John Edward Hasse and Tad Lathrop. *Discover Jazz.* Boston: Pearson Education, Inc., 2012. 384 pages. $81.47. ISBN 978-0136026372

Thomas E. Larson. *History and Tradition of Jazz.* 4th ed. Dubuque: Kendall Hunt, 2012. 255 pages. $107.05. ISBN: 978-1-4652-0491-2

John Behling

Jazz history courses are booming as music departments seek to address both the needs of increasing numbers of jazz performance majors and the goals of multicultural education. Two new jazz history textbooks seek to meet these requirements and objectives. *Discover Jazz* by John Edward Hasse and Tad Lathrop takes a broad, culturally grounded view of jazz, while *History and Tradition of Jazz* by Thomas E. Larson takes a more nuts-and-bolts approach that focuses on the history of styles and musicians, accompanied by a simpler and shorter discussion of jazz's historical and cultural contexts. Both books target general audiences and are intended for introductory courses.

Since the 1970s, when the first jazz history textbooks were published, writers have more or less told the story of jazz from the point of view of either musicologists or performers. *Discover Jazz* follows one path; *History and Tradition of Jazz* follows the other. These approaches to teaching jazz history were first articulated in textbooks written by Frank Tirro and Mark C. Gridley; new textbooks can be judged by how they build upon these original foundations and recognize advances in jazz scholarship. Frank Tirro's *Jazz: A History*, first published in 1977, represents the musicologist's perspective and has even been referred to as the "jazz Grout."[1]

1. Frank Tirro, *Jazz: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977; 2nd ed. 1993); for the characterization of Tirro's book as "jazz Grout," see Ken Prouty, *Knowing Jazz: Community, Pedagogy, and Canon in the Information Age* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 96.

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Tirro's history begins in Africa and ends (in its second edition) in the 1990s, and he declares that jazz is America's classical music. *Jazz: A History* is an inclusive, unifying, and validating account of jazz. Though not without its critics,[2] this text remains both literally and figuratively one of the weightier jazz history textbooks available.

Mark C. Gridley's *Jazz Styles* presents the performer's take on jazz history and focuses on stylistic development and the influences of performers.[3] Rather than beginning in jazz prehistory, Gridley first defines the core characteristics of jazz, framing jazz history not so much as a historical or cultural question but as a technical musical problem. For Gridley the meaning of jazz is in its sound, and while the eleventh edition of the text contains much historical and cultural information, he continues to be suspicious of extra-musical considerations. "Certainly, jazz does not exist in a vacuum," he writes, "yet the media have exaggerated the contributions of non-musical factors" (p. 4). Given the many excellent contemporary cultural studies of jazz by Monson, DeVeaux, and others, this critique no longer seems defensible.[4] However, in all but one of the schools where I have studied or taught, performance faculty have taught jazz history, so it is easy to understand why *Jazz Styles*, with its emphasis on purely musical issues, is still a widely used text. Tirro and Gridley set the standards that new textbooks must meet and supersede.

Jazz history texts address two different audiences: jazz performance majors whose first commitment is to their lessons and ensembles, and non-majors interested in satisfying cultural studies requirements. As a performer, I understand the need for students to gain a quick grasp of the history of jazz styles; however, as an ethnomusicologist, I believe that considering music without carefully considering its historical and cultural contexts inevitably leads to poor understandings of jazz, whether as art or as cultural practice. *Discover Jazz* and *History and Tradition of Jazz* speak to both non-musicians and musicians. *Discover Jazz* explores the history, cultural context, and sound of jazz in fresh and interesting ways that will appeal to many kinds of students. *The History and Tradition of Jazz* takes Gridley's text as its model, although in simplifying the story of jazz for non-musicians it loses some of what makes Gridley's book worthwhile.

By its title alone *Discover Jazz* presents itself as a different kind of jazz history. Some scholars have criticized jazz histories, noting that a single unified narrative often erases the debates that inform the construction of the jazz

2. Lawrence Gushee, "Review," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 32, no. 3 (1978): 535–40 and Lewis Porter, "Book Reviews," *Black Perspectives in Music* 6, no. 2 (1978): 233–37.

