



## **BRAILLE AND TALKING BOOK LIBRARY**

(800) 952-5666; [btbl.ca.gov](http://btbl.ca.gov); [btbl@library.ca.gov](mailto:btbl@library.ca.gov)

### **Biographies of Jazz and Blues Singers and Musicians**

To order any of these titles, contact the library by email, phone, mail, in person, or order through our [online catalog](#). Most titles can be [downloaded from BARD](#).

#### **Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans by Louis Armstrong**

Read by Chuck Young

5 hours, 48 minutes

Autobiography of jazz legend Louis Armstrong (1900-1971) chronicles his early years in New Orleans. Describes Armstrong's home life and his foray into the music scene, playing in bars with the biggest names in New Orleans until his 1922 departure to Chicago. Includes 1986 introduction by Dan Morgenstern. 1954.

[Download from BARD: Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB063277

#### **Irrepressible: the Jazz Age Life of Henrietta Bingham by Emily Bingham**

Read by Mary Vaughn

13 hours, 11 minutes

Author Emily Bingham was always curious about her great-aunt Henrietta, who lived from 1901 to 1968. Henrietta defied society's conventions and led a glamorous and provocative life filled with travel, art, drinking, and partying. She also took many lovers--both men and women--and this made her an embarrassment to her wealthy Louisville family. 2015.

[Download from BARD: Irrepressible: the Jazz Age Life of Henrietta...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DBC05650

**Louis Armstrong, Master of Modernism by Thomas David. Brothers**

Read by Bob Moore

23 hours, 3 minutes

Music professor examines the life, career, and influence of jazz trumpeter and bandleader Armstrong (1901-1971). Chronicles Armstrong's ascendancy in the music scenes of Chicago and New York City and discusses ways he helped to establish jazz as a musical art form. Pulitzer finalist. 2014.

[Download from BARD: Louis Armstrong, Master of Modernism](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB078244

**The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Jazz by Brian Case and Stan Britt**

Read by Ralph Lowenstein

36 hours, 17 minutes

Two music journalists collaborate on a biographical encyclopedia of more than 400 entries, including traditional pioneers of jazz and contemporary modernists. Selective discography. For high school and adult readers.

[Download from BARD: The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Jazz](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB014187

**Princess Noire the Tumultuous Reign of Nina Simone by Nadine Cohodas**

Read by Celeste Lawson

16 hours, 7 minutes

Biography of musician Nina Simone (1933-2003) chronicles her training as a classical pianist, foray into singing and jazz, and rise from Atlantic City clubs to the Newport Jazz Festival and European venues. Discusses Simone's financial troubles, civil rights involvement, and mental illness that affected her career and personal life. 2010.

[Download from BARD: Princess Noire the Tumultuous Reign of Nina...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB071869

## **Late Life Jazz the Life and Career of Rosemary Clooney by Ken Crossland**

Read by Robert Sams

15 hours, 30 minutes

Biography of singer Rosemary Clooney (1928-2002), aunt of movie star George Clooney, chronicles her life as she traveled from Kentucky to Hollywood.

Highlights her 1940s Big Band career, her starring role in the 1954 film *White Christmas* alongside Bing Crosby, and her 1970s comeback as a jazz singer. 2013.

[Download from BARD: Late Life Jazz the Life and Career of Rosemary...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB077847

## **Stormy Weather: the Music and Lives of a Century of Jazzwomen by Linda Dahl**

Read by Jake Williams

18 hours, 37 minutes

Survey of women involved in the development of jazz in the United States. Chronologically discusses vocalists, family shows, instrumentalists, and all-female bands. Profiles ten performing musicians, including Willene Barton, Helen Humes, Helen Keane, and Mary Osborne, and provides in-depth interviews done between 1979 and 1981. 1984.

[Download from BARD: Stormy Weather: the Music and Lives of a...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB063576

## **Shall We Play that One Together? the Life and Art of Jazz Piano Legend Marian McPartland by Paul de Barros**

Read by Zoe Alexis Scott

22 hours, 11 minutes

In a world dominated by men, Marian McPartland distinguished herself as one of the greatest jazz pianists of her age. Born in the UK and classically trained in piano, she was passionately attracted to the rhythms of American jazz.

Entertaining troops in WWII Europe, she met her future husband, Jimmy McPartland, a cocky young trumpet player who was the protege of the great Bix Beiderbecke. They were married and, together, they made jazz history.

Possibly, her greatest accomplishment was the creation of NPR's long-running show "Piano Jazz." Just as inviting as Marian's signature question on "Piano Jazz," "Shall We Play That One Together?" is an invitation to readers everywhere to listen to the score of a bygone age. Some strong language.

