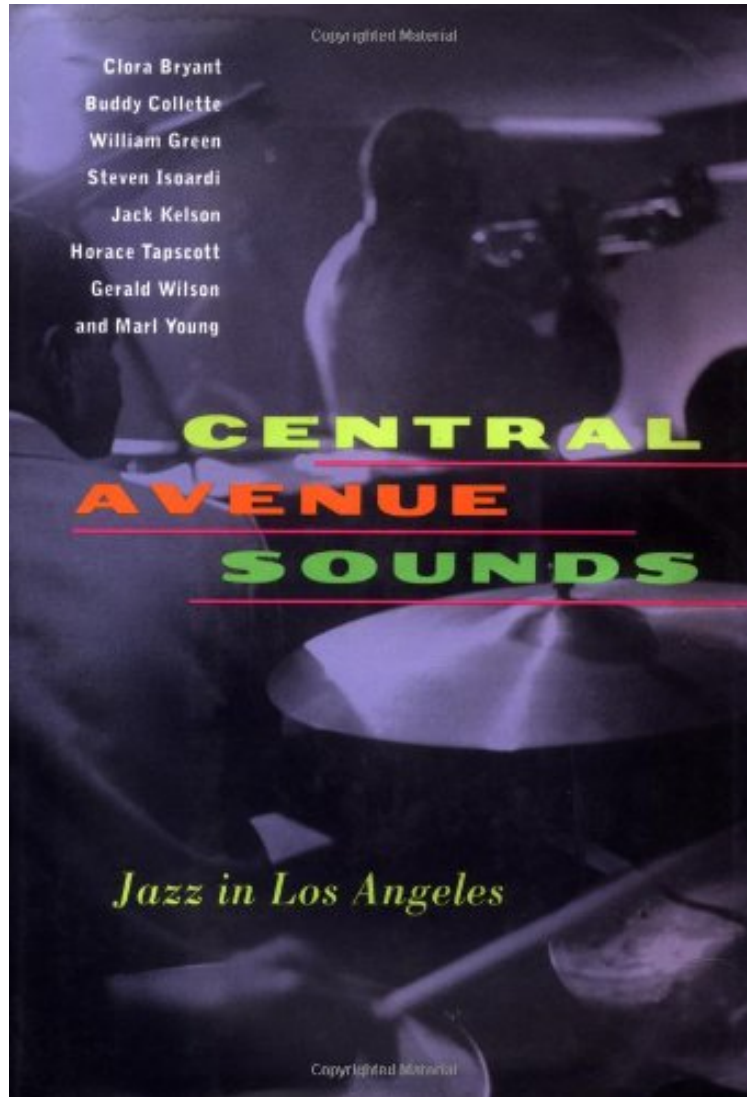


(Mobile ebook) Central Avenue Sounds: Jazz in Los Angeles

Central Avenue Sounds: Jazz in Los Angeles

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From University of California Press : Central Avenue Sounds: Jazz in Los Angeles before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Central Avenue Sounds: Jazz in Los Angeles:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Top read on Los Angeles History By SpikeGreat book. I had bought my 1st copy several years back. This 2nd was to be a gift. The book explains the phenomena of Central Avenue. Early Los Angeles was very segregated. Land was parceled off with conditions that if you sold your property there were clauses as to who you could sell to. Pockets of areas were set aside for Blacks, and so the neighborhoods filled with solid ethnic bulk. Yes you were in a different world. the community pride was evident. Traveling Musicians weren't

able to stay at just any hotel when they arrived in LA. the Hotel Dunbar was a shining jewel to many big name, well know black artists. Central avenue was a cultural area for a growing style of Music. There were 2 musicians unions in LA. One for whites one for blacks. the White unions got the creme of the crop jobs while the Black unions were less fortunate in locations available or Venues to play. The Black unions wanted to merge with the White union to get the better jobs. Many in the White Unions realised the talent pool that would be gained but there was still a long row to hoe before the merge would happen. Eventually the merge did take place in 1953. the Black artists were able to move more freely but at a cost. Unfortunately that cost was the dilution of their community. I don't think you have to know anything about jazz to get into this book. It's more the History of LA Music. Very interesting glad I have a copy in my Library. I just finished it for a Second time.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. THE TESTIMONY OF EYEWITNESSESBy Steve WyzardAs a lifelong Los Angeles-area resident, I was amazed when I read these stories of the Central Avenue jazz scene of the 1920s through 1950s. There is literally nothing left today, and if it weren't for books like this, an entire vibrant chapter of Los Angeles history (to say nothing of jazz history) would be mostly forgotten. Published in 1998, Central Avenue Sounds: Jazz in Los Angeles is a project of the UCLA Oral History Program. Nineteen musicians who lived through the times and worked/played on Central Avenue are given a chance to share their stories for posterity. This book was compiled just in time, as a number of those who were interviewed died before publication, and most (if not all) are no longer with us today.Cynics will no doubt dismiss these efforts as the ramblings of senior citizens, dropping names and repeating the same stories over and over with embellishments. Others will disparage this book as merely a local history project, with Los Angeles not being considered as crucial to jazz as New York, Chicago, New Orleans, St.Louis, Kansas City, et al. Charles Mingus and Eric Dolphy are perhaps the two most famous jazz musicians to start out in Los Angeles before arising to national prominence, and those who remember them tell their stories within. Everybody who was anybody in jazz played on Central Avenue when passing through town, and the memories elicited are almost always positive, in spite of the inevitable struggles and setbacks that had to be endured in those days. Regardless of the reader's background, the down-to-earth, simple humanity of each musician, with all the attendant aspirations and regrets, is readily apparent in each chapter. Even when there are widely-diverging viewpoints, a very clear, yet fascinating picture of long-ago life in Los Angeles is painted. The editors have stayed far out of the way, and allow each subject to tell their story in their own words.Everybody shares opinions in answer to the question, "Whatever happened to the Central Avenue jazz scene?" There is probably no one correct answer, but a combination of many (all recounted within) would be closer to the truth. Even today, in a city as large as Los Angeles, jazz has dwindled so far from the spotlight of public interest that there is no one major jazz concert hall that everybody performs at. There are annual festivals, a few small clubs and college venues, but that's it. The cityscape has truly changed over the years, both for better and for worse, so we can be thankful we have Central Avenue Sounds: Jazz in Los Angeles to remember the performers and places that have passed on. For those who don't want Los Angeles history (especially Los Angeles jazz history) to disappear like sandcastles on the beach, this book is definitely recommended.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Jazz Lovers should Read ThisBy David May, WHFC-FMCentral Avenue Sounds is one the most informative and interesting books on jazz, providing the reader with a 'you are there' experience of the Los Angeles music scene. I found the interviews with the surviving musicians to be outstanding. My only regret is that many of the Central Avenue and Watts musicians are no longer with us to add their perspective of the West Coast origins of jazz.

