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***South End Shout: Boston's Forgotten Music Scene in the Jazz Age*, by Roger R. House. Ann Arbor: Lever Press, 2023. [review]**

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Book Review

South End Shout: Boston's Forgotten Music Scene in the Jazz Age, by Roger R. House. Ann Arbor: Lever Press, 2023. Freely available online at <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.12735924>.

xii, 245 pp. ISBN 9781580469463 (paper). \$22.99. Open access ISBN: 9781643158402. Illustrations.

South End Shout: Boston's Forgotten Music Scene in the Jazz Age is a truly rare example of a well-researched work of first-rate scholarship that is also a great read. Roger R. House, on the faculty of Boston's Emerson College, pursues this material with the insider's fervor of a thorough musical detective, and he is at the same time an engaging storyteller. This book chronicles a story long forgotten or perhaps completely unknown to the great majority of current musicians and Bostonians, that of the rise of pre-jazz and jazz in Boston in the African-American neighborhoods around Boston's Frederick Douglass Square (now the Douglass Historic District).

House's research comes from long out-of-print booklets, musicians' union membership rolls from Local 535 (the Black chapter of the then-segregated union), and both the *Boston Globe* and the now defunct Black-owned *Boston Guardian* newspaper, as well as the Oral History Project at Berklee College of Music that chronicles Boston jazz from the 1930s onward. House also tells the remarkable story of his own jazz awakening when his Queens grade-school substitute teacher was none other than the iconic arranger Gil Evans. It is this lifelong passion that guides House as he slides between deep research and captivating tales. Consequently, this book will be an important addition to school and research library collections for its extensive personnel and repertoire lists from concerts of the early twentieth century, and a valued book for jazz fans who will return to this fascinating story again and again.

A survey of some of House's chapter titles shows the shape of the book: "How James Reese Europe Brought Jazz to Boston," "How Frederick Douglass Square Gave Birth to a Jazz Scene," "The Commerce of Jazz in Boston," "Jazz Takes the Boston Stage," "Jazz Across Ethnic Lines," "Dancing with All Their Might," and "Triumph of the South End Shout." Early on, there are wonderfully detailed descriptions of the Douglass Square area, center

of the Black business district and culture in the teens and twenties. There are repeated references to such gathering places as the Harmony Shop, an early record store and rehearsal area that was a birthing place for area bands.

House clearly establishes Boston's place on the national jazz scene—that the city did not have the recording facilities, the jazz clubs, or concert halls to be one of the major jazz hubs like Chicago, New Orleans, New York, or Kansas City, but that early pre-jazz pioneer James Reese Europe was active with visits there with his various bands, later succeeded or joined by early jazz giants like singer-pianist Noble Sissle and Pops Foster, then by Sissle's collaborations with the great Eubie Blake, the Sissle and Blake shows, and the iconic "Shuffle Along."

Particularly fascinating to current jazz fans will be House's interweaving the early lives of iconic swing era and jazz performances who were native to the city, including the two saxophonists and Bostonian Ellingtonians, Johnny Hodges and Harry Carney; both of those voices would later grace Ellington's sound for a half century. The legendary, still-active drummer Roy Haynes also grew up in Boston, going on to be a mainstay with Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, and nearly everyone on the post-1950s bop and hard bop scene. Also, multi-instrumentalists Howard Johnson and Benny Waters are included, as well as other noted Boston natives such as Benny Goodman solo saxophonist Nuncio "Toots" Mondello; later saxophonist and Berklee faculty member Charlie Mariano; the tenor player "Boots" Masulli; and the under-recognized baritone sax virtuoso Serge Chaloff, whose mother Margaret (known as Madame Chaloff) was a teacher to many, including pianists Hal Galper, Herbie Hancock, George Shearing, Kenny Werner, and more. Another Boston Italian, trumpeter Armando Correa, had a son who would be known as Chick Corea, one of the central figures in modern jazz and fusion. There is a beautiful account of drummer Alan Dawson, who had a huge effect on later Boston jazz and taught the great Tony Williams.

An area of particular interest to contemporary readers is the jazz connection to the birth of radio and stations like WNAC in Boston, along with other outlets that still exist there today. This rise of live radio broadcasts, along with the recording boom and record-playing Victrolas in the home, were key developments in the rise of jazz throughout the city's various cultures, born in the Black community.

House also beautifully describes the wider cultural connect with the 1920s dance craze, further connecting to big band jazz, and spreading the magic of jazz music to a wider, youth-oriented spectrum that spanned across American pop life and culture.

Other cultural highlights in the book include the late '20s presentations by the Paul Whiteman Orchestra in Boston's venerable Symphony Hall as well as performances by George Gershwin, and their endorsement by Boston Symphony conductor Serge Koussevitzky—redressing the earlier rejection of jazz that had come from the Boston Brahmin community. Also is an interesting snapshot of the views on the players of that

period on use of the word “jazz,” and their feelings about critics’ usage of that word to impose European values and control their music.

House took an unusual path with the illustrations in the book, asking illustrator James Fox to contribute drawings that outnumber the photos. These evocative drawings beautifully characterize the atmosphere of the times—but a number of the city scenes contain no people. Some additional photos of performances and club audiences would have added the same level of exactitude that is contained in House’s written research. Although the book is beautifully annotated, it is also suggested that subsequent editions include a traditional index; I must assume that other readers will share this reviewer’s desire to track down their favorite Boston jazz figure or famous concerts. If this volume is about to assume the important reference role that it deserves, that element will be important to its further uses.

Nonetheless, despite these minor issues, this book is a game-changer that will stand the test of time, and should be centrally involved in maintaining Boston’s important but little-known jazz heritage and legacy.

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