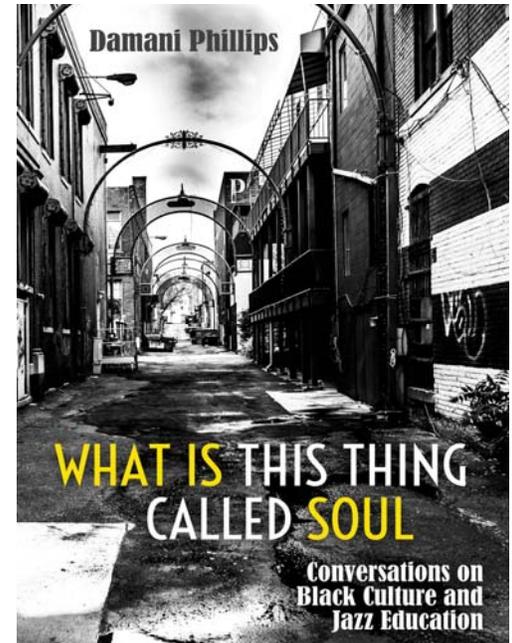


What Is This Thing Called Soul

Conversations on Black Culture and Jazz Education

Damani Phillips



What Is This Thing Called Soul breaks new intellectual ground in openly exploring how academic jazz education impacts the Black cultural value of soulfulness and similar esthetic standards in contemporary jazz music.

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Interviews Include:

Stefon Harris
Nicholas Payton
Rufus Reid
Marcus Belgrave
Phil Woods
Wycliffe Gordon

Foreword by
Derrick Gardner
(of Count Basie Orchestra)

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Through candid conversations with nine of the country's most highly respected jazz practitioners and teachers, **What Is This Thing Called Soul** explores the potential consequences of forcing the Black musical style of jazz into an academic pedagogical system that is specifically designed to facilitate the practice and pedagogy of European classical music. It tests the belief that the cultural, emotional and esthetic elements at the very core of jazz's unique identity, along with the music's overt connection to Black culture, are effectively being "lost in translation" in crossing the divide between academic and non-academic jazz spheres. This work offers a candid and objective look into pressing issues of race, culture and ethnic value in relation to both jazz music and jazz education. Sensitivity, marginalization and even a fear of offending others has limited open discussion of how the soul of jazz music can be lost in technical boundaries. **What Is This Thing Called Soul** is the first attempt to directly address such culturally urgent issues in jazz music. The book includes interviews with the late jazz masters Marcus Belgrave and Phil Woods; both of whom passed away shortly after being interviewed. Interviews are supplemented by original analysis of the nature and validity of these issues contributed by the author. Though Jazz serves as a focal point of the book, it essentially illuminates potential problems with the transmission of any cultural art form of ethnic origins in academic environments. The candid nature of the interviews provide informative and worthwhile read for readers of all backgrounds and interests well beyond jazz music alone.

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