



The Amazing Bud Powell: Black Genius, Jazz History, and the Challenge of Bebop

Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr.

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Bud Powell was not only one of the greatest bebop pianists of all time, he stands as one of the twentieth century's most dynamic and fiercely adventurous musical minds. His expansive musicianship, riveting performances, and inventive compositions expanded the bebop idiom and pushed jazz musicians of all stripes to higher standards of performance. Yet Powell remains one of American music's most misunderstood figures, and the story of his exceptional talent is often overshadowed by his history of alcohol abuse, mental instability, and brutalization at the hands of white authorities. In this first extended study of the social significance of Powell's place in the American musical landscape, Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr. shows how the pianist expanded his own artistic horizons and moved his chosen idiom into new realms. Illuminating and multi-layered, *The Amazing Bud Powell* centralizes Powell's contributions as it details the collision of two vibrant political economies: the discourses of art and the practice of blackness.

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