How have American writers written about jazz, and how has jazz influenced American literature? In Fascinating Rhythm, David Yaffe explores the relationship and interplay between jazz and literature, looking at jazz musicians and the themes literature has garnered from them by appropriating the style, tones, and innovations of jazz, and demonstrating that the poetics of jazz has both been assimilated into, and deeply affected, the development of twentieth-century American literature.

Yaffe explores how Jewish novelists such as Norman Mailer, J. D. Salinger, and Philip Roth engaged issues of racial, ethnic, and American authenticity by way of jazz; how Ralph Ellisons descriptions of Louis Armstrong led to a neoconservative movement in contemporary jazz; how poets such as Wallace Stevens, Hart Crane, Langston Hughes, and Frank O'Hara were variously inspired by the music; and how memoirs by Billie Holiday, Charles Mingus, and Miles Davis both reinforced and redeemed the red light origins of jazz. The book confronts the current jazz discourse and shows how poets and novelists can be placed in it--often with problematic results. Fascinating Rhythm stops to listen for the music, demonstrating how jazz continues to speak for the American writer.

My Personal Review:
David Yaffe seems to be a Master of the Jazz Universe. He has a keen ear when it comes to the music, understanding its complexity on its own and the musicianship required to make the structured seem spontaneous. He also understands how authors and poets, some with musical backgrounds and some with none, have attempted to incorporate jazz into their writings, some successful, some not. He reminds us of "the dangerousness" of the music, the seeming lines of transgression crossed in both directions.
For Jazz fans, it is a great read. For everyone else (people like me), it is serves as a great reminder how great American Music and Musicians have been misread. I look forward to Mr. Yaffe's books on Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan as he does his magic.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
Fascinating Rhythm: Reading Jazz in American Writing by David Yaffe - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!