



The Parisian Jazz Chronicles: An Improvisational Memoir

By Mike Zwerin

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In his Beat-like jaunt through the Parisian and European jazz scene, Mike Zwerin is not unlike Jack Kerouac, Mezz Mezzrow, or Hunter S. Thompson—writers to whom, for different reasons, he owes some allegiance. What makes him special is his devotion to the troubled musicians he idolizes, and a passion for music that is blessedly contagious.

Many jazz fans will know Mike Zwerin for his witty, irreverent, and undeniably hip music reviews and articles in the *International Herald Tribune* that have entertained us for decades. Based in Paris, or, rather, stuck there, as Zwerin likes to say, he has been a music critic for the *Trib* since 1979. Zwerin also had a distinguished career as a trombonist. When he was just eighteen years old, he was invited by Miles Davis to play alongside Gerry Mulligan, John Lewis, and Max Roach in the band that was immortalized as *The Birth of the Cool*.

The Parisian Jazz Chronicles offers an engaging personal account of the jazz scene in Paris in the 1980s and 1990s. Zwerin writes lovingly but unsparingly about figures he knew and interviewed—such as Dexter Gordon, Freddy Heineken, Miles Davis, Bob Dylan, Chet Baker, Wayne Shorter, and Melvin Van Peebles. Against this background, Zwerin tells about his own life—split allegiances to journalism and music, and to America and France, his solitary battle for sobriety, a failing marriage, and fatherhood.

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