



So You Want to Sing Jazz: A Guide for Professionals

By Jan Shapiro

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So You Want to Sing Jazz: A Guide for Professionals By Jan Shapiro

Since the 1930s and '40s, jazz has stood tall in American popular music, drawing into its embrace not only great horn players, percussionists, guitarists, bassists, and pianists, but also some of the greatest singers in America's musical history. Jazz has laid the groundwork for important innovations in modern singing, opening up entirely new ways of delivering songs through what would eventually become jazz standards—songs that formed the basis of the American Songbook.

In *So You Want to Sing Jazz*, singer and professor of voice Jan Shapiro gives a guided tour through the art and science of the jazz vocal style. Throughout, Shapiro hones in on what makes jazz singing distinctive, suggesting along the way how other types of singers can make use of jazz. She looks at such key matters in jazz singing as the role of improvisation, the place of specific singers who influenced and even defined vocal jazz as we know it today, and the unique way in which jazz incorporates vibrato, conversational delivery, rhythmic phrasing, and melodic embellishment and improvisation.

The book includes guest-authored chapters by singing voice researchers Dr. Scott McCoy and Dr. Wendy LeBorgne. In *So You Want to Sing Jazz*, singers and voice teachers finally have the go-to resource they need for singing vocal jazz.

The So You Want to Sing series is produced in partnership with the National Association of Teachers of Singing. Like all books in the series, *So You Want to Sing Jazz* features online supplemental material on the NATS website. Please visit www.nats.org to access style-specific exercises, audio and video files, and additional resources.

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Editorial Review

Review

For the reader intent on pursuing a career as a jazz vocalist, the entire book is useful; however, several chapters are indispensable.... This volume never wanders from a practical approach. Shapiro walks the singer through professional preparedness and etiquette, from the creation of lead sheets to appropriate apparel. She describes the challenges faced by the prospective jazz singer, such as a diminishing number of performance venues, and a proliferation of easily accessible recordings (usually as close as a cell phone) that lessens the demand for live performances. The author is not pessimistic, however, about the genre; nor does she discourage the reader to pursue jazz singing, either as an avocation or as a profession. Instead, she paints a realistic picture of the challenges and rewards that await the singer who is serious about a career in jazz.

-Brian Manternach (*Journal of Singing*)

About the Author

Jan Shapiro has been on the faculty of Boston's Berklee College of Music for the past 31 years. She is a world -class practitioner of the art of jazz singing. She served as chairwoman in Berklee College's vocal department for over a decade.

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