[Download from BARD: Shall We Play that One Together? the Life and...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DBC00342

## **Voices of the Jazz Age: Profiles of Eight Vintage Jazzmen by Chip Deffaa**

Read by Christopher Hurt

10 hours, 54 minutes

Sam Wooding, Benny Waters, Joe Tarto, Bud Freeman, Jimmy McPartland, Freddie Moore, and Jabbo Smith reminisce with a jazz critic about their lives, focusing on their respective roles in creating the heyday of jazz in the 1920s. An essay on Bix Beiderbecke, who died in 1931, recognizes the importance of his short life in the history of jazz.

[Download from BARD: Voices of the Jazz Age: Profiles of Eight Vintage...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB037856

## **Bunny Berigan: Elusive Legend of Jazz by Robert Dupuis**

Read by Christopher Hurt

12 hours, 54 minutes

Story of the jazz trumpeter famous during the 1930s for his horn playing and his Swing Era band. Dupuis notes Berigan also enjoyed money, women, and alcohol until his untimely death in 1942 at the age of thirty-three. He asserts Berigan's sound, stamina (playing in public up to seventy hours a week), wide register, and theme song, "I Can't Get Started," secure his place among the legends of jazz. Some strong language.

[Download from BARD: Bunny Berigan: Elusive Legend of Jazz](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB038138

## **Music is My Mistress by Duke Ellington**

Read by Peter Jay Fernandez

17 hours, 50 minutes

Autobiography of bandleader, composer, and jazz musician Duke Ellington (1899-1974). Describes Ellington's childhood in Washington, D.C., his fellow artists, his 1923 arrival in New York City, subsequent worldwide tours, and his philosophy of life. 1973.

[Download from BARD: Music is My Mistress](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB066574

## **Hand Me My Travelin' Shoes in Search of Blind Willie McTell by Michael Gray**

Read by Jake Williams

18 hours, 10 minutes

Author Michael Gray recounts his odyssey through the Deep South to research this biography of Georgia blues singer and twelve-string guitarist William Samuel McTell (1903-1959), who was born blind. Portrays Willie's travels and performances during the segregation era and the way his reputation grew after his death. 2009.

[Download from BARD: Hand Me My Travelin' Shoes in Search of Blind...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB071430

## **Searching for Robert Johnson by Peter Guralnick**

Read by Chuck Young

2 hours, 35 minutes

Author of music biographies including Last Train to Memphis (DB 40087) examines the short life and long legacy of bluesman Johnson, who died at age twenty-seven in 1938. From scarce information, the author stitches together what is known of his life, and looks at the many blues musicians he influenced. 1989.

[Download from BARD: Searching for Robert Johnson](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB089243

## **When I Left Home My Story by Buddy Guy**

Read by Mirron E. Willis

7 hours, 29 minutes

Legendary blues guitarist Buddy Guy (born 1936) reminisces about growing up as the son of Louisiana sharecroppers, moving to Chicago in 1957 and playing in nightclubs, and working with Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Junior Wells, Eric Clapton, and the Rolling Stones. Strong language. Commercial audiobook. 2012.

[Download from BARD: When I Left Home My Story](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB075698

### **Herbie Hancock Possibilities by Herbie Hancock**

Read by Herbie Hancock

12 hours, 35 minutes

Grammy Award winner Hancock (born 1940) reflects on his life and career. Discusses growing up on Chicago's South Side, discovering music and jazz, playing in Miles Davis's band, his solo career, drug addiction, becoming a Buddhist, and his work as a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2014.

[Download From BARD: Herbie Hancock Possibilities](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB080338

### **Queen of Bebop: the Musical Lives of Sarah Vaughan by Elaine M. Hayes**

Read by Dawn Ursula

17 hours, 32 minutes

Music historian explores the life and legacy of jazz singer Vaughan (1924-1990). Draws on interviews with friends and former colleagues to chronicle her career highs and lows, as well as the marriages that took their toll on her both emotionally and financially. Some strong language. 2017.

[Download from BARD: Queen of Bebop: the Musical Lives of Sarah...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB091399

### **Lady Sings the Blues by Billie Holiday**

Read by Dawn Ursula

8 hours, 15 minutes

Memoir of the famous jazz and blues singer, written in 1956, just three years before her death at forty-four. She shares details of her Baltimore youth, her rise to fame in the jazz world, and the struggles she experienced with racism and drug addiction. Some strong language. 1956.

