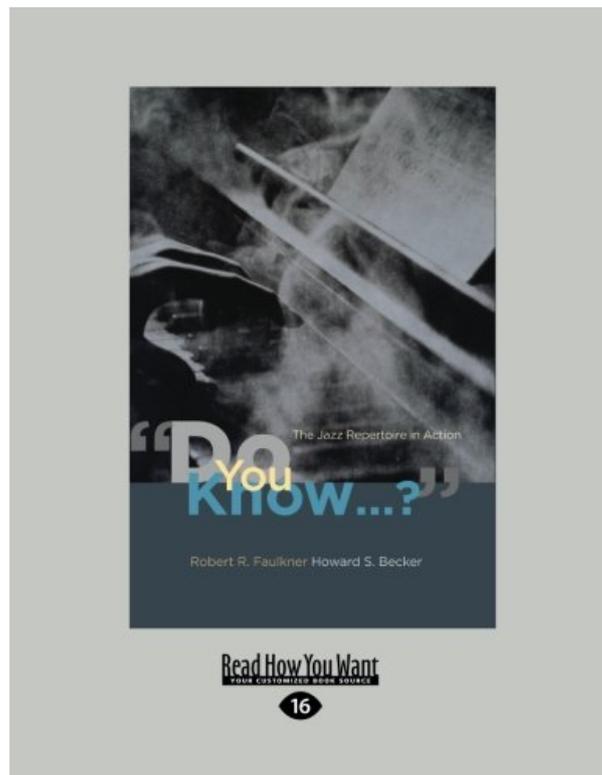
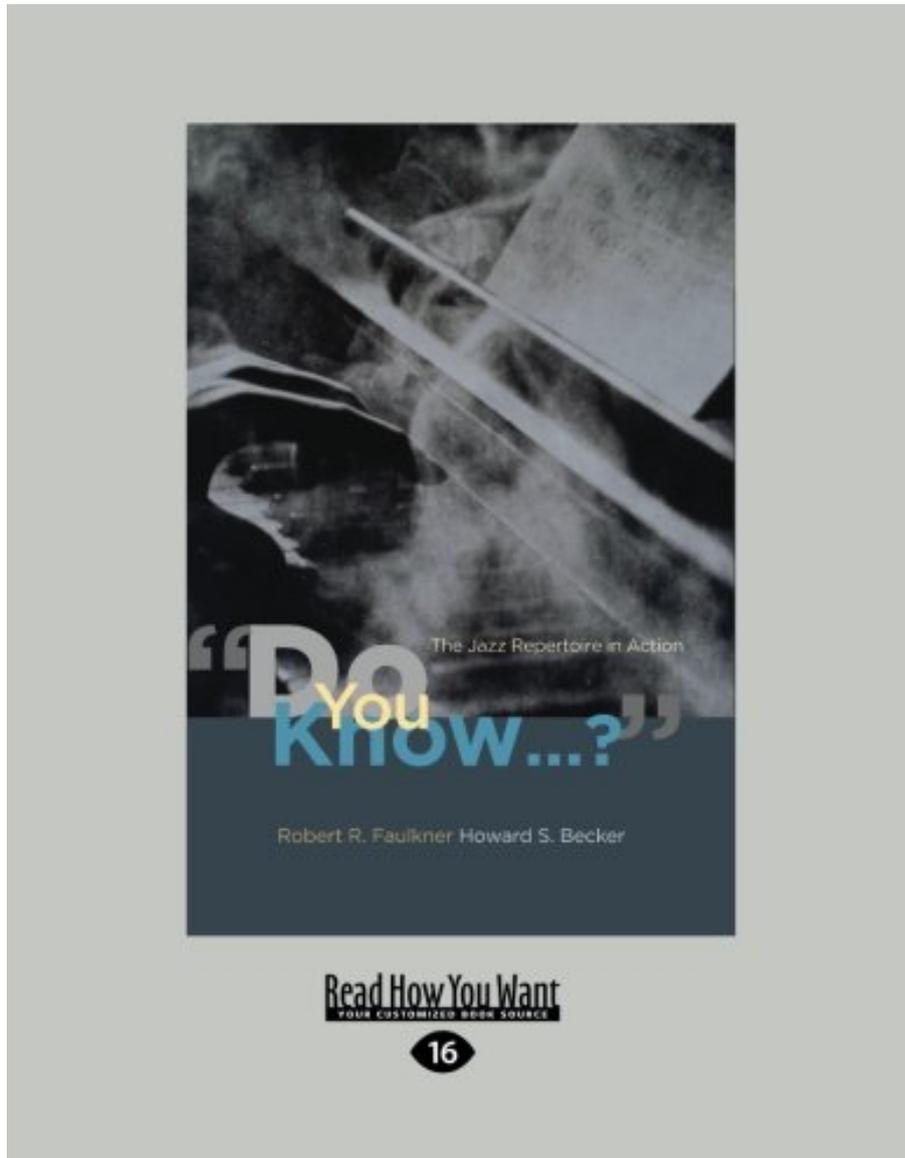


