

A New History of Jazz



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The March 1913 issue of the San Francisco Bulletin coined the term "jazz" - using it to describe a dance music full of vigor and "pep." Over time, jazz became the word used to describe the syncopated bands that became popular in New Orleans at the turn of the twentieth century, playing a fiery mix of African and European music that then became popular in Chicago and New York and, finally, the world over. It wasn't long before the Roaring 1920s became known as "the Jazz Age," forever attaching the music form to decadence, booze, sex, and dancing. In his mammoth book *A New History of Jazz*, BBC presenter and London Times jazz critic Alyn Shipton investigates how jazz first started - examining the precursors of the music, identifying the difficulties in mapping out its history, and challenging the traditional views of its development. More than just a rote narrative, *A New History of Jazz* provides critical analysis of the jazz history that has been "written" among both academics and musicians over the last century. Shipton argues that the music's history is so characterized by underground clubs, regional styles, and the "fringe" element in general that previous attempts at tracing its routes have failed to grasp the big picture. He even questions the possibility of creating a universally applicable definition of jazz. Shipton also explores how different things contributed to the modern notions of jazz music. He examines how the development of sound recordings, instrumental innovations, and new methods of

music publishing took the art form from its bayou routes to different urban areas around the country, and finally beyond the borders of the United States. A New History of Jazz further examines how the network of theaters, concert halls, and performances that sprang up all over the United States in the twentieth century contributed to the spread of the music's popularity and the different styles that have developed over the years. Leaving no stone unturned, Shipton's history of jazz is as sweeping as it is personal. This is the book that jazz aficionados have been waiting for, as well as an excellent primer for the casual fan.

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