



Jazz in Its Time

Martin Williams

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Praised variously as "perhaps the greatest living jazz critic" (Gunther Schuller) and "one of the most distinguished critics (of anything) this country has produced," (Gary Giddins, *The Village Voice*), Martin Williams has been perceptively chronicling the development of jazz for more than 30 years. Both *The Jazz Tradition*, which many consider a classic history of jazz, and his previous collection of jazz writings, *Jazz Heritage*, received the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award for Excellence in Music Criticism.

In this, Williams's newest jazz collection, the author gathers together many of his best pieces and covers new ground, with short columns on Teddy Wilson and George Winston and a longer article, "How Long Has This Been Going On?," examining the current state of jazz. In this last work, Williams notes that jazz is experiencing a period of "stylistic retrenchment or, if you will, a period of conservatism," and questions the fusion of jazz with rock. Williams cites the opinion of Wynton Marsalis and a number of other musicians, who "seem to see the whole fusion thing as a kind of commercial opportunism and artistic blind alley, maybe even a betrayal of the music."

Arranged roughly according to the form of the writing (music reviews, profiles, etc.) the pieces included here examine the musicianship of jazz greats from Sidney Bechet to Ornette Coleman, including Lionel Hampton, Lee Konitz, Art Farmer, and others. There are also thought pieces on the development and direction of jazz and jazz scholarship. Together, these works provide an insightful overview of the development of jazz over the past 20 years.

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