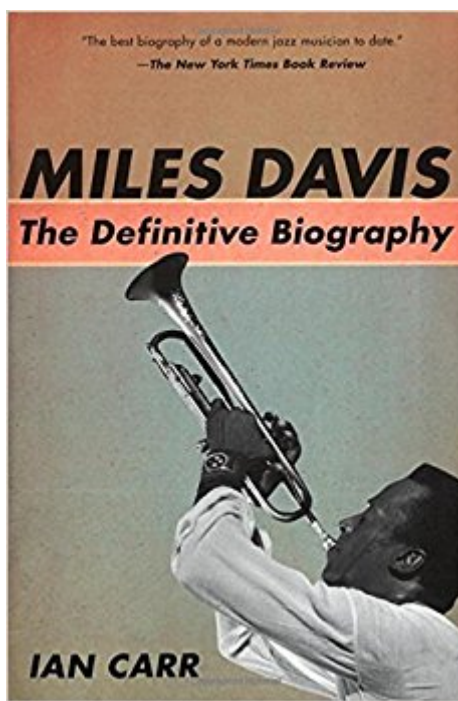


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Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography



Synopsis

This exhaustively researched, revised edition of Ian Carr's classic biography throws new light on Davis' life and career: from the early days in New York with Charlie Parker; to the Birth of Cool; through his drug addiction in the early 1950s and the years of extraordinary achievements (1954-1960), during which he signed with Columbia and collaborated with such unequaled talents as John Coltrane, Bill Evans, Wynton Kelly and Cannonball Adderly. Carr also explores Davis' dark, reclusive period (1975-1980), offering firsthand accounts of his descent into addiction, as well as his dramatic return to life and music. Carr has talked with the people who knew Miles and his music best including Bill Evans, Joe Zawinul, Keith Jarrett, and Jack DeJohnette, and has conducted interviews with Ron Carter, Max Roach, John Scofield and others.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First, you need to know that this is an update of Carr's 1982 biography of Miles Davis. To begin with, there is some definite updating of the early chapters. In particular, recorded material that wasn't available in 1982 is discussed, such as the Plugged Nickel performances, and recent Columbia/Legacy releases such as Carnegie Hall 1961 are specifically mentioned. There are also surprising little nuggets of new information sprinkled throughout the first half. However, these chapters would have benefited from more careful or consistent editing. Statements of fact in 1982 that were later made inaccurate have not been revised. For example, Carr remarks that Miles' days as a sideman were over after LEGRAND JAZZ, a statement belied by his later sessions with

Toto, Chaka Khan, Cameo, Scritti Politti, Shirley Horn, Paolo Rustichelli, et al. Also, Carr marks FILLES DE KILIMANJARO as the last album with Gil Evans, although I suppose STAR PEOPLE is arguable as a matter of degree. Another aspect that consistent editing would have fixed is that statements are presented as more or less current opinions, when the speakers have passed away since the first edition. Even when referring to historical events, Red Rodney, Philly Joe Jones, and others are quoted as contemporary figures. True in 1982, but not today. This is a little disconcerting. In these respects, reading this edition is almost like reading two books, which I suppose it is in a way. But the transition from the old material to the new is seamless, and it always seemed to me that the ending of the first edition was rather rushed, anyway. Initially it seemed to me that the coverage devoted to the post-retirement years (not quite half the book) was more than a little out of balance.

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