

MUSIC ACROSS TIME

ACCORDION CRIMES – Annie Proulx

A button accordion brought to New Orleans in 1890 by a Sicilian immigrant finds its way into the lives, dreams, fantasies, sorrows, and intimacies of men and women of other immigrant groups in South Dakota, Texas, Montana, Maine and elsewhere.

BODY AND SOUL – Frank Conroy

Claude Rawlings, a poverty-stricken young man, feels stymied by life, until he finds an old piano and embarks on a musical odyssey that takes him into a world of wealth, power, and fame.

ANTONIETTA – John Hersey

Follows the odyssey of a Stradivarius violin from its creation in 1699, through its impact on musicians and composers as diverse as Mozart, Berlioz, and Stravinsky, to its purchase in 1990 by a tone-deaf financier.

NOCTURNES: FIVE STORIES OF MUSIC AND NIGHTFALL – Kazuo Ishiguro

Five interconnected stories in which music is an intrinsic theme follow the struggles of a once-popular singer desperate for a comeback, a songwriter who is unwittingly involved in a failing marriage, and a jazz musician who wrongly believes that plastic surgery will secure his career.

Also:

THE CELESTIAL JUKEBOX – Cynthia Shearer

JOPLIN'S GHOST – Tananarive Due

LISTENING TO MOZART – Charles Wyatt

SOME SING, SOME CRY – Ntozake Shange

HIP-HOP & RAP

MY FINE LADY – Yolanda Joe

Talented young singer Imani is surrounded by men with their own interest in her career--including her father, her boyfriend, and Orenthal Hopson, who believes that he can transform her from a hip-hop diva to a traditional jazz singer.

Also:

CAUGHT UP IN THE RAPTURE – Sheneska Jackson

VOICE

PRAIRIE NOCTURNE – Ivan Doig

Teaching voice lessons to the privileged members of society during the height of the Harlem Renaissance, Susan Duff is hired by a man who once harbored political ambitions to teach his African American chauffeur how to sing.

THE SONG IS YOU – Arthur Phillips

Julian Donahue, separated from his wife after the death of his son, becomes drawn to an Irish rock singer, but delays meeting her, communicating only through email and on websites, until his attraction turns into an obsession with music and fame.

Also:

GOODBYE WITHOUT LEAVING – Laurie Colwin

THE LANTERN BEARERS – Ronald Frame

SONG OF THE LARK – Willa Cather

VOICES OF SUMMER – Diane Pearson

OPERA

BEL CANTO – Ann Patchett

When terrorists seize hostages at an embassy party, an unlikely assortment of people is thrown together, including American opera star Roxane Coss, and Mr. Hosokawa, a Japanese CEO and her biggest fan.

Also:

THE BELLS – Richard Harvell

GRAMERCY PARK – Paula Cohen

PUCCINI'S GHOSTS – Joss Morag

PHANTOM OF MANHATTAN – Frederick Forsyth



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MUSICAL FICTION



If music is the soundtrack of life, then the characters in these novels must be living it up! Each of the books compiled here has a musical theme: from classical to rock to rap. Whether it's a take on how music is created or how it affects listeners, these novels are sure to please even the tone-deaf!

The annotations are courtesy of NovelList Plus, part of the TFPL e-Resources.

JAZZ & SWING

THE MAMBO KINGS PLAY SONGS OF LOVE

– Oscar Hijuelos

Cesar and Nestor Castillo, two very different Cuban brothers, recall their heyday in 1950s New York, when they led an orchestra, were known as "the Mambo Kings," and appeared on "I Love Lucy.

ROOKERY BLUES – Jon Hassler

In 1969, faculty members at Rookery State College form a jazz quintet, and the lives of those in the group reflect the trials of the times including the Vietnam War and campus problems.

Also:

1929: A NOVEL OF THE JAZZ AGE
– Frederick Turner

HALF BLOOD BLUES – Esi Edugyan

*NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU PROMISE TO COOK
AND PAY THE RENT YOU BLEW IT CAUZE BILL
BAILEY AIN'T NEVER COMING HOME AGAIN*
– Edgardo Vega

*A SIMPLE HABANA MELODY FROM WHEN THE
WORLD WAS GOOD* – Oscar Hijuelos
SWING! A MYSTERY – Rupert Holmes

COUNTRY & FOLK

THE BIG BALLAD JAMBOREE – Donald Davidson

In 1949, folk music in the North Carolina Appalachians changes from folk to hillbilly, and Cissie Timberlake decides to get her master's degree codifying the tradition.