'DO YOU KNOW...?': THE JAZZ REPERTOIRE IN ACTION BY HOWARD S. BECKER AND ROBERT R. FAULKNER



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Review

“This book consists of a seamless blend of anecdotes and analysis, filled with delight and insight. Robert Faulkner and Howard Becker, writing from their twin perspectives of professional jazz players and renowned scholars, offer an unprecedented understanding of the interpersonal dynamics of jazz performance and the implications of using jazz as a model for understanding negotiations in other realms of human interaction.” (Barry Kernfeld, editor of *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*)

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Every night, somewhere in the world, three or four musicians will climb on stage together. Whether the gig is at a jazz club, a bar, or a bar mitzvah, the performance never begins with a note, but with a question. The trumpet player might turn to the bassist and ask, "Do you know Body and Soul?" - and from there the subtle craft of playing the jazz repertoire is tested in front of a live audience. These ordinary musicians may never have played together - they may never have met - so how do they smoothly put on a show without getting booed offstage In "Do You Know . . . ?" Robert R. Faulkner and Howard S. Becker - both jazz musicians with decades of experience performing - present the view from the bandstand, revealing the array of skills necessary for working musicians to do their jobs. While learning songs from sheet music or by ear helps, the jobbing musician's lexicon is dauntingly massive: hundreds of thousands of tunes from jazz classics and pop standards to more exotic fare. Since it is impossible for anyone to memorize all of these songs, Faulkner and Becker show that musicians collectively negotiate and improvise their way to a successful performance. Players must explore each others' areas of expertise, develop an ability to fake their way through unfamiliar territory, and respond to the unpredictable demands of their audience - whether an unexpected gang of polka fanatics or a tipsy father of the bride with an obscure favorite song. "Do You Know . . . ?" dishes out entertaining stories and sharp insights drawn from the authors' own experiences and observations as well as interviews with a range of musicians. Faulkner and Becker's vivid, detailed portrait of the musician at work holds valuable lessons for anyone who has to think on the spot or under a spotlight.

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Most helpful customer reviews

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Interesting but more "academic" than I would have preferred

By Vegas Reader

A worthy read, especially the references to real world music jobs and jam sessions. Oftentimes however, the authors focused on academic sociological concerns as if this were a professional paper. I read this as a musician, so it did not have enough of the kind of information that I would have liked. Still, it was undeniably well written and therefore easy to read.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

If you love jazz music and culture, this book is for you

By Laura

I have been playing jazz music all of my life, and as an upcoming sociology Ph.D, this was an excellent read for me. It can be a bit esoteric, if you do not know too much about the field (or both fields, rather) but I still found this to be an exceptional publication by two very esteemed sociologists. Howard Becker is a legend, and it seems as if Robert Faulkner is his protege. Enjoyable for those who play, listen to, or enjoy jazz music and cultural reflections.

5 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Could have been an interesting essay

By Steve Rogers

As a Jazz fan with an interest in sociology I was a bit disappointed in this book. The area being analyzed is a fascinating one and the authors have hands on experience as Jazz musicians. The book they produced has some interest but, as presented, could have been much shorter as there is a lot of repetition and recapitulation. The authors have decided to keep the stories they base their research on as anonymous but this gives the book an anecdotal quality. You can not check the stories and it is all based on a few interviews; there is no attempt at a scientific or statistical analyses. So it fails to be a convincing sociology book and provides too little of interest to jazz fans.

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