10 Jazz

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Chapter preview

This chapter considers what makes the study of jazz different from the study of other kinds of music. It looks at jazz's mixture of assimilation and rejection of other music, and shows how it relates to important political, social, and economic issues. Problems in writing the history of jazz are examined, and the role of recording and transcription in the reception and teaching of jazz are stressed. The nature of improvisation is considered in relation to composition in classical music, and the tension in jazz between the drive for new forms of expression and the desire to appeal to a wider audience is investigated. The question of whether jazz can still remain a "critical" form of music when it is increasingly being formally taught in schools and universities is raised along with the issue of whether jazz should now be concerned with the preservation of its traditions, or with new musical exploration.

Key issues

- Can we define jazz, and does it matter whether we can?
- How does the study of jazz differ from the study of other kinds of music?
- Does jazz present a challenge to the assumptions and procedures of conventional musicology?
- Is there "progress" in jazz?
- How does jazz relate to history, society, and politics?
- What is jazz's status in relation to other developments in modern music?
- How does technology affect jazz?
- Is jazz now becoming as "academic" as other forms of "serious" music?

Introduction

"That's not jazz" has long been one of the most frequent claims made in discussions of jazz. Why should this be the case? From its beginnings, early

in the twentieth century, jazz has attracted controversy because of its disputed relationships, not just to other music, but to other aspects of modern culture. The reasons for the disputed nature of these relationships are central to an understanding of jazz. The question of whether something is jazz or not might, of course, be regarded as just a question of definition, on the assumption that if we had the correct definition we could identify what is jazz and what isn't. The first problem here is, though, that it is far from clear where the word "jazz" first emerged, or what it actually meant. Moreover, many ways of defining what constitutes jazz turn out not to help a great deal. Is jazz, for example, improvised music? Much jazz may be improvised, but quite a lot of famous jazz performances involve very little improvisation, and improvisation occurs in many other kinds of music. Is jazz characterized by its extensive use of syncopation? Earlier forms of jazz often were, but much modern jazz uses very little syncopation. Jazz is supposed to "swing," but many performances don't, because the tempo is too slow, or because that is not the aim of the performance. Other descriptions give rise to similar problems, even as they may also help reveal something about what people call jazz.

The fact is that definitions rarely allow one to describe something definitively, especially if what is in question is part of human culture. Given our ability to discuss cultural and other topics despite a lack of agreed definitions, it is perhaps better to think of terms like "jazz" as tools that we use to talk about things that we find significant. The more interesting question, therefore, is why the use of terms like "jazz" generates such controversy. Part of the answer is that disputes about whether something is jazz or not are part of what jazz is. Jazz develops via its assimilation and rejection of other kinds of music, so that its boundaries are always being contested and redrawn. During the history of jazz, musicians have adopted elements of church music, blues, classical music, musicals, and other popular sources, various kinds of Latin-American music, and, more recently, rock music and "world music." At the same time, jazz musicians have also rejected important aspects of other music (including other kinds of jazz), cultivating rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and other techniques and approaches that often depend on their differences from what was being rejected. Such a stance played a role, for example, in the development of "bebop" in the 1940s. The new melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic demands of bebop were partly intended to exclude musicians used to playing jazz in a more traditional manner.

This kind of oppositional stance illustrates how jazz is embedded in and motivated by social and political issues. Bebop was in part a reaction against "swing" music, which came by the 1940s to be dominated by white musicians, who had commercial success playing a diluted version of what had previously been a mainly black music. Unlike many jazz musicians before them, bebop musicians did not in the main seek commercial success or court popularity by making compromises in order to please their audiences. Music like bebop and

the other more experimental kinds of jazz that follow it has, then, in part to do with the need for African-American culture to sustain its identity against a dominant, often racist white culture. Significantly, experimental jazz also became part of the oppositional culture in those Communist countries that sought rigorous state control of musical expression.

