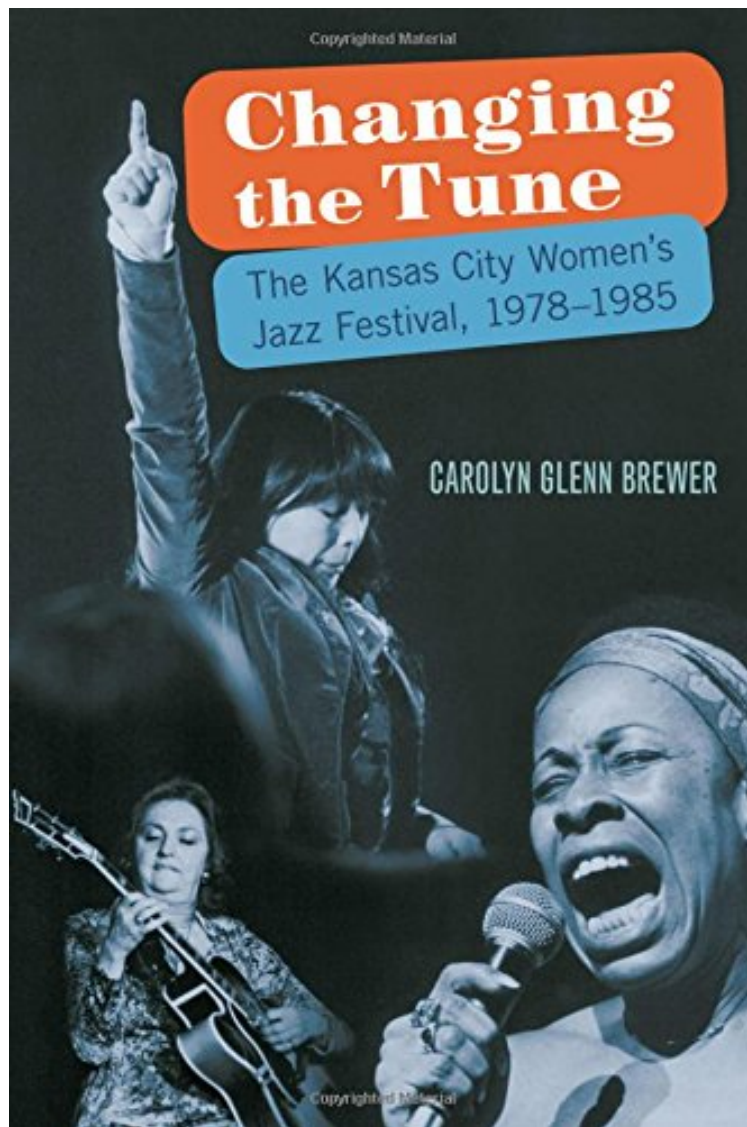


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Changing the Tune: The Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival, 1978-1985

Carolyn Glenn Brewer

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Carolyn Glenn Brewer : Changing the Tune: The Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival, 1978-1985 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Changing the Tune: The Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival, 1978-1985:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Educating, Entertaining and EnlighteningBy Ruth EllenFor jazz

musicians and enthusiasts, the names Marian, Mary Lou, Carmen, Betty and Toshiko are well-known and appreciated for their successful careers. But, what about Roz, Mary, Janice, Stacy and Barbara? And the dozens of other females of all ages, all accomplished jazz musicians who have played alongside the best of their male counterpart jazzers, but whose names haven't always been recognized. The book *Changing the Tune: The Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival, 1978-1985*, recently published by the University of North Texas Press, is an in-depth and thoroughly entertaining account of not just this particular series of jazz festivals, but of the lives of the women who made it happen. The credit for this remarkable saga is two-fold. Carol Comer and Dianne Gregg, both talented jazz performers, writers, journalists and educators, were the instigators and executors of the monumental feat of bringing an international array of women to perform, teach, learn and enjoy jazz together. And Carolyn Glenn Brewer has written a lively and detailed look into how all this came about, with background descriptions of sometimes harrowing logistics of trying to pull off a festival with multiple venues and literally hundreds of participants, as well as intimate personal recollections from the women involved from the 1930s into the late 20th century. Brewer also takes the time to recount the styles of jazz throughout the decades, how the musicians have evolved with the changing sounds and how the listening audience has continued (or not!) its love affair with jazz. This brilliant book superbly serves as both education and inspiration for all up-and-coming jazz musicians, but in particular for those girls and young women who find themselves irresistibly drawn to the jazz universe.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Though the Festival was a great success, it is clear how difficult it was ...By Helen Iliff Marquette This book is loaded with details and behind the scenes vignettes shedding light on each artist's quirks and habits. Leonard Feather's colorful, sublime critiques are saved for each artist, some not receiving such high praise. Though the Festival was a great success, it is clear how difficult it was to organize something of this magnitude. For those of us locals participating in the Women's Jazz Festival we were given the chance of a lifetime to meet world class musicians in a three day jazz marathon birthed and organized by the super duo of Dianne Gregg and Carol Comer and superbly written by Carolyn Glenn Brewer. What an honor it is for this book, "*Changing the Tune: The Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival, 1978-1985*" to go into the annals of Jazz History, especially Kansas City Jazz History with women musicians showcased next to men as it should always have been. From the 1st note to the last, jazz shows no gender.--Helen Iliff Marquette

