

# 'John Coltrane'...; 'Black Music'...: Two new books on roots of jazz and Black struggle

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NEW YORK--**Pathfinder Press** has just published two new books on the roots of jazz and the Black struggle: "John Coltrane and the Jazz Revolution of the 1960s" and "Black Music, White Business: Illuminating the [History](#) and Political Economy of Jazz." Both are by Frank Kofsky, a frequent lecturer on the history of jazz who died in 1997.

Jazz as an art form, Kofsky argued, cannot be separated from the constellation of social, political and economic forces confronting the Black urban population in the United States.

In particular, he contends, the innovations associated with John Coltrane were indelibly marked by the social context in which they emerged. This meant, in the early 1960s, the growing determination among Blacks to remove the chains of second-class citizenship, the impact of the movement for African independence, and "not least, the growth of explicit Black-nationalist sentiment."

"John Coltrane and the Jazz Revolution of the 1960s" is a revised, greatly expanded edition of Kofsky's acclaimed 1970 work, "Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music." It contains the best-known interview with Coltrane, recorded in 1966, a year before the saxophonist and composer's death. It also presents interviews with drummer Elvin Jones and pianist McCoy Tyner, and includes a discussion on how the interplay among Coltrane and his accompanists culminated in a series of artistic break-throughs.

"Black Music, White Business" examines the contradiction in jazz that Blacks create the music but wealthy whites own it. The expropriation of the means of expression of a whole people—and its transformation into just one more commodity to accrue profit—Kofsky explained, is the key to understanding the ruthless exploitation of jazz and the musicians who create it.

Charlie Parker, Billie Holiday and Bessie [Smith](#) are eloquent examples of this fundamental relationship between the makers and owners of the music, Kofsky asserts.

Parker, the most prominent innovator of the bebop style of jazz, had to sign an exclusive recording contract to secure his release from a state mental institution where he was being held against his will. Holiday and Smith--two of the most popular singers of this century - died broke; many of their most famous works had been recorded under contracts that provided flat fees, with no royalties.

A 500-page [book](#), "John Coltrane and the Jazz Revolution of the 1960s," contains 16 pages of photos and is available in paperback at \$23.95. "Black Music, White Business," a book of 165 pages, with eight pages of photographs is available in paperback at \$15.95.

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