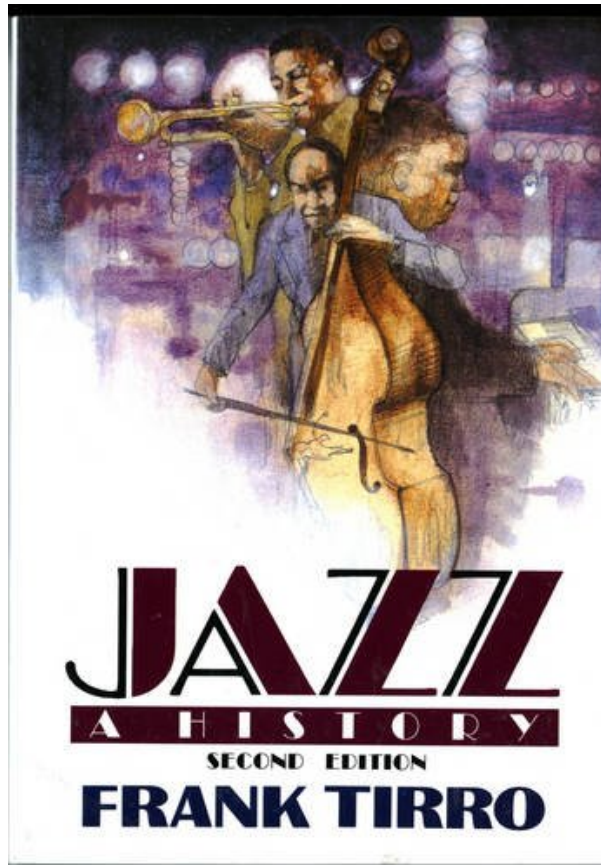
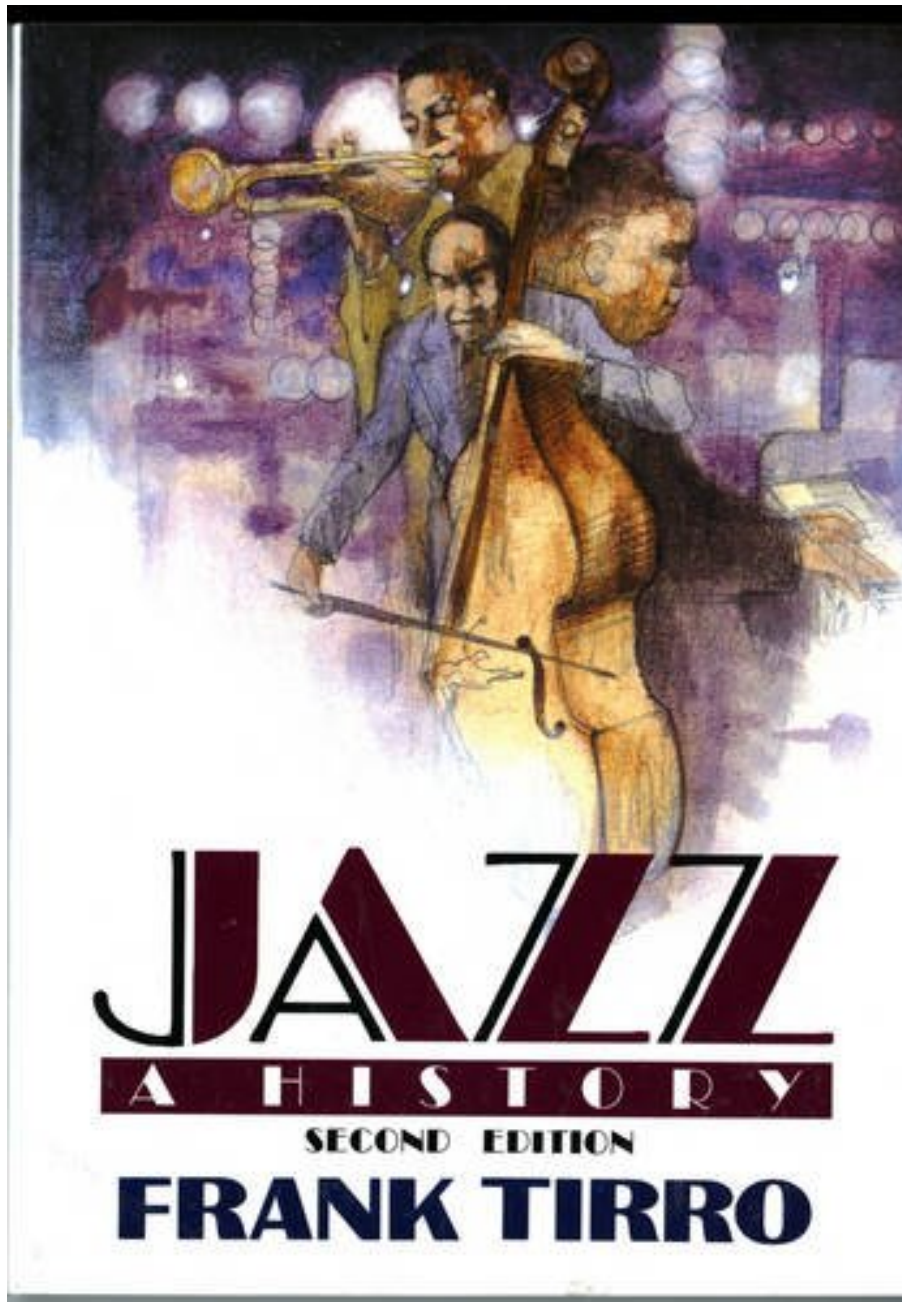


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This book is intended to serve as a guide to the music and as an interpretation of the historical interaction that has taken place among jazz musicians, the music, and society. It is a survey of the historical development of this music from its African precursors to its current living exponents.

