



Drummin' Men: The Heartbeat of Jazz, The Swing Years

Burt Korall

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In the 1930s swing music was everywhere--on radio, recordings, and in the great ballrooms, hotels, theatres, and clubs. Perhaps at no other time were drummers more central to the sound and spirit of jazz. Benny Goodman showcased Gene Krupa. Jimmy Dorsey featured Ray McKinley. Artie Shaw helped make Buddy Rich a star while Count Basie riffed with the innovative Jo Jones. Drummers were at the core of this music; as Jo Jones said, "The drummer is the key--the heartbeat of jazz."

An oral history told by the drummers, other musicians, and industry figures, *Drummin' Men* is also Burt Korall's memoir of more than fifty years in jazz. Personal and moving, the book is a celebration of the music of the time and the men who made it. Meet Chick Webb, small, fragile-looking, a hunchback from childhood, whose explosive drumming style thrilled and amazed; Gene Krupa, the great showman and pacemaker; Ray McKinley, whose rhythmic charm, light touch, and musical approach provided a great example for countless others, and the many more that populate this story.

Based on interviews with a collection of the most important jazzmen, *Drummin' Men* offers an inside view of the swing years that cannot be found anywhere else.

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