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival By homer I was proud to work with the Women's Jazz Festival for years. They helped promote the Jazz scene and they brought in Jazz musicians and vocalists from all over the world. Kansas City promotes all kinds of live music today and many of the people in this book are still involved. #KC5Stars

Even though the potential passage of the Equal Rights Amendment had cracked glass ceilings across the country, in 1978 jazz remained a boys' club. Two Kansas City women, Carol Comer and Dianne Gregg, challenged that inequitable standard. With the support of jazz luminaries Marian McPartland and Leonard Feather, inaugural performances by Betty Carter, Mary Lou Williams, an unprecedented All-Star band of women, Toshiko Akiyoshi's band, plus dozens of Kansas City musicians and volunteers, a casual conversation between two friends evolved into the annual Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival (WJF). But with success came controversy. Anxious to satisfy fans of all jazz styles, WJF alienated some purists. The inclusion of male sidemen brought on protests. The egos of established, seasoned players unexpectedly clashed with those of newcomers. Undaunted, Comer, Gregg, and WJF's ensemble of supporters continued the cause for eight years. They fought for equality not with speeches but with swing, without protest signs but with bebop. For the first book about this groundbreaking festival, Carolyn Glenn Brewer interviewed dozens of people and dove deeply into the archives. This book is an important testament to the ability of two friends to emphatically prove jazz genderless, thereby changing the course of jazz history.

"Thank goodness for people like Carol Comer and Dianne Greg who did their part to lift our culture by supporting and sharing with the world powerful music by powerful musicians who happened to be women. And thank goodness for people like Carolyn Glenn Brewer, who wrote so beautifully about them, reminding us that important things come from individuals with bold ideas and a lot of determination."—Maria Schneider, Grammy Award-winning composer and big-band leader "In Carolyn Glenn Brewer's book, *Changing the Tune*, we get to experience a well-documented account about the many notable women who lent their voices to the world of jazz. Thank you for helping to erase the stigma women musicians experience by exposing this inspiring organization and its contributions to women in music."—Ellen Johnson, vocalist, producer and author of *Jazz Child: A Portrait of Sheila Jordan* "In telling the story of the Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival and the women who made it possible, Ms. Brewer has written a glorious new chapter in jazz history. These jazz women are no longer 'anonymous.'"—Chuck Haddix, author of *Kansas City Jazz: From Ragtime to Bebop—A History* and *Bird: The Life And Music Of Charlie Parker* "Thanks to Carol Comer, Dianne Gregg, and their Women's Jazz Festivals of 1978-1985, a new chapter has been added to the rich history of Kansas City jazz. And thanks to Carolyn Glenn Brewer, that chapter has been captured and documented in the most comprehensive and in-depth way. It is a privilege to know each of these talented ladies and to sing the praises of this outstanding book."—Mike Metheny, trumpet/flugelhorn soloist and author of *Old Friends Are the Best Friends* "A wonderfully detailed book that captures the essence and inner workings of the WJF while also providing much more

than a glimpse into the Kansas City Jazz scene during those years."—Steve Cardenas, guitarist "Compiling oral histories documented with facts, Brewer has breathed life into a story that connects gender issues from 40 years ago to the present, immersing the reader in a rich story-telling experience."—Lee Hill Kavanaugh, alumnus bass trombonist for DIVA and award-winning journalist for the Kansas City Star "This gifted writer draws the reader in like she was chatting over coffee and shares the incomparable, unique stories of seven years of the Women's Jazz Festival in swingin' Kansas City."—Mary Jo Papich, Jazz Education Network co-founder and past president