THE DEVIL'S DREAM – Lee Smith

Kate Bailey and her brood experience joy and heartbreak over the years, culminating in a final gathering at the Opryland Hotel.

Also:

BABY, WOULD I LIE – Donald E. Westlake

FENDER BENDERS: A NOVEL – Bill Fitzhugh

NASHVILLE CHROME – Rick Bass

THE SONGCATCHER – Sharyn McCrumb

THE WIND IN THE WHEAT – Reed Arvin

ROCK, BLUES, & R&B

RESERVATION BLUES – Sherman Alexie

When Robert Johnson passes his enchanted guitar to Thomas-Builds-the-Fire, an epic journey of redemption begins that will take the storyteller and musician from the reservation, to Seattle, to Manhattan, and all points in between.

WISHBONES – Tom Perrotta

A thirty-one-year-old rock'n'roll guitarist decides to get married, only to begin an affair with Gretchen, a New York poet, and finds himself torn between letting his dreams die and having a steady gig.

THE COMMITMENTS – Roddy Doyle

A group of working-class Irish youths with a passion for the music of Sam Cooke and Otis Redding form a rock 'n' roll band and attempt to bring soul to Dublin.

ROCK BOTTOM – Michael Shilling

Once on their way to the glittering heights of the rock music world, the four members of Blood Orphans find themselves in Amsterdam, washed up after a dismal European tour.

A VISIT FROM THE GOON SQUAD – Jennifer Egan

Former punk rocker Bennie Salazar and the passionate Sasha hide illicit secrets from one another while interacting with a motley assortment of equally troubled people from 1970s San Francisco to the post-war future.

Also:

ANYTHING GOES – Madison Smartt Bell

CROSSROAD BLUES – Ace Atkins

THE DA DA DE DA DA CODE – Robert Rankin

THE GROUND BENEATH HER FEET
– Salman Rushdie

THE GUTBUCKET QUEST
– Piers Anthony & Ron Leming

I WANNA BE YOUR JOEY RAMONE
– Stephanie Kuehnert

HIGH FIDELITY – Nick Hornby

NEVER MIND THE POLLACKS – Neal Pollack

NIGHT TRAIN – Clyde Edgerton

STONE ARABIA – Dana Spiotta

SWAY – Zachary Lazar

CLASSICAL & INSTRUMENTS

THE BLACK VIOLIN – Maxence Fermine

Wounded while fighting with Napoleon's army in the Italian campaign, violin prodigy Johannes Karelsky arrives in Venice, where he is rescued by a mysterious woman and boards with Erasmus, an aged violin maker who has created the legendary "Black Violin."

CORELLI'S MANDOLIN – Louis De Bernières

The idyllic world of the Greek island of Cephallonia is forever changed by the inexorable changes of World War II, as the inhabitants struggle to cope with the Axis invasion and occupation

CLARA: A NOVEL – Janice Galloway

A fictional portrayal of the musical partnership of the Schumanns follows Clara's childhood experiences that inspired her career, her marriage to Robert, and her struggles with love and creativity.

THE PIANO TUNER – Daniel Mason

In 1886, piano tuner Edgar Drake leaves London for the jungles of Burma, where he has been asked to repair a grand piano belonging to a British army officer who uses the piano and music to help keep the peace among warring local Burmese princes.

MOZART'S LAST ARIA – Matt Rees

Mozart's estranged sister, Madame Maria Anna Berchtold von Sonnenburg, travels to Vienna to investigate the mysterious circumstances of her brother's sudden death.

Also:

AN EQUAL MUSIC – Vikram Seth

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN – Gerald Elias

THE GLASS HARMONICA – Louise Marley

LUCY GAYHEART – Willa Cather

MEPHISTO WALTZ – Fred Mustard Stewart

MUSIC AND SILENCE – Rose Tremain

THE MUSIC ROOM – Dennis MacFarland

SLEEPING WITH SCHUBERT – Bonnie Marson

THE SOLOIST – Marc Salzman

SPANISH BOW – Andromeda Romano-Lax

THE STUDENT CONDUCTOR – Robert Ford