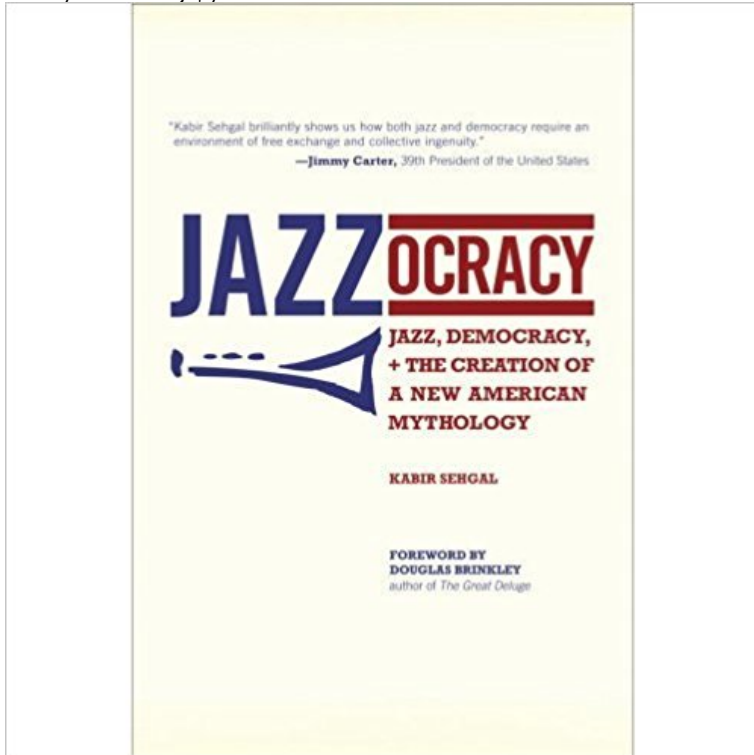


# Jazzocracy: Jazz, Democracy, and the Creation of a New American Mythology



Sometimes a jam session includes trading fours, where each member of the band takes four measures to solo. If someone forgets to play his four, there is a flagrant void of sound. If you play one measure extra, you're not respecting the form. In the jam session of a Jazzocracy, Americans trade fours with each other. Talk and listen. In the 1950s, jazz musicians became the literal embodiment of American democracy. Through one of the largest ever funded cultural projects, premier jazz musicians traveled to places beyond the Iron Curtain, and throughout the Third World in an effort to promulgate ideals of democracy. Now, from a new generation, we have a new challenge. It's the challenge to see the evolution of jazz and democracy as forming our next set of mythologies, ones that cast beyond the tired legacy of Billy the Kid, or the degraded trends of popular music. This young author asks the big question: are we forgetting the very spirit that inspired jazz in the first place? Kabir Sehgal shows us how jazz can help us recapture America's rightful soul.

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