

THE JAZZ BOOKSHELF: The thrill of the hunt, in-store and online

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Many jazz fans satisfy their hunting instincts by tracking down and buying old jazz albums. For others, the thrill of the chase involves jazz memorabilia such as posters, scores, and such. For me, finding books about jazz adds zest to my continuing appreciation of all things jazz. Fortunately, two of my favorite brick-and-mortar bookstores also happen to be in great jazz towns.

A visit to New York isn't complete unless I carve out time for a long browse at **The Strand**. At 12th street and Broadway (just around the corner from The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music on West 13th) this legendary book emporium claims "eighteen miles of books." They're not kidding: towering bookcases on each floor with the barest minimum of walking space in between, tables heaped with stacks of books, and an only slightly musty, rather shadowy basement offer the diligent searcher plenty of titles, new and used, to scan. Most areas of the store are organized by genre or subject matter, but jazz books can turn up in unusual places, perhaps in the photography or history section. I usually arrive at the checkout counter with both hands full --- and a crook in my neck from leaning over sideways to scan a few hundred feet of those miles of books.

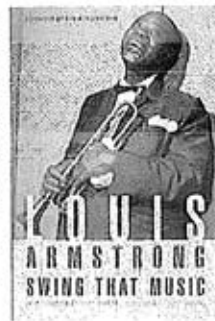


But you can shop The Strand without ever leaving Louisville — their website www.strandbooks.com offers several browsing and search options, with easy payment and shipping features. You might turn up such gems as studio musician Buddy Collette's **Jazz Generations: A Life in American Music and Society**, published by Continuum in 2000, or something a little older, George Thomas Simon's **Glen Miller and his Orchestra**, from Crowell in 1974. If giant coffee-table style photo books appeal to you, try Kennedy family photographer Jacques Lowe's **Jazz** (Artisan, 1995) with 200 black

and white portraits of jazz musicians.

In Chicago, my favorite bookstore is just a few blocks from Michigan Avenue in the Columbia College area. **Powells'** South Wabash Avenue store offers discounted new and slightly-used books in all subject areas; jazz books are shelved in the performing arts section in the brightly-lit basement. I chanced upon Louis Armstrong's **Swing That Music**, with an introduction by Rudy Vallee. This gem was originally published in 1936; Da Capo Press reprinted it in paperback, with a new forward by Dan Morgenstern in 1993.

But the book I began reading on the plane back to Louisville was the best find of the day, **Jazz Talking: Profiles, Interviews, and Other Riffs on Jazz Musicians**, by Max Jones from De Capo Press. This 2000 reprint of a 1987 original offers profiles of more than three dozen jazz greats grouped by instrumental section; the brass section features Harry "Sweets" Edison, Wingy Manone, and Sy Oliver, among others. You can shop at this Chicago store online, too, at www.powellschicago.com.



In a case of search engine serendipity, I've discovered yet another online bookstore. The similarly named, but quite different www.powellbooks.com is clear across the continent in Portland, Oregon. This store's website usually has more than 1000 titles in its jazz cyber aisles.

Brand Marketing Coordinator Kim Sutton says, "Music is a heavily searched section on our website, and within the topic of jazz, jazz biographies are our best sellers." By the time this goes to press, you might still be able to order a regional jazz title that includes not just biographical info, but also social and political history of the West Coast jazz scene half a century ago. Search for **Jumptown: The Golden Years of Portland Jazz, 1942 - 1957**, published in 2005 by Oregon State University Press.