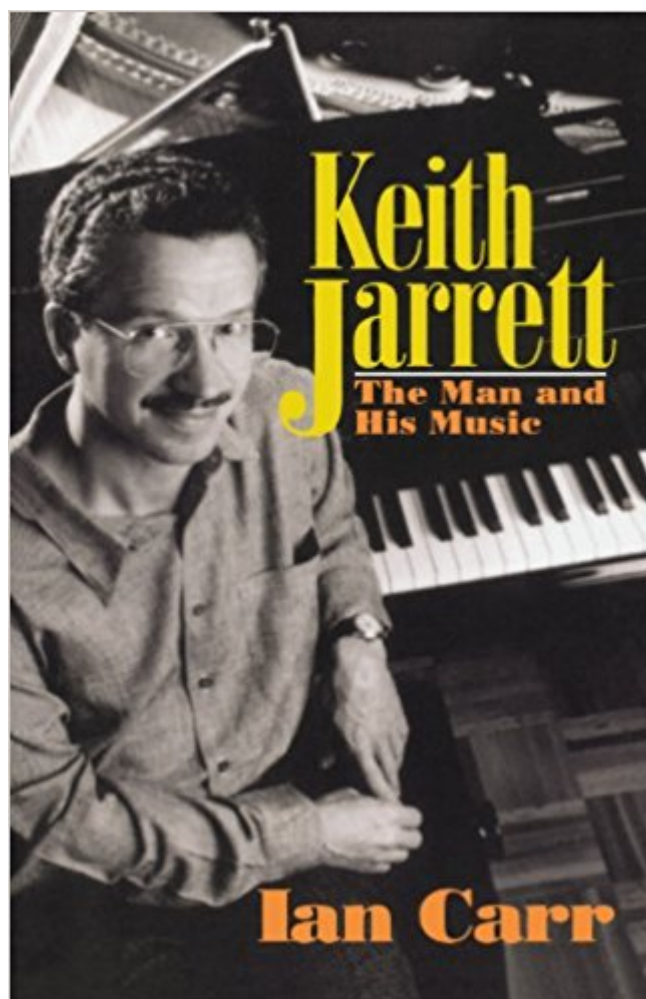


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Keith Jarrett: The Man And His Music



Synopsis

Keith Jarrett is probably the most influential jazz pianist living today: his concerts have made him world famous. He was a child prodigy who had his first solo performance at the age of seven. In the sixties he played with the Jazz Messengers and then with the Charles Lloyd Quartet, touring Europe, Asia, and Russia. He played electric keyboards with Miles Davis at the beginning of the seventies, and went on to lead two different jazz groups—one American and one European. He straddles practically every form of twentieth century music—he has produced totally composed music, and has performed classical music as well as jazz. Jarrett has revolutionized the whole concept of what a solo pianist can do. And his albums such as Solo Concerts (at Lausanne and Bremen), Belonging, The Koln Concert, and My Song have gained him a worldwide following. Now, with Keith Jarrett: The Man and His Music, Ian Carr has written the definitive story of Jarrett's musical development and his personal journey. This is a revealing, fascinating, and enlightening account of one of the outstanding musicians of our age.

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Customer Reviews

I'm not sure why the review below is so negative. Actually, I have been re-discovering Keith Jarrett and, once this reviewer complained about the reviews in the book, I was sold! Just what I was looking for to help me sort through the huge back catalogue! Mr Carr has written this bio in the time-honoured fashion. He does not heap praise on Keith Jarrett's every recording. He reviews every disc (up to the end of the eighties) as one would expect from a biographer - we can't all see

an artist live whenever we want to - most of us rely on these "records" of the artist's sound, style and progress or whatever. He gives examples of Jarrett's genius and of his to-be-expected-of-a-person-like-this idiosyncrasies and lets us make up our minds about the man. It's worth reading just for the incredible circumstances surrounding the "Solo Concerts" and "Koln Concert" recordings. Recommended. Hope he updates it in the future.

I agree with the first reviewer who writes that "the major problem inherent in books about musicians is that ultimately the only way to understand the artist's music is to listen to it." I see no reason why anyone would want to read this book without having listened to some of Jarrett's music. But those who have will likely be interested in this rather short biography by Ian Carr. After a short foreword, we hear about Jarrett's childhood, his experiences with his piano teachers in particular and the stories surrounding his child prodigy. In chapter two, entitled 'From Allentown to Berklee and Boston', Ian Carr writes about the struggles to get out of the boring and dead town that Keith thought Allentown was into the more jazz-suited places like Berklee and Boston. Chapter three deals with his going to New York and playing with the Charles Lloyd Quartet, the first major turning point in his career, and the next chapter tells about his experiences on playing the Miles Davis. The following chapters is more about his own pursuits where he doesn't have to play in an apprentice's role. The book has only 195 pages, and that's too little to cover the story of a genius. The book quotes musicians from time to time and those quotations are much like a tv documentary without much depth. Actually the book could well be a tv documentary, because it reads like one - the story about his family relationship, his economic problems, a tour of his albums and so on. Although I have mostly criticized the book, I want to recommend it to fans of Keith Jarrett. This is the only book about him, and though it's a little bit shallow, it provides a good picture and overview of his music and his personal life that fans would love to read about.

This was a very readable and interesting book about Jarrett's younger years and his career up to the late 1980's. It would be nice if the author could update it. The plus side: The author was able to interview people critical to Jarrett's life, including relatives, his collaborators, and most importantly, Jarrett himself. The writing is what I'd call straight ahead -- the author is not trying to impress with technical terms or literary sentences. The writing is clear and direct. There is good coverage of the years when he was a starving artist, and there are lots of unusual details that will entertain fans (like the unique piano sound of the Koln concerts). The author also describes the music in fairly clear terms -- obviously you have to listen to the music to understand what he's really driving at. But most

of the material is available on You Tube. There is extensive discussion on what drives Jarrett emotionally and intellectually in his music making, and that is perhaps the best part of the book. There is a lot of Jarrett's personal philosophy and I think this would be valuable to someone considering a career in music. It also discusses Jarrett's view of classical music -- what's good and bad about it. Being very familiar with classical music, I think he hits the nail on the head. Cons: There aren't too many. The book is outdated, but on the other hand the early years were very important to understanding Jarrett. The book is obviously by someone who worships Jarrett so there is nothing very negative in it. Jarrett is honest about his divorce. I was left wondering why he had money troubles at the height of his career -- there seems to be more of a reason than the money simply wasn't there. On the other hand, I am not interested in bios that want to find all available dirt about the person. Finally, if the book is updated, it would be nice to have a flash drive included so one could go to the computer and hear what the writer is describing in the music. It certainly does not have to include full cuts, just short samples. One good thing I forgot to mention. I had owned about 15 Jarrett CDs. The book led me to some others that had very interesting music, which I subsequently purchased.

The fact is simply that this book is twenty years old, and Jarrett has remained active the entire time since its publication. His career has continued to evolve and he has continued to release mammoth works which redefine Jarrett as an artist. The book is very well-written, informative and entertaining, I can only hope that the author will release a significantly updated version, or that some other ambitious author will take up Ian Carr's mantle.

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