[Download from BARD: Lady Sings the Blues](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB083025

**Thelonious Monk the Life and Times of an American Original by Robin D.G. Kelley**

Read by Julian Thompson

34 hours, 47 minutes

Historian chronicles the life of jazz pianist and composer Thelonious Sphere Monk (1917-1982), from his poverty-stricken childhood in North Carolina to his reclusive final years in New York City. Discusses Monk's musical influences, unique playing style, artistic collaborations, eccentric behavior, and influential oeuvre--much of which became jazz standards. 2009.

[Download from BARD: Thelonious Monk the Life and Times of an...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB071039

**Leader of the Band: the Life of Woody Herman by Gene Lees**

Read by Randy Atcher

18 hours, 29 minutes

Renowned author of books on jazz examines the life of jazz great Woody Herman, who died in 1987 at seventy-four. A clarinet-playing bandleader for a fifty-year span that included the big-band era, Herman was well liked by the musicians he directed. Discusses his tours, noted members of his band, his personal life, and the financial problems that plagued his final years.

[Download from BARD: Leader of the Band: the Life of Woody Herman](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB042362

**The Uncrowned King of Swing Fletcher Henderson and Big Band Jazz by Jeffrey Magee**

Read by Roy Avers

16 hours, 29 minutes

Music professor's biography of the African American musician credits Henderson with devising the arranging formula that made Benny Goodman the King of Swing. Portrays Henderson as a pianist and bandleader who "profoundly shaped American jazz...during the 1920s and 1930s." Describes Henderson's work with Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, and others. 2005.

[Download from BARD: The Uncrowned King of Swing Fletcher...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB060620

## **Beneath the Underdog: His World as Composed By Mingus by Charles Mingus**

Read by Chuck Young

10 hours, 1 minute

Jazz musician and composer Charles Mingus (1922-1979) recounts his life, from his rough beginnings in Watts, California, where he learned about jazz, women, and crime, to his music career in New York. Describes his feelings, his appetites, and his music. Strong language and some explicit descriptions of sex. 1971.

[Download from BARD: Beneath the Underdog: His World as Composed...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB063336

## **Chasin' the Bird the Life and Legacy of Charlie Parker by Brian Priestley** **Read by Gregory Maupin**

10 hours, 2 minutes

British jazz critic analyzes the music of African American saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker (1920-1955), tracing Parker's contributions to jazz and bebop. Documents Parker's recordings and performances and describes his Kansas City depression-era childhood, his first paid engagement at age fourteen, and his early addiction to alcohol and drugs. 2005.

[Download from BARD: Chasin' the Bird the Life and Legacy of Charlie...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB089919

## **Coltrane: the Story of a Sound by Ben Ratliff**

Read by Julian Thompson

8 hours, 48 minutes

New York Times jazz critic analyzes the performance style of saxophonist John Coltrane (1926-1967), from his 1946 recordings as a navy bandsman and 1950s improvisational experimentation to his 1961 breakthrough song, "My Favorite Things." Discusses Coltrane's openness to other cultures and influence on other musicians. Some strong language. 2007.

[Download from BARD: Coltrane: the Story of a Sound](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB066428

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR17755](#)

Also available in braille BR017755



### **Respect the Life of Aretha Franklin by David Ritz**

Read by Brad. Raymond

17 hours, 21 minutes

Ritz, author of Ray Charles (DB 46564) and coauthor of When I Left Home (DB 75698), examines the life of legendary singer Aretha Franklin (born 1942).

Discusses her childhood in Detroit, her personal struggles impacted by phenomenal career success, and her legacy to the music industry. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2014.

[Download from BARD: Respect the Life of Aretha Franklin](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB079771

### **W.C. Handy the Life and Times of the Man Who Made the Blues by David Robertson**

Read by Jake Williams

11 hours, 31 minutes

Biography of William Christopher Handy (1873-1958) traces his Alabama childhood during Reconstruction, his musical training, and his early career performing in ragtime and vaudeville venues. Highlights Handy's ability to write scores and publish commercially, his relocation to Memphis and then Harlem, and the accident that blinded him. 2009.

[Download from BARD W.C Handy the Life and Times of the Man who...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB069060

### **Groovin' High: the Life of Dizzy Gillespie by Alyn Shipton**

Read by Jake Williams

18 hours, 47 minutes

Biography of gifted trumpeter, jazz great, and musical ambassador John Birks Gillespie (1917-1993). Discusses his rise from poverty to become an outstanding entertainer, bandleader, and master of bebop, Afro-Cuban jazz, and bossanova. Includes details about his offstage life and the complexities of his character. 1999.

