



The Penguin Guide to Jazz Recordings: Eighth Edition

By R. M. Cook, Brian Morton

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This volume is a comprehensive, critical guide to jazz recordings. This edition has reassessed each artist's entry and updated the text to incorporate thousands of additional CDs.

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Editorial Review

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The updated, eighth edition of this long-running title features more than 14,000 reviews of CDs and 400 new artist entries. Entries include very brief descriptions of the artists and a list of their recordings, with reviews and ratings by the authors. The lengths of the CD entries vary from very short (label, catalog number, issue date, and performers) to extensive, multiparagraph descriptions of the album's history, reception, and individual songs. The authors are clearly devout jazz historians, and the character of the entries is as much admiring as it is strictly factual. Their detailed descriptions of albums, songs, and even artists' tone colors and interpretations within specific songs are testament to their expertise. They also lament the loss of jazz divisions at many major record companies, leaving independent labels to carry the lion's share of the responsibility for documenting this art form.

Changes from the previous edition are worth mentioning. The artist index, missing from the seventh edition, has returned in response to reader demand, but to maintain what the authors consider a reasonable physical size for the volume, they have eliminated entries "which have seemed to stand still in recent years through the lack of any new releases by the artist in question." In some particularly long entries containing extensive lists of albums, they offer an "in brief" section, which allows for the inclusion of less-important yet still worthwhile recordings by presenting shorter descriptions.

Another important feature is the "Core Collection" selections. Within the listings for some artists, recordings considered essential for a basic jazz library are printed in bold type and described in greater detail. A separate list of these 200 titles would have been useful for those who are looking to build their own collections without having to wade through the entire book to find these seminal works.

Libraries holding the seventh edition, without the author index, will probably want this one. Anything older will certainly need to be updated. *Steven York*

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Review

The leader in its field... if you own only one book on jazz, it really should be this one. -- *International Record Review*

About the Author

Richard Cook, former editor of the *Wire*, now edits *Jazz Review* and contributes to many other publications.

Brian Morton is a freelance writer and longtime broadcaster for BBC Radio.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Russell Bussey:

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Michael Velez:

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