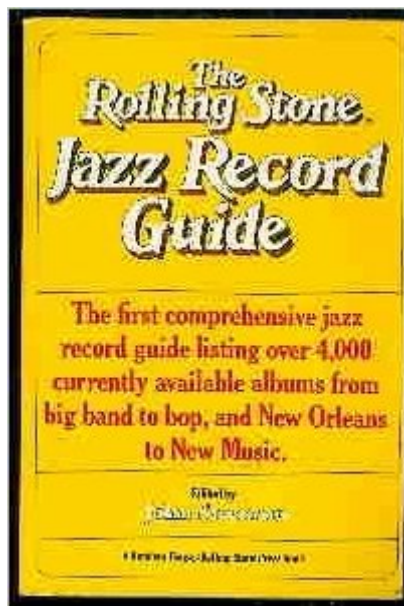


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Rolling Stone Jazz Record Guide



Synopsis

Here are sixty-odd years of recorded jazz brillaintly reviewed in one essential source. Covering more than 4,000 currently available jazz albums, this long-needed work will remain the standard reference in the field for years to come.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Here are sixty-odd years of recorded jazz brillaintly reviewed in one essential source. Covering more than 4,000 currently available jazz albums, this long-needed work will remain the standard reference in the field for years to come.

This book is incredibly dated, as the title makes clear -- it's not a Jazz CD Guide, but a Jazz Record Guide. Remember records? They were thin, 12-1/2 inch platters made out of vinyl that turned around on what they used to call "record players" or "turntables."Unfortunately, the book does not accurately reflect which recordings are presently available by major jazz artists, because thousands of classic jazz works have been reissued since publication of this book over a decade ago. For example, there are at least a half dozen recordings of Kenny Dorham (my personal favorite) on a variety of labels which were reissued since this volume was published. Also, several works which were available in 1985 are no longer being marketed today. This is inevitable with a work of this type, especially in today's market, where reissued works are appearing faster than crabgrass after a summer rain. Nevertheless, the book remains a valuable resource for anyone wishing to find out

about the essential works of the greatest artists in the history of recorded jazz. I purchased it myself around '89 and have frequently turned to it for helpful guidance. The book contains alphabetically arranged entries for the principal artists in the entire spectrum of jazz, with listings of and a rating of the worth of each recording -- one to five stars. While some subjectivity invariably comes into play in the rating process, it is generally honest and reliable. Do you wish to know which recordings are generally considered the finest from Coltrane's later years? What's the "must-have" album by Monk? Have artists such as Grover Washington, John Klemmer, and Bob James ever made any real contributions to jazz, or would your money be better spent on something by Lee Morgan, Clifford Brown, or Art Blakey? This book provides answers to these and many other related questions. I would love to see the publisher expand and update this useful work.

Yes, this is dated, and that's part of its value. I had a copy of this and filled it with notations in the 1980s. The lists of available records and their ratings were my entrance into areas of jazz I didn't know and came to love, beyond the obvious Miles Davis and (back then) Weather Report. How things change! I tossed it some years ago and was fine, using another jazz guide (or the web), but recently I realized how many albums (and I do mean 12 inch vinyl, but most of this stuff is also on CD) are not currently available. I was finding things at garage sales and wanted a quick resource--and so I bought a new (used) copy of this book. It's more valuable than ever. There are complaints about any star rating system. (Lee Morgan might seem overrated, but try to listen again fresh--it's a sound that Blue Note championed and has a smooth post-bop quality that just barely avoids musak at times, but it does avoid it.) Exactly. We all have opinions. And we won't agree most of the time. Good! (I remember the first Rolling Stone guide to Rock records gave Led Zeppelin lots of 3 star ratings, during a period of critical disdain, and now they've been bumped to 5 stars.) So here's what really works--think of them as relative ratings. So within a musician's body of work, the higher rated albums are more likely to be places to start. Let's say you discover Joe Henderson for the first time. The text gives some fast, great background and a bit of perspective on his place in the history. And the stars give a sense of what album or two to try. There's always listening to clips on or iTunes to get a feel for things, too. Anyway, I think for a couple bucks plus shipping this book is essential stuff. Who cares if you agree? I kind of prefer having my own opinion. Or checking a second book (like the Penguin guide, which has its own bias). Or spending 99 cents and trying a cut here and there by some folks you are curious about. That's loving music, and that's really what this book is about!

A useless book that gives out 5 Stars as though it is water. Unbelievably uncritical, this book will not steer consumers to the very best work of an artist. Stick with the Penguin guide. It isn't perfect, but its vastly superior and pretty consistent regarding giving higher grades to the better albums and lower grades to the truly lesser works.

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