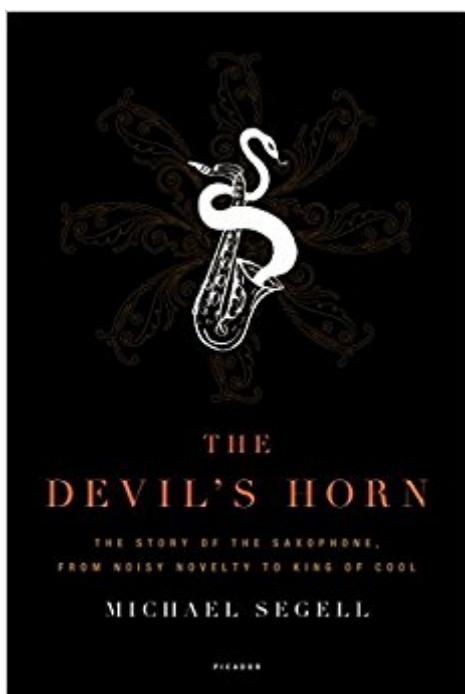


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# The Devil's Horn: The Story Of The Saxophone, From Noisy Novelty To King Of Cool



## Synopsis

The 160-year history of the saxophone comes to brilliant life in Michael Segell's wonderfully researched, beautifully told *The Devil's Horn*. Beginning with "a sound never heard before," Segell's portrait follows the iconographic instrument as it is lauded for its sensuality, then outlawed for its influence, and finally credited with changing the face of popular culture. A deeply personal story of one man's love for music-making, a universal story of artistic and political revolution, and a trenchant critique of the global forces that stand in art's way, *The Devil's Horn* is music writing at its very finest.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The saxophone has come to be synonymous with 20th-century music, not to mention all things cool: jazz, cocktail lounges, hip cats and the like. Segell (*Standup Guy: Manhood After Feminism*) traces the instrument back to its eccentric Belgian creator, Adolphe Sax, an acoustical craftsman who survived disease, accidents and even assassination attempts from his instrument-making competitors. Just 10 years after Sax completed the first prototype of the saxophone in 1843, the shining horn had traveled all over the U.S. and throughout Europe. Music would never be the same again. Like its creator, the sax was revolutionary, an instrument whose very sound— which has been described as "carnal" and "voluptuous"— caused it to be banned by Nazis and Communists; religious leaders—including the Vatican— deemed the instrument "profane." As Segell recounts the saxophone's history, he simultaneously illuminates many of its

renowned players, namely jazz greats Benny Carter, Sonny Rollins, Lee Konitz and Branford Marsalis. An amateur musician himself, Segell has a personal relationship with the horn, which adds a stirring sense of immediacy to the narrative. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Would someone please forward Segell the memo that states that books about jazz are supposed to be academic and soporific? . . . [A] freewheeling tribute . . . [with] exuberance that is everywhere to be found.” The New York Times Book Review “[A] historical and deeply personal tribute to the saxophone . . . [The Devil’s Horn] will reward and surprise readers who may have thought they knew something about the horn simply because they’ve spent a lifetime listening.” Baltimore Sun “Segell has produced a minor miracle: a book on jazz that does not rely on largely unrevealing anecdotal tidbits, hip talk, one-upmanship . . . and dazzling (but superfluous) adjectives. . . . It is humorous, enlightening, instructive, and revealing to a degree that it may forever change your attitude toward the sax.” The Roanoke Times “An excellent short course on the saxophone in jazz . . . [A] beguiling story.” Chicago Sun-Times “[Segell is] adept at spreading the contagion of his own curiosities.” The News & Observer

One devil of a fine book. Adolph Sax created a "mean machine" when he created the saxophone. I've played clarinet for about six decades; and in high school and college I played tenor sax in dance bands. Last summer I decided to buy a soprano sax and found it to be a mean monster, despite its smaller size. Working hard for months I was beginning to be discouraged by my inability to get a good tone. The alto and tenors were no problem. Fascinated by this instrument I read Mike Segell's *THE DEVIL'S HORN*. I learned that when John Coltrane decided to play soprano sax after becoming one of the premier jazz sax musicians, it took him two years to get the tone he wanted. No longer discouraged, I'll try as long as it takes me. *THE DEVIL'S HORN* contains many story's of the saxophone greats and gives many tips from the pros. Even if you are not a musician or even a saxophone player, you will enjoy this story.

I've read and re-read this book at least three times. Partially because my memory sucks but mostly because it is filled with so much information It is worth re-reading. Michael does a really nice job of gathering a ton of information and anecdotal information from credible sources. Because some of it

is anecdotal a few reviewers questioned the accuracy of the information. My take is that in those cases documented historical information is not and never will be available. Michael cited conclusions from his sources and is up front about the lack of documented evidence. Don't let my comments on the "history" piece of this book turn you off. Michael makes it an easy read and mixes it up with stories and opinions from legends of the music/saxophone family.

I bought this book after reading a library copy. The library copy awoke me to the fact I should have been playing a saxophone. So I started playing - at age 58. How many books are that inspiring?

While the trumpet is a symbol of God's proclamations throughout the Bible...the saxophone travels down a different path in history; the most intricately mechanical horn in the orchestra..and with a history of inspiration all its own. Great first-person interviews with some of history's most important sax players.

The book starts out fabulously. I loved the fascinating and funny tale of Adolphe Sax's youth. The author chooses many roads to travel down, many of which were not interesting to me personally. He certainly hits a few 'high notes' however, and these may warrant you reading it. I would have preferred more concentration on jazz, it's players, and horns, rather than the parade of oddballs and their odd ideas that populate this book.

I purchased this book while learning to play the saxophone. The author does a great job of telling the story of the saxophone from past to present. A very interesting read for anyone wanting to know more about this instrument.

as a saxophone player for many years i truly enjoyed learning about the history of the saxophone. michael seagell has so many wonderful stories about famous and not so famous saxophone players and their contributions to the instrument and music in general. would recommend this book to anyone that has an interest in music and particularly the saxophone....

Good writing style and it is a good human interest story.about author's personal involvement with the sax .. He learned to play by interviewing other famous players.and finding out all he could about playing the sax. Would be good reading for anyone who plays the sax or is interested in music. A sax player.

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