

Writing Jazz

Writing Jazz

Conversations with Critics and Biographers

SASCHA FEINSTEIN



excelsior editions

Cover credit: Trombonist Slide Hampton. Photo: Steven Sussman, used by permission.

Published by State University of New York Press, Albany

© 2025 State University of New York

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission. No part of this book may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means including electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior permission in writing of the publisher.

Links to third-party websites are provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only. They do not constitute an endorsement or an approval of any of the products, services, or opinions of the organization, companies, or individuals. SUNY Press bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality, or content of a URL, the external website, or for that of subsequent websites.

Excelsior Editions is an imprint of State University of New York Press

For information, contact State University of New York Press, Albany, NY
www.sunypress.edu

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Name: Feinstein, Sascha, 1963— author.

Title: Writing Jazz : conversations with critics and biographers / Sascha Feinstein.

Description: Albany : State University of New York Press, 2025. | Series:

Excelsior editions | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2024025594 | ISBN 9798855801071 (pbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN 9798855801064 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Music critics—United States—Interviews. | Musical criticism—United States—History—20th century. | Jazz—History and criticism.

Classification: LCC ML403 .F45 2025 | DDC 781.6509—dc23/eng/20240702

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2024025594>

*for Lynne Miller—
if you want*

And, as you can see, I lived long enough to get this down onto paper, knowing well that—like notations on musical score paper—it'll go on being strictly dead stuff, an artifact, until another human being runs it through that most marvelous of instruments, imagination, and transforms the look of it into sound by breathing sense and meaning and feeling back into these blues.

—Al Young, *Drowning in the Sea of Love*

Hey, Rudy: Put this on the record—*all* of it.

—Miles Davis, Hackensack, New Jersey, December 24, 1954