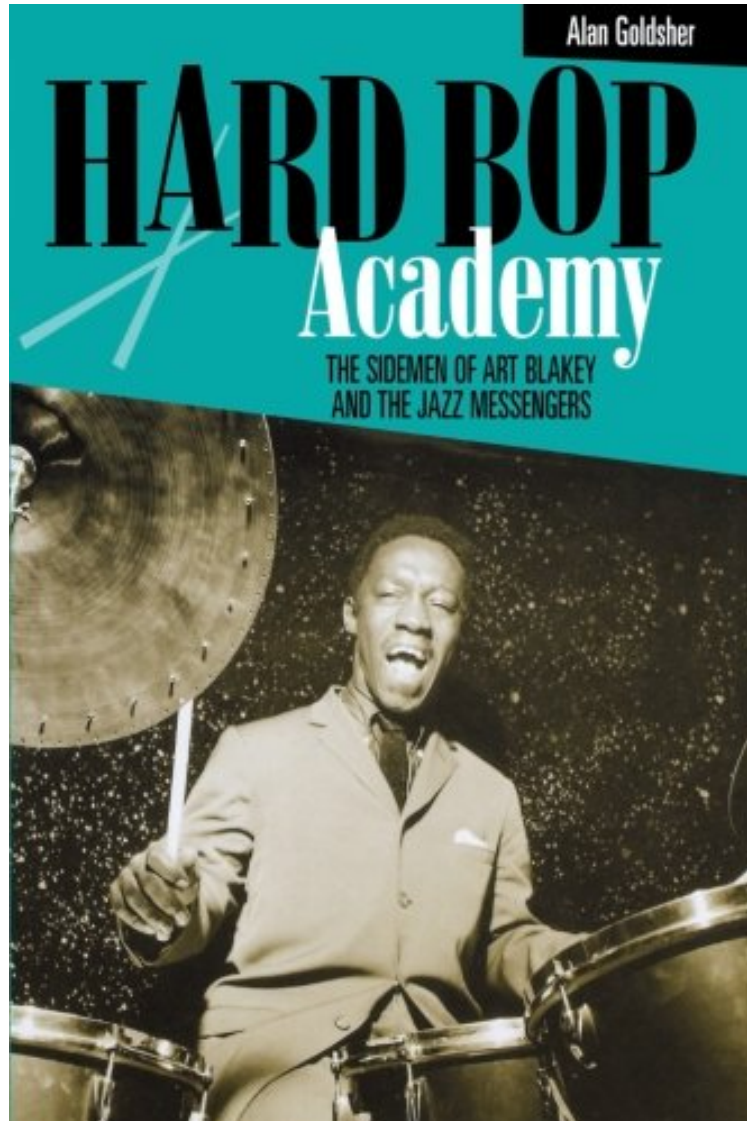


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Hard Bop Academy

Alan Goldsher, Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers
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Alan Goldsher, Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers : Hard Bop Academy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hard Bop Academy:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Essential for Blakey-ophilesBy Samuel C.I had purchased the best-selling "Moanin" LP and caught the Shorter-edition of the Messengers in the 60's, but it wasn't until I caught the Messengers in the late 70's, playing the 2nd half of a Newport program that featured Horace Silver on the first half,

that I contracted Messengers fever. They were everything that Horace's group was not--thunderous, alive, free and life-affirming--and doing it with unheralded musicians--Dave Schnitter, Bill Hardman, James Williams--who, in effect, put their counterparts to shame. Goldsher's is the best book-length study on the Messengers that I've seen, devoting as much attention to Schnitter and Hardman as to the more renowned Messengers. The profiles are admittedly short and told from an "outsider's" perspective, but frequently the author nails exactly what's unique about the playing of a Kenny Dorham or Bill Hardman, and in musical terminology that will not exclude the layman. What remains to be written is a look at the Blakey world from an "insider's" point of view: what it was like to get "up" for each performance, what distinguished, say, an "off" night from an inspired performance, what filled the days while traveling, what personal tensions arose and how they were dealt with, what it was like to feel you had played badly or to anticipate being "terminated." Although Goldsher's profiles encourage greater appreciation of the hard-edged, professionally "finished" groups of the 60's and 80's, I'm still partial to the richly warm, inventive Mobley ensembles of the 50's and the unsung, exciting "overachievers" of the 70's. Goldsher is one of the few writers to give Walter Davis Jr. his due as a pianist and, especially, composer (though he fails to mention "Backgammon" as well as Mickey Tucker, the gifted pianist who handled Davis' treacherous chordal/rhythmic sequences better than Walter himself). For the best example of the 70's ensemble along with Davis' extraordinary compositions, there's only one currently available resource: The Jazz Messengers at the Umbria Jazz Festival on DVD. The best examples of the lyrical Mobley Messengers from the 50's is Art Blakey's "The Jazz Messengers" on Columbia (with exceptional ensemble balance and sound that's more spacious and "true" than that of the Blue Note sessions) and Art Blakey and The Jazz Messengers "At the Cafe Bohemia" on Blue Note (the combination of Mobley and Kenny Dorham is simply as good as it gets). After any of the foregoing, the popular "Moanin'" session (my first Blakey recording--memorized, then discarded) sounds merely formulaic, and all of the early 60s Shorter/Morgan/Fuller sessions begin to sound the same.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. For Jazz Messengers fans especially By Scott Albin A concise, informal survey of Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, told largely by a group of "talking heads" who played in the band, such as Branford Marsalis, James Williams, Bobby Watson, Benny Green, etc. There's a useful section in the back listing just about anyone who ever played in the band even for one night, plus a generous photo insert. Well-organized by the author, whose knowledge and enthusiasm on the subject helps to make the book a success.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great Book By Fred This book really provides a lot of detail as far as the different periods of the Messengers and the players that have gone through the Blakey University. Very informative. A must read for all jazz, and especially, Blakey fans like me!

Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers was one of the most enduring, popular, reliable and vital small bands in modern jazz history. Blakey was not only a distinguished, inventive and powerful drummer, but along with Duke Ellington and Miles Davis, he was one of jazz's foremost talent scouts. The musicians who flowed seamlessly in and out of this constantly evolving collective during its 36-year run were among the most important artists not just of their eras, but of any era. Though their respective innovations were vital to the evolution of bebop, hard bop and neo bop, the recorded work of the Messengers sidemen has never been properly analyzed. Until now. *Hard Bop Academy: The Sidemen of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers* critically examines the multitude of gifted artists who populated the many editions of the Jazz Messengers. In addition to dissecting the sidemen's most consequential work with Blakey's band, jazz musician and acclaimed novelist Alan Goldsher offers up engaging profiles of everyone from Wynton Marsalis to Terence Blanchard to Hank Mobley to Wayne Shorter to Horace Silver to Keith Jarrett to Curtis Fuller to Steve Davis. And that's only the beginning. Goldsher conducted over 30 interviews with surviving graduates of Blakey's Hard Bop Academy, many of whom spoke at length of their tenure with the legendary "Buhaina" for the first time. Alan Goldsher is a bassist who has recorded with Janet Jackson, Digable Planets, Cypress Hill and Naughty By Nature. His writing has been published in *Bass Player*, *Tower Pulse*, *Sport and BasketBull: Chicago Bulls Magazine*. Goldsher's debut novel, *Jam*, was published in 2002 by Permanent Press. He lives in Chicago. Hardcover.