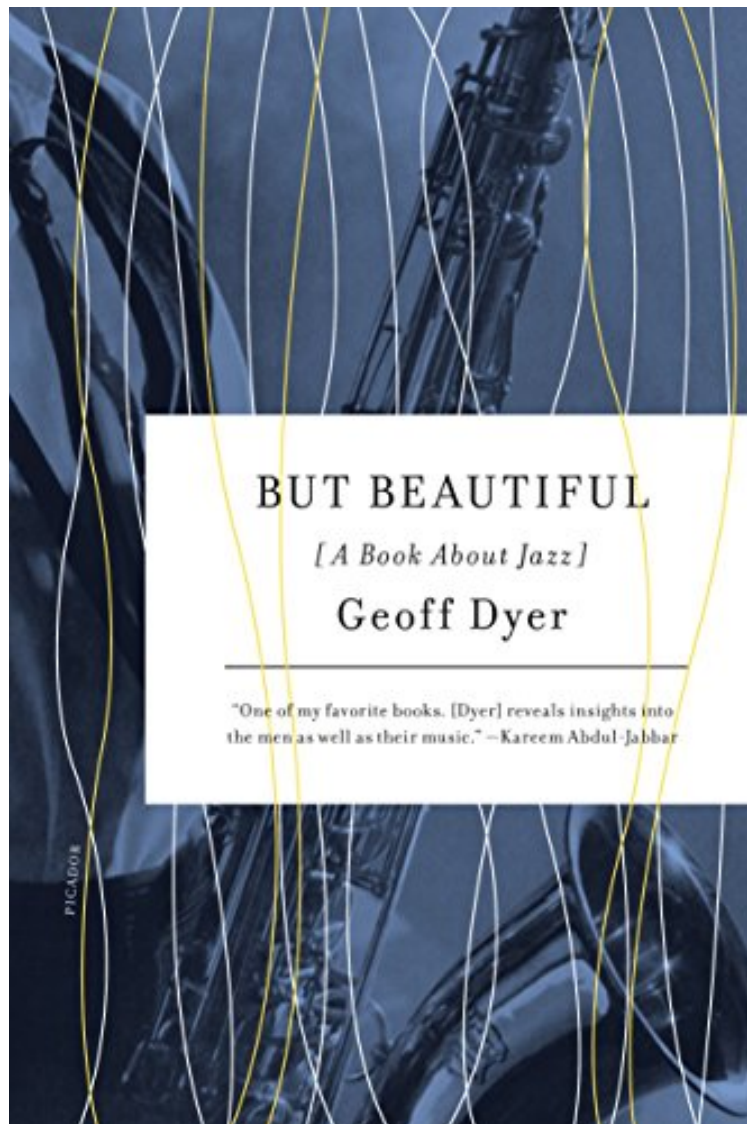


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## But Beautiful: A Book About Jazz

*Geoff Dyer*

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#86271 in Books Geoff Dyer 2009-11-10 2009-11-10 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.28 x .76 x 5.411, .46 #File Name: 0312429479240 pages But Beautiful A Book about Jazz | File size: 64.Mb

**Geoff Dyer : But Beautiful: A Book About Jazz** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised But Beautiful: A Book About Jazz:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The unreliable narrator By Morgan This is an usual book in that it is written as something best described as journalistic but is explicitly not bound by fact. It aims at the essence of a jazz world and has been applauded by a number of jazz luminaries as giving the clearest account of the jazz life around. Much of this might be explained by its romanticism. Rather like Diane Arbus' photographs it relishes its knowledge of

the underworld, the beat, the alcohol, the lonely hotel rooms and this is as much a one-sided view as any. I found myself doubting the credentials of the writer and wondering how much we are being asked to take on trust. It seems to me to be about the hipness of the author as anything.<sup>3</sup> of 3 people found the following review helpful. Improvisational Prose that Illuminates and Evokes the Jazz Ethos By Marty Babits This book is a tour-de-force of imagination. The author places his imaginative consciousness into the lives of numerous reknown jazz greats and brings the era and the force of their creativity onto the page. A feat of unusual power. A book to savor for jazz lovers and lovers of lyrical, expressive prose.<sup>0</sup> of 0 people found the following review helpful. Lovely gift for a Jazzman By planosue I bought this book (digital) intending to gift it to a friend who is a Jazzman. It is quite a lovely and interesting book for that purpose I subsequently purchased the book in hard cover for my friend. I think he will enjoy it as well.

"May be the best book ever written about jazz." David Thomson, Los Angeles Times In eight poetically charged vignettes, Geoff Dyer skillfully evokes the music and the men who shaped modern jazz. Drawing on photos, anecdotes, and, most important, the way he hears the music, Dyer imaginatively reconstructs scenes from the embattled lives of some of the greats: Lester Young fading away in a hotel room; Charles Mingus storming down the streets of New York on a too-small bicycle; Thelonious Monk creating his own private language on the piano. However, music is the driving force of *But Beautiful*, and wildly metaphoric prose that mirrors the quirks, eccentricity, and brilliance of each musician's style.

.com Besides colorful and expressive music, jazz greats such as Lester Young, Thelonius Monk and Duke Ellington led equally colorful, albeit self-destructive, lives. Through this collection of essays, Geoff Dyer recounts some of the more vivid episodes and events these personalities engaged in and illuminates unique aspects of their character that contributed to their music. He also sheds light on the oppression of working within an atmosphere of race-alienation, a hardship that led many to abuse alcohol and drugs, and find solace only in their incredible music. From Publishers Weekly Dyer (*Ways of Telling*) here weaves impressionistic fantasies around the lives of eight jazz legends. Though he calls this "imaginative criticism," the vignettes, inspired by photos and writings about the artists, have little to do with music. Rather, he muses about the musicians' personalities and certain episodes in their lives? Lester Young's disastrous stint in the army, Thelonious Monk's inability to communicate with anyone but his wife, Bud Powell's mental breakdown, Chet Baker's drug-induced deterioration, Duke Ellington's endless travels. The colorful essays are sometimes excessively fanciful, and they capture the atmosphere of alienation that surrounded these men who, often wasted by drug and alcohol abuse and worn out from days and nights on the road, seemed to function only when making music. The pretentious "afterword" is irrelevant. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal I was uneasy as I read in Dyer's preface that he invented dialog and action to produce a type of "imaginative criticism." But I soon found myself immersed in a series of atmospheric vignettes populated by several troubled geniuses of the bebop era. The fictive device allows us to experience the pain and loneliness that led many of these artists to drink, drugs, and madness. Whether we are witnessing Lester Young's humiliation by a sadistic agent, seeing Thelonious Monk lose his cabaret card in a bad bust, or watching Chet Baker getting his teeth bashed in by an unpaid drug dealer, we move through each scene in a type of bleary-eyed disorientation that might follow a late night of jazz, booze, and despair. Dyer evokes the rhythm and feeling of the music as his words echo the forlorn, aching sound of a midnight solo. An essential purchase for all jazz collections.? Dan Bogey, Clearfield Cty. P.L. Federation, Curwensville, Pa. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.