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Review of "Jazz Mavericks of the Lone Star State." By Dave Oliphant

Jean A. Boyd
Baylor University

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Jazz Mavericks of the Lone Star State. By Dave Oliphant. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007. xi + 242 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$55.00 cloth, \$22.95 paper.

Jazz Mavericks of the Lone Star State is a collection of sixteen essays that can be read according to interest rather than order. They cover a wide range of jazz-related topics, from important jazz musicians to important jazz discographies; Dave Oliphant is emphatic throughout about the important contributions of Texas-born jazz musicians to every phase of jazz. I have the same concern now that I did when reading Oliphant's earlier book, *Texan*

Jazz (1996), namely that he deals less with jazz in Texas than with Texas-born jazz musicians who left the state to work in top bands. Nevertheless, this collection is an important contribution to our knowledge not only of Texas-born jazz musicians, but also of the major bands in which they played.

For this reviewer the most interesting essays are the two pertaining to western swing. Though he admits that some performances of western swing possess jazz qualities, Oliphant is not ready to admit western swing into the canon of jazz history. These chapters nonetheless belong in a book entitled *Jazz Mavericks of the Lone Star State* because western swing, like all true mavericks, followed its own laws and obeyed the commands of its own distinct audience.

Another essay of particular interest deals with jazz in literature. This refreshing acknowledgment that jazz has influence far beyond itself opens the door for teachers of jazz history to discover new areas of research for themselves and their students. In "The Alchemy of Jazz," Oliphant sees jazz as "an American music that continues to inspire artists in every field—

among others, television series, film, dance, drama, poetry, and detective novels—just as it goes on moving listeners around the world and in every walk of life." Educators and researchers will find here an irresistible invitation to intense research in fields related to jazz.

"Ornette Coleman's Harmolodic Life" investigates this iconic Texas jazz musician's career and contributions through written and spoken pronouncements by others, but in its conclusion focuses on the idea that Coleman's sound mirrors his sense of place, the Texas prairies and the great Southwest. Again, this notion of the importance of place to any artist's output and style suggests countless research possibilities.

Jazz Mavericks of the Lone Star State is an important tool in the on-going search for deeper associations between the many divergent paths of jazz and related areas of art, literature, religion, politics, and culture.

JEAN A. BOYD
School of Music
Baylor University