

A brief history of jazz's miscellaneous instruments according to *Down Beat's* annual polls

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The tendency of jazz musicians to seek out new sounds and try out unusual instruments has always been an important driving force in the aesthetic evolution of their music. In this poster, I would like to explore the history of jazz's marginal instruments through a survey of *Down Beat's* annual polls, which have made them a category of their own since the 1950s: that of "miscellaneous instruments." The analysis of this data will allow us to draw a brief history of that world "at the fringes of jazz" and to highlight many of its particular dynamics. We can notably mention :

- The appearance-disappearance of certain instruments within the category, in relation to trends;
 - The role of certain great "masters" in the introduction of new instruments whose longevity was then ensured by less notorious musicians;
 - The existence of different "revolutions" that have led, through a process of sedimentation, to the now highly heterogeneous content of the category;
 - Some remarkable individual trajectories, made of figures dominating the category, of some "eternal seconds" as well as of "disloyal" competitors, i.e., of some great exponents of traditional instruments that have (temporarily) embraced a second, more unusual instrument.
- These and many other considerations, based on data extracted from one of the most authoritative (but not bias-free) publications on jazz, will allow us to explore the theme of inclusion, understanding, and acceptance of a very specific diversity, that of musical instruments, which remains rather unexplored in jazz history.