

Storytelling takes many forms; words can fill any space.

While the days of vinyl records are not gone, the heyday of liner notes was some fifty years ago.

Herb Wong was a critic, record producer, educator and radio DJ on the former station KJAZ in San Francisco. He also wrote liner notes for many of the great jazz musicians of the 20th century.

Jazz on My Mind: Liner Notes, Anecdotes and Conversations from the 1940s to the 2000s (MacFarland; April 18, 2016; 248 pages; \$39.95), co-written with Paul Simeon Fingerote (who was the Marketing Director for the Monterey Jazz Festival) offers readers a delightful curated vision of America's music genre.

The collection is organized as if it were an extended play CD, with "tracks" for each instrument, from Big Bands to Trumpet, to Vibraphone, to Vocals.

In each "track", you'll find Wong's liner notes for records, interviews, as well as anecdotes about his spectacular life in jazz.

Reading Wong's liner-note prose is a pure joy. His enthusiasm will send you to the record store, and his encyclopedic knowledge will inform your listening.

You can read the book from cover to cover, and you'll be tempted to do just that. But it is also perfect for causal reading, and as a reference if you're listening to the music.

If you're unfamiliar with jazz music and want a starter's guide, I cannot imagine a better book. This is truly fun to read, a time capsule into another era and even another version of English that you simply won't read or find anywhere else.

Wong was a charming, genuine genius, but you don't need to be one to dig his writing.

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