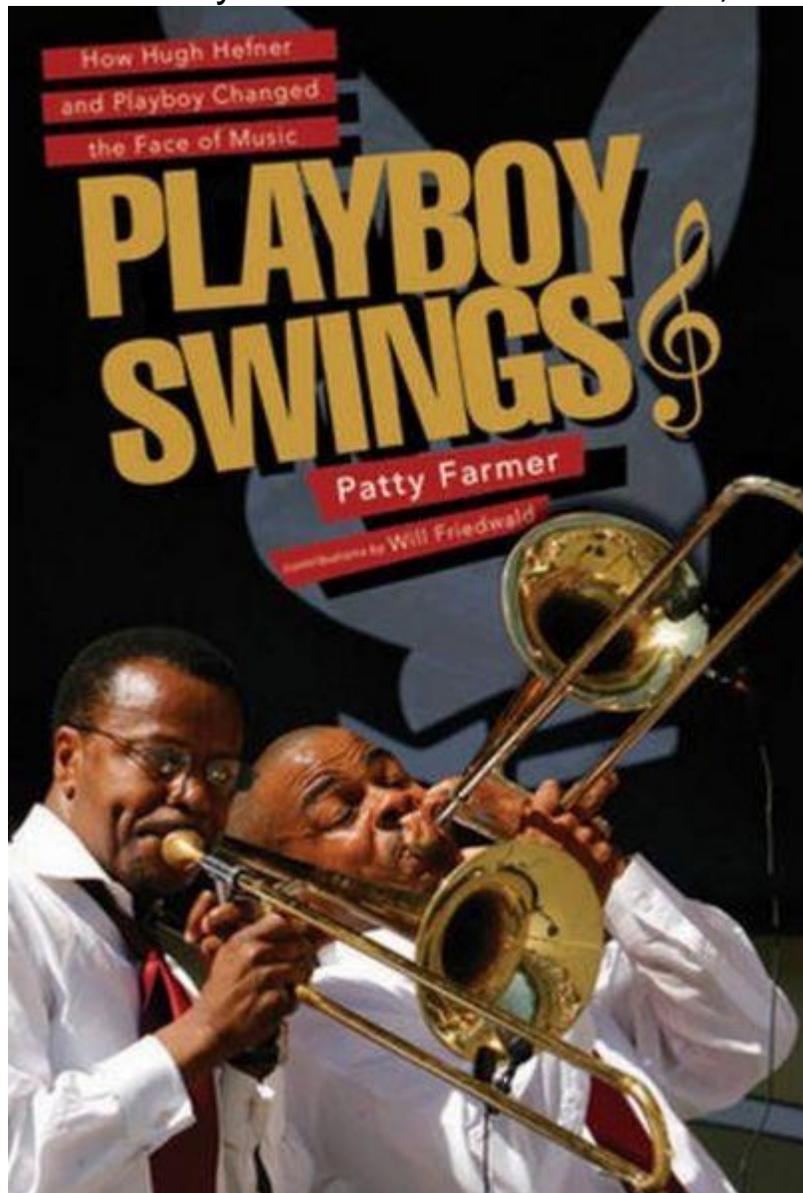


Playboy Swings' tells how Hugh Hefner and Playboy promoted jazz

AXS.COM by Paula Edelstein - Jul 24, 2015



Author Patty Farmer takes stock of the pivotal moments that shaped the trajectory of jazz as fueled by Hugh Hefner's influential Playboy brand in *Playboy Swings* (Beaufort Books). Hefner's avid interest in jazz is well-documented through interviews with Playboy insiders, jazz artists and many others. Patty Farmer tells how Playboy's jazz festivals, clubs, late-night television shows and the magazine promoted the jazz genre and its artists. Her extensive research, black and white photos culled from various collectors and her collaboration with contributor Will Friedwald beautifully conveys the enthusiasm of the times.

With a forward by Victor Lownes III and the introduction by George Wein, the book's 16 chapters reveal the intermingling of Playboy and jazz over 60 years. As one of the most important jazz festivals in the nation, the first Playboy Jazz Festival was produced in 1959 in celebration of Playboy's fifth anniversary. Twenty years later to celebrate its 25th anniversary, the annual 3-day festival was born and debuted at the Hollywood Bowl. It bracketed the golden era of Playboy, during which it operated over 40 clubs around the world. Now in its 37th years, the annual Playboy Jazz Festival held in Los Angeles, California at the Hollywood Bowl, continues to bring jazz music to both veteran jazz buffs and newcomers alike.

Patty Farmer also explains how the late president of Blue Note Records, Bruce Lundvall, came up with the concept for *In Performance* at the Playboy Jazz Festival, an album he produced to document the 1982 jazz festival at the Hollywood Bowl. In the book she names the artists – Dexter Gordon, *Pieces of a Dream*, Grover Washington, Jr., *Weather Report* and *Manhattan Transfer*, *The JazzTet* – Art Farmer/ Benny Golson, Nancy Wilson, Michael Woolf, Maynard Ferguson and the "Great Quartet" of Freddie Hubbard, McCoy Tyner, Ron Carter and Elvin Jones – all on the same Playboy Jazz Festival. What a weekend that had to be! Miles Davis' sellout performance of 1985 broke records for attendance and gross sales at the Bowl.

So the genre of Jazz owes a great deal to the Playboy brand and to Hugh Hefner. Patty Farmer's book gives her readers an up-close and personal glimpse into the lifestyle and the music Hef so dearly celebrates.