3. Mark Gridley, *Jazz Styles and Analysis*, 11th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2012).

4. Ingrid Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) and Scott DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

canon.[5] While titles like Gridley's *Jazz Styles* and Tirro's *Jazz: A History* imply that jazz history is a clearly circumscribed topic, *Discover Jazz* invites students to hunt for something that might not be so easily found. Three propositions guide this search. Hasse and Lathrop state that *Discover Jazz* is "inclusive," "contextual," and "student-friendly" (pp. x–xi). The result is an informative and entertaining textbook that amply explores the jazz canon in great musical and social detail while at the same time gently challenging the borders of that canon by exploring the many ways that jazz is "a new music that carrie[s] a message of freedom: freedom to improvise new forms of expression; freedom to cross cultural, economic, racial, and political boundaries" (p. viii). This theme of freedom enables the authors' agenda of discovery.

Discover Jazz asks questions of jazz history, but those questions are subtly woven into a text that presents the generally accepted jazz canon. Like most jazz history textbooks, *Discover Jazz* begins by introducing students to the musical elements of jazz and to the general historical and cultural contexts informing jazz performance. Following this introduction are chapters on the precursors to jazz, early jazz, the swing era, bebop and modern jazz, mainstream jazz, free and exploratory jazz, and fusion. Unlike many earlier textbooks, *Discover Jazz* also includes chapters on Latin jazz and jazz outside the United States. In this way the text tells the common story of jazz and America, while also proposing that jazz has become something more than "America's classical music."

Hasse and Lathrop teach and challenge the canon by presenting conventional and unconventional material with the same enthusiasm and respect. For example, they discuss Louis Armstrong and provide an excellent listening guide for the almost de rigueur discussion of "West End Blues." At the same time the authors offer a respectful account of Paul Whiteman, recognizing his importance as "the King of Jazz" in the 1920s. Such a claim seems troubling from a contemporary perspective, since Whiteman's "sweet" music sounds so different from the "hot" music of African American performers such as Louis Armstrong, who probably ought to wear the crown. However, the thoughtful treatment of Whiteman recognizes his importance in the music industry of his day, and his story illustrates how jazz—both the term and the music—were understood differently in the 1920s than they are now. Elsewhere, Hasse and Lathrop buck convention by including bebop and cool jazz in the same chapter. While many see these jazz styles as representing opposing forces, here they are presented as sharing many musical elements and performers while remaining somewhat oppositional. In one of many "Issues" text boxes included throughout the text, Hasse raises the question of musical revolution and makes the case that jazz styles can be viewed both as continuations and revolutions, and he proposes

5. Scott DeVeaux, "Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography," *Black American Literature Forum* 25, no. 3 (1991): 525–60 and Prouty, *Knowing Jazz*.

that artistic revolutions in jazz are similar to other twentieth-century artistic conflicts, such as the 1913 Paris riot following the premiere of *The Rite of Spring* (pp. 136–37). Here and elsewhere the authors avoid dogmatic assertions about jazz. Instead, they invite students to consider debates about the music, and they encourage them think about how jazz practices intersect with the world beyond jazz. As the authors affirm, "The story of jazz is not one story but a series of different encounters between musicians, historical events, musical influences, and social forces" (p. x), and their text itself embodies this proposition by including chapters by Bob Blumentahl, John Litweiler, and other notable experts.

Hasse and Lathrop weave together musical and cultural analysis in a way that is clear, insightful, and entertaining. A good example of this is John Hasse's discussion of Pink Anderson's recording of "Boll Weevil." In four short and entertaining paragraphs Hasse brings together the biography and performance practices of Pink Anderson, the literal and metaphorical significance of the boll weevil, the formal characteristics of blues music and lyrics, and the differences between Piedmont blues, Mississippi blues, and the blues of W. C. Handy (p. 38). Hasse's smooth blending of musical and cultural elements helped me to hear "Boll Weevil" in a way I hadn't heard it before.

Graphics and layout also help to make *Discover Jazz* a lively book. Text boxes, photos, and other graphic elements, including recurring sections in categories such as "Take Note," "Listening Focus," "Listening Guide," and "Issues," deliver information in readily understandable units that are easy to remember. And hardly a page goes by that does not include beautiful photographs or artwork. Most chapters also include a section called "A Closer Look," in which annotated photos introduce musicians and connect them to concepts discussed in the chapter. Old photographs can distance their subjects from the reader, but these annotated photos bring subjects closer. While the text boxes and photos generally provide for lively reading, they are sometimes overwhelming, and I found myself occasionally losing the main thread of the text amid the flurry of insets.

