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Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. 337-382) and index.
Nota di contenuto	A marvel of paradox : jazz and African American modernity -- Dizzy atmosphere : the challenge of bebop -- Passions of a man : the poetics and politics of Charles Mingus -- Straight ahead : Abbey Lincoln and the challenge of jazz singing -- Practicing "creative music" : the black arts imperative in the jazz community -- Writing "creative music" : theorizing the art and politics of improvisation -- The majesty of the blues : Wynton Marsalis's jazz canon.
Sommario/riassunto	Despite the plethora of writing about jazz, little attention has been paid to what musicians themselves wrote and said about their practice. An implicit division of labor has emerged where, for the most part, black artists invent and play music while white writers provide the commentary. Eric Porter overturns this tendency in his creative intellectual history of African American musicians. He foregrounds the often-ignored ideas of these artists, analyzing them in the context of

meanings circulating around jazz, as well as in relationship to broader currents in African American thought. Porter examines several crucial moments in the history of jazz: the formative years of the 1920's and 1930's; the emergence of bebop; the political and experimental projects of the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's; and the debates surrounding Jazz at Lincoln Center under the direction of Wynton Marsalis. Louis Armstrong, Anthony Braxton, Marion Brown, Duke Ellington, W.C. Handy, Yusef Lateef, Abbey Lincoln, Charles Mingus, Archie Shepp, Wadada Leo Smith, Mary Lou Williams, and Reggie Workman also feature prominently in this book. The wealth of information Porter uncovers shows how these musicians have expressed themselves in print; actively shaped the institutional structures through which the music is created, distributed, and consumed, and how they aligned themselves with other artists and activists, and how they were influenced by forces of class and gender. What Is This Thing Called Jazz? challenges interpretive orthodoxies by showing how much black jazz musicians have struggled against both the racism of the dominant culture and the prescriptive definitions of racial authenticity propagated by the music's supporters, both white and black.
