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For immediate release

Sight Readings Photographers and American Jazz, 1900-1960

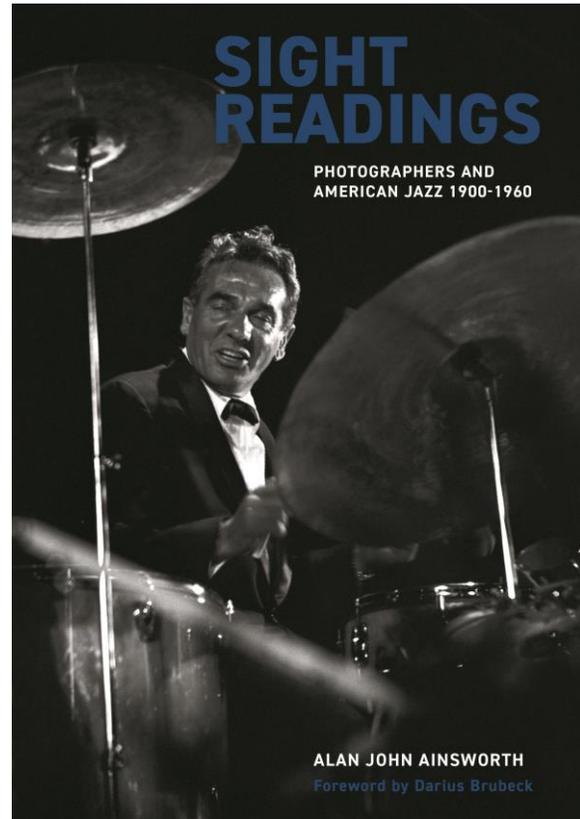
By Alan John Ainsworth

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**A revelatory look at the photography
that shaped the American jazz age.**



In this book, Alan John Ainsworth considers the work of a range of American jazz photographers from the turn of the twentieth century through the Jazz Age and into the 1960s. Drawing on extensive archival research, Ainsworth examines jazz as a visual subject, explores its attraction to different types of photographers, and analyzes why and how they approached the subject in the ways they did.

While some of the photographers are widely recognized today, the volume also explores lesser-known figures of the period—including African American photojournalists, studio photographers, early-twentieth-century emigres, and Jewish exiles of the 1930s—whose contributions are often overlooked. Informed by ideas from contemporary photographic theory and with a foreword by Darius Brubeck, *Sight Readings* is a wide-ranging, eye-opening new look at twentieth-century jazz photography and the people behind it.

Alan John Ainsworth is an independent scholar based in Edinburgh. He researches and writes on jazz, jazz photography, the history of photography, architecture, and design.

Please contact Georgia Glasspole at Intellect Ltd (georgia@intellectbooks.com) for any marketing enquiries.



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Reviews for Sight Readings

"Here we have a thinking man's guide to early jazz photography that will appeal to fans of the art and science of photography, fans of history and fans of the photos and photographers who take the shots. It makes for insightful reading and viewing."

Frank Alkyer, *DownBeat Magazine*

"The most fascinating chapter explores early African American photographers, and here the book is invaluable — collating information about key figures, including Arthur Bedou, James Van Der Zee, Edward Elcha and Carroll T. Maynard. No previous study has shed such light on this vital and important era. [...] a timely, thorough and absorbing addition to the study of jazz iconography."

Alyn Shipton, *JazzWise*

"Sight Readings is the definitive book on jazz photography. It will certainly continue to be so well into the future. I admire its theoretical sophistication as well as its exhaustive account of the many artists who devoted themselves to creating a photographic record of jazz."

Krin Gabbard, author of *Better Git It in Your Soul: An Interpretive Biography of Charles Mingus* (University of California Press, 2016)

"The book's originality lies in its ambition and range. There is nothing else in the market that covers the range of issues discussed in this book, draws on such a variety of scholarly and non-scholarly written material, or provides so much information about so many photographers. [...] The persuasive power of this work rests on its careful documentation and determined naming of photographers."

Simon Frith, emeritus professor of Music at The University of Edinburgh



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"Like an expansive jazz solo, Sight Readings both digs deep and flies high, remapping the history and redefining the conceptualization of jazz photography as a subgenre. Alan Ainsworth uncovers studio publicity portraiture, vernacular photography, and work done for the segregated black press, among other new directions, while illuminating the faded jazz image of the early twentieth century."

**Benjamin Cawthra, assistant professor of history at California State University, Fullerton;
author of *Blue Notes in Black and White: Photography and Jazz*
(University of Chicago Press, 2013)**

"Sight Readings is an instant classic, a work of breathtakingly thorough research and seasoned erudition that shows how African American, Jewish émigré, and other photographers created a vast archive of jazz imagery that both reflected and shaped the emergence of American multiracial modernity. Himself a superb photographer and learned historian of the form, Ainsworth's concern is how photographers have gone about framing jazz as a space of aesthetic, cultural, and political meaning. Sight Readings teaches us how photographers approached their jazz subjects with a view to their expressive potential and social importance, and how jazz writers, listeners, and musicians themselves can better grasp the richness and complexity of jazz history through visual evidence. An exemplary model of multi-sensorial music criticism, this excellent book enables us to see, hear, feel, and think about jazz much more deeply."

**John Gennari, professor of English and critical race and ethnic studies at the University of Vermont; author of *Blowin' Hot & Cool: Jazz and Its Critics*
(University of Chicago Press, 2006)**