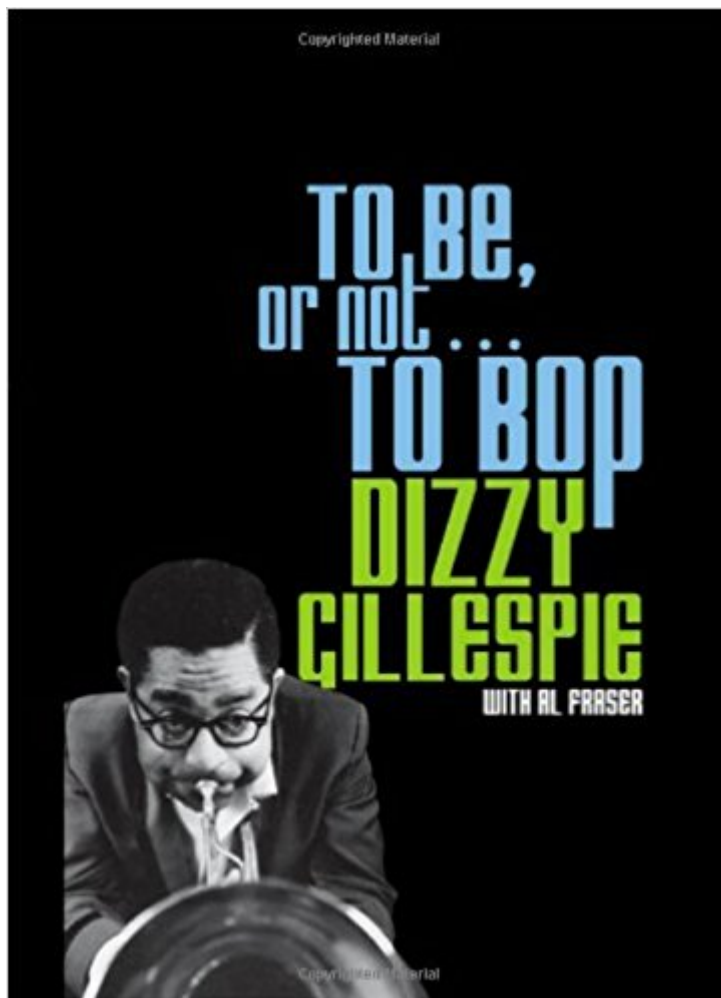


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# To Be, Or Not . . . To Bop



## Synopsis

You don't have to know John Birks 'Dizzy' Gillespie's songs to feel his influence. The self-taught trumpet player rose from a poor but musically driven upbringing to become a jazz mastermind, founding the bebop movement and giving rise to Afro-Cuban music.

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## Customer Reviews

You don't have to know John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie's songs to feel his influence. The self-taught trumpet player rose from a poor but musically driven upbringing to become a jazz mastermind, founding the bebop movement and giving rise to Afro-Cuban music. This extensive biography is intertwined with reflections from famous Gillespie associates Cab Calloway, Count Basie, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Mary Lou Williams, Ella Fitzgerald, and many others. They provide numerous perspectives of Gillespie's early start on the road to fame and the spirited times that would follow. *To Be, or Not . . . to Bop* is a unique account serves as both a rollicking history lesson in American music and culture and a towering play-by-play of a life not to be forgotten.

Dizzy Gillespie (1917-1993) was an American jazz trumpet virtuoso as well as a bandleader, singer, and composer.

Interesting book because it includes other musicians opinions about Dizzy. I am about half way

through the book and I am enjoying reading about the history of jazz from his perspective. I think anyone interested in Jazz history would like this book. I am learning to play Tenor Sax and I enjoy reading about how challenging it was for Jazz musicians in 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s to make a living, and it still appears to be so. My only negative comment is that though the book contains photos, like many paper back books the quality of the photos is poor though a bit of photoshop and the photos could be much better. Dizzy is definitely a jazz icon and worth reading about.

How wonderful that this book has finally been reissued. Snap it up before it goes out of print again! This extraordinary book was written by Dizzy Gillespie and Al Frazer about Dizzy's life as one of the creators of bebop. The main text is Dizzy in his own words, but this is interspersed with interviews from other people who were there at the time who provide their own recollections of the same incidents. This book is a unique picture into the world of jazz by one of its most flamboyant players. This book, along with the Miles Davis Autobiography "Miles" and Ross Russel's book on Charlie Parker "Bird Lives!: The High Life And Hard Times Of Charlie (yardbird) Parker" are essentials for any jazz lover.

Great book.

Great book, but you have to read it over a few times just to absorb all the information. One of the true giants of 20th Century Music.

I would recommend this product to anyone studying jazz history or interested in Dizzy's story. Superb, well written, and a pleasure to read.

This book gives you a "down-to-earth" insight into the life of a Jazz great and how unconventional it all really is.

love it

Of all the jazz biographies I've read, this one seems the most indispensable. Dizzy Gillespie brings the bebop era to life in this book, much as he helped create the era in real life. He explains how the creators of bebop came together to create the music. Included are plenty of third party interviews that corroborate and accentuate Dizzy's central role (it is noteworthy that bebop's other creators

such as Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk didn't write autobiographies before they were overtaken by death and mental illness). We also learn about Dizzy's compelling journey as a man, from a surprisingly poor and ruffian youth, to instigator of mischief, to innovative musician, to international ambassador of music, and finally, to a spiritual man who aspired to be a humanitarian. We hear a lot about Dizzy's shortcomings and weak moments, including via the hilarious frankness of his wife Lorraine. The late chapter titled "Evolutions" should be a gold mine for musicians and jazz historians trying to understand the process of musical innovation. One downside of this dense book is that it is not more tightly edited. The same story is often told by multiple witnesses, adding more pages than insight to this 500 page book.

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