Jazz originated among oppressed and disadvantaged parts of the population of the United States, some of whose very recent ancestors had still been slaves. For these people jazz was – and in some places still is – a form of expression that gave them a cultural identity often denied them by the rest of their society. A reminder of how such socio-political issues have not gone away was apparent in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. In New Orleans it was the deprived African-American population, many of whom were still carrying on the jazz traditions of their home city, that bore the brunt of the catastrophe. Many developments in jazz are, then, closely linked to issues in a particular society, such as racial discrimination, or the cultural effects of a rapidly changing capitalist economy. On the one hand, jazz has been a form of resistance to an unjust dominant culture which relegated (and still does relegate) many African Americans to an inferior economic and social status. On the other hand, though, jazz has – in the "Swing Era" from the 1930s onwards, for example – at times been a commercially very successful form of music. The dilemmas of commercially successful jazz are echoed in the situation now familiar in rock and pop music. The quality of the music can be affected by market influences, and any assessment of jazz must take this into account.

Issues like these mean that the academic study of jazz makes special demands. Serious academic writing about jazz was comparatively rare until fairly recently, and many university music departments still do not have staff specializing in jazz. The reasons for this relate closely to the reasons for the contentious status of jazz. The fact that jazz is not primarily notated and so relies a great deal on recordings also, as we shall see, affects these issues. Jazz musicians have always had a complex relationship to "legitimate," "classical" music, both rejecting it for being "square," and yet also drawing on it for all kinds of musical resources. "Classical" composers have in turn drawn on jazz for new approaches, and have also at times regarded it as inferior to the music that they themselves produce. (When they do use jazz, they tend not to assimilate it fully into their style: listen, for instance, to Stravinsky's "jazz-inspired" *Ebony Concerto* (1946), which by no means sounds "like jazz," but does make use of certain of its features.) As the borderlines between most kinds of music have become more porous in recent years, this mixture of rejection and assimilation has come to seem less important in some quarters, and some jazz is now widely regarded as simply a part of serious modern music. Issues in the academic responses to jazz have, then, to do with the evaluation of the relationship between jazz and other kinds of music, and with jazz's relationship to the societies in which it is played.

History and context

"Jazz" is still only around one hundred years old, having emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century, particularly, but not exclusively, in New Orleans, a port city that was ethnically and culturally very diverse. Jazz's development during the 1920s was affected by migration, particularly of African-American workers, from the rural South to the cities of the North, so that, for a time, Chicago became the center of the new music. Since the 1930s it has been New York that has often attracted and produced the most innovative musicians, though Kansas City and other cities have also played a major role. During the 1950s jazz on the West Coast of America became important. Since then jazz has become more and more international, for instance via its incorporation of Latin American styles, like Bossa Nova, so it is now hard to locate where the most important developments are. Because jazz has developed in such a rapid and varied manner, it is inevitable that much writing about it has been concerned to trace and understand its history, from collective improvisation in New Orleans to the ever more virtuosic forms of individual solo playing characteristic of many of the major forms of jazz.

Because of the lack of clear documented evidence and recordings, the "roots" of jazz are an endless topic of discussion. How much was the music that came to be called jazz based on African music, ragtime, popular song, gospel music, marching music, the blues, etc.? How was it that a mixture of influences from a great variety of places coalesced into something so different from what had gone before that it became the basis of a new kind of music that is now played all over the globe? Such questions cannot be answered in solely musical terms, and they require resources from sociology, anthropology, and other subjects if they are to be answered effectively. Given the magnitude of this task it is not surprising that writing about jazz rarely attends to all the dimensions required to do justice to it. Writing on jazz has, for example, tended towards the merely anecdotal, because it is concerned with the often colorful lives of the musicians without revealing much about the music; or towards the merely impressionistic, because it enthuses about the music without explaining what is special about it with any precision. This situation has changed in recent years, and the rigor and range of writing on jazz has substantially improved.

The history of jazz involves the development of the music from what was in effect a kind of (mainly) instrumental folk music with simple, if novel, harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic techniques, very often used as dance music, to the great complexity of some contemporary jazz, which takes up techniques from every conceivable kind of music in the search for new forms of expression. Just tracing such a development in technical terms – via aspects such as the extension of "permissible" notes and chords to include the flattened fifth, ninth, etc., or via the growing complexity of rhythms employed, or via the emergence of the solo as the main core of many forms of jazz – would fail to offer an

adequate interpretation of what these extensions of the "language" of jazz meant, both at the time they took place and since.