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## **PDF**

Jazz is a democratic music in the best sense of the word, for it is the collective achievement of a people.

This book is not a recounting of anecdotes nor a simple chronology of musical events, but a history. It evaluates the gathered evidence and draws conclusions. Its narrative and summaries are based on repeated careful listenings to thousands of recordings, on the reports of musicians who witnessed and experienced many of the crucial events and created some of the masterworks, and on the fresh research and insightful thought of hundreds of serious scholars who love and respect this music.

- Sales Rank: #118684 in Books
- Published on: 1993-05-17
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.20" h x 1.30" w x 6.50" l, 1.99 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 720 pages

### Features

- Music
- Jazz
- College Text

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### Most helpful customer reviews

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Thorough history from the beginning

By Gary Sprandel

This is a review of the 1977 edition. I'm sure there is a latter edition, and probably due for an update.

Fairly serious, text book, and perhaps best in the early years, including folk, ragtime, blues and African influences. Liberally sprinkled with great photos, some early ones include a 1895 photo of Buddy Bolten and a 1923 photo of King Oliver band with Louis Armstrong. This book is probably most geared for the musician, with transcriptions from Lester Young, Charlie Parker, and John Coltrane as well as many shorter musical passages through the text.

Although I'm sure everyone find some of their favorite musicians missing, Tirro offers many perspectives and tries to relate jazz to other cultural happenings, such as beat poets. His chapter on "Loose Ends" attempts to fill in some of his omissions. I would have liked to have seen more discussion on the role of evolving

technology, for example without the more modern microphone a crooner like Frank Sinatra wouldn't have stood out. I found his chronology and discography very helpful in keeping the history and music in context. Readers would do well to have a copy of The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz to listen along with the reading.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

A potpourri of Jazz Music, Theory and History

By Herbert L Calhoun

While not exactly the full story of America's only classical music, this loose collection of short bios of the key players, histories, vignettes, musical charts and themes, comes very close to telling the complete story of the music. All that is missing is a social backdrop, a plot, a subplot, a theme: a reason d'etre for Jazz's emergence and existence.

I believe the only mistake of an otherwise fine book was to leave as an exercise for the reader, or perhaps for the "real" historians, rather than for this musicologist, the unravelling of the connection between American society and the development of America's original classical music. Obviously the one affected the other, greatly. To the extent Jazz is uniquely American music, formulated in the European tradition, it could only have become what it is because of the peculiarities of American society itself. Thus to have avoided even venturing into speculative mention of how the social context of American society inevitably led to Jazz's development and has since affected its progression throughout, is to leave the only hole in an otherwise fine example of American musicology.

This rather glaring omission is all the more obvious given the evolutionary track that Jazz's development took: from African rhythms, calls and responses, to slave field chants, to black prison chain gang work songs, to New Orleans funereal marches, to the blues of those on the outskirts of main stream American society, to the big bands of the 1920-30s, to bop and bebop of the late 40s and 50s, to the modern progressive jazz innovations that followed. Even in relief, this evolutionary track allowed the reader to understand the most important history about Jazz only by reading between the lines, where he could then see the connections between the music and the larger societal forces that actually produced it. It seems to me that this missing connection to the music is one of the most important elements in fully understanding the true meaning of the music itself?

In this same regard, I have a theory that inner city "Rap" music also emerged as a result of similar societal constraints: Due to tax constraints because of "white flight" from America's inner cities, ghetto kids no longer have valid music programs in their greatly diminished schools. All one needs to do to understand the effect of this, is go to a patriotic holiday parade in an inner city and see that the inner city schools no longer have instruments. They show up with drill teams, teams of baton twirlers and drum corps, all without musical instruments and with very little musical training. Again, only in relief does one then understand why and how "rap" had to be invented to fill that gap. The racist rules of American society have never been trivial in such instances.

With that beef out of the way, what this book brings to the party is the ability to summarize the meaning of the music and its theory at each cusp in the evolutionary tree in short pithy (though often inelegant) pieces; and to link these with insider understanding of the relevant aspects of the music business itself, aspects that were also pivotal to the almost random directions the Jazz trajectory took (but again the element of race is carefully avoided).

At every turn, these mostly black musicians were constrained both in their creativity and in their ability to make a living out of the art they produced by the peculiar racist constraints of American society. Thus, at

least as interesting as the history and the music itself, is the way in which the rules of society cramped the music and the musicians on both sides of the color divide. For instance, rather surprisingly, the musical groups were racially integrated as far back as the turn of the century with brisk collaboration going on between musicians even while the society itself remained in the racial dark ages. Unfortunately, a great deal of this collaboration was unidirectional often resulting in whites either ignoring or "appropriating" much of the "colored creations."

They did so for no reason other than, because "society said that they could." Black musicians on the other hand were constantly being harassed with petty societal rules and requirements from, cabaret licenses, to segregated facilities, to having to join unions that only wanted their dues, to frequently being cheated and being grossly underpaid for their creative outputs compared to their white counterparts. It is unfortunate that the book just ignored the hoops and barriers that those who produced this music (often more appreciated in other lands than at home) had to go through to produce it. Three stars

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

It's not the most comprehensive book around but it was indeed one of the best at the time

By BK Saunders

This was one of my textbooks as an ethnomusicology student at Purdue back in 1981. I remember the book to be very informative and enjoyable. It's not the most comprehensive book around but it was indeed one of the best at the time. Read this book and "Blues People" and you got ALL the info you need about the evolution of jazz!

Brian "Morpheus B" Saunders

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