




Jazz icons : heroes, myths and the jazz tradition


Whyton, T 2010, **Jazz icons : heroes, myths and the jazz tradition**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.


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Abstract

Today, jazz history is dominated by iconic figures who have taken on an almost God-like status. From Satchmo to Duke, Bird to Trane, these legendary jazzmen form the backbone of the jazz tradition. Jazz icons not only provide musicians and audiences with figureheads to revere but have also come to stand for a number of values and beliefs that shape our view of the music itself. *Jazz Icons* explores the growing significance of icons in jazz and discusses the reasons why the music's history is increasingly dependent on the legacies of 'great men'. Using a series of individual case studies, Whyton examines the influence of jazz icons through different forms of historical mediation, including the recording, language, image and myth. The book encourages readers to take a fresh look at their relationship with iconic figures of the past and challenges many of the dominant narratives in jazz today. Contents Introduction: jazz narratives and sonic icons; 1. Jazz icons, heroes and myths; 2. Jazz and the disembodied voice; 3. Not a wonderful world: Louis Armstrong meets Kenny G; 4. Men can't help acting on impulse!; 5. Witnessing and the jazz anecdote; 6. Dispelling the myth: essentialist Ellington; 7. Birth of the school; Bibliography.

Item Type: Book

Themes: [Media, Digital Technology and the Creative Economy](#)
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Schools: [Schools > School of Arts & Media > Arts, Media and Communication Research Centre](#)

Publisher: Cambridge University Press

Refereed: Yes

ISBN: 9780521896450

Depositing User: **AR Whyton**

Date Deposited: 19 Jan 2012 13:07


Last Modified: 22 Aug 2018 14:09

URI: <http://usir.salford.ac.uk/id/eprint/19394>

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Jazz icons not only provide musicians and audiences with figureheads to revere but have also come to stand for a number of values and beliefs that sh... From Satchmo to Duke, Bird to Trane, these legendary jazzmen form the backbone of the jazz tradition. Jazz icons not only provide musicians and audiences with figureheads to revere but have also come to stand for a number of values and beliefs that sh [Leer mas...] Editorial. But the principal argument of Jazz Icons is that jazz scholarship has suffered from its insistent focus on the lives and works of the music's "great men". We need to move on. Also vital in the myth-making process is a wealth of anecdotal reverence by fellow musicians, the subject of an interesting chapter here. Icons are, then, a product of reputation management, which is often supported by commercial as well as critical input, as Whyton illustrates with a case study of the marketing of Coltrane's recordings for the Impulse! label. As academic Tony Whyton states in Jazz Icons: Heroes, Myths and the Jazz Tradition, jazz's history is usually presented as a straightforward, linear development, a tendency which fails to represent the complex skein of musical threads that have combined from the get-go—and expanded ever since—to produce the great mongrel that is jazz. Jazz Icons is essential reading for anyone interested in better understanding their relationship with jazz icons and it will no doubt change the way many of us perceive our relationship with jazz. Highly recommended. Post a comment.