The extended language of a particular new jazz style may be regarded as unmusical by adherents of an earlier style – this was the attitude to the playing of saxophonist Ornette Coleman of many of the modern jazz players in the 1960s – and, if employed within an earlier style, may indeed sometimes make little musical sense. Is, though, each new development in jazz an advance on what preceded it, as many musicians who play new styles often suggest by criticizing earlier styles as being "corny," "cheesy," etc.? The difficulty in interpreting the attitude of such musicians becomes apparent in the fact that the history of jazz has also frequently involved the return to older styles, such as the revival of traditional New Orleans jazz that took place in the 1940s and 1950s both in Britain and Europe, and, to a lesser extent, in the United States, or the return from "jazz rock" and "fusion" to versions of bebop and other supposedly superseded styles in the 1980s.

These revivals could, on the one hand, be seen as involving a regression to something that had been replaced by more sophisticated or fashionable approaches, but on the other they could also be regarded as enabling the continuation of a unique form of musical expression, which might otherwise have been forgotten. This situation contrasts with what happens in classical music, where music from the past is now generally more important than most contemporary music. Performing older classical music is not usually regarded as involving a regression. Concern with "historically informed" performance practice does, though, introduce something analogous to a concern with regression, when a modern, and therefore anachronistic, style of performing comes to be regarded by some people as no longer valid. In jazz, reviving a style also has different consequences because what is produced is still likely to be improvised (though some revivals have involved note-for-note recreations), and so is new in some measure, even if the style may still be regarded as "old hat" by many musicians and fans. Musicians often mix elements of old and new styles, so that there is no necessary sense of a "linear progression" from one style to another. Indeed, the very notion of jazz "style" is questionable in this respect. The complexities of jazz history are apparent in such phenomena, and it is vital to be aware of how much assumptions about musical "progress," etc., will affect the writing of that history.

Technical descriptions alone evidently fail to do justice to these sorts of questions. An adequate historical account of any aspect of jazz therefore has to see how different assessments of the music relate to cultural, ideological, economic, and political matters. This leads to the following questions. Are changes in jazz styles just secondary signs of the social changes that they accompany? The move from collective improvisation to solo playing can be seen, for instance, as connected to the move from a more traditional, collective local culture to the individualist culture of big-city life. On the other hand, should the most significant forms of jazz be seen as themselves having social

and political effects, because they change peoples' attitudes to the culture in which they live, as some avant-garde music did in the 1960s? There is no simple answer to these questions, and a response to them requires specific research in each case because the music and its context are inextricably linked.

Questions about jazz history can highlight vital problems in the wider study of music. One way to approach these problems is to consider them in terms of the idea of competing "norms," i.e., of rules or expectations governing what is appropriate or inappropriate. Doing this allows one to connect historical and social issues to musical ones, by seeing how musical norms relate to social norms. An example of such a connection is how ways of playing jazz that seem closer to some of the norms of classical music, like some of the highly arranged and elegant swing music of the late 1930s, can come to seem too formal and "correct" in some contexts. Bebop reacts to this situation by offering a more aggressive and less "classical" musical alternative that is often linked to a more assertive social stance with regard to issues of racial and cultural injustice. At the same time, bebop can also be seen as relating to the social crises around World War II, which brought about rapid changes in the nature of American society that are echoed in the more intense, yet highly organized, nature of the music. Something analogous can be observed in the emergence of "free jazz" in the 1960s, which connects jazz to the more overtly political stance of the Civil Rights movement of the time by rejecting the musical norms of the "cool jazz" of the 1950s, because they can be associated with forms of social and political constraint.

Jazz that increases its harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic range, in a manner akin to that in which classical music changed from Bach to Schoenberg, is complemented, particularly in post-World War II jazz, by the development of often extreme expressive means – tonal distortion, aggressive dissonance, etc. – of the kind that also play a role in the classical avant-garde. The tensions between expressive intensity in jazz, and jazz's ability to communicate through melody, harmony, and rhythm in a manner akin to more traditional classical and popular music, echo difficulties in contemporary classical music, where the loss of a broader audience is often the price of pursuing the newest expressive approaches. One of the essential questions in the contemporary assessment of jazz history is, then, whether the drive for novelty, which has been the motor of jazz's astonishingly rapid development, should give way, as people like the trumpet player Wynton Marsalis now argue, to a cultivation of jazz's many traditions, or whether jazz should seek to remain the kind of avant-garde music it became when bebop challenged musical and social norms in the 1940s.

