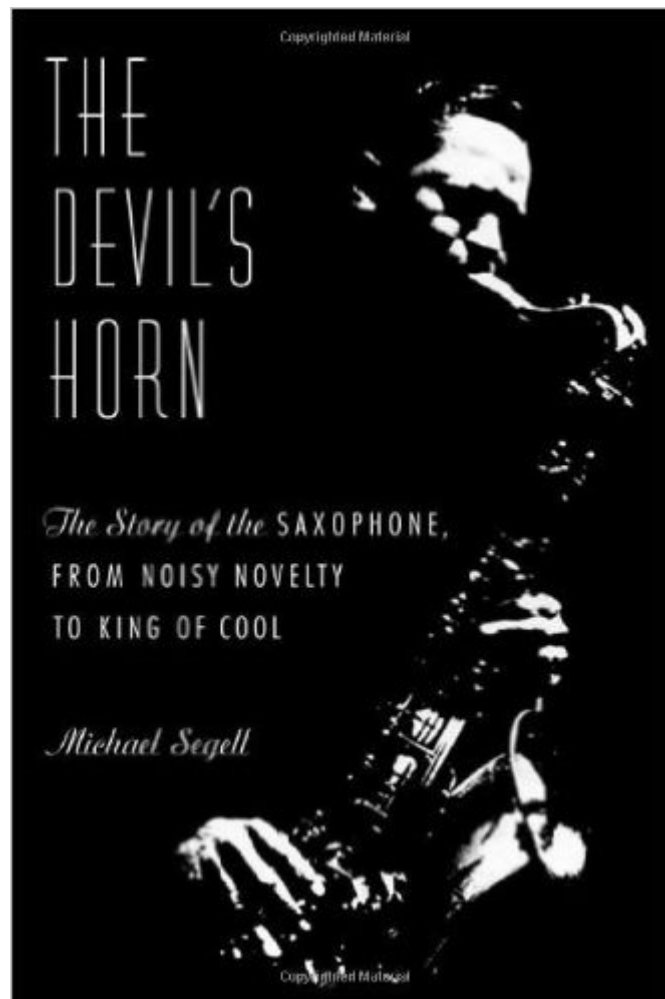


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# The Devil's Horn: The Story Of The Saxophone, From Noisy Novelty To King Of Cool



## Synopsis

In *The Devil's Horn*, Michael Segell traces the 160-year history of the saxophone—a horn that created a sound never before heard in nature, and that from the moment it debuted has aroused both positive and negative passions among all who hear it. The saxophone has insinuated itself into virtually every musical idiom that has come along since its birth as well as into music with traditions thousands of years old. But it has also been controversial, viewed as a symbol of decadence, immorality and lasciviousness: it was banned in Japan, saxophonists have been sent to Siberian lockdown by Communist officials, and a pope even indicted it. Segell outlines the saxophone's fascinating history while he highlights many of its legendary players, including Benny Carter, Illinois Jacquet, Sonny Rollins, Lee Konitz, Phil Woods, Branford Marsalis, and Michael Brecker. *The Devil's Horn* explores the saxophone's intersections with social movement and change, the innovative acoustical science behind the instrument, its struggles in the world of "legit" music, and the mystical properties that seduce all who fall under its influence. Colorful, evocative, and richly informed, *The Devil's Horn* is an ingenious portrait of one of the most popular instruments in the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Michael Segell has written a book which is brimming over not just with the enthusiasm of a convert but also with some very solid scholarship. The reader can't help but be caught up in the world which has evolved around this much maligned but fascinating instrument. What the book needs is a bit of

condescension to those not familiar with the saxophone's parts and some jazz terminology left me in the dark. A glossary and diagram of the instrument's parts would help.

All of us owe a debt to Michael Segell for his book on the saxophone. He has written an engaging, informative and oftentimes hilarious account of Adolphe Sax's incredible creation. Mr. Segell has spared no expense in tracing the history of the saxophone and has chronicled its years of development with easy-reading expertise. His interviews with many saxophonists are a particular joy to read and be a part of. Although it would be practically impossible to document every little piece of information about the saxophone and all of its major contributors over the past 160 years, Segell has done an exceedingly thorough and heartfelt job (one look at his bibliography will offer proof of that), and he deserves all the credit in the world for his efforts. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is a saxophonist and who is interested in becoming a more learned student of the history of the great instrument. I also hope this book will teach all of us as saxophone players not to be as divided in our thinking as we have been and that we will instead become more united and accepting of each other and of the many different styles and ways of thinking regarding our amazing instrument, the saxophone. At the very least, it's worth a try...sax on everyone!

Am about 80% done with this book. Great book shows history of the saxophone from Adolphe Sax's humble beginnings to the latest sax variation called the aulochrome (double-soprano sax welded together?). I liked the Personal Sound section of the book. Very informative and helpful. Buy it!

How can one not be interested in a musical instrument banned by Nazis, Communists and the Catholic church and played by President Clinton. It's also just about the newest of the major musical instruments, dating from 1843 when Adolphe Sax built the first one. This book is basically a love affair with the Sax. It's part history, part stories, part nostalgia for the greats of the past, part just plain good writing about a thing the author clearly loves. The author is a professional journalist, an amateur musician and he has combined these two interests together in this book. It's an easy and delightful read. It's kind of fun to have a book like this that is something other than how much one political party hates the other, the war, oil prices and all the other things that you see getting published today.

As an "old pro" who has played my Selmers next to lots of familiar names, I feel this book is **MUST** reading for anyone serious about the instrument (...even just as a listener). I had to laugh out loud at

some of the 'holy' schemes hatched against Adolphe Sax and his legacy, and I loved the passionate quotes and reminiscences gathered from many of the top hornmen around Manhattan. More surprising yet are sensuously scientific details about how quickly the new brassy/windy sound caught on, forcing innumerable clarinetists and violinists everywhere to switch instruments, or quit. Reading the book out here in the middle of the Pacific, I suppose even my own album, "sax hawaiian style", proves the author's point that this sultry 'devilish' voice was destined to invade practically every musical style and culture worldwide. I can hardly wait until some saxophonist conquers a juicy stake in Rap, or in middle-eastern music, or in whatever genres someday arise!

I've read many of the dissertations and references he's used for research here, and this book is a much more enjoyable read than many of them. It's historically accurate and informative, yet pleasantly written in the style of a professional journalist rather than a PhD candidate. He's used many of the best names in the legit (and jazz) business as sources. If you want a one-source introduction on how the saxophone came to be, this would be my first choice.

One devil of a fine book. Adolph Sax created a "mean machine" when he created the saxophone. I've played clarinet for about six decades; and in high school and college I played tenor sax in dance bands. Last summer I decided to buy a soprano sax and found it to be a mean monster, despite its smaller size. Working hard for months I was beginning to be discouraged by my inability to get a good tone. The alto and tenors were no problem. Fascinated by this instrument I read Mike Segell's THE DEVI'LS HORN. I learned that when John Coltrane decided to play soprano sax after becoming one of the premier jazz sax musicians, it took him two years to get the tone he wanted. No longer discouraged, I'll try as long as it takes me. THE DEVIL'S HORN contains many story's of the saxophone greats and gives many tips from the pros. Even if you are not a musician or even a saxophone player, you will enjoy this story.

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