[Download from BARD: Groovin' High: the Life of Dizzy Gillespie](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB050792

**Artie Shaw: a Musical Biography and Discography by Vladimir Simosko**

Read by Bob Moore

28 hours, 11 minutes

Music librarian pens a biographical essay about Swing Era clarinetist and bandleader Artie Shaw. Chronicles each phase of Shaw's career from 1924 to 1954, places the musician in the context of the times, and concludes with an extensive discography. Foreword by Artie Shaw. 2000.

[Download from BARD: Artie Shaw: a Musical Biography and Discography](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB060847

**Red Hot Mama: the Life of Sophie Tucker by Lauren Rebecca Sklaroff**

Read by Barbara Rappaport

11 hours, 20 minutes

Biography of a singer and actor who starred in vaudeville, radio, film, and television. Drawing heavily on the scrapbooks Tucker (1887-1966) kept throughout her career, chronicles how this daughter of Russian Jewish immigrants went on to inspire generations of female performers. Some strong language. 2018.

[Download from BARD: Red Hot Mama: the Life of Sophie Tucker](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB091786

**Billie Holiday the Musician and the Myth by John F. Szwed**

Read by Cecelia Riddett

7 hours, 29 minutes

Jazz scholar Szwed begins his examination of singer Billie Holiday by looking at the many contradictory stories told about her and by her, especially in her own 1956 autobiography Lady Sings the Blues. He analyzes Holiday's influences, iconic songs, and unique gifts as a singer. Some strong language. 2015.

[Download from BARD: Billie Holiday the Musician and the Myth](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB081774

### **Duke a Life of Duke Ellington by Terry Teachout**

Read by Jake Williams

19 hours, 57 minutes

Wall Street Journal drama critic profiles jazz virtuoso Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (1899-1974). Details Ellington's early life in Washington, D.C., as the son of a butler and grandson of a slave, his personal relationships, and his career as a bandleader and composer. 2013.

[Download from BARD: Duke a Life of Duke Ellington](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB077714

### **Pops a Life of Louis Armstrong by Terry Teachout**

Read by Conrad Feininger

15 hours, 5 minutes

Biography of jazz musician Louis Armstrong by a drama critic and former musician. Uses newly available material to portray the trumpeter in the contexts of his time. Traces Armstrong's impoverished childhood in turn-of-the-twentieth-century New Orleans, his ascent in the music world, and his personal life. Some strong language. 2009.

[Download from BARD: Pops a Life of Louis Armstrong](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB072358

### **Giants of Jazz by Studs Terkel**

Read by Robert Sams

6 hours, 12 minutes

Collective biography of thirteen American jazz greats: Joe Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Bix Beiderbecke, Fats Waller, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Woody Herman, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, and John Coltrane. Portraits blend musicians' life stories with information about the evolution of jazz. Includes discography. 1957.

[Download from BARD: Giants of Jazz](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB060829

## **Escaping the Delta Robert Johnson and the Invention of the Blues by Elijah Wald**

Read by Julian Thompson

14 hours, 40 minutes

Author of *How the Beatles Destroyed Rock 'n' Roll* (DB 71861) researches the origins of Mississippi Delta blues. Recaps the life of African American singer Robert Johnson (1911-1938) and his influence on white performers who revived the genre in the 1960s. Debunks stereotypes and myths surrounding the music. 2004.

[Download from BARD: Escaping the Delta Robert Johnson and the...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB074297

## **The Night People: the Jazz Life of Dicky Wells by Dicky Wells as Told to Stanley Dance**

Read by Bob Moore

9 hours, 40 minutes

First published in 1971, this revised version describes the life of the jazz trombonist who played solo and sideman under Count Basie during the Swing Era. He worked with saxophonist Lester Young and singer Billie Holiday, and later with B.B. King and Ray Charles. Wells talks about the jazz world and about life on the road. Contains a discography. Some strong language.

[Download from BARD: The Night People: the Jazz Life of Dicky Wells](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB035456

## **Say No to the Devil the Life and Musical Genius of Rev. Gary Davis by Ian Zack**

Read by Bob Moor

12 hours, 7 minutes

Accidentally blinded in infancy, Davis endured an impoverished childhood in South Carolina. Through his extraordinary gifts as a guitar player, however, he made a life as a street singer and preacher, moving to New York in the 1940s and, eventually, becoming an icon of the 1960s folk music revival. 2015

[Download from BARD: Say No to the Devil the Life and Musical Genius ...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB083529