Improvisation and performance

The study of jazz should not, however, concentrate just on history. Jazz can be analyzed like any music, although the techniques for doing this can differ from

those in some other kinds of music. Much of the recent analysis of jazz is connected to the practice of learning to play jazz, and here some important issues become apparent. If you are studying a piece by Beethoven, the initial material of study is generally the score of the piece in question. This can be analyzed in harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic terms, and the analysis can be informed by comparison of recorded and live performances of the piece. Although there may be disagreements on the detail of the score, its main features will generally be well established, and performances that fail to do justice to those features will be regarded as inadequate. Disputes about historical performance styles have recently made it more apparent just how complex the relationship between score and performance can be, but the score remains the initial basis of interpretation (see chapter 2).

In jazz (and some other improvised forms of music) these relationships appear in a different manner. Even a big band like Duke Ellington's, which played highly arranged music, often did not have fully notated scores, though the majority of big bands do. Such scores are, however, generally only studied in arranging classes. The initial material of study in jazz is most often a recorded performance, or a tune written as melody with chord symbols, rather than a full score. At the same time, learning to play jazz just with aural resources is difficult. Learning generally requires written notation as well. Written "scores" in jazz generally take the form of transcriptions of solos from significant recordings. The point of transcriptions is primarily practical. They are intended to enable players to extend the resources they use in improvisation, transcribing solos or parts of solos being a tried and tested technique for jazz musicians. Such "scores," many of which are now being commercially produced in the manner of traditional musical scores, are evidently secondary to the original performances, as anyone who tries to play them convincingly without having heard the original performance will testify. Much that matters in jazz cannot be adequately notated – the tone and attack of horn players in particular is essential to their music-making – so learning has to rely both on recordings and notation. It is unexceptional that there is a different kind of relationship between sound and score in differing kinds of music, such as folk music and classical music, but what specific consequences does this have with regard to jazz?

Jazz is closely connected to the development of new technologies. Major changes in jazz styles take place with often remarkable rapidity because of the new capacities to broadcast, record, and electronically manipulate music that are characteristic of the twentieth century, which are already taking on new forms in the new millennium. The need to hear an actual performance, rather than just read a transcription, is imperative, because jazz lives from the individuality of its performers. This means that any bibliography for the study of jazz will need to include a discography: recordings are probably more important than books for knowing about jazz. At the same time, the speed and complexity of much jazz improvisation means that learning to use

some of the techniques of a major jazz musician depends on the ability to slow the music down with technological means in order to transcribe it. The role of the improvising "composer" in jazz is different from what it is in European classical music. However, the difference between improvised composition and written composition is probably only a relative one, because similar analytical techniques to those applicable to written composition can be applied to improvised jazz once it is transcribed.

Much jazz is still, of course, improvised on the basis of composed pieces, where melody and harmony are to some degree fixed, though they are very often altered by the performers. There is, however, considerable debate about the extent to which improvised performances are really spontaneous "creation," in the sense that something wholly new emerges in the performance. The complexity of some of the melodic phrases encountered through chord-based improvisation in modern jazz in particular is almost impossible to attain wholly from scratch, however skilled the musician. The ability to create new melodic turns of phrase relies on having learned to use a great deal of pre-prepared material beforehand, and on techniques of varying and transforming such material by the use of embellishment, sequencing, etc. The saxophonist Charlie Parker, who sounds remarkably spontaneous in most performances, has been shown to use a number of essential melodic patterns most of the time, many of which he developed quite early in his career. Parker developed some of his material from listening to saxophonists Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, and others, but his manner of using it makes it sound very different. It is his ability to manipulate and vary this material in his own manner that is remarkable, and this gives his playing its uniquely spontaneous feeling. Some of saxophonist John Coltrane's most virtuosic solos, like the astonishingly fast one on "Countdown" (on the album *Giant Steps* of 1960), consist mainly of pre-practiced sequences of four notes (many of which recur several times), his remarkable achievement lying in the way these are built into a coherent overall solo at very high speed.

