



Stomping The Blues

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This study of the blues by one of America's premier essayists and novelists will change old attitudes about a tradition that continues to feed the very heart of popular music—a blues that dances, shakes, shimmies, and exchanges bad news for stomping, rollicking, pulse-quickenng good times.

Stomping The Blues Details

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Author : Albert Murray

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From Reader Review Stomping The Blues for online ebook

John Lingan says

A diligently researched, proudly pugilistic book about the connection between a music's formal qualities and the yearnings of the people who created it. Murray positions the blues within a larger history of black American expression and emotion, and I tried to do something similar with country music and the white working class.

-- says

A series of essays on the blues and jazz as a natural extension of it. Intellectual, literary, but also grounded in reality and commonplace experience.

Insists that the blues is a music of movement and dancing, that it signifies the heroic stand.

Jeff says

A review written the night Murray (1916-2013) died. Read this one in my twenties. One immediate result of my reading it was to offer up my respect to dance music, of whatever kind. Marcus, Guralnick, and Samuel Charters had written books I liked that argued over the blues, but none had put it into the context of dance music, a very specific communal context. Reading *Stomping the Blues* intensified my response to groups as varied as X (the L.A. punk band) and Michael Jackson, and my awareness that dance music was the music that mattered most to me. Music and dance are the co-terminus art forms. Blues is a modality of something going on in dance. Lead players in jazz watching dance hall patrons stomp the blues, two-in-one, is how soloing in jazz becomes an art form. Murray understood all this and much more.

Michael Finocchiaro says

I learned of the existence of this book from Stanley Crouch (because it is from a period of music prior to the 60s when he thinks jazz died) and found it to be a great and fun read about the origins of the blues by college professor and blues researcher Albert Murray. A must read for lovers of the blues of Robert Johnson, Son House, Lightning Hopkins, Pink Anderson and the like!

Jeremy says

One of the best books about music I've ever read. Murray manages to capture the tone, rhythm, and flow of the blues and jazz as he illuminates these musical traditions in an extremely educated way. You also get a whirlwind tour of the history of the blues with some great anecdotes and information about Bessie Smith, Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Charlie Parker and many more. The

pictures and their captions alone make this book worth skimming, and the prose makes it worth reading at least once. Any student of jazz history should know and love this book.

Kevin Brennan says

Interestingly, when Murray speaks of "the blues" as music, he's really talking about jazz. My take on his angle here is that jazz is the pinnacle of what the blues, as a folk form, represents. Murray is a little tough on the musicians we'd consider the great bluesmen, such as Lead Belly, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and Muddy Waters, labeling them folk stylists more than top-level artists. He reserves his greatest praise for Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, and others.

All that said, this is a beautifully written census of the jazz greats from the 1920s to the 1950s.

Kylee Bear says

View the original review on my blog, A Slice of Ky!

This book is being used in my Blue's Literature class as the "textbook" because it is a nonfictional look at the complexity of blues music and the culture of the blues. It has been so interesting to learn the full history and depth of this music style. I was never really an avid listener and so this class, with the help of this book, has been completely eye opening. Not only does the book teach about the blues, but through the context it also illustrates the history of certain aspects of African-American culture.

dv says

Ottima analisi della forma musicale blues/jazz, che parte dalla distinzione tra i blue devil e il blues come musica e prosegue sgretolando una serie di luoghi comuni (sullo spirito della musica, sul ruolo della tecnica, sullo stile, sulla presunta ingenuità del folklore) che purtroppo animano la maggior parte delle riflessioni su queste musiche.

Mike says

It's a bit thick in its language, but you're going to be hardpressed to find a book that better addresses the blues from every possible angle.

Cam says

There are some really interesting insights and nuggets of history contained in Murray's book, but I found it difficult to get past the diction and organization. The book is loosely chronological, and starts with the

origins of Blues music. In fact, the intro and first chapter are excellent, but then moves into discussion of various jazz musicians without adequately describing the turning point from jazz to blues. Murray does write the blues is dance-hall music and jazz concert-hall music, but doesn't do enough to explain the differences or how the "jazz" sound was often Blues music. I would say the book is worth reading, but I was disappointed with the execution. Also, Murray's writing style is a bit verbose and takes some getting used to.

Marje says

Slow going at times, until you fall into the rhythm of the words and language the author uses. Great perspective on blues history and blues dance.

Jamie Howison says

This one gets three stars, at least in part because it is such an influential book... but ever so earnest. You can see Murray's fingerprints all over Wynton Marsalis and the whole Jazz at Lincoln Center "cabal". Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington are the most important extensions of the blues tradition, and Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie its most important innovators. Coltrane figures, but only in terms of his pre-"A Love Supreme" work. Somewhat surprisingly Ornette Coleman is well received as an extension of the tradition, but there is no sign of any other innovative, free, or challenging music from the 1960s. That's a bit odd, given that Murray wrote this in the mid 70s.

There is also an assumed opposition between the spirituals (and the church...) and the blues, and the latter definitely trumps the former. Thing is, Murray published this book five years after James Cone's "The Spirituals and the Blues"; didn't he read that book? Probably not... the hostility to the black church is palpable, which narrows his vision so terribly.

But you know, if you want to wrestle with the world of jazz and blues, you have to read this. Even if it drives you crazy, you have really do.
