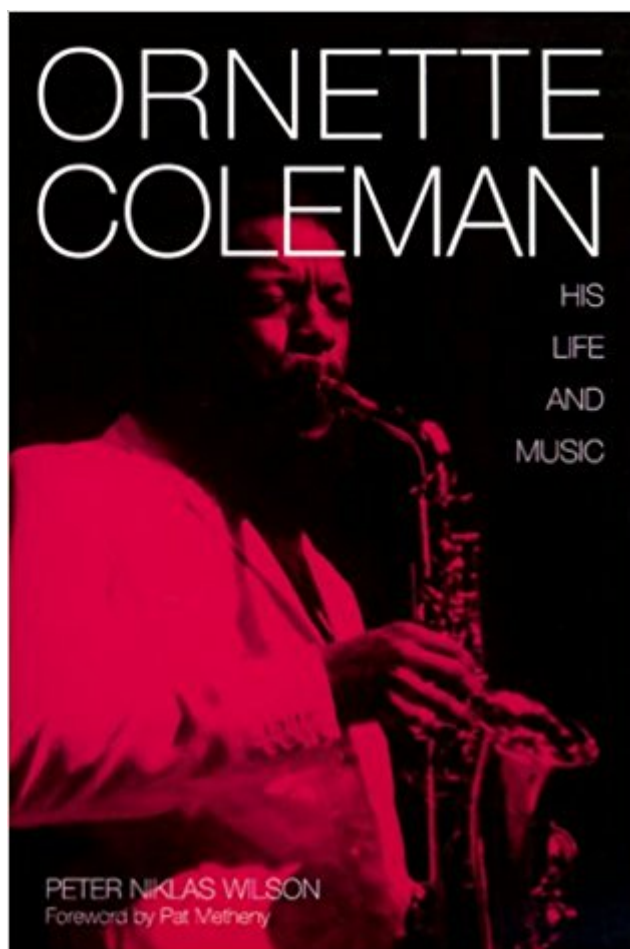


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# Ornette Coleman: His Life Music



## Synopsis

With the release of the album *Free Jazz* in 1960, Ornette Coleman inaugurated a movement that went on to dominate jazz for a decade. In the '70s, his fusion group, *Prime Time*, took his orchestral ideal of sound into the electric era, and in later years, he recorded albums with Jerry Garcia and Pat Metheny. Today, at 69 years of age, Ornette Coleman continues to push the envelope. In this first book about Coleman in over a decade, jazz biographer Peter Niklas Wilson divides the story into three parts. Part One traces Coleman from his youth in Texas and his breakthrough in New York City to decades of experimentation with electric and classical groups. Part Two explains "harmolodics," Coleman's esoteric musical theory. Part Three contains a complete narrative discography.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It is not easy to explain the music of Ornette Coleman with both accuracy and clarity, but Peter Niklas Wilson has done so with *Ornette Coleman: His Life and Music*. Peter Niklas Wilson's *Ornette Coleman: His Life and Music* is an insightful, well-researched examination of one of the most cryptic figures in American music. He skillfully draws upon scholarly and journalistic sources to write a thorough, yet well-paced biographical narrative. A musicologist who has written detailed studies on Charlie Parker and Anthony Braxton, and a bassist who has performed with Braxton, Barry Guy, and others, Wilson also has the technical background to untangle the nagging enigma that is Harmolodics, which he does with surprising clarity. Additionally, he surveys Coleman's recordings

as leader and sideman through 1997, keeping the bar rather high throughout the various phases of Coleman's career. With an engaging foreword by Pat Metheny functioning as something of a bonus track, Ornette Coleman: His Life and Music makes a persuasive case for Coleman's greatness, as Wilson is able to make Coleman's innovations digestible without diluting their substance. --

JazzTimes Jan/Feb 2000

Paving the way for some of the later innovative saxophonists such as John Coltrane, Albert Ayler, and others, Ornette Coleman was perhaps the pivotal man on his instrument in the '60's. Wilson's excellent new book brings his music before the reader in a clear, intelligent manner, offering a very accessible account of how Coleman's music works, how it achieves the effects it does, how he altered the rich tradition he had inherited. Perhaps most intriguing is the account of the considerable hostility Coleman originally met with from many critics, and Wilson's attempts to put the differing views into their respective contexts. Coleman's biography is equally fascinating, a unique life which resonates strongly with those intrigued by the idealism associated with the '60's. The second half of the book consists of 2-page reviews of Coleman's entire corpus of recordings, the most valuable section for this reader, allowing fans to navigate Coleman's 40 years of innovations.

This is a great little book on Coleman. I wish the bio section at the beginning was more detailed (it states that a more representative bio has been written though it appears to be out of print). The section on Coleman's Harmolodic system was very interesting and written in a way that someone with limited knowledge of music theory (i.e. me) could comprehend. The write ups regarding all of Coleman's recordings were fascinating. Where many writers praise everything their subject touches, here the praise and criticism seems to be very objective. Sometimes writers show a preference for either Coleman's acoustic quartet or the electric Prime Time group but Wilson handles each on its own merits. Recommended!

Simply wonderful. I enjoyed every page of this book and could not wait for the next. Being a huge fan of Ornette's, this was the first attempt of approaching literature based upon him. Forever waiting for his yet to be published (and probably written) book of Harmolodics, I could wait anymore and this book ensured me I shouldn't have.

not only is Ornette Coleman a Musical Genius but this Book captures his Full Essence.his Music Career is Incredible.he broke alot of Ground.his Music&Timeless.this is a Must Read on one Of The

Greatest Musicians Ever.

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