One way of assessing the nature of improvisation in this respect is via comparison of different "takes" of the same tune at a recording session. Are the solos played in very similar ways, or is each solo constructed very differently? Some musicians will repeat an idea or ideas each time, because they "work," others will do something new each time. Jazz here poses interesting questions about musical evaluation, because decisions about what matters musically must be made in assessing whether spontaneous novelty can be more important than more traditional musical virtues. Do we, for instance, assess those soloists in Duke Ellington's band who over many years played much the same solo (one sometimes part-composed by Ellington) in a piece less positively than musicians who almost always play something different, even though the Ellington band solos are excellent in musical terms? Louis Armstrong sometimes improvised something new each time, but at other times he had worked out all but the smallest details of a solo and repeated

them. If both performances sound equally spontaneous, does it matter that one is more improvised than the other? What of the many kinds of "free jazz," which do not rely on a chordal structure underlying the improvisation? How are performances of this kind to be evaluated?

These questions also have consequences for learning to play jazz. The phenomenon of the technically excellent player who is just playing material learned from transcriptions of the great soloists has become increasingly common, and such players are often criticized. However, jazz has relied enormously on such imitation from the beginning: is it more questionable now because the means that allow imitation are more readily available and more easily used?

This issue has been important in discussions of methods for the teaching of jazz. Playing jazz has to do with "finding your own voice," but is it so problematic to have a voice derived from that of the great players? Is this situation any different from that in classical music, where talented "second-rank" composers have often used many of the means established by their "first-rank" contemporaries? The problem here is how to establish a balance between acquiring the know-how and technical means to express oneself while being able to find a way of playing that is one's own. This problem is common to many kinds of music. However, in jazz, unlike in classical music, it is sometimes the case that technical limitations may actually enable a player to establish their own voice. Musicians such as the clarinetist Pee Wee Russell, or the saxophonist Archie Shepp, who have relatively limited techniques, but play in an intriguingly idiosyncratic manner, illustrate this point. Perhaps most strikingly, trumpeter Miles Davis lacked the virtuoso technique of some of his contemporaries, but had more effect on jazz than they did because of his ability to explore highly diverse kinds of music.

Jazz as "critical music"

The fact that jazz musicians do not necessarily need to possess a command of all the main technical resources available in order to produce something unique might, however, be seen as conflicting with the widespread demand in jazz to "pay one's dues" by going through a difficult apprenticeship in technique and musicianship. The "jam session" and the competitive climate it creates has, after all, been essential in the development of jazz. The tension between musical competence and the desire for individual expression is vital to the understanding of jazz, as the following examples can suggest. During the revival of traditional jazz in Britain in the 1950s, some players prided themselves on their indifference to refined technical skill, regarding it as an obstacle to "authentic" expression of the kind they heard in the simple style of the older, recently rediscovered, jazz musicians from New Orleans, like the clarinetist George Lewis. Jazz was seen here as being critical of a

commercialized musical culture by keeping to its "folk" roots, rather than being corrupted by urban sophistication. The danger involved in this stance is of relying on the myth that an authentic, pure state of the music has been sullied by later developments. We never know that we are hearing the original of any kind of music, because it will always be related to something that precedes it.

A less problematic example of the prioritizing of expression over conventional technique is offered by John Coltrane. His music on the album *Giant Steps* reached a level of technical development that threatened to make it hard for all but the most highly trained musicians to play jazz of this kind. However, starting at the same time as *Giant Steps*, Coltrane concentrated less on rapidly changing, complex chord sequences, and instead played often relatively simple "modal" pieces based on a very few scales (though he soon incorporated some of the harmonic complexity of *Giant Steps* into his improvising on these pieces). The resulting music remained very challenging, but musicians more oriented towards "free jazz," like Shepp, and saxophonists Albert Ayler and Pharaoh Sanders, who did not have Coltrane's conventional technical facility on the saxophone, were then able to add new, unconventional approaches to the music, and so influenced Coltrane in turn. Coltrane explicitly connected his music in this period to political issues. Listen to him, for example, on the track "Alabama" (on *Live at Birdland* of 1963), which relates to an appalling racist murder of the time, which is both an anguished protest and a song of great beauty and simplicity, or to the much more dissonant "free" playing of his last recordings, which protest in a much more angry manner.

