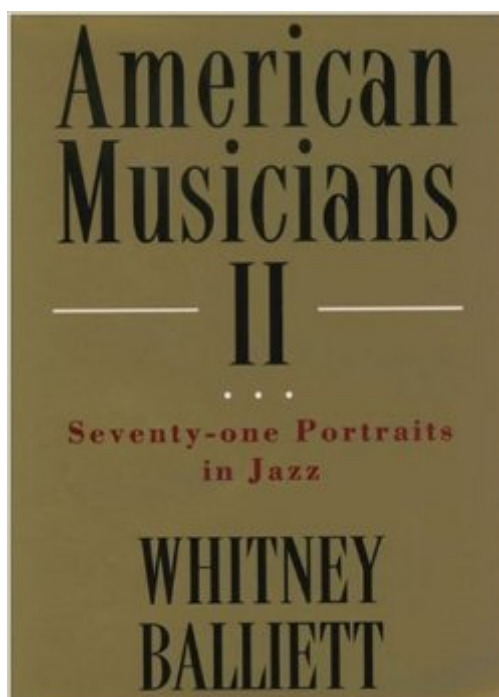


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# American Musicians II: Seventy-Two Portraits In Jazz



## Synopsis

When Whitney Balliett's *American Musicians* first appeared in the fall of 1986, the acclaim it received was universal. Leonard Feather, writing in *The Los Angeles Times*, said "no other writer now living can write with comparable grace and equal enthusiasm about everyone from Jack Teagarden and Art Tatum to Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman." And Bruce Cook in *The New Leader* called the book "the quintessential Whitney Balliett, the cream of the cream, a collection that leaves no doubt about his strength." Now greatly expanded with sixteen new essays, *American Musicians II* remains a superb introduction to the giants of jazz, or as Balliett himself calls it, "a highly personal encyclopedia, a series of close accounts of how a beautiful music grew, flourished, and (possibly) began the long trek back to its native silences." Breathtaking in its scope, the book features Balliett's singular portraits of jazz greats who have shaped this uniquely American tradition from its earliest days to the present, from inimitable innovators like Joe "King" Oliver and Jelly Roll Morton, to swing-era mainstays Fats Waller and Lester Young, to avant-garde pioneers such as Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman. We are treated to profiles of Pee Wee Russell, Red Allen, Earl Hines, and Mary Lou Williams, written when they were at the height of their powers; reconstructions of the lives of Art Tatum, Coleman Hawkins, Jack Teagarden, Zoot Sims, and Dave Tough; quick but indelible glimpses into the daily (or nocturnal) lives of Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus; and vivid portrayals of such modern masters as Red Norvo, Buddy Rich, Elvin Jones, Art Farmer, Michael Moore, and Tommy Flanagan. This new edition adds essays on such major musicians as Benny Goodman, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, George Shearing, and Paul Desmond. In the forty years that he has written for *The New Yorker*, Whitney Balliett has earned the reputation as America's foremost jazz critic. The late Philip Larkin described him as a "writer who brings jazz journalism to the verge of poetry." Alistair Cook wrote that he is, "without a rival in sight, the most literate and knowledgeable living writer on jazz." And Gene Lees called him "one of the most graceful essayists in the English language on any subject." Now, with the second edition of *American Musicians* in hand, music lovers can experience Balliett's peerless observations on the jazz scene, as he takes you into the hearts and minds of jazz's great practitioners.

## Book Information

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