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Lee Morgan: His Life, Music and Culture

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Perchard, Tom. 2006. *Lee Morgan: His Life, Music and Culture*. London: Equinox. ISBN 1845532058 [Book]



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Abstract or Description

This is the first biography of the jazz trumpeter Lee Morgan (1938-72). He was a prodigy-- recruited to Gillespie's big band while still a teenager, he joined Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers not much after. By his twenties Morgan had played on four continents and dozens of albums. The trumpeter would go on to create a personal and highly influential style, and to make records -- most notably *The Sidewinder* -- which would sell millions of copies almost unheard of in jazz. While what should have been Morgan's most successful years were hampered by a heroin addiction, the ascendant black liberation movement of the late sixties gave the music a new, political impulse, and he returned to the jazz scene to become a vociferous campaigner for black rights and representation. But Morgan's personal life remained troubled, and during a fight with his girlfriend in a New York club, he was shot and killed, aged thirty three.

Although Lee Morgan lived and died in sensational style, the story told in this book doesn't just stumble through stages, studios, bars and needles; such a narrative couldn't do justice to the richness of the trumpeter's music or to the culture from which it came. The events of Morgan's life are presented here not just as items of biography but also as points of departure for wider historical investigations that aim to situate the musician and his contemporaries in changing aesthetic, social and economic contexts. This book draws on many original sources, interviews with Morgan's colleagues and friends, as well as extensive archival research and critical engagement with itself.

Item Type:	Book
Departments, Centres and Research Units:	Music
Date:	October 2006
Item ID:	7817
Date Deposited:	26 Mar 2013 08:09
Last Modified:	30 Jun 2017 10:00
URI:	http://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/7817

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