The conflicting demands on jazz musicians of expression and technique are perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the record that really established the modal approach to jazz, Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue* (1959), on which Coltrane played tenor saxophone, is one of the most commercially successful jazz records of all time. The balance between the simplified framework of the tunes and the challenge of improvising in a new manner that the musicians faced resulted in a record that was both innovative and accessible to a wider audience. Since then jazz has continued to negotiate the tension between innovation and audience appeal, and approaches to the study of jazz need to be aware of the significance of this tension in different contexts.

Jazz and the academy

Musical ideas of considerable sophistication and complexity developed by Coltrane and other leading modern jazz players, like Parker, Davis, trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, and pianists Bud Powell and Bill Evans, have been adopted by many musicians in their improvisations, and this points to a key contemporary issue. As the resources for transcribing jazz become ever more readily

available – computer technology has also made things increasingly easy – the "canon" of great jazz has become more subject to academic treatment. This often leads to methods of teaching jazz which become more like the graded methods employed in teaching classical music. The consequence is a widespread general improvement in technical competence: there are many musicians now able to play at a level previously only attainable by a few stars. However, the changes in academic evaluations of modern music that have led to previously "marginal" forms, like jazz, being taken more seriously in this way can also threaten to defuse their critical potential, by creating norms that may inhibit new ways of playing and lead to conformism. It is vital to remember, though, that jazz, especially in the USA, is no longer a dominant form of popular music, rock and pop having cornered the market. In this respect, the fact that jazz has joined the mainstream of musical studies might also have some advantages, because it enables the art form to survive and develop without being subject to the market pressures that distort the production and reception of much rock music.

Chapter summary

- Jazz both rejects and assimilates other kinds of music.
- Jazz makes different demands from those encountered in the study of other kinds of music, relying heavily on such techniques as transcription of recordings of performances.
- The social and political history of jazz is inseparable from any assessment of the development of the music.
- Jazz can be seen as a critical form of music which challenges questionable social norms, but it can also be very commercially successful, and jazz studies has begun to become a more formalized academic discipline in recent years.

Discussion topics

- Should jazz concentrate on critical opposition to other kinds of music, or should it seek to assimilate other music?
- Is jazz now too concerned with its own history, rather than with its own future?
- Does jazz rely more on innovation than tradition, or vice versa?
- Is the future of jazz as a popular or as a more esoteric form of music?

Further reading

Most of these books include suggestions for listening, as one cannot learn about jazz by reading alone. This list does not include books on discography and concentrates mainly on informative historical accounts which talk about the specifics of the music and on some manuals for learning jazz theory.

Berliner, Paul F. (1994), *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (Chicago: Chicago University Press).
An investigation of the nature of improvisation.

Cooke, Mervyn, and Horn, David (2003) (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Jazz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
A selection of essays covering the main issues in the study of jazz.

DeVeaux, Scott (1997), *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press).
A detailed musical and social account of the emergence of the music that made jazz a radical form of art.

Gioia, Ted (1999), *The History of Jazz* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
A readable account of jazz history.

Levine, Mark (1995), *The Jazz Theory Book* (Petaluma, CA: Sher Music).
A good practical guide to the rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic techniques of modern jazz.

Gridley, Mark, C. (2003), *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall).
A historical and analytical account of jazz; a CD of examples to accompany the book can also be obtained.

Rawlins, Robert, Bahha, Nor Eddine, and Tagliarino, Barrett (2005), *Jazzology: The Encyclopedia of Jazz Theory* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard).
A compendium of major elements of jazz theory.

Schuller, Gunther (1986), *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development* (New York: Oxford University Press).
A historical and analytical account of early recorded jazz.

Schuller, Gunther (2005), *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930–45* (New York: Oxford University Press).
A historical and analytical account of swing.

Szwed, John F. (2000), *Jazz 101: A Complete Guide to Learning and Loving Jazz* (New York: Hyperion).
A general history of jazz which links it to developments in society at the same time as conveying the excitement of the music.