Discover Jazz is accompanied by an online website, where students can take pre- and post-chapter tests and study digital flash cards, and instructors can find ready-made teaching aids. My favorite feature of the website is the animated "Listening Guides," where recordings trigger highlighting in the appropriate sections of the formal outline. These guides will be especially helpful for students with limited musical training who might have trouble hearing musical form.

While *Discover Jazz* represents the story of jazz from the musicologist's perspective, *History and Tradition of Jazz* by Thomas E. Larson tells the story of jazz from the perspective of a performer by focusing mainly on styles, musicians, and musical influence. Larson discusses historical and cultural context, but only briefly. His goal is to present jazz to non-music majors in a one-semester introductory course that avoids overwhelming non-specialists with technical musical

details while still presenting an informative account of jazz. The resulting textbook presents a fairly conventional overview of the jazz canon that does not inundate the student with details. Some students and instructors will find this text appropriate, while others might find its abbreviated approach unsatisfying.

Like many jazz history textbooks, *History and Tradition of Jazz* begins with chapters on the basic elements of jazz and its precursors. Subsequent chapters cover the canonical periods, styles, and performers, and include discussions of early jazz in New Orleans, the jazz age in Chicago, jazz in New York and Kansas City, and the swing era. Chapter 7 is devoted to bebop, which Larson characterizes as an unqualified revolution. This chapter marks a turning point in the text, and it seems that bebop and post-bop styles are what Larson really wants to talk about. The bebop chapter is followed by chapters on stylistic fragmentation, jazz in the 1960s, and jazz today. Larson deals with a variety of post-bop styles in an appreciative and insightful way, making the book's last chapters the most satisfying. The text is supported by a website and access to online musical examples, as well as a sample syllabus, test materials, and flash cards for students. These materials will be of interest to students and instructors alike.

History and Tradition of Jazz will be useful as an introduction to jazz styles, but it might be less suitable for courses intended to fulfill a cultural studies requirement. Larson's perspective as a contemporary jazz performer affects his interpretations of earlier styles and cultural moments. Larson's guiding metaphor is the jazz performer as hero. Jazz, he asserts, "is a story of not only music and musicians but also the struggle to achieve, to create, to invent and re-invent, and to sacrifice for the sake of art" (p. vii). His focus on the heroic soloist sometimes leads him to judge earlier styles in light of current aesthetic values. For example, he writes that bebop was "nothing less than an insurgency" that "washed away the musical clichés of swing" (p. 115). Such a view normalizes contemporary bebop-influenced jazz combo practices and is at odds with some contemporary research on the development of bebop.[6] He also asserts that "the highest form of individual expression in a jazz performance is the improvised solo" (p. 2). While this certainly describes many contemporary practices, such statements seem to marginalize important composers such as Duke Ellington, not to mention countless singers, arrangers, and others who express themselves through jazz but are not thought of as improvising soloists.

The text also suffers from writing that is at times inelegant and a bit sloppy. Larson writes, for example, of "changing historical facts" rather than opinions (p. vii). He refers to Wayne Shorter as an "exceptionally talented writer of songs" (p. 167); Shorter is a prolific composer, but few, if any, of his compositions are songs. These kinds of mistakes, though minor, are disruptive and inappropriate. My students already have too many examples of careless writing; their textbook

6. DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop*.

ought to exemplify a higher standard, one that will serve as a model for their own essays.

Larson's word choices at times point to more serious issues, when they imply negative judgments of the people and practices he discusses. For example, he calls the ring shout a "state of hysteria" (p. 15) and characterizes religious expressions in blues lyrics as "superstition" (p. 23). Also, of Robert Johnson's influential 1936 recording of "Cross Road Blues," Larson writes that Johnson "noodles around on the guitar" (p. 24). Such statements seem to disparage the religious and musical practices of rural African Americans and implicitly to valorize the musical and social values of academic jazz performers. These kinds of problems occur only sporadically in *History and Tradition of Jazz*, but that they occur at all is cause for concern.

Jazz history textbooks bear a heavy burden, since they must make complicated musical and cultural issues accessible to both jazz performance majors and students with no musical training. With *Discover Jazz* Hasse and Lathrop show that the study of music and culture can come together to produce an informative and lively textbook. *History and Tradition of Jazz*, on the other hand, shows that one can present a brief account of jazz styles, but without a nuanced approach to cultural and historical contexts the story told presents a limited view not only of music's cultural contexts but of its sounds as well.