Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, who brought jazz into the mainstream; mavericks like Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, who toyed with its sound and structure; and avant-gardists like Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane, who revolutionized and reinvented jazz. In this lively, sometimes controversial photo-filled account, Collier shows us how jazz became an international craze, all the while remaining as American as apple pie.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up? Twenty-four years after his in-depth *Inside Jazz* (Four Winds, 1973), Collier now offers yet a further look at this uniquely American art form. Some information is repeated, but there is a

sufficiently different perspective to recommend this new volume. Written in a crisp, enthusiastic style, this book examines jazz's origins and its development, showing how it marries African and European traditions while it deviates from both. The author's explanations are clear, and specific vocabulary is explained in context. The influences of various performers are presented in the context of jazz's growth. A selected discography offers suggestions for listening, but only the artist and title of the recordings are provided; the recording company is not. The information presented will be helpful for reports, but the book lends itself to a good nonfiction read as well. A fine complement to Morgan Monceaux's *Jazz* (Knopf, 1994) to update music collections. ?Renee Steinberg, Fieldstone Middle School, Montvale, NJCopyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"Collier easily guides the novice jazz lover, the occasional jazz listener, and those of us who listen on the outskirts of the jazz world through the many changes in jazz music. From New Orleans Dixieland, big band swing, bebop, avant-gard, fusion, and neobebop, this tour is informative without being dull, clearly written without sounding simple, and interesting and enjoyable."--VOYA

This book is so well-researched and perceptive that it transcends the genre of juvenile books. In fact, I plan to recommend it to senior citizens taking my music appreciation course in the Evolution of Jazz. Collier provides a good, brief, clear history of jazz, from its roots to free jazz and neo-bop. In addition, the final two chapters on rhythm and on improvising are unexpectedly learned and enlightening. A real find!

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