The musical and social history of Los Angeles's black community from the 1920s through the early 1950s comes to life in this exceptional oral history collection. Through the voices of musicians who performed on L.A.'s Central Avenue during those years, a vivid picture of the Avenue's place in American musical history emerges.By day, Central Avenue was the economic and social center for black Angelenos. By night, it was a magnet for Southern Californians, black and white, who wanted to hear the very latest in jazz. The oral histories in this book provide firsthand reminiscences by and about some of our great jazz legends: Art Farmer recalls the first time Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie played bebop on the West Coast; Britt Woodman tells of a teenaged Charles Mingus switching from cello to bass; Clara Bryant recalls hard times on the road with Billie Holiday. Here, too, are recollections of Hollywood's effects on local culture, the precedent-setting merger of the black and white musicians' unions, and the repercussions from the racism in the Los Angeles Police Department in the late 1940s and early 1950s.Central Avenue Sounds fills a major gap in California's cultural history, and it shows the influence of a community whose role became as significant in the jazz world as that of Harlem and New Orleans. The voices in this book also testify to the power and satisfaction that can come from making music.

From BooklistAlmost every major American city had its Central Avenue. Washington, D.C., had U Street. Chicago had "Bronzeville." Just like Central Avenue, the old commercial district running through the Watts neighborhood in the South Central section of Los Angeles, all were thriving cultural centers for black America in mid-century, and all are gone or on the verge of extinction, many burned to the ground or abandoned in the mid-1960s. From the 1920s to the 1950s, Central was home to local jazz clubs that launched the careers of international jazz stars who hailed from

L.A.: Buddy Collette, Sonny Criss, Eric Dolphy, Dexter Gordon, Charles Mingus, and many others. It was L.A.'s Harlem, with blacks and whites flocking to see the best local and international jazz musicians. Very few archival records of the neighborhood remain, so the UCLA Oral History Project tracked down surviving musicians from the era and recorded their memories. Unfortunately, too many stars passed before they could be interviewed, but the stories collected here are lively, informative, and entertaining. Both sweet and sad, the interviews describe the formation of black neighborhoods in L.A., the impact of segregation, economic prosperity during the 1940s, and the gradual decline and demise beginning in the 1950s. This is an invaluable history of the formation of L.A., not to mention a first-rate monograph on the history of jazz in America. Ted Leventhal

From Kirkus sWith a long list of editors, this oral history is the product of a committee, composed mostly of musicians who lived and worked in Los Angeles during the heyday of the Central Avenue jazz scene. Today, Central Avenue largely consists of empty lots, burned-out stores, and terrible slums--the heart of the area known as South-Central L.A. Once, though, it was the vibrant heart of black Los Angeles, a street whose music clubs gave birth to a myriad of jazz and rhythm-and-blues talents and showcased virtually every major African-American popular musician of the 1930s and '40s. The history of jazz in California is woefully underdocumented, and this volume is a major contribution to redressing that imbalance. Under the auspices of the Central Avenue Sounds Committee (the volume's editors), Steven Isoardi, an interviewer for the UCLA Oral History Project, spoke to 30 musicians; 19 of those conversations appear in this book. Certain themes recur: the importance of family bands as a breeding ground for young musicians; the significant support youngsters received at the local Jefferson High School from a serious and dedicated music faculty; the importance of Central Avenue as a gathering place and training ground for players; and the importance of the struggle to open up the segregated local musicians' union. Many of the interviews are a delight to read. Jack Kelson waxes rhapsodic in painting a word picture of the avenue after dark. Marl Young offers a witty, hard-headed recounting of the union fight. The importance of these testimonies is inestimable. But the decision to preserve each interview as a separate chapter is a misguided one. The book that results is often repetitive and occasionally dull. An important book for jazz historians, but it could have been so much more. (bw photos, not seen) -- Copyright ©1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. "One of the best jazz books ever compiled. . . . What a wonderful and memorable book this is. To read Liston's memories of touring with Billie Holliday; Farmer's recollections of the Billy Berg Club's audience reaction on the first night Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie played there, is quite an experience." -- Phil Elwood, San Francisco Examiner